

Copycat Fast Casual Restaurants: Consumer Response of Dublin Professionals 25 - 39

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Declaration

I, Audrey Brewer, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School's academic honesty policy.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Audrey Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Date: January 8 2018

Acknowledgments

This is dedicated to my dad, who thinks it's cool to read books, and my mom, who prefers to get stuff done. Writing this required equal shares of both! Thanks for all of the encouragement along the way.

Abstract

The fast casual market in Ireland is growing at a rate three times that of other restaurant categories. It is especially popular with young professionals age 25 - 39, representing more than 1/3 of their food spend. As the market expands, many Dublin restaurateurs have adopted a shorthand approach to capitalize on existing restaurant brands. These "copycat" restaurants take concepts, menus and trade dress from leader brands outside Ireland, often to commercial success. By using a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach, this research aims to explore Irish consumer perception and patronage of five Dublin copycat restaurants, further negotiating this with consumer evaluation of authenticity. 272 questionnaire responses were evaluated then phenomenologically assessed through in-depth interviews, seeking to explain socioeconomic and cultural factors that contributed to this feedback.

Results indicate a generally positive acceptance towards the copycatting trend in Ireland, while still evaluating the control original brand as better. In this context, a moderate similarity approach appears to work best when the leader brand is not present. Respondents did not have an overall negative view of copycats, and even fewer reported a desire to stop visiting such restaurants when informed about them. Interviews further investigated the regulatory, economic and cultural underpinnings for this acceptance, suggesting this response is dictated by contextual factors unique to the Irish commercial landscape.

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CHAPTER ONE:

Introduction

1.1 Problem Orientation

Two aspiring restaurateurs secure leases on the same city street in Dublin, Ireland. Hoping to break into a growing restaurant category, both decide to open fast casual eateries. Owner A spends 6 months in branding development, creating menus with a professional chef and designing the space with architects. Owner B spends 6 weeks imitating a popular restaurant he visited in Los Angeles, only slightly changing its name and color scheme. When both restaurants open, will the additional effort of Owner A matter? How will customers behave towards the copycat? Will they care, or notice at all?

Recycling concepts is a de facto reality in branding. The belief that there is “no such thing as an original idea” assists in justifying this strategy, especially in places where the leader has no foothold. Yet as countless businesses build on borrowed ideas, marketing practice continues to position innovation and authenticity as key to consumers. This divide - between the success of copycats and the alleged importance of authenticity - has created an intriguing query worthy of academic research. While consumer response to copycat branding has been addressed in numerous research fields [2.2], this strategy has yet to be examined in a restaurant context. By analysing Irish consumer behavior, new research aims to understand their perception of copycat fast casuals, relating this further to their valuation of authenticity. In doing so, new research will add depth to findings in multiple research fields, courtesy of a popular consumption space with its selected population.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Irish Restaurant Market

The fast casual market in Dublin is growing rapidly, with these restaurants opening at a rate 3x faster than any other [Bord Bia 2015]. It is the most popular food service category with residents 25 - 39, accounting for a full third of their food spend [Kennedy 2016]. Observing how consumers behave towards these restaurants will provide a foundation for understanding copycat branding in food service, which to the researcher's knowledge has not witnessed a formal study. In addition to academic insights, new research may provide findings that could assist restaurateurs looking to enter this market.

Dublin finds itself at a pertinent time for food marketing research. Economic and cultural growth in the city has been exponential since 2013, with U.S. companies entering the market to the tune of €300 billion in direct investment [Roughneen 2017]. This has led to an influx of new residents, as well as more Irish electing to remain in the country [Kenny 2015]. This population upturn has led to a push for more metropolitan offerings like retail shops, bars and restaurants. This yields a greater opportunity than ever for Dublin restaurateurs, as well as a demand for higher quality provisions. With restaurants voted the most important cultural element of cities for American residents [Sasaki 2014], it is pertinent to observe how this tracks with the modern Irish consumer. By observing their behavior towards restaurants and the copycat branding that often accompanies them, research will provide fresh insight into their consumer behavior.

1.2.2 Authenticity in Branding

Authenticity is a high value concept in modern marketing, yet proves difficult for academic research to quantify. Many experts have discussed concrete definitions for authenticity [Gilmore, 2008, Machtiger & Prieto, 2015, Morrison & Humlen, 2016], but all submit that it is a subjective and interpretive branding concept. Researchers have positioned the increased desire for "authentic branding" as the response of a smarter, more connected consumer [Gilmore & Pine 2008]. While authenticity is often reported as important by Irish consumers - ranked as a top food trend by the Irish Food Board - there is little information on how this tracks within an applied, rather than theoretical, context.

By examining authenticity concepts laid out in other works, new research hopes to gauge how consumers negotiate their personal definition of authenticity with the evaluation of copycats, and whether this has any effect on their patronage or perception.

1.2.3 Copycatting Business Strategies

Copycat branding is important not only because it stands in opposition to marketing concepts like innovation and authenticity, but because it often appears to work. The success of many copycats within the Dublin fast casual market appears to contradict such marketing recommendations, making the practice worthwhile of further inspection. When attempting to justify copycat branding, two oft-repeated reasons are an ease of implementation and safety of concept. Discussions with field experts in the Dublin restaurant industry may elucidate if these are the sole reasons for Dublin fast casual copycats, or if there are additional legislative, economic, or cultural elements at work. There have been a number of studies that examine the consumer's perception of copycat food branding, but this research only extends to the grocery aisle. After defining the parameters and terms related to copycat strategies, further research will gauge its efficacy in this new market context.

1.3 Justification and Rationale

Upon a review of literature on copycat branding, fast casuals, and authenticity, it appears the potential findings proffered by this academic study have yet to be met by research. While methodologies of prior copycat studies have examined the consumer's relationship to themes like *quality*, *brand loyalty*, and *substitutability*, they have not addressed their relationship towards *authenticity*. This is one gap this research aims to fill.

Moving beyond the copycat boundaries, limited academic research appears to exist on Irish consumer perspectives towards food service in general. Most published works on Irish food are provided by government-lead initiatives like the Irish Food Board or corporate-sponsored surveys. This leads existing research to focus on general dietary patterns or food industries like dairy and beef rather than food service. Consumer research on copycat branding and Irish food tends to remain within the fast moving consumer goods [FMCG]. Gauging consumer response to food service may be more difficult than

FMCG due to the restaurant's dynamic environment. Evaluation requires assessment from all senses, and is therefore less easily observed than feedback on a cereal box. Despite this, it is worthwhile to expand food service research, particularly as restaurant and readymade foods become increasingly important to consumers. Last year marked the first time American and Irish consumers spent more money eating out than on groceries [Philips 2016], and the Irish food service industry is growing faster than ever before [Casey 2016]. This method of food consumption deserves further attention by academic research, despite its difficulty in data collection.

While restaurant studies have evaluated attributes like *service*, *food quality* and *atmosphere*, the element of authenticity is largely absent. Observing authenticity within restaurant evaluation could amplify research into both fields. Further, if respondents can find elements of authenticity within a copycat business strategy, an idea of *manufactured authenticity* could be proposed, with recommendations provided for brands to improve perception. Any research that could provide suggestions for success in the restaurant industry are justifiably worthwhile. With 59% of restaurants failing in the first 3 years [Behman 2014], the risks associated with entering this industry are well documented.

This consumer-based research brings together three areas of study: copycat branding, food service, and authenticity. Combining this research will provide new insight into these fields, introducing an unexplored trend in Irish food service. While existing works have relied on either a qualitative or quantitative approach towards these topics, few have incorporated both research styles. Combining these methodologies will not only provide a baseline consumer perspective, but will elucidate their sociocultural motivations through in-depth interviews with industry experts. By using survey methods from both restaurant and copycat studies, then performing phenomenological research to evaluate results, this paper will create a detailed picture of the copycat restaurant trend that has not been met by current research.

1.4 Research Objectives and Hypotheses

This research seeks to answer the question: How do Dublin professionals 25 - 39 perceive and patronise copycat fast casual brands, and how do these responses relate to their valuation of authenticity?

While visiting this question through qualitative and quantitative methods, the researcher hopes to achieve the following objectives:

- Locate and define examples of copycat fast casuals in Dublin for use in primary research [located in Appendices, A.1 - A.5]
- Using a quantitative online survey, collect data from Dublin professionals 25 - 39 regarding their
 - fast casual patronage rates,
 - preferred fast casual attributes,
 - assessment of Dublin copycats, and
 - opinion on copycat strategies
- Develop a contextual understanding of these findings through in-depth interviews, providing explanations for
 - the socioeconomics of Irish restaurant culture,
 - the copycat restaurant trend, and
 - Irish consumer trends and tastes

The researcher performing this study has spent time in Dublin restaurant marketing, and therefore has some preconceived ideas of the questionnaire's outcomes. While the objectives of the study cover both sides of the research, hypotheses refer only to the quantitative survey. Upon reviewing related literature, and in conjunction with the author's restaurant branding experience, four hypotheses emerged:

H₁	A decreased "Importance of: Authenticity" has a positive moderating effect on the assessment of "Food Quality" and "Authenticity" of a copycat restaurant.
H₂	Decreased experience of an original restaurant will have a positive moderating effect on the assessment of the copycat restaurant.
H₃	Importance of "Trustworthiness" and "Authenticity" will not be evaluated identically. Likewise, a copycat will not need to be rated high on "Authentic & Original" for it to be rated highly as "Trustworthy."
H₄	If a consumer has a negative view of the copycatting practice, it will not necessarily stop them from patronising a copycat restaurant.

These will be rigorously tested, with conceptual frameworks developed contingent on the results obtained.

1.6 Thesis Outline

This thesis was prepared as part of a 14 week dissertation at Dublin Business School. Following an introduction, the paper will perform a literature review of previous findings on consumer restaurant evaluation, copycat branding, and authenticity. With the latter, research will examine authenticity not only in a general sense, but as it relates to food and Irish contexts as well. The methodology for this research will be laid out in Chapter 3, as the paper aims to justify its mixed method approach and data collection methods. Research will take shape through an online survey and in-depth interviews with experts in the Irish restaurant industry. Upon receiving results from both inquiries, this data will be assessed for thematic points and objective findings that relate to the paper's objectives and hypotheses. Once results are tabulated, detailed analysis will compare results with those of the literature review. By cross-referencing new results with prior findings, areas of refusion and reinforcement should emerge. The paper will then attempt to provide recommendations for restaurateurs looking to enter the Dublin fast casual market, as well as suggestions for further research. Finally, the paper will conclude with a self-reflection on the constraints and overall performance of the study.

1.7 Limitations

As with any short-term study, there are clear limitations to the methodology in place. The scope of this research is limited, and findings will not be able to transfer to other contexts seamlessly. This study analyzes a demographic of a specific age group/location/employment status within a short time frame, making it a subjective space for consumer response. Additionally, because the researcher lacks experience in primary data collection, there is a possibility of misstep in its application in terms of survey structure or interview protocols. Extensive research and preparations have been made to mitigate these risks, but as it will be the researcher's first attempt, errors will likely emerge.

The researcher must also take steps to remove their personal bias from colouring the results or recommendations of the study. As someone who has built a professional background in bespoke brand development, her tendency is to avoid copycat practices. Awareness that results may not align with the author's personal beliefs must be accounted for and treated as objectively as possible when recounting the relevant data. Additional details on the limitations of this research can be found in Chapter 3.8.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a literature background to three key elements of the study: copycat branding, fast casual restaurants, and authenticity. Together, research will provide a clearer picture of where new research may add depth and dimension to previous findings.

To begin, it would not be possible to understand copycat branding in a fast casual context without seeing how it functions across different markets and consumer profiles. Copycatting is a branding strategy that comes with considerable reputational risk. However, performed in the right contexts, research suggests it can certainly yield financial returns. One question not fully answered by research is precisely how to copy “the right way” within a given context, which this study hopes to answer for young Irish professionals.

It is valuable to examine the fast casual due to its emergence as a popular and distinct restaurant category over the last 15 years. Because of its fairly recent definition, limited academic research exists on the segment. In order to develop foundational knowledge of this market, literature on quick service and casual dining was also considered, as these are nearest in nature to the fast casual. Understanding what succeeds in this environment will help shape research questions that can provide base recommendations to the fast casual copycat market.

Finally, understanding a fluid concept like authenticity is vital to defining a consumer’s relationship to it. By examining “authentic” marketing practices as well as how Irish consumers and food researchers negotiate it, new findings may elucidate how cultural context relates to belief systems on authenticity.

2.2 Copycat Branding

Copycat branding is well researched in a formal academic context, however there remains uncovered terrain to examine. There does not appear to be a study on copycat restaurants, nor on its perception by Irish consumers. Research in this section will thus draw from multiple geographic areas and product/service backgrounds.

When beginning to discuss copycat branding, it must be noted that similarities are not evaluated identically by consumers [Miceli & Pieters 2010]. Indeed, it is the consumer's own "mindset" which regulates this judgment. Miceli & Pieters introduce two core mentalities: the *featural mindset*, which reflects an ability to locate physical similarities, and *relational mindset*, which express the ability to distinguish more thematic links [2010]. Their research places relational mindsets at the higher end of copycat identification, finding consumers who identify conceptual similarities as more astute than their feature-focused counterparts.

This study proved useful for understanding the subjectivity of consumer response. With these defining mentalities in mind, one can segment and define behavior into different segments. Shared response patterns could also indicate processing tendencies across a population. While informative, Miceli & Pieters' paper does not explore if copycats are assessed better or worse depending on a more attribute-based or theme-based approach. By having consumers rate a variety of Dublin restaurants whose own copycat statuses range from direct copies to more thematic imitations, opinions based on imitation type will be recorded.

Consumer judgment capabilities have been extensively researched by marketing and psychology researchers, with the ability to perform "good judgment" determined by a number of indexical paradigms. When examining copycat brand judgment, it is important to remember the definition of *brand confusion* - "a deliberate attempt to mislead consumers into believing they are purchasing a brand leader" [Kapferer 1995]. Despite being a legally validated term, brand confusion remains subjective, relying on a consumer's cognitive style to be accountable or not. Foxman & Berger defined four elements of cognitive style that dictate a consumer tendency towards brand confusion [1990]. An outline of these, including examples for the Dublin fast casual market, is below.

Cognitive Styles	Description	Contributing Authors
Levelling Sharpening /	Does the consumer actively search for distinctive details, or generalise similar products as relatively the same? Sharpeners are less prone to brand confusion.	Kelman & Cohler, 1975
Example	<i>A levelling consumer does not have much of a preference for one Dublin burrito shop over another.</i>	
Conceptual Equivalence Difference /	The extent to which a product must exhibit differences before a consumer begins to notice.	Jackson & Messick, 1960
Example	<i>A consumer with strong conceptual differentiation is able to tell which Mexican restaurants cut their guacamole with sour cream and which do not.</i>	
Reflection Impulsivity /	Describes if a consumer considers alternative solutions when in uncertain environs, or acts on impulse. Reflective consumers tend to be better at inspecting stimuli before making a decision.	Brodzinsky, 1985, Schwabish & Drury, 1974
Example	<i>A reflective customer sees a new coffee shop and thinks about the quality levels in previous coffee shops before judging this new one.</i>	
Field Dependence / Independence	Refers to whether a consumer ignores "background information" when examining stimuli, or if they respond to a product in its contextual environment. Field independent users tend to be better at categorizing brand stimuli.	Marincola & Long, 1985
Example	<i>A field dependent customer will frequent a local barbeque spot if it is the only one in their area - with no regard to its comparative quality to others they've tried.</i>	

Fig. 1 - Cognitive Styles Table

These cognitive styles will be assessed in Chapter 5 to determine how this survey population relates to certain cognitive styles.

A consumer's *brand experience* can also colour their perceptual judgment abilities. The more experience a consumer has with a brand, the less likely they are to experience brand confusion - and the more loyal they become [Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009]. This has informed a hypothesis that familiarity with only the copycat increases consumer valuation of its inherent authenticity. For instance, if a consumer knows Boojum is a copycat

of Chipotle, but relies on Boojum every lunch break, perception of its copycat status may decrease. Brand experience is important to this data analysis, as the Irish consumer's familiarity with leader brand restaurants is currently unclear. As these original restaurants do not have a foothold in the Irish market, consumer brand experience will likely centre on the copycat.

Substitutability is another key factor of successful copycatting, and refers to a copycat's ability to take the place of a leader brand for consumers. Loken & Ward's study suggests copycats seen as worthy competitors can serve as a substitute for consumers [1990]. However, if an identical-looking product is revealed to have a lower quality grade than the leader, consumer loyalty effectively dissolves [1990]. This is an important concept - while copycat branding may get consumers in the door, they must be deemed worthy substitutes to engender continued patronage.

Loyalty is a concept further addressed in Wong Ma's research, which examines copycat product design in the smartphone category. Surprisingly, his research indicates strong brand loyalty does not protect a leader from copycats [2015]. Indeed, loyal customers were even more likely to defect to a copycat. Copycatting is still a risky endeavour, however, as these consumers also reacted negatively to their preferred brand copying others, as well as viewing originality positively. Ma's research reiterates the often conflicting nature of consumer perception towards copycats. Consumers seem to want what they want, even if it places a brand in a hypocritical position. They will buy a copycat, and even obviate their loyalty - but look down upon copycatting all the same.

Copycat branding is perhaps seen most blatantly in the field of fast moving consumer goods [FMCG], with over 50% of store brands imitating the leader in terms of color, shape, or name [Scott-Morton & Zettelmeyer 2004]. Grades of imitation are a core element to many of these copycat branding studies. Femke van Horen's variance analysis study on FMCG suggests moderate brand imitation is more effective than high similarity copies if the leader brand is present [2010]. However, when the leader brand is absent, a higher similarity will win. She found the *consumer mindset* [her definition of "buying"] preferred a high similarity copy, while the *judge mindset* ["general evaluation"] had the opposite effect. These findings, like Ma's, were useful in reflecting a consumer's ability to hold two contradictory views at once. Within a new context, this may mean consumers will frequent a copycat restaurant, while disapproving the practice and valuing authenticity.

Van Horen's research on copycat branding in FMCG is abundant, but her research focuses on Dutch university students, and naturally does not address the nuances of food service evaluation. FMCG studies focus on goods like cereal or potato crisps, and tend to observe visual perception only, not product quality. When both aspects are considered, it appears consumers will punish a copycat whose quality belies its appearance [Cambel & Kimari 2000]. Intentional deceit is seen as a cardinal sin, which helps form this dissertation's suggestion that copycatting a restaurant concept moderately while maintaining leader-brand quality is key to a successful strategy. Dublin's fast casual copycats have the crucial advantage of existing where the brand leader is not in the choice set, which suggests many consumers will not have tried the leader brand offerings and therefore cannot compare the two. With Loken & Ward's research on substitutability in mind, new research aims to discover if copycat restaurants are reviewed better when consumers have not tried the original brand's offerings.

While research into visual evaluations of FMCG copycats are useful, they remain incomplete when transferring to a restaurant context. For this reason, new research will validate assessment only when the consumer has tried a copycat restaurant before. It will also evaluate a consumption space where the leader brand is nonexistent, and thus not comparable in a side-by-side manner.

Moving into the economics of copycat strategies, some researchers openly propose a *theory of observational learning* to adapt existing approaches from successful businesses [Bikhchandani et. al 1998, Qin & Wen 2016]. Many companies don't have the resources to perform innovative brand development, they explain, and should assume brand leaders have performed the often expensive trial-and-error efforts of innovative strategy. Further, the more successful a company, the stronger likelihood of its future success [Bikhchandani et. al, 1998]. These economists presuppose copycatting as not only morally neutral, but a vital resource for new companies. From this perspective, innovation strategies simply reveal "untapped" consumer desires, reflecting a demand copycats may help supply. With fewer risks and lower startup costs, providing a similar experience for consumers appears relatively seamless [Kapferer 2005]. Concepts of supply and demand do seem to reflect the rationale of restaurant copycats, and have therefore formed a number of questions for the study's in-depth interviews. However, these economic authors fail to ascribe any value to innovation, which could be considered a shortfall depending on the results of new research.

While there are clear financial justifications for copycatting, they are not risk-free, particularly if a copycat fails to live up to the original's quality [Loken & Ward 1990]. This has informed the belief that copying does not guarantee poor perception, so long as one copies well. Precisely how to "copy well" in an Irish context is something this research aims to elucidate. In a city that has played cosmopolitan catch-up since the 1980's, copycat restaurants appear to fill consumer needs in a time-sensitive, high-demand environment. It is pertinent to see how this shorthand approach is perceived, because if consumers are wholly satisfied, innovation may prove as inefficient as these authors position it to be.

In terms of market success, the competitive edge provided by innovation is often short-lived and unpredictable [Lieberman & Montgomery 1988]. Imitators thus present a disadvantage to leader brands, as it remains impossible to bar them from entering the market. Legal repercussions for copycatting are particularly absent in the restaurant segment, evidenced by American news articles found during research. In these articles, copycat restaurants in Boston and New York were "named and shamed," but copycats remain opened and operational. Very few restaurateurs bring their menus, recipes or trade dress to a patent or trademark office, and rarely do they mandate non disclosure agreements [Hammersley 2015]. Even when these measures are taken, it is the restaurant owner's responsibility to pursue legal action - a time-consuming and tedious endeavour, which becomes even more difficult when considering international borders [2015]. To the researcher's knowledge, there are no equivalent Irish news articles on copycat restaurants - save, ironically, the case of Irish restaurateur Niall Fortune, owner of copycat brand Eddie Rocket's. In 2013, Fortune successfully barred a former franchisee from using Eddie Rocket's tagline, brand colors and jukeboxes for his copy-of-a-copy Rockin' Joes [Deegan 2013]. What is not mentioned in the article, however, is how most Eddie Rocket's attributes were taken from American diner chain Johnny Rocket's in the 1980s. This absence of discussion on the subject in Ireland is stark, and appears to reinforce copycatting as a normalised practice when the leader is absent. Phenomenological reasonings for this will be explored in qualitative research.

This wide array of copycat research seems to highlight the subjective and often conflicting opinions of the consumer population. At their core, consumers mindsets and cognitive styles prove complex and varied. More brand experience yields more brand loyalty - yet this loyalty does not protect brands from copycats. Moderately similar copycats perform best in evaluation, but consumers can be drawn to high similarity copies in the absence of leader brands. "Observational learning" is good for business, but carries bigger risks when performed improperly. All the while, restaurateurs experience little protection against

copycats - apparently even fewer in Ireland than the United States. This vast, mutable research field would value from fresh insight, as research suggests both benefits and drawbacks to the copycat method.

2.3 Fast Casuals

The next important research focus pertains to the researcher's chosen food service category. Fast casual eateries are experiencing a boom in Dublin, particularly within the young professional segment. Dublin adults under 39 spend more money at fast-casual restaurants than on groceries, and the market segment is growing 3x faster than any other restaurant type [Bord Bia 2015]. Naturally, as a burgeoning category, fast casuals contain a specific set of consumer expectations. Perhaps because of their recent definition however, fast casual research is markedly underdeveloped.

The *Franchise Times* concedes the definition of fast casual is "fuzzy," with experts holding differing opinions on what constitutes these restaurants. The general consensus places fast casuals between casual dining and quick service, with higher check averages [around €7 - 15], a targeted adult demographic, "upscale decor", and pay-at-the-counter service [2008]. This list is non-exhaustive, but assisted in the creation of parameters for defining Dublin copycats referenced in this study [see Appendices]. Because of its relatively new coinage, studies of casual dining and quick service were also reviewed, as they represent the nearest relevant categories.

When examining consumer expectations of different restaurant categories, Bujisic & Hutchinson [2014] found that attribute evaluation changed depending on restaurant type. They developed design experiments for 18 grades of quality, trade dress & restaurant type, including quick service. For these, their recommendation was to prioritise food quality above all other elements, with service & ambience ranked next in importance. While this experiment style allowed for complete manipulation of the environment, it did so at the cost of important consumer evaluation benchmarks. Brand loyalty & word-of-mouth knowledge can greatly affect consumer assessment, factors which are absent in a constructed environment.

The question of customer loyalty at fast casual restaurants was however researched by Kuo Chang in 2013. He suggests brand reputation can cultivate loyalty through *trust* and *value*,

with *perceived trust* doing more than *perceived value*. This finding speaks to the power of a great branding strategy as a way to cut corners on other attributes, as trust may beget value for consumers. Trust cultivated by prominent leader brands could explain why copycats are able to “ride coattails” into similar success. The finding that trust supplants food quality in importance does not contradict Bujisic & Hutchison’s research, as their restaurant was an experiment design and therefore lacked a *trust* evaluation category. Because trust and authenticity are often associated [2.4], it will be important to see if consumers evaluate the two similarly. Chang further advises adding innovative products to a branding strategy, and focusing on superior service at the right price in order to establish positive *pre-trust* through word of mouth. These techniques do not appear to be fully utilized by copycats in Dublin, so additional research could show their usefulness in this environment.

Experience quality was observed through casual restaurant atmospherics in a paper by Jooyeon Ha, who found food quality and service were again top priorities for consumers. This paper took a narrow focus by examining one restaurant, however new research could add depth to these findings by reviewing multiple restaurants at once. It is generally agreed restaurant trade dress and atmosphere are important marketing tools - yet multiple studies suggest service and food quality have stronger impacts on behavior intentions [Ha 2012, Bufquin & Partlow 2015]. Bufquin & Parlow’s study implemented the “DinEX” 20-factor customer satisfaction model to again examine the importance of restaurant attributes to consumers. They found while food, service and atmosphere were important for urban customers, social and health concerns were not. The DinEX will inform the backbone of the adapted survey questionnaire discussed in Chapter 3. Another key finding from these authors noted the largest disparity between the *importance* of good quality food and resulting *performance* in fast casuals, meaning customers desired better food than received. By surveying consumers on copycat attribute satisfaction versus importance, useful recommendations could emerge.

The consolidation of these restaurant evaluations is defined below:

Author	Top Consumer Restaurant Preferences
Jooyeon	1 Food Quality 2 Service
Kuo Chang	1 Trust 2 Service 3 Value
Bujisic & Hutchison	1 Food Quality 2 Service
Partlow & Bufquin	1 Food Quality 2 Service 3 Atmosphere

Fig. 2 - Restaurant Attribute Preferences

The top preferences culled from these restaurant surveys will be adapted for new research and compared alongside authenticity, bringing new insight not only to copycats, but fast casuals in general.

2.4 Authenticity

Authenticity is a perennial theme in contemporary marketing. Many scholars and business leaders have explored the concept, while struggling to define it or provide overt means to reaping its benefits. A robust synthesis of authenticity branding was performed by Gilmore & Pine in the book *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* [2008]. The book cultivates authenticity as a hyperfluid, potentially impossible, yet ever-sought-after marketing ideal. They reiterate Lasch's theory that consumers are living in a world of diminishing expectations, at the same time their marketing knowledge increases [1979]. They cite hundreds of examples a falsified, oversaturated authenticity market, detailing the consumer's disenchantment while still searching for "the real thing." They theorise consumers sense "unreality" surrounding them in the modern world, yielding a desire for authenticity even as they struggle to quantify it [2008].

While many find the loss of objective truth & authentic reality as a result of modern culture, some scholars argue this sense has persisted throughout human history. Regina Bendix's "In Search of Authenticity" [1997] traces the earliest known example of "lost objectivity" to

Plato's Allegory of the Cave. Plato writes of prisoners trapped inside a cave, who come to see their fire's shadows as all that exists in the universe. As we examine consumer perspectives on authenticity, it becomes clear there are no universal means of evaluation. This opens the possibility for copycat brands to cultivate an authentic perception, despite their imitative roots.

Gilmore & Pine suggest a consumer's definition of "authentic" changes over time based on life stages, experience, and changes to a brand's offerings. Companies who wish to endure must manage their authenticity with an "ever changing, always aging" consumer [2008]. This relates to a study by Schindler, who researched the link between authenticity and nostalgia. She found nostalgia functions as a strong factor for authenticity, operating as an index that changes with time [2003]. A nostalgic theme could potentially help a copycat for this reason; for instance, an American expat who used to enjoy leader brand Chipotle may come to regard its copycat Boojum positively if it fulfills a nostalgic need.

Researchers Grayson & Martinec also aimed to define authenticity. Like others, they found authenticity's evaluation guidelines insufficient, and therefore proposed two levels of perception - *indexical* and *iconic*. *Indexical perception* refers to a direct spatiotemporal link that "proves" authenticity: for instance, a Dublin pub opened in 1766 full of white-haired men. *Iconic perception* requires external strategies to show authenticity where the index is absent: for example, a Dublin ramen bar whose menu states their noodle press is from Okinawa. Most importantly, this research contributes to a broader understanding of perceptual subjectivity. When investigating how tourists evaluated tourist landmarks, they found an authentic perception was often generated arbitrarily. Even if an old artifact's age was listed and verified, the consumer felt uncertain if it looked "too new" [2004]. It is clear from this research that authenticity is a mutable resource. This is a possible advantage for copycat restaurants seeking to attain a more authentic identity, as research suggests it can be manipulated or manufactured to work in a variety of contexts.

An important point when studying consumer's ideations of authenticity is *self-expression*, or as Pepsi CMO Anne Mukherjee puts it, "the genuineness of letting people express themselves" [2005]. Many experts place self-expression as a key element of authentic branding [Newman 1997]. When studying consumer response to copycats, it will be worthwhile to see if self-expression can be positively manipulated by a copycat despite their non-expressive origins. If a Dublin burrito shop copies an American market leader, it may not reflect any brand conviction towards self-expression. However, if that shop permits their

customer to hand-pick every ingredient of their meal, it may end up fulfilling self-expression needs anyway.

The following section will observe how authenticity operates in food-related research, as the concept often appears in culinary discussions. Understanding authenticity in a food context will assist research by seeing what methods are implemented, how consistent or inconsistent the approach to authentic branding is, and expectations of consumers in the field.

2.4.1 Authenticity - Food Context

The concept of restaurant authenticity was examined by Barger & Grandey in a study on consumer experience. They found hiring “genuinely positive employees” lead to significant positive assessment [2005]. In contrast, research by Ashforth & Humphrey found forcing employees to smile lowered positive impressions and reduced the sense of authenticity [1993]. Service behavior is possibly one of the hardest elements to adequately copy, as it is difficult to mimic human behavior in a way that appears genuine. Consumers will notice such behavior, which could further highlight a copycat’s inauthenticity. If the sign at the exit states “We miss you already” but a customer feels rushed out the door, they will likely develop a poor perception of the restaurant.

One intriguing example of food authenticity cited by Gilmore & Pine is the “slow food movement,” which suggests consumers be mindful of the food they prepare and eat. This allows them “to notice and enjoy the details of the experience” [2008]. In many respects, this is the antithesis of the fast casual ethos, which seeks to get consumers fed and out the door quickly. Indeed, Go Slow is one of Gilmore & Pine’s 5 Authenticity Principles, alongside 1) Be Direct 2) Focus On Uniqueness 3) Treat as Temporary and 4) Be Foreign [2008]. Since copycat restaurants are neither direct with consumers nor unique in origin, it appears their authenticity could be poorly judged based on these guidelines.

Rather than positioning authenticity as a core business practice, Gilmore & Pine note how many brands manipulate token authentic elements to appeal to consumers. They cite smoothie shop Jamba Juice as an example, who grow wheatgrass in-store to symbolise a commitment to “sunshine” and “real nutrition” [2008]. When performing additional research for this paper, it was discovered Jamba Juice garnered criticism one year after Gilmore &

Pine's book for stealing the work of cartoonist David Rees for its marketing campaigns. The tokenised authenticity practice raises the question of pursuing the ideology only when it is convenient. It raises an important question of whether this shorthand works on consumers, or rather, if it possible to be perceived as authentic and inauthentic in tandem.

Finally, excerpts from the 2005 Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery [Theme: Authenticity] reiterate that labelling any food offering as authentic is tenuous at best. In Nichola Fletcher's essay "Authentic Kneadless Bread," she reminds readers that recipes are adjusted with every preparation, and these adaptations from an original are "simply food evolution in progress" [2005]. In the same series, Colleen Taylor Sen speaks of a similar issue with American-Indian restaurants. She explains restaurant culture did not exist in India at the emergence of American-Indian eateries. Therefore, much like Chinese food before it, even the "most authentic" Indian restaurant in America remains an adaptation. Any restaurant offering displaced from its origin country will be a modification, reformatted to fit another culture. It may possible to relate this philosophy to copycats when speaking with Irish food culture experts

2.4.2. Authenticity - Irish Context

Observing authenticity in a localised manner is worthwhile, as an Irish perspective comes with its own set of cultural assumptions and beliefs. The historical link between authenticity and 'Irishness' may add another unique layer to how its residents negotiate this concept. It is even possible young Irish consumers will actively defy such stereotypes.

Food authenticity and provenance are top of mind in Irish food marketing as of late, counted as top consumer trends to watch by the Irish Food Board [2017]. Research by Irish marketing agency MCCP suggests 81% of Irish consumers express scepticism over food claims, and when asked what makes their preferred brands authentic, cited things like "no hidden agendas" and "having the consumer's best interests at heart" [2016]. Much like Chang's study on restaurant attributes, these consumers cited *brand trust* as the most important factor evaluated. [It should be noted that this survey was conducted by a marketing agency who defines themselves as "the authentic branding company," so a vested interest in perpetuating this perspective is likely.]

A stroll around the Irish Food Board's headquarters in Dublin, however, indicates a similar sentiment. Their reception area showcases street-facing displays centred on *authentic* ideals. Icons of provenance - wooden fruit boxes, hand-painted signs, and pictures of organic farms - dress the windows, seeming to define the government's chosen culinary messaging. When speaking to experts, it will be valuable to see if the reality of this presentation matches their professional experience.

The concept of Irish authenticity was traced in a marketing context by Neil O'Boyle in his research into what defines an "Irish" advertisement. Many marketing professionals pointed to personal stories and anecdotes as the secret sauce to Irish advertising, making sure to separate their work from "artificial inseminations" [2009]. However, O'Boyle questions how efficacious this authenticity practice is, considering few agencies base this on researched consumer preference. O'Boyle warns that becoming entrapped in "authentic narratives" can alienate a brand from capturing new audiences. Another question raised is the concept of "Irishness" itself, which O'Boyle concludes is more ambiguous and uncertain than ever. If culture is defined as "the way we do things" as one marketer described, Ireland's culture is certainly changing - but into what? O'Boyle states the solution to this problem must be "to avoid the petrification of tradition, as well as the multinational Los Angelisation of society" [2009]. It is clear that a city's restaurant offerings can play a part in this divisive cultural debate. It is thus important to understand how young professionals in Ireland react to such anxieties. Copycat restaurant valuation could certainly provide a small cross-section of that perspective.

2.5 Conclusion

This review pulled literature from a variety of academic backgrounds. Naturally, no piece of existing literature covered the potential findings of this new study. In general, an absence of literature on the fast casual category appears - as does copycat branding in food service. While Irish consumer food preferences are profiled in a more generalised sense by Irish government bodies, restaurant preferences are far less detailed. Finally, for a virtue innately tied with Irish cultural identity, little information exists on how consumers negotiate their relationship to authenticity. These many research areas would benefit from an expansion of insight, through both quantitative and qualitative discussion. An explanation of research methodology follows.

CHAPTER THREE:

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In terms of the objectives laid out in the introduction, those which pertain to the primary research are:

- Using an online quantitative survey, collect data from Dublin professionals 25 - 39 regarding their
 - fast casual patronage rates,
 - preferred fast casual attributes,
 - assessment of Dublin copycats, and
 - opinion on copycat strategies

- Using qualitative in-depth interviews, provide a context for these findings by examining
 - the socioeconomic background of Irish restaurant culture,
 - the copycat restaurant trend, and
 - Irish consumer trends and tastes

Research was carried out using in-depth interviews and a consumer research survey, leading to a mixed qualitative/quantitative approach. The structural methodology for this research was adapted from existing studies found in the literature review related to copycat branding and restaurant evaluation. The chosen approach was selected above other options based on prolonged research and critical reasoning. This chapter will detail the precise plan, justification and strategy for this twofold approach.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Philosophy

Before beginning any research application, a philosophy must be determined. This research adopted a Pragmatic philosophy for a number of reasons. As evidenced by their mixed qualitative/quantitative approach, the researcher understood there were many ways of interpreting information. Consumer behavior is bound by a human element, influenced by countless moving parts. It was important for research to respect the differences between each survey respondent, as social actors evaluate their own experience on an individuated basis even as patterns emerge [Hill et al, 1999].

Pragmatism was also selected because the ontological reality of populations will always be subjective, based on a number of social and experiential factors [Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004]. An Interpretivist philosophy is generally ascribed to research involving interviews, so this approach will be included as a part of the Pragmatic philosophy [which permits the integration of other philosophies.] The researcher believes in intersubjectivity, and therefore incorporated results of qualitative and quantitative findings to find points of convergence and contention. "People cannot be separated from their knowledge;" this philosophical standpoint relates not only to consumer evaluations, but to the researcher herself. Due to her professional experience with Dublin fast casual branding, it was impossible to fully extricate new research from a prior knowledge base. A clear link between the researcher and her subject existed, which made an interactionist-style approach additionally effective.

The quantitative portion of this study aimed for an objective ontology, with the aim of providing the best possible manner of research collection. These results were collected in a Positivist manner, then reviewed through the lens of other phenomenological methods. The axiology of these survey responses were first appraised in an objective manner, and only after was a subjective interpretation of results presented. The nature of this research question sought to not only discover what consumers believed, but why they were inclined to feel that way given their cultural, historical and economic context. The researcher found it unlikely to locate the answer *why* without first defining *what*, a question the objective analysis helped to answer.

One significant drawback of adopting a Pragmatic philosophy was the potential for bias on behalf of the researcher. There were limited ways to mitigate this reality, as one consequence of performing sociological research is acknowledging one's rationalising place in the world [Fox 2017]. While avoiding bias entirely is not possible, reflections were sure to include acknowledgment of the researcher's background to allow the reader to reach their own conclusions using the material provided. In addition, this reflexivity may have provided a fuller, richer account than a categorically objective finding, as long as the reader was made aware of this positioning.

3.2.2 Approach

Because research took qualitative and quantitative forms, the best approach to research appeared to be an abductive approach, which reconciles the weaknesses of both inductive and deductive reasoning [Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004]. This position was taken because there was simply not enough academic literature on the research population to determine steadfast rules or theories towards their behavior, nor was the breadth of this investigation enough to put such theories into place. Abductive reasoning seeks to take what is an undeniably incomplete observation and turn it into a best prediction, rather than offering a general rule leading to a specific conclusion [Poole 1994]. The data collected from this study explored a phenomenon [copycat fast casuals in Dublin] and then identified themes and patterns from consumer response using a conceptual framework developed from previous academic frameworks. In turn, recommendations were generated while incorporating existing theories, thereby modifying previous research but not rejecting or replacing it.

In the style of abductive reasoning, the research began with a surprising fact - say, the popularity of copycats - and then sought to find a "best explanation" among alternatives for this phenomenon, through consumer surveys and discussions with field experts [Goddard & Melville, 2004].

3.2.3 Strategy

Due to the researcher's use of both surveys and interviews, research strategy took a pluralistic qualitative/quantitative approach. Pluralistic research combines different methods of analysis to the same data set, which is particularly useful when considering the subjectivity of consumer perception [Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004]. Pluralistic research is an apt choice because with a Pragmatic philosophy and abductive approach, the author felt critical of the idea that a singular truth existed or that one perspective was better than another. Concepts like authenticity, trust or product quality are often open to interpretation. Any contradictions revealed by this study had to be addressed head-on, in a way that pluralistic research permitted [Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004]. The combination of research methods allowed for a multilayered understanding of the copycat restaurant phenomenon. Within the context of consumer behavior, qualitative and quantitative methods work best in tandem [Hill et al, 1999]. Research into this strategic approach helped develop a methodology that is ideal for the research question and objectives posed.

3.2.4 Choice

The decision to perform research in this manner over others was based on a number of factors. Experiment-based research, evidenced in Bujisic & Hutchinson's restaurant study, proved too rigorous and time-consuming for a 2-month research endeavour. Observational research like case studies were not as pertinent to the research question, and would not have answered the broader ideological questions raised in the literature review. Therefore, an opinion-based research study in conjunction with discussion with experts was concluded as the best way to procure the desired information.

Practically, this study was borne from the researcher's profession and population access, but values and belief also played a part in developing the research question. As a professional in Dublin restaurant marketing, she has witnessed the proliferation of copycat fast casuals firsthand, creating a desire for an academic investigation into this practice.

Still, there remained a number of practical implications that went into determining this methodology as well. Time and funding were both in limited supply for this research study, which removed the opportunity for long-range or experiment-based approaches. The development of a methodology that answered questions of copycat

evaluation, fast casual patronage and authenticity was required, but it was not feasible nor best practice to establish an entirely new survey framework. The available literature from which research could be adapted came predominantly from opinion-based quantitative surveys and in-depth qualitative reviews, thus retaining these formats allowed for optimal reworking into a novel context.

To be detailed in 3.4.1, the adapted survey design was culled from both copycat and restaurant survey methodologies. It is of equal importance to this research to understand how copycatting practices and Irish restaurants are evaluated, and therefore both approaches were pertinent to include. The primary adapted survey model comes from Antun et. al's 2010 DinEX scale, which seeks to evaluate individual restaurants on 5 main factors through smaller meta-evaluations. Additionally, some questions were culled from copycat surveys by van Horen and Ma [2010 and 2014]. A full justification of these adaptations is provided in 3.4.2.

3.3 Population and Sample

As required of formal academic research, careful consideration was made into the sampling methods for who, how, and when to collect primary data. First, a desired population was defined, followed by locating an accessible sampling frame and baseline sample size for data. Then the sampling technique was determined, and finally the process was executed in November 2017. This section details how this process was conducted.

The population for this study was determined to be Dublin residents aged 25 - 39, due to their well-documented patronage of fast casuals [Kennedy 2016], and because accurate data exists on population size. As of 2016, this population size was 169,317 [CSO 2016]. The geographic range of "Dublin" was also determined by this census [Appendix B]. As the main patrons of fast casuals, this population likely dictate trends in the fast casual restaurant sector. The full-time employment requirement was also selected because professionals tends to have more disposable income than students or the unemployed, making them more likely to afford restaurant fare with regularity [Kennedy 2016]. This population requires a sample size of 383 respondents for a 5% margin of error.

A stratified sampling frame was developed using two relevant cluster groups the researcher had access to, which also resulted in a practical advantage. Based on the subject matter of this study, it was useful for professionals to have a basic familiarity with Dublin fast casual restaurants, which these sampling frames possessed.

These clusters came from two Dublin food businesses: fast casual restaurant Token, and delivery service Lunch Team. Token is a non-copycat restaurant opened in July 2017, which has a sizable online following and a email list of 693. Lunch Team is a Dublin delivery service which connects offices to restaurants in the city, with an estimated 2,200 email contacts provided for the study. Both mailing lists were thought to include a significant amount of people in the population, and were in some form related to fast casuals. This familiarity with the survey subject could lead to more robust responses.

The total sampling frame was recorded around ~3,000, resulting in a required response rate of 10 - 15%. The researcher had permission and full access to both mailing lists, and because of this, could provide sufficient incentive for users to complete. In all, this approach lead to a stratified sampling method with two relevant clusters [Lunch Team, Token]. Responses were vetted using a pre-test that mandated respondent age, location and employment status. Once responses were qualified, they were gathered via simple random sampling.

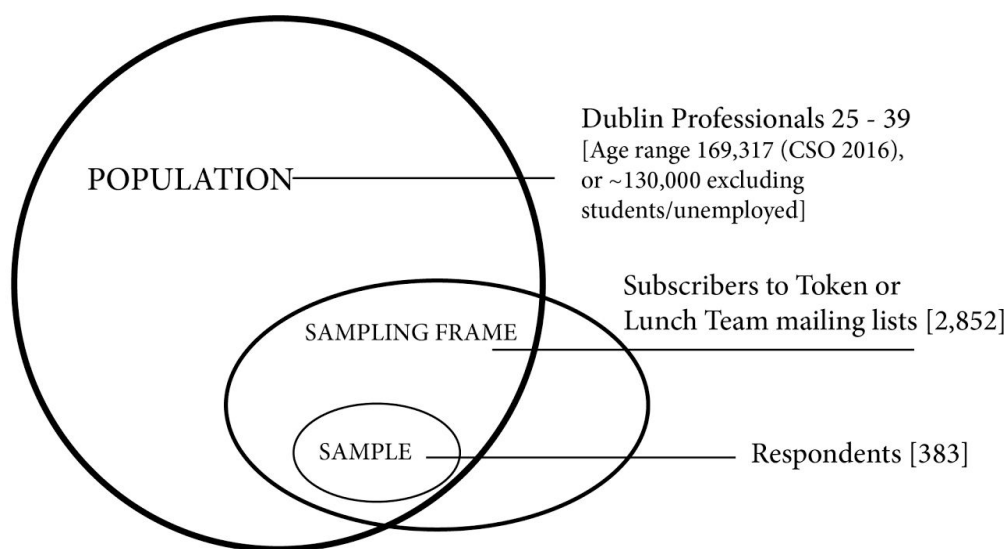


Fig. 3 Sampling Frame

The sampling process began on November 5th via a campaign to Token's email subscribers. Given the short time allotted to obtain the data, an incentive-based sampling process was deemed the most feasible collection means. This came in the form of a chance to win €100 gift vouchers to either company. A raffle-style incentive comes with potential drawbacks, such as the potential to rush through answers to achieve their desired result. Steps were taken to mitigate this risk: duplicate IP's were removed, emails included eye catching content and simple language, and the survey took >5 minutes from start to finish [Heyman 2016]. A storytelling "pitch" framed the request, explaining the researcher's interest in hearing consumer's opinions on restaurants, and responses were tested for efficacy.

The qualitative portion of the research was performed in tandem with the quantitative survey in the form of in-depth interviews with industry experts. A variety of backgrounds were approached, as the food industry is highly dynamic. Each interview brought a unique background [and thus, a set of biases and beliefs] to the study. In the end, four interviews were conducted, including Irish food academics, branding experts and business owners in the Dublin culinary sphere.

Each expert was selected on a case-by-case basis. Those requested for interview had to provide a unique relationship to the Dublin restaurant industry. A detailed description of interviewee profiles is available in 3.4.3.

Interviews were selected as a counterpart to the quantitative research because of their personal nature, which allowed the researcher to investigate deeply into pinpointed areas of interest more effectively than focus groups. Additionally, interviews proved most useful to the phenomenological inquiry into broader implications of consumer behavior. Because the interviewer is considered a part of the measurement instrument when interviewing, the author's familiarity with the Dublin restaurant market could also be fully utilised using interviews. A guided interview approach was selected, so as to focus the interview into clusters of relevant themes [see 3.4.3.] While conversations were adapted depending on the tone and narrative path of each interview, the basis of interview structure was standardised, guided, and open-ended. This allowed respondents to speak freely and the researcher to compare interviewee perspectives against one another via color-coded theme tracking [3.5.3].

Because the researcher lacks formal training or academic experience with interviewing, preparations were taken to ensure productive interviews. The researcher familiarised themselves with each person's background and relationship to the restaurant industry, and presented an outline of her research question prior each interview. Guided questions began with fact-based or simpler queries to establish a sense of comfort and security, and only later into the discussion were subjective opinions requested.

3.3 Time Horizon

Research was carried out from November to December 2017, beginning with an online survey on November 5th. The questionnaire was first released to Token's email list with a reminder two weeks later, then passed onto Lunch Team's mailing list in early December. Such pacing ensured both clusters could be compared prior to integrating the data, to note any differences in response depending on origin. Interviews were conducted in 30 to 60 minute increments across Dublin over a 3-week period in November. All primary data was collected by December 4th. This permitted a period of 4 weeks for research evaluation on findings, to accommodate a January 2018 submission date.

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Secondary

The secondary data of this research included existing information pertinent to the research question. This was not included in Chapter 4, but will be utilised in the discussion to reinforce or refute primary data findings. Secondary data included research into Irish food consumption, branding research and other syndicated service sources on copycat strategy and authenticity. While this paper's focus area has no prior data, portions of relevant fields were merged to establish a clearer picture for the topic.

This research reviewed existing academic works to build an appropriate conceptual framework for the survey and interview questions. This process was completed through online research and private academic and governmental documents. Findings were pulled from the fields of copycat branding [Food/Other], consumer restaurant preferences [Quick Service/Casual], and authenticity [Irish/Food/General]. In a research field this specific, secondary data was not sufficient to complete research objectives, thus primary data was pursued.

3.5.2 Quantitative

The quantitative portion of this research study was used to measure consumer's fast casual patronage and perspectives. Quantitative data was collected using Formstack survey software, with a subscription purchased for the completion of this study. Formstack suits this research because of its accessible and attractive interface, as well as its sophisticated cross-tabulation abilities to permit a smoother analysis.

The central conceptual framework adapted for this study is the DinEX model initially found in research by Bujisic & Hutchison, and created by Antun et. al in 2010. The DinEX was developed using a confirmatory analysis approach and adds factors related to "social connectedness and homophily" to the classically researched restaurant elements *service*, *food* and *atmosphere*. In total, it analyses five spheres: *food*, *service*, *atmosphere*, *social*, and *health*, further subdivided into meta-evaluations weighted by importance. In its normal state, the DinEX is a highly detailed scale, requiring in-depth evaluation by consumers. The researcher found this level of detail untenable when asking consumers to evaluate as many as six restaurants, and aimed to avoid such response fatigue.

For the purposes of new research, the DinEX was adapted and condensed:

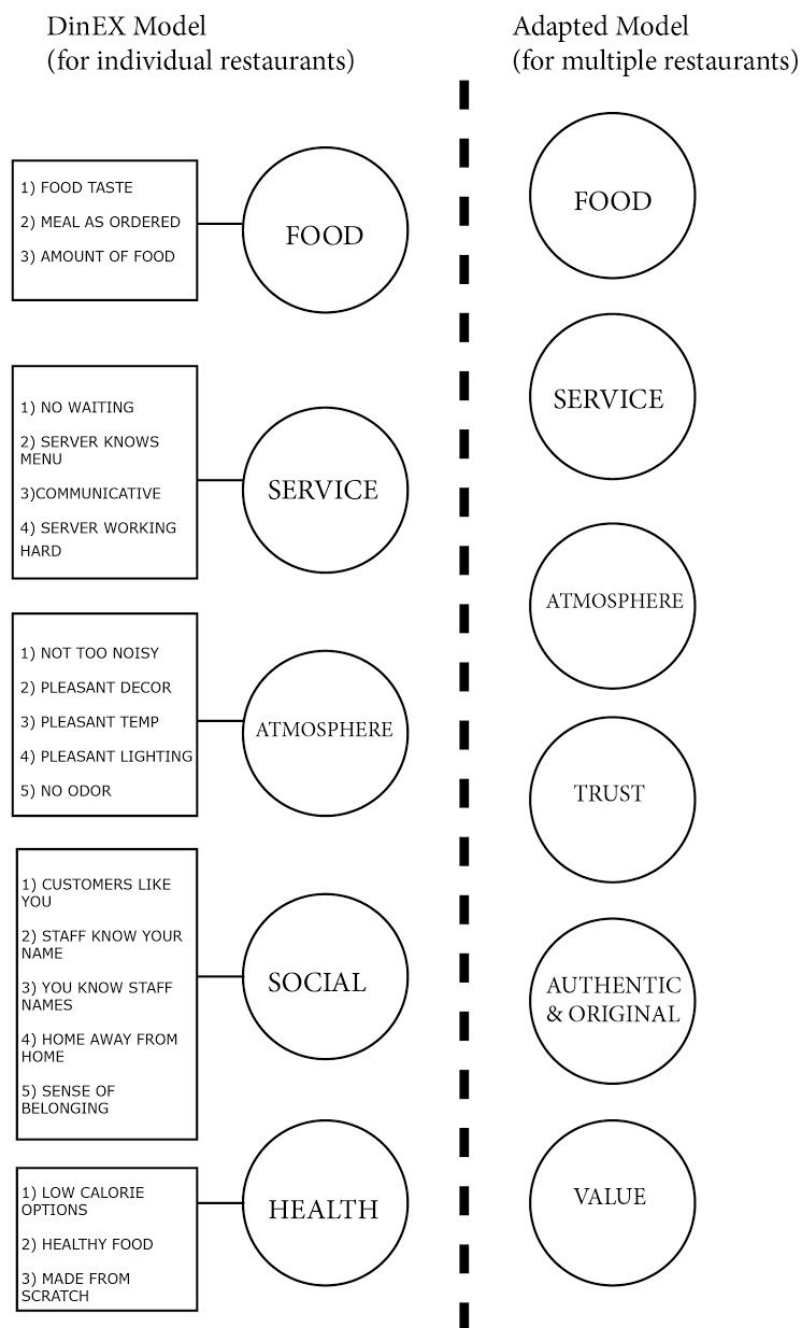


Fig. 4 Adapted DinEX Model

The researcher will retain the DinEX's evaluation of food, service, and atmosphere, as they are considered foundational to restaurant evaluation [Antun 2010]. However, the new study will remove "Health" and "Social" evaluations to accommodate "Trustworthiness," "Authentic & Original," and "Good Value," which better fit the goals of this research. Two of these

attributes were adapted from a non-DinEX study [Chang 2013]: trustworthiness, which has notable associations with authenticity, and value, which is integral to the fast casual category [Franchise Times 2008]. As well as being a central focus of new research, Authentic & Original concepts make their way into many meta-evaluations of DinEX. Elements like *Do the staff know your name?* and *Is the food made from scratch?* share a natural relation to authentic ideals. Thus, adding this as a bespoke evaluation category seemed pertinent to a consumer's restaurant evaluation.

The DinEX's 4-point Likert type scale was retained, as was their 2-factor ratings of the 1) importance of attributes and subsequent 2) evaluation of restaurants. Following the collection of this data, Foxman & Berger's cognitive styles were attributed to consumer response trends, as will the many parameters for authenticity by authors.

In total, six Dublin restaurants were available to evaluate: five copycats, as well as one control non-copycat to compare results. The restaurants were primarily selected because of their relation to the research population. Five are available on the Lunch Team delivery platform, while the sixth, Token, provided a cluster sampling frame. Token was deemed an "original" control restaurant for a number of reasons. First, the researcher had experience developing Token's branding, and could therefore confirm it did not include any direct copycatting methods. Second, as Token is the only restaurant of its kind in Ireland [combining dining with video gaming], it received a strong amount of press since opening. This suggests the restaurant's "Authenticity & Originality" will be fairly well-known by the selected population. The five copycats [Eddie Rocket's, Eathos, Pitt Bros, Boojum, and Chopped] were selected as copycats for similar reasons. Each restaurant had some form of discussion about its copycat status present on the Internet, and each shares a number of objective similarities with brand leaders. It is important to note, however, that not each copycat functions as a pure imitation of the original. Some have made an attempt to distance themselves by adopting new features, such as different logos or trade dress. A variety of appropriation levels will be examined, which may help elucidate why some copycats perform better than others in consumer assessment. A full detailing of these restaurants' copycat methods is available in Appendices A.1 - A.5.

To reiterate, the hypotheses of the quantitative survey are as follows:

Hypotheses Summary	
H₁	A decreased "Importance of: Authenticity" has a positive moderating effect on the assessment of "Food Quality" and "Authenticity" of a copycat restaurant.
H₂	Decreased experience of an original restaurant will have a positive moderating effect on the assessment of the copycat restaurant.
H₃	Importance of "Trustworthiness" and "Authenticity" will not be evaluated identically. Likewise, a copycat will not need to be rated high on "Authentic & Original" for it to be rated highly as "Trustworthy."
H₄	If a consumer has a negative view of the copycatting practice, it will not necessarily stop them from patronising a copycat restaurant.

Hypothesis 2 was adapted from a model created by We Fong Ma in his smartphone copycat survey. His hypothesis model appears below:

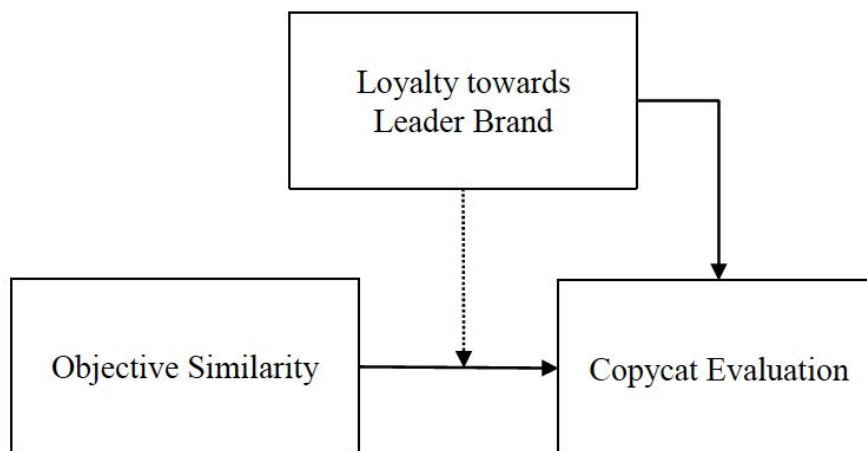
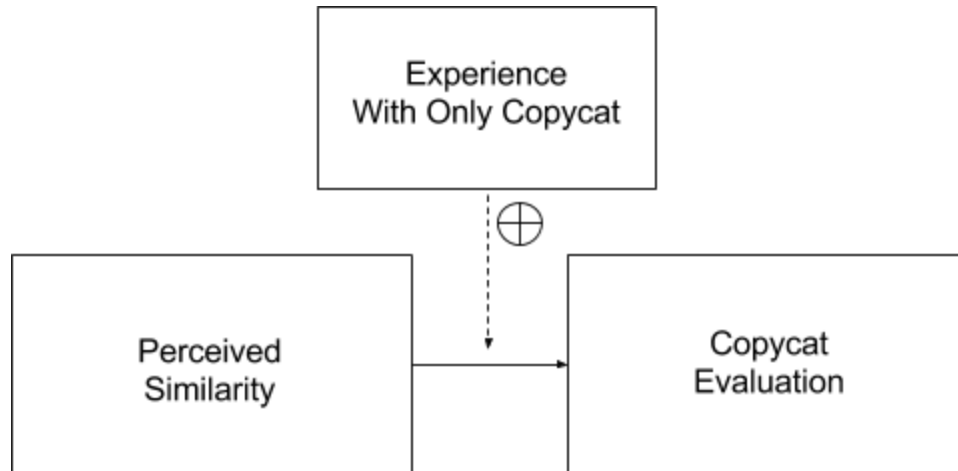


Fig. 5 - We Fong Ma's hypothesis model

As it is suggested that more brand experience yields more brand loyalty [Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009], it was worthwhile to test the hypothesis in this new research context. Loyalty was not evaluated in this setting, as the leader brand is not in the consumer's choice set. Therefore, a customer's experience level with an original was used in place of authenticity to observe if it had an effect on the overall evaluation.

A revised model based on this emerged:



H2: Decreased experience of an original restaurant will have a positive moderating effect on the assessment of the copycat restaurant.

Fig. 6 - Hypothesis 2 Adapted Model

Likert scales are one of the most common instruments for quantitative research. The 4-point scale was selected rather than the standard 5-point to avoid a “central tendency” bias in respondents. By removing a “neutral” option, respondents were forced to make a decision regarding their evaluation. The only restaurants a user could evaluate were ones they had attended at least once before, which the researcher believed provided the contextual background required to develop an assessment. However for questions where a user may not have the necessary background to answer [i.e. “Is Copycat Y a suitable substitute for Original Z?”] users were given the option to respond neutrally. Because the survey could require assessment of up to 40 individual evaluations, a 4-point scale was also preferred because larger scales may lead to response fatigue, and therefore less reliable data. [This was tested in Chapter 4 using Cronbach’s Alpha equation.]

Perhaps most importantly, it is important to remember when interpreting data from a Likert scale that, as ordinal data, finding a mean from this data is essentially meaningless

[Jamieson 2004]. The descriptive code nature of these numbers means their only value comes through their ability to be ranked, and they do not possess an inherent mathematical value. Variability and patterns of a Likert scale, then, were determined through the practices of finding medians and Interquartile Ranges [IQR] to find the most popular responses and the strongest points of contention among respondents, as is the appropriate methodology for ordinal data.

3.5.3 Qualitative

The qualitative research takes a phenomenological approach, seeking to find patterns and themes that form context around quantitative data. Preparation for collecting interview data was formed by creating a thematic framework that manipulated a colour identification process. This allowed themes to be highlighted along the research process, from the literature review up to future recommendations. This process produced a number of salient findings, such as the cyclical nature of Irish food trends. The model was fine-tuned following in-depth interviews, showing how these broader themes could be focalised into pertinent areas for Irish consumer behavior.

The model developed to frame interview structure is as follows:

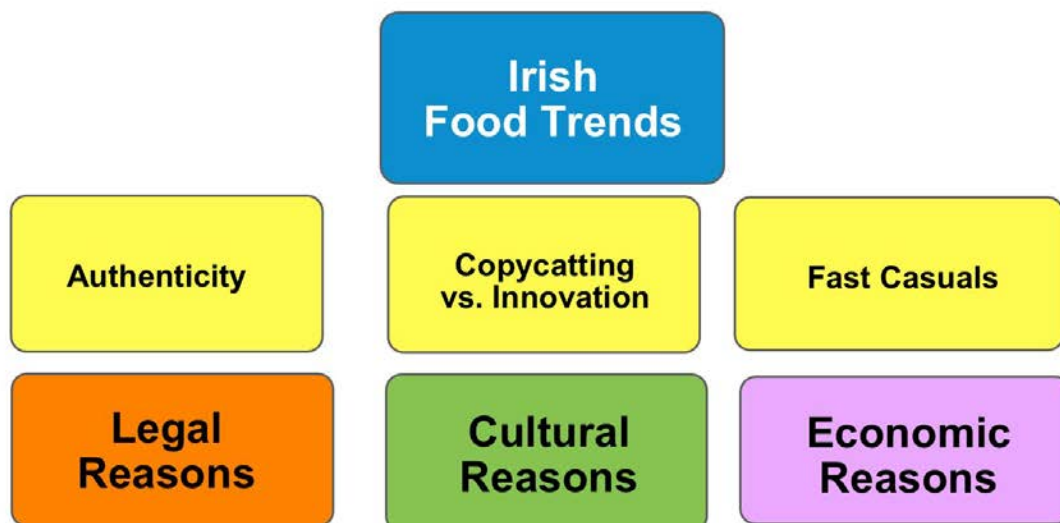


Fig. 7 Qualitative Theme Map

Upon reflection of the qualitative data, these broad themes were further explicated for an Irish context. These adapted thematic pots may help serve as memory aids to future research on Irish copycat branding. Indeed, the great appeal from this kind of framework analysis [developed originally by Ritchie and Spencer, 1994] is that themes may be developed from research questions, secondary data, and that of primary research.

In total, four interviews were conducted. Two interviews took place in November at the Dublin Institute of Technology's School of Culinary Arts. The first, Mairtin Mac Con Iomaire, is a career chef turned Food Studies professor, specialising in Dublin restaurant history. The second, Diarmuid Murphy, comes from a hotel and restaurant management background and teaches in the same program. He is currently completing PhD research into Dublin and London restaurant consumer groups. In addition to experts with academic backgrounds, two fast casual owners were interviewed to gauge the current state of the restaurant scene, and how copycats may or may not be affecting their business. The first, Harry Colley, is a chef and former operator of innovative restaurant project DUBLIN POPUP, which hosted bespoke and temporary food experiences in the city. He is also part owner of The Fumbally cafe and event space in Dublin, as well as the host of food podcast "With Relish." The second business owner is Nicholas Dimaio, director of Token, used as the control "original" restaurant in the quantitative survey. Token is Dimaio's first foray into the food industry, but has operated Dublin retail businesses for the last 15 years. All of these interviews resulted in thematic links, despite the variety of academic and professional backgrounds.

Data collection methods for qualitative interviews required recording devices, transcription services and script preparations on behalf of the researcher. The method of implementation was face-to-face interviews to allow for a more intimate method of data collection. This is the best way to conduct qualitative research, as it allows the conversation to flow more naturally, thus yielding more open and candid responses [Green 2016].

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

The data procured from this study was handled as its respective collection method required. When detailing the quantitative survey results, the study's sample population was restated, as will the primary question, to remind the reader of the research context. Because the survey was formulated using research objectives and hypotheses, these were also repeated. As there was a surplus of available data that could be included, any results had to relate directly to objectives and hypotheses, or else relate to findings in the literature review. Important insights were represented using tables and figures, as well as descriptive text. Analysis of quantitative methods required rigorous use of models to reflect trends and test hypotheses, including OLS regressions, cross-tabulation bar graphs, and expression of Interquartile data. Raw data was organised and analysed using Google Sheets as well as Formstack software.

Qualitative findings proceeded quantitative in Chapter 4. While there is no space for statistical models in the synthesis of this data, themes were addressed using formal structures of headings and subheadings, with the researcher placing pertinent findings into colour coded thematic pots. This phenomenological data sought to answer the *why* beneath the quantitative results, and direct quotes were pulled from transcripts to further cultivate a narrative element. Analysis required reading transcripts as well as notes from the time of interview multiple times. From there, research could progress towards an adapted framework that allowed for a more open form of interpretation.

3.7 Ethical Issues of Research

Collecting data from incentivised visitors of a fast casual restaurant or delivery service comes with both benefits and selection bias risk. Problems may have arisen if respondents tried to express preferences that would help them "win" the reward. Attempts were made to safeguard against this by affirming the random nature of the lottery prize and anonymity of survey responses.

Informed consent was paramount to all areas of primary research. Every survey participant was given a detailed explanation of their rights and anonymity with regards to the survey.

Qualitative respondents were made aware their name would be included. All respondents and interviewed parties signed a consent form, either digitally or in person, in order to be included in the study.

Because copycatting as a practice is a morally ambiguous concept, it was important for the content of the survey & questionnaire to avoid outright judgment of the practice. Because there were real restaurants being evaluated, it was important to perform beneficence to avoid harm done to their reputation. This is particularly pertinent to avoid due to the survey's dissemination through Token and Lunch Team, who permitted use of their mailing lists and would not want a negative association attached to the survey. As with the analysis, the structure of the survey was positioned to remove any value-based judgment from colouring its questions or tone.

Finally, when adopting a Pragmatic approach, the researcher had to take steps to remove their personal bias from colouring results or recommendations of the study. Awareness that results may not align with the author's own beliefs had to be accounted for and treated as objectively as possible when recounting the data collected.

3.8 Limitations of Methodology

As the researcher's first foray into academic research methods, there are potential limitations to the scope and analysis of the findings. While research and careful planning was performed, it is possible some methodological approaches did not meet the best practice standard. When developing the questionnaire, the researcher acted alone, therefore making their own decisions and assumptions as to what was and was not important. There is the potential to miss something of importance to a study when a researcher operates alone [Flyvbjerg 2006].

Improper representation of the target population may also have prevented the researcher from achieving her desired objectives. The sampling frame, while relevant and accessible, also contains direct ties to the surveyed fast casuals. Therefore, responses may not have reflected parts of the population with less of a relationship to these restaurants. In questionnaire surveys, there are few ways to tell how truthful respondents are being, nor how much thought was put into their responses [Popper 1959].

As mentioned in 2.3, the field of food service remains a difficult industry to evaluate. Copycat restaurants provide a more dynamic sensory space compared to the more often studied fast moving consumer goods sector. These factors can cause response evaluation to change given on the day, creating an even more context-dependent result than other product/service categories. There are intangible thematic elements to a restaurant experience [described as a “buzz” by one in-depth interviewee], and these factors prove more difficult to analyze in a formal academic manner. As a consumer behavior study which depended on the subjective response of the consumer, findings were resolutely tend-to in status rather than concrete determinations.

Many of the limitations of qualitative studies were abetted or reduced by a mixed methods approach. However, the in-depth interview approach still lead to a few shortfalls a questionnaire could not solve. First, the number of interviewed bodies was small. Transcription and analysis was a lengthy and somewhat expensive process, which necessitated a low number of interviews. Therefore, the response variation and depth is likely not as deep as it could have been. More specifically, interviews with copycat restaurant owners, Irish governmental bodies, and food-focused marketing agencies could have provided deeper and more nuanced insight than those with experience solely within the non-copycat restaurant business.

Still, with awareness of these limitations in mind and proper steps taken to mitigate them, the opportunity for research insight remains contracted, but pertinent.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Data Collection & Analysis

4.1 Quantitative Summary

In total, 400 individuals participated in the survey text. While this was enough to create a survey population of the entire city, the target demographic of professionals 25 - 39 was deemed too relevant to change at this stage. Some responses were therefore not used in the study, such as those who did not pass the pre-test requirements of age, location and employment status, or those who rated restaurants identically through the entirety of the survey. Having unreliable observations has the potential to skew productive results. For this reason, any results that had a response variation of zero were eliminated.

In the end, 272 vetted responses formed the base of this data. Of this, 123 responses came from email list for Token, while 159 came from Lunch Team subscribers. The survey was sent out on a rolling basis to separate the two survey sample clusters. Token subscribers were given access from November 7th to November 29th, and the survey was made separately available to Lunch Team's subscribers the week of December 7th. This allowed the researcher to review each set of responses independently to determine any significant differences in the two populations. These 272 responses allowed for a 6% margin of error with a 95% confidence level. The average age of the participants was 31, with a standard deviation of 3.9.

While a 4-point Likert scale has been used in previous related studies, best practice dictates testing the scale regardless. The most common methodology for testing scale reliability is Cronbach's Alpha, and was the mode of choice in this survey. A 4-point scale and a 5-point scale were used in this survey alongside Yes/No/NA radio buttons and checkboxes. The 4-point scale had two labels, one which delegated importance, and the other quality assessment. The 5-point scale was used only once to report frequency of patronage at fast casual restaurants. The evaluation scale displayed a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.947 for Token's cluster and .951 for Lunch Team. This places the reliability of results in the excellent range and should result in efficacious data. Additionally, this high coefficient suggests survey response fatigue did not occur.

It is important to reiterate that respondents were only given access to evaluate a restaurant if they reported having visited before. This allowed for a more faithful assessment, but naturally lead to a disparity between the amount of responses for each restaurant. When medians were found for broader assessments like the “overall rating” of the copycat restaurants, results were weighted to reflect this difference in patronage.

All qualified respondents reported visiting a fast casual restaurant in Dublin before, with 68% of respondents having visited 3 or more of the 6 restaurants. Eddie Rocket’s was the most commonly experienced copycat, with 91.5% of respondents reporting having visited at least once before. Eathos had the lowest experience rate at 18.6%. When assessing the importance of certain restaurant qualities, the two most important attributes were Food Quality and Good Value [Mdn 4], with Service, Authenticity, and Trust scoring similarly [Mdn 3, IQR 1]. Style & Atmosphere was the only result with an IQR difference of 2, indicating a slightly more divided opinion on its importance to large segments of the population.

When eating at a fast casual restaurant, how important are the following things to you?

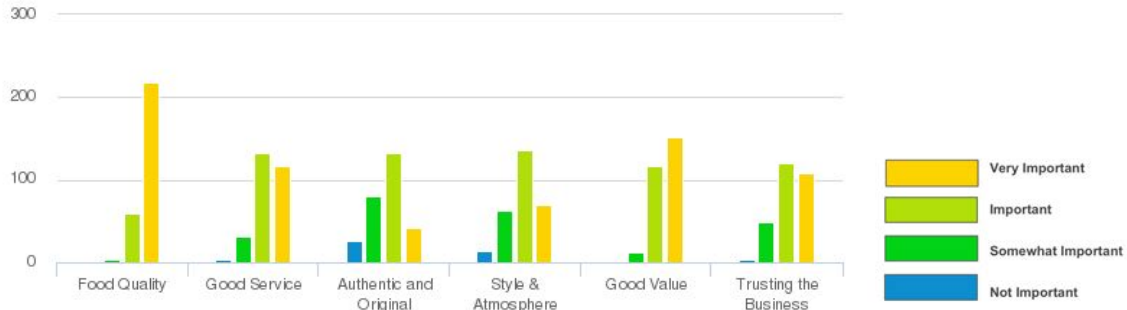


Fig. 8 - Importance of Restaurant Attributes

While the median score of the overall importance of restaurant qualities sat at 3.5 [between Important and Very Important], the median rating of the copycat restaurants came in at 3 [Good]. The largest disparity between importance and evaluation appears to be the attribute of Good Value at copycat fast casuals. Rated at 4 [Extremely Important] to consumers, the median score for copycat restaurants was 2.5 [Fair to Good]. Possible reasons for this will be addressed in the Discussion. A cursory look at Authenticity appears to indicate consumer satisfaction, scoring a median of 3 [Good] as well a median 3 for importance. Overall, it appears that while the feedback for copycat restaurants is Good,

there are areas of improvement that could improve this evaluation, particularly in regards to Good Value and Food Quality [Mdn 2.5, 3]. Eathos was the only copycat restaurant to score a median of 4 [Excellent] in any attribute [Food Quality]. It is interesting to note the original restaurant Token received a 4 median score in four distinct categories: Authenticity, Food Quality, Style and Trustworthiness. This will be explored further in Chapter 5.

Top Consumer Restaurant Preferences
1 Food Quality [Mdn 4, IQR 0]
2 Good Value [Mdn 4, IQR 1]
3 Good Service [Mdn 3, IQR 1]
4 Trustworthiness [Mdn 3, IQR 1], Style & Atmosphere [Mdn 3, IQR 2], Authentic & Original [Mdn 3, IQR 1]

Fig. 9 - Importance Ranking

4.1.1 Quantitative Hypothesis Summary

This section provides a summary of the hypotheses that were tested, with a deeper discussion and analysis included in Chapter 5 . Two out of four hypotheses related to the concept of authenticity in fast casual copycats, observing how this attribute was evaluated across clusters and against other qualities. One hypothesis considered the effect of increased experience with an original restaurant on the evaluation of a copycat, and the last considered the ability of consumers to judge copycats poorly without reducing their patronage.

This table provides a summary of the results of the tests described in Chapter 5:

Hypotheses		Support for Hypotheses
H₁	A decreased "Importance of: Authenticity" has a positive moderating effect on the assessment of "Food Quality" and "Authenticity" of a copycat restaurant.	No [no effect]
H₂	Decreased experience of an original restaurant will have a positive moderating effect on the assessment of the copycat restaurant.	No [not in the predicted direction]
H₃	Importance of "Trustworthiness" and "Authenticity" will not be evaluated identically. Likewise, a copycat will not need to be rated high on "Authentic & Original" for it to be rated highly as "Trustworthy."	Yes
H₄	If a consumer has a negative view of the copycatting practice, it will not necessarily stop them from patronising a copycat restaurant.	Yes

Fig. 10 - Hypotheses Support Table

4.5 Qualitative Summary

Following a thematic template developed from a literature review of Irish consumer behavior, data from the qualitative in-depth interviews easily adapted into the framework. Numerous useful insights from these restaurant professionals and academics were drawn together to uncover motivations behind Dublin consumer behavior and the copycatting phenomenon:

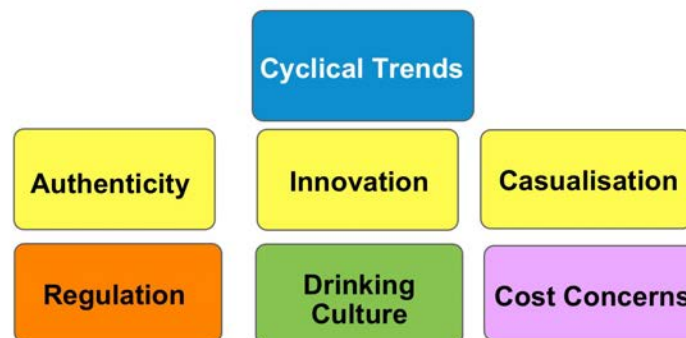


Fig. 11 - Qualitative Theme Adapted Map

4.2.1 Consumer Trends

In beginning the analysis of the qualitative data, feedback was collected on consumer trends as the experts perceived them. Professor Diarmuid Murphy described the modern consumer landscape as one where consumers expect a plethora of choice and self-identify as “discerning consumers.” However, alongside this self-conception is a stark lack of awareness of what actually happens inside restaurant kitchens. Therefore, Murphy attributes the importance of restaurant attributes to the *perception* of quality and authenticity, rather than any tangible reality. Likewise, in-depth interviewee Mairtin Mac Con Iomaire shares a similar perspective. He believes the study’s demographic of professionals 25 - 39 have food tastes and preferences that are highly influenced by the aesthetics of social media culture. This kind of content, he posits, contributes to a consumer’s love for food storytelling, but does not perform the heavy lifting required to inspire a real dedication to or knowledge of food provenance. As a self-described advocate of the chef, Mac Con Iomaire does not see most fast casuals as legitimate “restaurants” at all, because they frequently do not hire chefs to oversee operations or menu development. However, both professors agreed that the fast casual food category is particularly popular within the selected age demographic, and remains successful in spite of its perceived culinary shortcomings.

4.2.2 Authenticity

All interview bodies acknowledged the *perceived* importance of authenticity in Ireland - not just to consumers, but from the country’s own food marketing messaging. However, they also shared a certain distaste for the term, as well as expressing doubts for any way of consumers quantifying it:

“I don’t like the word authentic because I don’t think there is such a thing.” MM

“Quality is valued highly by consumers, but it’s just a perception.

Authenticity stops at the counter.” DM

Interviewee Mac Con Iomaire went so as far to say they don’t believe authenticity is truly possible in the fast casual category, let alone in copycats. This, he argues, goes down to

the fundamental nature of the fast casual operational procedures. He cites examples of visiting fast casuals for a cohort analysis and asking to speak with the chef, only to find many fast casuals did not have a staff member present who self-defined as such. To a professional chef like Mac Con Iomaire, this lack of menu experimentation, management or quality control effectively limits the fast casual's ability to produce an authentic product at all, regardless of branding origins. Even Harry Colley, chef behind the local sustainable breakfast hub The Fumbally seems to agree that authenticity "doesn't really matter" to Irish consumers. It's a choice his restaurant has made, he says, because it is something he believes in, but by and large is not a key deciding factor for many consumers. He acknowledges his consumers don't actually know the source of his ingredients, and it is likely a case of perception vs. proven reality that earns their patronage.

4.2.3 Innovation

*"At the moment the buzzwords are all about 'local, sustainable.'
As a food historian, I say, 'Jesus, here we go again.'" MM*

The cyclical nature of food trends in Dublin was addressed by many interviewed parties. As a historian of Irish food, Mac Con Iomaire states that the current trend of authenticity and provenance is more likely a passing phenomenon than any innovative psychological shift. Provenant food, he states, first appeared as a trend in the nouvelle cuisine movement of the 1970's, and has re-entered the discussion of food culture many times. While he believes that "nothing is new," he does see some form of innovation in fast casuals, in that many provide "something that is uniquely rich" - a signature high-calorie menu item that separates their menu from competitors. He states it is extremely difficult to get restaurant funding for a concept that has not been tested in Ireland, let alone in general, which puts a damper on the ability to innovate. He reminds the interviewer "The best way to make a small fortune in restaurants is by starting with a large fortune." As will be discussed later, there are cost concerns that prevent many aspiring restaurateurs from creating an innovative offering in Ireland. Yet Diarmuid Murphy found that the product life cycle of Dublin food trends is faster than ever, and supplying some form of "exotic non-homogenous fare" is vital gaining interest or popularity. These interviews reinforced that a tokenised innovation concept appears more common than a top-down approach.

4.2.4 Casualisation

One key positive element found in multiple interviews is the fast casual's accessibility to a wide variety of consumers. Their price point and casual environment makes them more democratic than the "white tablecloth, special event" restaurants that long dominated the Irish restaurant market [MM]. Many experts view this as a positive contribution, as it brought the young demographic "out of the pub" and interested in food culture more than before. Restaurants are, in general, a "harder sell" in Dublin [DM], mainly due to the popularity of pub culture with both residents and tourists of Ireland [4.5.6]. Fast casual owners Coffey and Dimaio see this casualisation of the dining experience as a generally beneficial trend, as it gives consumers the ability to afford and experiment with and try foods that were previously unavailable to them. However, this demand to provide great value in a casual environment may inhibit the full potential for innovation and quality in Dublin's restaurant market. As seen in the next theme, there are additional factors that prevent many from entering the market at all.

4.2.5 Regulation

When delving into the legal procedure of opening a restaurant in Ireland, it became clear that legislation is a potential trouble area for restaurateurs looking to open a business. This "red tape nightmare" [DM] could help explain the prevalence of copycat restaurants in Dublin, as copycats are often owned by serial entrepreneurs with experience in quick, efficient restaurant openings. Diarmuid Murphy states that the main impediment to a better restaurant culture in Dublin is the "not quite cartel, but close" of the Irish Vintners Association [publican advocacy group]. The ability for a restaurant to sell alcohol under a full license in Ireland is exceedingly difficult and expensive, as pub licenses are made available on a fixed-number, bidding basis rather than case-by-case application. Murphy cites a similar license in the UK being available for less than 1000 GBP, while Irish equivalent bids start at 100,000 EUR. This can discourage restaurants from pursuing a full alcohol license, which Murphy finds tantamount to a "complete experience" of a leisurely dining experience. This tends to bifurcate a consumer's evening between both restaurant & pub, and may explain the popularity of a "quick in, quick out" fast casual experience.

Token's owner Nicholas Dimaio reports his restaurant's opening was pushed back 6 months in order to legally obtain and finance the transfer of a full pub license, a timeline that can be prohibitively expensive when accounting for operational costs like city centre leaseholds.

This "punitive" legislation [DM] in Ireland towards restaurants selling alcohol appears to be a contributing factor to the copycat phenomenon, according to these interviews. For serial entrepreneurs who prioritise expediency and the bottom line, it appears more logical to open a fast casual that can be fit into a portion of a consumer's evening plan rather than try to retain customers for an entire evening. Many original/leader restaurant brands from other countries know these regulations, and choose to not bother expanding into the Irish market [DM]. Instead, brands will sometimes provide the ability to franchise their offering, but this is not always the case. Knowing leaders are reluctant to enter the market, yet aware that Irish consumers are receptive to fast casuals, a space appears to open for copycat restaurants to fill.

4.2.6 Pub Culture

The restrictive legislation behind restaurants providing alcohol is directly related to the popularity of drinking culture in Ireland, as the Vintner's Association is reported as having a longstanding advantage over restaurants through its lobbying efforts [MM]. The government's prioritisation of pubs over restaurants appears to be a de facto reality to those in the restaurant industry. "Foreigners don't open Irish restaurants," says Diarmuid Murphy, "they open Irish pubs." Drink taking precedence over food appears common in Irish culture, yet this is not necessarily posed as a bad thing by those in the industry. "I love the pub," says Harry Colley. "And I think part of why we're drawn to fast casuals is we can fit it in between the pubs on a night out." It appears culturally in Ireland, food functions as a practical necessity, while drink is a socialising pleasure. While the overall interest in food is increasing in Dublin as the city grows, a lingering preference for pub over restaurant may explain the Irish consumers' general satisfaction with copycats. They may be seen to fulfil a functional duty rather than a keystone of an evening out.

4.2.7 Cost Concerns

One factor that relates closely to other themes is the importance of good value and cost concerns to Irish consumers. This appears to be a subject that begins with the first stages of a restaurant's lifecycle in Ireland. Most fast casual owners, Mac Con Iomaire explains, do not own the buildings from which they operate. Therefore, high operational costs can dampen the ability to provide exceptionally low prices unless significant starting capital is obtained. Fines and fees resulting from running a restaurant up to regulation standards also put pressure on the bottom line of restaurateurs, says Colley. The absence of a union for chefs in Ireland, explains Mac Con Iomaire, may also contribute to a lack of professional chefs providing apprenticeship to casual restaurant line cooks. This keeps the general salary of cooks at fast casuals low, but limits the ability for cooks to "move up the ranks" while working there. The concept of "good value" emerged as a result of the recession, says Mac Con Iomaire, as restaurants were expected to accommodate for a lower amount of disposable income with consumers. During this time, restaurants began to provide value options or "meal deals" as a regular feature, which is retained in many fast casual menus to this day.

From a consumer's standpoint, posit Colley and Dimaio, the economic state of young Dublin professionals may also contribute to the high prioritisation of good value in the restaurant survey [Mdn 4]. While salaries have raised by less than 5% in most sectors in the past year [CSO 2016], the average cost of renting in Dublin has raised by 15%. This naturally leads to less disposable income for consumers across all categories, including food. When combined with a general prioritisation of pubs over restaurants as an evening experience, the importance of value to restaurant-going patrons elevates further.

4.2.8 Qualitative Summary

Interviews with field experts delivered insights into the building blocks of restaurant development in Ireland, in addition to providing potential explanations for why quantitative feedback resulted as it did. Again, these insights are grounded in the internal structure of Dublin's restaurant legislation and history, which in turn reflect how consumers engage and maintain relationships with these establishments. The same authenticity response - namely, that it functions as a perception-based "lip service" rather than cornerstone of assessment [DM] - remained consistent across the quantitative and qualitative findings.

It is evident in these findings that cultural and economic reasonings exist for the copycat phenomenon in Ireland, and that the consumers' responses fit inside these unique environmental factors.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Discussion

When examining the results of both quantitative and qualitative data, it appears the Irish consumer is generally amenable to the concept of copycats. The general perception of copycat fast casuals in Dublin fell into a “good” perception ranking, with a median rating of 3 on the 4-point Likert scale. However, upon analysing the data and following the in-depth interviews with experts in Dublin’s food industry, some interesting points of discussion emerged that added detail and nuance to these findings.

5.1 Hypothesis Testing

Data analysis provided a general review of the data collected, proved the reliability of the study, and introduced the results of the hypotheses for discussion. This section will evaluate the statistical results of the hypotheses laid out and provide a deeper look into their implications.

5.1.1 Hypothesis 1

A decreased “Importance of: Authenticity” has a positive moderating effect on the assessment of “Food Quality” and “Authenticity” of a copycat restaurant.

This hypothesis was formed in part from Foxman & Berger’s work, which sought to segment consumers by cognitive style. Differences in cognitive style can indicate the level of skill with which a consumer is able to identify an authentic brand from a copycat. Research has not yet investigated the importance of authenticity to consumers as related to their ability to identify a copycat. Testing this hypothesis had two aims: to see if a high importance of authenticity was related to the ability to see a copycat as *inauthentic*, and if those with a lower valuation of authenticity were more receptive to copycats.

Responses were segmented into a lower and upper tier. Those who valued “Authentic & Original” as non-key attributes [1 - Not Important or 2 - Somewhat Important] were placed against those who ranked higher [3 - Important or 4 - Very Important]. From there,

responses from these consumers rating the Food Quality & Authenticity of each copycat were recorded and compared against each other in an OLS regression to observe behavior.

Statistical differences between the two categories proved minimal. Despite the difference in prioritising Authentic & Original, both segments had highly similar ratings of copycats in terms of the selected observed attributes. The regression model reiterates this:

Food Quality Evaluation

High Importance		Low Importance	
<i>Regression Statistics</i>		<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.04513163456	Multiple R	0.02103331881
R Square	0.002036864438	R Square	0.0004424005
Adjusted R Square	0.0000002049779876	Adjusted R Square	-0.002792413738
Standard Error	0.7919230328	Standard Error	0.7807829826
Observations	492	Observations	311
<i>Coefficients</i>		<i>Coefficients</i>	
Intercept	3.287030075	Intercept	3.111869685
High Importance	-0.08515037594	Low Importance	-0.03940591688

Authenticity Evaluation

High Importance		Low Importance	
<i>Regression Statistics</i>		<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.01506875753	Multiple R	0.04373101229
R Square	0.0002270674536	R Square	0.001912401436
Adjusted R Square	-0.00181328547	Adjusted R Square	-0.001317655517
Standard Error	0.8332569655	Standard Error	0.861152534
Observations	492	Observations	311
<i>Coefficients</i>		<i>Coefficients</i>	
Intercept	2.684022556	Intercept	2.858545934
High Importance	0.02988721805	Low Importance	-0.09042999162

Fig. 12 - Hypothesis 1 Regression Model

From observing the two regressions, it appears that the "Importance of Authenticity" to a consumer has minimal impact on whether a copycat will be perceived as inauthentic or not. This seems to indicate that perhaps consumers' personal definitions of "Authentic & Original" may be receptive to including copycats. With a median rating of 3 [Good], consumers ranked copycats 1 point behind the original restaurant Token in terms of authenticity, but still offered an overall positive assessment.

5.1.2 Hypothesis 2

Decreased experience of an original restaurant will have a positive moderating effect on the assessment of the copycat restaurant.

Another hypothesis related to consumers' evaluation of copycats relates back to W. Ma's research on smartphone copycats. His research hypothesized that increased loyalty towards a leader brand would lead to a more negative evaluation of a copycat. Loyalty is not a topic of study in this research, as the leader brand is not directly available in Ireland and therefore cannot be "chosen" by consumers. However, it appeared useful to try and find evidence between a consumer's brand experience with an original restaurant and their ensuing evaluation of a copycat. In observing the data pertaining to original brands, Chipotle proved the most well-known, with 80% of respondents reporting hearing of it before.

For hypothesis 2, consumers were segmented into two subsets: those who had been to both the original and copycat restaurants, and those who had only been to the copycat. Their responses were then compared against each other across each restaurant attribute category. Ultimately, experience of the original restaurant had a negligible effect on the overall valuation of a copycat. In some cases, like that of burrito shop Boojum, those who had been to the original [Chipotle] even rated Boojum's Food Quality better [Mdn 4, IQR 1] than those who had not been to the original [Mdn 3, IQR 1]. Perhaps most important to note, evaluations on Authenticity remained consistent, with 4 of 5 restaurants reaching identical medians and IQRs across the board.

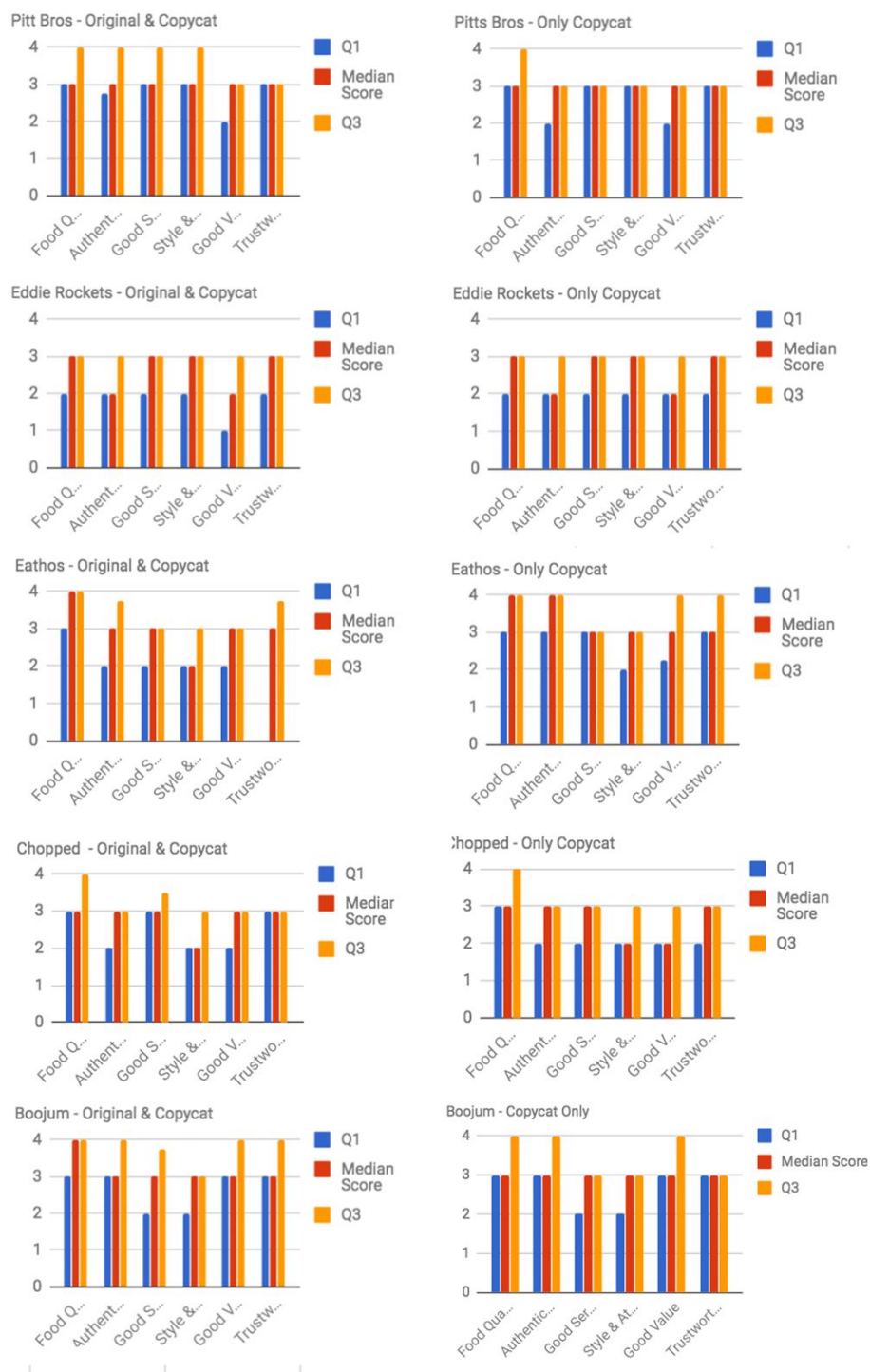


Fig. 7 - Hypothesis 2 Comparison Graphs

The Low Experience/High Experience groups were examined further to gauge their response towards whether a copycat restaurant was considered a worthy substitute. The Yes:No rate of answering across both categories was 3:1, meaning 75% of people who gave a decisive

response on this question found a copycat worthy, regardless of whether they'd been to the original. Of those who had experienced both restaurants, just 16.7% found the Dublin equivalent an *unworthy* substitute [compared to 5.74% of those who had not been to the original.] In both subsets, the option to select N/A was chosen more often than "No" - 19.66%, and 71.41%, respectively. While it is understandable that those who have not been to an original restaurant opted out of rating a copycat's substitutability, it is noteworthy that more consumers who have visited both chose "N/A" over "No." This may indicate a hesitancy to see the two restaurants as categorically comparable at all, despite their similarities.

For both Hypotheses 1 and 2, it appears that neither a high importance of Authenticity nor experience with an original restaurant have a significant effect on a consumer's valuation of copycats.

5.1.3 Hypothesis 3

Importance of "Trustworthiness" and "Authenticity" will not necessarily be evaluated identically. Likewise, a copycat will not need to be rated highly "Authentic & Original" for it to be rated highly "Trustworthy."

Because Trustworthiness and Authenticity were the two morally thematic evaluations, and because literature in 2.4 places trust as a direct result of authenticity to consumers, it seemed worthwhile to observe their interplay in a copycat study. The hypothesis that a copycat will not need to be ranked as highly authentic to be seen as trustworthy stems from the mutable nature of authenticity's definition in the literature review. This hypothesis contests the interplay of the two moral attributes, and posits that they may not be mutually inclusive. It was worthwhile to see if trustworthiness, while perceived as a result of authenticity, could be retrieved by other means for copycat brands.

The importance of trustworthiness and authenticity both received a median weight of 3 [Important], however the IQR varies, as Authentic & Original's interquartile range is closer to 2 [Somewhat Important], while Trust is closer to 4 [Very Important.] This does indicate some variation between the two assessments, placing Trust as higher priority over Authenticity. When examining the evaluations, however, only 1 of the 5 copycats [Eddie Rockets] resulted in a full point difference between Trustworthiness [3] and Authentic &

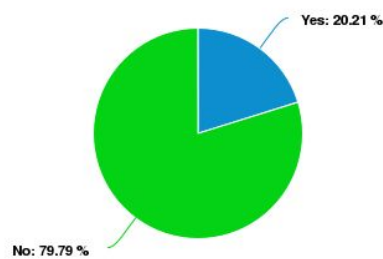
Original [2]. In terms of a consumer's ability to evaluate trust and authenticity differently, results do not indicate a statistical significance within copycat fast casuals.

5.3.4 Hypothesis 4

If a consumer has a negative view of the copycatting practice, it will not necessarily stop them from patronising a copycat restaurant.

This hypothesis was developed from a number of studies that indicated an incongruous stance from consumers regarding their evaluation of copycats and originals [van Horen 2014, Ma 2015, Grayson & Martinec 2004]. Previous findings often revealed conflicting ideologies within a single survey; for instance, rating a copycat negatively yet still reaching for it when in a buying mindset [van Horen 2014.] Authenticity is a concept often prioritised by marketers in Ireland, which presumably meant it would be valued by consumers [O'Boyle 2009, Bord Bia 2015]. In theory, this would lead copycatting to be viewed negatively by many respondents, despite existing literature on copycat branding suggesting otherwise. I Because these copycats are available in Ireland while the leader brand is not, it was expected that consumers would still be willing to patron these restaurants. The results from this analysis prove the general hypothesis to be true. Most surprisingly, however, is the small number of consumers who report a negative opinion of the practice to begin with:

Does a business that takes concepts from businesses in other countries negatively impact your opinion of it?



Would finding out about such a business stop you from going there?

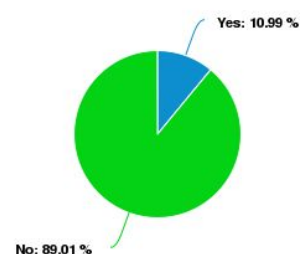


Fig. 14 Hypothesis 4 Pie Results

Just 20% of total respondents held a negative opinion of copycatting business techniques at all. This was lower than expected, given authenticity's high prioritisation in Irish food marketing. However, the second half of the hypothesis was proven true, as this 20% response rate is reduced by nearly half when it comes to actually ceasing patronage at such

a restaurant. This research indicates that if a consumer who dislikes copycatting were to be informed of a restaurant's tendency towards it, only 50% would consider ending their relationship with the restaurant.

It is also worthwhile to note that the combined results of the data [Lunch Team and Token] reported this feedback as 15% lower than Token's list alone, where 35% of respondents viewed copycatting practices negatively. It is possible that consumers who display a dedicated interest in an original restaurant [for example, by subscribing to the email list of one] may have stronger moral convictions against the copycatting practice.

5.2 Extrapolating cognitive styles

No previous study on copycatting has been performed on an Irish population, and therefore it is important to observe what sort of cognitive tendencies this population shows towards the practice. Results of the study and interviews seem to suggest a general trend within this population which leans towards a more accepting perspective on copycats.

Cognitive styles laid out by Foxman & Berger describe how consumers locate and define copycats [1990]. When reviewing the Dublin fast casual survey, results tend to suggest its population leans towards two cognitive styles: *field dependent* and *levelling*. *Levelling* consumers do not actively search for distinctive details, and tend to generalise similar stimuli rather than separate them. *Field dependent* consumers tend to observe and judge stimuli in the context of the environment it is located, rather than for its independent attributes. These factors relate to the Irish consumer population for a number of reasons. First, feedback suggests that consumers overwhelmingly view Irish copycats as worthy substitutes, and do not mind when Irish businesses exhibit copycat practices. These factors indicate that distinctive differences between copycats and originals are either not registered by consumers, or are irrelevant to the consumer's assessment. Further, consumer evaluation of copycats was generally rated high [Mdn 3], which is potentially a result of the leader brand's absence in the contextual environment of Dublin.

The consumer's ability to accept what is provided within their immediate circumstances implicates these levelling, field dependent cognitive styles. While both of these elements rank as "less astute" on the cognitive scale, qualitative feedback provided a number of socio economic factors that justify these responses as necessary for the Irish population, as there

are many barriers in place that prevent original offerings from entering their market. In Guillory's investigation into brand personality [2012], the hypothesis that *Consumers with high nostalgia proneness will prefer older brands* proved unsupported by her research. Likewise, this new research did not find any evidence between experience with an original restaurant and a consumer's overall evaluation of a copycat. The idea of nostalgia, or previous experience, with an original brand does not play into the consumer's copycat evaluation, further enforcing the field-dependent cognitive style.

5.3 Irish consumer evaluation practices

Upon reviewing results of the data, it appears that two attributes of Dublin's fast casuals do not meet their relative importance to consumers. When reporting the importance of Food Quality and Good Value, consumers rated both as Mdn 4 or "Very Important." However, Food Quality earned a median 3 rating with copycats, and Good Value witnessed an even larger disparity, scoring a 2.5 median [between Fair and Good] across copycat restaurants. When combining qualitative findings with the quantitative, sociocultural motivations behind this Good Value evaluation seem to emerge.

According to the in-depth interviews, the importance of Good Value to Irish consumers burgeoned during the recession of 2012. The high-value trend has maintained despite the recession's end, as salaries stagnate and rents continue to rise in the city. Because a good value offering is requisite within the definition of a fast casual, this element could also be more closely scrutinised by patrons than other restaurant attributes leading to a more demanding score. The disparity between Good Value's evaluation and its relative importance could provide useful information for restaurateurs who are aiming to gain a competitive edge in the market.

This research also appeared to refute Kuo Chang's findings that service and trust were more important than value. Good Value was equally important in this survey to Food Quality, with Service and Trust being tertiary in importance to these. Good Value was not an element explored in most previous consumer surveys, so it is not clear where this attribute would rank in their surveys if it were to be included. However, Good Value trailing behind importance of Trust and Service in Kuo Chang's survey may speak to the differences with an Irish consumer population versus an American one. Unfortunately, discussions with fast casual owners appear to elucidate legislative and regulatory barriers to providing a better

value proposition for consumers. High rents for new commercial locations and prohibitively expensive alcohol licenses may limit the ability of restaurants to reduce their bottom line without sacrificing food quality, which remains an equally important attribute for consumers.

Partlow & Bufquin's study implemented a DinEX customer satisfaction model to examine the importance of restaurant attributes [2015]. One key finding stated that in fast casual restaurants, there was the largest disparity between the *importance* of good quality food and resulting *performance* - implying customers in this category desired better food than was received. New data from this survey reinforced this study, finding that Food Quality was most important to casual diners [Mdn 4], but did not perform at a similar level when evaluated [Mdn 3]. Because this trend is evidenced in other studies as well, it is difficult to know whether an Irish context plays a part in the evaluation. However, it is possible to extrapolate certain elements of the fast casual business model described by experts into other countries as well. The absence of a chef on duty, static menus, and a tendency to purchase the cheapest ingredients available are likely to be common across fast casuals in any country, and may affect their ability to provide top-quality food offerings.

In terms of Irish familiarity with leader brands, Chipotle and Johnny Rocket's had similarly high experience rates between 45 and 50%. With smaller London-based boutique restaurants like Pitt Cue and Ottolenghi, only 5 to 10% of respondents reported having been, despite their close proximity to Dublin. Larger chains, even if farther away geographically, shared a higher rate of both knowledge and experience with consumers, which suggests distance is not a factor in consumer awareness, so long as the restaurant has enough market presence or locations.

5.4 The place of innovation

In his research into fast casual brands, Chang advised including innovative products and superior service at the right price to establish positive *pre-trust* via word of mouth [2013]. This idea was further supported by Gilmore & Pine [2008]. These suggestions were reiterated in the in-depth interviews, reflecting the need for at least some originality within a fast casual value proposition. It is interesting to note that the chefs interviewed found fast casuals to operate along the border of readymade food service and "real" restaurants, with innovative details appearing to help cross into restaurant status. In-depth interviewee Mac Con Iomaire's personal definition of a restaurant required the presence of a chef who can

change and modify a menu, as well as provide growth opportunities for its prep and line cooks. Copycat fast casuals who heed this advice, for instance incorporating seasonal menu items, could locate a good solution for adding culinary credibility without requiring a complete rebranding strategy.

Despite the relatively good rating of copycats within the consumer survey, evaluation of the original restaurant Token remained higher across 4 of 6 categories - Food Quality, Style, Trust and Authenticity. This rating seems to suggest that when "best practice" branding is implemented, and innovation arises from a clear consumer demand [in this case, video game nostalgia], consumers respond more positively to an original than to a copycat. However, innovation remains a more expensive and time-consuming practice. That can in turn have a negative kickback effect, as Token was rated alongside copycats in terms of Good Value. Owner Nicholas Dimaio stated a desire to keep consumer prices as low as possible, but admits the process is prohibited by the higher costs of upholding original and authentic branding practices.

Upon reviewing the interviews, it appears fast casuals may be so popular in Dublin because their speed of service can fit into the central activity of Irish nightlife: pub-going. With a median copycat evaluation of 3 or "Good," these restaurants do show a certain level of satisfaction in terms of filling consumer needs. However, consumers do not appear to have as strong evaluations for copycats as they did for the innovative restaurant. One potential differentiator could also be Token's status as the survey's only fast casual with a full alcohol license. The ability for patrons to order alcohol freely and without a full meal requirement appears to encourage longer visits and deeper involvement with the establishment, therein resulting in a high evaluation score.

5.5 On authenticity

A robust synthesis of authenticity branding was performed by Gilmore & Pine, who cultivated authenticity as an elusive yet ever-sought-after marketing ideal. This fluidity of definition appears to be an advantage for Dublin copycat restaurants, as research suggests authenticity is a possibility even for copycats. It would be of value to follow this further with a focus group discussion, to find out exactly how Irish consumers define authenticity and negotiate the concept with copycats.

It is evident from the generally good assessment of copycat “Authenticity” that the consumer’s definition of originality is mutable and open to interpretation. Similar to past research, results reflected a consumer’s tendency towards contradictory values and consumption habits. Disliking like the practice, yet still buying, is a fairly common phenomenon across copycat research [van Horen 2011, Ma 2015]. However, it appears when the leader brand is not in the choice set, this becomes even less of a concern for consumers. Just 20% of total respondents had a negative opinion of copycatting techniques, a result lower than expected given authenticity’s strong presence in Irish food marketing. Further, only half of these people would consider stopping patronage at an outed restaurant. The number of consumers who share the Negative Opinion / Would Stop Buying mindset is consistent with trends in previous research. While this total percentage of consumers is a minority [10%], it would be worthwhile to investigate if satisfying this consumer segment would provide a competitive edge needed to cover fiduciary aspects of brand authenticity and innovation.

When reviewing individual restaurants, the only copycat rated less authentic [Mdn 2] than it was trustworthy [Mdn 3] was *Eddie Rocket’s*. This restaurant is the largest chain on the list, with 38 locations across Ireland, as well as the oldest and most attribute-similar copycat in the survey [Appendices]. It is possible *Eddie Rocket’s* status as a copycat is well-known to most people, affecting its perceived “Authenticity” in a statistically significant way. This disparity suggests carbon copying a well-known leader is the only way to make the majority of consumers conscious of copycat status. Still, with 91% of consumers reporting visiting, its presence in the market keeps its trustworthiness score elevated [Mdn 3] despite a well-known copycat status. Interestingly, the second lowest rated copycat was *Chopped*, which is second only to *Eddie Rockets* in terms of Irish locations [27]. *Chopped* is also highly attribute-similar to its original, both in name [*Chop’ed*], menu offerings, and trade dress [A.2]. From observing that *Eddie Rockets* and *Chopped* are the two largest copycat chains, it appears possible to copy an original model closely and use this saved time to increase presence quickly. However, as the two poorest rated copycats, the reputation of a restaurant does appear to be slightly affected by this method. It will be interesting to follow the path of this high-similarity approach as consumer tastes evolve over time.

5.6 Similarity Levels

Van Horen’s research that a moderately similar copycat tends to perform better may have

clout in the fast casual context. However, her research states this is only the case when the brand leader is available. When the leader is absent, van Horen suggests a higher similarity will win. This distinction lies in contrast to new research of Dublin fast casual consumers.

The highest rated copycat in Dublin was burrito shop *Boojum*. This restaurant manipulated a moderate similarity approach to its original *Chipotle*, altering their trade dress, color scheme and name, while retaining a nearly identical menu, preparation method and business model [A4]. Compared to a restaurant like *Eddie Rockets*, which is a part-and-parcel copy of *Johnny Rockets*, *Boojum* came out with a full point higher median using a moderate similarity method. When observing consumer responses, there appears to be enough variation between *Boojum* and *Chipotle* to create an authentic perception with consumers. Despite the leader brand not being available, a moderate similarity copycat appears to perform better in this fast casual context.

5.7 Conclusion

In this discussion, the results of this new data was placed against previous research on fast casuals, copycats and authentic branding. In doing so, a clearer image of the unique qualities of the Dublin professional consumer emerged, with points of similarity and divergence coming to the fore. Good Value appears to be a stronger motivating factor for Dublin professionals than previous research in other product categories and geographic regions, leading to possible cultural underpinnings for this evaluation. While adopting an authentic branding strategy lead to higher overall ratings, it should be focused where it matters most to consumers [Good Value / Food Quality] to achieve maximum effects. It should also be done with financial discretion in mind, because fast casuals who lack these elements still perform well enough to expand and succeed in the market. Moderately similar copycats tend to score best with Irish consumers, likely because a tailored flair increases a brand's personality and uniqueness to the Irish market.

As noted in the literature review, there remains a stark absence of discussion on the subject of copycat restaurants in Ireland. When comparing this to the consumers surveyed response, this normalisation of copycatting is reinforced. As long as the leader brand is not in direct competition with the copycat, there does not seem to be a significant negative perception or impact of the copycatting practice in Ireland. At the same time, it appears that authentic & original branding practices are still appreciated and rated highly by

consumers. There still appears to be space for these practices, as they could be the differentiator between a good fast casual brand and a great one in the eyes of Irish professionals.

CHAPTER SIX:

Conclusions & Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

In general, this inquiry into Irish consumer behavior towards fast casual copycats interacted with previous research in a number of ways. While some research was upheld in the transition to a fast casual research context, other findings did not translate as seamlessly. Ultimately, this new research space has opened an array of further spaces for academic investigation, which this chapter will delineate.

6.1.1 Research Question and Objectives

The primary aim of this research was to address the question of how Dublin professionals 25 - 39 perceive and patronise fast casual brands, and how these responses relate to their valuation of authenticity.

When speaking generally, the perception of Dublin copycats by consumers may be categorised as "good." The 6 evaluated attributes of Food Quality, Service, Value, Atmosphere, Authenticity, and Trustworthiness ranked near to each other in the good range, with slight variances among their Interquartiles. Within these, Good Value and Food Quality showed the most disparity between overall evaluation and importance to consumers, making them noteworthy spaces of improvement for copycats. The original restaurant included in the survey scored higher than copycats in terms of Food Quality, Authenticity, Trust and Atmosphere, but did not come ahead in the areas of Service and Value. As these are the second and third most important elements for consumers, the disparity between ranking the original and copycat restaurants was not as significant as it had potential to be.

In terms of patronage rates and perception, copycats appeared popular. 68% of respondents had visited at least half of the fast casuals before, with only 20% of consumers holding a negative view of the practice. The consumer's relationship to authenticity, as anticipated, raised as many questions than it answered. While consumers identified the original restaurant as *more* authentic than copycats, the overall assessment of copycat

authenticity still remained good. Only in the most overt cases of copycatting was a restaurant rated as “Fair” in this attribute [Eddie Rockets, Mdn 2.] These responses to the quantitative objective sufficiently fulfilled the primary objective:

- Collect data from Dublin professionals 25 - 39 regarding
 - fast casual patronage rates,
 - preferred fast casual attributes,
 - assessment of Dublin copycats, and
 - opinion on copycat strategies.

The hypotheses related to this study were adopted as a means of testing relevant areas of authenticity and copycatting praxis. They bolstered objective findings with formal statistical analysis of the data, supporting the Irish consumer’s general acceptance of copycat fast casuals. One hypothesis model presented in Chapter 3 was negated by the results of the survey. In its place, a new model emerged:

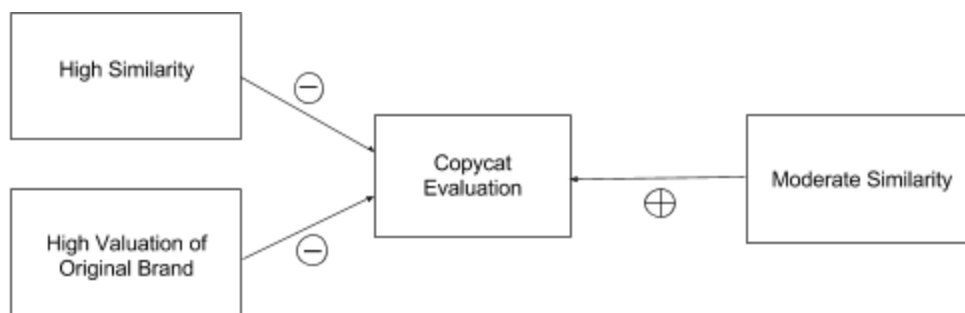


Fig. 15 Adapted Consumer Behavior Model

Unlike the FMCG copycat studies conducted by Femke van Horen, the overall evaluation of copycats prioritised a moderate similarity over a high similarity copycat when the leader brand was absent. The most similar brand copycat, Eddie Rocket’s, ended up scoring a median .5 points below the moderate similarity restaurant Boojum, despite the restaurant having the largest amount of locations and the most amount of consumers reporting visiting.

Another interesting factor in the copycat evaluations comes from observing the two clusters of consumers within the sample. Responses coming from the Token email list [the original restaurant in the survey] indicated a stronger negative response to the copycatting practice:

35% of consumers compared to 16% with Lunch Team. While the rate at which they would end their patronage remained similar, around half, this disparity brings up an interesting distinction between consumer brand perception and preference. It appears as though an overt relationship with an “authentic and original” brand, for instance signing up for their email list, leads to a stronger judgment against the copycatting practice. Although the two cluster’s evaluations of the practice of copycatting differ, their reviews of each restaurant did not show significant differences. Therefore, as indicated in the qualitative portion of the study, the impetus remains on the *perception* of authenticity and originality, rather than any tangible indicators or behavioral shifts.

The qualitative portion of this study facilitated the second objective:

- Using qualitative in-depth interviews, provide a context for these findings by examining
 - the socioeconomic background of Irish restaurant culture,
 - the copycat restaurant trend, and
 - Irish consumer trends and tastes

Many factors were addressed in the qualitative interviews that provided a contextual background for analysing survey results. It appears legal and governmental regulations interplay with consumer response in many ways, particularly elucidating their open-minded attitude towards copycat restaurants. Multiple in-depth interviews stressed the difficulty of introducing a new restaurant brand to the Irish market, noting the “red tape nightmare” of Irish government taxes and levies. Many original brands simply elect to avoid trade in Ireland altogether, or else only operate on a franchise basis. At the same time, the Irish population is well-known for emigration and leisure travel, which creates a natural demand to recreate food trends found in other regions. Copycats therefore appear to emerge as a response to this demand, with consumers eager to adopt them.

Regulation against innovative restaurant development is further influenced by governmental bodies who share a close relationship with the Irish Vintners Association. Experts purport this relationship has placed the pub trade at a higher priority to restaurants in terms of legislation, which restricts Irish restaurants’ ability to compete effectively with Dublin pubs for longer, dynamic customer experiences. While the quick service nature of fast casuals fits neatly into the space proffered by these regulations, it remains difficult to fully capture a consumer who looks to pubs for their main evening entertainment. While the casualisation

of dining has generally been perceived by experts as a net positive, it does so at a demanding price point. This leads consumers to expect high quality at a great value, which may create an ideal that is challenging for the market to fill. Economic drawbacks stemming from the most recent recession, and more broadly, Ireland's colonised history, have led to lower disposable income for the average consumer. This informs a higher demand for value-driven offerings, as rents for both consumers and restaurateurs rise. Altogether, qualitative findings fulfilled the narrational request of framing consumer data into a well-justified context, giving reason and structure to their response trends.

6.1.2 Literature Review Comparison

The foundation of this research was developed from a number of academic studies on restaurants, copycat branding and authenticity. Due to the new context of Irish fast casual copycats, some findings translated well, while others found points of variance in the environment/category transition. A summary table of these findings is included on the following page.

Author	Previous Finding	Fast Casual Copycat Finding	Support?
Chang 2013 [Quantitative survey, American casual restaurant]	Service and Trust are more important than Value.	Value is more important than Service and Trust.	No
Parlow & Bufquin 2015 [Quantitative survey, American casual restaurant]	The largest disparity between importance and assessment of an attribute was <i>Food Quality</i> .	Consumers reported a full point difference between importance and assessment of <i>Food Quality</i> .	Yes
Chang 2013 Gilmore & Pine 2008 [Quantitative survey, American casual restaurant]	Innovative restaurant details can help establish trust.	Innovative or unique menu items can greatly assist brand appeal.	Yes
Van Horen 2014 [Quantitative survey, FMCG Copycats]	A higher similarity copy scores best when the leader isn't present.	The moderately similar copycat scored best when the leader wasn't present.	No
Ma 2015 [Quantitative survey, Smartphone Copycats]	Consumer loyalty to a leader brand does not lead to a negative evaluation of a copycat.	Experience with a leader brand did not lead to a negative evaluation of a copycat.	Yes
O'Boyle 2009 [Qualitative Interviews, Irish Agencies]	The importance of "authenticity" in marketing is problematic because it is often not based on consumer research.	The "importance of authenticity" ranked lowest, and consumer definition often included copycat brands.	Yes
Gilmore & Pine 2008 [Qualitative Interviews]	Authenticity is fluid and difficult to define.	Authenticity is fluid, difficult to define, and may be integrated successfully into a copycat strategy.	Yes

Overall, the majority of previous academic findings were supported by the research conducted on Irish fast casual copycats. This study had an admittedly limited scope, and therefore could not directly respond to many of the points of focus of other studies.

However, most findings related to prior studies did not necessarily refute their claims. Two notable exceptions to this came with the studies by Kuo Chang [2013] and Femke van Horen [2015]. It appears from Chang's study that Value was a tertiary priority beneath Trust and Service, yet Value ranked second in importance [behind Food Quality] in new research. This tendency could be explained by the qualitative review, which outlined many reasons for the importance of value to Irish consumers. Van Horen's analysis, which stated that a high similarity copycat wins when the leader brand is absent, appeared to be contested by a fast casual context that favored moderate similarity models. There are a variety of factors that could have informed this divergence. High similarity fast casuals could indicate an overall shorthand approach to their development that in turn affects other attributes, like food quality, in a negative manner. Another possibility exists that the Irish consumer acknowledges and appreciates some level of differentiation to separate a Dublin brand from the monocultural corporatisation of their city, providing some originality within an already-successful business model. This possible finding leads to one recommendation developed by the author based on the study results.

6.1.3 Research Conclusion

Expansion of copycat-based literature is always worthwhile, especially in product/service categories where no research currently exists. The nuances of consumer perception have the potential to lead to fruitful recommendations, but these positive behavior intentions will only result when the appropriate context is given due consideration. By consolidating thought on restaurant evaluation, copycat branding and authenticity, then applying these to a mixed methods approach, a new focus for academic research has been opened.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 For Irish Copycat Fast Casuals

Multiple focused but pertinent recommendations have emerged from this research. First, it appears consumers with a clear-cut relationship to an "authentic & original" brand [e.g. registered to their email list] lead to a stronger judgment against the act of copycatting. For this consumer segment, it appears highlighting a brand's authentic and innovative qualities

could be an effective approach to gaining a more positive perception. Gilmore & Pine's suggestion of adding smaller authentic or innovative elements, like a weekly special, may be a sufficient middle ground between copycatting and innovative branding based on the data received.

This appreciation for innovative details is also reiterated by the Irish consumers' preference towards a moderate similarity approach, which integrates some original elements into an already successful strategy. From a phenomenological perspective, this feeds into a broader question of the contemporary Irish self-concept, investigated by Neil O'Boyle in a review of Irish marketing strategies. O'Boyle presented a concern for the future of "Irishness," which appears to be a common concern across the Irish population [2009]. Fears of Dublin adopting a monocultural position to look like other metropolitan cities appear frequently, from protests over Starbucks' city centre permeation [Paul 2017] to ongoing debates on building height restrictions [O'Sullivan 2016]. This may explain why a differentiation approach works better than carbon copies for Dublin restaurants. It is important to see how young professionals react to these anxieties, as their responses could foretell the future brand landscape of the city.

While a copycat offering can in many ways be labelled objectively, assessment of its authenticity is far more fluid. If a restaurant takes its menu and food preparation from a different restaurant, but then prioritises food provenance and local sourcing, these effects may even out their assessment to consumers. In many of these discussions, the true moral issue appears to be a *devalued experience* rather than concept appropriation. As repeated in the literature review and consumer survey, if a copycat is to appropriate another brand, they must *match or improve* its quality to gain acceptance.

In the case of Dublin copycats, there existed a disparity between consumer expectation of food quality and its resulting performance, which some interviewees attributed to the nature of fast casual operations. Such restaurants rarely hire chefs to train cooks, finesse recipes, or source better-quality ingredients, all of which could help improve their Food Quality ranking. The exception to these is the fast casual Token, who employs a full-time chef who both introduces specials and trains employees. Token scored a "4" in Food Quality and won Dublin Restaurant of the Year at the Irish Food Awards in its first year of operation, indicating a positive consumer response from this approach. The prioritisation of Food Quality has the ripple effect of improving other attribute categories, such as Authenticity and Trustworthiness, by the nature of the practice. While authenticity may not be a

worthwhile attribute to focus on arbitrarily, there appear to be advantages to taking a food quality focus where authenticity is an intrinsic component.

Because the researcher lacks the background to speak on government regulation, recommendations are pulled only from analysis of qualitative research. It does appear the “punitive” relationship between restaurants and governmental bodies places restrictions on optimal restaurant development. Loosened regulation on full alcohol licenses, as well as measures towards further municipal rent control would be a welcome addition for Dublin restaurateurs. As proposed by Mac Con Iomaire, creation of an official union for Irish chefs could also be useful, as it would potentially curtail the emigratory drain which sees many chefs leave Ireland for better training and higher wages. While there is no clear way to prevent copycat restaurants from entering a market, providing incentive for innovative development in the restaurant sector could add quality and variety to Dublin’s culinary landscape. The Irish government currently provides such funding for the technology sector through agencies like Enterprise Ireland. A similar provision for the country’s Food and Drink sector could be of value, as it would likely result in improving Dublin’s cultural offerings. This would then create a stronger value proposition for international companies contributing direct investment to the State, by providing a stronger relocation incentive for employees.

6.2.2 For Future Research

This research was borne from a lack of academic study on copycatting outside of the consumer goods category, as well as information on Irish restaurant preferences beyond government-lead research. Thus, research has a wide range for further expansion. To begin, the creation of a larger point survey like the 20-pt DinEX could add significant depth to findings if adapted for copycat assessment, including the 6 attributes contained in the adapted framework.

A worthwhile extension of this study would also find benefit in focus group analysis of survey respondents, to understand the consumer’s relationship to authenticity and copycatting in a more direct manner. It would also be worthwhile to recreate the adapted conceptual framework of this study to consumer populations outside Ireland, to observe what responses yielded a specific vs. shared result.

This study was unable to interview copycat business owners, which would have added a nuanced perspective on the success rate of the strategy. Understanding their personal reasons for pursuing this approach would have been useful. In addition, the quantitative portion of this study suffered from lower than anticipated respondent data [273], resulting in a 6% margin of error in place of the more ideal 1-5%. Continuing this study to fulfill the best practice academic quota would be useful.

Just as this research tested a branding concept in a new product category and environment, further research into restaurant branding and copycatting techniques is worthwhile in other metropolitan areas. The overall importance of restaurants and their relationship to a consumer's self-concept were questions unable to be answered by this study. Narrowing focus onto the true value of food-based authenticity concepts would also be of value, considering this research appeared to open a conflicting account of its purported importance and resulting performance.

Finally, the legality and legislation of copycat branding practices in a restaurant or retail space is a pertinent focus for future research. Current studies on brand confusion - as well as the majority of legal cases - centre on consumer goods brands, failing to address the implications of this practice on food service business owners and innovative brand development. This lack of legal protection against copycats may have resulting implications that this study did not have the time or resources to accommodate.

6.3 Final Observation

This research was performed with the intention of understanding the Irish consumer's relationship to authenticity within a restaurant branding context. The impetus for this study was bred from the researcher's professional experience in restaurant branding through the original restaurant Token [used as a control leader brand within the study.] Token opened in Dublin in July 2017, after nearly 2 years of heavily researched development. It was a financial and commercial success upon opening, seeming to reinforce a then-unproven demand for the kind of nostalgia experience a "barcade" provides.

Towards the tail end of this research project, the researcher received an email that a new fast casual restaurant was about to open in Cork, Ireland. This restaurant went from

conception to launch in under 3 months, funded and owned by a large entertainment group. From this new restaurant's menu design and arcade game selection, down to the small canvas bags used to hold their "signature tokens," some uncanny similarities struck the researcher as familiar. The restaurant's name differed from Token's, yet oddly, was shared with a barcade in Ottawa, Ontario. This discovery confirmed the researcher's initial belief in the perennial and inevitable nature of restaurant copycat practices in Ireland. It served as an apt metaphor for the unpredictability of being the leader brand, and to the researcher, justified the worthwhile nature of a market investigation into this practice.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

Reflection

A Master's submission in January yields itself to introspection quite naturally. Indeed, the life cycle of this degree was just under one calendar year. Making the choice to leave full-time employment in pursuit of academia is never easy, and I'd be lying if I said I didn't miss the former a little [please see bank balance.]

Pursuing this dissertation in the final stage of my degree, however, proved the most enjoyable part of my studies as well as the most rigorous. It required near-constant recalibration and fine-tuning, but it also provided the ultimate reward. Through my research, I was able to at least partially answer a question that plagued me since I arrived in Ireland. How many people can say they did that?

Using Gibb's Reflective Cycle, I would like to take you through some observations on my dissertation.

Description

I arrived at my topic a bit faster than peers, with a research question fleshed out by semester 1. By the end of RMII, I had a foolproof plan... or so I thought. Surprising nobody with graduate experience, plans for a 400+ respondent survey, 10 interviews, and 3 focus groups proved untenable for a 3-month project. Luckily, reducing my strategy was simple enough to do without losing sight of its general aims.

I spent October writing a literature review and developing a questionnaire, and November working through methodologies, data collection and analysis. By the time I had completed primary research, I was more than ready to review it. Getting to observe results after 7 months of preparation was daunting, and took a long time to dissect. Mistakes were certainly made - like finding means for ordinal data, until I realised that was mathematically moot - and retracing these steps did cost me time. [Articles from postdoctoral researcher Achilleas Kostoulas proved a saving grace at this juncture!] December 31st was spent poring over my methodologies and coming to conclusions [Happy New Year!].

In the end, the paper took shape similar to my aspirations. Even if the results weren't expected, the effort felt like it paid off.

Feelings



Fig. 16

Moving from a normal 40-hour work week to 3 days plus dissertation was difficult. I was often stressed and anxious, with a bit of imposter syndrome thrown in for good measure. To be honest, I anticipated these feelings. I take certain tasks [writing dissertations, buying cookware] rather seriously, and feel personal responsibility to complete a task properly. In the end, my time management skills were greatly improved by the project, and I felt content with my work by the submission deadline.

Evaluation

The most difficult part of the paper were naturally the parts where I experienced knowledge gaps. Having to learn how to run regressions and equations comes easily for some, but my aversion to mathematics is strong. I wish I had more time to analyse the quantitative data with confidence. While my data is accurate and hypotheses were properly tested, I should have researched statistical analysis methods for quantitative data before the chapter was staring me down. I had to do more reading than I prepared for, as well as asking a few questions to people smarter than me.

The part of the paper I was most excited for were the in-depth interviews, and they exceeded my expectations. I got to feel like the host of a radio show [that no one cared about but me!] I have great admiration for these experts, and enjoyed re-reading their feedback for analysis.

Conclusions

In the end, I am satisfied with my final paper and time management over the research period given my busy schedule. However it is clear now I could have made the process easier for myself. I wish I had read more on data analysis praxis before November, and known precisely how I would test my hypotheses before deciding on them. Beginning the literature review in September would have likely saved time that could be used towards editing. Finally, having a backup plan for accessing more respondents would have been useful, as I received enough for a 6% error margin instead of the best practice 5%.

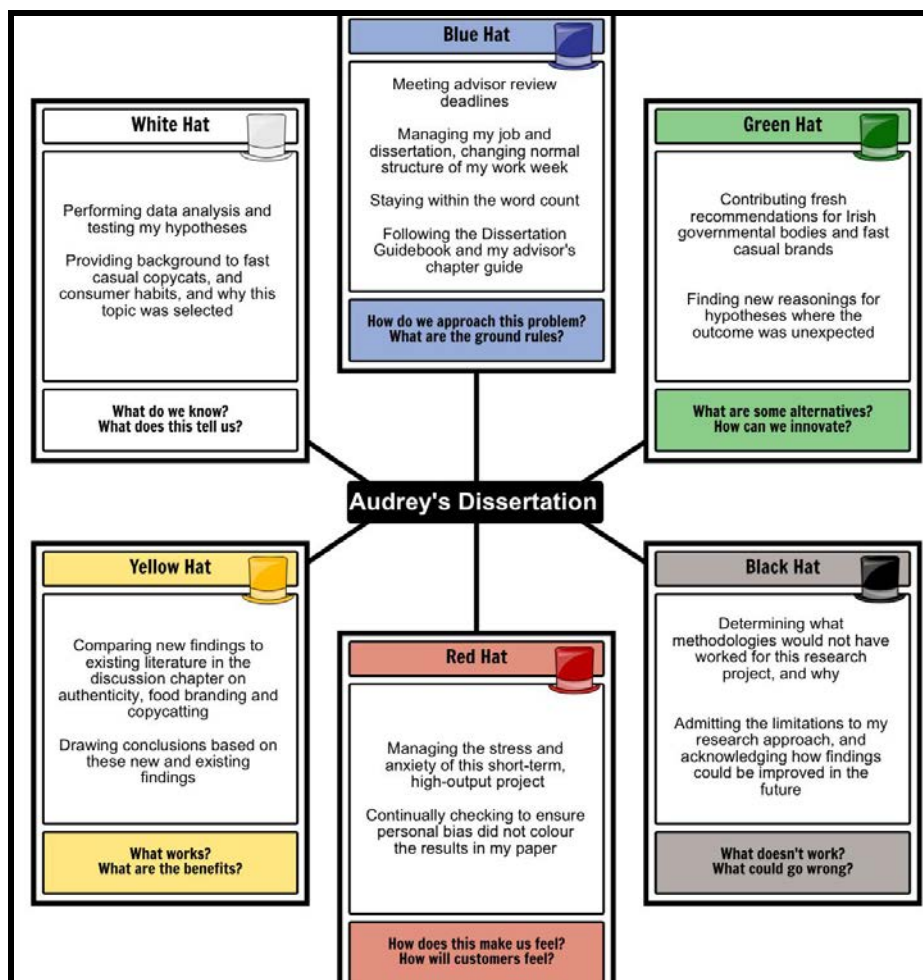


Fig. 17 - My Hat Collection

I found a blank Six Hats template [credit: Marissa Martinez] and placed my learnings inside it. It reflects the many mental processes writing this paper required.

Action Plan

The “Conclusions” section has provided a useful base for better academic work, if I choose to pursue it in the future. I have a better understanding of graduate research expectations, and have learned through trial-and-error what it takes to get accurate data. Even when insights are robust, I believe graduate degrees actually serve to teach you how much you *don't* know. More broadly, this is something I can bring to learning opportunities anywhere. I am more aware of the areas that come naturally to me [like discussions and recommendations], but also know I have ample space to improve. Completing this paper required resilience, but the reward is how natural that quality now feels to me. I feel mostly ready for whatever professional challenges await. Now if you will excuse me, I am going to eat a hamburger - just perhaps not one from a copycat.

Appendices

A. Dublin Copycat Fast Casuals

Objective:

Locate and define 5-10 examples of copycat fast casuals in Dublin, delineating the name, concept and trade dress attributes of these and the leader brands.

Similar Qualities Table

Brand Name	Logo	Trade Dress	Menu
Preparation style	Staff attire	Brand concept	Special features

A.1 Eddie Rockets

Original: Johnny Rocket's Diner

Locations: 320 locations worldwide (none in Ireland), founded 1986

Copypat: Eddie Rocket's Diner

Locations: 38 locations across Ireland & N. Ireland, founded 1989

<p>Name: Male First Name + "Rockets"</p>	<p>Logo/Colours: Red circle with white text & vintage style font</p>	<p>Trade Dress: Chrome details, checkered floors, leather seating, jukeboxes</p>	<p>Menu: Burgers, hot dogs, fried starters</p>
<p>Preparation style: Open kitchen</p>	<p>Staff attire: Striped shirts, 50's minidresses</p>	<p>Brand concept: 1950's themed diner</p>	<p>Special features: Seasonal milkshakes</p>

Additional Information:

According to one qualitative interview, Eddie Rocket's director Niall Fortune had been in negotiation to buy the franchise rights for Johnny Rocket's but was unable to. Instead, Fortune took the idea and renamed it.



Left: Johnny Rocket's, Right: Eddie Rocket's



Johnny Rockets Interior, New Jersey



Eddie Rocket's Interior, Dublin



Logo Comparison



Left: Chopped Interior, Right: Chop'd Interior



Logo Comparison

A.3 Pitt Bros.

Original: Pitt Cue Co

Original Locations: London, founded 2012

Copycat: Pitt Bros.

Copycat Locations: 3 locations in Dublin, founded 2013

Name: Pitt + one-syllable word	Logo/Colours: Piglet logo	Trade Dress: High ceilings, chalk menus, wood + industrial feel, white enamel trays, cutlery & sauces on table
Brand concept: "Authentic" American-style barbeque restaurant	Menu: Meat Mains, Savoury Sides, "Bun" Meals	

Additional Information:

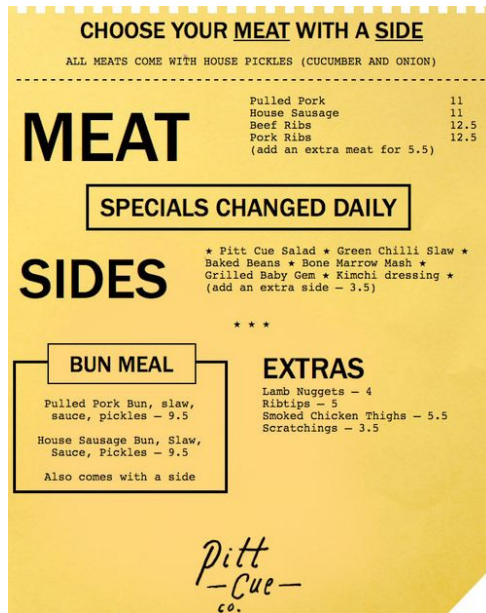
The original Pitt Cue has now closed, and has reopened as a higher-end barbeque restaurant outside of the fast casual sector.

Pitt Bros has adapted Pitt Cue's brand messaging to include a definitive Irish flair: puns, sarcasm, no-nonsense messaging.

Pitt Bros has seen commercial success despite poor reviews from critics. Wrote Aingeala Flannery of The Independent, "No gimmick is spared – you can pull your own cone just like in Neon a country mile up the road. Half a chicken had been rubbed with a chilli spice mix that you can see, but cannot taste. The skin is baggy and the chicken huddles inside it. The tenderness you expect from slow-cooking is not there. Made properly, mac 'n cheese is comfort food par excellence. Regrettably, Pitt Bros' take on it is insipid, milky, and under-seasoned."



Left: Pitt Cue’s “Meal & Side,” Right: Pitt Bros: “Meal & 2 Sides”



Left: Pitt Cue Menu, Right: Pitt Bros Menu



Street Signage Comparison

A.4 Boojum

Original: Chipotle

Original Locations: 2,250 locations in North America and Europe (none in Ireland), founded 1993

Copycat: Boojum

Copycat Locations: 12 locations in Ireland and N. Ireland, founded 2007

<p>Menu: Burritos, bowls, salads, tacos and nachos</p>	<p>Preparation style: Burrito assembly line with build your own options</p>	<p>Trade dress: Menu signage above assembly station follows same instructions / structure, dining area and line are sectioned in the same manner, metal accents [Chipotle, corrugated steel, Boojum, steel pipe tables]</p>
<p>Brand concept: Cheap and cheerful burrito shop that prioritises speed of service</p>	<p>Staff attire: Black canvas aprons and hats</p>	

Additional Information:

According to an interview with its owners, the Boojum story has its origins in America. "Neither [owner] had any prior experience in the food trade, but John had seen the success of fast Mexican food in America, and decided that the idea could transplant to Ireland. 'I did a hell of a lot of research into Chipotle Mexican Grill in the US,' he says." [BizPlus 2015]



Left: Chipotle Interior, Right: Boojum Interior



Left: Chipotle Menu Signage, Right: Boojum Menu Signage

A.5 Eathos

Original: Ottolenghi

Original Locations: 4 locations in London, founded 2002

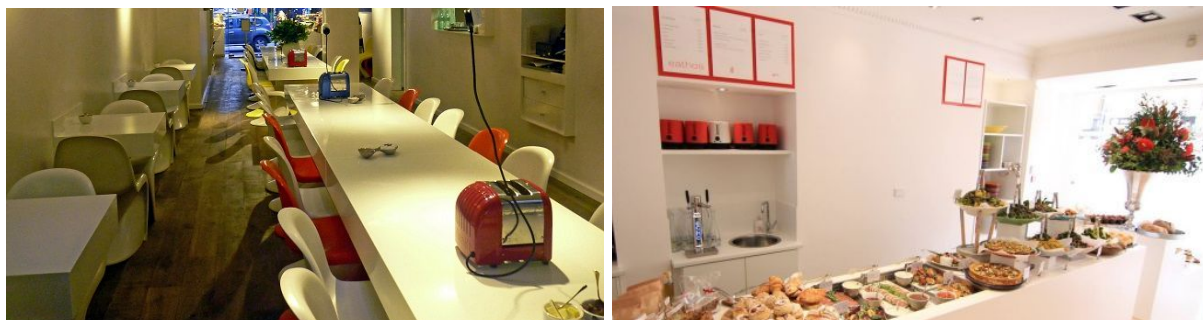
Copycat: Eathos

Copycat Locations: 1 location in Dublin, founded 2015

<p>Logo/Colours: red and white with thin, minimalist font</p>	<p>Trade Dress: all-white walls and service spaces, flowers, visually striking salads served in large bowls, trays of cupcakes, recessed lighting</p>	<p>Menu: Artisanal salads and cupcakes, emphasis on Mediterranean-inspired fare, breakfast and brunch</p>	<p>Special features: Toasters that can be placed on tables for customers to use themselves</p>
<p>Preparation style: Mix of premade salads on display and breakfast kitchen</p>	<p>Staff attire: white shirts and patterned blue aprons</p>	<p>Brand concept: Healthy, provenant, authentic, local suppliers, "upscale" morning and afternoon fare.</p>	

Additional Information:

In Katy McGuinness' 2015 review of Eathos, she begins by stating its overt appropriation of Ottolenghi. However, she reflect a common Irish sentiment in her evaluation: "I have no problem with anyone wanting to bring Ottolenghi-style food to Dublin. The city could do with it. There is no copyright on cuisine, and whoever is behind this venture has nailed the visuals perfectly. Now they need to sort out the food."



Tabletop Toasters: Left: Ottolenghi, Right: Eathos



Ottolenghi Interior



Eathos Interior

OTTOLENGHI eathos

Logo Comparison

B. CSO Dublin Geographic Area



C. Quantitative Survey Questionnaire

Please read the following definition before completing this survey.

Fast Casual Restaurant: A mid-tier restaurant that provides quick service, price points between €5 and €15, and higher quality food than fast food restaurants." *Examples in Dublin include Bunsen, Boojum, and Token.*

When eating at a fast casual restaurant, how important are the following things to you?*

	1 - Not Important	2	3	4 - Very Important
Food Quality	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authentic and Original	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Style & Atmosphere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good Value	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trusting the Business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Tick off the fast casuals you've been to.*

- Eddie Rockets
- Chopped
- Pitt Bros
- Boojum
- Eathos
- Token

How often do you eat at these restaurants?*

	More than twice a week	1-2 times a week	About once a month	About once a year	Never
Eddie Rockets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chopped	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pitt Bros	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boojum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eathos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Token	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please review the restaurant Eddie Rockets.*

	1 (Poor)	2 (Fair)	3 (Good)	4 (Excellent)
Food Quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authentic and Original	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Style & Atmosphere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good Value	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthiness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Does a business that takes concepts from businesses in other countries negatively impact your opinion of it?*

- Yes
 No

Would finding out about such a business stop you from going there?*

- Yes
 No

Please tick off the restaurants you've HEARD of.*

- Johnny Rocket's {USA}
 Chop'd {London}
 Pitt Cue {London}
 Chipotle {USA}
 Ottolenghi {London}
 None

Please tick off the restaurant's you've BEEN to.*

- Johnny Rocket's {USA}
 Chop'd {London}
 Pitt Cue {London}
 Chipotle {USA}
 Ottolenghi {London}
 None

Would you consider the Dublin restaurant a worthy substitute for the non-Irish one?*

	YES	NO	N/A
Johnny Rockets <-> Eddie Rockets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chop'd <-> Chopped	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pitt Cue <-> Pitt Bros	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Chipotle <-> Boojum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ottolenghi <-> Eathos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How satisfied are you with Dublin's fast casual offerings? *

	1 (Poor)	2 (Fair)	3 (Good)	4 (Excellent)
Select	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Finally, please rate Dublin's fast casual market as a whole. *

	1 (Poor)	2 (Fair)	3 (Good)	4 (Excellent)
Food Quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authentic & Original	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Style & Atmosphere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthiness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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