

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and due acknowledgement must always be made of the use of any material contained in, or derived from, this thesis

**Exploring how Generation Y consumers engage
with human brands: Does it differ from how
they engage with traditional brands?**

SAVENA YEYEDÉ NKEMDILIM LAWAL

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO BOURNEMOUTH
UNIVERSITY FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
PHILOSOPHY
2020

THIS DEGREE IS AWARDED BY BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY
SEPTEMBER 2020

ABSTRACT

Traditionally, brands have been known as cues that identify or distinguish products, businesses, services, or organisations. More recently, researchers have established that brands can also be human, yet to date very little literature has explored the concept of human brands. For the purpose of this study, traditional brands are brands used as a tool (name, colour, sign, symbol etc.) for marketing and differentiation purposes and specifically created for the sale of physical goods or services. Human brands are famous or well-known individuals (celebrities) in various sectors who are the centre of marketing communications and may or may not be tied to branded organisations. Much of the marketing literature relating to human brands focuses on the concept of endorsement. This study seeks to further establish the presence of human brands, by utilising the concept of consumer brand engagement to understand why and how consumers engage with human brands and traditional brands with a focus on Generation Y. This study further investigates how consumer brand engagement with the two brand types differs.

Through 24 in-depth interviews, the findings identified influences of consumer brand engagement with traditional and human brands, which represent why consumers engage with the two brand types. Influences of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands (TB), from the findings of this research, are: **product features, brand characteristics, self-brand concept, marketing communication, customer perceived value, consumer brand communication, celebrity/individual behind the brand, consumer-brand relationship, cultural representation**. While influences of consumer brand engagement with human brands (HB) are: **the celebrity performance, the celebrity characteristics, the celebrity influence, self-brand concept, celebrity authenticity, celebrity relatability, and community**. The research findings also show that participants overall expressed more cognitive, behavioural, and emotional engagement attitudes with HB than with TB. Nonetheless, the findings show that there are differences and similarities in the way consumers engage with HB vs. TB. Six main engagement differences were found between the two brands: (1) Engagement with TB is product/service focused, while with HB engagement is focused on the celebrity. (2) Engagement with TB fluctuates whereas it is higher during or before purchase and lower after purchase, while engagement is constant with HB. (3) Engagement is more function-based with TB and more emotion-based with HB. (4) Engagement is highest with TB when consumer-brand relationship is present, while engagement is highest with HB when emotional connection is present. (5) Engagement with TB is adversely affected by negative customer service and decline in product characteristics/performance, while engagement with HB on social media is adversely affected by lack of authenticity. (6) Engagement with TB is higher online than offline, while engagement with HB is high both online and offline. Similarities were: (1) participants had similar online behavioural engagement patterns (liking, commenting, sharing etc.) with both human and traditional brands (2) participants' cognitive engagement attitudes were low for both HB and TB. (3) Finally, stimuli promote online engagement with both brand types.

Chapter 1 Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	12
1.2 Overview.....	12
1.3 Research background	12
1.4 Rationale	13
1.5 Research aim and objectives	15
1.6 Contribution of thesis	16
1.7 Overview of the structure of the thesis	16
1.8 Summary.....	18
Chapter 2: Literature review.....	19
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Introduction to Grounded theory	19
2.2.1 The concept of Grounded theory	19
2.2.2 Grounded theory and literature review	20
2.3. Pre-theory literature review	21
2.3.1 Defining traditional brands.....	21
2.3.2 Defining human brands	23
2.3.2.1 The concept of Human Brands	24
2.3.3 Research on human brands.....	27
2.3.4 Engagement	31
2.3.4.1 The concept of Engagement.....	32
2.3.5 Consumer brand engagement.....	33
2.3.5.1 Conceptualisation of consumer brand engagement.....	34
2.3.6 The effect of social media on consumer brand engagement	36
2.3.7 Introducing Generation Y.....	38
2.4 Post-theory literature review	39
2.4.1 Antecedents and drivers of consumer brand engagement	40
2.4.1.1 Antecedents/drivers of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands ..	40
2.4.1.2 Antecedents/drivers of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands on social media platforms.....	42
2.4.1.3 Antecedents/drivers of consumer brand engagement with human brands.....	43
2.4.1.3.1. Authenticity	45
2.4.1.3.2 Emotional attachment	46
2.5. Literature review conclusions: Uncovering the gaps in research.....	47
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	49
3.1. Introduction	49
3.2. Research philosophy	49
3.2.1 An interpretive paradigm	49
3.2.2. A qualitative approach	50
3.2.3. Research methods.....	52
3.2.4. Research Strategy	52
3.3 Grounded Theory	54
3.3.1. The constructivist approach to Grounded Theory.....	55
3.3.2. Data generation approaches and tools.....	55
3.3.3. Ethical Consideration.....	56
3.3.4 Sampling method.....	57
3.3.5 Inclusion criteria and recruitment of participants	57
3.3.6 Pilot study	58
3.3.7 Theoretical sampling	59
3.3.8 Interview conduct	60
3.3.9. Memo writing.....	61
3.4. Data analysis	62

3.4.1 Data handling and management	63
3.4.2 Coding stages.....	64
3.4.2.1 Conduction of coding and generation of themes	65
3.4.2.2 Validation of codes.....	66
3.5 Establishing quality	66
3.6 Reflexivity	67
3.7 Researcher's impact on study	68
3.8 Conclusion.....	69
Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings	70
4.1. Introduction	70
4.2. Overview.....	70
4.3. Themes on why consumers engage with traditional and human brands	71
4.3.1. Consumers engagement with traditional brands.....	72
4.3.1.1. Product features	73
4.3.1.2. Brand characteristics.....	75
4.3.1.3. Self-brand concept.....	77
4.3.1.4. Marketing communication.....	78
4.3.1.5. Customer perceived value.....	79
4.3.1.6. Consumer-brand communication	79
4.3.1.7. Celebrity/individual behind the brand.....	80
4.3.1.8. Consumer-brand relationship	81
4.3.1.9. Cultural representation	82
4.3.2. Consumers engagement with Human brands.....	83
4.3.2.1. Celebrity performance	84
4.3.2.2. Celebrity characteristics	86
4.3.2.3. Celebrity influence.....	88
4.3.2.4 Self-brand concept.....	90
4.3.2.5. Celebrity authenticity	91
4.3.2.6. Celebrity relatability.....	92
4.3.2.7. Community.....	93
4.4. Perceived significance of traditional brands and human brands	94
4.5. Analysis on exploring the dimensions of Consumer brands engagement ...	95
4.5.1. Cognitive activity.....	95
4.5.2 Emotional activity	102
4.5.3 Behavioural activity.....	109
4.6 Conclusion.....	117
Chapter 5: Discussion	118
5.1. Overview.....	118
5.2. Influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement	118
5.2.1. Influences/antecedents of engagement with traditional brands	119
5.2.1.1 Previously explored themes	120
5.2.1.1.1 Product features.....	120
5.2.1.1.2 Consumer brand communication	121
5.2.1.1.3 Self-brand concept	122
5.2.1.1.4 Customer perceived value	122
5.2.1.2 Unexplored themes	122
5.2.1.2.1 Brand characteristics	122
5.2.1.2.2 Marketing communication.....	124
5.2.1.2.3 Celebrity/individual behind brand.....	124
5.2.1.2.4 Consumer brand relationship	125
5.2.1.2.5 Cultural representation.....	126
5.2.2. Influencers/antecedents of engagement with human brands.....	126
5.2.2.1 Previously explored themes	127
5.2.2.1.1 Emotional attachment	127
5.2.2.1.2 Celebrity authenticity	128
5.2.2.2 Themes not previously explored in literature.....	128

5.2.2.2.1 Celebrity influence	129
5.2.2.2.2 Celebrity performance.....	130
5.2.2.2.3 Celebrity characteristics	131
5.2.2.2.4 Self-brand concept	132
5.2.2.2.5. Celebrity relatability.....	133
5.2.2.2.6 Community	133
5.3 Differences and similarities in the way consumers engage with human brands vs. traditional brands	134
5.3.1 Differences in engagement with traditional brands vs. human brands.....	134
5.3.2 Similarities in engagement with traditional brands vs. human brands.....	138
Chapter 6: Conclusions.....	142
6.1 Chapter overview	142
6.2 Re-examining the aim and objectives of the thesis	142
6.3 Contribution to literature.....	143
6.3.1 Contribution on influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement ...	144
6.3.2 Contribution to the concept of consumer brand engagement.....	145
6.4 Recommendations.....	146
6.4.2 Recommendations for human brand managers.....	148
6.5 Limitations and future research recommendations.....	149
6.6 Summary of the chapter	151
References.....	152
Appendices	169

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Example of GT coding done in this study	66
Table 4.1 Participant sample characteristics	71
Table 4.2 Why consumers engage with traditional brands.....	73
Table 4.3 Why consumers engage with Human brands (celebrities)	84
Table 4.4 Do you think about your chosen brand, and how often?	97
Table 4.5 Do you think about your chosen brand when you're on social media?	99
Table 4.6 Would you like to learn more about your chosen brand?	101
Table 4.7 Example of feelings towards the brand	104
Table 4.8 Example of feeling expressions during social media engagement	106
Table 4.9 Example of expression on feelings on association	108
Table 4.10 Are you proud to be a fan of your chosen brand?	108
Table 4.11 Do you tell people about your chosen brand/celebrity?	111
Table 4.12 Have you attempted to see this brand/celebrity appearance or event? Would you in future?	115
Table 5.1 Framework of differences in consumer brand engagement with both brand types	134
Table 5.2 Framework for similarities in consumer brand engagement with both brand types	139

Table of Illustrations

Figure 2.1: Relationship between consumer brand engagement and marketing concepts (amended from Hollebeek 2011b, p.793-794).....	41
Figure 3.1: Summary of essential grounded theory methods and processes (Tie et al. 2019, p.3)	63
Figure 5.1 Framework for influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement.	120
Figure 5.2 Framework for influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement.	127

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the man that made all this possible; my cherished husband
Tosin Samuel Lawal

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my esteemed supervisors Professor Juliet Memery and Dr. Gelareh Roushan, for their continuous and unwavering support, time, endurance, and significant feedback and direction. I could not have sustained this doctorate journey without you, especially through the challenging and unpredictable time I've had over the few years of study. I am extremely grateful for everything and for your overall unwavering support.

I would like to thank every single person that participated in my research. This research wouldn't have been possible without you all. I am truly very grateful for your selflessness to commit your time towards my lengthy interviews.

Equally, I would like to thank my loving husband, Tosin, and my father, for their amazing love, support, and belief in me. It is evident this whole journey wouldn't have been possible without these two men in my life. I am grateful for the money and energy you both dedicated to my study, but most of all for the fact that you both were ready to sacrifice so much for me to fulfil my dreams. For this I am most grateful.

Finally, to my amazing friend Sovereign and my colleagues who were both encouraging and helpful during the writing of this thesis, thank you. Your feedback and assistance was very instrumental in the completion of this study.

DECLARATION

This thesis has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for a degree. All quotations have been distinguished and sources of information acknowledged. My first supervisor, Professor Juliet Memery and second supervisor Dr. Gelareh Roushan are in agreement that this thesis may be submitted

Signed: Savena Yeyede Nkemdilim Lawal

Date: 11-01-2021

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.2 Overview

In this chapter the author introduces the thesis. This chapter outlines the background to, and rationale for the study, the aim and objectives of the research, the contribution of the thesis, and an overview of the structure of the research.

1.3 Research background

In the marketing field, the concept of brands and branding can be described as a major building block and a key foundation to several other marketing concepts and topic areas (Keller 2003). Research to date has focused on a number of areas of branding, including how brands are created and the different aspects of brands (Levine 2003; Keller 2009), how they are perceived by consumers (Lovelock and Writz 2007), how consumers react to them (de Chernatony and Dall'Omo Riley 1998), the relationships consumers create with them (Fournier 1998), how consumers integrate them into their self-concept (Chaplin and John 2005), the different benefits a brand gives an organisation (Keller and Lehmann 2006), as well as how consumers communicate with them (Leckie et al. 2016). However, the concept of a 'brand' keeps evolving and growing as researchers continue to discover the applicability of branding in new dimensions, contexts, industries, and entities (Close et al. 2011; Muzellec et al. 2012; Speed et al. 2015). Nonetheless, very few researchers have established that brands could also be human (Thomson 2006; Fournier 2010).

The concept of human branding in research remains rather limited but its importance and growth in recent years is evident (Carlson and Donovan 2013). Most researchers and marketers have limited their studies of potential human brands (celebrities) to the study of celebrities within the concept of endorsement. However, Thomson (2006) highlights the similarities of celebrities or human brands to traditional brands, as they both possess intangible assets such as reputation, image, a name, credibility, and they are both manageable by professionals. Political campaigns are an example where the contender's speeches, catchphrases, manifestos, public appearances, and endorsements are well managed and organised by a group of experts and political

parties in order to create and manage the politician's brand image and increase appeal to potential voters (Thomson 2006).

Although research has highlighted the presence of human brands and the key attachment and relationship consumers create with human brands (Thomson 2006; Parmentier 2010; Close et al. 2011), this area could be further developed. Research has continually shown that consumers are able to create emotional attachment to various non-living objects including brands (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006). These attachments are of utmost importance to the strength of consumer-brand relationships (Thomson 2006). These strong attachments are manifested in consumer engagement with brands, as engagement is based on the continuous growth of emotional relationships and bonds between consumers and brands (Palmatier et al. 2006; Yoon et al. 2008). Patterson et al. (2006, p.11) defined consumer engagement as "the level of a customer's physical, cognitive and emotional presence in their relationship with a service organisation". Brodie et al. (2013) explain that consumer engagement provides a means of creating, building, maintaining, and enhancing consumer relationships and it is also a strategic tool for generating and sustaining competitive advantage while being an indication of potential positive business performance. Hence, consumer brand engagement presents itself as an accurate instrument in investigating why and how consumers engage with human brands compared to traditional brands. This study will illustrate the concept of consumer brand engagement with two different brand categories (traditional brands and human brands), which have been recommended for future research by Hollebeek (2011a). Hence, although engagement has gathered a wealth of research, this study will further extend the literature on consumer brand engagement.

1.4 Rationale

A growing number of celebrities are expanding their brands into products and establishing separate product brands such as make-up brands and clothing lines. These businesses have been shown to be doing exceedingly well as they gain valuable market share across various industries regardless of the presence of established large traditional brands that have dominated those industries for years. A good example is the reality star Kylie Jenner (celebrity) who has become a household name in the

cosmetic industry, making \$420 million in sales within just 18 months of launching the famous Kylie cosmetics brand (Gobanking 2020b).

The capacity for celebrities' product brands to gain instant success across various industries which they diversify into can be largely attributed to the status, fame, and 'love' the celebrity, as a human brand, has acquired over the years. This phenomenon can be likened to what most traditional brands seek to attain from utilising celebrity endorsement as a marketing strategy. Hence, the hope is that by using celebrities as ambassadors and faces of the brand they are able to transfer the positive emotional connections consumers create with these celebrities onto the brand and product line. However, the effectiveness and return on investment of this very expensive strategy is almost always unknown. Unlike endorsement, when celebrities create their own product line and product brands, the transfer of interest, love, emotional connection and reputation from celebrities to the new product brand are relatively instantaneous and highly effective. These product brands created by celebrities become an extension of themselves and a part of the celebrity that their fans and admirers can have to themselves. The phenomenon therefore mirrors the concept of the transferring of a brand's accumulated equity onto a new product line or product extension. It therefore becomes essential for celebrities to be acknowledged and treated as brands as this paradigm shift is bound to affect the type of marketing strategies the branded organisation creates with celebrities and famous individuals at large. A good example of this shift can be found in the growing trend of large brands partnering and co-creating with celebrities (e.g. Kanye West and Adidas in the creation of Yeezys). Although the current research does not explore such marketing trends it might just serve as an explanation of why such trends seem to be growing in attention and success.

Celebrities in particular are known to possess strong influence over an individual's preferences, actions, thoughts, and even beliefs (Thomson 2006; Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016). Hence it is not only relevant but essential that celebrities and public figures should be treated by marketers as brands and not merely company tools for enhancing brand personality and image through endorsement. Human brands should be viewed as an indispensable component of both contemporary culture and the modern market economy (Parmentier 2010). The idea that consumers form stronger

and deeper connections with human brands than they do with traditional brands is the premise of this research. The current research builds on the concept of human brands through focusing on Generation Y consumers and investigating why and how these individuals engage with both traditional and human brands and whether there are similarities and differences in the way the chosen group of individuals engages.

1.5 Research aim and objectives

This thesis aims to expand the literature on human brands and illustrate celebrities as impactful brands by comparing consumer brand engagement with human brands to their engagement with traditional brands. Hence, the aim of this research is to investigate how and why Generation Y engages with traditional and human brands, and evaluate whether their engagement differs between the two brand types.

To fully achieve the aim of this study, the following objectives will be addressed:

1. Explore and establish the concepts of both traditional brands and human brands.
2. Investigate why consumers engage with human brands and traditional brands.
3. Investigate how consumers engage cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally with both traditional brands and human brands.
4. Identify the differences and similarities between consumer-brand engagement with traditional brand vs. human brands.

In this study the author focuses on the consumer's perspective on why and how Generation Y consumers engage with human brands and traditional brands. By investigating why they engage with the two different brand types the study establishes influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands and traditional brands. This study also directly investigates how consumers engage cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally with both human and traditional brands. This study does not focus on a particular human brand or traditional brand as participants are asked to choose a particular human and tradition brand they feel highly engaged with. Also, consumer brand engagement is not limited to a contextual environment such as Facebook for example but investigates both offline and online

(social media) engagement. Particularly, this study conducts its investigation on Generation Y due to their unique qualities as will be highlighted in the literature review.

1.6 Contribution of thesis

As there are very limited studies on the concept of human brands, this study seeks to directly contribute to this topic area by investigating why consumers engage with human brands and how they do so cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally. This study, to the best of the author's knowledge, is the first to date to directly investigate consumer brand engagement with human brands especially from the perspective of consumers.

Additionally, this study contributes to the consumer brand engagement literature by both investigating the phenomenon in a different brand category, that is, human brands, and comparing consumer brand engagement with two different categories of brands in order to establish whether it differs.

Finally, this thesis establishes a framework of influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement for both traditional brands and human brands.

1.7 Overview of the structure of the thesis

This thesis contains 6 chapters; below is a summary of what each chapter entails:

Chapter 1

The first chapter of the thesis is an introduction to the study. The chapter sets the scene for the study with an introduction to the context of the study. The chapter also highlights the key aim and objectives of the study, the contributions of the thesis, and an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter 2

The second chapter of the thesis is the literature review. This chapter explores and presents the literature relevant to the topic areas being considered in this study. The literature review begins with an exploration of the concept of branding in order to clearly define the terms ‘traditional’ and ‘human’ brands. This is followed by a review of literature on the concept of human brands. The next section of the literature review introduces engagement with a particular focus on consumer brand engagement through conceptualisation and the adoption of Hollebeek’s (2011b) consumer brand engagement dimensions for the study. Furthermore, this chapter highlights both the uniqueness of generation Y cohorts and why they have been adopted for the study as well as the impact of social media on engagement. The literature review also explores literature on antecedents and influencers of consumer brand engagement with both traditional brands and human brands. Finally, this chapter highlights the gaps presented in the literature through the review process.

Chapter 3

The third chapter of the thesis explores the methodological stance and approaches of the research. In this chapter, the research choices, methods, and approaches are discussed and justified. This chapter is divided into three sections, with the first section exploring the choice of interpretivism as the research paradigm and the use of qualitative research. The second section highlights the particular use of grounded theory and its unique research approach, while giving a detailed insight into how the study was conducted.

Chapter 4

The fourth chapter presents the key analyses and findings of the study. The first section highlights the themes of influences on consumer brand engagement for both traditional brands and human brands. The second section focuses on consumer brand engagement with the two brand types based on the dimensions adopted by the study.

Chapter 5

The fifth chapter of the thesis is the discussion chapter. In this chapter, the author discusses the key findings of the study in relation to previous literature on consumer brand engagement with traditional brands and human brands. The chapter introduces the three main outputs of the study, which are: influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands, influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands, and the differences and similarities between how consumers engage with human brands vs. traditional brands.

Chapter 6

The sixth chapter concludes this thesis. The chapter revisits the aims and objectives of the study by explaining how these were achieved. The author highlights the contribution of the study to literature with recommendations to managers and future research presented.

1.8 Summary

This chapter has delivered an introduction to the study and sets the scene with an introduction to the research context. The chapter also highlights the key aim and objectives of the study, the contributions of the thesis, and an overview of the thesis. The following chapter of the thesis is the literature review, exploring current literature on the subject area investigated by the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to critically assess the literature on traditional brands, human brands, consumer brand engagement, and influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with both traditional brands and human brands while identifying research gaps. This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section introduces this research as a grounded theory study and the implications of this for the literature review. The second section comprises the pre-theory literature review, which addresses the background literature on the topic areas covered. The third section covers a review of extant literature on the core theory generated from this study categorised as the 'post-theory' literature review. Finally, the last section covers the literature review conclusions and identifies the key research gaps this study seeks to fill.

2.2 Introduction to Grounded theory

Prior to exploring literature on the topic area, it is vital to introduce the concept of grounded theory as it influences most of the research decisions taken for this study. This research can be described as a grounded theory study, which essentially means the theory generated by this study is grounded in data. The process of conducting a grounded theory study directly affects the structure and process of conducting the literature review. Hence, to fully present the literature review, the key components of grounded theory and how it affects the acquisition of information from previous literature will now be discussed.

2.2.1 The concept of Grounded theory

Grounded theory originated in the combined work of Glaser and Strauss in the mid-1960s as medical sociologists, and the subsequent publication of 'The Discovery of Grounded theory' (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This seminal work is the backbone of the concept famously known as the classic Grounded theory. It explains how theory could be generated from data inductively (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Grounded theory challenged the notion that scientific quantitative research was the only unbiased

method by which to justify and generate truth claims, while equally asserting that the notion that qualitative research lacks rigour is fundamentally wrong (Glaser 1998).

Grounded theory as a methodology is suitable when there is little known about a phenomenon in the area in question. The aim is to uncover or produce a theory based on data (Locke 2001). The research process of grounded theory consists of meticulously constructed stages that are integral to the successful establishment of a 'grounded theory'. These processes are not only essential to the generation of theory but are distinctively key elements of ensuring quality in a grounded theory study (Mills et al. 2014). Chapter 3 further elaborates on the processes and components of a grounded theory study. However, the adaptation of a grounded theory research approach dictates how and when extant literature on the subject is viewed by the researcher.

2.2.2 Grounded theory and literature review

A key component of grounded theory that needs to be stated before exploring the topic area in this chapter is the use of literature in grounded theory. The essence of grounded theory is for the researcher to be guided and sensitive to the data, following leads and categories discovered through data with the use of constant comparative analysis. Therefore, it is imperative in a grounded theory study to refrain from overly and improperly influencing the research, data, and developing theory through extensive reading and literature reviews (Birks and Mills 2015). The idea that the theory emerges from the data becomes challenged when existing theoretical notions and beliefs intersect with the data collection and analysis processes, and if these begin to shape the researcher's preconceptions of the topic area (Tie et al. 2019). This increases the risk of clouding the researcher's capability to discover and follow leads of emerging categories that may contradict or expand on the research to date, thus undermining the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher (Tie et al. 2019). Rather, grounded theory considers a literature review to be more suitable for constant comparative analysis once all the primary categories and their links being investigated have been identified and the fundamental theoretical framework for the study is well developed and established (Charmaz 2011).

Consequently, in accordance with Charmaz (2006) and to adhere to the methodological principles of grounded theory, a minimal literature review conducted before the discovery of all core categories and their properties seemed appropriate for this study. As such, the literature review is divided into two sections: pre-theory literature review and post-theory literature review. The pre-theory literature review denotes a form of background review of the existing literature on the topic areas and the post-theory literature review explores further literature around the theory generated from this study. The aim is for the researcher not to enter the research process with preconceived codes and categories from existing literature but to rather have background knowledge of the literature as a departure point which the interview questions could be based on (Charmaz 2006).

2.3. Pre-theory literature review

This section of the literature review was conducted prior to the data collection and analysis process. It comprises a review of the main topic areas of this study and represents a literature background and conceptualisation of the key terms and concepts discussed in this study.

2.3.1 Defining traditional brands

The concept of branding has consistently gained popularity in marketing and is considered a significant subject for research (Keller 2003). Previous research has categorised the term 'brand' to be a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of distinguishing features of a good and service (Kotler and Armstrong 2010). According to Keller and Lehmann (2006), brands comprise various useful functions for the different stakeholders involved with the brand:

- To firms, they are markers of the offerings,
- To customers, they serve as a form of differentiation from other similar products especially during the purchase decision-making process and also serve as cues for quality, risk, price, class and so on,
- To marketers, they are indicators of the effectiveness of marketing efforts such as advertising and positioning.

Park et al. (1986) explores the selection of a brand concept to be based on the firm's selected brand meaning originated from customer needs before market entry. This

means brands are to be created solely to meet three main consumer needs: functional, symbolic, and experiential needs. A brand should therefore decide whether they wish to meet the functional (problem-solving), symbolic (self-enhancement and social self-preservation), or experiential (invoking, enhancing sensual pleasure) needs of the consumer and only then derive their life-long enduring brand image. However, such definitions have been criticised as being company-oriented, focusing solely on the business purpose of branding and aiming at achieving competitive advantage and profits (Kotler and Keller 2006; Park et al. 2013). This myopic view can be described as a traditional perspective of brands (Muzellec et al. 2012).

As researchers began to discover the emotional attachment and involvement consumers have with brands there has been a progressive evolution of the branding concept (Fournier 1998). The Brand Concept has seen a shift from the more traditional and static definition of brands to a multi-dimensional approach where brands come in different forms and represent sets of associations in the minds of consumers (Keller 2008). Hence, brands embody both the functional values for firms and psychosocial needs of consumers (de Chernatony and Dall'Olmio Riley 1998) as well as emotional, social, and core values of the brand. For example, brands do not only serve as a form of differentiation but also a form of expression of consumers' identities and equally translate core virtues and values prized by consumers that the brand represents such as being eco-friendly or socially responsible. The emotional facet of the brand concept refers to a pool of perceptions in the mind of the consumer (Muzellec et al. 2012), giving rise to the shift of emphasis from brand managers to consumers, as they became active value co-producers rather than an uninvolved audience (Jeon 2017). This continually results in growth and development in the manner brands have been created and the establishment of the meaning of a brand.

Therefore, the evolution of the brand concept also birthed an expansion of the scope of branding. A growing number of researchers have explored the possibilities of brand concepts being extended to include an extensive variety of institutions (Speed et al. 2015) such as churches, fashion and modelling (Parmentier et al. 2008; Parmentier et al. 2013), universities (Close et al. 2011), sports (Carlson and Donavan 2013; Lobpries et al. 2016), politics (Speed et al. 2015), blogging (Safitri 2017), and now people either in the form of celebrities or ordinary individuals (Thomson 2006; Eagar

and Dann 2018). Hence, the brand concept has metamorphosed into a flexible and creative terminology where researchers such as Muzellec et al. (2012) keep pushing the boundaries once confirmed around the term 'brand' to new dimensions such as virtual environments.

Therefore, this research uses the term 'traditional brands' to categorise brands that exist within the traditional perspectives, definitions and scope of brands. Traditional brands in this research are brands used as a tool (name, colour, sign, symbol, etc.) for marketing and differentiation purposes and specifically created for the sale of physical goods or services as well as company revenue. Hence for this research:

- A traditional brand represents only goods or services (such as electronics or a restaurant).
- A traditional brand's marketing communication aims to promote goods or services.

2.3.2 Defining human brands

In recent years, researchers have become interested in the investigation of brands being human. The study of human brands is relatively limited (Thomson 2006; Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016), however it is becoming evident that in this contemporary marketing culture anything from products to individuals are capable of being branded (Thomson 2006; Parmentier et al. 2008; Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016).

Nonetheless, most researches in marketing and branding that consider the influence of celebrities are based on celebrity endorsement (Bergkvist and Zhou 2016). To further develop the concept of human brands, it is essential to highlight that the human brand concept is different from celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsement has generally been described as a common advertising strategy (Bergkvist et al. 2015; Winterich et al. 2018) where a famous person who enjoys public recognition uses their social status to advertise a good or service (Agnihotri and Bhattacharya 2018). An example is Charlize Theron, who has worked with Dior since 2004 and has been the face of many of the brand's perfume lines (Echo 2018). Brands use these celebrities to achieve several things (Erdogan 1999; Winterich et al. 2018) such as: drawing

attention and adding persuasion to marketing communication; raising brand awareness; defining brand image; repositioning; transfer of likability and success of the celebrity to brands, and increasing sales. Although this practice is not new, it is a consciously growing practice among marketers, causing companies to spend anywhere from US\$1million to US\$5million on yearly contracts of 11 years and up, with some celebrity endorsement deals costing an upfront fee of US\$50 million or more (Rahman 2018; Gobanking 2020a). Conversely, human branding is a concept where individuals such as celebrities are recognised as brands in their own right and not tools for the marketing purposes of other brands. It is the process of centring marketing activities around an individual to either promote themselves in their field of relevance or business purposes and not for the benefit of traditional brands of goods and services. Organisations need to evolve their perspective of celebrities to view them as strong brands. This could alter methods marketers utilise from expensive celebrity endorsement to more innovative effective collaborations with celebrity brands (e.g. co-branding).

2.3.2.1 The concept of Human Brands

Different approaches have been taken to exploring the concept of human brands. Researchers have examined the possibilities of individuals as brands under a range of dimensions such as personal branding, internal branding, and celebrity branding (Thomson 2006; Vallaster and de Chernatony 2006; Zamudio et al. 2013; Eagar and Dann 2018)

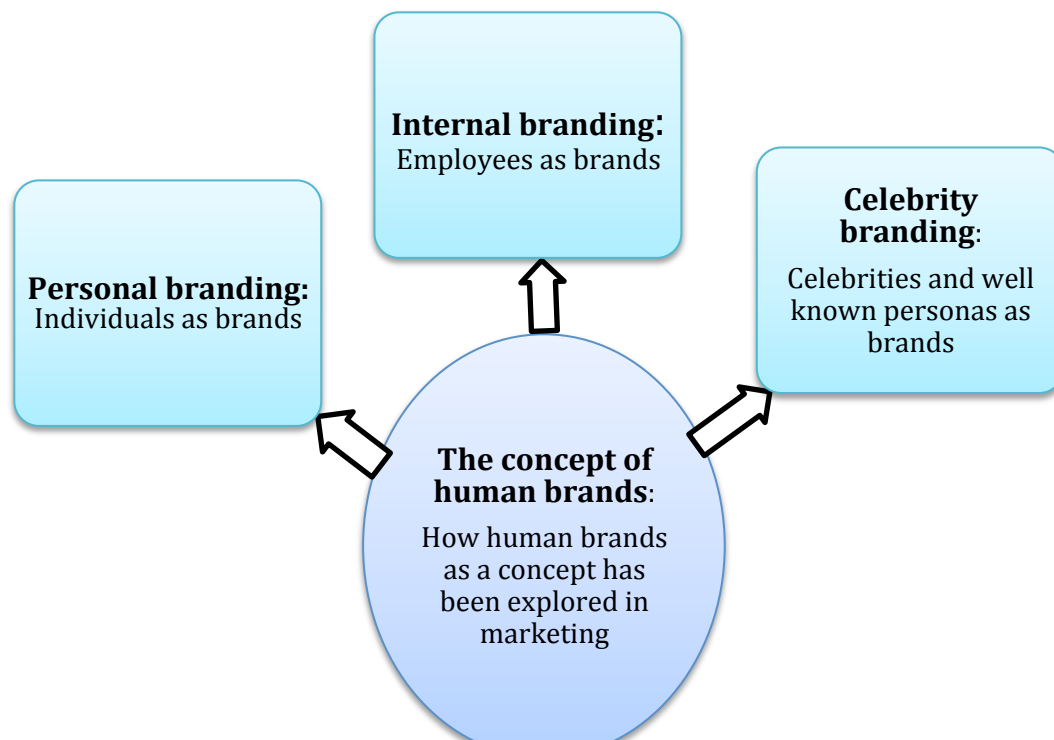


Figure 2.1 Human brand concept (original diagram by researcher)

Personal branding:

Researchers such as Kotler and Levy (1969), Parmentier et al. (2013), and Zamudio et al. (2013) have utilised the concept of human branding on a personal level through the term ‘personal branding’ as they explore how individuals can use branding and marketing concepts and practices as tools in positioning themselves as the best candidate for a job (Zamudio et al. 2013). This branch of human branding research emphasises that brand management is a method that individuals use to package themselves when seeking to advance their careers (Speed et al. 2015). However, this version of personal branding can only exist under the traditional view, of branding being a tool for identification and differentiation as prospective employees utilise the concept of branding to stand out from the pack of applicants. This causes difficulties in applying the more complex functions of brands such as relationship management, representing sets of associations, and creating emotional connections to this aspect of personal branding. Hence, this perspective lacks the complexity of a more holistic and evolved version of human branding that this study seeks to explore.

Another group of researchers extended the term ‘personal branding’ as the method ordinary individuals use to create a human brand image (e.g. Muñiz et al. 2013; Eagar

and Dann 2018). This body of research views the individual as a brand manager of themselves as they utilise continuously-growing technology structures and social media to create platforms for self-expression of an assembled public image (Eagar and Dann 2018). This concept capitalises on the feature that the ordinary person has the power to re-define or re-brand themselves to the public. Hence, these individuals utilising personal branding do not have celebrity status and would have traditionally been excluded from human branding performances such as creating a brand image without the introduction of technology. However, this concept is highly dependent on the availability and development of technology and may not have the capacity to exist outside such technological scales (Eagar and Dann 2018). This limitation of the concept excludes it from the parameters of human branding involved in this study.

Internal branding:

Another body of research applies human brand theories to an organisational setting called 'internal branding' (Lui et al. 2017). It capitalises on the application of human brand theories to employees as they represent everything a brand promises and are key to customer satisfaction (Vallaster and de Chernatony 2006). Internal branding conceives of employees as needing to be managed in a manner wherein they can 'be the brand' they represent to reinforce brand promises and experiences customers have with products (Khan 2009). Although the concept of 'internal branding' has the potential to be highly beneficial in areas such as management and organisational behaviour, it is very restrictive as it is focused on employees and does not align with the aims of this study.

Celebrity branding:

The final and most common arm of research on human brands is celebrities as human brands (Thomson 2006). Celebrities in this concept are well-known individuals who are marketed and branded. This consists of anyone from a professional athlete to a musician, an artist, or even a politician.

Speed et al. (2015) expands on the Celebrity branding pool of study, where the primary focus of research has been based on human brands with little to no connections with organisations, or what he terms 'freestanding human brands'. The research highlights that:

- There are Human brands such as businessmen who have a celebrity status that is strongly tied to a branded organisation - for example, Steve Jobs and athletes tied to a team (Carlson and Donovan 2013).
- This connection between human brands and organisational brands raises unique and complex factors when creating and managing these human brands as their celebrity status is often generated through their associations with, or roles within, these branded organisations (Speed et al. 2015).
- It is in this unique relationship between human brands and branded organisations that research on politicians as human brands become distinctive from other sectors, as every political personality represents its political party and is used as a competitive tool for their party's advantage (Speed et al. 2015).

The current study seeks to build on the concept of human brands presented by Thomson (2006) and Speed et al. (2015) by exploring how and why consumers engage with human brands. Hence, for the purpose of this study, human brands represent famous or well-known individuals in various sectors who are the centre of marketing communications and may or may not be tied to branded organisations or entities. This group of individuals' celebrity status is generated from their career growth and expertise, wherein their celebrity status is not bound, created, or limited to a social environment within an online platform or presence.

2.3.3 Research on human brands

Most research on human brands has explored the different features a human brand possesses and just like a traditional brand, human brands are equally made up of brand image, brand personality, brand identity and most importantly, consumer-brand relationships (Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016).

Common areas of research on human brands as celebrities or well-known individuals that have been explored are based on brand identity, brand personality, and brand associations. These topic areas are interwoven, with some of the words having similar definitions (Carlson and Donovan 2013; Speed et al. 2015; Eagar and Dann 2016; Lobpries et al. 2016). The purpose of this section is to identify extant literature on

human brands and identify how the current research differs and how it extends understanding of the topic.

Brand Identity and human brands

Brand identity has been described as a distinctive and enduring characteristic of a brand (He et al. 2016), which resonates with stakeholders such as consumers (Nandan 2005). Pich et al. (2016) describe brand identity as a strategic tool that forms the heart of brand creation as it defines the brand and its purpose. Researchers such as Lobpries et al. (2016) have explored the concept of brand identity in athletes as human brands, stating that brands which successfully create a unique identity can generate a significant market presence, secure more customer spending, create loyalty, ensure consumer identification with the brand, create competitive advantage and brand differentiation, and increase sales (Aaker and Joachimsthaler 2000; Ghodeswar 2008). Farhana (2014) states that the creation of a brand identity is fundamental to brand building, brand management, and brand promotion activities. Lobpries et al. (2016) discusses the primary brand identity in human brands, which concerns the lasting and unchanging quintessence of the brand, and the extended brand identity in human brands, which refers to the valuable and unique sets of associations given to the brand that allows for consumers to confirm their identities and create relationships with the brands as they connect with and consume them (Farhana 2014). For instance, the core identity of a brand will narrate its reason for existence e.g. Dettol refers to antiseptic cleaning and protection, while a human brand will be based on their core values and purpose of performance e.g. a country singer or defender-position football player. Meanwhile, the extended brand identity denotes elements that provide roundness and texture to the brand identity, giving it its differentiated properties used in promotional activities. The extended brand identity is said to be a combination of brand personality, positioning and presentation (Lobpries et al. 2016). Hence, extended brand identity and brand personality overlap both in definition and functionality.

Human brand personality and brand image

Azoulay and Kapferer (2003) define brand personality as a set of human personality traits associated with brands (Carlson and Donovan 2013). Carlson and Donovan

(2013) further explore how customers consume various brands based on the personality traits or adjectives associated with certain brands, especially human brands, such as sexy, fashionable, independent, hardworking, family-oriented, etc. These personalities that human brands possess make it easier for consumers to identify with them while expressing their actual or ideal self (Carlson and Donovan 2013). Hence, consumers are attracted to human brands with personalities that match or expresses who they are (actual self) or who they aspire to be (ideal self) (Mikulincer and Shaver 2007; Malär et al. 2011; He et al. 2016). Speed et al. (2015) established that for the set of associations created to a particular human brand personality to be valuable they should be favourably evaluated and strongly held by consumers, as well as unique to the brand in order to be differentiated from other brands.

Furthermore, Speed et al. (2015) explored the concept of brand persona, which is a key differentiation between human brands and traditional brands. The brand persona can be described as the key image a brand endeavours to communicate, although this concept corresponds with 'brand image' for traditional brands. The key difference lies in the fact that human brands are beings with actual personalities. This difference poses an important challenge in managing human brands as these human brands have the daunting task of re-enforcing this persona in the eyes of the public via their daily actions. The individual ought to be able to continually present this persona as their actual personality to the public; also known as 'being themselves' (Tolson 2001), which could be comprehended as a public performance. This performance needs to be seen as authentic by the public for the persona to be effective (Speed et al. 2015). Speed et al. (2015) calls it a believable act but, as human beings, mistakes can occur which have consistently led to the end of some human brands' celebrity status and career at large – an example is Tiger Woods and the cheating scandal, which tarnished his image in the eyes of the public (Knittel and Stango 2014).

Human brands and consumer connections

Finally, research on human brands has shown that consumers create strong attachments and connections to these well-known individuals such as celebrities (Thomson 2006; Parmentier 2010; Carlson and Donovan, 2013). Companies have

reportedly endeavoured to increase the emotional connections consumers have with their brands as they have observed that such connections result in increased consumer loyalty and economic performance (Park et al. 2010). It is this strong attachment and connection that propels firms to link their brands to celebrities with the anticipation that such an action will cause consumers to transfer the attraction, connection and love they have for a celebrity onto their brands (Nicolau and Santa-María 2013). Carlson and Donovan (2013) have classified these strong connections consumers have with human brands as a form of identification. This identification can be explained as a sense of belongingness with an individual, group or body, in which the individual expresses and defines him or herself in terms of the individual, group, or body they belong to or identify with (Coelho et al. 2018). Carlson and Donovan (2013) explain this form of identification consumers have with human brands from a social identity theory perspective. This perspective shows that the diverse social groups an individual belongs to and identifies with contributes to their social identity. It provides a method for consumers to declare the groups they affiliate with as well as the groups they differentiate themselves from and cannot be part of (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). They further argue that consumers identify with human brands that they perceive to be similar to their own actual or ideal self (Funk and James 2001; Bhattacharya and Sen 2003; Tuškej et al. 2013).

Based on this overview of research on human brands to date, studies have provided insight into the concept of human brands and the important components of human brand interactions with consumers. However, though there is considerable evidence of the existence of celebrities as human brands in research, to date there is still too little literature available on human brands and not enough attention given to the topic in marketing literature. The business world has recently seen trends of celebrities launching solo brands and producing products that see more success than large established traditional brand alternatives which have been in the market longer. An example is Rihanna's makeup line Fenty Beauty, which sold more than their traditional rival makeup brands such as NYX, recording US\$72.0 million in earned media value in the first month, beating NYX's US\$51.5 million (Ilchi 2017). Therefore, the need for more research in this area cannot be overstated. It is key to further understand consumers' strong relationships and means of engagement with

human brands. This study will focus on engagement with human brands as it seeks to investigate why and how consumers engage with human brands as well as whether and how this differs to their engagement with traditional brands.

2.3.4 Engagement

The concept of engagement and its significance and relevance to marketing to date can be attributed to the creation of this current study's aim and objectives. Following the development of the brand concept, researchers continue to uncover the depths and consequences of the strong brand relationships consumers create, which lead to emotional attachment and consumer commitment to brands (Fournier 1998; Oliver 1999). Commitment directly translates to loyalty while emotional attachment shows affinity to a brand over other available alternatives and influences both the growth of a firm's revenue and its profits (Jeon 2017). Commitment is the desire for consumers to maintain valued relationships with brands (Walsh et al. 2010) and is often referred to as a consequence of engagement (Hollebeek 2011b). Emotional attachment or brand attachment is an affective construct strongly associated with ownership (Gómez-Suárez et al. 2019; Vivek 2009) and narrates the strength of the cognitive and emotional bond connecting the brand with self (Chen et al. 2020; Park et al. 2010). Essentially, consumer engagement propels and enhances the emotional bonds between consumers and brands (Li et al. 2020). Although both attachment and engagement comprise a consumer-brand relationship, the difference between the two is in the definition and expression. As the following sections in this chapter explore, engagement is the actualisation of a consumer-brand relationship through emotional, cognitive, and behavioural activities, while attachment explores the bond and connection consumers' form manifesting as a long-term outcome of brand relationship (or continuous consumer engagement) (Chen et al. 2020; Hollebeek 2019). Hence, engagement encapsulates the different actions consumers invest in building relationships with brands and brand attachment translates the strength of the bond created through a long-term relationship. Managers are therefore propelled to invest in promotional activities with the potential to produce such strong consumer-brand relationships (Brakus et al. 2009). Hence, a brand's functionality has matured to accommodate the ability to create long-term connections and relationships with consumers. Consequently, scholars, marketing managers, and communication

professionals have dedicated their focus to understanding and creating ‘engagement’ between consumers and brands as the fundamental expression of the consumer-brand connection (Graffigna and Gambetti 2015). For this study to investigate why and how consumers engage with human brands and traditional brands, it is important to review the concept of engagement, and more specifically consumer brand engagement, as this study adopts the dimensions of consumer brand engagement to investigate exactly how consumers engage with the two brand types.

2.3.4.1 The concept of Engagement

Engagement has been widely explored in various academic disciplines such as organisational behaviour, political science, psychology, and sociology (Leeftang 2011). Higher engagement levels in these various disciplines resulted in positive outcomes. For example, in the area of organisational behaviour employee engagement resulted in higher morale in employees, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, reduced absenteeism, and several other positive outcomes leading to increased productivity and profitability (Hollebeek 2011a; 2011b). While exploring the concept of engagement within marketing Brodie et al. (2011) observe the following key points:

1. Engagement is an individual-specific variable that is context-dependant and manifests from a two-way interaction between the related subject and object. The engagement subject may include students, employees, consumers, while the engagement object may include schools, other students or co-workers, jobs, organisations, brands. In marketing, scholars have widely accepted the engagement subject to be consumers/customers, while the engagement object varies from brands and products to organisations (Hollebeek 2011b).
2. Engagement can be seen as a subject’s motivational state to interact with a particular object (e.g. brand) (Van Doorn et al. 2010).
3. There is a surfacing of various more specific engagement sub-forms such as ‘consumer/customer engagement’ (Hollebeek 2018), ‘Consumer brand engagement’ (Graffigna and Gambetti 2015), ‘consumer engagement in online brand communities’ (Lujja and Özata 2017), and ‘Consumer engagement behaviours’ (Van Doorn et al. 2010). This growing field of ‘engagement-

based' concepts depicts the promising and insightful nature of engagement in marketing and should be explored with human brands.

4. Engagement represents a multi-dimensional concept (including cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions), which may vary across different contexts, and is based on different views of engagement conceptualisation (Hollebeek 2011a; 2011b; Hollebeek et al. 2019).
5. Engagement has been said to be an adequate measurement for the strength of a brand and gives rise to feelings of pride, confidence, integrity and passion in a brand (Lujja and Özata 2017).

The growing popularity of the term 'engagement' in marketing has highlighted the concept to be distinctively different from similar relational concepts such as participation, involvement, connection and attachment as it encompasses all these concepts but occurs within a broader relevant engagement process developing over time (Brodie et al. 2011). This study focuses on consumer brand engagement to determine how consumers engage with both human brands and traditional brands.

2.3.5 Consumer brand engagement

Consumer brand engagement represents a wider scope on the concept of engagement, emphasising consumers' perceptions, interactions, connections, relationships, and intimacy with brands and branded activity. Hence, consumer brand engagement as a concept is expanding the field of relationship marketing (Vivek et al. 2011) and consumer-brand relationships (Fournier, 1998). This concept is understood to lead to positive and concrete results such as consumer retention, positive word-of-mouth, loyalty, and satisfaction through value co-creation (Verhoef et al. 2010; Leckie et al. 2016). According to Leckie et al. (2016), consumer brand engagement is centred on the view that consumers are proactive actors, and not mere audiences, who dedicate cognitive, emotional, and physical energy to co-create value from certain brand interactions (Brodie, et al. 2011). Consumer engagement has continually been linked to improved organisational performance such as growth in sales, competitive advantage, and profitability (Sawhney et al. 2005; Bijmolt et al. 2010; Hollebeek 2018). Additionally, well-engaged customers have greater brand loyalty (Islam et al. 2017; Lujja and Özata 2017), are more likely to contribute to new product

development, and contribute to viral marketing activity (Hoyer et al. 2010; Brodie et al. 2011).

2.3.5.1 Conceptualisation of consumer brand engagement

Consumer brand engagement is not only beneficial to brands but is much more essential than other mechanisms such as perceived quality and customer satisfaction in predicting brand loyalty (Hollebeek 2011b), while being used as a measurement to indicate the strength of a company or brand (Lujja and Özata 2017). However, various authors have explored the conceptualisation and definition of the concept via different views, leading to a variety of outcomes (Hollebeek 2011b; Graffigna and Gambetti 2015; Lujja and Özata 2017; Islam et al. 2018). These conceptual viewpoints are significant to explore as they determine what dimensions, or in some cases, stances, are used to assess the concept of consumer brand engagement.

Calder et al. (2016) explore consumer brand engagement from an experience-based perspective, where they interpret consumers' engagement to be "a multilevel, multidimensional construct that emerges from the thoughts and feelings about one or more rich experiences involved in reaching a personal goal" (Calder et al. 2016, p.40). They argue that the multi-dimension nexus explored by authors such as Van Doorn et al. (2010), Brodie et al. (2011), and Hollebeek (2011b) through the cognitive, behavioural, and/or emotional states of engagement are merely consequences of the experiences consumers create with brands. However, in support of Brakus et al. (2009) 'experience' and 'engagement' ought to be viewed as separate theoretical entities (Lemke et al. 2011), as brand experience does not infer a motivational state like engagement does, as shown by Brodie et al. (2011). It also does not depict an emotional relationship between the consumer and the brand (Brakus et al. 2009). Consequently, this conceptual stance is inappropriate for this study as the essentiality of the connection and relationship built between consumers and brands has been well established in earlier sections of this thesis and forms an important part of the rationale behind this study.

Another stream of research on consumer brand management is the concept of a process-based nature, highlighting the various manifestations of consumer

engagement initiated through different stages of the customer life-cycle (Graffigna and Gambetti 2015). According to Bowden (2009), consumer engagement is conceptualised as a psychological process that models fundamental mechanisms whereby customer loyalty forms with new customers, and mechanisms whereby customer loyalty is maintained with existing customers, of a service brand. Although this perspective covers a fluid, unstable journey of the customer's life-cycle (Bijmolt et al. 2010), its definition is restricted to service brands, which can be seen as rigid and ultimately too myopic for the scope of this study. Furthermore, it assumes the notion that there are universal mechanisms of loyalty for both new and existing customers. This assumption is unrealistic as there continue to be on-going debates around the consequences and antecedents of consumer brand engagement (Florenthal 2019); thus, there are bound to be different views on what are considered mechanisms of loyalty for an existing and new customer.

The final arm of consumer brand engagement conceptualisation is the multi-dimensional perspective where researchers view consumer brand engagement in two or more dimensions with the most common being cognitive, behavioural and emotional states (Hollebeek 2019; Leckie et al. 2016) through motivational drivers (Van Doorn et al. 2010). Nonetheless, some authors have concentrated more on one of these dimensions within their research (i.e. behavioural e.g. Van Doorn et al. 2010) causing their work to be one-sided, static (Graffigna and Gambetti 2015) and limited (Hollebeek 2019; Hollebeek et al. 2019; Islam et al. 2019). The multi-dimensional view unifies various dimensions of consumer brand engagement such as the work of Brodie et al. (2011) and Hollebeek (2011a, 2011b), giving it a more dynamic conceptualisation as various forms of engagement are explored. For the purpose of this study, it is essential for the dimensions adopted to depict the different ways that consumers engage with brands in order for the aim of establishing how consumers engage with the two different brand types to be accomplished. Dimensions such as vigour, dedication, absorption, interaction, awareness, enthusiasm, activity, and experience (Patterson et al 2006; Vivek 2009) do not necessarily imply how consumers engage with brands. Cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity dimensions are much broader and are better able to cover other dimensional aspects of consumer brand engagement such as interaction and absorption, for example. This is mainly because engagement factors such as interaction or absorption can occur

cognitively, emotionally, or behaviourally. Finally, cognitive, emotional and behavioural activities refer to the different methods of consumer brand engagement. This consequently study adopts the multi-dimensional perspective wherein consumer brand engagement “refers to the level of a customer’s motivational, brand-related and context dependent state of mind characterised by specific levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural activity in brand interactions” (Hollebeek 2011b, p.790).

Cognitive activity is defined as the individual’s level of concentration and engrossment in the brand (Hollebeek 2011b). Meanwhile, emotional activity is defined as the individual’s level of inspiration, pride and affection for and in the brand (Schaufeli et al. 2002). Finally, behavioural activity has been defined as the individual’s level of energy exerted in interacting with the brand (Patterson et al. 2006).

2.3.6 The effect of social media on consumer brand engagement

Technological advancement has given rise to a new method of engagement among individuals where communication is fast, peer-to-peer, and happens in real-time across the globe (Florenthal 2019; Helme-Guizon and Magnoni 2019). This efficiency and dynamism of communication and engagement are as a result of social media networking sites. Social media can be described as a storehouse of content that is created, reconstructed, deliberated, and shared by individuals and communities through highly interactive platforms (Florenthal and Chao 2015). Thus, social media sites vary from networking sites (e.g. Facebook) to communication platforms (e.g. WhatsApp), interactive websites (blogs), micro-blogs (e.g. Twitter), community web pages, review and rating sites, as well as game and/or video sharing sites (e.g. YouTube) (Baccarella et al. 2018; Colton 2018). These sites promote multi-dimensional, peer-to-peer, two-way communication and have attracted brands that wish to engage with their consumers as it has become one of the main channels for promoting and cultivating improved consumer-brand relationships (Chiang et al. 2017; Hudson et al. 2016), all while promoting a brand’s image, values, products, and services (Morra et al. 2018).

Social media can be described as an efficient environment for consumer brand engagement activities (Mangold and Faulds 2009) and has become an integral part of a company's marketing promotional strategies (Kim et al. 2014). The key for brands to utilise social media sites effectively as a marketing strategy is to find ways to engage their target audience (Alalwan et al. 2017). This can be done either through brand-consumer communications (e.g. brand pages) or brand-driven communication among consumers (e.g. brand communities) (Florenthal 2019). Consequently, recent research on consumer brand engagement was conducted in the context of these two types of engagement on social media as a whole (Florenthal 2019).

Social media sites have equally affected how consumers engage with celebrities (Krotoski 2011), as information about celebrities is abundant and easily accessed (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández 2019). Historically, celebrities were presented in traditional media such as magazines and television, and engagement with celebrities was a one-way flow of information (Krotoski 2011). Hence, consumers were simply passive or observant audience members. However, social media has transformed the communication flow to a two-way dynamic structure wherein consumers can comment, like, share, and co-create information on/with celebrities (Stever and Lawson 2013). Celebrities are more in control of the distribution and flow of information about their private lives and can disclose as much or as little of it as they please (Stever and Lawson 2013). Essentially, what this means is that consumers can connect more deeply with celebrities and create stronger emotional bonds with them (Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016). Social media is part of social communication and new technology; a merging between old and new media which has changed, developed and transformed consumer brand engagement between consumers and celebrities (Thomas 2014).

Finally, the effect of social media on consumer brand engagement for both traditional brands and human brands cannot be understated or disregarded. Although this current study does not exclusively focus on engagement in a social media context, it is nonetheless essential to incorporate engagement on social media into the investigation to holistically understand why and how consumers engage with traditional brands and human brands.

2.3.7 Introducing Generation Y

The Generational theory is a form of grouping of people belonging to specific generations as determined by their birth year (Gursoy et al. 2008). The theory is based on the concept that people who were born in specific periods possess similar core values and therefore behave expectedly (Bochert et al. 2017). This study focuses on Generation Y due to their uniqueness, which is favourable to the current research as will now be discussed.

Scholars have observed that individuals who grow up around technology have greater affinity for it and are more comfortable using it (Chayko 2016). Members of Generation Y are grouped by their birth year, which is approximately from 1982-2002, making them currently between the ages of 18-38 years of age in 2020 (Howe and Strauss 2007). They are said to have spent their lives surrounded by technology and digital devices such as computers, cell phones, digital music players, videogames, etc., encouraging knowledge and understanding of technological advancements (Prensky 2001).

Generation Y are also often referred to as 'Millennials' (Howe and Strauss 2007), 'Digital natives' (Myers and Sundaram 2012), and the 'Net Generation' (Bolton et al. 2013), with these terms being used interchangeably in literature. This generation are the earliest digital natives as they were the first generation to be born and grow up in the digital and technological environment (Radzi et al. 2018). According to Fromm et al. (2015) individuals of Generation Y are:

- Known as content creators and users: meaning they are considered to be the first generations of bloggers, vloggers, (video, virtual, social) gamers, social network users and are the pioneers of these digital platforms (Chayko 2016).
- Concerned with peer affirmation: this encourages them to engage with one another on social media and networking sites (Bochert et al. 2017), while also encouraging them to create positive brand/celebrity associations for communicating self-expressive and status claims.
- They are willing to participate in branded marketing: as a generational cohort, they are willing to express their opinions, interests and emotions freely and openly and are willing to engage/interact with branded/celebrity content while

giving reviews and feedback (Valentine and Powers 2013). They are equally adventurous and will go the extra mile to co-create with brands/celebrities.

Generation Y could be considered the first group of individuals to explore the web and all its offerings. These consumers have incorporated technology and the Internet as part of their daily lifestyle and can be classified as dependant on it as they have no (or a very distant) memory of a time without technology (Florenthal 2019). They are highly interested in networking, collaborating, sharing their private lifestyle and experiences, instant messaging, and entertaining content with little to no concern for privacy (Myers and Sundaram 2012). They are constantly changing the dynamics of engagement through technology, media outlets, and networking sites (Florenthal 2019). They are also very willing to communicate with brands that they perceive to be engaging, informing, and inspiring (Fromm et al. 2015). These generational cohorts are also very susceptible to being influenced by celebrities and are very interested in learning information about their favourite celebrities (Agozzino 2012; Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016)

All these characteristics of Generation Y make them particularly appropriate for this study as they represent active consumers, willing to engage with brands/celebrities and marketing activities, and are peer conscious. They are the ideal group of people to understand why and how they engage with both traditional brands and human brands.

2.4 Post-theory literature review

This section of the literature review was conducted after the data collection and analysis process and the establishment of the core category and theory. It comprises a review of extant literature available on the core category generated by this research, which concern influences of consumer brand engagement on both traditional brands and human brands. The researcher does not conduct the research with these existing theories as preconceived codes or categories to be investigated. Nonetheless, overlaps and distinctiveness between extant literature and findings from this study are further discussed in Chapter 5. This section is equally essential for highlighting the gaps in the extant literature on the topic which this current study seeks to fill.

2.4.1 Antecedents and drivers of consumer brand engagement

The engagement field is predominantly concentrated in conceptual papers exploring definitions and dimensions of consumer brand engagement (e.g. France et al. 2016) as demonstrated earlier in this section, where authors continually disagree and explore the phenomenon through various facets (Wang et al. 2019). Nonetheless, there is substantial literature on factors that influence consumer brand engagement. Many studies have emphasised the importance of understanding what moves consumers to engage with different brands as it allows companies to build stronger relationships with their customers and to better serve them (Fernandes and Moreira 2019). These influencing factors of consumer brand engagement have been explored using different terms throughout the literature such as ‘motivational drivers’ (Muntinga 2011), ‘antecedents’ (Leckie et al. 2016), and ‘drivers’ (Chiang et al. 2017).

2.4.1.1 Antecedents/drivers of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands

To identify drivers and motivational factors of consumer brand engagement, the majority of the literature in the field begins by examining other marketing constructs that are related to, yet distinct from, the phenomenon (Brodie et al. 2011; Hollebeek 2011b; Fernandes and Moreira 2019). Researchers have consistently identified different marketing concepts that share a similar conceptual and functional relationship with consumer brand engagement (Dessart et al. 2016; Claffey and Brady 2019), allowing different authors to theoretically and empirically examine the connections classifying them under antecedents and consequences of consumer brand engagement. Hollebeek (2011b) explores different marketing concepts, placing some as antecedents and some as consequences depending on the nature of engagement and the stage of the consumer cycle; new or existing. Table 2.1 depicts a narration of Hollebeek’s (2011b) viewpoint of the relationship between different marketing concepts and consumer brand engagement and how they relate to it in terms of being antecedents or consequences.

Concept	Definition	Relationship to Consumer brand engagement (CBE)
Involvement	Individual's level of interest and relevance in terms of the focal object	CBE antecedent
Interactivity	Level of customer-firm interaction	CBE antecedent
Flow	Peak of an experience categorised by focused attention, effortless concentration, loss of consciousness, distortion of time etc.	CBE antecedent to short term peak experiences
Rapport	Genuine concern, sympathy and empathy for the other party	Potential CBE consequence in customer-brand interactions in new and/or existing customers. Also, potential antecedent in existing customers
Co-created value	Level of consumer perceived joint creation with brand	Potential CBE consequence
Brand experience	Consumer's internal response (feelings etc.) and behavioural response to brand-related stimuli	Potential CBE consequence
Perceived quality	Consumer's perceived quality of product/service	Potential CBE consequence primarily in service and co-creative contexts
Customer satisfaction	Customer's overall evaluation of the performance of a firm's offering	Potential CBE consequence in new/existing customers. Also, a potential CBE antecedent primarily in existing customers
Trust	Consumer's perceived security in brand interactions and belief that their best interest is acted on	Potential CBE consequence in new/existing customers. Also, a potential CBE antecedent primarily in existing customers
Commitment	Valuing on-going relationship, a desire to maintain relationship	Potential CBE consequence in new/existing customers. Also, a potential CBE antecedent primarily in existing customers
Customer value	Overall assessment of perceived value received in contrast to what was given	Potential CBE consequence
Brand loyalty	Continuous repeat purchase over a period of time	Potential CBE consequence

Figure 2.1: Relationship between consumer brand engagement and marketing concepts (amended from Hollebeek 2011b, p.793-794)

Brodie et al. (2011) give a very similar evaluation to Hollebeek's (2011b) explanation of different marketing concepts acting as antecedents and consequences of consumer

brand engagement. They include ‘participation’ as a required or expected antecedent of consumer brand engagement, while other concepts are categorised as antecedents or consequences depending on whether they relate to a new or existing customer. Vivek et al. (2012) supports the study by classifying participation and involvement as antecedents of consumer engagement with value creation, trust, affective commitment, Word-of-Mouth (WoM), loyalty, and brand community involvement as proceeded consequences.

On the other hand, concepts such as satisfaction and commitment have been considered key antecedents of engagement (Lujja and Özata 2017). Meanwhile, France et al. (2016) have argued that the existing key antecedents of consumer engagement should include ‘brand interactivity’, ‘brand quality’, ‘brand-self congruity’ and ‘brand involvement’ to give a more holistic depiction to the antecedents. They argue that the antecedents of consumer brand engagement need to be both consumer-centred and firm-led, based on the fact that most antecedents accepted are fairly consumer-centred and give little to no consideration to the brand’s input into consumer brand engagement (France et al. 2016). Supporting the viewpoint of brand-influenced drivers, Read et al. (2019) propose ‘brand intimacy’, ‘brand interactivity’ and ‘brand-consumer service’ as antecedents of consumer brand engagement.

2.4.1.2 Antecedents/drivers of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands on social media platforms

With the recent growth and interest, brands have been cultivated in the online context, spurring further research on the drivers of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands, centred on the dynamics and structures presented in online platforms, particularly social media environments (Yan 2011; Hutter et al. 2013). Social media platforms give brands the ability to connect in real-time and to co-create with consumers in a way they could never achieve before, due to its multi-dimensional, two-way communication properties (Jahn and Kunz 2012). This has cultivated diverse consumer brand engagement and consumer-brand relationships (Gensler et al. 2013). Therefore, a review of the antecedents of consumer brand engagement on social media, especially on online brand communities, is warranted (Dessart et al. 2015).

The majority of studies examining drivers of consumer engagement on such platforms or under online brand communities have increasingly applied the frameworks of Uses & Gratification theory (U&G theory) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) either separately or in combination (Florenthal 2019). U&G theory seeks to explain consumers' motivations for using and adopting a wide range of media (Ha et al. 2014). The theory states that people use different media to meet various needs and gratifications that assist in fulfilling their goals (Morra et al. 2018) and these drivers include hedonic (e.g. entertainment), utilitarian (e.g. information seeking), and social (e.g. need to connect with others). TAM is used to portray user behaviours from a wide range of online technological platforms and thus focuses more on the prediction of consequences of social media usage and engagement than the antecedents (Rauniar et al. 2014). Research has shown that drivers or antecedents of online consumer brand engagement are fundamentally functional drivers (Jahn and Kunz 2012), social drivers (Pansari and Kumar 2017), customer factors (Potdar et al. 2017), product and brand factors (Wang et al. 2019), learning factors affecting satisfaction (Chiang et al. 2017), usage intensity and co-creation (DeVries and Carlson 2014).

2.4.1.3 Antecedents/drivers of consumer brand engagement with human brands

The concept of human brands, and especially celebrities as brands in their own right, is not only underdeveloped but also hardly explored in the marketing field of research. However, these are becoming ever more prevalent as more and more celebrities become household brands for products/services and compete with big-name traditional brands (Parmentier et al. 2008). Evidently, there is little research focusing on why consumers engage with celebrities as brands. An overwhelming proportion of research focuses on brand engagement with people who possess some sort of celebrity status and are centred on 'influencers' or 'influencer marketing' (Pedroni 2016; Childers et al. 2018). The concept of influencers is centred on multi-platform high-profile micro-celebrities who have accumulated a large following on social media sites through visual and textual content, displaying their lifestyle and monetising their following by promoting brands' products and services for a fee or free access to goods/services (e.g. bloggers) (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-

Fernández 2019). They are individuals who use their relatively large followings to ‘influence’ consumers on branded products and services for a fee or incentive and are seen as ambassadors of those brands (Abidin 2016). They are usually viewed by their followers as authentic, informative, experts, and thus carry a certain power of influence over followers (Lou et al, 2019). These unique qualities have made influencer marketing a relatively integral strategy in a firm’s promotional activities, especially on social media (DeVries et al. 2017; Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). Drivers of engagement with influencers are subjected to eventual engagement with the firms or brands these influencers promote (Hughes et al. 2019). Brand influencers become drivers of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands. This is primarily because influencers are not the focal point of consumer brand engagement, but rather intermediaries between consumers and brands whereby they act as marketing tools for branded products (Abidin 2016; Pedroni 2016; Hughes et al. 2019; Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández 2019).

In the context of this study, and based on a review of the topic of influencer marketing, influencers are essentially different from celebrities and although they are classified as a form of human branding, that is, personal branding, they are not treated as human brands and/or celebrity brands in this study. This study elaborates and draws on the concept presented by Thomson (2006), wherein human brands are well-known individuals in various sectors who are the centre of marketing communications and may or may not be tied to branded organisations or entities, as stated earlier in the literature review. Therefore, there are key distinguishing factors of influencers that make them different from celebrity brands:

- Influencers, unlike celebrities, are ordinary individuals who have benefited from growing technological advancement and structures like social media to create a human brand image they would originally not have been able to attain if it were not for these platforms (Lovett and Staelin 2016; Eagar and Dann 2018; Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández 2019).
- Celebrities, as opposed to influencers, acquire their celebrity status due to their profession, whereas influencers acquire a micro-celebrity status based on their social media posts and activity (Abidin 2016) and are only considered celebrities within the context of online platforms.

- Celebrities, as opposed to influencers, are the centres of marketing communications, whereas influencers are individuals who become brand managers for themselves as they use social media to create a public image (Eagar and Dann 2018).
- The most important distinctive essence of influencers is that they are essentially given that title because they communicate branded products and/or services to their followers for monetary or incentive gain and thus form part of a traditional brands' promotional activities (Hughes et al. 2019). They are used as eWoM and awareness strategies to promote favourable behavioural activities (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández 2019).

Although there is very little research that treats celebrities as human brands, Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) apply the findings of Thomson (2006) in relation to human brands to investigate drivers of consumer behavioural activities towards human brands such as Word-of-Mouth and purchase likelihood. Although their study does not directly focus on antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands, it does begin to scratch the surface of this topic through its pilot study and highlights key concepts that can be considered antecedents and/or are significant to mention for consumer engagement with human brands.

Kowalczyk and Pounders's (2016) study found authenticity and emotional attachment were the two themes that fostered consumers' willingness to engage with celebrities on social media and were explored further as drivers of word-of-mouth and intention to purchase. These themes were re-occurring throughout consumers' engagement experiences with celebrities in Kowalczyk and Pounders's (2016) study and will be treated as potential antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands.

2.4.1.3.1. Authenticity

Authenticity as a concept implies that what is observed or believed to be true (Charmley et al. 2013), and has been acknowledged and explored in the marketing and branding literature (Brown et al. 2003; Thomson et al. 2005; Moulard et al. 2015). While a range of definitions exists, they generally all denote that authenticity is what a party perceives to be genuine, real and/or true (Beverland and Farrelly, 2010;

Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016). Hence, it is believed to be an interpretation of what is observed rather than a factual description of the characteristics of an object (Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016). As such, authenticity is defined by each customer based on their perception, and what may be observed as authentic or real to one customer may be categorised as fake to another (Rose and Wood 2005).

The majority of research on authenticity in marketing has concentrated on consumers' views of authentic brands or marketing strategies like campaigns depicting the 'actual self' concept (Beverland and Farrelly 2010) as opposed to the authenticity of people and their actions. However, growing research has considered the authenticity of artists and celebrities (Moulard et al. 2015; Speed et al. 2015; Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016). According to Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016), celebrity authenticity is the perception that a celebrity appears in a manner that depicts his or her true and genuine self. They also revealed that consumers engaged more with posts or content on social media that exhibited aspects of the celebrity's true self and consumers exhibited positive emotions when engaging with contents that showed celebrities as real people (Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016). Kowalczyk and Pounders's (2016) findings also showed that celebrity authenticity positively affected consumers' purchase likelihood and positive word of mouth. Authenticity can therefore be considered a potential antecedent of consumer brand engagement with human brands.

2.4.1.3.2 Emotional attachment

Emotional attachment is essentially an emotional bond or connection between a person and an object. It is target-specific and can be developed or directed at any focal-object like a brand, firm, object, place, pet, or person (Thomson et al. 2005; Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016). It is rooted in, and stems from, Attachment Theory, which has long been used to describe the connections consumers create with brands (Park et al. 2010; Jeon 2017). The benefits of these attachments and connections consumers create with brands have been explored in the marketing literature (Jeon 2017) and linked to outcomes such as positive word of mouth, purchase behaviours and loyalty (Oliver 1999). Thomson (2006), as one of the first authors to explore the concept of celebrities as human brands, used Attachment Theory to explore and examine the relationships between consumers and celebrities and related it to

outcomes such as trust, commitment and satisfaction. Emotional attachment as a form of attachment, therefore, denotes a long-lasting psychological connection between individuals that originates from close bonds as a result of strong emotions such as passion, desire, love, and delight (Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016). Research has also established that emotional attachment does not need to be reciprocal and explains why consumers can build an emotional attachment with inanimate objects or ideas, and also celebrities (Aurier and N'Goala 2010).

Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) found that consumers liked using social media to engage with celebrities to feel emotionally attached to them. They found that continuous engagement with celebrities on social media made consumers feel closer to them, and resulted in emotional attachment. They also establish a connection between authentic celebrity posts and the likelihood of consumers developing an emotional attachment with the celebrity (Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016). Therefore, the literature shows a positive relationship between emotional attachment and engagement with a celebrity. Emotional attachment can therefore be considered a potential antecedent of consumer brand engagement with human brands.

2.5. Literature review conclusions: Uncovering the gaps in research

The focus of this study can be split into two sections: understanding why and how consumers engage with the two brand types examined in this study, and whether these engagement patterns differ from one to another. To answer this question, this chapter has examined the concept of branding and consumer brand engagement. Throughout the literature review, several gaps have been identified that call for further research and empirical study.

Branding is arguably one of the oldest concepts in the marketing field and still receives a substantial amount of interest as it keeps evolving, growing, and developing into a multi-dimensional concept, flexible enough to be applied to any and every service, context, scope, and industry. Nonetheless, the concept of individuals (especially celebrities) as brands still lacks in-depth research and needs to be explored further. The majority of research on celebrities views them as tools for a traditional brand's marketing strategy in the light of endorsements, ambassadors, and/or opinion

leaders. Thomson (2006) has established the concept of human brands, exploring celebrities as brands. However, there is still little research validating this and expanding the scope of the concept, as called for by researchers (Parmentier 2010; Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016). Also, there is little research that directly investigates the influences or antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands, as this topic is largely underdeveloped.

Consumer brand engagement is a continually growing field in marketing and branding research, and rightly so, as it has been linked to positive consumer behaviours such as positive word of mouth, emotional connection, and loyalty (Van Doorn et al. 2010). It directly affects consumer brand-relationships and the building of strong consumer-brand connections, which in turn lead to loyalty (Jeon 2017). Therefore, understanding what makes consumers engage with brands is essential for both scholars and marketers and these factors have been described as antecedents or drivers of engagement. The majority of antecedents of consumer engagement were developed from examining the connection between consumer engagement and other marketing constructs, while others have focused on the antecedents of consumer engagement on social media sites or among particular online brand communities. However, in this author's view, existing research in the area needs further development as there is very little that examines direct antecedents of consumer brand engagement through qualitative investigation, rather than from quantitative hypotheses based on relationships between concepts that give rise to potential antecedents. Also, no research views consumer brand engagement holistically as a continuous process that translates both online and offline.

Finally, to the best of this author's knowledge, to date, there is no empirical research that examines why and how consumers engage with both traditional brands and human brands, exploring whether consumers engage with traditional brands as they do with human brands. This study seeks to address these substantial gaps in the marketing and branding literature.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology and data collection methods adopted for this study. Research methodologies outline the calculated process a researcher adopts to resolve a research problem. It encompasses everything from the mind-set of the researcher to the collection and analysis of data from various different sources to reach a conclusion. The methodology also serves as a form of record and justification of decisions made to successfully conduct a particular study.

3.2. Research philosophy

The research philosophy is a fundamental piece of any research as it ensures the researcher gathers and analyses data in the most appropriate manner to the type of knowledge being investigated (May 2011). Essentially, a research philosophy explains a set of assumptions regarding the researcher and/or the reality being investigated, such as values, beliefs, concept and practices (Saunders et al. 2007; Bryman, 2012). Therefore, the assumptions created by the research philosophy adopted in a research study serves as a justification for how and why the research was undertaken in terms of the approach, strategy, data collection and analysis (Flick, 2011). The philosophical position adopted serves as a blueprint for what the researcher considers the best way of achieving the goals of the study and the methodological decisions made during the study (Saunders et al. 2009). Clarke and Braun (2013) explain that there is no right or wrong philosophical paradigm, but rather different approaches towards acquiring knowledge and driving outcomes. According to Saunders et al. (2012), there are three fundamental blocks of philosophy that give birth to philosophical positions: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. However, on a more basic level the main differences between various paradigms can be identified as lying between an interpretive approach and a positivist approach to reality and knowledge (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012).

3.2.1 An interpretive paradigm

The interpretive approach to philosophy focuses on the generation and interpretation of knowledge through the nature of an individual's character, perspective, and their role as a social actor in the world around them (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2014). It is

rooted in the philosophical traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology, and attributed to the work of Max Weber (Chowdhury 2014). Interpretive research seeks to understand and capture meanings behind the actions, behaviours, and interactions of individuals and to gather knowledge from individuals' ideas, thoughts, and interpretations of phenomena (Weber 1947). The technique of interpretation of knowledge has been described as anti-positivist due to its emphasis on the subjective behaviour of actors and creators of knowledge.

Contrary to interpretative research, positivist philosophies emphasise that facts and knowledge are objective, distinctive, predictive and measurable (Dean 2018). Positivist researchers hold the idea that society can be viewed as an objective reality and studied scientifically (Comte 1975). Social research is therefore to be separated from the researcher's influence to ensure objectivity; with this philosophy favouring scientific approaches such as quantitative techniques (Punch, 2013). Another emphasis of positivism is the ability to generalise the subject matter (Seale 1999) with a focus on scientific measurements that produce facts (Comte 1975). However, a positivist philosophy is unsuitable for the current research, as it is not effective in comprehending processes and the meanings that individuals ascribe to actions (Weber 1947). An interpretive research approach is more applicable to the study of people and their perceptions, feelings, intentions, and social activities (Sprenkle and Piercy 2005), which is the basis of the current research. Therefore, in order for this current research to fulfil its aim and objectives, an interpretive approach is adopted towards the generation of knowledge and insight. The experiences and perceptions of consumers are utilised to investigate why and how these consumers engage with both traditional brands and human brands and to establish how this engagement differs.

3.2.2. A qualitative approach

Positivist studies are generally associated with quantitative research methods, whereas Interpretive studies are very much associated with qualitative research methods. The unique structure of qualitative data allows researchers to understand or interpret phenomena with regard to the significance people apply to them (Merriam 2009). This study therefore uses a qualitative research approach to acquire and generate data.

Quantitative research focuses on measurement by quantity (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). It stresses the implementation of measuring and analysing large amounts of data through large sample sizes (Hoy 2009). This ensures the generalisation of data and findings, causing data to be mathematical and statistical in nature (Saunders et al. 2009). Quantitative research is criticised for researchers' predisposition towards missing insights into new and rich knowledge so that findings become rigid, without understanding the reasons behind data (Creswell and Clark 2011).

On the other hand, qualitative research focuses on the quality of data, not quantity (Denzin and Lincoln 1994), and is considered more fluid and adaptable as the researcher is able to follow leads to acquire knowledge. Here, there is room for researchers to discover unexpected findings and to examine them further (Myers 2008). Qualitative data is categorised as in-depth and rich, with explanations about phenomena governed by interactions and behaviours. Nonetheless, critics have stated that this research methods often lack dependency (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Hence, both qualitative and quantitative research methods have been interpreted and expressed differently by different researchers so that the explanation ultimately depends on the study and the way the researcher predicts that the research question would be answered.

Therefore, based on the numerical data collection and analysis techniques of quantitative research such as statistics (Bryman and Bell 2011), qualitative research provides this study a more appropriate method for exploring participants' perceptions and experiences of why and how they engage with human and traditional brands (Silverman 2004). Participants build these interactions and relationships with the two different brand types, and the meanings of these social engagements to each participant are collected as data. A qualitative approach gives room for such data collection, allowing for the required depth of detail on engagement and rich insights to be provided (Ahuvia et al. 2006), giving room for further concepts to be discovered. Additionally, the use of a qualitative research approach in consumer brand engagement research has been influential in this study. Authors such as Hollebeek (2011a; et al. 2014) and Thomson (2006) have defined it as an exploratory method of research that allows for particular expressions of consumer brand engagement.

3.2.3. Research methods

Research methods are the intricate techniques the researcher uses to collect data and the procedures that will be used for analysis. As there are several qualitative research methods, it is essential for the researcher to utilise a method best suited to the delivery and generation of both information and knowledge (Saunders et al. 2009).

As this research focuses on the consumers' perspectives and the interpretation of their feelings, experiences and actions, observation-based methods of data collection are not appropriate for this research. This is because observational methods do not necessarily involve participants' perspectives on the phenomena but rather involve the researcher witnessing or keeping track of participants as they participate in the phenomenon in question (Trochim et al. 2015). The aim of this study does not require such observation, as it is more concerned with interpretations participants give to a phenomenon as well as their thoughts and feelings towards the phenomenon, rather than the actual action of the phenomenon.

The other two main research methods for qualitative research are focus groups and interviews (Silverman 2000). Focus groups are a group discussion conducted for the sole purpose of the research. They are guided, regulated, and recorded by the researcher (Morgan 1998). Although this research method can lead to great insights, the purpose of this study is to explore consumers' insights into their personal experiences of engaging with the two brand categories being investigated and a focus group may influence consumers' thought processes and responses. Interviews, on the other hand, allow for a personal conversation between the researcher and participant where their views and experiences can be shared uninterrupted and uninfluenced by others' opinions (Hammersley 2013). They also provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being investigated, especially when little is known about the topic (Bryman 2016). Due to the exploratory and qualitative, nature of this research, it uses one-to-one in-depth interviews. This method allows for each participant to give rich accounts of their personal engagement with the two different brands types.

3.2.4. Research Strategy

The research strategy refers to the style or plan used to collect and analyse data. It is important to have a strategy that guides the researcher on the step-by-step methods that will be applied to carry out the research (Saunders et al. 2007). There are various strategies available to researchers for data collection but it is very much dependant on the chosen research approach, and which the researcher feels to be the most appropriate method for achieving the aims and goals of the research. This particular study has an inductive qualitative research approach as it is suited to filling the research gaps and creating a basis for new theory (May 2011). Drawing on an inductive approach, this study will follow a Grounded Theory (GT) qualitative strategy. Consequently, this section explains the selection of GT as opposed other possible strategies.

Creswell (2007) has identified five possible strategies for a qualitative study: phenomenological study, narrative research, case study, ethnography, and Grounded Theory research. A Phenomenological approach studies the manner in which ordinary individuals attend to their everyday lives (Farber 1943). It focuses on exploring peoples' lived experiences, feelings, and interpretations of a phenomenon mainly from their perspective (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Although the aim and objectives of this research are very reliant on participants' perspectives, phenomenological research requires more in-depth description of the phenomenon than is necessary for this study and could sometimes require an observatory research technique that is beyond the scope of this study. Narrative research studies people's experiences, which are collected stories written to showcase the experience of an individual (Moen 2006). A good example of this research strategy is a bibliography, which does not align with the purpose, aim, and objectives of this study. A case study is sort of a combination of both a phenomenological study and a narrative study. It enables close and in-depth examination of the data from a small geographical area or limited number of individuals within a specific real-life context such as the experience of unemployment (Creswell 2007). This research method is also too extensive for the current research question and inappropriate for this study in terms of scope, research sample, research purpose, and possible research outcomes. Ethnography strategies emphasise the researcher observing and/or interacting with the participants in their real-life environment (Trochim et al. 2015). These could be groups, organisations, communities, or even specific categories of individuals such as cancer patients.

Features of this strategy are unnecessary and impractical to the current study and may impart financial, logistical, and ethical constraints on the study.

Grounded theory (GT) has been chosen as the most suitable research strategy for this study. GT discusses the generation of theory 'grounded' in data that has been collected and analysed (Charmaz 2006) and is deemed suitable when there is little known about a phenomenon in the area of question. Although it was developed in the school of nursing (Glaser and Strauss 1967), it is influenced by symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969) and applicable in exploring social relationships and the behaviours of groups in relation to social phenomena (Crooks 2001). Through GT, people's key interactions with both human brands and traditional brands can be systematically collected and analysed to generate a theory around whether consumers' engagement with the two brand types differs. The interpretive nature of GT strongly appeals to this study as it facilitates and promotes research deeply rooted in gathering authentic and rich expressions of participants through qualitative research.

3.3 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory (GT) has three different approaches underpinned by authors with different research paradigms. The traditional GT by Glaser (1992; 1998), the modern approach towards GT by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998), and the refined GT approach by Charmaz (2006). The different approaches do not suggest that one perspective is better than the other but rather point to the epistemological differences a grounded theorist may adopt for data collection and analysis that best suits their research (Mills et al. 2006). Glaser's GT depicts a more positivist stance towards the epistemological philosophy, maintaining that researchers have an objective stance towards their research and that the theory should emerge from data without any influence from the researcher (Hunter et al. 2011). Alternatively, Strauss and Corbin depict a relativist-pragmatist view, emphasising that reality remains unknown but should be interpreted, while researchers should be more involved in the research process (McCann and Clark 2003). In contrast to these two views, Charmaz relates a more constructivist view of GT wherein researchers become co-constructors of the theory as they interpret participants' experiences (Charmaz 2006).

3.3.1. The constructivist approach to Grounded Theory

Glaser's objectivist approach to GT emphasises the notion that all is data (Glaser 1998). This is not strictly a qualitative research approach and encourages the use of mixed-method applications in data collection and analysis from various sources to generate a universal whole concerning the situation investigated (Gibbs 2015). This approach not only requires a wider scope of research than that of the current study but also does not support the use of only one data-gathering instrument, which is appropriate for the aim of this study. While Strauss and Corbin's approach is more interpretive and suitable for conducting one-instrument research, it is still very objective in its approach to theory generation (Melia 1996). They maintain that the theory should essentially reveal itself out of the data through the different stages of coding with no assistance from the researcher. Although this current research is structured to restrict the researcher's influence in the generation of theory, it is understood that the researcher guides participants towards expressing their experiences and emotions concerning the phenomenon and equally values the use of background knowledge in the subject area to guide the researcher in developing an effective interview guide and structure. Charmaz's approach to GT allows the researcher to be flexible in the selection of traditional GT principles while staying true to the core methodological views of GT. The researcher's approach allows for background research on the topic, as shown in Chapter 2, while acknowledging the influence of the researcher in the research process (Charmaz 2011). Therefore, this research adopts the approach of Charmaz (2006) in data collection and analysis.

3.3.2. Data generation approaches and tools

GT promotes the use of open-ended questions as it is assumed that the researcher knows little about the phenomenon being researched (Tie et al. 2019), so allowing the researcher to discover how participants react to the phenomenon. This research captures open-ended questions by utilising semi-structured interviews drawing on Baldus et al. (2015), a grounded theorist. This form of data collection instrument permits both an open-ended approach, allowing consumers to freely express why they engage with their chosen brands, and a closed-ended approach with structured questions to investigate the different dimensions of consumer brand engagement e.g. emotional, cognitive and behavioural activity. This research design allows for the

study to grasp consumers' perspectives on engagement and also investigate the concept of consumer brand engagement in accordance with the literature. There is therefore room for flexibility during the interview and the researcher can pursue emerging theories (Britten 1999), which is essential to the application of a grounded theory.

Data collection for this study lasted a total of 2 months, from September 2019 to November 2019. Data generation was conducted using face-to-face interviews following a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 3.3). The interview guide was generated based on the aim of this study, following the study of Hollebeek et al. (2014) and guidance from supervisors. The study of Hollebeek (2011a) and Hollebeek et al. (2014) were both used for the formulation of questions investigating consumer brand engagement in relation to the engagement dimensions adopted from the literature.

3.3.3. Ethical Consideration

Ethical approval was obtained from Bournemouth University's (BU) ethics committee in line with BU's code of practice. Participants recruited were from Generation Y due to their experience and knowledge of the phenomenon (Consumer brand engagement), hence all participants were between the ages of 18-35 years old, meaning parental consent was not required (Muntinga et al. 2011). This research was not carried out on vulnerable persons and refers to the context of marketing and business research; no harmful or sensitive data was used or collected.

The ethical issues considered in this research concerned audio recordings being made of interview sessions. Hence, a detailed Participant Information Sheet (See Appendix 3.1) containing details and procedures of the interview and data collection/analysis process was given to participants before the interview, and a Participant Agreement Form (See Appendix 3.2) was signed by all participants before interviews. Recorded interviews were stored safely on a password-protected recording device only accessible by the researcher and were deleted on completion of the research program. This study did not require any identifiable information about participants and thus all transcribed interviews were anonymised and unidentifiable to ensure confidentiality

of participants. Finally, face-to-face interviews took place in public spaces, with supervisors aware of the interview venues and schedules, and encouraged to drop in during interviews for observation.

3.3.4 Sampling method

GT research commonly adopts a purposive sampling method (Bryman 2001), which allows for researchers to hand-pick individuals from a population that are particularly experienced in the phenomenon in question (Birks and Mills 2015). In accordance to grounded theory guidelines, participant recruitment should be done based on the researcher's knowledge of participants' ability to produce insight into the theory being generated (Tie et al. 2019). However, GT is flexible enough to accommodate other forms of sampling (Tie et al. 2019). The current research required specific individuals who were experienced in engaging with both human brands and traditional brands regularly, but lacked the resources of time and sample size to utilise purposive sampling, therefore Charmaz's (2006) guidelines for utilising purposive snowballing sampling were chosen for this current study. Strict criteria were adhered to, to ensure all participants were members of Generation Y and used social media. This study adopts a snowballing sampling approach where participants referred other participants to the researcher (Naderifar et al. 2017). This method of sampling meant participants referred were willing to participate in the research, were more likely to fit the recruitment criteria, and that the number of participants required for the research was quickly met.

3.3.5 Inclusion criteria and recruitment of participants

The recruitment criteria were created to recruit participants most likely to engage with both traditional brands and human brands on social media as well as offline, in accordance with GT guidelines. As explained in the literature review, Generation Y cohorts possess unique characteristics and exposure to both social media and an evolved method of engagement. Hence, the recruitment criteria were designed to strictly recruit participants who were part of Generation Y and used social media. Therefore, participants were male and female adults aged 18-35 who use social media. Social media was included in the criteria simply because some interview questions were centred on consumer brand engagement on social media. Participants

were also asked about their occupation to ensure the study recruited a good range of professionals. This was particularly to ensure participants were not all students and that the study recruited individuals at different stages of their lives and professions all between the ages of 18-35 years. Each participant was recruited based on this inclusion criterion.

The first three participants were handpicked by the researcher and given the participant information sheet (See Appendix 3.1) and a participant agreement form (See Appendix 3.2) to sign prior to commencing the interview. Although they were recruited for the purpose of the pilot study, they were instrumental in the recruitment of other participants based on snowball sampling methods. These three participants went on to refer other participants, who in turn referred other participants until theoretical saturation was achieved. For safety and ethical reasons, the researcher's email and contact details were given to each participant to pass on to potential participants rather than collecting referred participants' contact details. This way only willing and criteria-appropriate participants contacted the researcher confirming their consent to participate. Each and every participant was given the appropriate information sheet and consent form to sign.

3.3.6 Pilot study

These first three interviews were designed to be pilot studies but due to the relatively insignificant change in the interview questions, they were counted as part of the main twenty-four interviews. The initial stage of data analysis began after the first three interviews, which prompted the researcher to modify the interview questions by removing repetitive questions. Modifications to the interview questions were minor and just involved the removal of the following two questions from the initial interview guide:

1. Can you express how this brand makes you feel?
2. Would you say you have an emotional connection with this brand?

The first question 'Can you express how this brand makes you feel?' was removed from the second section of the interview as it was repeated in the third section of the

interview and was better suited in the third section. The second question ‘Would you say you have an emotional connection with this brand?’ was removed due to the complexity of the question as participants expressed confusion when asked the question and the researcher equally experienced difficulty explaining the meaning of the question.

3.3.7 Theoretical sampling

The goal of theoretical sampling is to enable the researcher to follow leads presented in the data by recruiting new participants or material that are relevant to the generation of theory (Bryant and Charmaz 2007). It is essential to grounded theory and ensures the flexibility needed to develop key categories that constitute theory, ensuring that the final theory is grounded in data (Mills et al. 2014). Hence, the focus shifts from sample size to the adequate formation of categories needed for the generation of theory (Creswell 1998). Theoretical sampling continues until theoretical saturation is achieved, which occurs when data becomes repetitive and no new categories emerge from it (Charmaz 2006).

For the purpose of this study, theoretical sampling was initiated based on the emerging data and categories generated from it (Charmaz 2014a). Theoretical sampling did not lead to new categories of themes generated but rather focussed recruitment on participants aged 30-35 years. The intent was to investigate whether this age group had a different cognitive engagement process in comparison to those aged 20-29 years, based on a lead detected from the 13th participant. However, through continuous comparative analysis and the researcher’s sensitivity, low cognitive engagement was not particular to participants 30-35 years of age but was seen across all age groups recruited.

According to Creswell (1998), the recommended sample size for GT research lies between 10 to 30 interviews where theoretical saturation occurs between the two recommended limits. Hence, this study intended to recruit a maximum of 30 participants for the semi-structured interviews. However, in accordance with GT, theoretical saturation was achieved after 24 participants were interviewed, hence interviews ceased after this number of respondents.

3.3.8 Interview conduct

The majority of participants chose both the venue and interview time most convenient for them. All interviews were conducted at a public venue with enough privacy and sufficiently quiet to facilitate conversation and clarity of recording. Interviews were conducted mostly at weekends or evenings when participants were less busy and free to commit the time necessary. It was equally important that the meaning of the terms ‘traditional brands’ and ‘human brands’ were clearly explained to participants before beginning the interviews in order to dispel all confusion from their minds during the interviews. ‘Traditional brands’ were explained to encompass any brand of, or representing, a good and/or service, with an example provided of a traditional brand such as Coca-Cola. Human brands were explained to comprise celebrities of any category and industry, with examples given of celebrities such as Rihanna or Donald Trump.

The interview began with filter questions confirming again for the audio recording that participants met the recruitment criteria. After this, general questions were asked that initiated conversations on social media usage and whether participants followed both traditional and human brands on social media in order to establish participants’ experiences in consumer brand engagement practices with both human brands and traditional brands. For the purpose of the research, the term ‘human brands’ was replaced with ‘celebrity’ in accordance to the definition given in the literature review for ease of communication with participants. The next section followed structured questions that directed conversations towards the reasons consumers engaged with chosen brands/celebrities on and offline. In this section, participants were instructed to choose both a traditional and human brand that they felt highly engaged with, ensuring that brands spoken of during the interviews were brands that consumers were both familiar with and engaged with regularly. Questions asked throughout the rest of the interview were then directed at these brands.

The third section of the interview was structured to investigate how consumers engaged with brands/celebrities on each dimension adopted by this research in accordance with Hollebeek’s (2011b) conceptualisation of consumer brand engagement. Thus, the questions focused on cognitive, emotional, and behavioural

engagement between participants and their chosen brands. At certain points through the different sections of the interview, additional probes into a particular question and/or additional questions were asked by the researcher using theoretical sensitivity to either encourage further expressions and/or to follow leads of themes being expressed by participants

3.3.9. Memo writing

Memoing refers to the act of memo writing during the process of data collection and analysing, which can be considered a compilation of ideas documented as the researcher continuously interacts with the data (Glaser 1998). Memos comprise the researcher's ideas, feelings, and thought process throughout the data collection and analysis, showing why and how decisions were made (Lempert 2007). Memo writing was essential for this research and served as a written record of the researcher's ideas throughout the analytic process of this study.

Memo writing in this research was a tool utilised as a strategy to facilitate early continuous data analysis. Memos were both written and/or recorded immediately after each interview and represented an informal documentation of the researcher's thought process (Gilles et al. 2016). The process encouraged the researcher to think about the re-occurring categories concerning why consumers engaged with both traditional brands and human brands and the manner in which participants expressed their perceptions and experiences. It equally stimulated close involvement with the research process, by constantly considering and deliberating on the research developments and emerging insights (Charmaz 2014a)

As data collection and analysis progressed, the focus of the memo shifted from records of generating categories and body language to developing key areas of discussion and observation for future investigation and the thesis discussion chapter. Below is an example of two memos written at different stages of the research:

1. 5/9/2019 Memo written after the first interview

First interview was conducted smoothly. Participant was very enthusiastic talking about both her chosen celebrity and chosen traditional brand. When expressing her reasons for engaging with her celebrity she keeps expressing that she wants to be like her and she finds her inspirational. Do these two statements mean the same thing? Can inspirational be a theme? Does her excitement about her chosen celebrity translate to strong emotional connections? What does it mean to find a celebrity relatable? Participant keeps talking about Rihanna when talking about her chosen traditional brand. Can this be a theme? What exactly does this research show? What theory is emerging from this data?

2. 10/10/2019 Memo written after 15th interview

Participant seemed to have low cognitive engagement levels with both traditional brand and human brand similar to interview 13 even though they are a few years apart. Cognitive engagement does not seem to be attributed to age as previously thought. Nonetheless, further investigation is needed to develop this theory. Tips for thesis discussion originated from this interview and to be added to other tips: it will be important to discuss and investigate how cognitive engagement levels were lowest for both traditional brands and celebrities but still slightly higher with celebrities. Age factor may not be the reason and more investigation needed. Data probing hinting towards levels of responsibility as a reason for this phenomenon.

3.4. Data analysis

GT, unlike other research methods and data analysis processes, is not a linear or straight-forward process, but a continuous process of analysis that starts right at the beginning of data collection and continues until theoretical saturation is achieved and a ‘grounded theory’ produced (Glaser 2001). This study aligned the research methods used with the circular motion of GT (as shown in figure 3.1) from the beginning of the data collection process through to compilation at the data analysis stage.

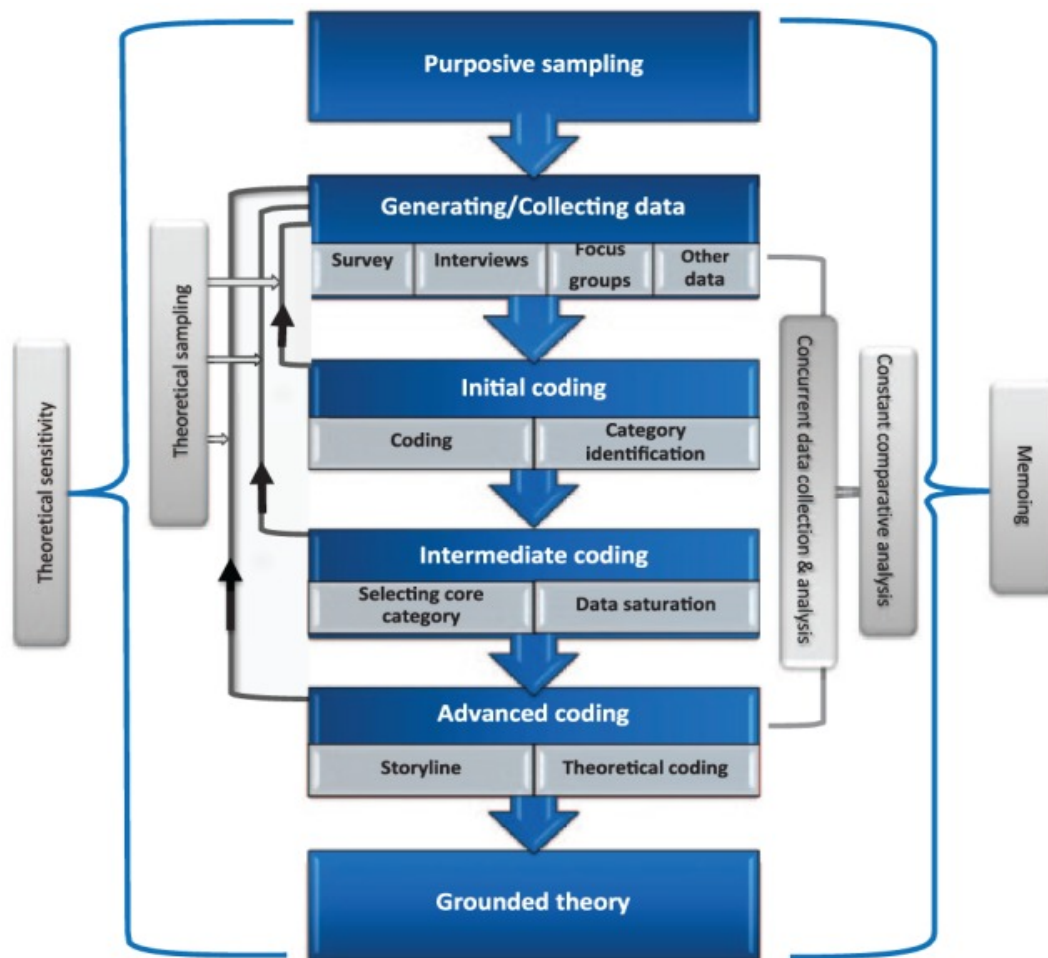


Figure 3.1: Summary of essential grounded theory methods and processes (Tie et al. 2019, p.3)

3.4.1 Data handling and management

All interviews were transcribed directly by the researcher. All audio recordings were stored on a password-protected recording device and were only accessed by the researcher. Once interviews were conducted, both the audio and transcribed data were anonymised to ensure privacy. Interview transcripts were used exclusively for the purpose of this research and were checked with the original audio recording for accuracy before the data analysis process commenced. Data analysis was conducted manually without the use of analysis software. This was largely due to time constraints. Allocation of the time the researcher would have taken in learning and mastering the use of analysis software such as NVivo was not feasible given the milestone dates for thesis submission.

3.4.2 Coding stages

Coding is a key process of data analysis that consists of identifying concepts, reoccurrences, and similarities found within the data collected (Charmaz 2014a). It is essentially the first step in recognising and categorising data and developing a theory. GT proposes three stages of coding that allows the researcher to advance to deeper and more abstract codes, which eventually results in theory. These stages have been given different names by different researchers (Glaser 1967; Birks and Mills 2015; Tie et al. 2019) but essentially mean or denote similar actions.

- Initial coding: This stage, as the name suggests, is the first step of coding in the process, where researchers begin to identify codes as they go through the research process. Ideally this process should begin as data collection begins. In this stage, the researcher begins to dissect the data by capturing and labelling important words, phrases, and expressions to capture patterns, differences, and similarities. At this stage, data remains in its purest form, as original words and phrases are kept for future analysis allowing for as many codes as possible to be created. Questions pertaining to what the data suggest and whose perspective the data carries begin to grow in the mind of the researcher.
- Intermediate coding: At this stage, codes begin to be grouped into concepts where broader and more abstract categories are identified from data. At this stage, researchers must decide which codes, if any, belong under broader categories and which codes stand as a building block or concept on their own. This stage usually also allows theoretical sensitivity where researchers begin to determine and decide whether future research is needed or if the research needs to take a different direction, as well as whether theoretical saturation has been achieved.
- Advanced coding: At this stage the big question as to what the data reflects or assumes is answered and the themes that answer the research questions are formed and grouped. Grounded theory suggests that there should be a flow between themes and research questions that shows a flow and integration between the themes and the theory generated (Tie et al. 2019).

3.4.2.1 Performing of coding and generation of themes

Initial coding was done for the first three interview transcripts before conducting further interviews. The main aim at this point was to evaluate the interview questions to ensure they were appropriate and relevant to the aim and objectives of the research. Nonetheless, beginning the coding process enabled theoretical sensitivity throughout the research and consistent comparative analysis directed by grounded theory (Glaser 1998; Tie et al. 2019).

The initial stage of coding was done by highlighting key expressions of participants, line-by-line, according to colour codes. The following questions guided the researcher during this stage:

- What are participants expressing here?
- What do these statements mean?
- How does the participant act, behave, or speak when speaking on the two different brands?
- What aspects of these brands are they more involved in?

By the end of the initial coding stage, similarities and categories were noticed and theoretical saturation was achieved. The second stage of analysis began nearly immediately as repetition in expressions became more constant. For example, an intermediary code was developed concerning relatability and similarities since participants often remarked ‘the celebrity is so relatable’ ‘I feel like we are similar in our interests’, which was finally developed in the advanced stage of coding as a theme for consumer brand engagement with human brands under the term ‘celebrity relatability’.

Although GT advises coding for actions and processes to establish a story (Charmaz 2014), the data was better grouped as themes to categorise the distinctive nature of the influences of consumer brand engagement with both traditional brands and human brands. The advanced stage of coding created themes that represented why consumers engage with both human brands and traditional brands. Advanced coding continued even as thesis writing began, as there was continuous re-evaluation of categories, themes, and the grouping of themes into larger umbrella themes. Table 3.1 portrays an

exemplified visual representation of the different stages of coding applied to this study through grounded theory.

Table 3.1 Example of GT coding done in this study

Initial Coding: identifying codes, similarity, and patterns	Intermediate Coding: identifying and grouping codes into concepts and categories	Advanced Coding: categories combined into bigger themes if necessary
<i>“It makes me feel like I’m a part of something”</i>	Sense of belonging	Consumer-brand Community
<i>“they like become a part of you, so it’s like a part of you when things happens to them”</i>	Identifying as part of the brand	Consumer-brand identity
<i>“I remember their first campaign actually and their campaign till date”</i>	Campaigns	Marketing communication

3.4.2.2 Validation of codes

In order to further validate codes and themes produced by the data and to ensure the researcher was open to emerging categories from the data, there were weekly debriefing sessions with the researcher’s supervisors, as recommended by Shenton (2004). These discussions were essential in sharing analysis approaches and insights into the definitions and names of themes generated through the data. Interview transcripts were also shared with supervisors during the data collection stages that ensured constant scrutiny of process and continuous insights into coding categories. Furthermore, peer scrutiny of research process (Shenton 2004) by academic colleagues was utilised as a strategy for validation and feedback from fresh perspectives.

3.5 Establishing quality

The quality of research has been described as a key issue for consideration during the process of engaging in experimental studies (Shenton 2004). Due to the differing views underpinning various qualitative research approaches, a number of qualitative criteria have been established, resulting in confusion amongst researchers (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Spencer et al. 2003; Silverman 2013). Within the research method of

grounded theory, several criteria from different authors have been presented and confusion amongst researchers persists (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1998). Hammersley's (1992) proposal of universal criteria being used for both qualitative and quantitative has gained recognition by organisations responsible for commissioning research (Murphy et al 1998; Elliott and Lazenbatt 2004). However, Long and Johnson (2000) advocate greater concentration on research methods rather than generating new criteria. They argue that quality is achieved through thorough attention and application of the research method. This is particularly relevant in the case of grounded theory, where grounded theory methods themselves can be used to assume and assure quality in research (Murphy et al 1998).

Grounded theory guidelines and methods ensure that the process of sampling, data collection, and data analysis are not separate ceremonial steps of the research process but are rather a continuous cycle (Elliott and Lazenbatt 2004). This continuous cycle of collecting and analysing data while utilising theoretical sampling to pursue emerging theory ensures the data accurately represents the phenomenon being investigated and therefore establishes credibility and originality of the findings and the research generally.

This study specifically utilises the grounded theory guidelines and methods such as: purposive sampling to ensure participants are knowledgeable in the subject area, and constant comparative analysis to ensure preliminary findings remain constant and relevant to the topic area and for recognition of omitted categories. Theoretical sampling ensures the developing theory is theoretically complete, and memos are used to track the researcher's construction of categories and themes. Overall, the current research focused on participants' subjective perspectives in developing themes concerning their experiences to ensure the theory generated was grounded in data and thus achieved quality through the grounded theory methodology.

3.6 Reflexivity

Qualitative research methods are known and classified as subjective, unlike the positivist research approach, which is said to be objective in nature (Morrow 2005). Consequently, the researcher becomes a significant research instrument (Silverman

2000), raising questions about the credibility of the study (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012). Reflexivity has been established as a measure used to address and decrease the impact of the subjective nature of qualitative research. Reflexivity can be defined as a process by which the researcher's active reflection and evaluation of her/his own perspectives, values, assumptions, decisions, and interpretations affect research decisions, processes, and outcomes (Hall and Callery 2001). It is the consciousness of self during all stages of the research and their responsibility to their research as well as its outcome (Dowling 2006). This process helps ensure credibility, trustworthiness and quality of qualitative research.

In this study, the researcher continuously re-evaluated both the research and data analysis process from the beginning of data collection to the end of theory generation. This was primarily in adherence to grounded theory guidelines. The use of theoretical sensitivity, constant comparative analysis, theoretical sampling, and memoing particularly shaped the researcher's reflexivity in directly pursuing theory grounded in data, while suppressing pre-disposed assumptions of outcomes. Ongoing guidance from supervisors aided in preventing hurried conclusions or biased results in theory generated, as they served as a form of external auditors (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

3.7 Researcher's impact on study

Although the researcher's impact in an interpretive approach to research has been suitably emphasised (Lincoln and Guba 1985), the researcher is well aware of her possible impact on the research and has gone to all necessary lengths to ensure the theory is grounded in data, and that no misinterpretations have occurred.

The choice of the research topic, although generated from theoretical gaps as identified in the literature review chapter, was influenced by the researcher's marketing background and interest in branding. The researcher was driven by her own assumptions concerning the influences celebrities have on consumers and the growing trends of celebrities diversifying into the production of consumer goods. Together with the insightful directions and advice from the researcher's supervisors, the topic and title were formed.

The researcher was born in 1992, and is therefore a member of Generation Y; one who engages with traditional and celebrity brands both on and offline. The researcher equally relies on social media and technology at large for day-to-day interactions. In the author's view, this had a positive impact on the research process and the ease of interviews. The researcher could understand and relate to the participants and their experiences and perceptions on why and how they engaged with traditional brands and human brands. Being close in age allowed the researcher to develop an instant relationship of partnership or friendship with participants rather than a researcher-participant model. This aided in reducing any tensions participants felt with being interviewed or recorded. It also had an impact on the quality of data generated, as participants were more expressive, lively, free and open in expressing their connections and relationships with traditional brands and human brands.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the researcher's paradigm, selected for the purpose of this research. The selection and justification of the research methods, approach and strategy with a distinctive look into grounded theory has been discussed. The chapter concludes with a narration of how this study was conducted.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the current study. First, it explores the themes concerning why consumers engage (and continue to engage) with their chosen brands (both human and traditional brands). Next, analysis is conducted of how participants engaged with their chosen traditional and human brands, based on the three dimensions of consumer brand engagement from Hollebeek (2011a, 2011b): cognitive, emotional, and behavioural.

4.2. Overview

This chapter presents findings from 24 in-depth interviews used to gather respondents' reasons for brand engagement and how they engage cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally with both traditional and human brands. Participants' own perspectives on reasons for engagement were used to generate the key themes. Consequently, no one particular reason for engagement was explored from previous literature, allowing participants to fully express why they engage with different brands. Participants were asked to choose both a traditional brand and human brand that they are highly engaged with, which was then referred to throughout the interview. In order to preserve the identities of participants and to keep them anonymous, identifying characteristics were not documented and participants were assigned numbers from 1-24. Participants expressed a wide variety of reasons for engaging with each brand and after careful analysis and grouping, findings show 9 themes for traditional brands and 7 themes for human brands. The length of the interviews varied from eighteen minutes to fifty-five minutes. The twenty-four participants comprised 13 females and 11 males, aged 21-35 years.

Table 4.1 Participant sample characteristics

Participant sample				
Interviewee		Age (years)	Profession	Interview length
1	Female	24	PhD student	55m20s
2	Female	23	MBA Graduate	30m20s
3	Male	25	Loan analyst	30m31s
4	Male	29	Entrepreneur	35m17s
5	Male	23	Content developer and fashion influencer	31m10s
6	Female	24	Student	27m40s
7	Male	29	IT company CEO	35m57s
8	Female	22	Student	32m08s
9	Female	26	Engineer	21m59s
10	Male	23	Student/ photographer	46m42s
11	Male	28	Executive analyst at primary school	24m40s
12	Male	35	IT specialist	32m53s
13	Female	32	Nurse	19m02s
14	Female	21	Student and writer	18m32s
15	Female	26	Lawyer	22m54s
16	Female	26	Global health analyst	37m25s
17	Male	30	Human resource officer	21m31s
18	Male	31	Business man	38m56s
19	Female	26	Marketing analyst	28m29s
20	Female	24	Project engineer	27m26s
21	Male	35	Social worker	26m05s
22	Male	33	Music producer and musician	34m17s
23	Female	28	PhD student	30m41s
24	Female	30	Marketing executive	29m08s

4.3. Themes concerning why consumers engage with traditional and human brands

In seeking to understand whether consumers' engagement with human brands differs to that with traditional brands, the researcher found it useful to understand why and how consumers engaged with each brand type. The themes presented here depict why participants engage with the two different brand types. The themes for each brand type are explored differently, allowing for an in-depth presentation of the meaning of each theme for each brand, and illustrative quotes from participants show how the themes were expressed.

4.3.1. Consumers' engagement with traditional brands

Participants expressed several reasons why they engaged with their chosen traditional brands. After coding, and grouping data into categories, 9 main themes emerged that fully captured the expressions of the 24 participants. Some themes were grouped under a larger concept that better classified them: e.g. product quality, product innovation, and product performance are all qualities of the product and are therefore grouped as 'product features'. Themes concerning why consumers engage with traditional brands are: product features, brand characteristics, self-brand concept, marketing communication, customer perceived value, consumer brand communication, celebrity/individual behind the brand, consumer-brand relationship, cultural representation. Various authors have previously mentioned some of the themes gathered (e.g. self-brand concept by Brodie et al. 2011), while other themes have not been explored and will serve as a contribution to literature in this topic area.

Table 4.2 Why consumers engage with traditional brands

Themes
Consumer brand engagement with traditional brands
1. Product features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product quality • Product innovation • Product performance
2. Brand Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand personality • Brand achievements & reputation • Brand uniqueness & creativity • Length of continuous engagement
3. Self-brand concept: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status
4. Marketing communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign
5. Customer perceived value
6. Consumer-brand communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer-brand interaction • Customer service
7. Celebrity/individual behind the brand
8. Consumer-brand relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand community • Consumer-brand identification
9. Cultural representation

4.3.1.1. Product features

Product features represents an umbrella theme comprising sub-themes pertaining to the products, features and performance. Participants expressed that they are highly engaged with traditional brands due to the different product attributes they find appealing.

- Product quality: The perceived quality of the product emerged as a key reason as to why participants engaged with traditional brands. Interviewee 15 (female, 26 years) highlighted this sub-theme during the interview when asked to identify a traditional brand she felt highly engaged with, how and why:

“Yay! Bedge pictures ah. Erm I follow him on Instagram, and I physically like his posts like every day, like every other day cause I love the quality of the posts and pictures he delivers”

Similarly Interviewee 16 (female, 26years):

“so I like Muji Lagos, so they are a Lagos brand, that make this authentic leather chic bags with different sizes and they are very, very pretty. I have really been on a buy the Naira vibe and been into supporting Nigerian brands so I like that it is Nigerian made and the quality is actually quite good”

- Product innovation: When participants were asked why they engaged with traditional brands and how they would describe their chosen brand some expressed that they do so because of the innovative nature of the product. For Interviewee 4 (male, 29years), it was a re-occurring theme throughout his interview and a reason for his continuous engagement. When asked ‘why do you engage with this brand’, he responded that:

“Mercedes-Benz might look finer but things like technological advances, like...erm...lane assist, the new H fog light, self-driving, and apparatus like that in the car all began with BMW...”

When asked to describe the brand the participant said:

“efficient, innovative, futuristic, pace setting, if that’s, if I could use that. Dynamic”

Hence, product innovation also promotes continuous engagement with the chosen brand

- Product performance: Participants also engaged with traditional brands because of how good they perceive the product to be. The performance of the product takes centre stage and portrays a positive image of the brand. Interviewee 22 (male, 33years) gave good examples of this theme throughout the interview. When asked to identify a traditional brand that he felt highly engaged with, how and why, he replied saying:

“Hmm, this is an equally tough question ‘cause I am not a brand person but I would choose Mercedes-Benz and that’s just ‘cause I love the car so much, I think it’s the best brand of car ever, their designs are exquisite and it’s so durable and strong...”

He later expressed that:

“It makes me feel safe, like I can go anywhere with it and not be worried cause it’s a big, strong and powerful car.”

4.3.1.2. Brand characteristics

Brand characteristics as a theme represents those qualities of traditional brands that consumers recognise as the essence of the brand that makes them distinctive and attractive to consumers. These attributes include the brand’s personality, achievements, reputation, and uniqueness. The attributes allow consumers to identify and create connections with brands as they do with individuals. The sub-themes under this category are all linked, and combined together to create brand differentiation and brand equity.

- Brand personality: Brand personality refers to a set of human qualities or characteristics that brands possess and consumers can identify with and relate to. These brand personalities enable individuals to connect with brands on a personal level, where they feel like they share a similar personality with the brand or admire the personality a brand possesses. Interviewee 12 (male, 35years) fully illustrated brand personality when asked to identify a brand he highly engaged with and why:

“the reason that I am engaged with them [Real Madrid] is because they believe in nothing but success. You can almost call it success at all cost, so the drive behind everything they do and want to achieve is to succeed and be the best at whatever they do...”

- Brand achievement & reputation: This sub-theme is attributed to consumers’ perceived level of achievement, acquired by the brand in the industry, in delivering top products, and in achieving what it claims to do. Perceived brand achievement and reputation are interlinked as meanings and expressions; hence they have been paired together. Achievements are accomplishments of the brand, while reputation comprises where accomplishments represent what the brand is known for. Hence, a brand’s achievements become part of their reputation over time. The following quotes

demonstrate different expressions of brand achievement and reputation.

Interviewee 4 (male, 29years) made statements coded under this theme:

“well I have done some research on them and they go way back, back to the times of the Second World War. One of the first cars to be made and they’ve lasted this long. So, I like their evolutionary story, I like the consistency when it comes to longevity; I like the fact that they are efficient. The Germans are known for making very good vehicles and BMW as far as I am concerned is the best there is because, their closest rival, which would be Mercedes-Benz is not nearly as efficient as them...”

Interviewee 11 (male, 28years) said:

“Apple is like the, you know, it’s on top of the mountain, as far as these new age devices are involved”

- Brand uniqueness & creativity: The uniqueness of the brand is also expressed as its ability to stand out from competition through branded features and unique products. Brand creativity is also very similar to uniqueness as it creates a form of distinctiveness and can be used interchangeably to describe the same feature of a brand. Interviewee 21 (male, 35years) expresses why he engages with his chosen brand:

“Yes, I am engaged with a brand called Sainte. Why is because their brand is quite unique. It’s not something that you can compare to brands like Hugo boss and the rest...Erm...Sainte is a unique clothing brand like I said...it’s significant because of its uniqueness, which makes me feel like I can stand out from the crowd and that’s something I like as the designs are very artistic and isn’t the normal type of T-shirts you see around...I like their pieces and the creativity of the brand and that’s that.”

Interviewee 19 (female, 26years) also gave her reasons for engagement with her chosen traditional brand [Relia and France]:

“Well number three which is the highest reason is the fact that it is a very unique brand, it’s a very creative brand”

The perceived uniqueness and creativity of the brand is often translated through the product.

- Length of continuous engagement: This refers to the length of time participants have been engaging with their chosen traditional brand and have continually chosen that brand over others during the timeframe of engagement. It was particularly expressed in the sense of childhood connections made with brands and the constant engagement or longing for the brand that carries on into adulthood. This can also be termed ‘blind loyalty’ (Comiteau 2003) and serves as the main reason this theme is not categorised as brand loyalty, as the focus was on the continuous period of engagement not brand loyalty. Interviewee 17 (male, 30years) showcases this phenomenon throughout his interview:

“Erm, right from when I was way younger I used to draw Nike signs on my book, when we couldn’t buy Nikes, so in school then I used to draw it on my notes and have dreams that oh one day I would be able to afford some and now I can... Yes, yes. I remember very well in secondary school, I had mates who were the rich kids then and they would come to school with their Nike shoes and bags and I would be like ok one day I would buy this thing for myself. So yeah it was really crazy...it’s been a huge part of my childhood from growing up and becoming an adult, and it’s a brand that cuts across all generations so yeah”

Interviewee 3 (male, 25years) said it is the reason why the brand is significant to him:

“The brand [Adidas] is because I’ve been engaging with the brand now for like 20 years or plus and I will still be”

4.3.1.3. Self-brand concept

Self-brand concept is the use of brands to communicate or express a consumer’s self-concept. Products are used as cues to articulate attributes or beliefs about a consumer’s actual self or to attain or depict an image of their ideal self. Hence, when a brand’s image is associated with prestige for example, consumers are likely to form a connection with that brand in order to express their current or desired status.

- Status was expressed as a reason for engagement as participants felt that their chosen traditional brands helped to portray a certain status to others. Interviewee 17 (male, 30years) said:

“Oh yeah, I feel definitely very, very good cause I use it [Nike] to show off (laughs), especially when I was younger”

While interviewee 3 (male, 25years) stated:

“Yeah. Its erm... I mean where I am from only big boys wear Adidas, like big players, you know, if you wear Adidas you kind of feel like you’re a big boy too (laughs) so yeah”

4.3.1.4. Marketing communication

Marketing communication: this refers to how companies portray their identities and communicate their core values and essence to consumers. This theme shows that consumers notice messages and cues especially from campaign strategies they find unique, intriguing, or interesting. Campaigns inform consumers of what the traditional brand is really about and what they stand for.

- Campaign: This refers to how brands promote their products and re-enforces the brand concept. The details used in campaigns are important to consumers as they send messages about the core values of the brand. Everything from the models or people presented in the campaign, the context, and the words used all represent communication cues that are noticed by consumers. Interviewee 1 (female, 25years) said:

“I just like the concept of the brand, erm...and whoever is doing their PR for them is doing so amazing because Fenty not only embraces black people, but erm...it embraces all colours and erm...it embraces different models. I remember their first campaign actually and their campaign till date, they used, I don’t want to say unusual models, but I just love how they use like a variety of people...”

Interviewee 20 (female, 24years) says:

“Erm, the campaign promos [of Fenty] are out of this world, everybody is represented, both like people of darker and lighter shades, there’s something for everyone.”

4.3.1.5. Customer perceived value

Customer perceived value is the perceived worth of the product from the perspective of the consumer. It is a theme that was widely expressed throughout this research. The majority of participants expressed that a major reason for engagement was when they perceived the product value to be high. Most of the time participants were especially grateful for quality products at an affordable price. However, other values such as convenience and ease of use were also mentioned. Ten interviewees mentioned this theme as a reason for engaging with their chosen traditional brand. For example, Interviewee 21 (male, 35years) says:

“Sainte is a unique clothing brand like I said, with clothing that are affordable to purchase but with same or more quality standard with other global brands, which I believe are purchased by people due to their luxury status and house hold name not necessarily the quality. I think for most people is about the name, but for me it’s about the affordability and quality, which Sainte provides”

4.3.1.6. Consumer-brand communication

Consumer-brand communication comprises all the different types of one-on-one interactions and/or communications between consumers and brands before, during, and after a purchase has been made and can be a crucial time for companies to deliver customer satisfaction, promote positive word of mouth, create a lasting impression of the company in the mind of consumers, create a consumer-brand connection and relationship, and even possibly lead to customer loyalty.

- Consumer brand interaction can be described as brand-consumer engagement where brands interact with consumers through brand-related content posted on brand pages and/or consumer pages. Such interactions include liking or commenting on consumers’ posts with their products and can be a big factor to encourage engagement and connection with consumers. Interviewee 5 (male, 23years) explained this well, as one of the reasons he is highly engaged with the brand:

“So their [Jumia Nigeria] social media page is really engaging cause like they engage with influencers really well and they give these influencers items they sell to review in the most honest way possible.”

And:

“so engagement with the brand is really easy. And also they also comment, if you buy the item and you post it on your page and you tag them they also comment and like your post so they’re really user friendly and the user experience is really nice.”

- Customer service refers to interactions between consumers and a traditional brand that are centred on the provision of service. This could happen before, during, and after purchase where the focus of conversation is the delivering and/or amending of an already failed service. From the interviews it is evident that customer service may not be a reason for initial engagement but certainly affects repeat or continuous engagement. Interviewee 5 (male, 23 years) commented on his interaction with his chosen brand:

“My interaction with the brand [Jumia Nigeria] is really easy, smooth and fast. So if I have, I’ve made like a couple of orders with the brand and whenever I do and I have a problem all I have to do is send them like a DM or tweet at them and they get back to me in tops 10 minute and/or their customer care representative will call me and talk to me about what the problem is.”

However, in cases where customer service is poor it has an adverse effect on consumer engagement levels. Interviewee 16 (female, 26 years) explained why she does not visit her chosen brand’s [Muji] social media platforms:

“Hmm, not often now at all but when I wanted to get one, maybe I was checking like every day to see what sales they were doing and what colour they had in stock. Actually, now that I think about it their service was very horrible, so slow at responding, I’m just remembering it now (laughs). They could really use some help, but their product is nice though”

4.3.1.7. Celebrity/individual behind the brand

The celebrity/individual behind the traditional brand is a big reason why a lot of participants engage with their chosen brand. This theme refers to consumers engaging with brands because of the celebrities or individuals that promote/represent them or even own the brand, and has been linked to both celebrities and business owners. This theme relates to the use of celebrities as brand ambassadors or endorsed celebrities

who are the face of the brand. Hence, the focal point of engagement is the traditional brand but the attraction or connection created between the brand and consumer is created through associating the celebrity with the brand. Unlike human branding, where the engagement benefits the celebrity's brand, here the celebrity becomes a tool to facilitate engagement with traditional brands. With regard to business owners, the phenomenon is usually based on the consumer's inability to separate the brand and the owner. This can be due to their profession/business (e.g. a photographer) and also the scale of business where every aspect of the business is run by the owner. They begin to represent the brand in such a way that they are inseparable from it. This is also not human branding because the owners do not have a celebrity status and the focal point of engagement once again is the brand and not the individual. Interviewee 8 (female, 22 years) said this is a major reason why she engages with her chosen brand:

“Yes I follow them [United Nations] on Instagram as well, and I also follow key people of the organisation so like the deputy general, the assistant deputy general, and other celebrities who work with them... Cause I think the people are sort of like the face of the brand, like when the people speak, when they engage, how they present themselves and what they speak on represents the brand...Erm I think I follow or I care about the brand because of them, so me seeing what they are doing, and caring about them makes me care about the brand”

Interviewee 15 (female, 26 years) says how inseparable some brands and their creators and owners are when asked if it was the brand or the person behind the brand that she was engaging with:

“Well both actually, just because of the nature of the work that he does cause you will engage with him as a photographer obviously as he's taking your pictures as the final end product as the pictures, which is the brand [Bedge] that he ends up developing and growing over time, if that make sense. So because of the nature of what he does you end up engaging with both him and his products”

Interviewee 6 (female, 25 years) says this when speaking about the owner of the brand:

“she's the main reason why I like the brand [Zeena Fabrics]”

4.3.1.8. Consumer-brand relationship

Consumer-brand relationship refers to the different types of relationships consumers build with traditional brands. Consumers build unique relationships with brands that usually translate into positive behavioural activities like purchase decisions and brand loyalty. Two different forms of consumer-brand relationship were identified from participants' expressions of reasons why they engage with their chosen traditional brands: brand community and consumer brand identity.

- Brand community as a theme is when a group of people form a social relationship based on the interest they have with the brand. They create a sense of belonging to the group in relation to the brand. Interviewee 12 (male, 35) expresses this theme through social belongingness by saying:

“It makes me feel like I’m a part of something that is worth being a part of really”

- Consumer brand identity refers to a sense of oneness with a brand. It is when consumers create a sense of belonging directly with a brand. Unlike brand community, the relationship exists simply between the consumer and the brand. This phenomenon was described by interviewee 12 (male, 35 years) when expressing why he engages with his chosen traditional brand:

“Oh I think it is a part of me, I don’t know if you would understand. I will almost say it’s a part of my life, it’s become a part of my everyday keeping up with what’s happening in the world of Real Madrid”

He later goes on to say:

“they like become a part of you, so it’s like a part of you when things happens to them. So when something good happens it affects my mood, likewise when something bad happens...you get emotionally involved and could be a significant part of my mood for the day or what happens afterwards.”

4.3.1.9. Cultural representation

Cultural representation refers to brands that carry a sense of culture in their essence or products and also what participants feel the brand represents of their culture or country. This theme was described as a major reason for engagement. Interviewee 23 (female, 28 years) stated:

“I think their [Grass Field] clothes are beautiful and I love the fact that they have been able to make such contemporary clothing with African prints... Well I think the brand is a beautiful and vibrant representation and interpretation of how beautiful African prints are and it has been done in such a creative way. The brand to me is sharing the beauty of Africa with the rest of the world”

Interviewee 21 (male, 35 years) says:

“This is a brand [Sainte] with local content and aura, which I love and like to support the creativity from my country, that’s why I follow the brand... “It is also important to me to support creativity from my country”

4.3.2. Consumer engagement with Human brands

Participants expressed several reasons for engaging with their chosen human brands. After coding, and grouping data into categories, 7 main themes emerged that fully captured the expressions of the 24 participants. Some themes were grouped under a larger concept that better classified them: e.g. personality & character traits, visual appearance, length of continuous engagement, and celebrity brand essence are all qualities of the celebrity and therefore grouped as ‘celebrity characteristics’. The seven themes that represent why consumers engage with brands are: celebrity performance, celebrity characteristics, celebrity influence, self-brand concept, celebrity authenticity, celebrity relatability, and community. Research on human brands is very limited and no other study to date has fully investigated reasons why consumers engage with human brands; these themes have therefore not been identified or explored previously and serve as a contribution to literature.

Table 4.3 Why consumers engage with Human brands (celebrities)

Themes
Consumer brand engagement with Human brands (celebrities)
1. Celebrity performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection with celebrity work (e.g. music) • Celebrity achievement (in/outside their fields) • Talent
2. Celebrity characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality & Character traits • Visual appearance • Length of continuous engagement • Celebrity brand essence
3. Celebrity influence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiration • Motivation • Emotional attachment • Impact of celebrity on people • Information (learning)
4. Self-brand concept: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideal self • Actual-self
5. Celebrity authenticity
6. Celebrity relatability
7. Community

4.3.2.1. Celebrity performance

Celebrity performance as a theme refers to when participants' engagement is centred or based on the celebrity's work (e.g. songs, movies), achievements, and talents rather than on the celebrity themselves.

- Connection with celebrity's work (e.g. music) is when participants engage with celebrities mainly because of what the celebrity has produced and the connection they have created with those products. Some participants expressed this theme as the work of the celebrity helping to get them through difficult times in their lives and thus helped forge deeper connections with their chosen celebrity.

Interviewee 7 (male, 29 years) shows that some participants simply engage with celebrities because they like their work (e.g. music).

“I think it’s because of the style of his [Burna boy’s] music so he’s a musician, an artist. So I resonate with his style of music, Its very unique, I like the authenticity of his music, I like the uniqueness of his music, so I’m more drawn to the originality of his music, so that’s why I engage with him, he’s very original. So the originality is an attraction for me. So yeah I’ll say that.”

Interviewee 3 (male, 25 years) says:

“Yeah he [Buba] is, he’s played a pretty, fairly important role in my life. His music carried me through you know, those moments so”

- Celebrity achievement (in/outside their fields) relates to when participants engage with celebrity brands mainly because of their achievements or career establishments inside and outside of the fields they operate in. Participants found it particularly intriguing when celebrities achieved outside the sphere of their known talent or influence. Interviewee 12 (male, 35 years) said:

“I would say the celebrity I’m highly engaged with is Rafael Nadal, he’s a tennis star, he’s an 18 times grand slam champion, and he’s won about 84 titles within he’s tennis career, so he’s quite a big deal in the tennis world”

Interviewee 4 (male, 29) stated part of the reason for his engagement is:

“besides his [Will Smith’s] acting and musical carrier, as a businessman he’s very profound, he’s very versatile again in business. And he’s into taking risks...so, yeah.”

- Talent relates to when participants express that they engage with their chosen celebrity because of their natural ability to be good at what they do. So, this theme is not essentially about their works or what they are able to produce, nor is it about what they have achieved. Interviewee 4 (male, 29 years) expresses that he engages with his chosen celebrity because of how good he is as an actor:

“Erm, been following him [Will Smith] since...on social media basically since I got an Instagram. Been a fan of his, he’s my favourite actor, been a fan of his since the early 90’s from his show Fresh

Prince of Bel-air. I was able to relate to him because, well the versatility of his acting. He can go from comedic to very serious very quickly, and he's very professional."

Interviewee 24 (female, 30 years) also states that this theme was a big part of the reason for her engagement, especially because her chosen celebrity is a businesswoman:

"She [Jai Nice] is also very talented, she is the fashion designer behind her brand, she is also the creative director behind every marketing communication project that goes out, she is also the brains behind the business, she does it all and all with being a great mum to her daughter."

4.3.2.2. Celebrity characteristics

Celebrity characteristics are those qualities celebrities have that make them unique and form the brand image that they possess. Just as people are attracted to and bond with other individuals based on the qualities and values they possess, participants mentioned that the sets of characteristics unique to each celebrity were a big reason why they engaged with the celebrities that they do. This theme was very repetitive throughout the interviews with participants expressing it in different forms and as a response to different questions pertaining to why they engaged with the celebrities they chose.

- Personality & character traits are those identifiable, unique, real and staged qualities of celebrities that they exhibit in their appearance, actions, expressed and observed values that they uphold, and ultimately a combination of features that result in their brand image. Personality would be those surface individual traits that consumers first recognise, while character traits are those deeper core traits that are shown over time and demonstrated by a celebrity in their core values and essence. Interviewee 17 (male, 30 years) described his engagement with his chosen celebrity based on their personality. This quote concerns the superficial personality traits of the celebrity, rather than their deep-rooted character traits, which would show the celebrity's core values:

"I follow him [Olamide] on Snapchat and Instagram, especially, 'cause he's really funny on Instagram sometimes when he does some of

his live videos and all, you can just start laughing and I follow him on Twitter as well. He's a kind of guy that is really down to earth, so if you give it to him, he will give it back to you, he insults people that insults him (laughs), he's just really casual with his fans like that...."

Interviewee 8 (female, 22 years) engages with her chosen celebrity due to those character traits that could have only been apparent through time, and represent key values:

"I engage with her [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez] because she is considered a youth. She is very hands-on with what she does, she is very committed to making America better, she is very outspoken, she doesn't let erm...the republican party bully her, she really cares about the people"

- Visual appearance was mentioned as a reason for initial engagement and can be a key part of forming brand image. This theme refers to what and how the celebrity looks - basically how appealing their visual appearance is. Interviewee 10 (male, 23 years) said:

"I follow him [Reece King] because he's pretty, he knows how to dress, and that's one of the reasons why I follow him"

- Length of continuous engagement refers to the length of time participants have been engaging with their chosen celebrity for. A key point for the participant is the fact they have watched this celebrity grow and evolve into the big name celebrity brand that they are now. Some participants also mentioned the fact these celebrities have become even better versions of themselves and overcome different obstacles. It is also apparent that they have formed strong emotional connections with these celebrities, which has translated into loyalty. Interviewee 3 (male, 25 years) says:

"Well the celebrity that I highly engage with is Buba the French rapper cause erm.. well I've known the guy since I was like 14 or 13 and ever since then I've always followed him on social media and everything."

Interviewee 20 (female, 24years) says:

"because like I've been following their [Rihanna's] growth since I was like a little girl, like and I've just seen her change like over the years"

and who she is right now is just so impressive...honestly like it's interesting cause her music has been with me through most of my life, like most of the years I can remember I was listening to her music, so it's very comforting"

- Celebrity brand essence denotes participants engaging with the celebrity because of what their brand represents or portrays. Interviewee 24 (female, 30 years) expresses this theme as a major reason for her engagement:

"I am highly engaged with her [Jai Nice] because I love what she stands for, which is a strong, black, and sexy woman and single parent who is convinced she can accomplish any and everything she put her mind to"

4.3.2.3. Celebrity influence

Celebrity influence is a theme that comprises the different ways participants have been impacted by celebrities. This theme was a big indicator of why participants engaged with their chosen brands because although these celebrities are brands they are also real-life individuals, unlike traditional brands and their actions, words, lifestyle, choices, and representation can influence consumers in various ways.

- Inspiration as a sub-theme was a big reason why participants engaged with chosen celebrities. This theme relates to when participants found their chosen celebrity inspirational and/or they inspired them in different ways and in various aspects of their lives. A good example of the two types of inspiration was expressed by interviewee 24 (female, 30 years) when she stated:

"she [Jai Nice] inspires me to become the best version of myself"

This expression was heard throughout the 24 interviews in relation to all sorts and genres of celebrities and is a strong reason for engagement.

- Motivation was also a common theme throughout all interviews as participants were highly engaged with their chosen brands because these celebrities were a source of motivation in different ways, shapes, and forms. Some participants expressed motivation with the slogan 'if they can do it then I can do it too'; as interviewee 6 (female, 24years) stated:

“I would say that she [Kylie Jenner] does really inspire me and she gets me out there to say you know what if someone like that can get stuff done, I can get things done as well. “

While others just said their celebrities motivated them, like interviewee 4 (male, 29 years):

“Basically, on social media, I just follow him [Will Smith] see certain things he does, erm...He has this bucket list where he’s ticking things off like going sky diving, bungee jumping, skiing. He also gives business advice, he gives motivational talks, things that I can relate with, things that impact and motivate me.”

- Emotional attachment refers to the emotional bond or connection consumers have formed with their chosen celebrity with expressions like ‘because I love her’. Participants highly engaged with their chosen brands expressed this theme, thus it is a big influence on consumer brand engagement with human brands. Interviewee 24 (female, 30 years) said:

“Ok so her name is Jai Nice and she is the creator and designer of a fashion house called Kloset Envy and as much as I love her clothes, I love her even more.”

Another example would be in interview 20 (female, 24 years):

“Erm...I’m borderline obsessed really (laughs). Erm...I would say I check up on her [Rihanna] probably once a day, go through her platforms, listen to her songs, yeah”

- Impact of celebrity on people is when participants engage with celebrities because of the way they have impacted them physically, mentally, and/or spiritually, causing changes to different areas of their lives. Interviewee 5 (male, 23 years) said:

“A celebrity that I’m highly engaged with is Dénola Grey, he is a Fashion celebrity, let me just say that, and a star consultant as well. Erm...he influences me because, I follow him because he impacts my brand”

Further interviewee 21 (male, 35 years) states:

“Very, yes I do, ‘cause anyone who’s had a positive impact upon my thinking, upon my actions and narrative, such is significant and highly important to my well-being”

- Information (learning) is when participants engage with their chosen celebrity to learn about a certain topic or to gain information in that area. Hence, here a participant continually engages because they feel their chosen celebrity is well informed or experienced in a particular field and the engagement allows them to learn or improve themselves in that field. Interviewee 11 (male, 28 years) expressed this theme by saying why he engages with his chosen brand:

“Erm...I’ll say Sean Combs. Cause obviously he’s a musician and I relate with him cause he’s just very inspirational and career-driven and I feel like I can learn a lot from him basically”

Interviewee 10 (male, 23 years) illustrates this theme more descriptively:

“The name is Reece King. I follow him because... .of the way he talks about mental health, which is very important and that’s something that I’m really passionate about so he has those moments where he... .literary brings us in and then he talks about mental health.... and gives you examples of why your mental health is important...”

4.3.2.4 Self-brand concept

The Self-brand concept as a theme is when participants engage with celebrities because they represent their ideal or actual self-concept. Consumers have concepts about themselves, which is who they think they are (actual self) and who they want or aspire to be (ideal self). They are drawn to celebrities that they feel allow them to accept or love who they are now, or allow them to experience life and improve to become who they want to be.

- Ideal self represents when participants engage with celebrities because they aspire to be like them and allow them to live their ideal lives through engaging with their chosen celebrities. Interviewee 5 (male, 23 years) said:

“cause, aside from the fact that like, for me he’s [Dénola Grey] someone that, his personality and his brand is something that I only aspire to one day achieve right. So erm...following him and following

his journey is one way, I won't say I'm living through him, but me seeing that is helping me as well to embrace the kind of things I would like to do and the kind of erm...brand I would like to build."

Interviewee 16 (female 26 years) expresses the ideal self-concept more explicitly:

"Hmm...she [Steffeny Gretzinger] shows a really good example of authentic relationship with God and just living from that overflow, and for me it's like that's who I want to be, that's how I want to be in my life, in loving people, that's how I want to be in my worship as well, you know"

- Actual self relates to participants engaging with celebrities because they encourage them to be their actual self and embrace themselves. This sub-theme was not as frequently mentioned as its counterpart 'ideal self' but was expressed in a few interviews. Interviewee 21 (male, 35 years) says:

"him [Kore Kenny] being a change agent gives me the confidence that in this path of expression that I have chosen I am not alone"

Interviewee 5 (male, 23 years) also shows this theme by saying:

"I follow him [Dénola Grey] because he impacts my brand, he helps like, most of the things I wear I kind of like get my inspiration from what he wears and the fact that he is so confident when he wears it gives me the confidence to wear my outfits too so yeah, I really like his brand"

The key point of this sub-theme is that when participants engage with celebrities it encourages them or gives them confidence to be who they are.

4.3.2.5. Celebrity authenticity

Celebrity authenticity is when participants perceive celebrities are being authentic online and being their real selves, such as showing their authentic feelings, thoughts, and daily lifestyle. It also covers a celebrity's handling of his or her own social media accounts themselves.

Interviewee 3 (male, 25 years) says part of the reason why he is highly engaged with his chosen celebrity is because he is real:

“he’s [Buba is] real, you know. His Instagram account is managed by him! It’s not someone else posting anything, but it’s him with his phone acting like a 20 year old or a 25 year old that I can relate to”

Interviewee 13 (female, 32 years) expresses this theme in a different way as the reason she engages with her chosen celebrity:

“Will Smith is an actor. I kind of like the fact that he doesn’t showcase his luxury or rich lifestyle. He comes down to lay man standard, and he tries to tell you about family inclusion....And then not just the luxury of going shopping or going for vacation, he takes you down deep into everything about his daily lifestyle and he’s not like flaunting nothing, so that’s why I like to follow him...I see him like a real person,”

Interviewee 7 (male, 29 years) shows how celebrities not managing their social media posts, and thus not appearing to be authentic online, can adversely affect consumer engagement online:

“Ok so I listen...like once he [Burna boy] releases a new video, I’m on YouTube going to watch it, I have all his albums from time memorial, I don’t follow him on social media, because I realise that he doesn’t manage his social media by himself so he’s not necessarily him speaking so there’s no point really following him from there”

4.3.2.6. Celebrity relatability

Celebrity relatability was a recurring theme for why participants engaged with celebrities. Respondents expressed that they engaged with their chosen celebrity when they found him or her relatable or held similar interests to their own and shared aspects of life. Interviewee 1 (female, 24 years) says:

“For me erm...for me Oprah Winfrey is a very unique brand to me because she’s so relatable and that’s why a lot of people black, white, Chinese, Asian a lot of people just erm...relate to her”

Interviewee 23 (female, 28 years) expresses both aspects of this theme:

“I would choose Tamera Mowry-Housley, and why I feel highly engaged with her is mostly because I like how authentic she is, how real she is, and how relatable she is. I feel like I am currently at a time in my life where I am seeing the values and mind-set she upholds as very similar to mine. She represents a parental, marital, and spiritual

role model to me, and I think we have similar perception of life, priority and way of thinking”

4.3.2.7. Community

Community refers to being part of a group where participants share a sense of social relationship through their shared interest or ‘love’ for that particular celebrity. Here participants engage with their chosen celebrity because they feel like they are part of a community or ‘clique’. Interviewee 20 (female, 24 years) expressed this theme by saying:

“Like a bad girl in a good way (laughs). Navy, part of the Rihanna Navy, which is like a fan army. That’s my role model”

She carries on to express the social relationship created from being part of this community by identifying as ‘us’ and ‘we’:

*“Yeah, part of a clique, **we** like go hard for her, and she never disappoints! She’s always out here performing for her fans, giving **us** content that we love to see...Oh she makes me feel so good! Like when I hear news about her, like I remember when **we** all thought she was pregnant, **we** all thought **we** were getting a little niece but no she was playing. Erm..., yeah it’s exciting, especially thinking about the new things she’s coming out with. Blows my mind every time”*

Identifying as plural further exerts the participant’s connection with other fans of her chosen celebrity based on their shared attachment with the celebrity. Speaking as though they were all related to each other and to the celebrity. This is also evident in her calling a potential child of the celebrity the community’s ‘niece’.

However, a particular participant — interviewee 19 (female, 26 years) — expressed negative emotions to being part of a community with their chosen celebrity because of the connotations associated with the celebrity’s fan club:

“I feel like there is a shallow connotation to it. It’s like when they say Beyoncé’s Bees you’re just associated with her for the whole bow down to queen Bee vibe, you know what I mean, for the beauty aspect of things. So I’m always like ah...don’t clump me into those kinds of things. And also because of how her fans are they treat her like a God, which nobody is a God, you know what I mean. So it kind of feels weird to be associated in that aspect, you know”

4.4. Perceived significance of traditional brands and human brands

This section displays participants' perceptions of how significant their chosen traditional and human brands are to them. Perceived significance of traditional and human brands denotes how important or essential the participants perceive their chosen brands to be in their everyday lives. Essentially, this question seeks to understand how dependant participants are on their chosen traditional and human brands.

Participants were asked whether they considered their chosen human and traditional brands to be significant to them. 21 out of 24 participants found their chosen traditional brand significant in comparison to 17 out of 24 participants saying their chosen human brand was significant. Participants expressed that their chosen traditional brands were significant because they fulfil functional purposes unlike human brands that represent role models, benchmarks for achievement, inspiration, and motivational influences. Interviewee 11 (male, 28 years) related why he considers his chosen traditional brand significant:

"I mean its significant to me obviously, cause I use their brand in my day to day, my phone is an Apple phone, my laptop is an Apple pro so it is very significant in the sense that yeah I use it for my day to day lifestyle. So it actually very significant"

And why he does not consider his chosen human brand to be significant:

"No reason. I don't think he's [Sean Combs] that significant for me to go about my day to day. Do you understand? I just look up to him in the sense of he's very, from where he came from to where he is at the moment, I just use him as a benchmark on what I plan on achieving in the future, basically. I won't really say he's that significant to me"

However, some participants found their chosen human brand to be equally as significant as their chosen traditional brand because of the perceived level of influence their chosen human brand has on them and/or how much connection, relationship, and emotional attachment they have created with their chosen celebrity. Interviewee 20 (female, 24 years) explains why she finds her chosen celebrity significant:

“because like I’ve been following their growth since I was like a little girl, like and I’ve just seen her [Rihanna] change like over the years and who she is right now is just so impressive and like she’s honestly a role model cause like right now she has a whole house under like LVMH, she has her own fashion brand under Louis Viton and all that, and I remember the days when she was doing like the Puma Fenty shoes and the Puma clothes, and just to see how every year she come up better, with more things for her fans, for her followers and yeah. And she also like speaks her mind, sticks up for what she believes is right....”

4.5. Analysis exploring the dimensions of Consumer brands engagement

The following sub-sections focus on questions asked in the third section of the interviews, where participants’ engagement with brands was investigated based on the different dimensions of consumer brand engagement adopted by this study. The questions were worded to encourage participants to express whether and how they engage with their chosen brand types cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally. This section is divided into three areas: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. The aim of this section is to investigate whether participants’ cognitive, emotional or behavioural engagement is different with human brands in comparison to traditional brands and how it differs.

Finally, whilst the results provide a quantitative picture, the approach used in this research is qualitative and the purpose of the tables is to illustrate the distinction in the responses.

4.5.1. Cognitive activity

Cognitive activity refers to the level of brand-related thought processing a consumer engages in, especially during an interaction with the brand (Hollebeek 2011a, 2011b; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Hence, it concerns the consumer’s cognitive and thought-provoking activity towards the brand and their willingness to do so. In order to fully elicit an expression of this dimension, three main questions were asked. All these questions show how much energy and willingness consumers have to engage in cognitive activity in relation to traditional and human brands.

Question 1: Do you think about your chosen brand and how often?

This question was asked to understand whether participants think about their chosen traditional and human brands outside of an engagement environment. This question shows how ‘immersed’ consumers are with their chosen traditional and human brands. Consumers generally are able to think or focus on a brand while interacting with that brand, for example while trying on Nike shoes it is easier to think about how Nike is such a reputable brand, whereas a certain level of immersion and interest is present to have the same thoughts towards Nike while at work or resting on the sofa. The same concept goes for consumers and celebrities.

Analysis

Participants were asked whether they think about their chosen brands and how often their chosen brands would come to their mind. Responses were along the lines of ‘yes I do and often’, ‘yes I do but not often’, ‘no I don’t only when I see something related to them or their post’, and ‘no not at all’. For human brands only 10 out of 24 participants think about their chosen brands often, and for traditional brands it was a little lower with 7 out of 24 participants stating that they do think about their chosen brands often.

Table 4.4 Do you think about your chosen brand, and how often?

Cognitive: Do you think about your chosen brand?		
	Traditional brands	Human brands
Responses	Example	Example
Yes often	<i>"I will say yes I think about them [Zara] often"</i> Interviewee 2 (female, 23 years) 7 out of 24 participants had such a response	<i>"Yes I do... Like I think about her [Kylie Jenner] a lot"</i> Interviewee 6 (female, 24 years) 10 out of 24 participants had such a response
Yes, but not often	<i>"Yeah, not so much"</i> Interviewee 6 (male, 23 years) 7 out of 24 participants had such a response	<i>"Yes I do but not often"</i> Interviewee 24 (female, 30 years) 4 out of 24 participants had such a response
No, only when I see something related to them	<i>"no not often, but they do come to mind when I see different Mercedes cars"</i> Interviewee 22 (male, 33 years) 5 out of 24 participants had such a response	<i>"not really... Maybe if I hear her [Steffeny Gretzinger's] song... or if I see her post"</i> Interviewee 16 (female, 26 years) 5 out of 24 participants had such a response
No, not at all	<i>"Oh they never come to mind"</i> Interviewee 23 (female, 28 years) 5 out of 24 participants had such a response	<i>"No"</i> Interviewee 16 (female, 26 years) 5 out of 24 participants had such a response

Response for traditional brands:

Participants stated they would usually only think of their chosen traditional brand when the need for purchase arises or during seasons when they were considering making a purchase. Interviewee 14 (female, 21 years) responded, when asked whether she thought about her chosen traditional brand:

"No, no. Just when I need new clothes"

Meanwhile, interviewee 16 (female, 26 years) responded:

"Hmm, no not any more I don't think about them [Muji], but before when I was trying to get the bag I did think about them"

Response to human brands:

Participants who responded that they do not think about their chosen celebrity expressed that they had more important things going on in their personal life to think

about. Interviewee 13 (female, 32 years) responded to the question in relation to her chosen celebrity by saying:

“(Sighs..Laughs) have a lot of things on my mind seriously. The fact that I like him [Will Smith] doesn’t mean that he would keep popping up on my mind; I have a lot I’m dealing with, from my career to juggling my child with everything. It’s just when I’m on Instagram and I see his stuff and he come up so yeah”

While other participants that responded affirmatively expressed that they either considered their chosen celebrity at moments where their words or influence were relevant and/or because they try to ask themselves how their chosen celebrity would react in a particular situation. Interviewee 3 (male, 25 years) said:

“Yeah...I would say that yeah. Cause sometimes I just ask myself is it something that this guy [Buba] would do”

Interviewee 11 (male, 28 years) stated:

“I mean, he [Sean Combs] will only cross my mind maybe I’m in a difficult situation, or I’m feeling kind of down and I would think of something he might have said that relates to the situation that I’ll be in and try and pick myself back up. Other than that, I don’t really think about him”

Question 2: Do you think about your chosen brand when you are on social media?

Once again, this question aimed to encourage participants to express their brand-related activity concerning their chosen traditional and human brands. As shown in the literature review, social media platforms have transformed the way engagement occurs; it has become an essential environment for engagement, especially for the participants, as members of Generation Y that rely on technology. Hence, it was important that a question based on social media was asked.

Analysis

When participants were asked whether they think about their chosen traditional brand or celebrity when on social media, responses highlighted that many of them only think about their chosen brand and/or celebrity, or choose to visit their branded/celebrity platforms when they see a post about and/or relating to the brand in question. This phenomenon has been categorised here as the need for stimuli to facilitate participant engagement.

Participants who expressed that they think about the brand/celebrity without stimuli said they check the brand/celebrity on social media as soon as they log on to their chosen social media platform or have their notifications on for those brands/celebrities.

Table 4.5 Do you think about your chosen brand when you're on social media?

Cognitive: Do you think about your chosen brand when you're on social media?		
	Traditional brands	Human brands
Responses	Example	Example
Yes without stimuli	<i>"Yes. So I'm always watching their [Apple's] reviews"</i> Interviewee 7 (male, 29 years) 4 out of 24 participants had such a response	<i>"Yes"</i> Interviewee 2 (female, 23 years) 10 out of 24 participants had such a response
Yes but need stimuli	<i>"as it relates to what I'm searching on social media, but I do"</i> Interviewee 10 (male, 23 years) 8 out of 24 participants had such a response	<i>"Yeah I'm on social media and I see something relating to her [Kim Kardashian]"</i> Interviewee 9 (female, 26 years) 6 out of 24 participants had such a response
No I only engage with their post on my feed	<i>"No not really, I just engage with their [Grass Field's] content when I see a post of them on my feed"</i> Interviewee 23 (female, 28 years) 9 out of 24 participants had such a response	<i>"most times I just see him [Nike] on my timeline, I don't specifically go to his page"</i> Interviewee 17 (female, 30 years) 4 out of 24 participants had such a response
No not at all	<i>"No I don't think about the brand [Bedge]"</i> Interviewee 15 (female, 26 years) 3 out of 24 participants had such a response	<i>"not really, she's just a human being"</i> Interviewee 16 (female, 26 years) 3 out of 24 participants had such a response

Response to Traditional brand:

And interviewee 12 (male, 35 years) said, in respect to his chosen traditional brand:

"Yes, I don't follow many brands but yes I would check them [Real Madrid] as soon as I'm on social media"

Response to Human brand:

Interviewee 3 (male, 25 years) said, in respect to his chosen celebrity:

“Yeah definitely.... He’s [Buba is] probably the one that I would never unfollow (laughs). And I tend to check his story before checking any of my friend’s stories because I mean, it’s always fun what’s happening there you know, there’s never a dull moment.”

However, the number of participants that think of their chosen traditional brands when on social media without having seen brand-related content appears to be low as participants stated that they hardly ever go looking for brand-related content and/or brand social media pages, but simply engage with traditional branded content that appears on their social media feeds. Interviewee 5 (male, 23 years) said that upon seeing a post of his chosen traditional brand, he may result check their social media page:

“Oh no, no, no... I wait for like posts from them [Jumia Nigeria] I don’t just go to their page. But once I see a post, I would go to their page to go see other things that may have been happening, so yes.”

Question 3: Would you like to learn more about your chosen brand?

This question was effectively open-ended, allowing participants to express what they would like to learn from their chosen brand/celebrity.

Analysis

Participants were asked whether they would like to learn more about their chosen human and traditional brands and more than half responded affirmatively for both brand types. They expressed that with traditional brands they would like to learn about their products and their strategy for the brands’ success. With human brands, participants were eager to learn about an array of things, from their private life, to lifestyle, to their ability to achieve, to their personality.

Table 4.6 Would you like to learn more about your chosen brand?

Cognitive: would you like to learn more about your chosen brand?		
	Traditional brands	Human brands
Responses	Example	Example
Yes	“ <i>yeah cause they [Adidas] are a huge co-operation</i> ” Interviewee 3 (female, 25 years) 14 out of 24 participants had such a response	“ <i>Yeah. Yeah</i> ” Interviewee 5 (male, 23 years) 20 out of 24 participants had such a response
No	“ <i>No</i> ” Interviewee 11 (male, 28 years) 6 out of 24 participants had such a response	“ <i>Yeah I don’t think I would at this very point.</i> ” Interviewee 19 (female, 26 years) 1 out of 24 participants had such a response
Not really	“ <i>I think I know enough about the brand [Mercedes-Benz]</i> ” Interviewee 22 (male, 33 years) 4 out of 24 participants had such a response	“ <i>Not really. I think I already know her [Kylie Jenner]</i> ” Interviewee 14 (female, 21 years) 3 out of 24 participants had such a response

Response for Traditional brands:

Some participants who wanted to learn about their chosen traditional brand expressed that they were more interested in learning about the individuals behind the brand and the owners or heads of such successful brands. This allows for a human connection to be established and for ideal human-to-human learning. Interviewee 5 (male, 23 years) said:

“So I would like to know more about the owner of the company, like how they grew so fast and how they grew to dominate the market, yeah”

Nonetheless, most participants were more interested in learning about the products of their chosen traditional brand. Interviewee 7 (male, 29 years) said:

“Erm..., to know more about their new products. So sometimes I go to Apple’s website and I view the product pages and just go down and read about the product. I may not buy them, I may not be interested in them, like the new watch or something, I’m not interested in buying it but I just go and read about it”

Response to Human brand:

As most participants expressed that their chosen human brand inspired, motivated, and/or challenged them in different aspects of life it was evident that participants were

interested to learn more about their chosen celebrities than they were to learn about their chosen traditional brands. However, some participants felt they knew enough about their chosen celebrities from social media. For example, interviewee 17 (male, 30 years) said:

“Yeah not really, but the way the social media life is, cause they’re artist, they put all their life out there. So, like I said earlier on in the interview, like I already know his kids and if I see him I’ll know yeah that’s Olamide’s son. So, I believe I already know quite a bit”

Overall on cognitive activity

The findings show lower overall cognitive activity with each brand type. Nonetheless, participants’ cognitive activity attitudes with human brands was higher than traditional brand, but not by a substantial amount. However, there was a different response for the cognitive activity of ‘thinking’ than the cognitive activity of ‘learning’. Participants are more interested, motivated, and invested in learning about a traditional brand or celebrity they love than they are to ‘think’ about them.

4.5.2 Emotional activity

Emotion relates to a consumer’s level of inspiration, pride, passion, and affection in relation to a particular brand (Hollebeek 2011a, 2011b; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Hence, it is the degree of positive emotional affect consumers create with a brand and experiences during engagement. In order to fully gather an expression of this dimension, 4 main questions were asked. All these questions aim to establish how much emotional activity consumers attach to and engage with in relation to traditional and human brands.

Question 1: how do you feel about your chosen brand or how do they make you feel?

This question strives to encourage participants to express their brand/celebrity related emotional activity. It reveals consumers’ emotional attitudes towards their chosen traditional and human brands and these have been categorised as passionate expressions.

Analysis

Participants were asked how they felt about their chosen human and traditional brand to encourage an expression of their emotions towards their chosen brands/celebrities. Arrays of expressions were gathered from participants but a vivid similarity and difference in the expressions was embedded in the manner, length, and choice of words used. All statements showcased how passionate participants are about the brands they spoke of. Hence, responses were grouped into passionate expressions, dispassionate expressions, and indifferent. To display a clear example of this phenomenon, Table 4.10 shows an example of each group of expression in regard to each brand type. The majority of participants were passionate, detailed, and expressive when communicating emotions towards their chosen celebrity. 21 out of 24 participants had such expressions, which may be an indication of their attachment and connection with those celebrities. Conversely, when speaking on their emotions toward their chosen traditional brands, participants were more direct, succinct, and dispassionate, giving one word/or one line answers. Notably, passionate expressions and dispassionate expressions both communicated positive feelings. For example, statements such as ‘I like it’ and ‘I love it’ are both positive statements but the choice and use of the word ‘love’ is more passionate, and stronger in emotion than the choice and use of the word ‘like’. It is likely that the word ‘love’ would be said with a little more emphasis and passion than the word ‘like’.

Table 4.7 Examples of feelings towards the brand

Examples of responses to “how do you feel about the brand?”		
Response	Traditional brand	Human brand
Passionate expression	<p><i>“Oh my God!! Ok so erm... this is the only make-up brand [Fenty], honestly from my heart, this is the only make-up brand where I put my make-up on and I feel beautiful, I feel amazing....”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 1 (female, 24 years)</p> <p>9 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>	<p><i>“I would say I take him [Dénola Grey] as a mentor. Yeah, I take him as a mentor; I take him as a very huge inspiration to me not just in my style or for my brand but for myself as a person as well. Yeah.”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 5 (male, 23 years)</p> <p>21 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>
Dispassionate expression	<p><i>“I feel like Apple is a very effective brand, it makes me feel, I don’t know the word to use to be honest. It makes me feel good”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 11 (male, 28 years)</p> <p>13 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>	<p><i>“hmm I think confident, happy”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 8 (female, 22 years)</p> <p>3 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>
Indifferent	<p><i>“Erm..., I’m just, I’m indifferent. Just normal”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 14 (female, 21 years)</p> <p>2 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>	<p>-</p> <p>No participants had such a response</p>

Question 2: How do you feel about your chosen brand when you’re interacting with them on social media?

This question gave room for participants to express their emotional activity with their chosen traditional and human brands; only this time those emotional feelings were expressed toward an active engagement practice on social media. Social media allows for direct engagement with brands in general and has changed the way consumers engage with brands.

Analysis

Here, participants were asked how they felt when they were on their chosen human and traditional brands' social media page or interacting with their content, to encourage expressions of participants' feelings during engagement with their chosen brands/celebrities. Once again, the expressions varied but what was similar was the enthusiasm in the expressions and words used to convey their feelings during consumer brand engagement with their chosen brands/celebrities. Table 4.11 has been designed to show examples of the different expressions. Once again, the majority of participants expressed positive emotions passionately, with excitement and enthusiasm as they spoke about their feelings while engaging with celebrities. With traditional brands, less than half of the participants spoke passionately about their feelings during engagement on social media. Most of the participants, once again, went straight to the point and used basic words like 'good' to describe their feelings. Nonetheless, as explained earlier, both passionate expressions and dispassionate expressions are positive feelings. However, interviewee 9 (female, 26 years) expressed negative emotions towards both her chosen traditional and human brands while engaging with them on social media, Table 4.11 shows her expressions.

Table 4.8 Example of feeling expressions during social media engagement

Examples of responses to “how do you feel about brand when on social media?”		
Response	Traditional brand	Human brand
Passionate expression	<p><i>“...it’s the rush of growth. So it’s like I can’t wait to do this or I can’t wait to do that. I can’t wait to be at that level of being known for creating something so beautiful and inspiring.....”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 10 (male, 23 years)</p> <p>11 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>	<p><i>“It’s always very nice, ‘cause first of all she [Beyoncé] always looks very nice so it’s good to see, it’s always very nice. And I just like seeing the new stuff that she comes up with so yeah, it always feels nice, it’s fun and its beautiful to look at”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 19 (female, 26 years)</p> <p>18 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>
Dispassionate expression	<p><i>“It’s good and pleasing to the eyes”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 16 (female, 26 years)</p> <p>9 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>	<p><i>“Erm..., how do I feel? I can resonate with whatever he [Will Smith] has to say, yeah.”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 13 (female, 32 years)</p> <p>4 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>
Indifferent	<p><i>“Erm... I mean it’s just a brand...I don’t, you know, have real emotions, I mean I like it, when I see something that I like”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 3 (male, 25 years)</p> <p>3 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>	<p><i>“I feel normal (laughs). I mean I feel, yeah.”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 11 (male, 28 years)</p> <p>1 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>
Negative emotions	<p><i>“...Intimidated (laughs). Yeah intimidated cause of the pricing (laughs)”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 9 (female, 26 years)</p> <p>1 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>	<p><i>“Hmm..., quite overwhelmed. Is overwhelmed the word (chuckle). Yeah, I’ll say probably overwhelmed ‘cause I feel like oh when am I going to be able to do this for myself (chuckle). So yeah”</i></p> <p>Interviewee 9 (female, 26 years)</p> <p>1 out of 24 participants had such a response</p>

Question 3: How does it feel to be associated with your chosen brand?

Consumers use brands as a form of self-expression and identification. Hence, a form of emotional activity would be those emotional feelings and attitudes consumers attach to being associated with particular brands or celebrities. This question further investigates the emotional activity participants have towards their chosen traditional and human brands.

Analysis

Once again, participants were asked how it felt to be associated with their chosen brand, which allowed them to express their feelings about being connected or associated with their chosen brand/celebrity. There were passionate expressions about their feelings from some, while others lacked passion and a few said they felt indifferent. Table 4.12 showcases an example of all three responses. Once again participants gave strong emotional expressions when it came to expressing association with their chosen celebrity, which could also be associated with the strong emotional connections consumers create with celebrities. And although the majority of participants did not have passionate expressions when relating what they felt with being associated with their chosen traditional brand, they did have positive responses.

Table 4.9 Examples of expression concerning feelings of association

Examples of responses to “how does it feel to be associated with this brand?”		
Response	Traditional brand	Human brand
Passionate expression	<i>“Very, very good. It is good to be with the best.”</i> Interviewee 4 (male, 29 years) 10 out of 24 participants had such a response	<i>“It’s an amazing feeling to say I am rooting for such an accomplished black woman [Jai Nice]”</i> Interviewee 24 (female, 30 years) 17 out of 24 participants had such a response
Dispassionate expression	<i>“Erm... good”</i> Interviewee 8 (female, 22 years) 11 out of 24 participants had such a response	<i>“Hmm... yeah I guess it’s nice to know that I’m following someone like Ada.”</i> Interviewee 15 (female, 26 years) 4 out of 24 participants had such a response
Indifferent	<i>“Hmm..., normal. It doesn’t make me feel anyhow”</i> Interviewee 11 (male, 28 years) 3 out of 24 participants had such a response	<i>“No kind of way”</i> Interviewee 9 (female, 26 years) 3 out of 24 participants had such a response

Question 4: Are you proud to be a fan of your chosen brand?

A consumer’s level of pride in relation to a brand is a direct emotional activity. Hence, this question explores this activity in relation to participants and their chosen traditional and human brand.

Analysis

When asked whether they were proud to be fans of their chosen human and traditional brands, the majority of participants answered yes. However, interviewee 13 (female, 32years) expressed that she didn’t know whether she would say she was proud to be a fan of either her chosen traditional brand or her chosen celebrity, as shown in Table4.13. Some participants who expressed that they were not proud to be a fan of their chosen traditional brand expressed that it was just a brand and they did not feel such a way for the brand. Interviewee 23 (female, 28 years), in relation to her chosen traditional brand said:

“Hmm I would say no’ cause I don’t think I’m proud; I’m just indifferent about it. I just like the brand [Grass Field] and the clothing but I won’t go as far as saying proud”

Table 4.10 Are you proud to be a fan of your chosen brand?

Emotional: Are you proud to be a fan of the brand?		
	Traditional brands	Human brands
Responses	Example	Example
Yes	“ <i>Very</i> ” Interviewee 4 (male, 29 years) 21 out of 24 participants had such a response	“ <i>Yeah, I can wear a I love Burna boy shirt</i> ” Interviewee 7 (male, 29 years) 23 out of 24 participants had such a response
I don’t know	“ <i>I don’t understand what they mean by proud</i> ” Interviewee 13 (female, 32 years) 1 out of 24 participants had such response	“ <i>I don’t know if I’m proud</i> ” Interviewee 13 (female, 32 years) 1 out of 24 participants had such response
No	“ <i>I would say no, ‘cause I don’t think I’m proud</i> ” Interviewee 23 (female, 28 years) 2 out of 24 participants had such a response	- No participants had such a response

Overall on emotional activity

Findings show that participants engage more emotionally with human brands than they do with traditional brands as they more readily form bonds and attachments with celebrities than with traditional brands. However, things like high pricing of traditional branded goods and celebrities created a perceived unattainable reality in their lives has led to negative emotions.

4.5.3 Behavioural activity

Behaviour is the individual’s level of energy exerted in relation to a particular brand (Hollebeek 2011a, 2011b; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Hence, a consumer’s energy is invested by spending a notable amount of time and/or effort interacting with a brand. This dimension can be examined under the time spent, the effort exerted to interact, and the physical behavioural actions taken by consumers in relation to a brand (e.g. commenting on brand-related posts). In order to fully gather an expression of this dimension, 4 main questions were asked. All these questions show how much energy

and time participants put into consumer-brand interactions and the specific actions carried out by participants in relation to their chosen traditional and human brands.

Question 1: Do you tell people about your chosen brand?

This question investigates positive word of mouth, in relation to participants' chosen traditional and human brands. Word of mouth (WOM) is an engagement action directly linked to the behavioural activity dimension of engagement.

Analysis

In order to explore the different aspects of behavioural engagement, participants were asked whether they tell people about their chosen brand/celebrity; a form of word of mouth (WOM), which can be categorised as a form of behavioural engagement. The majority of participants said they tend to tell people about their chosen brand/celebrity and/or talk about the different brand types with friends. Participants revealed that conversations about their chosen celebrity were centred on either debating with friends, trying to defend the celebrity or discussing something fascinating the celebrity said or did. Although the majority of participants said they tell people about their chosen human brand, some participants expressed that their engagement with their chosen celebrity is both personal and private and so they do not tend to talk about them with other people. Interviewee 10 (male, 23 years) said:

“Hmm..., most of my friends that know him [Reece king], they know him for the other part of his brand, which is the fashion. So, I don't talk about the mental health part cause it is more personal to me, so I can relate with others on the fashion part of his brand, we can talk about the fashion part but not the mental health part”

For traditional brands, participants were more open to sharing with friends and others, as they tend to fulfil functional needs and/or carry some value in regard to the product. Hence, participants were more likely to identify or recommend their chosen traditional brands to people. Interviewee 14 (female, 21 years) says:

“If people ask me or they complement my clothing, then I'll be like just check out Forever21, or if they are looking for where to buy clothes and don't want to go to Primark but still want something within an affordable price range then I'll suggest Forever21”

The response ‘I don’t need to’ refers to when participants express that they do not need to tell people about their chosen traditional brand or celebrity because the brands/celebrities are well known (famous). While the response ‘sometimes’ refers to when participants indicated that they tell people about their chosen brand/celebrity only when the conversation takes them there and/or the need arises. Table 4.14 gives examples of these responses.

Table 4.11 Do you tell people about your chosen brand/celebrity?

Behavioural: Do you tell people about the brand (WOM)?		
	Traditional brands	Human brands
Responses	Example	Example
Yes	“ <i>Yes, a lot</i> ” Interviewee 4 (male, 29 years) 20 out of 24 participants had such a response	“ <i>All the time</i> ” Interviewee 6 (female, 24 years) 15 out of 24 participants had such a response
No	“ <i>no not really</i> ” Interviewee 23 (female, 28years) 1 out of 24 participants had such a response	“ <i>not really, no</i> ” Interviewee 23 (female, 28 years) 4 out of 24 participants had a such response
I don’t need to (famous)	“ <i>Not really ‘cause it’s a big brand [Dior] and people know of it</i> ” Interviewee 9 (female, 26 years) 3 out of 24 participants had such a response	“ <i>not really, I feel like my friends and people just kind of know her [Steffeny Gretzinger]</i> ” Interviewee 16 (female, 26 years) 2 out of 24 participants had such a response
Sometimes	- No participants had such a response	“ <i>Yes. Not a lot actually but when it comes to it I tell people about her [Beyoncé]</i> ” Interviewee 19 (female, 26 years) 3 out of 24 participants had such a response

Question 2: How likely are you to carry out the following actions when engaging with brand related content?

This question examined participants’ behavioural activity on social media with regard to branded/celebrity-related content. As mentioned in the literature review, social media has transformed the way engagement occurs due to the benefits of one-to-one peer communication, interactivity, and engagement tools and technologies operating in real time. The majority of brands and consumers take advantage of these benefits, making it an effective and essential environment for engagement.

Analysis

The question asked: How likely are you to carry out the following actions when engaging with branded/celebrity related content? Very likely, Likely, Unlikely, Very unlikely to:

- Take time to look at picture/video
- Like the picture/video
- Read the caption
- Comment on the picture/video
- Read other people's comments on the pictures/videos
- Reply to other peoples' comments on the pictures/videos
- Share the picture/video

The question above aimed to establish participants' likelihood to take different actions when they see brand/celebrity related content on social media. It shows the tendencies of participants to engage with brand/celebrity posts or content encompassing both pictures and videos. Through this analysis, this study can establish whether participants engage differently with human brands online in comparison to traditional brands. Overall, participants' patterns of engagement with brand-related content are similar for both traditional brands and human brands. Some of those similarities show that for both traditional brands and human brands, participants are:

- More likely to take time to look at a picture and video posted by their chosen brand/celebrity
- More likely to like a picture and video posted by their chosen brand/celebrity
- More likely to read the caption on a picture and video posted by their chosen brand/celebrity
- Less likely to reply to other peoples' comments on pictures and video posted by their chosen brand/celebrity

However, there were some differences in response:

- Participants are more likely to read other peoples' comments posted on pictures and videos of their chosen celebrity. When asked this question interviewee 16 (female, 26 years) replied:

“Oh very likely, those are always very interesting”

While participants are less likely to read other people’s comments posted on traditional brands’ pictures and video posts. However, one of the few participants that answered ‘very likely’ to this question, Interviewee 18 (male, 31 years), said:

“Very likely ‘cause I want to see feedback and comments on items”

- Another difference in response was that participants expressed that they are less likely to comment on both pictures and videos posted by traditional brands, but with their chosen celebrities they were less likely to comment on videos as opposed to pictures. The reason for this was not fully clear from the data collected. Commenting on their chosen celebrity’s picture, the numbers were 5 ‘very likely’ responses and 8 ‘likely’ responses, totalling a combined 13 participants saying they were more likely to comment.

Overall, across all the seven questions asked to participants about their behavioural engagement actions taken in relation to brand/celebrity-related content on social media, participants answered that they were more likely to do so for human brands than for traditional brands. This shows that although online behavioural engagement patterns with brand/celebrity content are similar between the two brand types, participants are more likely to behaviourally engage with a celebrity’s post than they are with a traditional brand’s post.

Question 3: Do you spend time on social media interacting with this brand/celebrity? How much time?

This question seeks to investigate participants’ energy invested interacting with the two brand types. Time spent interacting with a brand directly translates to a form of behavioural engagement (Hollebeek 2011a). Consequently, it helps to understand how much of their personal time they invest in behaviourally engaging with their chosen traditional brand and celebrity.

Analysis

Participants were asked how much time they spent interacting with the two types of brand and the responses gathered from participants varied from minutes to hours and from daily to weekly. However, it showed that participants' duration of engagement could generally vary from 1-hour at times with a particular brand/celebrity to 10 minutes at other times with the same brand. Interviewee 1 (female, 24 years) explains it by saying:

"I spend at least 8 minutes on her [Oprah's] page but truly it depends because sometimes I might not be on Instagram for like few days... erm... or a few hours and maybe she must have posted 3-5 posts because she's a celebrity and you know celebrities have to post a lot to keep their audience engaged...so I might have to scroll back you know...it just depends literary because the pictures everything...I might want to see something that she said before. It just depends on the day, the time, my mood, my feeling. So, I might spend more time on her page than other days really. "

Also, findings show that time spent interacting with brand/celebrity-related content varied based on the type of interaction, particularly with their chosen celebrity. Interviewee 22 (male, 33 years) says he spends longer interacting with his chosen celebrity on 'live' sessions and not so much time on other forms of interactions:

"Erm...sometimes I'm on her [Shola Allyson] live for an hour but when there is no live about 10 minutes"

Another theme that came up in participants' expressions based on their interactions with celebrities that affected how long they spend interacting was when they need to 'catch up'. This meant catching up on past posts they missed especially after staying away from social media for a while. Interviewee 12 (male, 35 years) said:

"I don't know, let's say, maybe in a day up to 20-30 minutes. And this is not every day, it just depends if there's content I need to catch up on so yeah. "

Participants mentioned that when interacting with traditional brands they spent longer on websites than social media sites. Interviewee 13 (Female, 32years) says:

"Not very much 'cause I'll just rather prefer to be on their [MK] website, to get a proper look. So, on their website I could spend one hour at times, one and a half, two, depending on you know. So..I spend quite a lot of time with the website as opposed to on social media."

Question 4: Have you attempted to see this brand/celebrity when they have a public appearance or event? Would you in the future? Why?

This question investigates participants' willingness to interact with their chosen traditional and human brand offline. It portrays a consumer's level of energy exerted in interacting with a particular brand and the willingness to do so. It also captures behavioural activity outside of the social media environment.

Analysis

Table 4.12 Have you attempted to see this brand/celebrity appearance or event? Would you in future?

Have you attempted to see this brand/celebrity at a public appearance or event? Would you in the future?			
		Traditional brands	Human brands
Responses		Overall	Overall
Yes, I have	Positive	2 out of 24 participants had this response	3 out of 24 participants had this response
	Negative	1 out of 24 participants had this response	-
Yes, I would definitely want to in future		10 out of 24 participants had this response	14 out of 24 participants had this response
Yes, but only if it is convenient		6 out of 24 participants had this response	3 out of 24 participants had this response
No		5 out of 24 participants had this response	4 out of 24 participants had this response

Participants were asked whether they had attempted to go to a brand/celebrity-related event or appearance to encourage participants to express their willingness and the level of energy they will exert to interact with their chosen traditional and human brands offline. Their responses varied from 'yes I have been to one', 'yes I would definitely want to go to one in future, 'it is in my plan, I wish I could', 'yes I would attend one but only if it is convenient' and 'no'. The majority of participants had not previously attended a brand/celebrity event. While the majority of participants in relation to their human brand expressed that they were willing to and that it was something they had previously planned for, only 10 out of the 24 participants were willing to put in the effort to go to such an event in relation to their chosen traditional brand. Here are some quotes showcasing the different responses:

- Yes, I have (positive): interviewee 20 (female, 24 years) said she had been to an event for her chosen celebrity:

“Yeah, I’ve actually only seen her [Rihanna] in a concert once, erm... and that’s the only reason I went for this even ‘cause it was like in a whole other state.”

....

“It was, it was amazing, definitely like top 5 life experiences till date (laughs)”

- Yes, I have (negative): here, the participant expressed that although she made an effort to go to her chosen traditional brand’s event; it was a negative experience. Interviewee 16 (female, 26 years) said:

“Yeah, it was a little of a disaster. I called them [Muji] before going and they said they had products on display, took some time to get there and when I finally got there, they tell me all the products on display has been taken. So, wouldn’t be doing that again (laughs) I would just rather order online (laughs)”

- Yes, I would definitely want to in the future: interviewee 1 (female, 24years) responded when asked the question on her chosen celebrity saying:

“Oh my God!!! I don’t care how much it is! I would literally go! Like even if I had like a lecture, even if I had erm..., no, no, no, I’m going to go I don’t mind how much it is”

- Yes, but only if it is convenient: interviewee 3 (male, 25 years) expressed this when talking about his chosen traditional brand:

“Yeah sure...if there is any that I can go to that’s not too far from me and that will not take away from my work, schedule, or anything like that.”

- No: interview 24 (female, 30 years) expressed this response in relation to her chosen traditional brand:

“Oh no, no, no. If and when I need to buy, I just do it online. I wouldn’t be interested to go to an event by them [Babes & Felines] at all. Just not something I would do”

Overall on behavioural activity

Findings from this study show that participants are similarly behaviourally engaged with human brands as they are with traditional brands. However, participants showed a slightly higher response to behavioural activity with human brands than with traditional brands. Word of mouth (WOM) was slightly lower with human brands due to the intimate relationships participants have with celebrities, where relationships are based on personal and unique connections, bonds, and experiences developed over time. Whereas with traditional brands, they generally fulfil functional needs. In the aspect of social media behavioural engagement patterns (liking, commenting, sharing), engagement attitudes are higher with human brands than with traditional brands. This is largely because they are both more emotionally invested and more entertaining. Also, participants' activity on social media with traditional brands is usually for customer service, to read feedback, or to leave feedback. With offline behavioural engagement, participants treat engaging with celebrities in person as a 'bucket list' or dream of theirs to one day fulfil, unlike with traditional brands, causing higher engagement attitudes with human brands than traditional brands.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings generated from the data of this study. Nine themes that influence consumer brand engagement with traditional brands and seven themes that influence consumer brand engagement with human brands were identified. Then the chapter explored how consumers engaged with each brand type based on three dimensions: cognitive activity, emotional activity, and behavioural activity.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1. Overview

This chapter will discuss and evaluate the findings presented in the previous chapter through two main sections. The first section will relate the findings of this study to past literature on the topic area as well as highlight new theoretical findings on the topic area. It will also introduce the new framework for influences and antecedents of consumer brand engagement for both traditional brands and human brands. The second section will introduce and discuss the framework for the differences and similarities in consumer brand engagement between traditional brands and human brands.

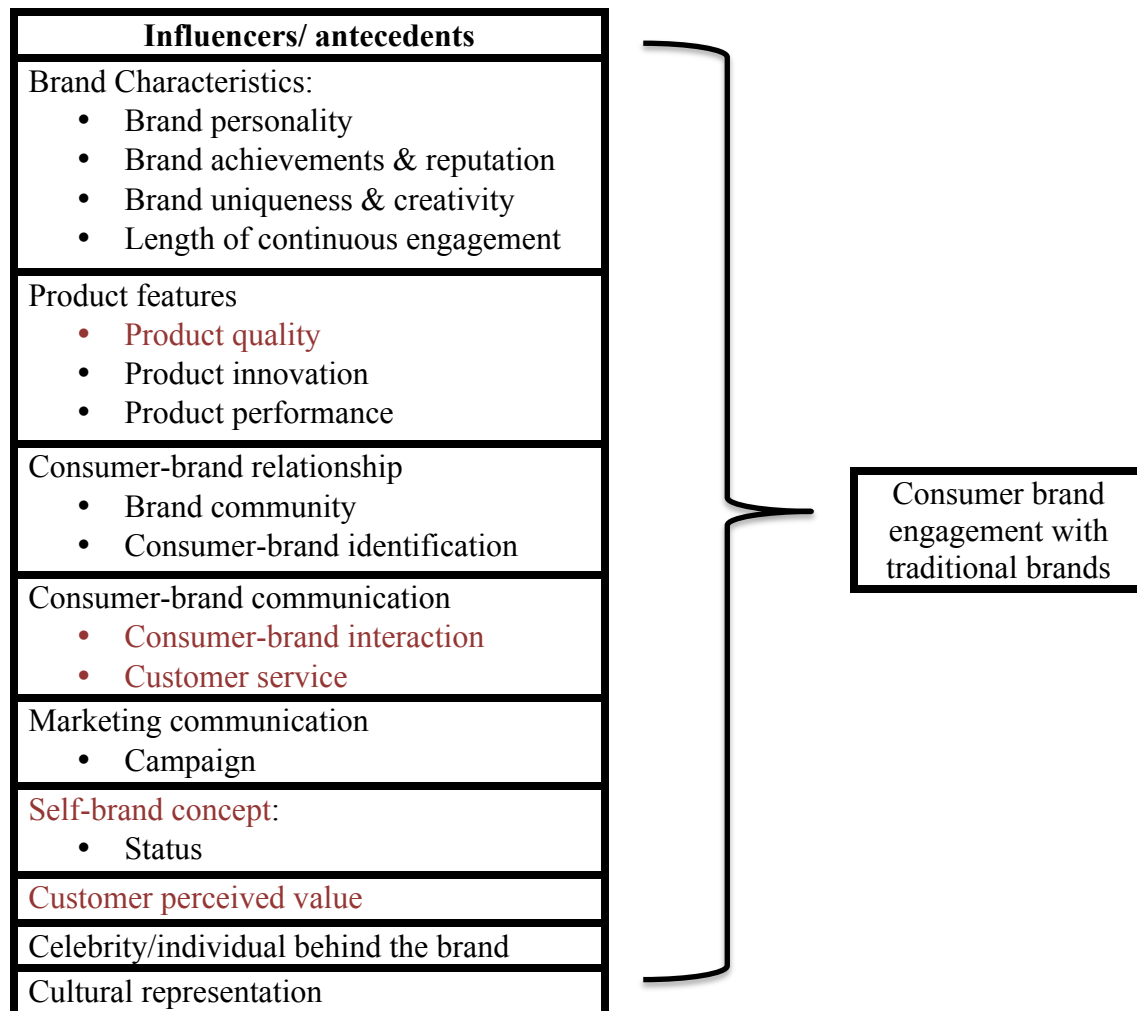
5.2. Influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement

By investigating why consumers engaged with both traditional and human brands, this study uncovers influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with the two brand types. Influences and antecedents of consumer brand engagement is not a novel stream of research (Hollebeek 2011b; France et al. 2016; Adhikari and Panda 2019) and has been established through the exploration of other marketing concepts that bear a close relationship with consumer brand engagement. Marketing concepts that are linked, interwoven, and/or similar to consumer brand engagement have been investigated and/or categorised as either potential antecedents or potential consequences of consumer brand engagement (Brodie et al. 2011). Although this notion is fundamentally true, it creates a vacuum in research of potentially influencing factors of consumer brand engagement that do not bear relationships or similarities with the concept of consumer brand engagement (France et al. 2016) and have therefore not been investigated and identified in literature. Continuous attention in this field has led to more empirical studies which have broadened the spectrum of influences and antecedents of consumer brand engagement (Dessart et al. 2016; France et al. 2016; Claffey and Brady 2019; Read et al. 2019). Findings from this study contribute and confirm both known and unexplored influences and antecedents of both traditional and human brands.

5.2.1. Influences/antecedents of engagement with traditional brands

The findings highlighted nine key themes that influence consumer engagement with traditional brands: product features, brand characteristics, the self-brand concept, marketing communication, customer perceived value, consumer brand communication, celebrity/individual behind the brand, consumer-brand relationship, and cultural representation. Due to the growth in interest of antecedents of consumer brand engagement, some of the themes highlighted by this study have been explored in prior research. However, key differences exist between the findings of this research and other studies.

Figure 5.1 Framework for influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement (note: themes written in red indicate previously explored themes in extant literature)



5.2.1.1 Previously explored themes

This section explores themes that have been identified in extant literature but appear in this study bearing significant differences in approaches, therefore contributing to the literature on antecedents of consumer brand engagement

5.2.1.1.1 Product features

Perceived quality, which is essentially the same as product quality (under the theme ‘product features’), was categorised as a consumer brand engagement consequence by Hollebeek (2011b). However, findings from this study show product quality or the

perceived quality of a product is a direct attraction for consumers to engage with brands. Consumers do not always make purchase decisions or have service experiences before concluding the quality of a product or service. Consumers are able to gauge quality from the reputation of a brand, through promotional communication, word of mouth, and branded content they view on social media (Brucks et al. 2000; Helm 2007; He and Li 2011). This can then influence consumer brand engagement. Perceived quality or product quality can therefore be both an antecedent and consequence of consumer brand engagement, especially for existing consumers. Unlike previous research, findings from this study highlight that different features of a product can influence consumer brand engagement and that the key aspects detected and categorised under product features are product quality, product innovation, and product performance. Consumers are attracted, or influenced, to engage with traditional brands whose products/services possess quality, are innovative, and perform well.

5.2.1.1.2 Consumer brand communication

Previous research identified interaction as a key antecedent of consumer brand engagement (Hollebeek 2011b; Read et al. 2019). Findings from this study fully support consumer-brand interaction being an influencer of consumer-brand engagement. However, this study's findings show consumer-brand communication is generally an antecedent of consumer brand engagement. This study identifies two main forms of consumer brand communication that has a high impact on consumer brand engagement: consumer-brand interaction and customer service. Although consumer-brand interaction has previously been established as an antecedent of consumer brand engagement, Read et al. (2019) displays the first empirical study to consider the relationship between consumer brand engagement and customer service, in a study based on Twitter. The findings from this study support Read et al. (2019) showing that customer service may not be an initial antecedent of consumer brand engagement but is an antecedent for continuous consumer brand engagement. It is an antecedent of consumer brand engagement for existing customers. Additionally, this study shows that it adversely affects consumer brand engagement in cases when it is perceived by customers to be poor or non-existent. Findings in this study show that in these cases, consumers are likely to stop interacting with the brand totally, spread

either zero or negative word of mouth, and only re-purchase from the brand if it fulfils a need. Therefore, it is important for traditional brand managers to be mindful of their customer service delivery at all times.

5.2.1.1.3 Self-brand concept

The relationship between the self-brand concept and consumer brand engagement has been well established both conceptually and empirically (Adhikari and Panda 2019). The concept has previously been expressed as both a consequence (Brodie et al. 2011) and an antecedent (France et al. 2016) of consumer brand engagement. Findings from this study support France et al. (2016) in that a high self-brand concept directly influences consumer brand engagement. However, this study further elaborates extant literature by identifying a key expression that directly influences consumer brand engagement with traditional brands: 'status'. This study shows that a brand's ability to express status will directly influence consumer brand engagement.

5.2.1.1.4 Customer perceived value

Customer perceived value has been explored in connection with consumer brand engagement (Hollebeek 2011b) but has been categorised as a potential consequence, not an antecedent of consumer brand engagement. However, findings from this study appear to contradict previous research showing that customer perceived value is a key reason for consumers engaging with traditional brands. Essentially, findings show consumers will engage with brands if they perceive that they will gain some sort of value compared to what they give. Consumers do not need to be existing customers in order to judge or perceive a certain value for money. This was the most re-occurring theme for influencing consumer brand engagement with traditional brands and thus needs to be treated as an antecedent.

5.2.1.2 Unexplored themes

This section explores themes that, to the author's best knowledge, have not been explored in past literature but were identified in this study, and therefore contribute to literature on influences and antecedents of consumer brand engagement.

5.2.1.2.1 Brand characteristics

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study to date has established brand characteristics as an influence and antecedent of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands. Although some authors have established firm-led influences (France et al. 2019) and brand related influences (Read et al. 2019), findings from this study show that consumers are influenced to engage with brands based on their unique characteristics such as personality, achievements & reputation, uniqueness & creativity, and the length of continuous engagement.

- Brand personality is an integral influence on both new and existing consumers. Consumers are able to identify, connect, and infuse brands into their self-concept based on the brand's personality. Consumers are more willing to engage with brands whose personality are not only similar to theirs but are also aligned with their values and attractive to their ideal self. Therefore, brand personality influences consumer brand engagement with traditional brands
- Brand achievement and reputation as an influence on consumer brand engagement helps evoke feelings of trust for new consumers and commitment for existing consumers. These have been categorised as a consequence of consumer brand engagement and a potential antecedent for existing customers by Hollebeek (2011b), and so are a direct influence of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands for all types of customer.
- Brand uniqueness and creativity are qualities of a brand that affect the level of differentiation and identification a brand is able to acquire. This sub-theme is strongly inter-linked with brand personality but also different, as it represents distinct qualities that consumers are most attracted to in brands, which influences consumer brand engagement.
- Length of continuous engagement as a theme was expressed for both traditional brands and human brands. It is not an initial influence on consumer brand engagement but can exist for both new and existing customers. This is because consumers can create connections with brands they desire or wish to experience, which manifests into emotional and cognitive engagement. Findings from this study also show that the theme is mostly manifested through brand recognition and affiliation created and nurtured from childhood. Past literature shows that brands consumers form emotional connections with

in their childhood are most likely to retain these connections into adulthood (Comiteau 2003). Although this might sound like loyalty, it is more a component of commitment, as the focus is not on repeat purchase, but rather on continuous engagement. These consumers may purchase rival brands and do not always have the advocate level or emotional attachment found with brand loyalty, but will continue to engage and value this engagement with the brand. Nonetheless, this can easily transform into strong relationships, bonds, and higher brand loyalty levels. This study identified two potential consumers on each side of the brand loyalty spectrum. One showing signs of very high brand loyalty; the other with lower emotional attachment and relationship to the chosen brand but still committed to engagement it. Length of continuous engagement is therefore an antecedent of repeat consumer brand engagement with traditional brands.

5.2.1.2.2 Marketing communication

Marketing communication is another untapped antecedent of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands; and to the researcher's knowledge, no other study to date has linked marketing communication strategies to consumer brand engagement. This theme highlights the importance of communicating a brands values and essence to consumers. Findings from this study show consumers are influenced to engage with brands based on the manner of marketing communications (such as it being entertaining or authentic) and the values being communicated. This study's findings further contribute to this literature by highlighting that campaigns, outside traditional adverts, are more striking and inviting to consumers, and directly influence consumer brand engagement with traditional brands

5.2.1.2.3 Celebrity/individual behind brand

This was a frequently occurring theme that influenced consumer brand engagement. It is centred on the use of celebrity brand endorsements or brand ambassadors to invoke connections with consumers and transfer their emotional attachment and 'love' for those celebrities onto the brand. Although this concept is widely accepted in marketing (Bergkvist and Zhou 2016; Agnihotri and Bhattacharya 2018), to the best of the author's knowledge it has not been empirically investigated as an antecedent of

consumer brand engagement with traditional brands. This study consequently contributes to the literature on such a basis. An additional aspect of this theme is the inseparability of some brands from their owners. This mostly manifests in brands that solely exist based on the actions of the owner; a good example would be an SME or entrepreneurial brand such as a specialist photographer. However, big brands like Apple whose success is generally attributed to an individual/owner of the brand, in this case Steve Jobs, can also experience consumer engagement simply based on the affinity consumers develop for the individual.

5.2.1.2.4 Consumer brand relationship

The connection between consumer-brand relationship and consumer brand engagement has been well established (Graffigna and Gambetti 2015). Consumer brand engagement is generally used as a tool to create stronger relationships with consumers and vice versa, thereby creating a cycle wherein the relationship creates engagement and engagement enhances the consumer brand relationship. However, the concept of having it as an antecedent has not been explored; rather, researchers have focused on different concepts that promote consumer-brand relationship as drivers of engagement. Furthermore, findings from this study highlight two key aspects of consumer brand relationships that directly influence consumer engagement with traditional brands.

- The concept of brand community has been explored in consumer brand engagement literature on online platforms (Florenthal 2019). Most authors of the engagement literature have focused on online brand communities as an environment that facilitates consumer brand engagement and rightfully so. However, findings from this study show that brand community, as a concept, directly influences consumer brand engagement and should be treated as an antecedent thereof. To the author's knowledge, this is the first study that directly highlights the concept of brand community as an antecedent of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands.
- Consumer brand identification is a concept that is very closely linked to self-concept but is still very different. It is not necessarily an expression of one's self but a sense of oneness with the brand where an individual takes up a brand's achievements and failures as theirs. This concept is usually seen with

consumers that support sporting brands and teams. It is one of the strongest influences of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands according to the findings of this research.

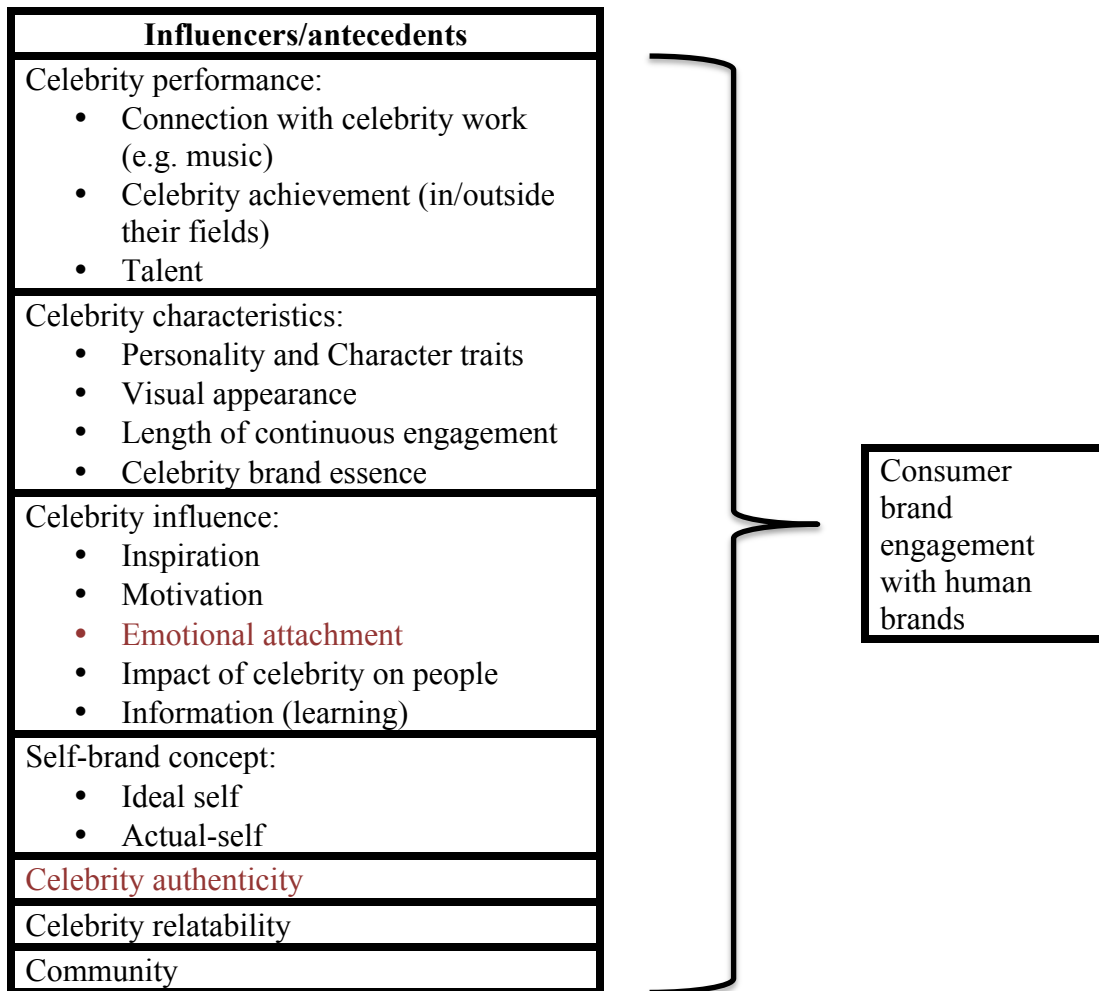
5.2.1.2.5 Cultural representation

Cultural representation was a theme expressed in findings of this study as being an influence for consumer brand engagement. Once again, this theme has not been examined as an influence of consumer brand engagement by any other studies to date to the author's best knowledge. This is generally particular of brands that have cultural, ethnic, or societal properties or focus. This theme has been expressed as a form of patriotic behaviour to the culture the brand represents. Consumers engage with these brands to support or invoke their patriotic stance to the culture being represented by the brand.

5.2.2. Influences/antecedents of engagement with human brands

Findings from this study highlighted seven key themes that influence consumer engagement with human brands, namely: the celebrity's performance, characteristics, influence, authenticity, relatability, community and the self-brand concept. Although no previous study has explored influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands, the literature review does highlight two potential influences/antecedents in regard to human brands: authenticity and emotional attachment. Findings from this study show that these two concepts are indeed influences on consumer brand engagement with human brands. However, the current study, being the first research to date (to the best of the author's knowledge) to directly investigate influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands, shows that all themes contribute to the literature on human brands and consumer brand engagement.

Figure 5.2 Framework for influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement (note: themes written in red indicate previously explored themes in extant literature)



5.2.2.1 Previously explored themes

This section focuses on themes that have been mentioned in extant literature as factors that influence the use of social media to engage with celebrities. However, this current study empirically proves that these themes are direct antecedents/influences of consumer brand engagement with human brands.

5.2.2.1.1 Emotional attachment

Although this theme is a sub-theme of celebrity influence, it is important to discuss it separately as it has been expressed as an influence of consumer engagement behaviour on social media with human brands (Kowalczyk and Pounders 2016).

However, findings from this study show that it also directly influences consumer brand engagement with human brands, not just engagement behaviours on social media. Findings here show that some interviewees, who expressed emotional attachment as their reason for engagement with their chosen human brands, also expressed high engagement attitudes with passionate expressions like ‘I love her’, ‘I am obsessed with her’. This shows that the bond consumers form with celebrities directly translates into their engagement levels with those celebrities both on and off social media, going beyond behaviours to also engage cognitively and emotionally.

5.2.2.1.2 Celebrity authenticity

Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) introduced authenticity as a propelling factor for consumers to use social media to engage with celebrities. The findings from this study support and extend their work by showing that authenticity directly influences consumer brand engagement, particularly on social media. However, findings from this study go a step further, illustrating that consumers do not only interact more with authentic posts but engage more on social media with celebrities that handle their social media pages themselves, as they feel like they are connecting and engaging with the real celebrity. Consumers want to know celebrities’ opinions, thoughts, actions, and emotions, and thus find it important that they handle their own social media pages and share authentic posts, in order to feel that they are connecting and engaging with the real celebrity and not their manager. A lack of celebrity authenticity on social media can have adverse effects on consumer brand engagement on social media. Consumers that feel celebrities do not manage their social media platform by themselves, or perceive celebrities’ pages to be more of a marketing strategy and not a depiction of their authentic selves are likely to reduce engagement with such celebrities on those platforms. However, it is important to note that the effect of a lack of celebrity authenticity on social media does not affect engagement outside social media or the emotional connection consumers have created with celebrities. Findings from this study show that consumers may reduce engagement with a celebrity on social media but are still willing to engage with that celebrity through other channels and retain their ‘love’ for the celebrity.

5.2.2.2 Themes not previously explored in literature

This section explores themes that have not been explored in literature but were identified in this study, and therefore contribute to literature on influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands.

5.2.2.2.1 Celebrity influence

Although research on human brands is very limited, the concept of celebrities having influence over individuals is not new (Winterich et al. 2018) and is the backbone of concepts like consumer endorsement (Agnihotri and Bhattacharya 2018) and influencer marketing (Lou et al. 2019). Celebrity influence is an umbrella theme encompassing the different ways consumers are emotionally and physically affected by celebrities. As a whole the majority of interviewees expressed these themes and individually the sub-themes in this section were some of the most re-occurring.

- Inspiration was mentioned by the majority of interviewees in this study. The findings show that consumers gravitate towards celebrities that inspire them in personal ways. Consumers place celebrities in their lives as role models, they see them as individuals who were able to achieve things the majority of people are unable to, and the awe they feel towards a celebrity becomes inspirational. The feelings of inspiration make consumers want to know, see, and feel more about the celebrity. Inspiration consequently directly influences consumer brand engagement with human brands.
- Motivation was often mentioned during the interviews, usually in connection with inspiration. This indicates that consumers are motivated to achieve goals in their lives by celebrities that inspire them. The feeling of motivation makes consumers want to engage more with the source of that motivation, almost like a continual reminder to achieve. Therefore, motivation directly influences consumer brand engagement with human brands.
- The current findings also highlighted that consumers engage with celebrities they perceive to have a substantial impact on their lives, whether personally, emotionally, physically, or mentally. This study shows that the more consumers feel a celebrity directly or indirectly positively changes or improves their life, work, reasoning, or other parts of their lifestyle or way of life, the more likely they are to engage and continuously engage with the celebrity. An existing fan or consumer of the celebrity would be more

susceptible to this. Evidently, the impact of the celebrity influences continuous consumer brand engagement with human brands.

- Information (learning) is centred on a consumer gaining knowledge from celebrities about a particular topic that is significant to them and not about gaining information about celebrities' personal life. This theme is very close to the theme 'impact of celebrity', addressed earlier, but the key difference here is that consumers use celebrities as educational tools to learn and improve themselves in various areas. In this way, information directly influences consumer brand engagement with human brands and can be a reason for engagement for both new and existing fans or consumers. An example of this is where a consumer begins to engage with a celebrity fitness instructor simply to learn about fitness. When consumers engage with human brands only for this reason, emotional engagement is usually low as they engage for functional reasons. However, some people engage with celebrities for this reason coupled with other reasons such as emotional attachment and maintain a high emotional engagement level.

5.2.2.2.2 Celebrity performance

The current findings show that consumers do not just create connections with celebrities but also with their work and artistic endeavours just as consumers are able to connect or form a bond with abstract entities and physical products (Graffigna and Gambetti 2015). All three sub-themes under celebrity performance are interlinked and could manifest all at once. Hence, consumer brand engagement is directly influenced by a celebrity's performance.

- Talent was found to be a reason why consumers engage with certain celebrities. Consumers are able to see and assess the celebrities' talent and ability and are generally impressed by how good they are at what they do. Thus, consumers are influenced to engage with human brands they perceive to have talent or are good at what they do.
- Connection with a celebrity's work revolves around consumers engaging and creating connections with songs or movies, for example, and these products are inseparable from the artist or celebrity. Consumers engage with celebrities

simply because they like the songs or movies they release, for example, and to get insights into what they are working on next.

- Celebrity achievement (in/outside their field) was also found to be a reason for consumer brand engagement with human brands. Findings from this study show that consumers are more likely to engage with celebrities with a positive track record of achievements both inside and outside their field of talent or career. The theme capitalises on the feeling of pride, awe, and respect consumers have towards celebrities that are able to achieve the impossible especially by showcasing versatility and achieving greatness in fields beyond what they are famous for.

5.2.2.2.3 Celebrity characteristics

The components of celebrity characteristics have been explored by Carlson and Donovan (2013) as an essential aspect of brand creation for celebrities. Nonetheless, findings from this study equally establish it as an influence of consumer brand engagement with human brands. Celebrity characteristics as a theme embody those aspects of celebrities that display their brand image and appearance. Essentially, this theme indicates and supports the concept that celebrities are brands as it relates to an integral aspect of brand formation: brand image and brand personality.

- Brand personality and character traits were mentioned often as reasons for consumers engaging with human brands. Consumers are attracted to celebrities' brand personality through their performance and charisma, and begin to pick up on their character traits as individuals, especially outside their performance or stage presence, through continuous engagement. An example of brand personality would be 'this celebrity is fun', whilst a character trait would be 'this celebrity is hardworking' or 'committed' or 'loyal'. It is therefore evident that brand personality directly influences consumer brand engagement with human brands, while character traits influence continuous or repeated engagement with human brands. However, it is important to note that because celebrities are very popular and can be in the lime light for a long period of time (for example, Michael Jackson) some of their character traits become known and commonly associated with their personality fairly quickly,

thus translating into an initial influence of engagement for new fans or consumers and not always a product of continuous engagement.

- The visual appearance of celebrities seems to be important to consumers. As a theme it serves as an attraction, and part of a brand's image. Celebrities generally dress in accordance to the type of image they are trying to portray. For example, they may be gothic, sophisticated, sexy, corporate, and so on. All of these various appearances depict a certain image and attract a certain demographic or group of people. Therefore visual appearance directly influences consumer brand engagement with human brands
- Length of continuous engagement is based on commitment and emotional connection built over a period of time. Consumers are impressed and captivated at the growth and accomplishments their adored celebrities are able to achieve over the years. This continuous engagement fosters into a relationship and bond. It is important to highlight that just as this theme was expressed with traditional brands, length of continuous engagement with human brands were most likely formed during childhood and now transferred into adulthood. However, unlike with traditional brands, consumers form strong emotional attachment with celebrities through the length of continuous engagement in terms of human brands. Hence, this theme would more likely translate to loyalty with human brands than to traditional ones.

5.2.2.2.4 Self-brand concept

This concept has been expressed with regard to traditional brands and how individuals include brands and products in their self-concept for expressive or identification reasons (Hollebeek 2011b). However, findings from this study show that consumers equally use or integrate celebrities into their self-concept. This study shows that this phenomenon is done through a celebrity connecting with their ideal or actual self, which influences consumer brand engagement with human brands.

- The current findings show that consumers are likely to engage with celebrities that either represent their ideal self or help them to become like their ideal self. The concept of consumers being inspired or motivated by celebrities is usually invoked because they represent their ideal self and aspire to be like

them. Hence, celebrities representing a consumers' ideal self directly influences consumer brand engagement with human brands.

- Just as consumers engage with celebrities to express or observe their ideal self, they also engage with celebrities that connect with and encourage their actual self. They are attracted to the similarities, the realness, and the acceptance the celebrity represents for them and this leads to engagement. Consequently, celebrities representing consumers' actual self directly influences consumer brand engagement with human brands.

5.2.2.2.5. Celebrity relatability

Celebrity relatability was a re-occurring theme in responses as to why consumers engage with human brands. Consumers are attracted to, and excited to see, similarities between themselves and celebrities. Common ground provides scope for relationship building and allows for consumers to become invested in the engagement. Celebrities being relatable also shows that they are human beings and probably go through similar life experiences to consumers, which allows for a connection to be made. Evidently, celebrity relatability directly influences consumer brand engagement with human brands.

5.2.2.2.6 Community

Community is a sense of belongingness shared with other fans and the celebrity. Celebrities acting as individuals provide a sense of community around their brand, and consumers feel like they are a part of a family, with other people to relate to and form friendships with. However, the unique thing about this theme in relation to human brands is that consumers are sometimes the masterminds behind forming a collective of supporters for a particular celebrity. In cases like this the celebrity has successfully gathered loyal fans and supporters, while treating their fans like family over a period of time. A good example is the fan club for the famous singer Beyoncé. They call themselves 'bees' in relation to her nickname 'Queen B'. However, findings from this study equally show that not all consumers that are fans and engage with a particular celebrity want to be part of, or categorised as part of, their fan club. This theme may not influence initial consumer engagement with human brands but it does influence continuous engagement with them.

5.3 Differences and similarities in the way consumers engage with human brands vs. traditional brands

Based on the above discussion and the findings from Chapter 4, Tables 5.1 and 5.2 offer a visual representation of the differences and similarities in consumer brand engagement with traditional brands compared to human brands. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 both explore and directly answer the fourth research objective: Identifying the differences and similarities of consumer brand engagement in relation to traditional brands and human brands.

5.3.1 Differences in engagement with traditional brands vs. human brands

Table 5.1 Framework of differences in consumer brand engagement with both brand types

Differences in the way people engage with human brands vs. traditional brands	
Traditional brands	Human brands
1. Engagement is more product/service focused	1. Engagement is more brand/celebrity focused
2. Engagement fluctuation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High engagement during/before purchase• Lower engagement after purchase	2. Constant continuous consumer brand engagement level
3. Engagement more functional based	3. Engagement more emotional based
4. Engagement attitude highest with brand when there is a consumer-brand relationship (brand community and consumer-brand identification)	4. Engagement attitude highest with brand when there is a high emotional connection
5. Engagement is adversely affected by perceived bad customer service and perceived decline on product characteristics/performance both offline & online	5. Engagement on social media sites adversely affected by a lack of authenticity of celebrities on social media sites
6. Engagement attitude is higher online than offline	6. Engagement attitude is high both on and offline

This section focuses on the differences in consumer brand engagement with traditional brands vs. human brands. The discussion below seeks to elaborate key differences highlighted in Table 5.1.

1. The first difference in consumer brand engagement between the two brand types was the focal point of the engagement. Respondents' engagement with traditional brands was more product/service focused while engagement with human brands was more brand/celebrity focused.
 - Traditional brands: The key reasons why respondents engaged with traditional brands was product/service related with themes such as customer perceived value and product features the most re-occurring themes for influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement. Respondents were more attracted to traditional brands because of the performance, prestige, quality, and value of their products/services than they were for their brand personality, character, and name. Even the brand's reputation was more often related to the success and quality of its products than to the brand essence and other core brand attributes
 - Human brands: With human brands, the attraction to engage was due to the celebrity brand. A lot of respondents stated that they engaged with their chosen celebrity because of their personality, character and the brand they have been able to build over the years. Very few respondents engaged with human brands because of their products (such as music, movies, or even political achievement) as respondents were more interested in the celebrity as a person and a brand.
2. Another difference in the manner in which respondents engaged with traditional and human brands was the consistency of engagement. Consumer brand engagement was more consistent with human brands than it was with traditional brands.
 - Traditional brands: Respondents' engagement with traditional brands appears to fluctuate with high engagement around purchase decision periods. The term 'only when I want something' was constantly used by respondents to express their engagement with traditional brands. This is strongly linked to the next point of engagement being functional as traditional brands fulfil functional needs.

- Human brands: in contrast to this, respondents created a constant engagement attitude towards their chosen human brands. Many respondents stated that they had alert mechanisms in place in order to keep up with the developments of their beloved celebrities. Things like social media notifications, routine playlists of celebrities, and online recommendations directing them to information on their chosen celebrity. This can be strongly attributed to not only the emotional/relational attachment consumers create with human brands, but also to the aspirational, motivational, and developmental impact celebrities have on the lives of those they influence.
3. The third difference highlighted in this study between the two brand types is the form of engagement respondents have with both traditional brands and human brands. Respondents' engagement with traditional brands was largely functional, while with human brands it was emotional.
- Traditional brands: Based on the two earlier points respondents expressed that engagement and interaction with brands occurred to fulfil functional needs and would otherwise not happen unless prompted by stimuli. Engagement habits were mostly based on purchase or customer service needs with few respondents creating habits to stay up to date with traditional brands.
 - Human brands: With human brands, engagement is more emotional. The majority of themes expressing reasons why respondents engaged with their chosen celebrities were emotional. Themes such as emotional attachment, inspiration and motivation were the most re-occurring for influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement, hence it is shown that celebrities fulfil some sort of emotional and entertainment need in the lives of consumers.
4. This point relates to the theme that generated the highest engagement attitudes towards traditional brands and human brands.
- Traditional brands: Respondents that portrayed a strong consumer-brand relationship with their chosen traditional brands exhibited high engagement attitudes with those brands. Occasionally respondents displayed deep connections with traditional brands where the success

and failures of the brand were equal to theirs, affecting their moods and plans for the day. These respondents expressed high engagement attitudes and behaviours with such brands, such as constantly thinking about them, frequently searching for news about them and regularly following their events both offline and online. Traditional brands that had created such strong relationships with respondents were exemplified by football and vehicle brands.

- Human brands: With human brands, the theme that generated the highest engagement attitudes from respondents was emotional attachment. Respondents who expressed that they ‘loved’ their chosen celebrity, or that their chosen celebrity was their ‘idol’ showed a high engagement attitude throughout the various engagement dimensions. They stated that they check on those celebrities on social media every few hours of the day and couldn’t go a day without hearing their music or seeing a post related to them. They equally identified as being part of a fan-based community and saw the celebrity as being as close to them as a family member.

5. Other differences in consumer brand engagement between traditional brands and human brands are the factors that lead to adverse, or a decline in, engagement.

- Traditional brands: Perceived poor consumer service and perceived declines in product performance or features caused respondents to decrease engagement. In a few cases, it caused negative engagement such as negative word of mouth (NWOM). The importance of customer service in relation to traditional brands cannot be overstated but when done poorly, can cause havoc to the reputation of the brand. This study shows that it does not only harm the brand’s reputation but also leads to both active and negative passive engagement such as discontinuing patronising and engaging with the brand, and spreading a negative narrative about the brand both online and offline. With a decline in product performance or features, respondents did not totally cut out the brand or begin to create negative attitudes towards it, but the decline did affect the quality of engagement and likeliness to do

so. This was especially true with brands that fulfilled functional needs and those where the product was the main focal point of engagement.

- Human brands: With human brands, the lack of celebrity authenticity, especially on social media, led to a lack of engagement. A particular respondent stated that they no longer follow their chosen celebrity on most social media platforms after they found out the celebrity was not managing his/her social accounts. Celebrity fans are disinterested in engagement when they perceive the social media platform or image being portrayed is fictitious or unauthentic.
6. This last point on the difference in consumer brand engagement between traditional brands and human brands concerns where consumers prefer to engage with the two brand types.
- Traditional brands: Most respondent showed a more positive attitude towards online engagement with traditional brands than they did towards offline engagement with traditional brands. This study shows that people are more willing to engage with traditional brands on their websites, brand apps, and social media than they are to engage with brands at stores or events. Most respondents said they would only attend a brand event if it were convenient or coincidental. This is largely because traditional brands fulfil functional needs and consumer's perceived influence of traditional brands on their lives is low.
 - Human brands: Respondents had an equal attitude towards engagement with celebrities' offline compared with online. The general theme was that online engagement was useful for connecting with, and gaining information about, such celebrities. Offline engagement, such as attending an event of their beloved celebrity, was a dream come true (something they were ready to go out of their way to do). Celebrities and their products have been integrated into the daily lifestyle of most respondents, so whether offline or online, there is a continuous flow of engagement.

5.3.2 Similarities in engagement with traditional brands vs. human brands

Table 5.2 Framework for similarities in consumer brand engagement with both brand types

Similarities in the way people engage with human brands vs. traditional brands	
1. Medium to low cognitive engagement attitude	1. Medium cognitive engagement attitude
2. Stimuli promotes online engagement	2. Stimuli promotes online engagement
3. Similar online behavioural engagement pattern (likes, comments)	3. Similar online behavioural engagement pattern (likes, comments)

This section focuses on the similarities in consumer brand engagement with traditional brands vs. human brands. The discussion below seeks to elaborate on key similarities highlighted in Table 5.2.

1. Findings from this study show that respondents cognitive engagement attitude was the lowest among all three engagement dimensions. This was the same for cognitive engagement with traditional brands and human brands. Although responses to cognitive activity with human brands were slightly higher than the cognitive activity with traditional brands, there was still less cognitive activity taking place among respondents towards the two brand types.
 - Traditional brands: The majority of respondents said traditional brands were just not important enough to think about during their day unless they needed something new from that brand. Respondents gave statements such as “it’s just a brand” or “it isn’t that serious” when expressing cognitive activity towards their chosen traditional brands.
 - Human brands: With human brands respondents stated that the thought of the celebrity might flash up once in a while, especially in situations they affiliated with that particular celebrity. Some other respondents explained that thoughts of celebrities might come to mind when they need some sort of motivation, encouragement or entertainment. However, the majority expressed that they had more

important personal issues and responsibilities to think about during their day.

2. For both traditional and human brands respondents expressed the need for, and success of, stimuli promoting online engagement. This was especially true for traditional brands but similar with human brands and was strongly expressed to influence or prompt cognitive activity towards the two brand types in a social media environment.
 - Traditional brands: A lot of respondents made statements such as “I only think about them on social media if I see a pop-up ad on them” when detailing their cognitive activity concerning traditional brands on social media.
 - Human brands: Most respondents would say “I would think about the celebrity when I see something relating to them on social media”. This stimulated them to look up that celebrity’s brand page on the social media platform being used.
3. The final similarity in consumer brand engagement between traditional brands and human brands was respondents’ online behavioural engagement patterns. Most respondents had a similar response to both traditional branded content and celebrity branded content on social media, which was to enjoy and appreciate the picture/video, like it, and probably share it privately with friends if necessary in private chats. Commenting on posts or replying to other people’s comments on brand/celebrity related posts was something most participants were less likely to engage in.
 - Traditional brands: Some respondents explained that they would only read comments on brand-related posts when looking for reviews or information about a product, while commenting was strictly for customer service purposes.
 - Human brands: Respondents stated they were more willing to read comments on celebrity posts for entertainment purposes.

This is the first paper to compare consumer brand engagement between traditional and human brands. The discussion offers initial insights into the various elements that

make consumer brand engagement with the two brand types different in some ways but also similar in others. Consumer brand engagement with traditional brands differ in comparison to human brands but not completely, as this study has identified three main similarities in engagement between the two brand types. Based on the discussions exhibited in this chapter, Chapter 6 presents the conclusions, contributions, managerial recommendations and limitations of this current study.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Chapter overview

The aim of this final chapter is to fully evaluate and conclude this research. It will begin by re-examining the aims and objectives of the study outlined in the introduction chapter. exploring the selection of each objective and how they were achieved. Following on from this, the key contributions to literature provided by this study will be distinctively outlined, followed by managerial recommendations for both traditional and human brand managers. Finally, the chapter will end with a discussion of the limitations of the research and potential areas for future research around the topic area of human brands.

6.2 Re-examining the aim and objectives of the thesis

This thesis responds to the work of Thomson (2006) and Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) and their call for more exploratory and empirical research into the concept of human brands as a whole, with a focus on consumer engagement with human brands. DeVries et al. (2017) calls for the investigation of the concept of consumer brand engagement with different brand categories. Equally, drawing on Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) study of drivers of online engagement with celebrities, this study focuses on the why and how consumers engage with both human brands and traditional brands in order to understand whether these engagements differ between the two brand types. Therefore, the aim of this research is to:

- Investigate how and why Generation Y engages with traditional and human brands, and evaluate if their engagement differs between the two brand types.

To fully achieve the aim of this study, the following objectives were fulfilled:

1. Explore and establish the concept of both traditional brands and human brands

The first objective was crucial as this study investigates consumer brand engagement with traditional brand and human brands. Hence, it is important to establish the concepts of these two brand types while defining the meaning of the terms ‘traditional brands’ and ‘human brands’ adopted in this study. Consequently, this study establishes a first-hand justification of the need for more research on the

concept of celebrities classified as human brands, and how this differs from celebrity endorsements. This objective was fulfilled through a background review of the literature on the topic, in the literature review chapter of this thesis.

2. Investigate why consumers engage with human brands and traditional brands
3. Investigate how consumers engage cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally with both traditional brands and human brands

The second and third objectives of this study are essential to fulfilling its aim. By investigating why consumers engaged with traditional and human brands (Objective 2) and how consumers engaged cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally with traditional and human brands (Objective 3), the study was able to understand how consumer brand engagement differed between both. The analysis and findings of these two investigations are presented in Chapter 4 and further discussed in Chapter 5. This whole study fully depends on these two investigations and thus it was crucial to have them as set objectives in order to direct the researcher towards achieving the aim of the study.

4. Identify the differences and similarities between consumer-brand engagement with traditional brands vs. human brands

The fourth and final objective of this study is accomplished in the discussion chapter of this thesis. This objective directly achieves the aim of this study as the differences and similarities in consumer brand engagement with traditional brands in comparison to human brands highlights how engagement between these two brand types differs. After discussing the findings of why and how consumers engage with both traditional brands and human brands, the discussion chapter highlights the key differences and similarities of consumer brand engagement that exist between these two brand types.

Each and every objective listed above is essential to the achievement of the overall aim of this study and have all been accomplished and presented in this thesis.

6.3 Contribution to literature

This study explores the reasons why consumers engage with both traditional brands and human brands, and examines if and how consumer engagement with these two

brands differs from one another. The findings from this study contribute key insights into factors that influence consumer engagement with the types of brands and how consumers engage with the two brands cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally. This study further contributes to literature by examining how engagement presented in the findings differs between the two brand types.

6.3.1 Contribution on influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement

The contributions to the literature on influences and antecedents of consumer brand engagement were made in regard to both traditional brands and human brands due to the comparative nature and aim of this study.

Current empirical studies on influences and antecedents of consumer brand engagement in relation to traditional brands have focused on the context of social media, online brand communities, brand pages and particular social networking sites like Facebook. These studies are experimental in nature, testing hypotheses based on the relationships between engagement related concepts and consumer brand engagement. Hence, to the best of the author's knowledge, this thesis is the first piece of research to directly investigate the consumer's perspective on factors that influence consumer brand engagement without focusing on a particular social networking site or social media as a whole, but instead viewing social media as an aspect of engagement. As such, this research provides a more holistic view of influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement while uncovering new knowledge into a previously explored phenomenon.

The study uncovered a framework of nine influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands. Four of these identified influences/antecedents have been explored in extant literature such as product features, consumer brand communication, self-brand concept, and customer perceived value. Nonetheless, this study expresses these known influences/antecedents slightly differently from previous research as shown in the discussion chapter (Chapter 5). To the best knowledge of the researcher, in this study brand characteristics, marketing communication, the celebrity/individual behind the brand, consumer brand relationship, and cultural representation are all unexplored influences/antecedents of consumer brand

engagement with traditional brands. Thus, this study directly contributes to Brodie et al. (2011) and Hollebeek (2011b) with new influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands, while providing new interpretations and views of the previously explored influences/antecedents thereof.

As shown in the literature review, research on human brands as a whole is fairly limited. Current research closest to antecedents of consumer brand engagement investigates why consumers use social media to engage with celebrities, thus expanding and contributing to Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) and Parmentier (2010). Hence, to the best of the author's knowledge, this thesis is the first piece of research to investigate direct influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands without focusing solely on social media. This research uncovers unexplored influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands and fills a research gap in the human brand literature. This study uncovered seven influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands, namely: celebrity performance, celebrity characteristics, celebrity influence, self-brand concept, celebrity authenticity, celebrity relatability and community.

Chapter 5 fully discusses and demonstrates these contributions of influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement to both traditional and human brands and how they differ from previous research.

6.3.2 Contribution to the concept of consumer brand engagement

Although literature on consumer brand engagement is vast and continuously growing, this study contributes to the pool of knowledge. This study directly investigates the three dimensions of consumer brand engagement with traditional brands and human brands. This allows for the exploration of the dimensions on a different brand category as recommended by previous research, thus contributing to Hollebeek (2011a) by showcasing the adaptability of the dimensions.

Additionally, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study to compare consumer brand engagement in the three dimensions in relation to traditional brands and human brands. This leads to the observation that similarities and

differences exist in the way Generation Y engages with the two brands. This contributes further insight and knowledge to the consumer brand engagement literature and contributing to Hollebeek (2011a, 2011b) by explicitly identifying how this engagement differs between consumer and human brands. This research showed that the Generation Y participants expressed more cognitive, behavioural, and emotional engagement attitudes towards human brands as opposed to traditional brands. However, participants had similar online behavioural engagement patterns (liking, commenting, sharing, etc.) with both human and traditional brands, while behavioural engagement patterns offline were stronger with human brands than traditional brands. Participants' cognitive engagement patterns were low for both human brands and traditional brands. Finally, emotional engagement attitudes were significantly higher with human brands compared to traditional brands. Overall, there were six main differences for consumer brand engagement with human brands compared to traditional brands and three main similarities, as highlighted in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 fully discusses and demonstrates these differences and similarities.

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussions from earlier chapters of the thesis, relevant recommendations to managers that may be impacted by the findings of this study are now outlined. Findings generated by this research focus on consumer brand engagement with both traditional and human brands, thus generating unique insights pertaining to each type of brand. Therefore, the recommendations would be directed to both managers of traditional brands and human brands.

6.4.1 Recommendations for traditional brand managers

As mentioned in this thesis, consumer brand engagement is not only integrated and interwoven with the consumer relationship management concept, it also leads to increased brand loyalty and purchase intentions. Therefore, the usefulness of understanding what influences or drives consumer brand engagement cannot be overstated. Previous research has mainly focused on consumer-centred influences, which brands do not fully have control over, and although a few studies have begun to highlight the importance of firm-led influences, this focus is still very limited to date.

Findings of this study show that there are more firm-centred influences on consumer brand engagement that managers can control, improve or implement to generate higher consumer brand engagement attitudes such as brand characteristics, product features, brand led interaction, customer service, and marketing communication strategies.

Findings of this study show that key brand characteristics and product features as well as performance, influence consumers to engage with traditional brands. Therefore, managers should consider the different aspects of their brands and products when seeking ways in which to generate more engagement with both existing and new consumers. This study highlights the importance of the brand concept and how firms build their brands. Influences like brand achievement, reputation and product features stress the need for consistency and excellence within the brand concepts and product standards. Consumers notice continuous excellence as well as deterioration, which can all affect consumer brand engagement.

Furthermore, consumers do not only use a brand's marketing communication strategy for information on product offerings, they also use it to evaluate the essence and values of the brand. This study highlights that the different communication strategies outside of direct advertisement such as campaigns, encapsulate cues of the brand essence, and are particularly engaging to consumers. Hence, marketers should try to focus more energy on marketing communication strategies that allow the firm to speak about its core values, essence, and the particular world views and perspectives the brand supports (such as ending world poverty or body shape positivity). These aspects help reveal an emotional and human characteristic of the brand creating a deeper layer of connection with consumers. Subsequently, consumers could build stronger emotional connections with brands and create consumer-brand identification resulting in stronger engagement attitudes towards brands.

Additionally, this study implies a strong connection between the consumer-brand relationship and highly engaged consumers. Although the importance and connection of the consumer-brand relationship with consumer brand engagement has previously been established, this study shows a direct influence on engagement. Thus, managers need to generate more ways to create the particular relationships identified by the

study with consumers in order to directly influence engagement. The study further highlights that the emphases on customer service cannot be stressed enough, as it directly leads to adverse effects on consumer brand engagement.

Finally, based on the findings of the study and the establishment that celebrities are beyond individuals and are themselves brands, managers of traditional brands should look more into merging brands with celebrities, rather than gaining their endorsement, in order to generate stronger responses from consumers. This phenomenon has already been taking place in the form of traditional brands co-creating products and services with celebrities. This might be a more effective manner of implementing the benefits associated with celebrity endorsement.

6.4.2 Recommendations for human brand managers

The concept of celebrities being brands is not necessarily new but has acquired very little attention as a topic, and thus little research has been done on the concept. Nonetheless, the influence celebrities hold over individuals is evident, which is why traditional brands have long used celebrities as ambassadors for their brands. This thesis focuses on human brands and why and how consumers engage with them. Accordingly, managers of celebrities can generate or influence consumer brand engagement through the findings of this study.

Each of the influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with human brands found by this study has not been previously explored in research and therefore gives great insight to celebrity brand managers. This study shows that as much as consumers are interested in the artistic productions that celebrities release, they are even much more interested in the celebrity themselves. They take an interest in their personality, characteristics, lifestyle, opinions, attitudes, and challenges. Therefore, managers should encourage both a consistent brand image and the sharing of those unique qualities and opinions that make the celebrity stand out and be relatable. Consumers want to know that behind the brand image celebrities are regular, unique but still extraordinary individuals that they can relate to and also aspire to be.

More importantly, findings show that managers should particularly encourage celebrity authenticity on online platforms to not only influence engagement but also prevent a decline in engagement. Consumers are likely to decrease their engagement with a celebrity on social media if they perceive that the nature and content of their posts is not authentic. This is especially the case when consumers feel celebrities do not handle their social media pages themselves and thus the celebrity is not being authentic online.

Additionally, this study shows that engagement with human brands is more emotional in nature. Therefore, managers could encourage or seek to stimulate stronger emotional connections between celebrities and consumers to encourage consumer brand engagement.

6.5 Limitations and future research recommendations

In order to accurately present this study, the limitations of this research must be outlined, indicating how these limitations provide scope for future research. Firstly, the sample was limited by age and focused only on individuals within the Generation Y classification. This limits the findings of this study; future studies may focus on a wider age range to include both younger and older individuals, exploring if results on influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement with traditional and human brands, and attitudes/patterns of engagement with the three dimensions, remain the same or differs. Secondly, the demographic information of the sample is a limitation of this research. This study omitted demographics such as participants' nationality, ethnicity, current and permanent place of residence, and income. Thus, future research could collect richer, comprehensive demographical information and investigate if demographic variable such as nationality, ethnicity, or culture affects consumers' engagement focal point (celebrities and brand) and attitudes.

Thirdly, the study was not related to a particular celebrity or traditional brand, allowing for the participants to self-select their chosen celebrities and traditional brands. Although this came with its own advantages, future research could pre-test and identify celebrities and traditional brands with strong brand equity or loyalty to understand why and how consumers engage with them. This might give insight into

whether particular brands generate similar reasons and patterns of engagement amongst a wide range of participants, so generating deeper knowledge and providing scope for more experimental research. Future research could also examine different celebrity and brand types from different industries in order to gather richer insights and test findings across a range of different brand contexts. Additionally, allowing participants to choose celebrities and traditional brands they were most engaged with potentially generated more antecedents of existing consumers than new consumers. Future research could test the findings to identify whether antecedents work for both new and existing customers.

Furthermore, although this thesis generated influences and antecedents of consumer brand engagement with both traditional and human brands, it did not directly link these influences/antecedents to particular engagement dimensions. Future studies could identify which influences/antecedents of consumer brand engagement translate to a particular dimension. For example investigating what influences emotional engagement rather than consumer brand engagement as a whole. Knowing what influences each dimension individually could better help managers to encourage a particular engagement type required for a purposeful outcome.

This thesis adopted a qualitative research method in order to capture unique experiences and expressions from participants. However, the author strongly advocates a future test of the findings via a quantitative research design with a larger sample size for further validation of findings. Furthermore, this thesis was carried out specifically as a doctorate paper and thus the time frame and scope of the research was both limited and short in nature. Future use of a longitudinal research method with a more observational research methodology construct could benefit a research focus on the influences of consumer brand engagement for traditional and human brands. Nonetheless, with the growth of technology and the ever-changing nature of consumers and how they engage, it may be worth a periodic renewal of the study with different research methods to identify changes in consumers' perspectives and actions.

Finally, future research could go a step further beyond comparing traditional brands and human brands, to investigate the concept of co-creation between traditional

brands and human brands and how that affects consumer brand engagement levels. This could generate very interesting findings.

6.6 Summary of the chapter

This final chapter has concluded the thesis. This chapter has identified how the aim and objectives of the study were met and achieved, ensuring the completion of the research. This chapter also identifies the key contributions to literature achieved by the study, the limitations inherent in it, and the scope for future research. Finally, recommendations were made for both traditional and human brand managers to further influence consumer brand engagement.

References

- Aaker, D. A. 1992. The value of brand equity. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 13 (4), 27-32.
- Aaker, D. A. and Joachimsthaler, E., 2000. *Brand Leadership*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Abidin, C., 2016. Visibility labour: Engaging with Influencers' fashion brands and #OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram. *Media International Australia*, 161 (1), 86-100.
- Adhikari, K. and Panda, R. K., 2019. The role of consumer-brand engagement towards driving brand loyalty. *Journal of Modelling in Management* [online], 14 (4), 987-1005.
- Agnihotri, A. and Bhattacharya, S., 2018. The market value of celebrity endorsement: evidence from India reveals factors that can influence stock market returns. *Journal of Advertising Research* [online], 65-74.
- Agozzino, A. 2012. Building a personal relationship through social media: a study of millennial students' brand engagement. *Ohio Communication Journal*, 50, 181-204
- Alalwan, A. A., Rana, N. P., Dwivedi, Y. K. and Algharabat, R., 2017. Social media in marketing: a review and analysis of the existing literature. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34 (7), 1177-1190.
- Aurier, P. and N'Goala, G., 2010. The differing and mediation roles of trust and relationship commitment in service relationship maintenance and development. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 38 (3), 303-325.
- Azoulay, A. and Kapferer, J. N., 2003. Do brand personality scales really measure brand personality?. *Brand Management*, 11 (2), 143-155.
- Baccarella, C. V., Wagner, T. F., Kietzmann, J. H. and McCarthy, I. P., (2018). Social media? It's serious! Understanding the dark side of social media. *European Management Journal*, 36 (4), 431-438.
- Baldus, B., Voorhees, C., Calantone, R., 2014. Online brand community engagement: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Business Research*, 68 (5), 978-985
- Bergkvist, V., Hjalmarson, H. and Mägi, A. W., 2016. A new model of how celebrity endorsements work: attitude towards endorsement as a mediator of celebrity source and endorsement effects. *International Journal of Advertising* [online], 35 (2), 171-184.
- Bergkvist, V., and Zhou, K. Q., 2016. Celebrity endorsements: a literature review and research agenda. *International Journal of Advertising* [online], 35 (4), 642-663.

- Beverland, M. B. and Farrelly, F. J., 2010. The quest for authenticity in consumption: consumers' purposive choice of authentic cues to shape experienced outcomes. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (5), 838-856.
- Bhattacharya, C.B., & Sen, S. (2003). Consumer-company identification: A framework for understanding consumer's relationships with companies. *Journal of Marketing* [online], 67, 76-88.
- Bijmolt, T. H. A., Leeflang, P. S. H., Block, F., Eisenbeiss, M., Hardie, B. G. S., Lemmens, A. L., & Saffert, P., 2010. Analytics for customer engagement. *Journal of Service Research*, 13 (3), 341-356.
- Birks M, Mills J., 2015. *Grounded theory: a practical guide*. 2nd edition. London: SAGE.
- Blumer, H., 1969. Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method. Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Bochert, R., Cismaru, L. and Foris, D., 2017. Connecting the members of Generation Y to destination brands: a case study of the CUBIS project. *Sustainability* [online], 9(1197), 1-20.
- Bodie, R. J., Hollebeek, L. D., Jurić, B., & Llić, A., 2011. Customer engagement: Conceptual domain, fundamental propositions, and implications for research. *Journal of Service Research*, 14 (3), 252-271.
- Bolton, R. N., Parasuraman, A., Hoefnagels, A., Migchels, N., Kabadayi, S., Gruber, T., Loureiro, Y. K. and Solnet, D., 2013). Understanding Generation Y and their use of social media: a review and research agenda. *Journal of Service Management*, 24(3), pp. 245-267.
- Bowden, J., 2009. Customer engagement: a framework for assessing customer-brand relationships: the case of the restaurant industry. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 18 (6), 574-596.
- Brakus, J. J., Schmitt, B.H. and Zarantonello, L., 2009. Brand experience: what is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty?. *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (3), 52-68.
- Britten N., 1999. Qualitative interviews in healthcare. In Pope C, Mays N (eds) *Qualitative research in health care*. 2nd edition. London: BMJ Books, 11-19.
- Brown, S., Kozinets, R.V. and Sherry, J. F., 2003. Teaching old brands new tricks: retro branding and the revival of brand meaning. *Journal of Marketing*, 67 (3), 19-33.
- Brucks, M., Zeithaml, V. and Naylor, G. (2000) 'Price and brand name as indicators of quality dimensions for consumer durables'. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 28 (3): 359-74.
- Bryant, A. & Charmaz, K., 2007. *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory*. London: SAGE Publications.

- Bryman, A., 2001 *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A., 2016. *Social research methods*. Oxford university press.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. 5th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. and Bell, E., 2011. *Business research methods*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carlson, B. D. & Donovan, T. D., 2013. Human brands in sport: Athlete brand personality and identification. *Journal of Sport Management*, 27, 193-206.
- Chaplin, L. N. and John, D. R. 2005. The development of self-brand connections in children and adolescents. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32, 119-129.
- Charmaz, K., 1990. Discovering' chronic illness: using grounded theory. *Social Science & Medicine* 30 (11), 1161-1172.
- Charmaz, K., 1991. *Good days, bad days: The self in chronic illness and time*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press
- Charmaz, K., 1995. The body, identity and self: Adapting to impairment. *Sociological Quarterly*, 36 (4) 657-680
- Charmaz, K., 2000. Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. 2 edition. London: SAGE Publications.
- Charmaz, K., 2006. *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Charmaz, K., 2008. *Emergent ethics in qualitative research*. 3rd ESRC Research Methods Festival: St Catherine's College, University of Oxford.
- Charmaz, K., 2011. Grounded theory methods in social justice research. In: Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (Eds.) *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. 4th edition. California: SAGE, 359-380
- Charmaz, K., 2017. Commentary: constructivist grounded theory. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12 (3), 299-300
- Charmaz, K., 2014a *Constructing grounded theory*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Charmaz, K., 2014b. Grounded theory in global perspectives: Reviews from international researchers. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20 (9), 1074-1084

- Charmley, R., Garry, T. and Ballantine, P. W., 2013. The inauthentic other: social comparison theory and brand avoidance within consumer sub-cultures. *Journal of Brand Management*, 20 (6), 458-472.
- Chaudhuri, A. and Holbrook, M. B., 2001. The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: the role of brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing*, 65 (2), 81-93.
- Chen, C-F., Chen, Y-X., Mu, P-J., and Yu, Y-H., 2020. Beyond adoption of shared bike: A case study of antecedents and consequences of brand attachment in Taiwan. *Research in Transportation Business and Management* [Online], 1-7.
- de Chernatony, L. and Dall’Olmo Riley, F., 1998. Defining a ‘brand’: beyond the literature with experts’ interpretations. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 14 (4-5), 417-43.
- Chiang, C., Wei, C., Parker, K. R. and Davey, B., 2017. Exploring the drivers of consumer engagement behaviours in social network brand communities: towards a consumer-learning model. *Journal of Marketing Management* [online], 33 (17-18), 1443-1464.
- Chowdhury, M. F. (2014). Interpretivism in Aiding Our Understanding of the Contemporary Social World. *Open Journal of Philosophy* [online], 4, 432-438.
- Childers, C. C., Lemon, L. L. and Hoy, M. G., 2018. #Sponsored #Ad: Agency Perspective on Influencer Marketing Campaigns. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising* [online], 1-18.
- Claffey, E. and Brandy, M., 2019. An empirical study of the impact of consumer emotional engagement and affective commitment in firm-hosted virtual communities. *Journal of Marketing Management* [online], 35(11-12), 1047-1079.
- Clarke, V. and Braun, V., 2013. *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. Sage
- Close, A. G., Moulard, J. G. and Monroe, K., 2011. Establishing human brands: determinants of placement success for first faculty positions in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39 (6), 922–941.
- Coelho, P. S., Rita, P. and Santos, Z.R., 2018. On the relationship between consumer-brand identification, brand community, and brand loyalty. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 43, 101–110.
- Colton, D. A., 2018. Antecedents of consumer attitudes’ toward corporate blogs. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 12 (1), 94-104.
- Comte, A., 1975. *Auguste Comte and positivism: The essential writings*. Transaction Publishers.

- Comiteau, J. 2003. When does brand loyalty start [online]. New York: ADWEEK. Available form: <https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/when-does-brand-loyalty-start-62841/> [Accessed 12 March 2020].
- Creswell, J. W., 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., 2007. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five traditions*. 2nd edition. California: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. and Clark, V.L.P., 2011. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. 2nd edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Crooks D. L., 2001. The importance of symbolic interaction in grounded theory research on women's health. *Health Care for Women International* [online], 22 (1-2), 11-27.
- Dean, B. A., 2018. The interpretivist and the learner. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* [online], 13, 1-8.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S., 2005. *The sage handbook of qualitative research*. 3rd edition. London: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S., 1994. *Handbook of qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C. and Morgan-Thomas, A., 2015. Consumer engagement in online brand communities: a social media perspective. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 24 (1), 28-42.
- Dessart, L., Veloutsou, C. and Morgan-Thomas, A., 2016. Capturing consumer engagement: duality, dimensionality and measurement. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 32 (5-6) 399-426.
- De Vries, N. J. and Carlson, J., 2014. Examining the drivers and brand performance implications of customer engagement with brands in the social media environment. *Journal of Brand Management* [online], 21 (6), 496-515.
- De Vries, L., Gensler, S. and Leeflang P. S. H., 2017. Effects of Traditional Advertising and Social Messages on Brand-Building Metrics and Customer Acquisition. *Journal of Marketing*, 81 (5), 1-15.
- Dowling, M., 2006. Approaches to reflexivity in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher*, 13 (30) 7-21
- Eagar, T. and Dann, S., 2016. Classifying the narrated #selfie: Genre typing human-branding activity. *European Journal of Marketing*, 50 (9-10) 1835-1857.

- Echo, 2018. *The benefit of celebrity endorsement for your brand* [online]. Crawley: Echo. Available from: <https://www.weareecho.co.uk/post/the-benefits-of-celebrity-endorsement-for-your-brand> [Accessed 15 August 2020]
- Elliott, N. and Lazenbatt, A., 2004. How to recognise a ‘quality’ grounded theory research study. *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 22 (3), 48-52.
- Erdogan, B. Z., 1999. Celebrity Endorsement: A Literature Review. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15 (4), 291–314.
- Farber, M., 1943. *The foundation of phenomenology: Edmund Husserl and the quest for a rigorous science of philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Farhana, M., 2014. Implication of brand identity facets on marketing communication of lifestyle magazine: case study of a Swedish brand. *Journal of Applied Economics and Business Research*, 4 (1), 23-41.
- Fernandes, T. and Moreira, M., 2019. Consumer brand engagement, satisfaction and brand loyalty: a comparative study between functional and emotional brand relationships. *Journal of Product & Brand Management* [online], 28 (2), 274-286.
- Flick, U., 2011. *Introducing research methodology: A beginner’s guide to doing a research project*. London: Sage.
- Florenthal, B., 2019. Young consumers’ motivational drivers of brand engagement behavior on social media sites A synthesized U&G and TAM framework. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing* [online], 13(3), 351-391.
- Florenthal, B. and Chao, M. C.-H., 2015. Corporate communicative engagement in microblogging: cross-cultural analysis of Weibo and Twitter. In Burkhalter, J. N. and Wood, N.T. (Eds), *Maximizing Commerce and Marketing Strategies through Micro-Blogging*. Hershey, PA: GI Global, 40-66.
- Fournier, S., 1998. Consumers and their brands: developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24 (4), 343-353.
- France, C., Merrilees, B. and Miller, D., 2016. An integrated model of consumer brand engagement: drivers and consequences. *Journal of Brand Management* [online], 23 (2), 119-136. doi:10.1057/bm.2016.4
- Fromm, J., Butler, C. and Dickey, C., 2015. How to engage millennials: re-imagining the consumer as a partner, not a target audience, to increase engagement. *Journal of Brand Strategy*, 4 (1), 27-36
- Funk, D.C. and James, J., 2001. The psychological continuum model: A conceptual framework for understanding an individual’s psychological connection to sport. *Sport Management Review* [online], 4 (2), 119–150.
- Gensler, S., Völckner, F., Liu-Thompkins, Y., and Wiertz, C., 2013. Managing brands in the social media environment. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 27(4), 242–256.

Ghodeswar, B. M., 2008. Building a brand identity in competitive markets: a conceptual model. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 17 (1), 4-12.

Gibbs, G., 2015. *Presentation on theme: "Grounded Theory Method"* [online]. Available from: <http://slideplayer.com/slide/4219060/> [Accessed 10 October 2019]

Giles, T. M., Lacey, S. and Muir-Cochrane, E., 2016. Coding, constant comparisons, and core categories: A worked example for novice constructivist grounded theorists. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 39 (1), 29-44

Glaser, B., 1978. *Theoretical sensitivity: advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B., 1992. *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis: Emergence Vs. Forcing*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B., 1998. *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B., 2005. *The Grounded Theory Perspective III: Theoretical Coding*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A., 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Hawthorne, New York: Aldine Publishing.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A., 1977. *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Hawthorne, New York: Aldine Publishing.

Gobanking, 2020a. *Celebrity endorsement deals with insane payouts* [online]. CA, El Segundo: Go Banking. Available from: <https://www.gobanking.com/celebrity-endorsement-deals-paid-how-much-2-2-2-2/> [Accessed 15 August 2020]

Gobanking, 2020b. *Oprah and 24 more celebrities with secret business empires* [online]. El Segundo, CA: Gobanking. Available from: <https://www.gobanking.com/successful-celebrity-entrepreneurs-2-2-2-2/> [Accessed 1 September 2020]

Gómez-Suárez, M., 2019. Examining customer-brand relationships: A critical approach to empirical models on brand attachment, love, and engagement. *Administrative Science* [Online], 9, 1-16.

Graffigna, G. and Gambetti, R., 2015. Grounding consumer-brand engagement, a field-driven conceptualization. *International Journal of Market Research*, 57 (4), 605-629.

Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y., 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In Denzin N. K. and Lincoln Y. S. (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, pp. 105–17.

- Gursoy, D., Maier, T. A. and Chi, C. G., 2008. Generational differences: An examination of work values and generational gaps in the hospitality workforce. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27, 448–458.
- Ha, Y.W., Park, M.-C. and Lee, E., 2014. A framework for mobile SNS advertising effectiveness: user perceptions and behaviour perspective. *Behaviour and Information Technology*, 33 (12), 1333-1346.
- Hammersley, M., 1992. *What's wrong with ethnography? Methodological explorations*. London: Routledge.
- Hammersley, M., 2013. *What is Qualitative Research?* London and New York: Bloomsbury.
- Hall, W. A. and Callery, P., 2001. Enhancing the rigour of grounded theory: Incorporating reflexivity and relationality. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(2): 257-272
- He, H., Harris, L. C., Wang, W., and Haider, K., 2016. Brand identity and online self-customisation usefulness perception. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 32 (13-14), 1308-1332.
- He, H. and Li, Y. (2011) 'Key service drivers for high-tech service brand equity: the mediating role of overall service quality and perceived value'. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27(1-2), 77-99.
- Helm, S. (2007) 'One reputation or many? Comparing stakeholders' perceptions of corporate reputation'. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 12, 238-254.
- Helme-Guizon, A. and Magnoni, F., 2019. Consumer brand engagement and its social side on brand-hosted social media: how do they contribute to brand loyalty?. *Journal of Marketing Management* [online], 35 (7-8), 716-741.
- Hollebeek, L., 2011a. Exploring customer brand engagement: Definition and themes. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 19 (7), 555-573
- Hollebeek, L. D., 2011b. Demystifying customer brand engagement: Exploring the loyalty nexus. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27 (7-8), 785-805.
- Hollebeek, L. D., 2018. Individual-level cultural consumer engagement styles: Conceptualization, propositions and implications. *International Marketing Review*, 35 (1), 42-71.
- Hollebeek, L. D., 2019. Developing business customer engagement through social media engagement-platforms: An integrative S-D logic/RBV-informed model. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 81, 89-98.

Hollebeek, L. D., Srivastava, R. K., and Chen, T., 2019. S-D logic-informed customer engagement: Integrative framework, revised fundamental propositions, and application to CRM. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 47 (1), 161-185.

Hoy, W., 2009. *Quantitative Research in Education: A Primer*. Sage Publications.

Hoyer, W., Chandy, R., Dorotic, M., Krafft, M. and Singh, S., 2010. Consumer cocreation in new product development. *Journal of Service Research*, 13 (3), 283–296.

Huang, W.-H. D., Hood, D. W. and Yoo, S. J., 2013. Gender divide and acceptance of collaborative Web 2.0 applications for learning in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education* [online], 16 (Supplement C), 57-65.

Hudson, S., Huang, L., Roth, M. S. and Madden, T. J., 2016. The influence of social media interactions on consumer–Brand relationships: A three-country study of brand perceptions and marketing behaviors. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 33(1), 27–41.

Hunter, A. Murphy, K., Grealish, A. et al. (2011) Navigating the grounded theory terrain: Part 1. *Nurse Researcher*, 18 (4), 6-10

Hutter, K., Hautz, J., Dennhardt, S. and Fuller, J., 2013. The impact of user interactions in social media on brand awareness and purchase intention: The case of MINI on Facebook. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22 (5) 342–351

Ilchi, L., 2017. *Fenty beauty earns third spot in earned media value* [online]. Los Angeles: WWD. Available from: <https://wwd.com/beauty-industry-news/color-cosmetics/fenty-beauty-earns-third-spot-earned-media-value-after-launch-11034624/> [Accessed 20 February 2020]

Islam, J. U., Hollebeek, L. D., Rahman, Z., Khan, I., and Rasool, A., 2019. Customer engagement in the service context: An empirical investigation of the construct, its antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 50, 277-285.

Islam, J., Rahman, Z. and Hollebeek, L., 2017. Personality factors as predictors of online consumer engagement: an empirical investigation. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 35 (4), 510-528.

Islam, J. U., Rahman, Z. and Hollebeek, L. D., 2018. Consumer engagement in online brand communities: A solicitation of congruity theory. *Internet Research* [online], 28 (1), 23–45.

Jahn, B. and Kunz, W., 2012. How to transform consumers into fans of your brand. *Journal of Service Management*, 23 (3), 344–361.

Jeon J., 2017. The impact of brand concept on brand equity. *Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship* [online], 11(2), 233-245. DOI 10.1108/APJIE-08-2017-030

- Jiménez-Castillo, D. and Sánchez-Fernández, R., 2019. The role of digital influencers in brand recommendation: examining their impact on engagement, expected value and purchase intention. *International Journal of Information Management* [online], 49, 366-376.
- Keller, K. L., 2003. Brand synthesis: The multi-dimensionality of brand knowledge. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (4), 595–600.
- Keller, K. L., 2008. *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity*. 3rd edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Keller K. L. 2009. Building strong brands in a modern marketing communications environment'. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 15(2-3), 139-155.
- Keller, K. L. and Lehmann, D. R., 2006. Brands and branding: Research findings and future priorities. *Marketing Science*, 25 (6), 740-759
- Khan, B. M., 2009. Internal branding: aligning human capital strategy with brand strategy. *The Icfai University Journal of Brand Management*, 6 (2), 22-36.
- Kim, E., Sung, Y. and Kang, H., 2014. Brand followers' retweeting behavior on Twitter: How brand relationships influence brand electronic word-of-mouth. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 37,18-25.
- Knittel, C., and Stango, V., 2014. Celebrity endorsement, firm value and reputation risk: evidence from the Tiger Woods scandal. *Management Science*, 60, 21–37.
- Kotler, P., 2009. The brand – a few definitions. *Economic, social, political and cultural problems of the future*, 10, 86-93
- Kotler, P. and Armstrong, G., 2010. *Principles Of Marketing*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L., 2006. *Marketing Management*, 12th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, Prentice Hall.
- Kowalczyk, C. M. and Pounders, K. R., 2016. Transforming celebrities through social media: the role of authenticity and emotional attachment. *Journal of Product & Brand Management* [online], 25 (4), 345-356. DOI 10.1108/JPBM-09-2015-0969
- Krotoski, A., 2011. What effect has the internet had on celebrity? [online]. Available at: www.theguardian.com/technology/2011/jan/23/effect-of-internet-on-celebrity (accessed 7 June 2020).
- Leckie, C., Nyadzay, M. W., Johnson, L. W., 2016. Antecedents of consumer brand engagement and brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 32 (5-6), 558-578.
- Leeflang, P., 2011. Paving the Way for Distinguished Marketing. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 28 (2), 76-88

- Lemke, F., Clark, M. and Wilson, H., 2011. Customer Experience Quality: An Exploration in Business and Consumer Contexts Using Repertory Grid Technique. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39 (6), 846-869.
- Lempert, L. B., 2007. Asking questions of the data: Memo writing in the grounded theory tradition. In: Bryant A. & Charmaz, K. (Eds.) *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Levine, M., 2003. *A Branded World: Adventures in Public Relations and the Creation of Superbrands*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Li, M-W., Teng, H-Y., Chen, C-Y., 2020. Unlocking the customer engagement-brand loyalty relationship in tourism social media: The roles of brand attachment and customer trust. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 44, 184-192.
- Lincoln Y. S. and Guba E.G., 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*, Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G., 2007. But Is It Rigorous? Trustworthiness and Authenticity in Naturalistic Evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation* [online], 15–25.
- Lobpries, J., Bennett, G., and Brison, N., 2017. Mary Ann to her Ginger: comparing the extended brand identity of two elite female athletes. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship* [online], 18 (4), 347-362.
- Long, T. and Johnson, M., 2000. Rigour, reliability and validity in qualitative research. *Clinical Effectiveness in Nursing*, 4 (1), 30-37.
- Lou, C. Tan, S. and Chen, X., 2019. Investigating consumer engagement with influencer vs. brand promoted ads: the roles of source and disclosure. *Journal of Interactive Advertising* [online], 19 (3), 169-186.
- Lovelock, C. and Writz, J. 2007. *Services Marketing – People, Technology, Strategy*. Pearson – Prentice Hall (6th edition).
- Lovett, M. J. and Staelin, R., 2016. The Role of Paid, Earned, and Owned Media in Building Entertainment Brands: Reminding, Informing, and Enhancing Enjoyment. *Marketing Science*, 35 (1), 142–57.
- Lui, G., Ko, W. W., and Chapleo, C., 2017. Managing employee attention and internal branding. *Journal of Business Research*, 79, 1-11.
- Lujja, A. and Özata, F. Z., 2017. The consequences of consumer engagement in social networking sites. *Business and Economics Research Journal*, 8 (2), 275-291.
- Malär, L., Krohmer, H., Hoyer, W. D. and Nyffenegger, B., 2011. Emotional brand attachment and brand personality: the relative importance of the actual and the ideal self. *Journal of Marketing*, 75 (4) 35-52.

Mangold, W.G. and Faulds, D.J., 2009. Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business horizons*, 52(4), 357-365.

May, T., 2011. *Social research: Issues, methods and research*. London: McGraw-Hill International.

McCann T. and Clark, E., 2003. Grounded theory in nursing: Part 2 – Critique. *Nurse Researcher*, 11 (9), 19-28

Merriam, S., 2009. *Qualitative Research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Mikulincer, M. and Shaver, P. R., 2007. *Attachment in adulthood: Structure, dynamics, and change*. New York: Guilford Press.

Mills, J., Birks, M. and Hoare, K. J., 2014. Grounded theory. In: Mills, J., and Birks, M., (eds) *Qualitative methodology: a practical guide*. London: SAGE, 107–121.

Mills, J., Bonner, A. and Francis, K., 2006. The development of constructivist grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5 (1), 1-10.

Moen, T., 2006. Reflections of narrative research approach'. *International Institute of Qualitative Methods*, 5 (4), 56-69.

Mollen, A. and Wilson, H., 2010. Engagement, telepresence and interactivity in online consumer experience: Reconciling scholastic and managerial perspectives. *Journal of Business Research* [online], 63, 919–925.

Morgan D. L ., 1998. *The focus group guide book*. London: Sage Publications.

Morra, M. C., Ceruti, F., Chierici, R. and Di Gregorio, A., 2018. Social vs traditional media communication: brand origin associations strike a chord. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 12 (1), 2-21.

Morrow, S. L., 2005. Quality and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research in Counseling Psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* [online], 52 (2), 250–260.

Moulard, J. G., Garrity, C. P. and Rice, D. H., 2015. What makes a human brand authentic? Identifying the antecedents of celebrity authenticity. *Psychology and Marketing*, 32 (2), 173-186.

Muñiz, A. M. J., Norris, T. and Fine, G. A., 2013. Marketing artistic careers: Pablo Picasso as brand manager. *European Journal of Marketing*, 48 (1-2), 68-88.

Muntinga, D. G. M., 2011. Introducing COBRAs. *International Journal of Advertising*, 30, 13–46.

Muntinga, D. G., Moorman, M. and Smit, E. G., 2011. Introducing COBRAs. *International Journal of Advertising*, 30 (1), 13-46.

- Murphy, E. Dingwall, R., Greatbatch, D., Parker, S. and Watson, P., 1998. Qualitative research methods in health technology assessment: A Review of the Literature. *Health Technology Assessment*, 2 (16), 1-274
- Muzellec, L., Lynn, T. and Lambkin, M., 2012. Branding in fictional and virtual environments: Introducing a new conceptual domain and research agenda. *European Journal of Marketing*, 46 (6), 811-826
- Myers, M. D., 2008. Qualitative Research in Business & Management. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications
- Myers, M. D. and Sundaram, D., 2012. Digital Natives, Rise of the Social Networking Generation. *University of Auckland Business Review*, 15(1), 30–37.
- Naderifar, M., Goli H., Ghaljaie F., 2017. Snowballing: A purposive method of sampling in qualitative research. *Studies in Development of Medical Education* [online], 14 (3), 1-6.
- Nandan, S., 2005. An Exploration of the Brand Identity-Brand Image Linkage: A Communications Perspective. *Journal of Brand Management* [online], 12 (4), 264–278.
- Nicolau, J. L. and Santa-María, M. J., 2013. Celebrity Endorsers' Performance on the 'Ground' and on the 'Floor'. *Marketing Letters*, 24 (2), 143–149.
- Oliver, R. L., 1999. Whence consumer loyalty?. *Journal of Marketing*, 63 (4), 33-44.
- Palmatier, R. W., Dant, R. P., Grewal, D., and Evans, K. R., 2006. Factors influencing the effectiveness of relationship marketing: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marketing*, 70, 136–153.
- Pansari, A. and Kumar, V., 2017. Customer engagement: the construct, antecedents, and consequences. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45 (3), 294-311.
- Park, C. W., Eisingerich, A. B., Pol, G. and Park, J. W., 2013. The role of brand logos in firm performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 66 (2), 180-187.
- Park, C. W., Jaworski, B. J., and MacInnis, D. J., 1986. Strategic brand concept-image management. *Journal of Marketing*, 50, 135-145.
- Park, C. W., MacInnis, D. J., Priester, J., Eisingerich, A. B., and Iacobucci, D., 2010. Brand attachment and brand attitude strength: Conceptual and empirical differentiation of two critical brand equity drivers. *Journal of Marketing*, 74 (6), 1–17.
- Parmentier, M., 2010. The Pitfalls of Fame: Insights From Human Brands. In *NA - Advances in Consumer Research* (37), eds. Margaret C. Campbell, Jeff Inman, and Rik Pieters, Duluth, MN : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 107-110 .

- Parmentier, M., Fischer, E., and Reuber, R., 2008. Pick me! Pick me! An extension of theory regarding human branding through investigation of editorial fashion models. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 35, 833.
- Parmentier, M., Fischer, E. and Reuber A. R., 2013. Positioning person brands in established organizational fields. *Journal of the Academic Marketing Science*, 41, 373-387.
- Pedroni, M., 2016. Meso-celebrities, fashion and the media: How digital influencers struggle for visibility. *Film Fashion & Consumption*, 5(1), 103–121.
- Pich, C., Dean, D., and Punjaisri, K., 2016. Political brand identity: An examination of the complexities of conservative brand and internal market engagement during 2010 UK general election campaign. *Journal of Marketing Communications* [online], 22 (1), 100-117.
- Potdar, V., Joshi, S., Harish, R., Backerville, R., and Wongthongtham, P., 2017. A process model for identifying online customer engagement patterns on Facebook brand pages. *Information Technology & People* [online], 31 (2), 595-614.
- Prensky, M. 2001. Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1-6.
- Punch, K.F., 2013. *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Sage.
- Radzi, N. A. A., Harun, A., Ramayah, T., Kassim, A. W. M., and Lily, J., 2018. Benefits of Facebook fan/brand page marketing and its influence on relationship commitment among Generation Y: empirical evidence from Malaysia. *Telematics and Informatics* [online], 35 (7), 1980-1993.
- Rahman, R., 2018. Building brand awareness: the role of celebrity endorsement in advertising. *Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science* [online], 28 (4), 363-384.
- Rauniar, R., Rawski, G., Yang, J. and Johnson, B., 2014. Technology acceptance model (TAM) and social media usage: an empirical study on Facebook. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, 27 (1), 6-30.
- Read, W., Robertson, N. and McQuilken, L., 2019. Consumer engagement on twitter: perceptions of the brand matter. *European Journal of Marketing* [online], 53 (9), 1905-1933.
- Rose, R. L. and Wood, S. L., 2005. Paradox and the consumption of authenticity through reality television. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (2), 284-296.
- Safitri, Y., 2017. Personal branding through fashion blogging. *Humaniora*, 8(1), 69-78.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill, A., 2007. *Research Methods for Business Students* [online]. 6th edition. London: Pearson.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill, A., 2009. *Research Methods for Business Students* [online]. 5th edition. Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A., 2012. *Research Methods for Business Students* [online]. 6th edition. Pearson Education Limited

Sawhney, M., Verona, G. and Prandelli, E., 2005. Collaborating to Create: The Internet as a Platform for Customer Engagement in Product Innovation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 19 (4), 4-17.

Seale, C. (1999) *The Quality of Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications (Introducing Qualitative Methods series).

Schaufeli, W. B., Mart'inez, I. M., Pinto, A. M., Salanova, M., and Bakker, A. B., 2002. Burnout and engagement in university students: A cross-national study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 33(5), 464–481.

Schwartz-Shea, P. and Yanow, D., 2012. *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes* [online]. New York and London: Routledge (Routledge series on interpretive methods).

Shenton A. K., 2004. Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information* [online], 22 (2), 63-75.

Silverman D., 2000. *Doing qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.

Silverman, D., 2004. *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice* .2nd edition.

Silverman, D., 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. 4th edition. SAGE Publications.

Speed, R., Butler, P., & Collins, N., 2015. Human branding in political marketing: Applying contemporary branding thought to political parties and their leaders. *Journal of Political Marketing* [online], 14(1-2), 129-151.

Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Lewis, J. and Dillon, L., 2003. *Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence* [online]. Government Chief Social Researcher's Office, London: Cabinet Office.

Sprenkle, D. H. and Piercy, F. P., eds. 2005. *Research methods in family therapy*. New York: Guilford Press.

Stever, G. S. and Lawson, K., 2013. Twitter as a way for celebrities to communicate with fans: implications for the study of parasocial interaction. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 15 (1), 339-354.

Strauss, A., and Corbin, J., 1990. *Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Sage Publications.

Strauss, A., and Corbin, J., 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage Publications.

Thomas, S., 2014. Celebrity in the ‘Twitterverse’: history, authenticity and the multiplicity of stardom situating the ‘newness’ of Twitter. *Celebrity Studies*, 1 (3), 242-255.

Thomson, M., 2006. Human Brands: Investigating Antecedents to Consumers’ Strong Attachments to Celebrities. *Journal of Marketing*, 70 (3), 104-119.

Thomson, M., MacInnis, D.J. and Park, C.W., 2005. The ties that bind: measuring the strength of consumers’ emotional attachments to brands. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 15 (1), 77-91.

Tie, Y. C., Birks, M. and Francis, K., 2019. Grounded theory research: A design framework for novice researchers. *Sage Open Med* [online], 7, 1-8.

Tolson, A., 2001. “Being yourself”: The pursuit of authentic celebrity. *Discourse Studies*, 3 (4), 443–457.

Trochim, W., Donnelly, J. P., and Arora, K., 2015. *Research Methods: The Essential Knowledge Base*. Boston: Cengage Learning.

Tuškej, U., Golob, U. and Podnar, K., 2013. The role of consumer-brand identification in building brand relationships. *Journal of Business Research*, 66 (1), 53-59.

Vallaster C and de Chernatony L., 2003. Internalization of Services Brands: The Role of Leadership During the Internal Brand Building Process. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 21, 181-203.

Vallaster, C., and L. de Chernatony., 2006. Internal Brand Building and Structuration: The Role of Leadership. *European Journal of Marketing* [online], 40 (7-8), 761–784.

Van Doorn, J., Lemon, K. E., Mittal, V., Nass, S., Pick, D., Pirner, P. and Verhoef P. C., 2010. Customer Engagement Behavior: Theoretical Foundations and Research Directions. *Journal of Service Research*, 13 (3), 253-266.

Verhoef, P. C., Werner R., and Manfred K., 2010. Customer Engagement as a New Perspective in Customer Management. *Journal of Service Research*, 13 (3), 247–252.

Vivek, S. E., Beatty, S .E. and Morgan, S. R., 2011. Customer engagement: exploring customer relationships beyond purchase. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 20 (2), 122-146.

Vivek, S. D., Beatty, S. E. and Morgan, R. M., 2012. Customer engagement: Exploring customer relationships beyond purchase. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice* 20 (2), 122–146.

Walsh, M. F., Winterich, K. P., and Mittal, V., 2010. Do logo redesigns help or hurt your brand? The role of brand commitment. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 19 (2), 76-84.

Wang, J., Liao, J., Zheng, S., and Li, B., 2019. Examining drivers of brand community engagement: the moderation of product, brand and consumer characteristics. *Sustainability* [online], 11 (17) (4672), 1-16.

Weber, M., 1947. *The theory of social and economic organization*. Translated by Henderson, A. M. and Parsons, T. New York: Free Press.

Winterich, K. P., Gangwar, M. and Grewal, R., 2018. When celebrities count: power distance beliefs and celebrity endorsement. *Journal of Marketing*, 82, 70-86.

Yan, J., 2011. Social media in branding: Fulfilling a need. *Journal of Brand Management*, 18 (9), 688–696.

Yanow, D., & Schwartz-Shea, P., 2014. *Interpretation and method: Empirical research methods and the interpretive turn*. 2nd edition. London and New York: M. E. Sharpe & Routledge.

Yoon, D., Choi, S. M. and Sohn, D., 2008. Building customer relationships in an electronic age: The role of interactivity of e-commerce web sites. *Psychology & Marketing*, 25 (7), 602-618.

Zamudio, C., Wang, Y., and Haruvy, E., 2013. Human brands and mutual choices: an investigation of the marketing assistant professor job market. *Journal of the Academic Marketing Science* [online], 41 (6), 722-736.

Appendices

Appendix 3.1 Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

The title of the research project

Do people engage more with human brands compared to traditional brands?

Invitation to take part

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Who is organising the research?

This research is part of the requirements of a Masters of Philosophy in the Faculty of management at Bournemouth University. The research will be conducted by Savana Lawal who is a Masters student at the University.

What is the purpose of the project?

This research seeks to understand how Generation Y consumers engage with different forms of brands. The research focuses on two main categories of brands – traditional brands (which refers to goods and services) and human brands (which refers to celebrity brands). The aim of the study is to understand whether consumers engage differently with celebrity brands than they do with traditional brands. The study features an interview with selected questions, which will last approximately 30 minutes.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate as you fall within the age group of 18-35 years, which classifies you as Generation Y. You have also indicated that you use social media platforms to engage with brands. A total number of 30 participants will take part in this research.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a participant agreement form. You can withdraw from participation at any time and without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw we will remove any data collected about you from the study up to the point where the data is analysed and incorporated into the research findings or outputs. At this point your data will usually become anonymous, so your identity cannot be determined, and it is not possible to identify your data within the anonymous dataset. Deciding to take part or not will not impact your treatment, care, education or studies at Bournemouth University (or that of others).

What would taking part involve?

Taking part in this research would involve you having a one on one face-to-face interview with the researcher. The researcher will first give you a participation information sheet, which gives you basic information about the research and then a consent form for you to sign. The researcher will then ask you a series of questions pertaining to the research about your engagement with both human and traditional brands. The interview will be audio recorded for data analysis and transcription purposes.

What are the advantages and possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will discover whether celebrities are brands in their own right and if people engage more with celebrity brands than traditional brands, while creating room for further research.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

The first information that will be sought from you will be that of your age, occupation, and if you are a social media user. This information is basically as a form of filter to make sure the correct group of participants that are relevant to the study are recruited. The next information that will be collected is based on a celebrity brand and traditional brand of your choice that you are highly engaged with. This will give insight to how, and why you engage with these two brands of your choice. This will help the researcher determine if you engage more with celebrity brands or with traditional brands.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

The audio recording made during this research will be used only for analysis purposes and the transcription of the recording for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

How will my information be kept?

All the information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly in accordance with current data protection legislation. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest, as part of our core function as a university. Bournemouth University (BU) is a Data Controller of your information which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it appropriately. BU's Research Participant Privacy Notice sets out more information about how we fulfil our responsibilities as a data controller and about your rights as an individual under the data protection legislation. We ask you to read this [Notice](#) so that you can fully understand the basis on which we will process your information.

Publication

You will not be able to be identified in any external reports or publications about the research without your specific consent. Otherwise your information will only be included in these materials in an anonymous form, i.e. you will not be identifiable.

Research results will be published

Security and access controls

BU will hold the information we collect about you in hard copy in a secure location and on a BU password protected secure network where held electronically.

Except where it has been anonymised your personal information will be accessed and used only by appropriate, authorised individuals and when this is necessary for the purposes of the research or another purpose identified in the Privacy Notice. This may include giving access to BU staff or others responsible for monitoring and/or audit of the study, who need to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations.

Sharing and further use of your personal information

The information collected about you may be used in an anonymous form to support other research projects in the future and access to it in this form will not be restricted. It will not be possible for you to be identified from this data. Anonymised data will be added to BU's [Data Repository](#) (a central location where data is stored) and which will be publicly available.

Retention of your data

All personal data collected for the purposes of this study will be held for 5 years after the award of the degree]. Although published research outputs are anonymised, we need to retain underlying data collected for the study in a non-anonymised form for a certain period to enable the research to be audited and/or to enable the research findings to be verified.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact:

Researcher:

Name: Savena Lawal

Email: slawal@bournemouth.ac.uk

Supervisors:

Name: Professor Juliet Memery

Email: jmemery@bournemouth.ac.uk

Name: Dr Gelareh Roushan

Email: groudhan@bournemouth.ac.uk

In case of complaints

Any concerns about the study should be directed to Professor Juliet Memery]. If you concerns have not been answered by Professor Juliet Memery, you should contact Professor Michael Silk, Bournemouth University by email to researchgovernance@bournemouth.ac.uk.

Finally

If you decide to take part, you will be given a copy of the information sheet and a signed participant agreement form to keep.

Thank you for considering taking part in this research project.

Appendix 3.2 Participant Agreement Form



Participant Agreement Form

Full title of project: **Do people engage more with human brands compared to traditional brands?**

Name, position and contact details of researcher: Savana Lawal, PGR student, slawal@bournemouth.ac.uk

Name, position and contact details of supervisor:

Professor Juliet Memery, Supervisor, jmemery@bournemouth.ac.uk

Dr Gelareh Roushan, Supervisor, groudhan@bournemouth.ac.uk

Section A: Agreement to participate in the study

You should only agree to participate in the study if you agree with all of the statements in this table and accept that participating will involve the listed activities.

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet and have been given access to the BU Research Participant Privacy Notice which sets out how we collect and use personal information (https://www1.bournemouth.ac.uk/about/governance/access-information/data-protection-privacy).	
I have had an opportunity to ask questions.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can stop participating in research activities at any time without giving a reason and I am free to decline to answer any particular question(s).	
I understand that taking part in the research will include the following activity/activities as part of the research:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• being audio recorded during the interview	
I understand that, if I withdraw from the study, I will also be able to withdraw my data from further use in the study up to the point where the data is analysed and incorporated into the research findings or outputs.	
I understand that my data may be included in an anonymised form within a dataset to be archived at BU's Online Research Data Repository.	
I understand that my data may be used in an anonymised form by the research team to support other research projects in the future, including future publications, reports or presentations.	
	Initial box to agree
I consent to take part in the project on the basis set out above (Section A)	

I confirm my agreement to take part in the project on the basis set out above.

Name of participant
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Date
(dd/mm/yyyy)

Signature

Name of researcher
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Date
(dd/mm/yyyy)

Signature

Appendix 3.3 Semi-structured interview questions guide outline

Filter questions

These questions in this section form as filter questions to ensure every participant partaking in the research falls under the correct criteria needed for this research. These questions would identify if participants belong to the Generation Y cohorts.

- How old are you?
- What is your occupation?
- How long have you been at your recent occupation?
- Do you use social media platforms?

Participants required for this research would need to be between the ages 18-35 to qualify as a generation Y cohort. Once participants fall under this age bracket, their occupations do not discredit them from participating in the research but rather serves as a record for the researcher in making sure the study explores the different range of this generational cohorts. Individuals from this generation could be anything from students, to recent graduates, to experienced working class individuals. Hence, it is appropriate to have such details on record for theoretical sensitivity. Finally, it is necessary that participants use at least one social media platform as some questions in the interview are related to engagement on social media.

Questions for in-depth interview

Section 1: The introductory questions (Ice-breaker)

- How many social media platforms do you use?
- How often do you use social media?
- What celebrities do you follow on social media?
- Do you follow any traditional brands on social media?

Section 2: Expressions of CBE

- Please could you identify a celebrity in any category that you feel highly engaged with? How and why? Explain
- How would you describe your interaction with this brand?
- Can you express how this brand makes you feel? Would you say you have an emotional connection with this brand?
- Do you visit this celebrity's social media platforms? Which ones? How often? Why?
- Have you attempted to see this celebrity when they have a public appearance? Would you in the future? Why?
- Do you consider this brand significant to you?

Same questions would be asked for traditional brands of their choice:

- Please could you identify a traditional brand (e.g. Coca-Cola) in any category that you feel highly engaged with? How and why? Explain
- How would you describe your interaction with this brand?
- Can you express how this brand makes you feel? Would you say you have an emotional connection with this brand?
- Do you visit your chosen brand's social media platforms? Which ones? How often? Why?
- Have you attempted to visit your chosen brand when they have a public appearance (events)? Would you in the future? Why?
- Do you consider this brand significant to you?

Section 3: Exploring the dimensions of CBE

Cognitive

Do you think about your chosen celebrity? How often?

Do you think about your chosen celebrity when you're using social media? What type of social media makes you think about them?

Is there a specific activity you do that makes you think about this celebrity (e.g. shopping)? Why?

Would you say you'd love to learn more about this celebrity? And why/why not? Explain.

Same questions for traditional brands:

Do you think about your chosen celebrity? How often?

Do you think about your chosen band when you're using social media? ? What type of social media makes you think about them?

Is there a specific activity you do that makes you think about this brand (e.g. shopping)? Why?

Would you say you'd love to learn more about this brand? And why/why not? Explain.

Emotional

How would you say you feel about your chosen celebrity? Explain

How do you feel when you are on your chosen celebrity's social media page? Or when you see content relating to this celebrity (e.g. videos, pictures) ?

How does it make you feel to be associated with this celebrity?

Are you proud to be a fan of this celebrity? Do you tell other people about this celebrity? Who? Why?

Same questions for traditional brands:

How would you say you feel about your chosen brand? Explain

How do you feel when you are on your chosen brand's social media page? Or when you see content relating to this brand?

How do you feel to be associated with this brand?

Are you proud to be a fan (or user) of this brand? Do you tell other people about this brand? Who? Why?

Behavioural

Do you spend time on social media interacting with this celebrity? How much time?

How likely are you to take the following actions when you see a picture of your chosen celebrity on social media? Choose from Very likely, likely, unlikely, very unlikely for each of the actions:

- Take time looking at the picture
- Like the picture
- Read the caption
- Comment on the picture
- Reply other people's comment on the picture
- Share the picture

How likely are you to take the following actions when you see a video of your chosen celebrity on social media? Choose from Very likely, likely, unlikely, very unlikely for each of the actions:

- Watch the video till the end
- Like the video
- Read the caption
- Comment on the video
- Reply other people's comment on the video
- Share the video

What do you associate your chosen celebrity with (e.g. fashion, beauty)? Have they influenced you in your decision making in any categories?

Same questions for traditional brands:

Do you spend time on social media interacting with this brand? How much time?

How likely are you to take the following actions when you see a picture of your chosen brand on social media? Choose from Very likely, likely, unlikely, very unlikely for each of the actions:

- Take time looking at the picture
- Like the picture
- Read the caption
- Comment on the picture
- Read other people's comment on the picture
- Reply other people's comment on the picture
- Share the picture

How likely are you to take the following actions when you see a video of your chosen brand on social media? Choose from Very likely, likely, unlikely, and very unlikely for each of the actions:

- Watch the video till the end
- Like the video
- Read the caption
- Comment on the video
- Read other people's comments on the video
- Reply other people's comment on the video
- Share the video

What do you associate your chosen brand with (e.g. fashion, beauty)? Have they influenced you in your decision making in any categories?