SELF-ESTEEM’S MODERATION OF SELF-CONGRUITY EFFECTS ON BRAND LOYALTY

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SELF-ESTEEM’S MODERATION OF SELF-CONGRUITY EFFECTS ON BRAND LOYALTY

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ABSTRACT

This research set out to find how consumer self-esteem moderates the relative importance of actual self-congruity vs. ideal self-congruity on women’s brand loyalty to fitness brands. College-aged women were the primary focus for this research because this demographic represents an emerging consumer group and because the literature suggests women score significantly lower than men on self-esteem scales in physical appearance, athletic self, personal self, and self-satisfaction self-esteem. A survey of 151 women ages 18-24 was conducted. The survey analysis supports prior research findings that actual and ideal self-congruity are both positively correlated with brand loyalty; however, this study failed to demonstrate a significant moderating effect of self-esteem on either actual or ideal self-congruity effects for brand loyalty.
SELF-ESTEEM’S MODERATION OF SELF-CONGRUITY EFFECTS ON BRAND LOYALTY

Jane Brannen

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Actual Self-Congruity, Ideal Self-Congruity, Brand Loyalty, Use of Preferred Brand, Self-Congruity, Women, Fitness Brands, Fitness Apparel
Introduction

My internship with Influence & Co. gave me the opportunity to gain experience with a leading company in the emerging thought leadership sector of content marketing. I not only observed Influence & Co.’s content creation process and client relations but also was immersed in day-to-day operations at a fast-growing startup. Influence & Co. continues to optimize its processes as it disrupts the content marketing industry, which made this a particularly exciting season to work there.

This professional component is relevant to my research on fitness branding because fitness and other brands frequently rely on content marketing, and it is relevant to my experience in corporate communications. I was able to use my research, writing, and editing skills while sharpening my strategic planning and critical thinking skills. This project fits my future career aspirations as I hope to work in marketing or advertising.
Week 1

A meeting with the vice president of content kicked off my first day. She outlined Influence & Co.’s corporate structure and core values, then explained my responsibilities as an intern. I also attended an orientation with more of this semester’s interns, where we reviewed Influence & Co.’s history, current position and goals for the future.

The rest of the week involved more orientation and training, but within the first few days, I had begun assisting with department tasks. I also attended my first few pitch meetings, where account strategists describe article ideas for their clients. Members of the editorial and publication departments attend to listen to these pitches, make suggestions and ensure these article ideas make sense for the clients, the publications and the client audience.

Week 2

This week I continued to get acquainted with my tasks as an intern. Influence & Co.’s editorial intern has two primary responsibilities: creating question sets and writing teasers. During my first week I concentrated on creating question sets; however, by the end of the second week, I was writing teasers as well.

Question sets help clients brainstorm and articulate their ideas for each article. We send the answers to writers who craft cohesive pieces of content, then each piece of content goes through several rounds of editing to make sure it is ready to be sent to publications or published on a client blog. Article teasers are brief posts (under 100
words) which clients can use on owned media channels to drive traffic to articles we help them publish on earned media channels.

**Week 3**

I completed my first initial edit this week. Initial edits are the first round of editing for a client article or blog post. Generally interns concentrate on question sets and teasers, so I was pleased to have been given a bigger responsibility, especially this early in my internship.

This week also included a meeting with the editorial department. The head of the editorial department outlined a few personnel and workflow changes, including that I will continue to focus on initial edits. We reviewed the department’s progress toward its quarterly goals and discussed issues that need improvement. The department is on track to hit its initial edit and final edit error-rate goals. We discussed ways to continue improving article quality, especially for those written by Influence & Co. employees for the company blog and other publications.

**Week 4**

Influence & Co. held its monthly company-wide KPI meeting this week. We reviewed the company’s progress over the past month. Influence & Co. exceeded its new client and sales goals this month. Our president congratulated departments that had done well and discussed strategies for client retention. Meeting attendees broke into small groups to brainstorm tactics for satisfying challenging clients. The exercise allowed me to hear from members of other departments and see Influence & Co’s internal processes from different perspectives.
This week, I also met with the head of the editorial department to discuss how my internship is going. After I expressed an interest in learning more about the account strategy department, she offered to set up a meeting between me and our senior account strategist so that I can ask questions about that department and the account strategist role.

Week 5

This week I continued working on question sets, teasers and initial edits and made progress on some of Influence & Co.’s online learning modules about content marketing, specific accounts and Influence & Co.’s process.

Influence & Co. is currently expanding its content marketing product offerings and has begun producing white papers for its clients. This week I completed my first set of questions for a client white paper. I was excited to try my hand at a relatively new process for the company and requested that white papers be covered in one of the upcoming education sessions Influence & Co. holds for its interns and part-time employees.

Week 6

This week, I met with Influence & Co.’s account manager, who leads the company’s account strategists, to ask a few questions about the account strategy department. She described the day-to-day responsibilities of an account strategist, which include pitching articles, working with clients, and developing client strategies. I expressed interest in learning more about the account strategy department and will be sitting in on more client calls and brainstorming sessions in the future.
In the editorial department, I continued working on question sets, teasers, and initial edits. The editorial department held its monthly meeting, where we discussed upcoming staffing and process changes. From now on, a supervising editor will score and track my initial edits. After I score 85 on three consecutive initial edits, Influence & Co. will consider me fully trained on initial edits, and I’ll able to do them without an additional supervisor.

Every department reads a book together each month, so we also used this meeting to talk about the editorial department’s book for March, “Precise Edit Training Manual.” The book gives practical tips for simplifying sentences and making writing more lively.

**Week 7**

The highlight of this week was earning my highest score yet on an initial edit. I scored 89 on an initial edit, 4 points higher than my goal. My supervising editor identified speed as an area for improvement, so as I work on initial edits in the future, I’ll focus on maintaining high quality while working efficiently.

Influence & Co. announced a few changes in the editorial department this week. After an audit of teasers, the company has decided to scale back the number it does and only write teasers when clients request them. This will save a lot of time and allow the editorial department to focus energy on other tasks. In addition, we are exploring alternatives to question sets for getting client information for articles. Some clients respond very well with question sets while others work better with phone interviews or other methods.
This week, I participated in a brainstorming session with account strategists. This allowed me to learn a little more about creating article topics. I suggested several article ideas, and next week, one of the account strategists will be pitching a topic I suggested for an event marketing client.

**Week 8**

Influence & Co. held its monthly company-wide KPI meeting this week. Since our last KPI meeting, the company has improved its client retention rates. This month, meeting attendees broke into small groups to brainstorm tactics for increasing the number of articles each client publishes per month. The client my group focused on has been slow in responding to question sets. We suggested some alternative methods for getting this client’s information for his articles and will be tracking his progress over the next month.

This week also included our weekly production team meeting. We discussed some challenges account strategists face as they try to develop topics for clients. Then we broke into small groups to brainstorm topics for a couple clients. Our group came up with several ideas for two clients, and the account strategist will use these ideas to pitch future articles.

Outside of meetings, I continued working on question sets and did several initial edits. I also got to sit in on a call with one of our major corporate clients. This allowed me to observe an account strategist walking through a thought leadership strategy with the client.

**Week 9**

The editorial department implemented a new question set template this week, and
I continued working on question sets and initial edits. One of the initial edits I worked on this week will be published in Forbes, one of our marquee publications. Influence & Co. targets our clients articles toward publications that will effectively reach their audiences and that are likely to accept the client articles. This means many of our publications serve niche audiences, and only clients who would benefit by reaching and broad audience and who give high-quality answers get published in larger, or “marquee” as Influence & Co. calls them, publications. So I was very excited to have a hand in an article that was sent to a marquee publication.

As I continue observing in account strategy, this week I sat in on my first kick-off call. The kick-off call is an account strategist’s first contact with a client. He or she and that client’s salesperson all get on the phone to go over the Influence & Co. content process and discuss goals before the account strategist drafts the client’s thought leadership strategy. During this call, it is important for the account strategist to build trust and set expectations. I felt like I learned a lot by watching how the account strategist and salesperson handled the call, and I wrote down phrases and talking points that will be useful if I ever hold a similar role in the future.

**Week 10**

We had several more question sets than usual this week, which meant I focused less on initial edits than in previous weeks. I continued adapting to the new question set template, which includes a section to summarize research and provide additional links to help clients answer questions. Many of these question sets were for Influence & Co.’s own marketing campaign. I enjoyed reading the article pitches and drafting questions for
them because it helped me understand Influence & Co.’s target audience, content strategy, and unique selling proposition better.

This week, I also wrote a blog post this week for a prospective client. The client had provided very little information, so I had to do a lot of research and … to pull together. Normally, Influence & Co. gives its freelance writers two days to complete an article or blog post, but I did this post with a four-hour turnaround. I was pleased that my supervising editor and the account strategist trusted me to take on such a big task, especially for a client we haven’t yet signed.

Week 11

For some time now, department heads have been discussing either pairing account strategists to allow them to collaborate on clients and grouping certain account strategists with certain editors to allow editors to grow more familiar with certain clients’ industries and tones. This week, Influence & Co. took the first few steps in that direction by pairing each account strategist with another account strategist. In addition, during monthly editorial department meeting, the head of the editorial department announced that we will move toward grouping editors and account strategists together into collaborative pods.

Whether or not I stay at Influence & Co. to witness the rest of this process, this is an exciting change. As the company continues to grow, creating smaller groups that work together is essential for maintaining a sense of teamwork and collaboration, and allowing editors to be dedicated to particular account strategists and clients will allow them to specialize in a helpful way.
Week 12

Influence & Co. held its April KPI meeting this week. Once again, the meeting focused again on client retention. We split into several groups, each of which discussed clients who had left at some point over the past year and identified a few things the account strategist, editorial department, sales team and public department could have done differently to satisfy the client. Our group discussed two cases and identified expanding our publication relationships and setting better client expectations about publication placement as areas for growth.

This week, I also attended an educational session on Influence & Co.’s data tracking and analytics process. Two members of the internal marketing department explained how Influence & Co. uses its gated content to generate, qualify and track leads and uses tools like Google Analytics and Hubspot to track users’ activity on the website and engagement with our content.

Week 13

The editorial department held its monthly book club, in which we discussed a writing guide about writing for impact. The guide offered practical tips about selecting the best words and using the best sentence structure to engage readers.

Also this week, I wrote a whitepaper for one of our large content marketing clients. After working on several small projects, I enjoyed getting to sink my teeth into a much larger content product, tackle more research, and organize a lot of information into a clear and readable package.
Personal Evaluation

My internship with Influence & Co. has been an incredible opportunity. I honed my writing and research skills, and I observed the entire content lifecycle, from ideation to article development to publication. I got to contribute article topics, participate in conversations about optimizing departmental structure and workflow, and listen to client phone calls. Along the way, I learned more about strategy development, inbound marketing, lead generation, and client relations.

I not only learned from Influence & Co. but also was able to contribute something valuable to the team. By becoming the only intern ever fully training in initial edits, I was able to lighten the workload for full-time editors while the editorial department was short-staffed. I feel that my unique perspective was useful, and I hope to maintain great relationships with the coworkers who became friends during my time there.
On-Site Supervisor Evaluation

Evaluation: Jane Brannen  
Date: April 8, 2015

This letter of evaluation is for Jane Brannen. Jane has been working at Influence & Co. as an editorial intern since February 2015. I have supervised many of Jane’s daily duties and have seen her dedicated work to fulfilling and exceeding the expectations of those duties.

During her time at Influence & Co., Jane has been a vital part of the editorial team. Her focus, enthusiasm, and dedication to quality has been impressive. Jane has branched out to tackle a variety of challenges within our editorial department including initial edits on article drafts, question prompts to elicit client information and expertise advice, teaser writing for company blogs and publications, and completing article drafts based on client and publication needs.

Jane has also shown a great interest in the various departments and facets of Influence & Co. She has worked closely with our account strategists to formulate new ideas for articles and strengthen our efforts to manage and direct the expertise and marketing needs of our clients.

The entire Influence & Co. team has benefited from Jane’s work and editorial knowledge. She always has a distinct perspective and is able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of initial drafts and client material. We truly value her attitude and attention to detail at Influence & Co.

Jane has been an incredible intern in her time here. She has truly stepped up to take on whatever responsibilities have come her way, and we look forward to the great things she can accomplish in the remainder of her internship.

Best,

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Literature Review

Introduction

Self-congruity refers to the perceived degree of affinity between individual self-concept and a brand perceptions (Kressmann et al., 2006). Research has generally suggested that ideal self-congruity (that is, congruity between a brand and an individual’s ideal self-concept) has a greater influence than actual self-congruity (that is, congruity between a brand and an individual’s actual self-concept) on consumer behavior (Aguirre-Rodriguez, Bosnjak, & Sirgy, 2012; Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004). However, Landon (1974) found while ideal self-congruity has a greater effect than actual self-congruity for some consumers, actual self-congruity has the greater effect for others. And Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger (2011) demonstrated that actual self-congruity has a greater effect on brand attachment than ideal self-congruity and that high self-esteem strengthens the relationship between actual self-congruity and emotional brand attachment. The researchers note an increasing interest in the effects of actual self-congruity and point to the success of the recent Dove Real Beauty campaign (which used realistic, rather than idealized, depictions of women’s bodies to sell personal hygiene products).

More research into the effects of actual self-congruity on consumers’ perception of and behavior toward brands is merited. My project will examine how consumer self-esteem moderates the relative importance of actual self-congruity vs. ideal self-congruity on women’s brand loyalty to fitness brands. Given Malär et al.’s (2011) findings and
research which suggests that individuals with high self-esteem are more difficult to persuade (Bearden, Hardesty & Rose, 2001; Zeidman, 2000), it may be that actual self-congruity has a stronger effect on brand loyalty for consumers with high self-esteem than for consumers with low self-esteem.

This research is of practical relevance to brand managers. Along with emotional brand attitude, consumer brand loyalty is one of the popular predictors of behavior toward a brand (Fang, Li, Mizerski, & Soh, 2012). Studying self-esteem’s influence on self-congruity motives and brand loyalty will help brand managers better understand and influence consumer behavior. In particular, this research focuses on the fitness market, in which self-esteem and self-concept are relevant concepts.

**Operational Definition of Self-Congruity**

Researchers have operationally defined the term “self-congruity” in various ways. All involve measuring similarity between some aspect of a brand and individual self-concept. Self-congruity can mean similarity between consumer self-concept and the symbolic meaning of the product itself (Govers and Schoormans, 2005; Dolich, 1969; Birdwell, 1968), similarity between consumer self-concept and the brand personality or brand-as-person (Kressmann et al., 2006; Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004), or similarity
between consumer self-concept and the stereotypical product-user image (Sirgy, 1986; Sirgy et al., 1997).

Because my research focuses on brand management, rather than product categories themselves, brand personality or stereotypical product-user image studies are more appropriate and relevant than product image studies. Of these two, there is more theoretical support for stereotypical product-user image studies. Aguirre-Rodriguez et al.’s (2012) meta-analysis found that “brand-as-person” evaluations showed a stronger self-congruity effect than stereotypical product-user image evaluations; however, Fang, Li, Mizerski and Soh (2011) note that self-congruity patterns found in brand-as-person studies may be exaggerated because in the majority of these studies, brand personality congruity is the only independent variable and therefore its effect may be partially accounted for by other variables not studied. Additionally, Helgeson and Supphellen (2004) found that self-congruity and brand personality are empirically discriminant and affect brand attitudes independently of each other. This suggests that the two concepts are not equivalent and studies which measure self-congruity defined as brand personality or brand-as-person may be conflating the two concepts.

Additionally, Sirgy (arguably the foremost expert on self-congruity) chooses congruence between consumer self-concept and stereotypical product-user image (Sirgy et al., 1997). Thus, my research will also focus on self-congruity defined as perceived similarity between consumer self-concept and stereotypical product-user image both for the conceptual validity of this definition and for its simplicity.

**Self-Congruity Motives**

Actual vs. ideal congruity. Aaker (1999) explains that the self-consistency motive (actual) and the self-enhancement motive (ideal) are driven by two distinct needs: consistency and positivity. Consumers’ self-concepts are typically valenced positively, and the need for positivity motivates consumers to express these positive personality traits while the need for consistency motivates consumers to seek feedback consistent with their self-concepts, even if it is negatively valenced (Aaker, 1999). The social consistency motive and the self-enhancement motive are sometimes at odds.

Early research noted a gap of information on the relative influence of actual and ideal self-concept. Ross (1971) and Dolich (1969) argued that ideal self-congruity would matter more for socially conspicuous products than for privately consumed products, but Dolich (1969) failed to find evidence that the self-enhancement motive was stronger than the self-consistency motive in any particular product category. Research conducted since then has provided more insight, and in 2012, Aguirre-Rodriguez et al.’s meta-analysis of degree of self-enhancement sought, which refers to how strongly an individual is influenced by actual self-motives (self-consistency and social consistency) vs. ideal self-
motives (self-enhancement vs. social approval), found that enhancement-type motives have a stronger effect on consumer behavior than consistency-type motives.

However, Malär et al. (2011) demonstrated that actual self-congruence has a greater effect on brand attachment than ideal self-congruence and note an increasing interest in the effects of actual self-congruity, and Graeff (1996) found that there was no statistically significant difference between the effects of actual and ideal self-congruity on brand evaluations. In a study of perceived congruity with sports teams, Kwak and Kang (2008) found that both actual congruity and ideal congruity explained a significant portion of variance in attendance frequency, media consumption and team loyalty but that actual congruity explained more of the variance for attendance frequency and media consumption. More research on the moderating influences that affect the importance of ideal self-congruence vs. actual self-congruence is merited.

**Moderating Effects**

**Individual differences.** Individual differences may be important in this discussion. Landon (1974) found that while overall purchases tended to correlate more with actual self-image than with ideal self-image, some subjects (Landon calls them “actualizers”) tended to purchase items more correlated with their actual self-concept and others (“perfectionists”) tended to purchase items more correlated with their ideal self-concepts. Malär et al.’s (2011) research suggests that product involvement, self-esteem and public self-consciousness are among the characteristics that distinguish between actualizers and perfectionists. They found that for consumers with high self-esteem, high
product involvement and/or high public self-consciousness, actual self-congruence had a stronger positive effect on emotional brand attachment.

Additionally, Aaker (1999) found that self-congruity motives influence brand preference more for low self-monitoring individuals (whose behavior tends to be more consistent across varying social situations) whereas situational congruity motives influence brand preference more for high self-monitoring individuals (whose behavior tends to change according to the social situation). And Graeff (1996) found that for publicly consumed items, self-monitoring had a significant moderating effect on the relationships between brand evaluations and actual self-congruity and between brand evaluations and ideal self-congruity but that for privately consumed products, self-monitoring did not have a significant moderating effect on either relationship.

Sung, Choi and Pinkham (2012) found that brand preference was more strongly influenced by situational cues for consumers with interdependent self-construals (emphasizing relationships and flexibility) than for than individuals with independent self-construals (emphasizing autonomy and assertiveness).

**Product conspicuousness.** Dolich (1969) found that self-congruity has a different effect on brand preference for socially consumed vs. privately consumed products, and Graeff (1996) found that ideal self-congruity is more highly correlated than actual self-congruity to brand evaluations of publicly consumed brands but that there is no significant difference between the influences of actual and ideal self-congruity on brand evaluations of privately consumed brands.
Expected Results

Because self-congruity has a positive effect on brand preference (Branaghan and Hildebrand, 2011), brand attitude (Sirgy and Johar, 1999) and brand loyalty (Kressman et al., 2006), it is expected that both actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity will both have a significant positive correlation with brand loyalty. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

H1: Actual self-congruity will be positively correlated with brand loyalty.

H2: Ideal self-congruity will be positively correlated with brand loyalty.

Self-esteem is thought to be related to an individual’s readiness to be persuaded (Bearden, et al., 2001; Zeidman, 2000). Additionally, brand attachment and brand loyalty are related concepts, and Malär et al. (2011) found that the influence of actual self-congruence on emotional brand attachment is greater for consumers with high self-esteem and for those with low self-esteem, Therefore, I hypothesize that:

H3a: For participants with high self-esteem, actual self-congruity will have a stronger correlation with brand loyalty than ideal self-congruity.

H3b: For participants with low self-esteem, ideal self-congruity will have a stronger correlation with brand loyalty than actual self-congruity.
Methods

For the purpose of this study, self-esteem is defined as how positively or negatively an individual feels about himself or herself (Galanou, Galanakis, Alexopoulos, & Darviri, 2014). Actual self-congruity is defined as perceived similarity between the product-user image and an individual’s actual self-concept (who she believes herself actually to be). Ideal self-congruity is defined as perceived similarity between the product-user image and an individual’s ideal self-concept (who she would like to be).

The selected apparel brands are Nike, Lululemon Athletica, adidas, Puma, Under Armour and Athleta. These brands were chosen because Mintel (2014) ranks them as the industry leaders.

Data Collection

To answer the research question, a survey questionnaire was created and distributed via Qualtrics, an online survey software. Participants were recruited via social media and from a course at the University of Missouri. On social media, links were posted on the researcher’s social networking sites. In class, the researcher gave a brief pitch in person and explained that participation is voluntary. A link was then sent to the students via email. A web-based survey is appropriate for this research project because individuals in this age group are heavy users of social and digital media.

Each respondent was directed either to respond to the self-esteem section of the survey or to the brand loyalty and self-congruity section of the survey. After completing the first, she was directed to the second.
The self-esteem section consisted of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale. The brand loyalty and self-congruity section of the survey began by asking the respondent to mark which of the selected brands she uses most frequently. She then filled out the brand loyalty inventory for that brand. Next, she was directed to think about the brand following Sirgy’s cognitive elaboration prompt and was instructed to respond to the actual and ideal self-congruity items in randomized order. Finally, the survey asked for demographic information, including race, age and education level.

**Sample Size and Characteristics**

Females between the ages of 18-24 were targeted as participants for this survey. The survey screened respondents by asking for their age and gender, and quotas were used to ensure that 150 of the respondents were female and within 18-24 years of age. 277 individuals opened the survey, with 151 female respondents within the ages of 18-24 who completed the survey.

The majority of respondents identified themselves as White ($n = 145, 96.0\%$), and of these, 4 identified themselves as of Hispanic, Latin, or Spanish origin. The remainder identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native ($n = 4, 2.6\%$), Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African American ($n = 3, 2.0\%$), Asian American or East Asian ($n = 2, 1.3\%$), Middle Eastern or Arab American ($n = 2, 1.3\%$), South Asian or Indian American ($n = 1, 0.7\%$), or other ($n = 1, 0.7\%$).

The majority of respondents had completed some higher education ($n = 146, 96.7\%$). These respondents indicated that they had completed some undergraduate study ($n = 64, 42.0\%$), an undergraduate degree ($n = 52, 34.0\%$), some graduate study ($n = 20,
13.2%), or a master’s degree \( n = 10, \) 6.6%). A smaller number of participants had completed only some high school \( n = 2, \) 1.3% or held only a high school degree \( n = 3, \) 2.0%.

Respondents indicated varying household income levels: below $20,000 \( n = 40, \) 26.5%, $20,000-$29,999 \( n = 19, \) 12.6%, $30,000-$39,999 \( n = 15, \) 9.9%, $40,000-$49,999 \( n = 14, \) 9.3%, $50,000-$59,999 \( n = 11, \) 7.3 %, $60,000-$69,999 \( n = 8, \) 5.3%, $70,000-$79,999 \( n = 7, \) 4.6%, $80,000-$89,999 \( n = 10, \) 6.6%, and $90,000 or more \( n = 27, \) 17.9%.

**Concepts and Measurement**

**The global measure of self-congruity.** The survey questionnaire evaluated self-congruity using Sirgy et al.’s (1997) global measure of self-congruity. This measure is superior to other methods because it measures self-congruity directly and without predetermined traits, allows for high cognitive elaboration, and can be adapted to measure actual and ideal self-concepts independently.

**Impression formation processes.** Traditionally, researchers have studied self-congruity using a trait-by-trait analysis of both self-concept and product-user image, then comparing evaluations of brands to individuals’ evaluations of their own self concepts by calculating a mathematical discrepancy (Sirgy et al. 1997). For example, Dolich (1969) used a series of semantic differentials to measure real self-concept, ideal self-concept and brand images. Heath and Scott (1998) measured perceived brand user personality using a 24-item five-point scale. Hamilton and Sun (2005) used a 15-item seven-point scale to measure self-image, ideal brand-image and perceived brand image.
Some support exists for this comparison method (Barnard & Ehrenberg, 1990); however, trait-by-trait analysis also has its detractors. Sirgy et al. (1997) argue that consumers view brands holistically, rather than as a series of individual traits. The researchers also note that eliciting responses to a set of predetermined traits may not be a valid approach because it asks subjects to indicate their perceived congruity with traits they may not associate with the brand at all. Finally, asking subjects about their brand perceptions and self-perceptions independently of each other does not directly capture their feelings of congruity or incongruity toward the brand.

To capture the gestalt effect of brand image, Sirgy et al. (1997) proposed a direct, global measure of self-congruity. The researchers asked respondents to rate self-congruence directly by indicating agreement or disagreement on a Likert scale with statements such as “This [product x] is consistent with how I see myself” (p. 232). In a series of six studies comparing the new method of measuring self-congruity to trait-by-trait analysis, Sirgy et al. (1997) found that the global method had higher predictive validity of various behaviors including brand preference, product form preference, brand attitude, program choice and consumer satisfaction.

Aguirre-Rodriguez et al.’s (2012) ambitious meta-analysis of more than 100 articles provides support for this. The researchers examined various studies’ impression formation processes (which refers to how each study asks consumers to evaluate self-congruity). They distinguished between studies using a trait-by-trait evaluation (ex. “[This brand] is [trait].”) and those attempting to elicit a “big picture” impression (ex. “I
am like [this brand].”). The researchers found that a holistic, or global, approach, such as the one recommended by Sirgy et al. (1997) elicits a stronger self-congruity effect.

**Cognitive elaboration.** Cognitive elaboration refers to the degree to which a study asks consumers to think about their responses to questions about self-congruity. Some studies ask for quick judgments (simply asking the respondent to rate associated traits or congruence with the brand) while others encourage a longer thought process (by asking the respondent to envision a scenario rating associated traits or congruence with the brand) (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. 2012).

Sirgy et al. (1997) recommend a high cognitive elaboration technique. The researchers advise instructing respondents first to contemplate the product, then imagine the kind of person who uses the product and apply adjectives to this typical user before finally indicating the degree to the product is consistent with how respondents see themselves. The study gives this example:

“Take a moment to think about [product x]. Think about the kind of person who typically uses [product x]. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives such as, stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical user of [product x]. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statement: This [product x] is consistent with how I see myself [in situation y].”
Aguirre-Rodriguez et al.’s (2012) meta-analysis supports such high cognitive elaboration techniques. The researchers found that studies that employed high cognitive elaboration showed stronger self-congruity effects than those that used low cognitive elaboration.

**Self-concept dimensions.** My research focuses on how self-esteem moderates the influences of actual self-concept and the ideal self-concept, which have the most support in the existing research (Sirgy 1982). Drawing on Malar et al.’s (2011) study, these motives can be measured using an adapted version of Sirgy et al.’s (1997) global approach with high cognitive elaboration using prompts as follows:

Think about [brand x]. Think about the kind of person who typically uses [brand x]. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more adjectives. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement with the following statements:

1) The personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I see myself (my actual self).

2) This user of this brand is a mirror image of me (my actual self).

3) This personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I would like to be (my ideal self).

4) This user of this brand is a mirror image of the person I would like to be (my ideal self).
Measures of brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is one of the most common cognitive measures used to predict consumer behavior toward a brand (Fang et al., 2012). Whereas brand attachment measures only a customer’s emotional bond and feelings toward a brand (Malär et al., 2011), brand loyalty is a “deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing.” Some researchers have focused on attitudinal measures of brand loyalty (planned purchase or word-of-mouth commitment), and others have focused on behavioral measures (share of wallet, percentage of brand purchases, and/or repurchase behavior) (Kressman et al., 2006).

Liu-Tompkins and Tam (2013) argue that research should consider both attitudinal and behavioral measures. They cite Oliver’s (1999) assertion that attitudinal measures of brand loyalty precede and contribute to behavioral measures. The researchers measured brand loyalty using a seven-point Likert scale for each of the following items: 1) “I like [this brand] more than other [brands in the same product category],” 2) “I have a strong preference for [this brand],” 3) I give first consideration to [this brand] when I need to buy [items in this product category],” and 4) “I would recommend [this brand] to others.” They measured behavioral measures by asking consumers about their purchasing habits.

As a further measure of consumer behavior regarding the selected brands, the survey included one item that asks about brand use. The item asked respondents to answer on a scale from 1-7 how frequently they use each brand in the study. Their use of the brand they select as most likely to prefer was recorded as the variable “BrandUse.”
Measures of self-esteem. Self-esteem can be defined as how positively or negatively an individual feels about himself or herself (Galanou, Galanakis, Alexopoulos, & Darviri, 2014). It is not the same as one’s self-concept but rather the positive or negative evaluation of that self-concept. Consumer self-esteem is relevant in studies of persuasion efforts. Malär et al. (2011) noted its relation to the effect of self-congruity motives on brand attachment. Researchers believe individuals with high self-esteem are less easily persuaded than individuals with low self-esteem (Bearden, Hardesty & Rose, 2001), and Zeidmen (2000) found that participants with low self-esteem were more likely to be persuaded by high fear messages.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) is the most commonly used measure of self-esteem (Huang & Dong, 2012). It is a 10-item Likert-type scale including the following statements:

1) I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
2) I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
3) All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
4) I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5) I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6) I take a positive attitude toward myself.
7) On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
8) I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9) I certainly feel useless at times.
10) At times I think I am no good at all.

Items 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 are reversed, and a mean score is calculated. A higher score represents high self-esteem (a positive evaluation of oneself) and a lower score represents low self-esteem (a negative evaluation of oneself).

**Reliability of Scales**

Brand loyalty, actual self-congruity, ideal self-congruity, and self-esteem were all measured using summated scales. A test of reliability was performed for each scale.

Four items were used to measure the concept of brand loyalty. These four items formed a new variable titled, “BLeague.” Internal consistency for these items was analyzed using Cronbach’s alpha. The alpha was .868.

Two items were used to measure the concept of actual self-congruity. These two items formed a new variable titled, “ASC.” Internal consistency for these items was analyzed using Cronbach’s alpha. The alpha was .879.

Two items were used to measure the concept of ideal self-congruity. These two items formed a new variable titled, “ISC.” Internal consistency for these items was analyzed using Cronbach’s alpha. The alpha was .788.

Ten items were used to measure the concept of ideal self-congruity. These ten items formed a new variable titled, “SEsteem.” Internal consistency for these items was analyzed using Cronbach’s alpha. The alpha was .858.

Because only one item was used to measure use of preferred brand, a Cronbach’s alpha was not calculated for this concept.
Results

SPSS was used to model the structural relationship suggested by the conceptual framework. To test H1 and H2, a regression model was used to calculate the extent to which actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence predicted brand loyalty. The hypothesis is that actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence will both be positively correlated with brand loyalty.

To test H3, a moderation analysis was used to calculate how self-esteem moderates actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity’s effects on brand loyalty. The hypothesis is that low self-esteem will increase ideal self-congruity’s effect on brand loyalty and high self-esteem will increase actual self-congruity’s effect on brand loyalty.

H1 stated actual self-congruity will be positively correlated with brand loyalty. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between actual self-congruity and brand loyalty. A strong positive correlation was found ($r (151) = .323, p < .001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables.

H2 stated ideal self-congruity will be positively correlated with brand loyalty. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between ideal self-congruity and brand loyalty. A strong positive correlation was found ($r (151) = .401, p < .001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables.

H3a and H3b examined the degree to which self-esteem moderated the relationships between actual self-congruity and brand loyalty and between ideal self-congruity and brand loyalty. To test H3a and H3b, I assessed interaction effects for self-
esteem using Hayes’ PROCESS macro in SPSS. Self-esteem and the independent variable (actual or ideal self-congruity) were entered into an ordinary least-squares regression model to test their effects on brand loyalty. In both cases, the overall regression models were significant, but no significant interaction was found.

A significant regression equation was found to predict respondents’ brand loyalty based on their actual self-congruity ($F(3,147) = 5.9327, p < .001$). Respondents’ predicted brand loyalty is equal to $4.575 - .0916\text{Self-Esteem} + .0942\text{Actual Self-Congruity} + .0465 \text{Self-Esteem x Actual Self-Congruity}$. However, no significant interaction effect was found ($B = .0465, p > .05$). Self-esteem does not significantly moderate the relationship between actual self-congruity and brand loyalty. H3a was not supported. See Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE(B)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. ($p$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>-0.0916</td>
<td>0.2549</td>
<td>-0.3594</td>
<td>0.7198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Self-Congruity</td>
<td>0.0942</td>
<td>0.4172</td>
<td>0.2257</td>
<td>0.8218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>0.0465</td>
<td>0.0738</td>
<td>0.6297</td>
<td>0.5298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $R = .3286, R^2 = .1080$

A significant regression equation was found to predict respondents’ brand loyalty based on their ideal self-congruity ($F(3,147) = 10.1423, p < .001$). Respondents’ predicted brand loyalty is equal to $4.494 + .0588\text{Self-Esteem} + .2394\text{Ideal Self-Congruity} + .0200 \text{Self-Esteem x Ideal Self-Congruity}$. However, no significant
interaction effect was found (B = .0200, p > .05). Self-esteem does not significantly moderate the relationship between ideal self-congruity and brand loyalty. H3b was not supported. See Table 2.

Table 2

*Summary of Moderation Analysis for Interaction of Self-Esteem on the Relationship Between Ideal Self-Congruity and Brand Loyalty (N=151)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE(B)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>0.0588</td>
<td>1.5157</td>
<td>2.3054</td>
<td>0.0225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal Self-Congruity</td>
<td>0.2394</td>
<td>0.2635</td>
<td>0.2229</td>
<td>0.8239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>0.0200</td>
<td>0.3416</td>
<td>0.7009</td>
<td>0.4845</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* $R = .4141, R^2 = .1715$

To examine the relationships between actual and ideal self-congruity and brand loyalty, a multiple regression analysis was performed. A significant regression model was found to predict respondent’s brand loyalty based on both their actual self-congruity and their ideal self-congruity ($F(2,148) = 15.683, p < .001$); however, only ideal self-congruity was a significant predictor ($p < .05$). Respondents’ predicted brand loyalty is equal to $3.622 + .143(Actual Self-Congruity) + .321(Ideal Self-Congruity)$. See Table 3.

Table 3

*Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Actual and Ideal Self-Congruity Predicting Brand Loyalty (N=151)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual Self-Congruity</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>0.099</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>1.590</td>
<td>0.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal Self-Congruity</td>
<td>0.273</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>0.321</td>
<td>3.564</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* $R = .418, R^2 = .175$
To further examine the relationships between actual and ideal self-congruity and use of preferred brand, a multiple regression analysis was performed. A significant regression model was found to predict respondent’s use of preferred brand based on both their actual self-congruity and their ideal self-congruity ($F (2,148) = 9.959, p < .001$); however, only actual self-congruity was a significant predictor ($p < .05$). Respondents’ predicted use of preferred brand is equal to $3.234 + .223(\text{Actual Self-Congruity}) + .166(\text{Ideal Self-Congruity})$. See Table 4.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Actual and Ideal Self-Congruity Predicting Use of Preferred Brand (N=151)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variable</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Self-Congruity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal Self-Congruity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: $R = .344, R^2 = .119$*

To further examine the role of self-esteem in consumer preferences and behaviors, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between self-esteem and brand loyalty. No significant correlation was found ($r (151) = .051, p > .05$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. A Pearson correlation coefficient was also calculated for the relationship between self-esteem and use of preferred brand. A positive correlation was found ($r (151) = .199, p < .05$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables.
Additionally, a multiple regression analysis for actual and ideal self-congruity and self-esteem predicting use of preferred brand was conducted, and a significant regression model was found (F (3,147) = 9.644, p < .001). All three independent variables were significant predictors of use of preferred brand, which is equal to .952 + .136(Actual Self-Congruity) + .211(Ideal Self-Congruity) + .217(Self-Esteem). See Table 5.

Table 5

*Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Actual and Ideal Self-Congruity and Self-Esteem Predicting Use of Preferred Brand (N=151)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual Self-Congruity</td>
<td>0.280</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>0.189</td>
<td>2.066</td>
<td>0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal Self-Congruity</td>
<td>0.243</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>0.211</td>
<td>2.287</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>0.217</td>
<td>2.839</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: R = .406, R² = .164*
Discussion

Key Findings

This research was intended to examine self-esteem’s moderation of actual and ideal self-congruity on brand loyalty. Data analysis yielded the following findings:

1. Actual and ideal self-congruity are both positively correlated with brand loyalty.
2. Actual and ideal self-congruity are both positively correlated with use of preferred brand.
3. Ideal self-congruity was a significant predictor of brand loyalty; however, actual-self congruity was not.
4. Actual self-congruity was a significant predictor of use of preferred brand; however, ideal self-congruity was not.
5. Self-esteem did not significantly moderate the relationship between actual self-congruity and brand loyalty or ideal self-congruity and brand loyalty.
6. Self-esteem was positively correlated with and was a significant predictor of use of preferred brand.

Self-Congruity Effects

Because actual and ideal self-congruity were both positively correlated with brand loyalty, H1 and H2 were supported. In addition, actual and ideal self-congruity were both positively correlated with use of preferred brands. These findings are all consistent with prior research findings that self-congruity has a positive effect on brand preference.
Actual vs. Ideal Self-Congruity

Aguirre-Rodriguez et al.’s meta-analysis of self-congruity studies (2012) suggests that enhancement-type motives generally have a stronger effect on consumer behavior than consistency-type motives, but existing research suggests the strength of actual vs. ideal congruity effects depends on a number of factors, the outcome being measured, and the context in which the product is used.

For some consumers, actual self-congruity has a greater effect on purchases than ideal self-congruity (Landon, 1974), and for consumers with high self-esteem, high product involvement and/or high public self-consciousness, actual self-congruence had a stronger positive effect on emotional brand attachment (Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011).

Although this study’s findings did not identify a moderator of ideal and actual self-congruity effects on brand loyalty, it does contribute to body of research on the differing influences of ideal and actual self-congruity. Although actual and ideal self-congruity were both positively correlated with both brand loyalty and use of preferred brand, only ideal self-congruity was a significant predictor of brand loyalty, and only actual self-congruity was a significant predictor of brand use. This suggests that ideal and actual self-congruity are both important in consumer research but play distinct roles.

The Role of Self-Esteem

Malär et al. (2011) demonstrated that high self-esteem strengthens the relationship
between actual self-congruity and emotional brand attachment. Thus, H3a predicted that for participants with high self-esteem, actual self-congruity will have a stronger correlation with brand loyalty than ideal self-congruity, and H3b predicted that for participants with low self-esteem, ideal self-congruity will have a stronger correlation with brand loyalty than actual self-congruity.

However, neither H3a nor H3b was supported by the results. Although a significant regression model was found for each hypothesis, no significant interaction was found. Self-esteem was not shown to moderate actual or ideal self-congruity effects on brand loyalty.

One reason for not demonstrating a significant interaction could be consumers’ varying levels of product involvement with fitness apparel and of public self-consciousness. Malär et al. (2011) found that for consumers with high product involvement or high public self-consciousness, actual self-congruence had a stronger positive effect on emotional brand attachment. Thus, product involvement or public self-consciousness may have been a confounding variable.

Another reason for not demonstrating a significant interaction could be that this study only examined one product category. Graeff (1996) found that ideal self-congruity is more highly correlated than actual self-congruity to brand evaluations of publicly-consumed brands. Since fitness apparel is generally a publicly-consumed product categories, this may have meant that ideal self-congruity had a greater effect overall, which may have concealed self-esteem’s moderating effects.
Nonetheless, self-esteem did play a role in consumer behavior. It was positively correlated with and was a significant predictor of use of preferred brand. Participants with higher self-esteem were more likely to use their preferred fitness apparel brand frequently.

**Limitations**

This research had some limitations for several reasons. First, a convenience sampling method was used, and the research focused only on females ages 18-24. The majority of these respondents were white and held at least some college education. This does not well represent the general population. Thus, the results cannot be extrapolated to a general audience. Additionally, the survey asked about a limited number of brands and focused only on fitness apparel.

**Future Research**

Future research might examine self-esteem’s moderation of actual and ideal self-congruity effects more accurately by accounting for some of the possible confounding variables. Given Malär et al.’s (2011) finding that high product involvement increases the effect of actual self-congruence on emotional brand attachment, researchers might replicate this study but limit the population to respondents who indicate high product involvement. Or to control for the effects of public and private consumption (Graeff, 1996), researchers could replicate the study with several product categories and include both publicly-consumed and private-consumed items.

The finding that self-esteem is a significant predictor of use of preferred brand suggests further research into the role of self-esteem in consumer decision-making. An
interesting direction for researching self-esteem would be to examine how positive self-esteem messages influence ideal and actual self-congruity effects on brand loyalty, brand preference, or brand emotional attachment.

Researchers could answer this question with a survey experiment that assigns respondents randomly to one of two conditions: advertisements with or without positive self-esteem messages. The survey would first ask respondents about their actual and ideal self-congruity with each brand, then expose them to the advertisements in their respective conditions, and finally ask them to fill out a brand loyalty, brand preference, and/or brand emotional attachment inventory. A moderation analysis could then be conducted to determine whether or not self-esteem messages moderate the effects of actual and ideal self-congruity on these brand metrics.

Conclusion

The results of this study reaffirm self-congruity theory by demonstrating that actual and ideal self-congruity are positively correlated with brand use and brand loyalty, and the findings that ideal self-congruity significantly predicts brand loyalty but not brand use and that actual self-congruity significantly predicts brand use but not brand loyalty are of interest. Additionally, the findings that self-esteem significantly predicts use of preferred brand suggest self-esteem is an important consideration in consumer behavior research. Further research into the relative importance of actual and ideal self-congruity and into self-esteem’s impact would help researchers understand consumer motivations.
References


Culp-Ressler, Tara. (2014). Are We Finally Fed Up With the Media’s Unrealistic Portrayal of Women’s Bodies? Think Progress. Retrieved from thinkprogress.org/health/2014/06/16/3449302/media-women-portrayals/


Appendix A: Original Project Proposal

Introduction

This project stems from my interest in brand personalities and brand management. I began by asking why certain consumers identify with certain brands, sometimes even incorporating those brands or characteristics of those brands into their identity narratives. What makes a brand appealing to a particular consumer? Why do some consumers identify easily with brands while others don’t form the same emotional attachments?

I researched brand personality and consumer self-concept in my mass media seminar during my first semester of graduate classes. As I became familiar with the literature on consumer self-concept, I was intrigued by the self-congruity motives outlined in Sirgy’s four-part self-concept schema. In particular, I was interested in the gap between the actual and ideal self-concepts and the corresponding self-consistency and self-enhancement motives. I wanted to learn more about how individual consumers’ personality differences could moderate the effects of these motives.

This led me to my research question: How does self-esteem moderate the influence of ideal vs. actual self-congruity on women’s loyalty to fitness brands? I chose to focus on women’s self-esteem both because the literature suggests self-esteem is a moderating variable on emotional brand attachment and because I’m interested in the relationship between media and women’s self-esteem. I chose to focus on the fitness industry because it is relevant to my interests both personal and professional. I’m an avid runner and frequently swim, lift weights, and practice yoga and would enjoy working in
fitness or health communication after graduating. Additionally, self-esteem is relevant in fitness messaging because the field focuses so much on body image and self-concept.

My research is timely. It coincides with increasing conversation about portrayals of women in advertising, as evidenced by the proposed Truth in Advertising Act of 2014, which would enable the Federal Trade Commission to regulate excessively retouched photographs in advertising (Culp-Ressler, 2014). Recent high-profile advertising campaigns, including Dove Real Beauty, Pantene Shine Strong, Always Like A Girl, Aerie Real, Lean In’s Ban Bossy, and the NYC Girls Project, have focused on boosting women’s self-esteem. This project will allow me to gain specialized expertise in the fitness industry and in marketing toward women, and because it relates to brand loyalty and shaping effective brand messages, the research will complement my study of integrated advertising and communication.

**Professional Skills Component**

I will complete my professional skills component as an editorial intern at Influence & Co., an agency in Columbia, Mo. Influence & Co. specializes in thought leadership. Its staff works with clients to help them author and publish articles that position them as experts in their fields. This professional component is relevant to my research component because both deal with influencing consumers’ perceptions of brands.

This job will employ not only the strategic planning and critical thinking skills I have gained in my classes at Missouri but also my research, writing, and editing skills. My semesters at Missouri have honed my knowledge of AP style and trained me to write
engaging, persuasive copy, and I have relevant professional experience. As the corporate communications intern for Citizens Commerce National Bank in Versailles, Ky., I wrote copy for the bank’s website, created brochures, letters, and emails to customers, and edited the bank president’s quarterly report to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. In this position, I gained experience translating corporate jargon into descriptions the average consumer could understand — a skill which will be useful in my work at Influence & Co.

Thought leadership is relevant to my research on fitness branding because it is a tool fitness brands frequently rely on. For example, Nike not only sells athletic clothing and gear but also positions itself as an expert on fitness. Its free Nike Training Club app provides workout plans, and its Nike+ portal gives members tips and tricks from coaches. Nike acts almost like a personal trainer for its users. Similarly, weight-loss-focused food brand Special K has an online database of fitness and nutrition advice articles that position the brand as a coach and guide for consumers looking to lose weight.

I will work 30 hours a week for 14 weeks beginning February 2 and ending May 8. As an editorial intern, I will perform research, write questions to extract clients’ knowledge, write articles and article summaries, and edit and proofread content. These articles, article summaries and client questions will serve as the physical evidence of my work, and the articles will be disseminated through various publications. In the past, Influence & Co. has worked with such publications as Forbes, Fast Company, The Washington Post, and Entrepreneur magazine. Influence & Co. editor Kyle Kelley will supervise my work via email and face-to-face conversations.
Research Statement

This research is interested in the effects of self-esteem on women’s loyalty to fitness brands. Specifically, it asks how self-esteem moderates the influence of actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity on brand loyalty. This study will focus on women in youth and young adult market, defined as those ages 18-24.

Actual self-congruity motives and ideal self-congruity motives have both been shown to influence consumer behavior and attitudes toward brands. For some consumers, ideal self-congruity has a greater effect than actual self-congruity, but the reverse is true for others (Landon, 1974). Malär et al.’s research suggests that self-esteem moderates the influence of both on emotional attachment to brands (2011).

My research will further examine self-esteem’s moderating influence on brand loyalty. It does so in the context of fitness brands because the field is so closely tied to body image and self-concept. It examines a female population because research suggests women score significantly lower than men on self-esteem scales in the following areas: physical appearance, athletic, personal self, and self-satisfaction self-esteem (Gentile, Grabe, Dolan-Pascoe, Twenge, Wells, & Maitino, 2009).

This research is of practical relevance. Numerous major brands, including Dove, Pantene, Always, Debenhams and Aerie, have recently launched campaigns focused on boosting women’s self-esteem and showing more realistic images of female bodies. It is important to note that actual and ideal self-congruity deal with viewers’ perceptions and not with actual or idealized depictions; however, viewers would presumably feel greater actual self-congruity to images that look like themselves and greater ideal self-congruity
to images that present an idealized image. Thus, as some marketers move toward presenting more realistic images, information on how self-esteem influenced women’s brand loyalty by moderating the influence of actual and ideal self-congruity would be useful.

Methods

For the purpose of this study, self-esteem is defined as how positively or negatively an individual feels about himself or herself (Galanou, Galanakis, Alexopoulos, & Darviri, 2014). Actual self-congruity is defined as perceived similarity between the product-user image and an individual’s actual self-concept (who she believes herself actually to be). Ideal self-congruity is defined as perceived similarity between the product-user image and an individual’s ideal self-concept (who she would like to be).

The selected apparel brands are Nike, Lululemon Athletica, adidas, Puma, Under Armour and Athleta. These brands were chosen because Mintel (2014) ranks them as the industry leaders.

Data Collection. To answer the research question, a survey questionnaire will be created and distributed via Qualtrics, an online survey software. Participants will be recruited via social media and from a course at the University of Missouri. Links to the survey will be on the researcher’s social networking sites. In class, the researcher will give a brief pitch in person and explained that participation is voluntary. A link will then be sent to the students via email. A web-based survey is appropriate for this research project because individuals in this age group are heavy users of social and digital media.
Data collection will continue until 150 female respondents ages 18-24 have completed the survey. The sample size of 150 was chosen to provide a reasonably low rate of error with a practically feasible number of responses. Little (2013) explains that as sample sizes increase, the reduction in the rate of error from a larger sample size decreases. The reduction in the rate of error slows dramatically above sample sizes of 150, and Little asserts that for many social and behavioral sciences questions, sample sizes from 100 to 150 are sufficient (2013).

The survey will screen respondents by asking for their age and gender. Male respondents and respondents under 18 years of age or over 24 years of age will be directed to exit the survey. Quotas will be used to ensure that 150 of the respondents are female and the respondent is female and within 18-24 years of age, she will be directed either to respond to the self-esteem section of the survey or to the brand loyalty and self-congruity section of the survey. After completing the first, she will be directed to the second.

The self-esteem section will consist of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale. The brand loyalty and self-congruity section of the survey will begin by asking the respondent to mark which of the selected brands she uses most frequently. She will then fill out the brand loyalty inventory for that brand. Next, she will be directed to think about the brand following Sirgy’s cognitive elaboration prompt and will be instructed to respond to the actual and ideal self-congruity items in randomized order. Finally, the survey will ask for demographic information, including race, age and education level.

**Concepts and Measurement**
The global measure of self-congruity. The survey questionnaire will evaluate self-congruity using Sirgy et al.’s (1997) global measure of self-congruity. This measure is superior to other methods because it measures self-congruity directly and without predetermined traits, allows for high cognitive elaboration, and can be adapted to measure actual and ideal self-concepts independently.

Impression formation processes. Traditionally, researchers have studied self-congruity using a trait-by-trait analysis of both self-concept and product-user image, then comparing evaluations of brands to individuals’ evaluations of their own self concepts by calculating a mathematical discrepancy (Sirgy et al. 1997). For example, Dolich (1969) used a series of semantic differentials to measure real self-concept, ideal self-concept and brand images. Heath and Scott (1998) measured perceived brand user personality using a 24-item five-point scale. Hamilton and Sun (2005) used a 15-item seven-point scale to measure self-image, ideal brand-image and perceived brand image.

Some support exists for this comparison method (Barnard & Ehrenberg, 1990); however, trait-by-trait analysis also has its detractors. Sirgy et al. (1997) argue that consumers view brands holistically, rather than as a series of individual traits. The researchers also note that eliciting responses to a set of predetermined traits may not be a valid approach because it asks subjects to indicate their perceived congruity with traits they may not associate with the brand at all. Finally, asking subjects about their brand perceptions and self-perceptions independently of each other does not directly capture their feelings of congruity or incongruity toward the brand.
To capture the gestalt effect of brand image, Sirgy et al. (1997) proposed a direct, global measure of self-congruity. The researchers asked respondents to rate self-congruence directly by indicating agreement or disagreement on a Likert scale with statements such as “This [product x] is consistent with how I see myself” (p. 232). In a series of six studies comparing the new method of measuring self-congruity to trait-by-trait analysis, Sirgy et al. (1997) found that the global method had higher predictive validity of various behaviors including brand preference, product form preference, brand attitude, program choice and consumer satisfaction.

Aguirre-Rodriguez et al.’s (2012) ambitious meta-analysis of more than 100 articles provides support for this. The researchers examined various studies’ impression formation processes (which refers to how each study asks consumers to evaluate self-congruity). They distinguished between studies using a trait-by-trait evaluation (ex. “[This brand] is [trait].”) and those attempting to elicit a “big picture” impression (ex. “I am like [this brand].”). The researchers found that a holistic, or global, approach, such as the one recommended by Sirgy et al. (1997) elicits a stronger self-congruity effect.

Cognitive elaboration. Cognitive elaboration refers to the degree to which a study asks consumers to think about their responses to questions about self-congruity. Some studies ask for quick judgments (simply asking the respondent to rate associated traits or congruence with the brand) while others encourage a longer thought process (by asking the respondent to envision a scenario rating associated traits or congruence with the brand) (Aguirre-Rodriguez et al. 2012).
Sirgy et al. (1997) recommend a high cognitive elaboration technique. The researchers advise instructing respondents first to contemplate the product, then imagine the kind of person who uses the product and apply adjectives to this typical user before finally indicating the degree to the product is consistent with how respondents see themselves. The study gives this example:

“Take a moment to think about [product x]. Think about the kind of person who typically uses [product x]. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives such as, stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical user of [product x]. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement or disagreement to the following statement: This [product x] is consistent with how I see myself [in situation y].”

Aguirre-Rodriguez et al.’s (2012) meta-analysis supports such high cognitive elaboration techniques. The researchers found that studies that employed high cognitive elaboration showed stronger self-congruity effects than those that used low cognitive elaboration.

**Self-concept dimensions.** My research will focus on how self-esteem moderates the influences of actual self-concept and the ideal self-concept, which have the most support in the existing research (Sirgy 1982). Drawing on Malar et al.’s (2011) study,
these motives can be measured using an adapted version of Sirgy et al.’s (1997) global approach with high cognitive elaboration using prompts as follows:

Think about [brand x]. Think about the kind of person who typically uses [brand x]. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more adjectives. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement with the following statements:

1) The personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I see myself (my actual self).

2) This user of this brand is a mirror image of me (my actual self).

3) This personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I would like to be (my ideal self).

4) This user of this brand is a mirror image of the person I would like to be (my ideal self).

*Measures of brand loyalty.* Brand loyalty is one of the most common cognitive measures used to predict consumer behavior toward a brand (Fang et al., 2012). Whereas brand attachment measures only a customer’s emotional bond and feelings toward a brand (Malär et al., 2011), brand loyalty is a “deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing.” Some researchers have focused on attitudinal measures of brand loyalty (planned purchase or word-of-mouth commitment),
and others have focused on behavioral measures (share of wallet, percentage of brand purchases, and/or repurchase behavior) (Kressman et al., 2006).

Liu-Tompkins and Tam (2013) argue that research should consider both attitudinal and behavioral measures. They cite Oliver’s (1999) assertion that attitudinal measures of brand loyalty precede and contribute to behavioral measures. The researchers measured brand loyalty using a seven-point Likert scale for each of the following items: 1) “I like [this brand] more than other [brands in the same product category],” 2) “I have a strong preference for [this brand],” 3) I give first consideration to [this brand] when I need to buy [items in this product category],” and 4) “I would recommend [this brand] to others.” They measured behavioral measures by asking consumers about their purchasing habits.

**Measures of self-esteem.** Self-esteem can be defined as how positively or negatively an individual feels about himself or herself (Galanou, Galanakis, Alexopoulos, & Darviri, 2014). It is not the same as one’s self-concept but rather the positive or negative evaluation of that self-concept. Consumer self-esteem is relevant in studies of persuasion efforts. Malär et al. (2011) noted its relation to the effect of self-congruity motives on brand attachment. Researchers believe individuals with high self-esteem are less easily persuaded than individuals with low self-esteem (Bearden, Hardesty & Rose, 2001), and Zeidmen (2000) found that participants with low self-esteem were more likely to be persuaded by high fear messages.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) is the most commonly used measure of self-esteem (Huang & Dong, 2012). It is a 10-item Likert-type scale including the following statements:
1) I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

2) I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

3) All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

4) I am able to do things as well as most other people.

5) I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

6) I take a positive attitude toward myself.

7) On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

8) I wish I could have more respect for myself.

9) I certainly feel useless at times.

10) At times I think I am no good at all.

Items 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 are reversed, and a mean score is calculated. A higher score represents high self-esteem (a positive evaluation of oneself) and a lower score represents low self-esteem (a negative evaluation of oneself).

**Expected Results**

Because self-congruity has a positive effect on brand preference (Branaghan and Hildebrand, 2011), brand attitude (Sirgy and Johar, 1999) and brand loyalty (Kressman et al., 2006), it is expected that both actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity will both have a significant positive correlation with brand loyalty. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

H1: Actual self-congruity will be positively correlated with brand loyalty.

H2: Ideal self-congruity will be positively correlated with brand loyalty.
Self-esteem is thought to be related to an individual’s readiness to be persuaded (Bearden, et al., 2001; Zeidman, 2000). Additionally, brand attachment and brand loyalty are related concepts, and Malär et al. (2011) found that the influence of actual self-congruence on emotional brand attachment is greater for consumers with high self-esteem and for those with low self-esteem. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

H3a: For participants with high self-esteem, actual self-congruence will have a stronger correlation with brand loyalty than ideal self-congruence.

H3b: For participants with low self-esteem, ideal self-congruence will have a stronger correlation with brand loyalty than actual self-congruence.

**Analysis**

SPSS will be used to model the structural relationship suggested by the conceptual framework. To test H1 and H2, a regression model will be used to calculate the extent to which actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence predict brand loyalty. The hypothesis is that actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence will both be positively correlated with brand loyalty.

To test H3, a moderation analysis will be used to calculate how self-esteem moderates actual self-congruence and ideal self-congruence’s effects on brand loyalty. The hypothesis is that low self-esteem will increase ideal self-congruence’s effect on brand loyalty and high self-esteem will increase actual self-congruence’s effect on brand loyalty.

**Target Publications**

Several publications have published works on similar topics or related concepts. This research would be suitable for publication in any of the following: American Journal
Appendix B: Survey Instrument

4/3/2015 Qualtrics Survey Software

Default Question Block

Your answers to this survey will help us collect market research for fitness brands.

By participating in this study, you agree that you are at least 18 years of age or older. Your answers are being used for research purposes and will be stored in a secure location. It is your choice to participate, and you may terminate the study at any time without penalty. Data will be kept anonymous, and none of your responses to questions can be linked to your identity.

If you are taking this survey for Professor Linda Sowers’ classes, you will receive 10 extra credit points for participating. If you do not wish to participate in the survey, you may complete an alternative assignment to receive extra credit instead.

This survey should take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. If you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact Jane Brannen at janebrannen@gmail.com or the Campus Institutional Review Board (573.882.9585 or umciresearch@missouri.edu). The IRB project number for this study is 200262.

Please check the box below to indicate that you understand these terms.

- [ ] I have read and agree to these terms.

What is your gender?

- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female

How old are you?

- [ ] <18
- [ ] 18-24
- [ ] >24

Self-Esteem

On a scale of 1-7, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I have a number of good qualities.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to do things as well as most other people.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I do not have much to be proud of.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take a positive attitude toward myself.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I could have more respect for myself.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I certainly feel useless at times.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At times I think I am no good at all.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Brands

**How frequently do you use these brands?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nike</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[Image of Nike logo]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lululemon Athletica</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[Image of Lululemon logo]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adidas</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[Image of Adidas logo]
Which of these brands are you most likely to prefer?

- Nike
- Lululemon Athletica
- adidas

https://missouri.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/Ajax.php?action=GetSurveyPrintPreview&T=SWf9Z0yvNdQk5sXL4EpM2
On a scale of 1-7, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about the brand you just selected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like this brand more than other athletic apparel brands.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong preference for this brand.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give first consideration to this brand when I need to buy athletic apparel.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this brand to others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On a scale of 1-7, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like Nike more than other athletic apparel brands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong preference for Nike.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give first consideration to Nike when I need to buy athletic apparel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend Nike to others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like Lululemon Athletica more than other athletic apparel brands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong preference for Lululemon Athletica.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give first consideration to Lululemon Athletica when I need to buy athletic apparel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend Lululemon Athletica to others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like adidas more than other athletic apparel brands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong preference for adidas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give first consideration to adidas when I need to buy athletic apparel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend adidas to others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like Puma more than other athletic apparel brands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong preference for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Survey Results

**Puma**

I give first consideration to Puma when I need to buy athletic apparel.
I would recommend Puma to others.

### Questionnaire Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like Under Armour more than other athletic apparel brands.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong preference for Under Armour.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give first consideration to Under Armour when I need to buy athletic apparel.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend Under Armour to others.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like Athleta more than other athletic apparel brands.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a strong preference for Athleta.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give first consideration to Athleta when I need to buy athletic apparel.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend Athleta to others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think about Nike. Think about the kind of person who typically uses Nike. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more adjectives. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I see myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This user of this brand is a mirror image of me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I would like to be.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This user of this brand is a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Think about Lululemon Athletica. Think about the kind of person who typically uses Lululemon Athletica. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more adjectives. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I see myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This user of this brand is a mirror image of me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I would like to be.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This user of this brand is a mirror image of the person I would like to be.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think about adidas. Think about the kind of person who typically uses adidas. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more adjectives. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I see myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This user of this brand is a mirror image of me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I would like to be.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This user of this brand is a mirror image of the person I would like to be.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Think about Puma. Think about the kind of person who typically uses Puma. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more adjectives. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>*</th>
<th>7 (Agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I see myself.</td>
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4/3/2015 Qualtrics Survey Software

this brand is consistent with how I would like to be.
This user of this brand is a mirror image of the person I would like to be.

Think about Under Armour. Think about the kind of person who typically uses Under Armour. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more adjectives. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement with the following statements:

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<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
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Think about Athleta. Think about the kind of person who typically uses Athleta. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more adjectives. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement with the following statements:

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<th>1 (Do Not Agree)</th>
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Think about the brand you selected. Think about the kind of person who typically uses that brand. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more adjectives. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement with the following statements:

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This user of this brand is a mirror image of me.
This personality of the user of this brand is consistent with how I would like to be.
This user of this brand is a mirror image of the person I would like to be.

Demographics

How old are you?

Are you Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin?
- [ ] No, not of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin
- [ ] Yes, of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin
- [ ] Unavailable/Unknown
- [ ] Prefer not to answer

Which category best describes your race? Check all that apply.
- [ ] American Indian or Alaska Native
- [ ] Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African American
- [ ] Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- [ ] Middle Eastern or Arab American
- [ ] South Asian or Indian American
- [ ] Asian American or East Asian
- [ ] White (Caucasian)
- [ ] Other
- [ ] Prefer not to answer

What is the highest level of education you have received?
- [ ] Some high school
- [ ] High school diploma
- [ ] Some college
- [ ] Undergraduate degree
- [ ] Some graduate study
- [ ] Master’s degree

https://missouri.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/Ajax.php?action=GetSurveyPrintPreview&T=5W3FZ0ysNc0kJ5iXLdEpM2
What is your annual household income?

- [ ] Below $20,000
- [ ] $20,000 - $29,999
- [ ] $30,000 - $39,999
- [ ] $40,000 - $49,999
- [ ] $50,000 - $59,999
- [ ] $60,000 - $69,999
- [ ] $70,000 - $79,999
- [ ] $80,000 - $89,999
- [ ] $90,000 or more

Thanks for participating! If you're completing this survey to receive extra credit for a University of Missouri class, please enter your name and your professor's name in the text boxes below. Your name will be separated from your responses.

Student Name

[Text Box]

Professor Name

[Text Box]

Class

[Text Box]