

ANALYSIS OF THE BRAND EXPERIENCES OF CONSUMERS AT THE JOHANNESBURG NEIGHBOURGOODS FOOD MARKET.

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Topic: To explore the consumer brand experiences of young adults at the Johannesburg Neighbourgoods market within the framework of the consumer culture theory.

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Abstract

This research paper explores the brand experiences of consumers at The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market. In understanding what experiences consumer undergo at the Neighbourgoods Market, the researcher will use research methods and data analysis techniques to answer the research questions.

Keywords:

The keywords surrounding this research paper refer to words which one would use in the sourcing of a research paper outline.

- Food market
- Neighbourgoods Market
- Consumer
- Brand experience
- Consumer culture theory

Chapter One: Introduction

1. Research topic

Explore the brand experiences of consumers at The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market within the framework of the consumer culture theory.

1.2 Introduction

Food has long been a part of South African culture, and will continue to be so as a member at the majority of events which South African's attend. The South African food industry as a whole has witnessed numerous changes and trends, currently the trend that is resonating with consumers most is food markets.

The Neighbourgoods Market is a food market which was established in Cape Town at the Old Biscuit Mill in 2006, it went on to establish a sister market in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, as part of the refurbishment of Braamfontein. Since its establishment the market has grown in popularity and in its ability to draw crowds of people consistently on a weekend-to-weekend basis (Neighbourgoods, n.d.).

This popularity that The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods market has found left the researcher curious as to the factors which contribute to consumers frequenting the market and as to what the experiences of these consumers are with the brand as a whole.

1.3 Problem Statement

To examine whether there is a presence of the perceived alignment between the intended brand experiences of consumers at The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market, and the physical brand experiences of the consumers aged 18 - 25.

1.4 Research Objective

The main objective of this research is to determine whether alignment exists between the intended consumer brand experiences and the physical consumer brand experiences at The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market.

1.5 Research Questions

- To explore the concept of consumer brand experience
- To analyse the brand experiences of consumers at The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market
- To explore the importance of a tailored consumer brand experience at The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market

1.6 Significance of Research

This research study will contribute to marketers gaining insights into consumer interactions, engagement and consumption of brands in relation to consumer brand experiences. The value of the research will be seen in that an established food market will be researched through the eyes of those consumers who may frequent other markets within the Johannesburg area. As the food market industry has seen a steady increase, this research has the potential to shed light as to how other food market brands can assess their own alignment in regards to their anticipated consumer brand experiences, and the brand experiences which consumers undergo. This research has the potential to add value to marketers and potential food market brands in Johannesburg, by providing valuable insights into consumer brand experiences and highlighting the importance of tailored consumer brand experiences.

1.7 Delimitation of Study

The research study at hand will not be focusing on the sensory nature of brand experiences, where the five human senses are stimulated in a manner that yields a reaction of some kind (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009), rather the study will be considering consumers experiences of The Neighbourgoods market brand as a whole. This study will not form a case study on the logistics and inner workings of the Neighbourgoods Market, rather it will form a case study on the perceived alignment between the anticipated consumer brand experiences and the actual brand experiences which consumers undergo. The study will identify what the anticipated

consumer brand experiences of The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market are as a benchmark in assessing whether the perceived alignment exists or does not exist. In order for the researcher to answer the set research questions, it is vital that aims and purpose of the research are focused.

1.8 Methodology

The methodology that will be employed for this study will form a qualitative case study at The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market. The researcher will employ qualitative data collection methods as well as qualitative data analysis techniques in order to uncover research findings and insights. These findings and insights will be aligned with the research objectives, in answering the research questions at hand. The methodology will be explained in detail in chapter three.

1.9 Assumptions

The researcher has the assumption that the motivating factors for some consumers frequenting The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market go beyond the food, beverages and crafts as the product offering; that these consumers are in search for a holistic experience which is unique to The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market. The researcher also has the assumption that the popularity of The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market is linked with the consumer culture of Johannesburg as a city and of Braamfontein as a suburb of Johannesburg.

1.10 Conclusion

This first chapter of the research report has discussed the background of the study along with the research objectives, research questions, delimitation of the study and assumptions of the researcher. The subsequent chapter will form the literature review of this research report which will be outlined according to themes taken from the research objectives and research questions, along with literature surrounding the theoretical framework within which the study is set against.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Food has always had a place in the lives of South Africans, it has the ability to bring people together and lift the spirits of those partaking in any feast throughout various locations at any given time. The Neighbourgoods Market has in the nature of it being a food market, aligned itself with the basic human need for food which consumers consume on a daily basis. This literature review aims to uncover the various themes running through the research report, in addressing the research objectives, research questions and the theoretical framework within which the research is set against.

2.2 Literature review

2.2.1 The Neighbourgoods Market

Food market can be described as areas designated to the tasting, selling and experiencing of a variety of foods and beverages. The Neighbourgoods Market as a brand was founded in 2006 in Cape Town by Cameron and Munro Justin Rhodes, two entrepreneurs with a cognition of revitalising and stimulating the public market as a community of sorts (Kingham, 2012). The market made its move to Johannesburg in September 2011 and found a well anticipated home in Braamfontein (Neighbourgoods, n.d.).

Operating on Saturday mornings, “The market features over one hundred specialty traders, creating a platform for local farmers, fine-food purveyors, bakers and distributors, grocers, mongers, butchers, artisan producers, celebrated local chefs, and micro enterprises,” as explained by Kinghorn (2012). An article by BDLive (2015) speaks of markets which have been transforming Johannesburg, where the Neighbourgoods Market has been said to not only be a traditional food market, in addition it has been said to be, “A new experience in Johannesburg and a new culture”, and has begun to create a trend within South African leisure culture (BDLive, 2015). The article goes on to speak of The Neighbourgoods Market as an institution which informs consumers on alternative manners of doing things in an attempt for consumers to uncover new tastes and experiences.

2.2.2 Anticipated consumer brand experiences of the Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market

The Neighbourgoods Market has set out to, “Go to great lengths to curate our offering to represent the best in local producers and Designers, creating a platform for them to grow micro-industries whilst educating and enticing the public into a more responsible and sustainable - yet tasty - way of living” (Neighbourgoods, n.d.). This is the benchmark to which the researcher will compare consumer brand experiences against.

2.2.3 Influence of trends on consumers

Trends can be described as a move and change in the manner in which consumers think and ultimately behave (Adlip, 2013). Trends can be found in almost all spheres of life, and as the Neighbourgoods Market has exhibited, trends certainly show themselves in the ways in which consumers experience their food. The same article by Adlip (2013) touches on a few mega trends that South Africans had exhibited, such as trends towards open creativity, social cohesion and discovery & freedom.

Consumers are open to new experiences in areas such as music, food and travel, these consumers find belonging in having the ability to create unique experiences in public, social gatherings, and embrace other consumers of different races, backgrounds and ages. Consumers find meaning and belonging in communities of other people, where they can discover, create with and bond with other consumers. The Neighbourgoods Market has capitalized on these trends and has as result seen much success and will continue to do so if the brand remains true to what consumers know it to be (Landa, 2006) (Adlip, 2013).

2.2.4 Influence of word-of-mouth

In the South African context, the experiences of others has a tremendous effect on impending trends. Social media has contributed to these occurrences, Black Twitter comprising of suburban middle-class black South Africans, is amongst the most influential with the myriad of consumers opinions from music to politics (Whaley, 2013). Ultimately trends increase the chance of consumers experiencing a particular brand and the experiences other people will ensure that brands live in the eyes and minds of their consumers (Adlip, 2013).

2.3 Concept of brand experience

A brand can be described as a promise made in the minds of consumers, and continues to hold certain perceptions in the minds of these consumers Landa (2006). Consumers are and will continue to be the most important people who come into contact with a brand, thus their experience of a brand could result in the success or failure of a brand (Brands and Branding, 2014). The experiences that consumers obtain from interactions with brands can create a sense of meaning, which can leave a lasting impression in their minds. This statement is substantiated by Brands and Branding (2014) in that human beings are on the constant look out for meaning in their lives and will resonate with brands who assist them in recognizing this meaning; ultimately consumers are in search for something to believe in.

Brand experience as described by Landa (2006) is a single consumers experience as he or she engages with a particular brand – at every moment of that he or she engages with the brand. Landa (2006) goes on to further say that each moment of engagement the consumer has with the brand impacts their overall view and awareness of the brand. It is of utmost importance then that a brand should tailor its complete branding package that will ensure consumers favourable brand engagement.

2.4 Importance of brand experience

The responsibility of the consumer's brand experiences are in the hands of the brand creators and founders, they ultimately have set the standard of what consumers are to experience with their brand. If these individuals are not attune to what consumers needs and wants are, the possibility of their brands being a success and having longevity, is not guaranteed. Brand creators and founders should be in touch with the trends that are dominating consumer culture, and therefore tailor their brands accordingly (Landa, 2006) (Adlip, 2013).

The Neighbourgoods Market in Johannesburg and as a brand, with its flagship market in Cape Town, have answered the call as to what South African consumers desire, it is this example that will ensure that other South African market can emulate.

Brands should ensure that the promise and value they claim to possess and transfer to consumers, is valid and consistent (Landa, 2006). Consumers of today, especially young adults are very savvy and are able to make decisions as stated by Joy & Li (2012), these decisions could translate into profits or losses for certain brands.

2.5 Consumer culture theory

The theoretical framework within which the research study had been set against is the Consumer Culture theory. Consumer Culture Theory is defined by Joy & Li (2012) as “A distributed view of cultural meaning”, used in analysing consumption outside of the typical frameworks of economics and psychology. These cultural meanings are created and derived by the greater cultural and social powers including ideologies, myths and narratives (Joy & Li, 2012). In light of the Neighbourgoods Markets view as “A new experience in Johannesburg and a new culture” (BDLive, 2015), it is evident that the markets essence is rooted in the definition of Consumer Culture Theory as defined by Joy & Li (2012).

As defined by Arnould & Thompson (2005), Consumer Culture Theory is “An interdisciplinary research tradition which has advanced knowledge about consumer culture.” This knowledge can be seen in the four domains which characterise Consumer Culture Theory, namely consumer identity projects, marketplace cultures, the socio-historical patterning of consumption, and mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers’ interpretive strategies (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). The study at hand will not be focusing on each of the four domains, the following have been taken into consideration:

2.5.1 Consumer identity projects

Consumers Culture Theory is concerned with the means by which consumers construct concepts about themselves in the environments and markets where they live. These consumers often are often influenced by marketplaces and choose to position themselves according to these identities they subsequently inhabit (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). The notion of experience is embedded in consumer identity projects, where consumers are seen as coherent decision creators, and are thrive off deep experiences fostered by marketplace interactions (Joy & Li, 2012). In regard to The Neighbourgoods Market, consumers create their own decisions on which food stalls to visit, and how to best experience the brand. The environment in which they

are in allows for consumers to create their desired identities, which show themselves in their entire brand experience.

2.5.2 Marketplace cultures

Consumer Culture theory shies away from viewing consumers as culture bearers, rather it views consumers as culture producers (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). In view of consumers identified as culture producers, Arnould & Thompson (2005) go on to point out that consumers construct feelings of social unity and cohesion, and in the process forge unique, self-appointed and at times fleeting cultural worlds in the quest of mutual consumption curiosities. Joy & Li (2012) further state that consumers create a form of community identities, where the allotment of shares, common values amidst various interactions. This supports Arnould & Thompson's (2005) views of consumers participating in customs of shared aims which are grounded in the commonalities of these consumer's way of life, interests and leisure choices. In light of The Neighbourgoods Market, consumers come together and share similar experiences, these experiences are what will continue to bring them back in order to experience something different.

The Consumer Culture Theory is a useful theoretical framework in researchers understanding the elements which contribute to and influence consumer experiences. As consumers construct identities in various marketplaces, these identities are overlapped by other consumer's identities in a marketplace or community where common and shared interests dominate. Brands that understand the value and influence of Consumer Culture Theory on consumer experience's, could potentially benefit in changing the value which consumers derive from consuming and experiencing their brands.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted literature surrounding the research topic, as well as the theoretical framework within which the research study is set against. This primary research has set the foundation for the research paper and will be pulled through to the final chapter of this paper.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter has the objective to describe and discuss the methods which will be used in understanding the research objective and questions presented in the beginning of this research paper.

3.2 Research Design

A research design can be described as a detailed plan of the ways in which the research will be undertaken and the data will be collected, in order to meet the research objectives (Aaker, Kumar, Leone & Day, 2013). This exploratory research design for the research at hand will form part of a case study design. Case study research designs survey a single case in a concentrated and precise manner in order to engage and analyse data collected from research (Bryman & Bell, 2014). Case study research designs fall within categories: single event, single organisation and single location.

For the purpose of the research at hand, the researcher will be focusing on a single location case study in the form of one particular food market, being The Neighbourgoods Market. This will be done in order to gain insights in answering the research problem at hand.

3.2.1 Research Methods and Methodology

A research methodology is described as the reasoning behind the research techniques and research approaches (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). This study will be set in the framework of qualitative research.

3.2.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research can be described as a multi-method approach to research characterised by interpretive techniques with the aim to describe, decode, translate and acknowledge phenomena which occurs naturally in the social world (Welman et al, 2005). Qualitative research is positioned amidst the eyes of the research participants and is ultimately contextualised to analyse human behaviours within social environments (Struwig & Stead, 2011). Qualitative research is inductive in

nature, here a theory is the result of the research, which is ultimately guided by generalizable inferences (Bryman & Bell, 2014).

3.3 Population and sampling

3.3.1 Population

The population for the research study will include all consumers who visited The Neighbourgoods Market on the day which the field research was conducted. Each of the consumers had an equal opportunity to participate in the research and become research respondents, as long as they qualified, according to age.

3.3.2 Sampling

In an attempt to tap into the minds of the target market as research participants concerning their brand experience, surveys will be distributed by the researcher at the Neighbourgoods Market. The researcher has chosen the target market methodically from the population which is made up of all young adults in the Johannesburg area between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. This segment of the population of the Neighbourgoods Market's consumers are considered to be young adults between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. This age group has been described as elusive, they are however proving to be more level-headed than otherwise thought to be (Experian, 2014).

3.4 Data Collection

Qualitative research employs various methods of data collection methods, including, direct observation, participant observation, interviews, focus groups and surveys (Bryman & Bell 2014). The research study will be employing qualitative questionnaires to respondents at the Neighbourgoods Market, these questionnaires will be created in an attempt to gain insights into the consumer brand experiences that the participants truly undergo; this will be done in order to answer one of the research questions and reach the research objectives. The final method of data collection will be through direct observation, where the researcher intends on observing the ways in which consumers interact with and experience the Neighbourgoods Market. The researcher will further conduct a brand contact audit in an attempt to identify the Neighbourgoods Market's various moments of interaction consumers have with the brand.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

Data is analysed in order to ascertain answers to the researcher's research questions and ultimately gather insights. Qualitative research utilises various methods of data analysis, namely coding, statistics, narrative analysis and content analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2014). The research study will employ the method of themes in order to analyse the data. Themes can be described as the creation of categories and themes which represent units of meaning from research data which has been collected (Struwig & Stead, 2011). The theme finding method of data collection will ensure that the researcher can manage the data collected can be reduced into manageable and understandable texts. (Struwig & Stead 2011); the researcher will identify which is most appropriate to utilise once the research been completed.

3.5.2 Trustworthiness

The study at hand will be utilising a qualitative research methodology, with the use of a case study with data collection methods such as direct observation and qualitative questionnaires. The use of a single location case study will ensure that the study at hand is reliable, as it will facilitate an environment of focus and precision. The use of a variety of data collection methods will ensure the trustworthiness of the study, as the data could be analysed from more than one single source which, ensuring that the research results will be valid. As the researcher intends on using thematic analysis as a data analysis method, the themes that will be created will allow for trustworthiness, reliability and validity to be present throughout the study and in the research results.

3.5.3 Ethical considerations

The study at hand is exclusively funded by the researcher. In relation to the consent of information, the researcher will in writing ask for permission to be obtained for the researcher to distribute surveys and conduct an interview with the founders of The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market. The research will be happy to share a copy of the research study with the founders should the need arise. In terms of privacy, the researcher will assure all research participant who complete a survey that it will

be done anonymously, and the disclosure of participants names will not be a required. This will allow research participants to complete the survey free from fear of their personal information being used.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the research methodology and the various methods in which data will be collected and analysed in order to cultivate research findings and insights in answering the research questions.

Chapter Four: Research Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to illustrate and cultivate the data collected by the researcher through the use of qualitative research methods such as questionnaires and direct observation. The analysis will be conducted through the grouping of similar themes within headings which will be explained for the audience to understand. This chapter will conclude with the findings and insights which the researcher has gained in the area of consumer brand experiences.

4.2 Research Methods and Data Collection

In order for the researcher to have a complete understanding of consumer's brand experiences at the Neighbourgoods Market, the researcher used direct observation as a means to gather data. The researcher chose to visit the Neighbourgoods Market on a specific day to conduct the direct observation and a separate day to collect data through qualitative questionnaires. This was done as to allow the researcher an opportunity to be fully immersed into the experiences of consumers as she took on the role of a consumer on the first visit; and as the researcher on the second visit.

4.3 Data analysis

4.3.1 Direct observation

The researchers analysis of the Neighbourgoods Market included that there was a constant influx of consumers who enter and exit the market at various times throughout the day of opening, these consumers are varied as many are families with children who visit the market for brief periods of time. Other consumers are older in age who also visit the market for a brief period of time in comparison to consumers who are in the eighteen to twenty-five age groups. These consumers spend more time at the market as they purchase food along with beverages with the intention of sitting down to consume the products while spending time with their friends. This indicates that the Neighbourgoods market fosters an environment of consumer interactions amongst friends and strangers. The multitudes of people who visited the market on the two separate occasions the researcher visited the market for the data collection, indicates to the researcher that the market is indeed popular

with Johannesburg consumers of all ages, especially those in the eighteen to twenty-five age groups.

The researcher also noted that many consumers among the eighteen to twenty-five age groups were dressed in similar types of clothing especially amongst female consumers. The researcher is aware to a decent extent of the various fashion trends currently in the Johannesburg area, these included Timberland boots being worn with skinny jeans, many consumers wearing hats and some female consumers not fully dressed in the cold June weather. This indicated to the researcher that some consumers who frequent the Neighbourgoods Market are aware of and partake in the consumption of trends.

Finally in the direct observation of consumers at the Neighbourgoods market, the researcher noted that many consumers seemed happy and relaxed within the environment. Many consumers were taking photographs of the stalls and vendors, the people within the market and the market itself. The smells and sounds that were in the environment were of various food items and the preparation of the food items. This indicated to the researcher that as the nature of the market is a food market, consumers are generally in a relaxed mood and therefore enjoy themselves. The sharing of food and the experiencing of new types of food was also noted by the researcher, this indicates to the researcher that the Neighbourgoods market is a brand which fosters new experiences for consumers as well as provides quality products.

4.3.2 Brand contact audit

Consumers first contact point with the Neighbourgoods brand was in the form of the signage at the entrance of the alley way which leads to the market. The researcher noted that many consumers were taking turns with other consumers in taking photographs underneath the sign. This fostered interaction with consumers as various groups of people congregated at this contact point. The second point of contact with the Neighbourgoods brand was in the form of the musical entertainment which is situated before the entrance of the market. Many consumers were congregated by the musical entertainment while taking photographs and dancing with their friends and family.

The third contact point with the Neighbourgoods brand was in the form of the signage which was large orange paint with the brand name on a wall parallel to the entrance of the market, the researcher noted few consumers taking photographs at this contact point. As the Neighbourgoods Market is made up of various stalls and vendors to which it provides a service in various open areas, consumers interact with the various stalls and vendors as part of the interaction with the Neighbourgoods brand as a whole. Thus, the fourth and most prominent contact point consumers have with the brand is with the various stalls and vendors who are located within the market. These stalls and vendors range from food items to beverages, sweets and candies, clothing and crafts, these stalls and vendors are spread out across two floors which make up the market.

The fifth contact point consumers experience with the brand are the two distinct seating areas within the market, the first is situated on the first floor and the second and largest seating area is located on the second roof top floor. Here consumers are in interaction with other consumers as their friends, family or strangers who they happen to sit next to. The sixth and final contact point with the market will depend on the direction in which consumers choose to exit the market, although there is only one exit which is the same as the entrance, there are vendors in the passage way near where the initial signage is located. This final contact point is with mostly vendors who sell clothing, jewellery and accessories.

4.3.3 Qualitative Questionnaires

The researcher compiled qualitative questionnaires which were to be completed by respondents at The Neighbourgoods Market as part of the field research which is the basis of this study. The researcher distributed forty-five questionnaires to respondents who qualified to complete the questionnaires within the age group of eighteen to twenty-five, containing various questions which will aid in answering the set research questions. Upon review of the forty-five questionnaires it was apparent that only forty could be used as five were incomplete.

As the researcher applied thematic data analysis techniques, the following findings were noted:

4.4 Findings

1. In answering the question 'How did you hear about The Neighbourgoods Market', respondents Consumers became aware of the Neighbourgoods brand from their friends and family through word-of-mouth.
2. The majority of consumers have visited the Neighbourgoods Market on more than one occasion, with the majority visiting over ten times, a significant number visited between two and five times.
3. The reasons for consumers revisiting the Neighbourgoods Market were interesting and patterns of data had begun to develop. The main reasons for revisiting were identified as the food, the atmosphere/vibe, the entertainment and the people.
4. The motivating factors for consumers visiting the Neighbourgoods market yielded the same patterns as the reasons for consumers revisiting the market, these reasons are for the food, the atmosphere/vibe, the entertainment and the people. A few respondents indicated that the location being Braamfontein was a motivating factor for them visiting the market.
5. When consumers were asked their perceptions on the Neighbourgoods Market in the form of describing it in three word, the themes that evolved were those of fun and relaxation, different and unique, youthful and fresh and lastly vibey and vibrant. The researcher believes that these responses are heavily influenced by the consumer's ages, eighteen to twenty-five, and are ultimately what consumers think about when thinking of The Neighbourgoods Market.
6. Consumers generally understand what is meant by the term brand experience, they however found it challenging to convey that understanding

into words. Consumers understood the term as how it makes an individual feel, some went as far as to understand it as points of contact.

7. All except for two consumers felt that the consumer brand experiences are necessary.
8. The most important aspects of a brand experience as identified by consumers evolved into themes of quality and service quality, satisfaction and brand loyalty, memorability and how it makes consumers feel, and finally alignment with what the brand stands for.
9. When consumers were asked to describe how they felt when at the Neighbourgoods Market responses were very positive, with two consumers feeling that the market was overcrowded and two consumers eluding to feeling as though they were 'broke' after their visit to the market. Overall generally felt happy, comfortable, relaxed, and a sense of belonging while at the market.
10. Consumers were asked to describe their past/present brand experience with the Neighbourgoods market and the responses were overall very positive. Consumers generally felt their experiences were good and happy, unique and fresh and lastly fun. Three respondents described their experiences as overpriced, overcrowded and overwhelming.
11. More than half of consumers had no preconceived expectations going into the Neighbourgoods market, while the rest of the consumers had preconceived expectations going in and all of those expectations were met.
12. Consumers believe the core values of the Neighbourgoods market to be unity and community, good food, good atmosphere/vibe, socialising, unique and different, and finally enjoyment/entertainment

4.5 Insights

1. Consumers are highly influenced by other people's experiences of the Neighbourgoods market brand and are more trusting of the information.
2. Consumers have positive enough experiences to yield further visits.
3. Consumer's experiences of a brand are not one dimensional, they are layered.
4. Consumers first experience a brand in their minds, then can physically experience it.
5. Consumer expect an experience with a brand, and proves that consumer brand experiences are highly important and should be tailored to consumers to ensure return customers and ultimately brand loyalty.
6. Consumers are well aware of how brands should be offering them experiences, and as a result base their perceptions and ultimately their purchase decision on these experiences with a brand.
7. Consumers generally have positive experiences while at the Neighbourgoods market.
8. Consumers are open-minded and neutral when experiencing a brand for the first or second time. Even though consumer are aware of the brand through word-of-mouth, which does not have an impact on their perceptions of the brand.

4.6 Conclusion

As the researcher did not experience The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market personally up till the day the fieldwork was conducted, the researcher remained objective throughout the research process, and not transferred any personal experiences or personal expectations onto the study. This neutral positioning of the researcher has always continuously been a contributing factor in the choice of study and research topic, it has given the researcher an opportunity to learn just as much as the audience. The researcher is also interested to experience the market first hand while in the process of direct observation as a data collection method, as well as get an opportunity to see what all the hype surrounding The Neighbourgoods Market is all about. Further it is the intention of the researcher to gain insights as to why the intended target audience have latched onto this food market brand, and in turn determine the value which they derive from frequenting The Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In the attempt to understand and investigate the consumer brand experiences of consumers at the Johannesburg Neighbourgoods Market, the researcher went on a journey of discovering what the actual experiences of consumers are and the importance of consumer brand experiences. In this journey the researcher had to assess whether there is alignment between the intended consumer brand experiences and the actual brand experiences.

As the Neighbourgoods Market indicated that they wish to curate their offering to represent the best in local producers and designers, creating a platform for them to grow micro-industries whilst educating and enticing the public into a more responsible and sustainable - yet tasty - way of living. It is evident that they have achieved this through the findings mentioned in chapter four. The brand has succeeded in giving consumers a tailored brand experience while remaining relevant and appealing to variety of consumers.

The researcher has answered the objectives and research questions set out in the beginning of the research paper. With consumer culture theory, the market has successfully created market place identities for consumers in making them feel comfortable and allowing them to interact with other consumers.

If the brand continues to do what it is doing, consumers will continue to frequent it and show their brand loyalty which will ultimately make the brand ambassadors.

5.2 Recommendations

1. The researcher recommends that the Neighbourgoods market consider extending their operating hours
2. Offering a greater variety with the product offering
3. Offering variety with the type of entertainment.

Consumers highlighted these throughout the research, overall the researcher believes that the brand is doing a stellar job.

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Appendix

Image: The Neighbourgoods Market intended consumer brand experience



THE NEIGHBOURGOODS MARKET

ABOUT US

The Neighbourgoods Market was founded by original members Justin Rhodes and Cameron Munro in partnership with Adam Levy of Play Braamfontein – a company that has been at the forefront of turning the once dilapidated neighbourhood of Braamfontein into the pioneering creative hub that it is today.

The Market is housed in a historic modernist building and is as much a source for farm fresh foods and speciality goods, as it is a meeting point to enjoy the community, swop ideas and be inspired by the energy that makes Johannesburg.

We go to great lengths to curate our offering to represent the best in local producers and Designers, creating a platform for them to grow micro-industries whilst educating and enticing the public into a more responsible and sustainable - yet tasty - way of living.

Source: <http://www.neighbourgoodsmarket.co.za/johannesburg/about-us>.

Consumer questionnaire

Good day,

I am a student at the Vega School of Brand Leadership studying towards the qualification Honours in Brand Leadership. As a major part of this course, I am required to produce a research report consisting of primary research.

The research study I am conducting surrounds the brand experiences of consumers at The Neighbourgoods Market, specifically focusing on the Johannesburg market, located in Braamfontein.

Please could I take a few minutes of your time to assist with this study; your input would be greatly appreciated. All the answers and comments from this questionnaire will remain confidential.

Thank you in advance...

1. Have you ever visited The Neighbourgoods Market located in Braamfontein?

Please tick.

Yes	No
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🚦 If you select 'no' you do not qualify to complete this questionnaire. If 'yes' please answer the questions which follow.

2. How did you hear about The Neighbourgoods Market?

3. How many times have you visited The Neighbourgoods Market?

4. If more than once, why do you choose to revisit The Neighbourgoods Market?

5. What are the motivating factors for you visiting The Neighbourgoods Market?

6. Describe The Neighbourgoods Market brand in **three** words?

7. What do you understand by the term 'brand experience'?

8. Do you believe that brand experiences are necessary? If yes or no, why?

9. What is the most important aspect of a brand experience in your opinion? Why?

10. As a consumer, how would you describe the way you feel when you are at The Neighbourgoods Market?

11. If you had to describe your past/present brand experience with The Neighbourgoods Market to a stranger, what would you say? Please complete the sentence...

My experience with The Neighbourgoods Market has been...

12. Did you have any preconceived experiences/expectations of the brand? If yes or no, why?

Were your preconceived experiences/expectations met? If yes, how? If no, why?

13. What do you think the core values of The Neighbourgoods Market brand are?

Please list **three**.

14. Do you think that The Neighbourgoods Market brand is unique? If yes or no, why?

15. Do you think that The Neighbourgoods Market brand is successful? If yes or no, why?

16. How do you think that The Neighbourgoods Market could improve on the brand experience that it offers to consumers?

17. Do you think that you will continue to visit The Neighbourgoods Market? If yes or no, why?

-End-

Thank you for your time.