Passive users vs. active users: a qualitative investigation of brand page attachment on Facebook

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2022

A research report presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Business Studies in Marketing

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Abstract

Brand attachment is the emotional connection consumers have with a brand and is essential in building lasting brand relations. Of equal importance is the construct of brand page attachment; however, it is a relatively new concept with few available studies in the literature. Using the case of Pams' brand page, a home brand of the supermarket chain New World, this study aimed to identify factors that influence passive brand page users to not engage with the brand page. Semi-structured interviews with six users, three passive and three active, were conducted. The interviews explored brand perception, brand page interaction, and brand page attachment. Thematic analysis indicated a direct link between past negative online experiences and the lack of user participation. Brands need to engage with passive brand page users, practically address their concerns, and so increase their brand page interaction to solidify their brand page attachment; this will lead to stronger brand attachment and a more committed consumer.

Keywords: brand attachment, brand page attachment, brand page interaction, brand image, brand personality, brand trust.

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Abbreviations

BA   Brand attachment

BE   Brand equity

BRQ   Brand relationship quality

BV   Brand value

CB   Consumer behaviour

CBR   Consumer-brand relationship

IR   Interactive relationship

OSN   Online social network

QDA   Qualitative data analysis

RQ   Research question

SMM   Social media marketing

TA   Thematic analysis

U & G   Uses and gratifications

WOM   Word of mouth

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Brand attachment (BA) is the emotional connection consumers forge with a brand (Malär et al., 2011) and is of pivotal importance to building long-lasting brand relations (Rabbanee et al., 2020). The ubiquitous nature of social media has allowed brands to engage in two-way communication with consumers to fortify the consumer-brand relationship. It has given rise to the new concept of brand page attachment, wherein consumers may also form an emotional attachment to a brand's page on a social media platform (Kleine-Kalmer, 2016). However, brands tend to focus their efforts and budgets only on the 1.3% active brand page users (Kleine-Kalmer, 2016), a suboptimal engagement rate seemingly typical to social media platforms. Brands, to all appearances, ignore passive brand page users who, though inactive, are presumably still brand loyal yet remain an unknown, unexplored and untapped resource.

Using the case of Pams' brand page, the aim of this study is to identify the factors that influence most brand page followers to remain passive and contribute to closing the knowledge gap between passive and active user behaviour. This chapter will introduce the study by first discussing the background and context of brand attachment and brand page attachment, followed by the research aim, -objectives and -significance, the research questions and methodology and conclude with the report overview.

1.1 Background and Context

In the wake of the Great Depression and two world wars in the first half of the 20th century, emotionally fatigued consumers sought more in life. The austere government-enforced restrictions gradually lifted in the post-WW2 era, and the knock-on effect of a high-spending military, low oil prices, and international cooperation in the wake of rebuilding Europe was conducive to the world entering the Golden Age of Capitalism (Marglin & Schor, 1992). Consumer consumption transformed from a purely transactional exchange based on product functionality to goods being assigned social and personal significance by the consumer (Levy, 1959).

Levy (1959) understood the symbolism consumers assign to goods and advised brands to make the same connection. If a product aligns with the consumer's self-concept, the consumer will buy and enjoy it. The ability of goods to carry cultural meaning for the consumer was and still is studied extensively (e.g., Belk, 1982; McCracken, 1986). The emotional connection consumers attach to products or brands is known as brand attachment.

Research into brand attachment was conducted during the 1980s and early 1990s. However, the first academic articles on this subject only appeared in the Journal of Consumer Psychology in 2004 (Escalas, 2004; Shimul, 2022). An ever-increasing number of works has since appeared in the literature: Thomson et al. (2005) identified the emotional elements involved in the brand attachment; Malär et al. (2011) examined how consumers view a brand as part of their self; and Kaufmann (2016) showed how strong brand attachment decreases the purchase of counterfeit goods. Although there is no consensus in the literature about BA drivers (Shimul, 2021), this research report will focus on brand trust, -personality, and -image, as they are among the most prominent elements of BA in the literature.

Brand attachment serves as the foundation for the new construct of brand page attachment which "reflects the strength of the connection a person feels toward a brand page" (Klein-Kalmer, 2016, p. 93). Social media users who find value on a brand page in obtaining information, entertainment, social value, or economic advantage will probably become attached to the page (Klein-Kalmer, 2016). Brands typically only focus on active users constituting a fraction of their total followers. Ignoring the bulk of their followers, who may be passive but have shown interest if not interaction, highlights the dichotomy within the brands' social media user portfolio. Brands seem to pay attention to the vocal few while ignoring the silent majority, an untapped and probably misunderstood resource with potent potential.

1.2 Research Question
How and why do users engage with the Pams brand page on Facebook?

Sub-questions
o   What are the users' perceptions of the Pams brand?
o   What motivates users to interact, or not interact, with the Pams brand page?
o   How do users feel about the Pams brand page and how attached are they to it?

1.3 Significance
Understanding the motivation and behaviour of active and passive brand page users may enable brands to extend the consumer-brand attachment to include the brand page on social media. This will foster an even stronger brand attachment which is key to building stable and lasting consumer-brand relationships.

1.4 Methodology
Using the case of Pams' brand page, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six users (three active and three passive). The objective was to gain a deeper understanding of the

motivations of active and passive users in their decision to engage, or not, with the brand page. Thematic analysis of the interview results was conducted to identify the correlation between user motivation and the themes identified in the literature review (see section 3.7).

1.5 Report Overview

Chapter one introduced the research topic, established the context for the study, and identified the significance of the research.

Chapter two is the literature review that looks critically at the extant literature as it relates to the three themes applicable to this study: brand perception, brand page interaction, and brand page attachment.

Chapter three discusses the report's methodology and research design and introduces the interview guide.

Chapter four presents the results from the interviews and how the themes relate to these findings.

Chapter five concludes the report by answering the research question, discussing the conclusions drawn and the research limitations, and culminating in management and future research recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The reputation of a product brand or a corporate brand is affected by many factors, including communication skills; the quality and safety of products and services; and employee and management behaviour (Everett, 2016). This research report's vocal point is on the product brand. The consumer-brand relationship is pertinent due to its salient effect on marketing, financial, and social outcomes (Fournier et al., 2012).

Over the past two decades, many studies have focused on the consumer-brand relationship, based on Blackston's (1992) and Fournier's (1998) seminal work. This literary review will first examine the literature on the consumer-brand relationship and consider customer-brand relationship theory, cultural meaning transfer, and brand attachment theory. The role a consumer's self-concept plays in their purchasing behaviour (Sirgy & Su, 2000; see 2.3) and brand attachment, a sub-component of brand relationship literature, provide the central part of the literature review, before discussing brand page attachment, a somewhat new concept in brand attachment research (Kleine-Kalmer, 2016).

2.2 The Consumer-Brand Relationship

The interactive relationship (IR) consumers form with a brand is an intricate psychological and cultural process akin to people's interpersonal relationships (Fournier et al., 2012). Notwithstanding this correlation between IRs and consumer-brand relationships (CBRs), a key difference is a monetary exchange that occurs in CBRs and is more atypical in IRs (Swaminathan & Dommer, 2012). Furthermore, the CBR needs to be understood within the broader context of consumers' life experiences because 'consumers do not choose brands, they choose lives' (Fournier, 1998, p. 367). In successful CBRs, the consumer becomes an equity brand partner resulting in brand equity (BE) or brand value (Blackston, 1992).

Before Fournier's (1998) influential work, Blackston (1992) was one of the first researchers to look beyond the conventional one-way relationship of the consumer's affective component (attitude) and the conative construct (behaviour) towards a brand by also considering the brand's attitude and behaviour towards the consumer. Communicating the brand's attitude and behaviour creates meaning in the brand image and message. By challenging the focus on the one-dimensional interaction, he put forward the concept of a two-way CBR to pave the way for further research on CBRs.

Supplementary to Blackston's (1992) pivotal work, Fournier's (1998) seminal study introduced brand relationship theory (BRT) by drawing a parallel between human interactions and consumer-brand interplay. Consumers enter or maintain their relationship with a brand because it adds meaning to their life through lived experiences. At the heart of strong CBRs is the notion of life themes, wherein the consumer becomes brand loyal when they perceive a meaningful connection between their life theme and a brand (Fournier, 1998; Fournier & Yao, 1997).

Consumers may also display multi-brand behaviour whereby they cycle through brands that belong to a 'family' of significant products in the consumer's mind. Therefore, consumers may habitually purchase a brand, engage in repeat purchases due to convenience, or become committed to a brand because it resonates with a consumer's lived experiences (Fournier, 1998). However, of particular interest and noteworthy as a word of caution is the risk that some CBRs may become such a part of quotidian rituals that they disappear into the background noise of everyday life (Coupland, 2005).

As a brand innovator researcher, Fournier (1998) assessed the CBR quality through a new framework called Brand Relationship Quality (BRQ) featuring six elements: love and passion, brand-self connection, interdependence, commitment, intimacy, and brand participant quality; the motivating factor in BRQ is social attachment. Interpersonal attachment theory may explain how a consumer constructs and maintains brand relationships at an emotional level (Blackston, 1992; Fournier, 1998). The brand attachment (BA) concept and the strength of that connection between a brand and consumer self-concept are central to CBRs (Fournier et al., 2012). The relationship is, therefore, stronger when a brand reflects a consumer's sense of self (Park et al., 2010).

2.3 The Consumer Self

The self is a heterogenous concept that reflects the individual's actual self-image, or self-congruence, and ideal self-image, or ideal self-congruence (Sirgy, 1982). Robust brand relationships surpass mere brand preference in terms of depth and enduring nature and indicate the strong connection between the consumer self and the brand (Sirgy & Su, 2000). Therefore, an individual's need to express their identity is often the motivation for their purchasing behaviour (Aaker, 1997; Kowal et al., 2020).

While self-congruence and ideal self-congruence play a strategic role in BA, brands with actual self-congruence, in general, influence attachment more than brands with ideal self-congruence (Malär et al., 2011). Although, in their study, Malär et al. (2011) also extend the

caveat that ideal congruence may be of more importance to aspirational brands in the symbol-intensive and hedonic categories than utilitarian brands. Consumers may be more inclined to form an emotional attachment to a brand that mirrors who they are now rather than who they would like to be (Choi & Winterich, 2013).

In addition, self-congruence may enjoy preference over functional congruence, wherein a consumer would likely first assess the symbolic features of a brand and then evaluate its functional attributes (Chaudhuri, 2006). A consumer generally processes the symbolic elements easier than the more cognitively taxing evaluation of functional attributes (Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy & Su, 2000). Once the consumer has accepted the brand based on its symbolic features, the consumer becomes highly involved with the brand due to the propensity of self-congruence to lead to the processing of the functional characteristics (Chaudhuri, 2006). Of equal importance is the vital role consumer emotions play in consumer psychology.

2.4 Consumer Emotions

Our reasoning and rationalisation capabilities are pivotal in our brand and product choices; however, so are our emotions (Chaudhuri, 2006). Consumers designate emotional and rational values to brands, products, and services, and comprehending these values is essential to understand consumer behaviour (CB) (Belk, 1988).

Notwithstanding the controversy in neuroscience literature regarding the origin, structure, and evolution of the human brain, MacLean's (1990) simplistic 'triune brain' theory offers the most accessible model to the layperson. He proposes that the human brain is the product of vertebrate forebrain evolution consisting of the reptilian brain, the limbic system, and the neocortex. He categorises our reptilian brain behaviour as routinisation (adopting routines), isopraxis behaviour (mirroring others' behaviour), tropistic behaviour (external stimuli response), repetitious behaviour (repetitive performance), and re-enactment behaviour.

According to MacLean (1990), the limbic system is responsible for feelings and behaviour conducive to species- and self-preservation, while the neocortex engages in higher cognitive processing such as language, problem-solving, and complex learning. Seen within consumer behaviour, a positive emotional response (affect) manifesting as happiness or bonding arises from the limbic system as part of the social-emotional system, with the neocortex promoting ideas and preserving information (Buck, 1999).

The emotions that consumers feel constitutes one part of the perceived brand value. Comprehending the values consumers assign to brands, products, and services is critical to understanding consumer purchase motivation and consumption behaviour (Soscia, 2013).

Five values influence consumer choice: emotional (such as the sentiments of nostalgia); social (such as group membership or reference groups); functional (such as price and durability); epistemic (curiosity or desire to learn); and conditional (utility or seasonal such as Christmas) (Sheth et al., 1991). Therefore, consumer emotions distinctly affect BA.

2.4.1. Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a particular type of emotion that reflects consumers' propensity to indulge in euphoric recall during stressful world events and has given rise to nostalgia marketing (Hemsley-Brown, 2021). When a brand triggers positive memories, consumers experience nostalgia for a particular event, place, or individual; this is evidence of their need to relate to or share a connection with others, and it occurs across many cultures (Gillespie & Noble, 2017; Olsen, 1999; Sheth et al., 1991). Consumers may materialise their reminiscences by transferring their abstract experience to the concrete brand (Kessous et al., 2015), thus, indulging in the memories the brand may evoke (Fournier, 1998; Loveland et al., 2010).

Much of the extant literature on brand nostalgia shows its suitability to feature in advertising across all product categories (Olsen, 1999). Brands typically incorporate nostalgia in their packaging to appeal to their target market and strive to increase their audience by linking generations. Brands may also re-design their brick-and-mortar interiors to showcase vintage elements or promote the sharing of consumer childhood stories on the brands' social media platforms (Kessous et al., 2015).

The emotional connection between consumers and goods was not always well understood or appreciated; however, the extant literature demonstrates that nostalgic brands enjoy stronger brand-self connections and more complementary product assessment (Gillespie & Noble, 2017; Youn & Dodoo, 2021). In general, nostalgic brands have stronger CBRs than non-nostalgic brands (Kessous et al., 2015); thus, consumers consistently prefer nostalgic products as it reconnects them with positive events or people (Loveland et al., 2010).

2.4.2. Consumer Culture

In Levy's (1959) ground-breaking work 'Symbols for Sale,' he laid the foundations of contemporary brand marketing. He challenged the prevailing thought that consumer consumption is motivated by rational thought about product functionality alone. Instead, he highlighted the implication of goods now having personal and social symbolic significance to the post-WW2 consumer; they have evolved from economically driven customers to audiences who assign meaning to goods. Levy (1959) also questioned if people were as functionally oriented as previously thought. Thus, the manufacturer needed to understand

they were 'selling symbols as well as goods' (p. 124); people no longer asked, 'Do I need this?' but now asked: 'Do I like it? Do I want it?' (p. 119). If a product enhances, reinforces, or aligns with how consumers think about themselves, they will use and enjoy it.

In the ensuing years, marketing studies of person-object relations explore the ability of consumer goods to communicate and carry cultural meaning (Belk, 1982; Levy, 1978). Culture constitutes the customs, values, and beliefs that modulate a society. Consumer culture suggests that buying a product or a service is a cultural undertaking propelled by more than just economic or practical factors but also by the meaning ascribed to it (McCracken, 1986). Culture is the lens through which we see our phenomenal world or the world we are aware of, and the cultural meaning flows from our world to consumer goods and then to the consumer.

In his classic study of cultural meaning, McCracken (1986) described how meaning transfers to products or brands, then is conveyed to the consumer, and how CBRs form. The producer or designer facilitates this transfer through advertising or the fashion industry, and the goods end up with cultural meaning. The meaning transfer may occur when the consumer engages in consumption rituals by exchanging gifts; it may also materialise when they engage in possession rituals by personalising their goods.

The meaning may also transfer when the consumer engages in grooming rituals, as exemplified in the automotive industry, or the consumer displays ritualistic divestment behaviour, such as when they see their clothing worn by a new owner and then experience dissonance. McCracken's (1986) model of consumption and culture encapsulates how meaning flows between culture, goods, and consumers and sets the groundwork for further research.

Ritualistic behaviours range from large, public ceremonies at one end, family or group rituals in the middle, and private ablution rituals of an individual at the other end (Levy & Rook, 2000). Rituals are formal behaviour systems and may involve participants, an audience (if culturally appropriate), scripted episodic behaviour typically at birthdays, etc., and may also employ ritual artifacts, including brands or products, during gift exchanges (Smith et al., 2012). Ignoring the rich life experiences of a consumer may lead to a disingenuous viewpoint of human behaviour (Levy & Rook, 1999) because consumer rituals involving nostalgia, and other consumer emotions, are fundamental to brand attachment and brand page attachment.

2.5 Brand Attachment

Brand attachment (BA) is the emotional nearness a consumer feels towards a brand (Thomson et al., 2005) and views the brand as part of their self (Malär et al., 2011).

Therefore, the consumer displays a strong positive attitude toward the brand and a commitment to remain in the brand relationship (MacInnis, 2014; Park et al., 2010). Thomson et al. (2005) identified three elements in BA: affection, connection, and passion. BA usually occurs due to the principles of attachment theory, wherein an individual's ability to forge relationships is driven by the attachment style formed with their prime caregiver in infancy (Bowlby, 1969).

In the marketing literature, this theory applies to CB as a 'systematic pattern of relational expectations, emotions, and behaviors that results from a particular history of attachment experiences' (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005, p. 27). Those with a history of secure caregiver attachment typically develop supportive relationships in contrast to those who display self-reliance dependence (Park et al., 1986; Park, 2010).

The literature reveals that BA may increase the levels of consumer satisfaction (Esch et al., 2006), and consumers may also become brand loyal with the propensity to continue buying that same brand in preference to competing brands (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Chieng et al., 2022). Loyal consumers may also have a higher brand recall, purchase more and become brand advocates (Shetty & Fitzsimmons, 2022). Consumers are generally also willing to pay more or pay a premium price for brands to which they have become attached (Sreejesh et al., 2016).

Strong connections also help maintain the relationship through a protective sense of exclusivity and reliance (Drigotas & Rusbult, 1992). A strong brand interconnection is also evident in the cultivation of consumption rituals (Fournier, 1998; see section 2.4.2); it displays a high level of emotional commitment through pledging brand allegiance and deprecating brand alternatives (Shimul, 2021). Interestingly, a study reveals that strong BA may be a reason a consumer is less likely to purchase counterfeit goods (Kaufmann et al., 2016).

There is no consensus in the literature about the number of BA drivers (Shimul, 2021). Some studies argue that brand attitude (Esch et al., 2006) brand satisfaction (Lam, 2014), and brand authenticity (Olsen, 1999) lead to BA. Other researchers found elements such as brand image, brand personality (Takamatsu 2021; Belaid & Temessek, 2011), and brand trust (Dwivedi, 2019; Hemsley-Brown, 2021) contribute to BA. This report will focus on brand trust, brand personality, and brand image, as they are among the most prominent elements of BA in the literature.

2.5.1. Brand Trust

Brand trust is rooted in the mental processes and emotions of a consumer about brand intentions and brand reliability (Gan et al., 2016); it is conceived as having confidence in a partner's integrity and reliability and is central to relational exchange (Lam et al, 2004). Other research underscores the importance of partner predictability in developing trust, while credibility is also considered paramount in determining perceptions of service or product quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

In the literature, trust is considered either a feature (or aspect) of relationship quality or a determinant of relationship quality; satisfaction, communication, and goal compatibility are considered in tandem to trust when seen as a feature (Moorman et al., 1992). Trust in a brand affects consumer commitment by reducing consumer uncertainty and thus contributes to the development of BA (Rajavi et al., 2019).

2.5.2. Brand Personality

Brand personality is created through personification by attributing human characteristics to the brand (Aaker, 1997) and is considered part of relational marketing (Louis & Lombart, 2010). Although Blackston (1995) argues brand personality and image are indivisible, other researchers treat personality and image as two distinct elements (Aaker, 1997; Aaker & Fournier, 1995). Studies suggest people anthropomorphise objects to facilitate interaction (Aaker & Fournier, 1995; Fournier, 1998). Therefore, consumers willing to accept the humanizing of brands often, of their own accord, also imagine brands as human characters (Levy, 1985). The literature also shows that brand personality may extend to brick-and-tile shops (Das, 2014; Dolbec, 2013; Park et al., 2010) and online stores (Panigyrakis et al., 2020; van der Heijden & Verhagen, 2004).

A primary way for people to make sense of behaviour is to engage in storytelling or narrative thought (Swaminathan et al., 2009). Advertisers often portray a brand as a character in a storyline; this raises the opportunity for the brand to engage in intentional behaviour that results in spontaneous trait inference or automatic judgement about a personality trait by the consumer (Aaker & Fournier, 1995). In addition, brand personality can be instrumental in an individual's expression of their actual or ideal self (Swaminathan et al., 2009). Sincere and exciting brand personalities are particularly noteworthy as they align with two aspects of interpersonal relationships: vitality and warmth (Fletcher et al., 1999). Typically, sincere brand personalities display traditional, family-oriented, and nurturing characteristics, while

exciting brand personalities exhibit traits of independence and vitality (Aaker, 1997; McManus et al., 2022).

2.5.3. Brand Image

Before Levy's (1959) seminal work Symbols for Sale, he co-authored the influential The Product and the Brand (Gardner & Levy, 1955, p. 35). He introduced the construct of the brand image as "a public image, a character or personality … may be more important for the overall status [and sales] of the brand than are many facts about the product."

Brand numbers escalated in the post-WW2 era due to the continued output of processes initially put in place for the war effort and a surge in demand by ration-weary consumers; the competition subsequently intensified with the emergence of newer and smaller brands (Gross, 2014). However, consumers found it difficult to distinguish between brands, especially when brands made similar lofty claims. Gardner and Levy's (1955) work particularly influenced marketing practice and research and launched the term brand image.

Brand image is the impression and perception of a brand held by the consumer (Singh & Duhan, 2016); it is an essential determinant of CB, as it influences the emotional, behavioural, and cognitive processes of a consumer towards the brand (Hsieh & Li, 2008). A favourable image of a brand also positively influences brand loyalty and word-of-mouth (WOM). In addition, the consumer may accept higher brand prices more readily and tolerate brand transgressions better (Singh & Duhan, 2016).

2.6 Brand Page Attachment

2.6.1. Introduction

Social media differs from traditional mass media as the focus moved from the classic sender-receiver relationship to interactive two-way communication, with consumers becoming co-producers of content (Rabbanee et al., 2020). Online social networks (OSNs), such as Facebook, are of paramount importance to brands due to their high reach among current and potential consumers (Kowal et al., 2020).

Brand page attachment is a sub-category of brand attachment that shares many of the latter concept's characteristics. Although research on the influence of social media on brand management has been conducted, with specific reference to brand image, brand loyalty, and purchase intention (e.g., Smith et al., 2012), the value of brand pages and their impact on

consumer behaviour is still in its nascent phase. There is a particular paucity of research information on brand page performance (Gummerus et al., 2012).

Klein-Kalmer (2016) addresses several gaps in the extant literature: the construct to measure the user bond to a brand page, the current user engagement measurement that excludes passive users, the lack of knowledge of factors that impact brand page attachment, and the motivation for the lack of user engagement on a brand page. She is, furthermore, one of the first to introduce the concept of brand page attachment and explores consumer emotional connection to brand pages through the lens of brand attachment theory (Park, 2010).

Klein-Kalmer (2016) amended the widely accepted concept of brand-self connection and brand prominence proposed by Park et al. (2010) (see section 2.5) to suit the brand page context. She termed it "brand page connectedness and brand page prominence." (p. 195); she also stated, "brand page attachment reflects the strength of the connection a person feels toward a brand page." (p. 93).

Consumers attached to a brand engage in positive information dissemination about the brand via word of mouth (WOM) (Zhou, et al., 2012). Engel et al., (1969) classified WOM into pre-decision and post-decision and identified the consumer who testifies about a product or brand post-purchase as the most valuable to a company because "recommendations by friends, family members or acquaintances are more credible than advertisements by the company" (p. 147). e-WOM is the information exchange process between consumers on the Internet regarding a product or brand (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004; Ismagilova et al., 2019). Consumers engage in WOM when they feel connected to or involved with the brand, as with e-WOM (Klein-Kalmer, 2016).

User engagement, or participation, is presently calculated through the activity level on a brand page and used to measure brand page performance. However, few users participate in OSNs, with typically only 0.9% to 1.3% of users actively engaging with a brand page, as found by the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science (Facebook Statistics and Trends, 2022). Therefore, Klein-Kalmer (2016) questions the accuracy of solely using user engagement in brand page evaluation.

2.6.2. Drivers of Brand Page Attachment

Previous research into mass media consumption applied the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) model asserting that digital media users are goal-oriented in their media usage and select media that suits their needs (Blumler & Katz, 1974; Ko et al., 2005; Ruggiero, 2000). Therefore, digital media users who extract value from informative content, obtain

entertainment or social value, or gain economic advantage will probably become attached to the brand page (Klein-Kalmer, 2016).

Information

Several studies exploring digital media gratifications established the importance of informational value to the user (Dholakia et al., 2004; Smith et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2011). Three activity levels were identified - consuming, creating, and contributing. Advice is routinely sought and supplied by the brand page community reducing the perceived risk of purchasing goods or services, especially in the higher price categories; reviews by other consumers are also considered a valuable resource by potential buyers. In addition, users may also enquire about products and receive an answer in real-time from the brand page moderator/s, while content uploaded by the brand or other users may also be inspiring to users.

Entertainment

Some users use social media as a stress reliever as it provides amusement and eases their boredom (Taylor et al., 2011). This indicates the importance of entertainment in the user activity triad of consumption, creation, and contribution (Klein-Kalmer, 2016).

Social and Economic Value

Users find value in staying in touch with friends and family online while communicating with their favourite brands and other like-minded users (MacInnis, et al., 2009). Interacting virtually with others may create social contacts, initiate friendships and dispel loneliness (Dholakia et al., 2004), while competitions, giveaways, vouchers, or discounts offered by a brand to their followers also motivate brand page consumption (MacInnis, et al., 2009).

2.7 Indicators

The classic performance indicators such as Hoffman's (2010) brand awareness, brand engagement, and word-of-mouth have limitations, including the lack of benchmarks and managerial implications. Klein-Kalmer (2016) suggests a new set of brand page performance indicators: awareness, consumer insights, new target groups, experience, and the 'deduction of indicators for every campaign' (p. 199). Linking campaigns to brand pages and measuring different metrics to suit each campaign can increase brand page attachment which will assist with brand-building measures.

2.8 Conclusion

This literature reviewed several issues about the consumer-brand relationship. Early work in the literature discussed how cultural meaning transfers to products or brands, then is conveyed to the consumer via advertising and culminates in consumer-brand relationship formation (see sections 2.2 and 2.4.2). It is also clear that actual self-congruence greatly influences brand attachment; it not only leads to acceptance of the symbolic elements of the product or brand but ultimately also eases the understanding of its functional characteristics (see section 2.3).

Consumers reveal their propensity to assign rational value to a product or brand and apportion positive emotional value due to emotions arising within the limbic system. Therefore, understanding consumer emotions is critical in comprehending the consumer's purchase motivation and consumption behaviour. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of the consumer-brand relationship and informs the development of the interview questions (see section 3.2).
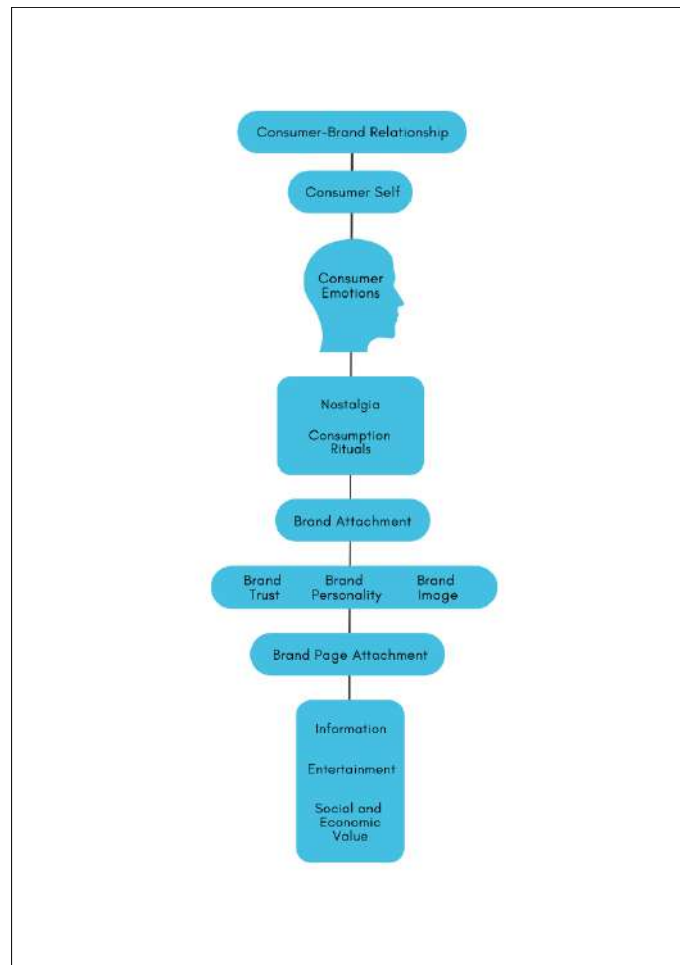
Figure 1. Layout of the CBR as it relates to brand page attachment (own Figure)

This report answers the research question:

How and why do users engage with the Pams brand page on Facebook?

It also provides answers to the sub-questions:

o   What are the users' perceptions of the Pams brand?
o   What motivates users to interact, or not interact, with the Pams brand page?
o   How do users feel about the Pams brand page and how attached are they to it?

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Introduction

Qualitative data analysis (QDA) is the "classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what it represents." (Flick, 2013, p. 5). The main aims of QDA may be to describe a phenomenon, to develop a theory, or to search for explanations to elucidate the differences between subjects within the study. This research report focuses on the latter in exploring the behaviour of active and passive users on Pams' Facebook brand page.

The categorising strategy in QDA is coding wherein the data segments are labeled and categorised by group, examined, and then compared (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014). Thematic analysis (TA) is a coding strategy defined as a "data reduction and analysis strategy by which data are segmented, categorized, summarized, and reconstructed in a way that captures the important concepts within a data set." (Ayres, 2008, p. 867). The TA of this research report involved three stages: creating domains (topic headings used to cluster the data), establishing the core ideas (a summary of the interview data within those domains), and ascertaining the common themes (a cross-analysis of developing categories in the core ideas) (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hill et al., 2005).

3.2 Research Philosophy, Strategy and Design

The foundation of this research report is rooted in interpretivism. It embraces a worldview that people create their reality socially and focuses on interpreting the meaning that people assign to their own and others' actions (Lapan et al., 2011). The literature review results reveal well-established theories related to brand attachment (e.g., sections 2.4.2; 2.5; and 2.6.1) but limited work on brand page attachment. The researcher adopted deductive reasoning that moves from broad generalisations to specific observations concerning existing hypotheses (Richards, 2015).

Using the case of Pams' brand page, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six users (three active and three passive) to explore the user interaction, or lack thereof. In an exploratory study, the objective is to gain an in-depth understanding and not generalised findings (Mills et al., 2010). Other types of qualitative designs were considered but not deemed appropriate: there was not enough extant research literature available to satisfy a historical enquiry into brand page attachment, nor was there a requirement to generate a new

theory which is typical of grounded theory design, nor was there a need to study a culture group, as found in ethnographic studies (Lapan et al., 2011). To answer the who, what, why, and how of an exploratory case study, a sample of six individuals of self-selected users of Pams' brand page was recruited (see section 3.6).

Interview Guide

The interview guide was developed based on the RQ and included nine main questions, as reflected in Table 1 below:

Theme # 1: Brand Perception
1) How would you describe the Pams brand to a friend who has never heard of it?   2) What do you like / don't like about the Pams brand?   3) How does Pams meet / not meet your expectations?
Theme # 2: Brand Page Interaction
4) When you go onto Pams' Facebook page, what do you usually do?   5) Describe a recent Facebook post of Pams and how you interacted with it.   6) What is your favourite type of post / interaction on Pams' Facebook page?
Theme # 3: Brand Page Attachment
7) What do you find of value on Pams' Facebook page?   8) What do you usually do after you've interacted with / read their page?   9) How would you feel if Pams deleted their Facebook page?

Table 1: Interview Guide

3.4 Sampling

A convenience sample was deemed appropriate as it involves the recruitment of participants who are easily accessible. A process known as snowballing, whereby one or two initially recruited participants called 'seeds' recruit other waves of participants was applied (Lapan et al., 2011). Convenience samples are non-random sampling based exclusively on the convenience factor. Other advantages of this data collection technique are its uncomplicated

nature, the little to no cost involved, and its ability to generate large samples quickly. The main disadvantage is bias, as convenience sampling does not represent the general population (Etikan et al., 2016).

3.5 Ethics

The student conducted a peer review of the ethical aspects of this study with her research supervisor and Massey University granted ethical approval (ID 4000026697; see appendix B). The ethical principles as outlined in Massey University's Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching, and Evaluations Involving Human Participants, as well as the obligations and the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Human Research Ethics, n.d.) applied. There was no power relationship between the participants and the student researcher, with no money or gifts exchanged. All participants gave informed and voluntary consent. Participant privacy and confidentiality are respected, and all collected data was handled and disposed of responsibly.

3.6 Data Collection

The primary data collection was from voluntary participants via semi-structured interviews conducted on Zoom. The student researcher approached her immediate neighbours and friends to recruit potential research participants. Two of the original seven people were suitable in line with the participant inclusion criteria of being older than 18 years and either an active or passive user of Pams' brand page on Facebook; this resulted in a sample of six self-selected users.

The remaining five people were requested to enquire among their network of family, friends, and work colleagues for potentially suitable participants and for those potential participants to email the student to express their possible interest. Nine people responded via email, and after selection to participant criteria, four were found suitable. All six participants received emailed consent forms that were subsequently signed and returned via email to the student. The participant interviews were audio recorded and initially transcribed by Zoom and checked for accuracy by the student researcher. The open-ended questions categorised under three main themes were 1) brand trust, brand image, and brand personality; 2) brand page interactions; and 3) brand page attachment (see the interview guide in Table 1 in section 3.3). The individual interviews lasted between 30 to 45 minutes. Labels were assigned to each participant to safeguard the collected data and prevent possible privacy leaks.

3.7 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is a qualitative data analysis method involving the researcher becoming familiarised with the data obtained from interview transcripts through repeated and immersive reading. The researcher then searches for distinctive and repetitive themes in that data which makes TA suitable when searching for patterns in the data or when a researcher is new to qualitative analysis (Whittaker, 2000).

Its advantages include the opportunity to produce new concepts and ideas from the generated data and the accessible approach it offers to researchers new to the qualitative analysis field. The limitations of TA include its flexibility allowing many data interpretations but may be intimidating to the novice, and appropriately prioritising data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). For this research report, the student researcher conducted TA on the interview transcripts in a step-by-step process by becoming familiar with the data; coding, or categorising, the data; identifying key themes; refining themes; and writing the report (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; see figure 2 below).
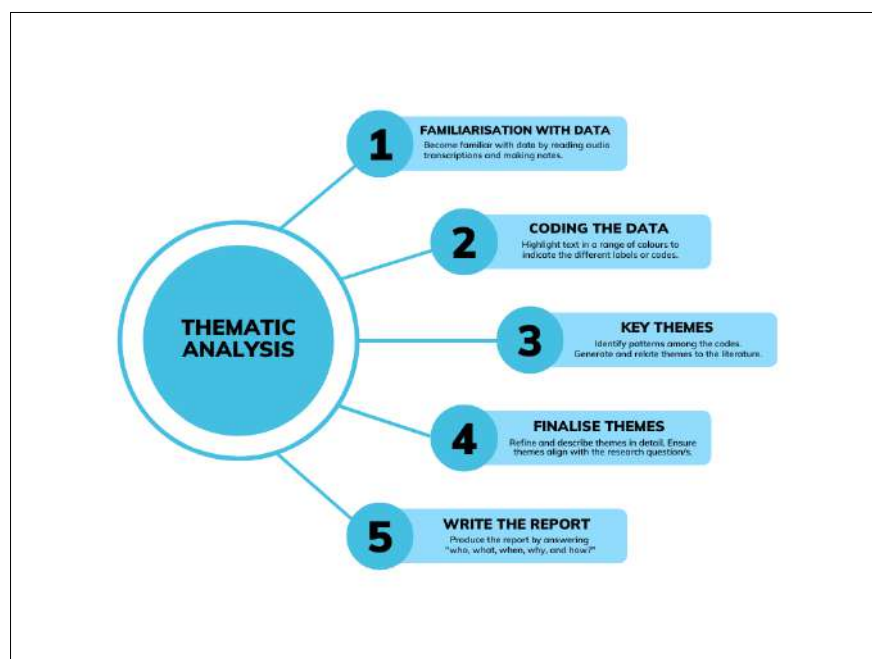

Figure 2. The steps of TA - based on Maguire & Delahunt (2017)

Chapter 4: Data Results

4.1 Introduction

Six participants were recruited, four females and two males; this reflected the findings of a recent New Zealand market study that females do most of the grocery shopping (Commerce Commission New Zealand, 2022). The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to greater than 65 years of age. Their working background includes office, administration, human resources, sales, trade, and a retiree. The participant demographics appear in the table below (Table 2).

Gender	Age	Industry Sector	Tag	Facebook User Type
Female	35 – 40	Administration	Active Female 1 (AF1)	Active
Female	30 – 35	Human Resources	Active Female 2 (AF2)	Active
Female	18 – 24	Office Support	Active Female 3 (AF3)	Active
Female	30 – 35	Sales	Passive Female 4 (PF4)	Passive
Male	65 – 70	Retired	Passive Male 1 (PM1)	Passive
Male	45 – 50	Trade	Passive Male 2 (PM2)	Passive

Table 2. Participant Demographics

4.2 Data Results

The findings from the data analysis relates to the research question: How and why do users engage with Pams' brand page on Facebook? The key identified themes are brand perception, brand page interaction, and brand page attachment (see Table 3 and Table 4) as

4.2.1. Theme # 1: Brand Perception

Trust in a brand generally reduces consumer uncertainty (see section 2.5.1). The passive and active users interviewed found the Pams brand reliable, and most participants also indicated the importance of consistent product quality. All the users thought Pams' products also offer

value for money, with two users particularly impressed with a wider product selection than competing home brands. PM1 described this as convenient:

> "I like to shop all in one go and because I know all Pams' stuff is good, I get most of my shopping done there and then. It's better than *(a rival brand)*, I can tell you."

This consumer viewpoint underscores the work in the literature on the importance of predictability to build brand trust, as well as creditability which is also a factor in determining the perception of product quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

All the users viewed the brand's personality traits (see section 2.5.2) as traditional and typical Kiwi, a sentiment of particular importance to the users. Pams' being New Zealand-owned was significant to them and echoed their perception of the brand being quintessential Kiwi. This notion also dovetails with the nostalgic sentiment they harbour about the brand. Nostalgia is a particular strong driver of brand attachment, as the literature found nostalgic brands enjoy stronger CBRs (Gillespie & Noble, 2017; Youn & Dodoo, 2021).

The current view and perception of Pams, or its brand image (see section 2.5.3), was overwhelmingly one of reliability. In addition, all but one user perceived Pams to resemble a premium brand, with general comments describing the packaging as "elegant" and "pretty" and "not budget-looking at all." These consumer perceptions confirm the importance of brand image and are well documented in the literature (e.g., Levy, 1959; Gardner & Levy, 1955; Singh & Duhan, 2016). It has a significant influence on consumers' emotional and behavioural processes towards a brand (Hsieh & Li, 2008).

4.2.2. Theme # 2: Brand Page Interaction

All three active users are motivated to interact with other brand page users as it has given them a sense of belonging to a community of like-minded consumers. Two active users described their experience of the brand page as fun and an activity they looked forward to every day (see section 2.6.1).

By contrast, the passive users preferred not engaging with anyone on the page, citing various reasons: being shy, having had a previous bad experience online, the brand page moderator not responding regularly to users, and feeling outnumbered by women on the brand page. One passive user felt no need to interact with the brand page unless the brand posted a competition, as only the lure of a possible prize could entice him to interact.

All three passive users thought the main reason for their lack of participation was trepidation about being mocked or rejected by the group. Although one passive user has not personally had a negative online experience, he has observed delinquent behaviour on other brand pages and social media platforms, an experience he is keen to avoid.

There is some overlapping behaviour between active and passive users in downloading recipes, watched videos uploaded by the brand, and shared brand posts on occasion on their timelines. Apart from posting comments, the active users liked posts and comments, interacted with other users and the brand page moderator, and sometimes tagged a friend. Sharing their recipes on occasion was particularly gratifying to two active users, with AF2 commenting:

> "Sometimes I'll share a family fav recipe on there. I love it when somebody tries my recipe and then comes back later to share that she liked it."

And AF3 said:

> "It's like swapping recipes with your neighbour. It gives me the warm fuzzies when I read that they liked a recipe I'd uploaded."

These comments illustrate the emotional connection users make on the Pams brand page. The literature confirms that online connections can be of great social value to users as it builds contacts and friendships, and can allay loneliness (Dholakia et al., 2004).

4.2.3. Theme # 3: Brand Page Attachment

Both active and passive users found the Pams brand page of social and economic value (see section 2.6.2), as it helped their budget and meal planning, gave them new meal ideas, and introduced them to new Pams products. The active users felt part of Pams' online community, two active users made new online friends on the brand page, and one active user made a new friend in real life. In contrast, the passive users did not experience a strong community spirit, although both groups indicated they would feel sad should the brand page be deleted. P1 commented:

> "I'm a widower … and a pensioner and after my hip replacement, I don't get about as much. So, I spend a fair amount of time surfing the Internet. It keeps me busy …
> It's like seeing old friends every time I click on Pams on the Internet, and I read all the comments. I'll be out of sorts if they took it away."

As previous research found, this comment illustrates how goal-oriented users can be in their social media usage and selection to suit their needs (Ko et al., 2005; Ruggiero, 2000). Klein-Kalmer (2016) extended this attachment to the brand page; when users gain information, entertainment, or economic advantage from a brand page, they are likely to become attached to it.

4.3 Summary

Overall, the themes corresponded with the literature, while the findings highlight the sense of community that active users experience, which is absent from the passive users' experience. Table 3 and Table 4 highlight the similarities and differences between active and passive users. Active users perceived Pams as a brand they can trust due to its traditional, reliable and typical Kiwi personality and ability to deliver a wide range of quality products (see Table 3 below).

Themes	Active Users (AF1, AF2, AF3)
Theme #1 Brand Perception **Subtheme** Trust	Consistent quality (AF1, AF3); Value (AF1, AF2, AF3); Bigger product range than other similar brands (AF1)
Personality	Traditional (AF2, AF3); Nostalgic (AF1, AF2, AF3); Typical Kiwi (AF3)
Image	Reliable (AF1, AF2, AF3); New Zealand owned (AF2, AF3); Resembles a premium brand (AF1, AF2, AF3)
Theme #2 Brand Page Interaction **Subtheme** Motivation	Feels part of a community (AF1, AF2, AF3); Fun activity (AF1, AF3)
Behaviour	Likes post / comments (AF1, AF2, AF3); Shares own recipes (AF2, AF3); Interacts with other users (AF1, AF2, AF3); Interacts with brand page moderator (AF3); Tags a friend (AF1, AF2, AF3); Watches videos again (AF1, AF2); Downloads recipes (AF1, AF2, AF3); Shares Pams' posts on own timeline (AF1, AF2, AF3)
Theme #3 Brand Page Attachment **Subtheme** Value	Helps to plan meals (AF1, AF3); Helps budget (AF1, AF2, AF3); New meal ideas (AF1, AF2, AF3); Intro to new products (AF1, AF2); Made new on-line friend/s (AF1, F2); Made new friend in RL (AF3); Feels part of the Pams' community (AF1, AF2, AF3)
Reaction	Feels urge to nibble (AF1); Downloads / shares recipes (AF1, AF2, AF3); Shares post on own timeline (AF1, AF2, AF3); Would feel sad if brand page is deleted (AF1, AF2, AF3)

Table 3. Coding of Active Users' Responses

Table 4 below shows the key findings for passive users. Although passive users share the positive perception of Pams with the active users in terms of quality, reliability and trust, negative online encounters, fear of rejection by the group, and a reticent personality motives passive users not to engage with the brand page. These drivers do not diminish their attachment to the brand, but it casts some doubt on the strength of the brand page attachment.

Themes	Passive Users (PF4, PM1, PM2)
Theme #1 Brand Perception **Subtheme** Trust Personality Image	 Consistent quality (PF4); Value (PF4, PM1, PM2); Bigger product range than other similar brands (PM1) Traditional (PM1); Nostalgic (PF4, PM1); Typical Kiwi (PM1, PM2) Reliable (PF4, PM1, PM2); New Zealand owned (PF4, PM1, PM2); Resembles a premium brand (PF4, PM2)
Theme #2 No Brand Page Interaction **Subtheme** Motivation Behaviour	 Shy (PM1); Previous bad experience online (PF4; PM2); Brand page moderator doesn't respond back (PF4, PM2); Feels outnumbered by women on the page (PM1); Only interacts when competitions are posted (PM2); Fears rejection / being mocked (PF4, PM1, PM2) Downloads recipes (PF4, PM1); Watches videos again (PF4, PM2); Shares posts occasionally on own timeline (PF4)
Theme #3 Brand Page Attachment **Subtheme** Value Reaction	 Meal planning (PF4, PM1); New products (PF4, PM2); Budgeting (PF4, PM1); New meal ideas (PF4, PM2); Stays informed (PF4, PM2) Downloads recipe (PF4, PM1); Would feel sad if brand page is deleted (PF4, PM1)

Table 4. Coding of Passive Users' Responses

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

This research aimed to explore how and why users engage with Pams' brand page on Facebook. Interviews with six users of the brand page (three active users and three passive users) explored their perception of and emotional connection to the Pams brand and why passive users do not interact with the brand page.

The active users' commitment to the brand page derives from the fun and sense of community they experience on the page, having made an emotional connection with the brand page and other users. They are motivated to engage with the page because they derive social, economic, and informational value. Although all the users exhibited a strong positive attitude toward the brand and a commitment to remain in the brand relationship, the passive users displayed a weaker attachment to the brand page.

Choosing not to engage on the brand page was a conscious and deliberate decision by the passive users in response to their prior negative online encounters, as it had instilled in them a fear of group rejection and an expectation of online ridicule. Although they seem as attached to the brand as the active users, their reluctance or refusal to engage with the brand page casts some doubt on the strength of their brand page attachment. Lacking a sense of belonging to a community may contribute to a less robust page attachment, as community spirit is an emotional driver of brand page attachment.

5.2 Research Limitations

The results of this research are not generalisable due to the small sample size of six individuals recruited from the same geographical area. Therefore, the potential limitations of snowball selection are acknowledged as it is a convenience sampling method, with only the most accessible people surveyed; this does not result in a statistically balanced representation of the general population and may lead to sampling bias. In the future larger quantitively studies will provide more detailed information.

5.3 Recommendations

Brands need to negate the adverse online experiences of passive users by fostering an emotionally safe and welcoming brand page. By using focus groups to identify the reason for the lack of brand page engagement, media managers can add measures on the brand page to mitigate the identified concerns. The measures may include advertising the presence of a

strong brand page moderator by interacting daily with followers and maintaining the brand's zero tolerance to online bullying with friendly and fair interactions.

Ensuring the page moderator responds to every comment made within 24 hours, regardless of content or tone, will foster an atmosphere of due care and brand commitment. Furthermore, uploading content that resonates with the different user profiles identified in the focus groups may encourage reluctant users to take the plunge, as exemplified by a passive research participant who only responds to the competitions.

Encouraging regular user-generated content on the brand page will contribute to maintaining a thriving two-way relationship. Responding to all comments, including negative feedback, is essential, as it shows due care and consideration for the opinion of every user. Ensuring all page moderators use the same tone and consistently express the brand persona will encapsulate the brand personality to the user. Finally, focusing on storytelling and creating an emotional connection is essential, as these are at the heart of brand attachment.

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Appendix A. Ethics Application

1. Project Title:
Active users vs passive users: a qualitative investigation of brand page attachment on Facebook

2. Recruitment / Data collection start date:
07/10/2022

3. What dates do you expect data collection and analysis activities to be completed by?
22/10/2022

4. Project Type:
Postgraduate Student Research

5. Aim of the project:
This research aims to gain insight into consumer engagement with a popular supermarket-owned brand, Pams (New World's house brand), via their Facebook page. The study is specifically interested in the activity divergence between active and passive followers.

6. Project Summary:
The powerful emotional attachment that some consumers form with a brand typically goes beyond the pragmatic and into the visceral aspect of brand attachment. This potent bond has been a topic of sustained research over the years to enable marketers to undertake those marketing activities most likely to affect consumer relationships. Research typically focuses on the online activities of consumers, who have come to consider the Internet as a communal third space, distinct from home and work.

Even though a brand may have several thousand Facebook followers, the percentage of followers who actively interact with the brand page and other followers is typically very low. This qualitative research aims to increase understanding of the role active brand page engagement plays, or not, in the continuance intention of followers, by conducting six semi-structured one-on-one interviews (three with active and three with passive followers). The study is exploratory and aims to gain an understanding of consumers' online interaction with Pams.

Snowball sampling will be used to recruit research participants, aged 18 years and older, with diverse levels of brand interactions. The student researcher resides in an Auckland suburb that is particularly age and ethnically diverse and will start the recruitment process with neighbours and friends, asking them if they can refer another person who has an interest

in the brand Pams (snowball sampling). Interviews will take place in person where possible, or online via Zoom and audio will be recorded. Interviews will be transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis and the results will be presented in a 156.893 research report.

7. Describe the peer review process that has been used to discuss and analyse the ethical issues present in this project:

The student researcher has had extensive discussions with her supervisor regarding ethical principles, as outlined in Massey University's Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants; as well as the obligations and principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Interviews will take place on Zoom wherever possible. If the student researcher knows the interviewee (neighbour / friend) the interview will take place at a location convenient for both participants. If interviewees are referred and have not been previously known to the interviewee, the interview will take place in a public space (café / library foyer) or online.

No reimbursement will be provided. Before the interview, respondents will be provided with general information about the aim of the project. Permission to record the interview will be sought. Respondents will be informed that their participation is entirely voluntary, and every effort will be made to preserve their anonymity (personal information will not be recorded in the transcription process).

Interviewees will be informed that they may stop the interview at any time or choose not to answer a question without any negative consequences. The questions that will be asked are related to participants' passive consumption and/or interactions with Pams on Facebook (See Appendix C for the interview guide).

8. Summarise the ethical issues considered and explain how each has been addressed:

Before the start of the interview, the participant will be provided with an information sheet that covers the points discussed above (pt.7) and is outlined below. Potential ethical issues will be reiterated verbally at the start of the interview and verbal consent will be sought.

- Obtaining informed and voluntary consent from all research participants, including permission to record their interviews.
- Respecting the autonomy of participants by making it clear to them that their participation is voluntary, and they may choose not to answer any questions and may quit participating at any stage, without any negative consequences.
- Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of participants.

- Respecting the culture, values, language and practices of all participants. Being sensitive to the possibility of participants being vulnerable or marginalised and maintaining a respectful manner.
- There will be no power relationship between participants and the student researcher, and no money or gifts are to be exchanged. The data will be handled and disposed of in a responsible manner.

9. With whom did you peer review the ethical aspects of your research?

Dr Alexandra Ganglmair-Wooliscroft (Supervisor and Senior Lecturer).

Appendix B. Ethics Approval

To: Caressa.Goldschagg.1@uni.massey.ac.nz, A.Ganglmair@massey.ac.nz

Cc: humanethics@massey.ac.nz

Fri, 30 Sept at 1:17 pm

Kia ora,

Ethics Notification Number: 4000026697
Title: Emotional brand attachment via Facebook: A case study of Pams

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as low risk.

Your project has been recorded in our database for inclusion in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low-risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish require evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again answering yes to the publication question to provide more information to go before one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low-risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low-risk notification.

Yours sincerely
Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)

Appendix C. Participant Consent Form

Consent for Participation in Interview Research

I volunteer to participate in interview research conducted by Caressa Goldschagg, a student researcher from Massey University, Albany. I understand that the interview is designed to gather information about consumers' Facebook interaction with Pams, a brand owned by the New World supermarket chain.

1. I understand this proposed research has been reviewed and approved by Massey University in accordance with its Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants and the Treaty of Waitangi.
2. My participation in this research is voluntary and I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.
3. I acknowledge that I have been provided with general information about the aim of the project.
4. I understand that I may withdraw from this research, or refuse to answer any question, at any time, without any negative consequences.
5. I understand that my participation involves being interviewed by the research student, Caressa Goldschagg and that the interview will last between 30 to 45 minutes.
6. I give permission for the online interview to be recorded via Zoom or the personal interview to be recorded via cell phone and the recording to be deleted after completion of the research report.
7. I understand that every effort will be made to preserve my anonymity and that personal information will not be recorded in the transcription process. Data obtained from the interview will be handled in accordance with Massey University's ethical data governance and custodianship standards which protect my anonymity.
8. I acknowledge that I have had all my questions answered satisfactorily and that I have been given a copy of this consent form.
9. I understand that I may contact the research student or her supervisor at any time regarding this research.

Research student

Caressa Goldschagg
caressa.goldschagg.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

Supervisor

Dr. Alexandra Ganglmair-Wooliscroft
a.ganglmair@massey.ac.nz

Agreed to and accepted by