



SCHOOL OF BRAND LEADERSHIP

***ANALYZING THE NARRATIVE IN THE GAME OF
MOTLOTLO TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE
RELATIONSHIP THAT CONSUMERS HAVE WITH
PRODUCT BRANDS***

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ALCHEMY FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the part time honours degree of Research Methodology Research Report RMET8411P at VEGA School of Branding, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree in any other university.

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08 day of July 2014

ABSTRACT

The game *Motlotlo* is not only a storytelling game exploring the significant moments in the tellers life, the game has the opportunity to decode consumer perception of consumers in a manner that brings forward the external brand story.

In contextualizing the game, the research process seeks out the degree in which brand association is informed by experiential and collective memory, and further more unpack how word of mouth communication (such as in the game) has an impact on building or breaking perception.

The paper aims to analyse the content of consumer stories to further understand the relationship between consumers and product brands. Thus *Motlotlo* becomes a tool which may be used to analyse brand contact points and consumer relationship key points.

The paper aims to seek how the game can be used for brand analysis platforms such as healthy brand audits, brand score cards and report cards.

KEYWORDS

The below keywords are words that can be used to find this research paper online:

- Brand association
- Brand contact points
- Brand perception
- Brand story
- Collective memory
- Gaming
- Memory
- Motlotlo
- Storytelling
- Word of mouth communication

DEDICATION

This research paper is dedicated to my late grandmother who continually inspired a spirit of childlike freedom in expressing myself and my talents.

Furthermore, the paper is dedicated to the creative children in South African townships who have precious stories hidden in the plots of the various games they play.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A great extension of appreciation goes out to my tutor Christi Kruger who has successfully directed me into exploring the merge between my childhood experiences and present studies.

The respondents played a significant role in assuring that this becomes a constructive paper, they too are noted in my acknowledgments.

I also dwell in my gratitude towards my family, who have been supportive throughout my honours degree and research process. The recognition for their efforts and input goes beyond words.

“If stories build belief, belief builds brands and brands build business, then negative stories also build belief, belief which harms brands and brands loose business.” (Amar A 2011).

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

- 1. Figure 1: Tiger brand "Tiger Alphabet"**
- 2. Figure 2: Layers of consciousness (RESC) Pawle. J 2006**
- 3. Figure 3: Motlotlo drawing by Moeketsi**
- 4. Figure 4: Motlotlo drawing by Ramela**
- 5. Figure 5: Motlotlo drawing by Makhubela**

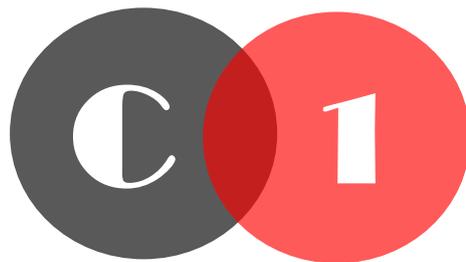
TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1	Introduction and Background	
	Research Topic / Field of Specialisation	11
	Proposed Journal	11
	Research problem and objectives	11
	Rationale	12
	Hypothesis / Assumption	13
	Delimitation / demarcation of the field of the study	14
	Objectives of the study	14
	Terminology	15
Chapter 2	Literature Review	
	Literature review content	17
	Introduction	18
	Storytelling as a means to communicate	18
	Benefits of collecting consumer stories	20
	Contextualizing memory	22
	On a cognitive and emotional footing, brands are imprinted in memory	24
	Brand Association and preference	25
	Brand account for 30-40% of a company's value	25
	Conclusion	29

Chapter 3	Methodology	
	Methodology	31
	Sample	33
	Data collection	33
	Reliability and Validity	34
	Field work	36
	Pilot study	37
	Practical and ethical problems do you anticipated	39
Chapter 4	Research Findings	
	Research Findings	41
	Memory	41
	Word of mouth communication	42
	Motlotlo	44
Chapter 5	Conclusion and recommendations	
	Conclusion	51
	Recommendations	51
Chapter 6		
	Appendices	53
	Interview questions	53
	Examples of the related games	53
	Respondents' Drawings	54
	List of personal communication	54
	References	55
	Bibliography	55
	Alchemy Activation rational	64

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

Research Topic / Field of specialisation

The research topic is: *Analyzing the narrative in the game of Motlotlo to better understand the relationship that consumers have with product brands.*

The research area is using storytelling as a tool to explore.

Through this topic, we look at what encourages the dialogue content in the game of Motlotlo. The game of Motlotlo is a storytelling game, which used to be played by children through the ages of five to thirteen. This game was most popular in the traditional Johannesburg townships; these are townships that were established in the 50's-60, townships such as Kagiso and Soweto. *Motlotlo* means "Storytelling" in SeTswana and SeSotho.

Proposed journal

African Journal of Business Management:

African Journal of Business Management is an academic journal that unpacks South African discourses personifying content through peer-reviewed open access journals. The Soul of the entity is that "to have an international journal that publicised the current research going on in African countries" (*African Journal of Business Management*; About: [http://www.academicjournals.org/about us](http://www.academicjournals.org/about-us) ; accessed 09-03-2015). The audience is comprised of students, business analysts, marketing and advertising companies, brand strategists, CEO's, and forecasters.

Research problem and objectives

The contribution of the study is to explore the parameters of the game of Motlotlo in relation to the connection that consumers in a specific geographical areas(s) have with product brands.

In this topic, the main research problem is of an empirical nature. So far, academic research provides little insight in measuring value propositions of brands through cultural tools. There seems to be a disjuncture in the facilitation of qualifying cultural and emotional explorations. Storytelling principles are usually presented in creative workshops as a qualitative research tool. This research explores this practice further.

Brands have their brand message that is derived from their brand story (internal perspective); however, it is as essential to acknowledge the stories being told by their primary stakeholders – their consumers (external perspective), when building on their brand message and brand promise. As a brand or brand manager, having the tool to uncover consumer perception and their relationship with the brand, is powerful in that it affords genuine discourse in ways that questionnaires, surveys, and traditional marketing tracking tactics could not achieve.

Research questions

The research questions are:

1. To what degree is brand association informed by experiential and collective memory?
2. In context to word of mouth communication, what significant measures can be employed to identify insight in light to perception?
3. How can the game of Motlotlo become a tool for brand managers to deduce brand perception in light of their customers?

Rationale

Analyzing the narrative in the game of Motlotlo to better understand the relationship that consumers have with product brands.

This topic is motivated by the underlying nature of the game Motlotlo.

When I was young, we used to play a storytelling game, much to the effect of a reality TV show narrated by an individual but executed through drawings.

A group of friends would sit on the street, on a stretch tar or sometimes in a classroom where the story teller would retell a story. The story teller would draw square shapes to geographically map where the story takes place. Squares would represent the houses or dwelling, while thin lines would represent the movement of the characters in the story and dialogue would be captured through a repetition of

dots within the geographically mapped fortress. This game / storytelling practice is known as *Motlotlo*.

This is a generational game that was played by my parents and later played by me. However, it now seems as though the game has faded out as games started evolving.

In these traditional Johannesburg townships, particularly in the context of *Motlotlo*, the streets were where the children could express themselves and adopt characters that depict their circumstances. At face value, the content would epitomize signs of envy, aspiration, admiration, criticism, and many other traits that reflect perception on various discourses. However, in this study, I choose to take note of the traits that these storytellers reflect on the perception of product brands. Through the exploration, the study is able to uncover the value shared in the role of the product brand in the lives of these consumers, and how that value has been imparted by families, friends and the community at large.

“Certain brands build up customer communities. These communities provide customers with the opportunity of social integration in a network of like-minded consumers or of increasing the proximity with the brand” (McAlexander, Schouten & König, 2002; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001).

Through analysing the dynamics of the game, it becomes clearer that the communities (family, friends, schools, churches, etc) are effectively influencing perception, and in the context of the study, the perception of product brands. In essence, the audience gains insight because children make reference to specific brands.

For me, the storytelling emulates how a brands’ lifeline is its story and the relationship with you, as a consumer. The relevance of exploring this topic is in how I believe that brands are, or should be, about consumers and their relationship with them.

Hypothesis

I was a product of my environment in that when played the game *Motlotlo*, I regurgitated what I perceived to be dominant influences in what I buy, eat, wear, and essentially consume. As children at the time, my peers would act out values that

their family and friends would have confidence in. In retrospect, the perceptions we shared of these various brands and discourses that are in our lives would be beneficial to the actual entities if they were part of our conversations and storytelling process.

In using direction from the literature review, the research process uses attributes such as storytelling as means to communicate; contextualizing memory; brand association; and consumer stories as guidance to build on the assumption that brands can gain great value from using this game as a tool for customer and product development.

Essentially the research paper will aim to explore how adults, who were children then, living in traditional Johannesburg townships, elucidate perception of product brands influenced through the game of Motlotlo.

Delimitation/ demarcation of the field of study

This study does not go into the parameters of identifying nor exploring the South African social discourses through the game of Motlotlo. Doing so in the context of branding may not justify the integral issues effectively. The study refrains from analyzing how a person / consumer become a product of their environment. A consumer can be influenced by various features, however it is imperative to allow the topic to remain about Motlotlo as a tool of uncovering these influences rather than realizing a consumers' identity in context of the product brands.

What is most important is that this study is not focusing on the internal stories told by the brands themselves but the stories told by their consumers and external stakeholders. For instance the TrueMoveH: Giving campaign.

Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to formulate Motlotlo as a tool that brands and brand specialists can use to analyse brand relationship key points with consumers. In other words enable the brand managers to key identify insights as well as to understand their position in the lives of their customers.

Motlotlo can be an instrument that can give access to more accurate healthy brand audits, brand score cards and report cards (above other brand measuring tools that brands and brand specialists use).

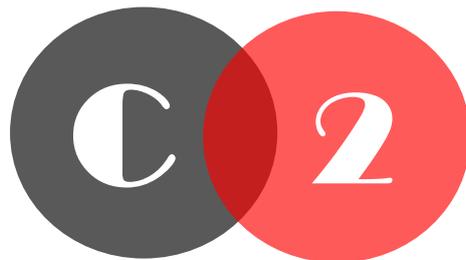
The point is to differently take on the understanding that brands add value to peoples' lives, and to assess this notion in an innovative way. In branding, we believe that you don't sell to individuals, you sell to networks, therefore communicate values. Motlotlo is a fitting tool that enables for the sourcing of these values.

Terminology

- Motlotlo: Storytelling
- Tsomo reka Omo: Go buy Omo
- Morabaraba: Indegenous game
- Zum Zaka Riza: No direct nor indirect translation
- Ditini: Tins

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW



Chapter 2

Literature Review

Literature review content:

“A brand story is more than content and a narrative. The story goes beyond what’s written in the copy on a website, the text in a brochure or the presentation used to pitch to investors or customers.” (Jiwa B <http://thestoryoftelling.com/> 2015).

A brands’ story is a complete picture layered with facts, feelings and interpretations. These are attributes that suggest that part of your story isn’t even told by you (the brand / brand manager); it isn’t what you tell people but much of what they believe about you based on the signals your brand sends.

The relationship between consumers and brands can be analysed and monitored in various ways. Using the game of Motlotlo as a tool is not only a quintessentially South African take but it also enables an intimate analysis into understanding the layers of influences of perception.

In 2012, in the book *Brands and Branding in South Africa 2012*, Mario Simon - Managing Director & Global chair at Millward Brown Optimar said, “Tangible assets account for only 30-40% of a company’s value. The rest is the intangible value, and about half of that intangible portion – close to 30% of total business value – is attributed to brand”. From this, we can deduce that the value that brand brings to business is of significant important and part of the shared value is perceived by stakeholders such as consumers.

The literature review will be looking at how the research topic can be best unpacked under the direction of the four research questions. In doing so, the following sub topics will be looked at:

- Storytelling as a means to communicate
- Benefits of collecting consumer stories
- Contextualizing memory
- On a cognitive and emotional footing, brands are imprinted in memory
- Brand Association and preference
- Brands account for 30-40% of a company’s value

Introduction

“Storytelling is one of, if not *the* most powerful form of human communication and a fundamental way by which we structure and make sense of our lives and the world around us (Schiffrin, 1996)” (J Cooper & P Pawle 2006:41).

“Part of who we are today is the result of who we were in the past.” (Mugge et al., 2008: 436). (Xue H& Woolley, 2006: 7). We essentially become products of our environment to some degree. Through those experiences, we interact with matters that are adopted by us through repeated behaviour even if it is through observations of such matters. “As Leibniz states, we need to have some “windows” to be able to see (perceive) outside influences. But how do these windows come about? (Démuth A, 2013:67)”. Various engagements with matters such as brands, people, or landscapes shape our perception of life and those involved in such matters, build awareness and insight as a reflection of their experience.

Storytelling as a means to communicate

Our experiences globally have long been fundamentally captured and relayed through forms of storytelling. The “window” of accessing these experiences has been primary through the sharing of stories through word of mouth WOM. Word-of-mouth communication is one of the strongest sources of information for consumers (Kotler 1988). (Delgadillo Y & Edson Escalas J, 2004: 186).

Stories add to the humanity of brands. They help consumers think through and act upon a narrative that is fundamentally rooted in human truths (we see ourselves, our likeness, or our aspiration in plot). Minus this, all content merely becomes features, data and discounts. With the above, it can be said that stories generate empathy.

Storytelling is about the combination of ethos, logos and pathos therefore brands and companies use storytelling to communicate their core values, win more customers, and differentiate from competition.

In context, companies and brands have applied this concept through various contact points with their stakeholders. It is evident through traditional advertising mechanisms. "For a company to be successful, it is essential that it understand consumers' perceptions of its products, services, and/or brands. Marketing and advertising frame these perceptions, along with word-of-mouth (WOM) communication between consumers when they complain about products or recommend products to friends." (Delgadillo Y & Edson Escalas J, 2004: 186). Love and respect are central in the connection between brands and customers.

When reflecting the mechanics of the game of Motlotlo, it begins to be evident that there is parallel in the values achieved in understanding the phenomenon of gauging perception. In listening to these stories, there is a thread of "commitment, empathy, and passion." (J Cooper & P Pawle 2006:38) for the storyteller.

Essentially what brands (as storytellers) aim to do in developing relationships with their consumers (listeners / audience) is "give birth to great stories; bring the past, present, and future together; tap into people's dreams; celebrate myths and icons; and inspire." (J Cooper & P Pawle 2006:38).

Storytelling has double meaning. Firstly in summarizing McGregor and Holmes study, there is similarity between the structural similarities of narratives and the information naturally acquired in life experiences.

On the one hand, "it implies recounting experiences in a coherent narrative format with the perspective of an audience in mind," (McGregor and Holmes 1999, p. 403). On the other hand, "it can also connote a certain slippage from the realities of the episodes it supposedly portrays, if not a wholesale bending of the facts to create a 'good story'" (ibid, p. 403). This "slippage" of facts to create a good story has implications for the attitudes" (Delgadillo Y & Edson Escalas J, 2004: 186). "Our own experience as discussed later is that both metaphors and brand storytelling are excellent techniques to unlock the core meaning of brands, along with a number of other techniques to get at more implicit associations with brands." (J Cooper & P Pawle 2006:38). "Therefore, these authors assert that narrative advertising may be the best way to communicate a service brand image." (Delgadillo Y & Edson Escalas J, 2004: 186).

Benefits of collecting consumer stories

Due to the cultural and intangible nature of the topic, the emotional and unquantifiable method of research needs to be directed by a framework that enables legitimacy and validity. "...Ethnographic work actively involves professional ethnographers and their clients in the experience of data collection and provides reports of consumers' experiences; stories produced in commercial ethnography create conditions that facilitate reader imagination of consumers' lives" (J. Bruner 1986, p. 11).

There is a story about a little girl who was very sick and could barely get out of bed. She was so sick, she didn't want to eat. Knowing this, her mother devised a plan. She came into her bedroom with a shoe lace and a big bowl of this cereal. She told the little girl to make a necklace with the cereals and if she would like to eat her beautiful necklace after stringing it, it was okay. This gave the little girl some fun while she sat in bed and at the same time it filled her tummy with food which she didn't even realize. When the little girl grew up, she played the same trick for her own children when they didn't feel good.

We can certainly learn about the feelings being communicated about the brand value propositions in relation to their consumers primarily through a storytelling process conducted by consumers, about their lives with certain product brands. "Stories work as a way to access feelings. They are a fundamental way through which we learn and communicate (M Richards, International Journal of Market Research Vol. 54 Issue 6).

The benefits of collecting consumer stories are that:

"They contain meaningful experiences about the roles of brands in our everyday lives; They engage and express emotions in ways that may be censored in interviewing; storytelling gives "permission" to say things that we otherwise suppress". (J Cooper & P Pawle 2006:38)

The distinctiveness of WOM communications leads to its being accessible. Multiple facets of narrative structure have an impact on how distinctive WOM communication will be.

Causal attributions mediate the effect of (negative) WOM on brand evaluations. Hastie (2003) has argued that stories are the primary mental mechanism for making causal attributions, because stories structure events in goal-oriented action sequences that result in (or *cause*) particular outcomes. Smith and Vogt (1995) examine how (negative) WOM information is integrated with information presented in advertising. The narrative structure of WOM communications has implications for this stream of research as well. One hypothesis is that a narrative ad, that is, an ad that tells a story, may counteract negative or positive WOM story effects better than another type of ad, for example, one that provides product information in an analytical fashion.

A great brand story should be a central core of your brand strategy and not merely relegated to your *About Us* page, but highlighted through a variety of media and collateral and displayed in ways that allow your customers to spread the word and get involved.

J Cooper & P Pawle studied that a great brand stories generate many insights about how people feel about the brand. The elements of the story express that which we are, what we want, aspire to and what we fear; thus expressing the type of relationship that customers have with the brand. Most importantly, they are stories shared among consumers as powerful word-of-mouth communications, *iron* influential or inspirational consumers passing virally around communities.

Consumer relationships with brands as symbols of deep emotions can be analysed by using classical Psycho Dynamic Analysis (PDA). From these analyses, creative recommendations are drawn about how to position brands to satisfy unmet needs or feelings. J Cooper & P Pawle explain this as a means to hold up a lens to the world, "you could look through that lens and see the world from a certain perspective . . . that produces a reliable insight, a sharp wit, and a standard of quality that was maintained over a long time...." (J Cooper & P Pawle 2006:43).

Contextualizing memory

Experiences are captured in memory and through the profiling of memory, association is imprinted. “Brand associations are the information, such as brand attributes and benefits linked to the node in memory (Keller, 1998). According to the human associative theory (HAM) (Anderson, 1983), brand associations can be formed through direct and indirect experiences. On the other hand, brand associations provide buyers with reasons to buy and create value for the brand. They help consumers to process and retrieve information and evoke positive affect and cognitive considerations of benefits (Ebrahim R, 2011:7). With regards to Brand associations, consumers store information in memory about a brand and when making purchases can recall the information, therefore brand association is an essential attribute to brand asset.

“These memory experiences are symbolic to the consumer and represent a new lens for viewing brand meaning, which complements the toolbox of extant research” methods” (Braun-LaTour K.A, LaTour M.S, & Zinkhan G.M; 2007:45) One of the tools to access the value in which brands add to consumers’ lives can be through then willingly share their perceptions in a mode of communication that doesn’t prohibit them from self-expression.

As, Gordon stated in 2006, brands are coded in memory on a cognitive and emotional basis. “Children are natural storytellers, how much of child play was about being characters – from mummies and daddies through witches and wizards to all manner of fantasies, woven into stories acted out in playgrounds and in bedrooms, with friends, with dolls, even with Lego bricks. (M Richards, International Journal of Market Research Vol. 54 Issue 6). The character play is based on memory and a constant role that influences their development and perceptions.

“The elicited memories can be interpreted on both literal and symbolic levels and can help marketers develop their own brand myths. Marketers who recognize that consumers coproduce brand meanings will find this method useful for their brand positioning and communication strategies.” (Braun-LaTour K.A, LaTour M.S, & Zinkhan G.M). this same point advocates for what Pawle states as a mode of

experiential expression for the consumers. Through enabling consumers to express themselves, the core meaning of brands can be identified.

This section defines the following concepts to contextualize memory in light of this research topic: “Collective Memory”, “Collective Memory Element”, and “Early Experience”.

“Collective Memory” is defined as a group of people’s proverbially shared memory of non-physical and physical objects (e.g. Behaviours, styles, products and brands etc.) that those people used to act or interact with daily, but no longer commonly available nor widely circulated. Such non-physical and physical objects are termed “Collective Memory Elements”. “Early Experience” refers to the childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. I will provide an experimental design case as an example to explain this design strategy. (Xue H& Woolley, 2006: 8).

What I draw from Pawle as well as Braun-LaTour K.A, LaTour M.S, & Zinkhan G.M are that memory is a constructed element that is structured around representations and stories that are fused with consciousness and unconsciousness.

“Narrative knowing is a form of discourse and a way of understanding the world that "is centred around the broader and more inclusive question of the meaning of experience," whereas the paradigmatic mode of knowing focuses on establishing universal truth conditions” (J. Bruner 1986, p. 11). The meaning of perception from the children’s’ position will be defined as follows:

- insight (consumer insight on the use and purpose of the brand);
- awareness (the familiarity of the brand, and the brands competitors);
- observation (the children’s examination on how the product is consumed by others, what benefits it affords and what other people’s opinions are of the brand)
- Experience (what the children’s experience is with the brand)
- Opinion (From the above mentioned, what opinion is formed of the brand).

On a cognitive and emotional footing, brands are imprinted in memory

Memory is a construct built out of the metaphors and stories along with the new experiences that are committed both consciously and unconsciously, and also commends metaphor elicitation as a method to capture less conscious emotions and feelings.

A brand story is more than a catchy tagline. Your story is the foundation of your brand and a strategy for future growth.

Ian Rowden is the Chief Marketing Officer of Virgin Group, he lives by the idea that The best brands are built on great stories. As read in J Cooper & P Pawle's text, "brands these days need not just to be respected but must also build a strong, loving relationship with consumers". "The imprinting-like effects of early experience on lifetime preferences should be considered even for such durable and utilitarian products as automobiles." (Schindler & Holbrook, 2003: 296)

Similarly, in terms of designing better product experience for target users, to know this group's past, how they grew up, what objects generally influenced their past, and learn to predict how to use their memories to design a better product experience could be valuable to designers

Ebrahim R argues that the experiential view focuses on the symbolic, hedonic responses beside the cognitive responses, and regards consumers as more blood and flesh humans who can have emotional and cognitive responses toward products. Therefore is argument implies that the experiential view contributes more in explanation of brand preferences formation by emphasising the role of the responses other than the cognitive one derived from consumers' experiences with the brand.

Unilever is another brand that used the **Project Sunlight** campaign that was in light of children's day to communicate their values through the stories told by a number of pregnant couples. With the concentration on the emotions of the couples, how they directed the stories told by the consumers, the pregnant couples is through a question. "Why bring a child into this world?". They used this discourse to imitate positive change in the world. This story was shared by millions of people.

Brand Association and preference

Generally, when people are facing huge uncertainty or change in their lives, nostalgia could serve as an adaptive mechanism (Davis, 1979). This probably is the most important reason for this nostalgia trend. (Xue H& Woolley, 2006: 4). "Customers use brand associations to help process, organise, and retrieve information in memory to aid in making purchase decisions (Aaker 1991; Low and Lamb 2000). The network of nodes and associations is a fuzzy structure that can take many forms based on the cues used to access the network (Barsalou 1983).

Keller (1993) defined brand associations as informational nodes linked to the brand nodes in memory, which contain the meaning of the brand for customers. Davis (1979: 18) defined nostalgia as a "positively toned evocation of a lived past" and noted that the nostalgic feeling is full of love, satisfaction, pleasure, joy, goodness and happiness of past and seldom infused with the negative emotions (e.g. hate, despair, frustration, shame etc.). (Xue H& Woolley, 2006: 3).

"The essential difference between emotion and reason is that emotion leads to action while reason leads to conclusions" (Calne, 2000). The quantifiable aspect of the research content will be the results identified from the actions made based on consumer perception. For example, the research will identify what the outcomes of certain consumer perceptions are for the brand and for the consumers themselves in relation to competing brands.

The tool to do so, which is storytelling through the game of Motlotlo is in listening to how children speak about these brands. "Most theorists, from Freud to Jung to Piaget to Erikson (Csikzentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981), have recognized the importance of childhood in establishing relationships and "imprinting" preferences." (Braun-LaTour K.A, LaTour M.S, & Zinkhan G.M).

"An emotion that emerges again and again in accounts of the post-socialist world is nostalgia. In many countries large parts of the population are prone to claim, with obvious feeling, that this or that aspect of life was better before the collapse of the

communist regimes.” (Heady & Miller, 2006) In the process of analysing cultural and social effects on a specific individual’s perception there must be a process of eliminating individual differences and thereafter identify influences characteristic for the whole group of observant.

It is demonstrated that consumers can have an already established preference and refer to the brand attributes that confirm their preferences. In addition, this traditional cognitive view that deemed consumer as rational decision making had been shifted to the experiential view focuses on the emotional, cognitive, symbolic responses of consumption an Importance of childhood in establishing relationships and as Ebrahim R describes it, “imprinting” preferences.

Over a period, consumers acquire various associations relating to a brand. At times, it has to do with brand attributes and benefits, and furthermore, others represent individual customer experiences with the brand. Whatever the answer might be, many so called perceptions which we intuitively use to conclude important information from our environment, are not culturally universal and neither do their colour connections carry an important message independent of the experience. This has been proven by a series of experiments involving a perception of pictograms in different cultures which resulted in ambiguous interpretation”.

In light of brand preference, J Cooper & P Pawle explain that loyalty cannot be bought for money, however love can result as a factor. This is through strong emotional bonds which reinvigorates loyalty and creates advocacy for the brand.

The research topic aims to identify the influences that consumers have in their relationship with brands products. The channel in which to analyse this relationship is through acknowledging the preferences that consumers have. The preferences will inform the value of brand loyalty.

“Brand preference represents the attitudinal brand loyalty excluding the action of repeat purchasing; the brand-oriented attitudinal loyalty. The main theme is that the first three decision-making phases of brand loyalty constitute the focal of brand preference. Thus, brand preference is related to brand loyalty; however, brand loyalty is more consistent depicted by the long term repeated purchasing behaviour.” (Ebrahim R, 2011:5).

In the research, Ebrahim defines brand preference as the consumer's tendencies or biasness toward certain. Therefore to him, this definition represents an essential step in understanding consumer choices, which leads to the "The self-concept".

"The Self Concept is "when consuming a brand with personality, consumers evaluate brands by matching process that is identifying brands congruent with their own self-image. This process is called self-congruity; congruence between consumer's self-concept or self-perception and symbolic brand image. The brand personality-self-concept congruence enhances the affective, attitudinal and behavioural responses, thus leading to favourable brand attitude strong brand preference over competing brands. Consequently the following can be assumed: Brunel Business School – Doctoral Symposium 28th & 29th March 2011 9. The impact of brand personality on brand preference is stronger when there is a high congruence between the human and brand personality." (Ebrahim R, 2011:8&9).

As a case study, Tiger Brand did precious campaign "The Tiger Alphabet Campaign". At the time, 65% of school learners (primary school) could not read. What they did was take brands that South Africans love and use every day, brands that they are familiar with, to teach them how to read. They created "The Tiger Alphabet", alphabets made up of brands that South African love and use.

1. A = All Gold
2. B = Black Cat
3. C= Crosse & Blackwell
4. D = Doom
5. E= Enterprise
6. F= Fizz Pop
7. G= Golden Cloud

And on it goes.



Figure 1: Tiger brand "Tiger Alphabet"

Brands account for 30-40% of a company's value

“Exploring relationships along the chain of effects from marketing actions to marketplace outcomes and the creation of market-based assets and firm value. (J Cooper & P Pawle 2006:43). Ebrahim R suggests to use brand experience as a key source of information that consumers have about the brand. This is then linked in memory forming the brand related associations therefore resulting in forming brand preferences.

Pawle accounts that emotional intelligence is becoming more central to advertising development. It is essential for the companies to build Customer Equity through their brand and brand equity. “The validity of the relationship proposition in the consumer-brand context, including a debate as to the legitimacy of the brand as an active relationship partner and empirical support for the phenomenological significance of consumer-brand bonds; (2) provides a framework for characterizing

and better understanding the types of relationships consumers form with brands; and (3) inducts from the data the concept of brand relationship quality, a diagnostic tool for conceptualizing and evaluating relationship strength.” (Fournier S, 1998:343).

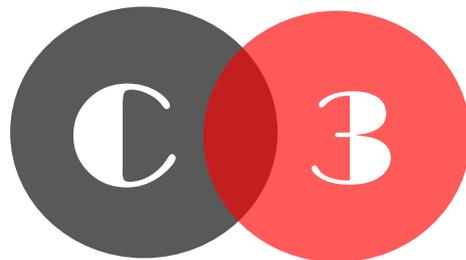
Your audience may not see it, but without it, your brand is nothing. “Storytelling in marketing terms isn’t just about telling ‘a story’ (producing an advert where a narrative arc occurs); it’s about telling the story of the ‘brand’ across multiple channels and using various tools and methods. The challenge is in not just using storytelling in video, but also to keep “the narrative weaved into the customer experience”. (What is storytelling for brands and why do you need it? 23 September 2014).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review has looked at how the engagement in narrative / storytelling can influence the outcomes in facilitating tools to monitor brand perception. The literature review has facilitated the research process with areas such as “storytelling as a means to communicate”; “the benefits of collecting consumer stories”; “contextualizing memory”; “cognitive and emotional footing, brands are imprinted in memory”; “brand association and preference; and lastly “brands account for 30-40% of a company’s value”. In that, attributes that determine the relationship between consumers and brands have been identified and studied.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION



Chapter 3

Methodology and data collection

Methodology

From this, the research followed a qualitative research process, informed by an ethnographic research process. Therefore, field research was conducted which then involved in depth interviews and focus groups.

The research was conducted through an ethnographic process that enabled me as a researcher to listen in as an observer and partially participate in the game of Motlotlo and explore the topic through the eyes of my participants. The method which was followed is a qualitative research approach therefore affected the scores of interpretation.

The primary research would be comprise of sitting in on the game being played and drawing analysis from the participants; focus groups comprised of storytellers (participants in the game), and interviewing brand specialists, cultural ambassadors and product retail owners in a semi-structured manner. Voice and video recording were used as tools interview participants. Findings came from patrons who are now adults and who have played this game when they were younger.

In the secondary research process (desk research), I utilized online journals and publications, books, blogs, online recorded creative workshops.

Motlotlo is a game that was primarily played in traditional townships, therefore the sample has to represent a cross-cultural scope of participants who are now adults and had played this game and are familiar and understand the geographical structure of where the game originates but most importantly the social, economic, and political climates of the geographical areas, within a time.

In order to conduct a representative sampling size but yet sizable for an honours project, the sampling was comprised of 6 adults, boys and girls (mostly girls, because it is girls that mostly play this game). This number doesn't fully represent the sampling fraction of the population in the townships, but is adequate for an honours level paper. The research will be conducted in Kagiso and Soweto.

It would have been complete to interview children between the ages of 7-12, however it has proven to be difficult to get them together and commit to a semi-structured research process. It has also proven that children at this age are easily persuaded and as a researcher I would possibly influence their reactions and input. An advertising and brand strategist was interviewed as part of the collective.

The involvement of the 7-12 old children would come in a form of sitting in one of the games being played by this group and engaging on an ethnographic point of view.

In this process, I did not initiate the snowball sampling effort because it would be difficult to facilitate and examine the intimate and raw responses from other participants without having a personal engagement to make judgment on.

As part of the process, I would be using case studies from existing brands such as Tiger Brands and Unilever as an alternative to individual depth interviews.

I conducted visits to participants over time, allowing the individuals' and groups' stories to inform the body of research.

The research materials needed to conduct research are questionnaires, voice and video recorder, paper and pen for to draw their stories on, images and videos of brand logos, advertising and marketing materials, case studies.

The research method was appropriate for the research questions because in the process, the participants were enabled to give insight into the construction of the storylines which highlights what informed the storyline and furthermore allowing room for objective views from various participants. The method experiments with various communication modes which unpacked the narrative in the game of Motlotlo. From an academic perspective, the methodology encompassed theoretical appraises that distinguish the relationship between consumers and brands.

Lastly, in the exploration of the topic, Motlotlo was centralized as a tool to express the connection and value between consumers and brands.

Sample

The research sample size consists of six respondents.

The selected respondents have been divided into individuals who have played the game and those who have not played the game, and lastly one strategic brand specialist.

The sampling strategy was to identify individuals who not only played the game but also have ability to articulate the complexities of the game of *Motlotlo* as well as games that relate to it. Furthermore, individuals who would be aware in their responses to the geographical, economic and social issues that are attached to the practice and playing of such games. This would bring forward true insight into the lives of these individuals then and now.

From that notion, convenience sampling was used. The reason was for the restrictions of possibly engaging individuals who cannot articulate their memory, nor decode their association of brands in the conversations they used to have as children.

From the respondents, those who used to play the game are females: Kebone Ramela, Female, 23, Gauteng Kagiso, Economics student, played the game; Maryjane Makhubela, Female, 22, Gauteng Kagiso, Human Resource, played the game; and lastly; Thando Dube: Female, 27, Gauteng Soweto, Chartered Accountant, played the game. Tshepiso Mogotsi, is the one male, 23, Gauteng Kagiso and Soweto, Fashion designer, who used to played the game.

Boitumelo Moeketsi: Female, 24, from Eastern Cape King Williams Town, Copywriter. She is the one female who did not play the game and is not familiar with the indigenous games related to Motlotlo. The last respondent, the strategic brand specialist is Neo Marumo-Mphaphuli, Male, 28, Gauteng, Boksburg, Advertising and Brand Strategist.

Data collection

The data collection procedure involved various aspects of communicating and capturing informative moments with the respondents.

The interviews were conducted and recorded through voice records. The transcribing process involved highlighting key insights in what the respondents mentioned and having the respondents elaborate on their insights visually (by drawing out their stories and brand perceptions). Thus, the respondents were asked to sketch their own *Motlotlo* story, and interactively participate in populating the RESC model which also assisted in analysing consumer behaviour.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability of the study comes through the premise of a structured observation research process. The interaction with the respondents was an interactive process, where I as the researcher would be taken through scenarios of the game itself in context to how the respondents lived and played when they were young.

In the process of data collection, the respondents were asked to partake in various activities that would literally draw out their understanding of the game of *Motlotlo* and their association to the brands involved in the game.

What is powerful is that the respondents identified a string of games that were founded on brands and brand association that they used to play. Due to the research process, their memory was ignited as they started identifying underlying tokens that informed their leisure time, influenced by the brands they love and aspire to. This will be further outlined below.

With regards to the validity of the study, it goes without saying that there are a levels of hidden behaviour from individuals and groups of people, cultural complexities and memorable social events inform peoples 'choices to share their lives with chosen products and services because they add value to their lifestyles.

The value of the study explores these incidents in the name of bonding core consumer insights with the innovative manner in which product brands should start communicating with their consumers. The study is heavily based on emotive reactions, thus it is imperative to quantify the effectiveness, usability, and rational formation of the data.

The research process was effective in that the respondents identified the change in direction with regards to the communication and value of brands at certain points in their lives, thus identifying the possible causes internally and externally. This as an outcome becomes a way to identify the consumers' expectations and relationship with the product brands.

The data is usable as it is able to track the thought processes and emotional association of a consumer to product brands. It is interactive thus the reader or observer enjoys the social and economic links to the game that has been delivered through the involvement and attachments of product brands.

Field work

In the ethnographic sampling, bases of conversational interviews were structured. This informed the body of the field work and the interaction with the respondents while I am there physically or not.

The field work for the research process is a mixture of participant observation and structured observation. The aim is to gain access into the feelings that create perception about product brands. This is through an ethnographic process that ignites the use of storytelling and accessing memory to interpret this.

Individual interviews were held throughout the research process. From this, there was a need to access insights relating to psycho-demographic targeting for brands. From the individual interviews, the conversation was able to debunk what influenced the respondents' self-expression through the games they played; it also gave a window into the social and economic circumstances that influenced their lifestyles and lifestyle choices.

The interviews, as suggested by the research topic, were guided by the aim to analyze the narrative in the game of Motlotlo , so to decode the elements in the storytellers life that brings value to their engagement with certain product brands..

Two focus groups were conducted; the first one was with two females who used to play the game, Makhubela and Ramela. The intention for the focus group was for the respondents to unfold and remember the trajectory of the game. This allowed for the researcher to observe subjects that trigger memory and conversation but most importantly a recollection of memory for product brands. The focus group evoked

important emotions that brands are striving to induce with their customers. This showed that there is a need for more conversational platforms with brands and consumers.

The other focus group consisted of three respondents, one who did not play the game, Moeketsi, and the other one who did, Ramela. The purpose of this focus group was to identify the complexity and viability of this topic in context to those who did not know much about the game. Structuring the focus group in this way verified the significance and interest around word of mouth tools that collect valuable insights about brand perceptions. It further allowed for the respondent to give understanding in context to answering the research questions.

The size of the focus group was kept to an intimate size intentionally because in the case of larger groups, it is easier for respondents to redirect the content of the conversation, especially when dealing with nostalgia and conversations around memory.

The focus groups were semi-structured interviews. We first introduced the respondents to a round of remembering their favourite games that embedded product brands. From that, a number of games that inform the research findings are introduced and decoded in context to the research questions. These games will be further outlined later in the paper.

The manner in which the conversations within both the individual interviews and the focus groups were set up gave flexibility for the respondents to interpret the topic of storytelling into degrees of discourse personification. They embodied their modes of communication through memory to identify part of who they were as children. The channel of nostalgia brought familiarity and understanding to the levels of adaptive mechanism in context to branding and advertising.

With the major focus on memory and storytelling, it is fitting to have Life History Interviews as part of the focus group structure. This approach allows for a personal interpretation from the respondents, allowing the respondent to look back at their relationship with certain product brands in context to their lifestyles and environment.

The research took on representative interviews, thus the respondents were observed primarily on their ability to interact within the context of the game as themselves

when they were young as well as themselves presently as adults associating that memory and contextualizing their influences based on their current circumstances and relationship with the same brands. Furthermore, the respondents were observed through their emotional reaction to the product brands that came up. This informed their relationship with the brands, whether trust, loyalty, love, hate relationship, the research process unpacked reasons for such relations with the product brands.

My role as an ethnographer was to extract myself from role playing as a game player and storyteller and utilize my expertise as a brand manager. My aim was to create channels that would be effective when applied to brand measuring tools such as a healthy brand audit, brand score card, brand report card, and decoding the brand identity model.

As an ethnographer, I did not shy away from incorporating art in a form of drawing, singing, and acting to further prove points. The aim is to try and paint out how the games are relative to the value of brand management and brand communication.

Pilot Study

In light of the primary research examination, I have conducted a pilot study that one person who used to play the *Motlotlo* game.

Tshepiso Mogotsi, Male, 25, Fashion design, Protea Soweto.

In the semi structured interview, I went through memorable moments in both our lives: TV adverts, primary and high school lunchbox content, popular clothes, snacks, and popular cellphones. I directed the conversation towards unpacking what his awareness was on these products at the time and what formulated his observation.

Brands that were spoken about was Omo, Colgate, Sunlight green bar soap, Black Cat, Sisko Sam (Sisko Bread); Ntsu (Snuiff), Black like Me, Chappies and Big Time, Enterprise palony, Nokia 3310, Yogheta, Love Candy, amongst the rest. Most of this evoked emotions of nostalgia, wistfulness and appreciation (even when some of the brands, as he recollects, were a complete rip off to black consumers). Mogotsi told

stories about how they (friends and family) used these products to serve unintended needs. Certain products put his stature on a higher social level therefore his engagement was always exclusive. He is from Protea , also known as the Sandton of Soweto but even in that, he had consumer problems experienced by a great majority of black consumers in the townships.

The insights from our conversation had allowed him to analyze the relationship black consumers in the townships had with the brands and how displaced brands were with the lives of their major consumers.

In the exercise, Mogotsi was able to speak of the different brand in relation to the RESC model; separating the brands in the quadrants (love, hate, product and service); and an analysis of the positive and negative threshold mentioned in the methodology.

Mogotsi reminisced over a session of *Motlotlo* as he drew a story plot about how he would spend his weekend with his mom, grandmother and female cousins. His experience build a sense of gratitude for the type of lifestyle the brands afforded his family and how through these brands consumers developed their sense of being.

He enjoys how black creatives now access these stories and portray them in our TV show, fashion collections and even adverts. According to him, this gives a sense of pride in our history (as a nation, as communities, as primary storytellers) through our brands, it gives value to what consumers comprehend as a vehicle that threads their lifestyle choices.

It seemed as though the research process will have numerous nostalgic content reflecting on the state of society and black township consumers at the time. This would be compared to the current black township consumers with entities such as Maponya mall and mall complexes built in their townships (Jabulani mall, Kagiso mall, etc).

From the Pilot Study, I am encouraged to PVR shows and content from new channel SABC Encore, as this fits perfectly in reflecting on the content of my research.

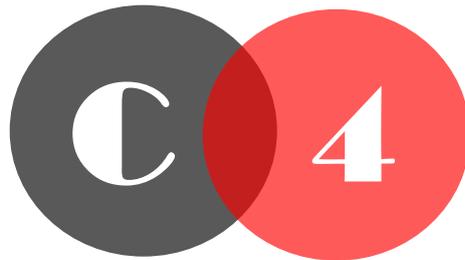
Practical and ethical problems do you anticipated

There was red tape when working with school children, more so children through the ages of seven to twelve. Therefore it would be important to get consent from parent (consent forms would be sent out to parents to read through and keep), guardians, and or teachers in order to conduct my research. I will also need the permission of schools to speak to teachers. In the same light, the children participating must be aware and have full understanding of what is being conducted and how the information will be used as a key future issue for researchers. I was sensitive to the understanding that children are easily influenced and as the researcher, I can influence their participation and opinions.

There is probability that the storytelling process will become intimate and directed by the participants own perceptions and opinions, it was imperative to be cognizant of the voluntary, informed consent of the participant to take part in the research. It was also upright to for me as the researcher to respect the confidentiality and privacy of the research participant.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS



Chapter 4

Data analysis

Research Findings

Memory

Together with the research objectives, in the research findings, it will be useful to examine the reasons for negative brand stories to later recommend management strategies for brands to control negative perceptions therefore negative stories. “If stories build belief, belief builds brands and brands build business, then negative stories also build belief, belief which harms brands and brands loose business.” (Amar A 2011).

In the aims to explore the value of the game of *Motlotlo*, the data analysis is directed at stating the case that explores indigenous games as a South African inspired platform of engaging with the major market. As a result, creating a tool that can be adopted by brands to progress their brand message and brand promise.

Due to the amalgamation of cognitive and visual exemplification, the research findings for this paper have been translated through a mixture of conversational and narrative analysis, with the acceptance that the visual representation of the game opened invitation to the semiotic analysis of the data.

From the respondents, it can be deduced that customers use brand associations to help process, organise, and retrieve information in memory to aid in making purchase decisions.

Taking *Motlotlo* as a channel of unpacking brand engagement, throughout the storyline, children would relive the lifestyles they experience in their households and communities while giving an understanding of how consumers live with these brands and amongst their communities. Furthermore, the storylines would become a vehicle that conveys social, economic and political discourses within the community.

From the data, it is inferred that memory is a constructed element that is structured around representations; memory experiences are symbolic to the consumer and represent a new lens for viewing brand meaning. I asked respondents if they think they choose to remember the taste, smell, feel of certain product brands. Your

experience with a particular brand is captured in memory, association is then imprinted. From this I wanted to explore what could inform memory, especially directed to a complex entity such as a product brand.

Memory is very selective therefore the consumer goes through a process of profiling the memory, that why part of the research data indicates that respondents remember and better understand the brand message of interactive brand activations.

What the data also inferred to was that memory is recreated, hence when products are brought back to market they get scrutinized by consumers because they are being compared to the nostalgic piece of memory that chooses to remember the feeling that the product ignites.

Word of mouth communication

The respondents made every interaction personal, the brand stories therefore were owned by the respondents, the consumers. Over a period, consumers acquire various associations relating to a brand. The respondent's insights reverted back to being aspirational, in the present and past tense. Their exclusivity was in whether or not the brand promise is attainable.

We interact with subjects that are adopted by us through a repetition of behaviour even if it is through observations of such subjects.

The data collected in the research process indicated that the respondents relied heavily on word of mouth communication amongst themselves as consumers to develop perception about product brands; what was more informative were the stories they told about their personal experiences with these product brands that developed perception for those listening. We need to have some "windows" to be able to see (perceive) outside influences.

Issues that arose are of locating the respondents present and past rationality in the context of perception. The respondent's engagement to the interview had to be reinforced with a strong sense of reasonability and decision making consciousness.

There are multiple concerns that inform modes of communication and therefore perception. Moeketsi's perceptions about brands are not so heavily influenced on

family perception. Her grandmother doesn't believe in women smoking and actually finds it appalling to see a woman smoking. However due to her external influence (school, social spaces) she differed in perception.

For the age group of respondents I was interviewing, peer pressure was a significant point to consider when reflecting on brand perception and purchase decisions. Factors such as status, trends, trust, loyalty, lifestyles were and to a certain degree still some of the things to consider when buying into a brand and consuming it.

From a student's perspective, even for those who recently entered the job market, becoming brand conscious is densely due to the word of mouth communication around the brand(s), this goes beyond just mom talking or using the brand.

As young children growing up, even till varsity years, the respondents went through points of wanting to prove themselves, to fit into the mould. What they understood was that who you hang out with informs what you drink, eat or wear, so social hierarchy then became visible with every brand contact point.

This opened room for creativity in using the product brand to fit one's lifestyle. The respondents gave example of how they became creative in alternatively utilizing products in order to fit in or extend the value of the brand in the course of their lifestyles.

Taking ownership of this aspect of the products' life gave the respondents (consumers) reason to take ownership of the brands story. They rewrote the plot of the brand within the context of their lives and gave new value to the brand.

In the findings, the route to contextualize the data is to find value and use in the reasons or cause for the negative stories told about the brands.

"Stories are how we pass on our accumulated wisdom, beliefs and values. They are the process through which we describe and explain the world around us, and our role and purpose in it. Audiences have always known this and asked for stories—they've never asked for content." (PMEDT September 2013)

Through exploring the different levels to the product and therefore the brand, the consumers use word of mouth to communicate the nature of their perceived brand story.

The categories that informs negative content of their subject matter about the brand amongst other relative attributes: lack of awareness; false promises; increase competition; and raise of social media.

The platform social media as a tool to tell and spread stories has a poignant perception about the brand. This is not the story that is being told by the brand, these are social media conversations had by consumers and observers. The findings pick up on how social media can inspire people to join the conversation. The Project Sunlight by Unilever has used social media as a storytelling platform. It is apparent that in the bigger scheme of things, every tweet, post or picture on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram tells a story. Social media has sparked social conversations which make storytelling even more widespread in society.

Tumi wrote to KOO about the TV advert, “thank you mom for doing the best that you can do for me”. She couldn’t remember the lyrics to the jingle on the advert, so she wrote on their Facebook page asking what the lyrics are because there is no web reference. KOO’S response was that they would post the jingle on the website and see who remembers it. Unofficially, Tumi created a campaign driven by consumers. What was problem is that KOO didn’t follow up on that and ended up not doing it.

Motlotlo

The game can be understood as a platform that Analyses consumer behaviour. This section of the findings will explore consumer behaviour based on the relationship between negative and positive perception of the product brands while using *Motlotlo* as a tool.

The game of Motlotlo was a game that gave a visual interpretation of other games we used to play. As the research progressed, it proved to be the game that visually documented the representation of the number of games that were founded on brands.

Through the game, the respondents showed that brands have been, for a very long time entities that consumers don't realize as direct value injectors. They indirectly impact on our lifestyle choices however there isn't much cognisance placed on how brands do that and when are they significant in our lives.

The game is a platform that affords for a reflexivity transaction to occur. It is a phenomenal apparatus that consumes use to judge their relationship within a context of the society they live in.

In the same breath, the games open up room for individuals to lie. When the respondents reflect, they wanted to be the children who came from households that could afford the finer product brands, thus tweaking their actual life with the brand(s). This speaks back to the aspirational attachment to the brand(s).

Brands have a way of making transparent the level of social exposure that people have (they expose a level of status and mind-set that the consumers have). Therefore throughout the storytelling process, the listeners are sometimes experiencing a sense of culture shock.

From the game, it could also be inferred that the game helps identify that stories are essentially brand messages. Therefore, I used Amars' method in categorizing types of brand stories told by the respondents:

1. Brand face stories: These are stories with heritage, who keep consistency throughout the value chain and their product and services. They identify with original content and supply. (eg Disney).
2. Brand Value stories: These are commercialized stories and brands that are designed for fiction and fantasy. Their brand message places value on narratives and its forever evolving. (eg Coca Cola – Spreads Happiness, Cadbury Chocolate).
3. Negative brand stories: They are stories that emerge and are materialized by observers (either consumers, competitors or even authorities). They are always unfavourable (KFC with the PETA allegations, or Mc Donalds and Coca Cola with the unhealthy allegations).

Essentially, I am able to identify who is the brand in the game for? Are they rewarding; a coach; mother-care giver; silent partner? With this, brands can be informed about the respondents' expectations from the brand and its' contact points.

I used the RESC model of the layers of consciousness to better analyse the consumers relationship with the brand. The model facilitates the cultural, social, emotional and rational influences that inform perception and action. Please see the model below.

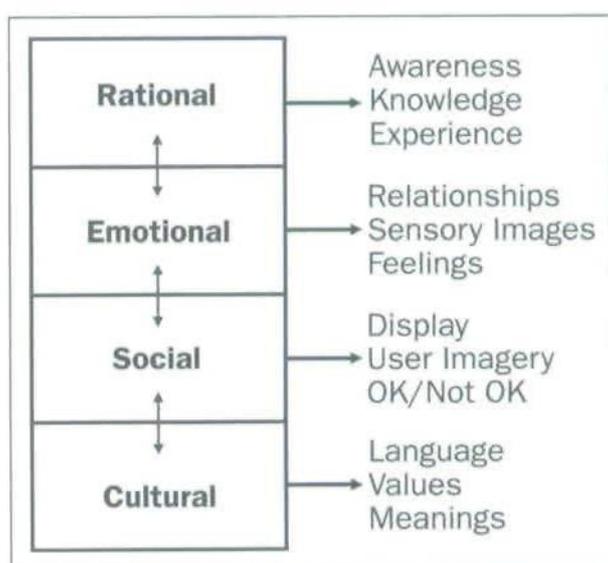


Figure 1: Layers of consciousness (RESC) Pawle. J 2006

It is exemplified in the below brands. I asked the respondents to associate the Ntsu snuff brand with any brand of cigarettes. From that I deduced the rational, emotional, social and cultural correlation to their reasoning and association.

- Yellow and red: Taxi
- Yellow and black: Ntsu
- Yellow and green: Mental

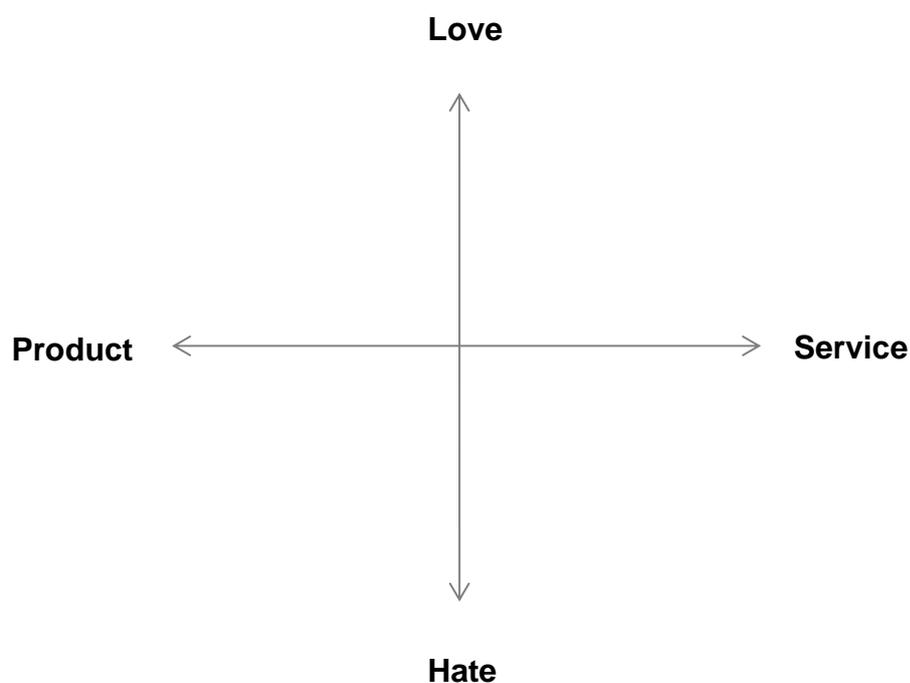
The person who smokes Ntsu is what type of person:

Linking brand association in terms of perception:

- Yellow and Blue: Taxi = Dunhill Fine Cuts (you don't see it a lot, blue packaging)
- Yellow and black: Ntsu = Stuyvesant Blue (everyone smokes it)
- Yellow and green: Menthol = Cigarette = Craven A,

“When we think about what it means to design a social business, we can't ignore the role of storytelling in the process. More specifically, brands who engage their customers do more than describe their latest products or services. They tell the story of who they are, not only the people behind the brand, but also how their customers connect to their products in ways that give them the ability to do more. These are the stories that bring differentiators to life, that illustrate the *why* and *how* behind the *what* and *where*. The social business is storytelling. The faster we start revealing, the better off we'll be.” (Edwards C 2014).

The analyses of the respondent's key responses were based on the following quadrants which separate discernment:



From we can deduce the following in the research findings:

1. Positive brand perception is based on

- Product satisfaction
- Value for money
- Style and design
- User friendly
- Experience
- Trust
- Exclusivity

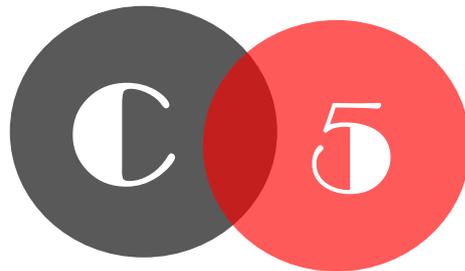
2. Negative brand perception is based on

- Misleading
- Poor value for money
- Bad design
- Complicated
- Poor customer service
- Bad quality
- Copied ideas

In conclusion, the game of *Motlotlo* informs complex aspects of the consumers psyche which give reason to believing the brand promise. The brand story has been essentially directed by the consumers through means of word of mouth communication. As a perspective, memory plays a major role in facilitating brand association and perception in context to the past and present role of the consumer.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION



Chapter 5

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

Part of who we are today is the result of who we were in the past. The research paper has facilitated that stories do indeed build belief, thus belief builds brands and essentially brands build business. The assessment of brand building then comes in facilitating negative stories which also build belief.

Various engagements with matters such as brands, people, or landscapes shape our perception of life and those involved in such matters, build awareness and insight as a reflection of their experience.

In listening to these stories, there is a thread of “commitment, empathy, and passion to a level of consciousness to brand relations. The analyzing of the narrative in the game of *Motlotlo* has upheld exploration in matters beyond the socio-economic dynamics of the storyteller but also involve the collective memory of the storyteller as the consumer.

The relationship that consumers have with product brands is a build on associations founded on factors including communication channels, primarily through word of mouth.

What brands can grasp from this paper is that engaging with their stakeholders intimately enough to create fond memories of the brand. Memory is very selective thus brands should strategically reinforce their contact points in a manner that builds relevant perception therefore relevant memory of the brand.

Memory is based on experience, thus a great experience of a brand builds upon the collective memory of the consumer.

The result of the Framework has indicated aspects that influence negative and positive perception of the brand and the brand story. The framework further allowed for the game of *Motlotlo* to become a tool that realizes this.

Furthermore, the research findings have given clarity on the research questions

1. To what degree is brand association informed by experiential and collective memory?
2. In context to word of mouth communication, what significant measures can be employed to identify insight in light to perception?
3. How can the game of Motlotlo become a tool for brand managers to deduce brand perception in light of their customers?

Recommendations

A major concern was how the respondents did not understand what a brand should be (not grasping the value and essence of a brand existence). Most importantly, brands should educate what a brand initially is (what it's value is). Some brands have enabled the respondent to get lost within the brand that they do not need other contact points to validate its value in their life.

Brands should be more encouraged to take advantage of opportunities that today's hyper connected and social consumer and modern distribution platforms have to offer.

Advertising agencies and brand managers should redirect their focus from thinking about branded content and exploring true storytelling.

Brands should invest in putting people first and thinking about their lives and their needs and how our products and brands are truly meeting their needs.

Product brands could use Motlotlo as a tool of uncovering various attributes about their brand in a self-expressive and undirected manner, straight from the consumers' mouth. Another benefit is that it is an approach for measuring emotion that combines qualitative insights. Lastly, this topic enables product brands to maximize their connection with consumers by creating strong emotional bonds. A strong emotional bond reinvigorates loyalty and creates advocacy.

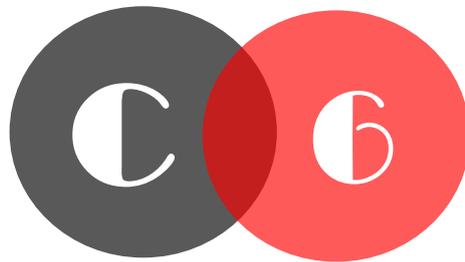
Music carries emotions. Perhaps we should bring jingles back. The research findings reminded us how valuable it was to engage the audience in an interactive manner.

Recommended brands that would work with this concept of using *Motlotlo* as a tool:

KOO; OMO; Lion (Match Stick); Doom; Knorr; and Albany

CHAPTER 6

Appendices



Chapter 6

Appendices

Interview questions

1. How would you unpack storytelling as a tool to communicate brand essence?
2. How were you attracted by the trends you followed?
3. Associate different product brands within the same category according to perception: eg Ntsu and cigarettes
4. What informed the content contribution within these games?
5. Talk about the conceptual differences in the current TV ads compared to when you were growing up.
6. What triggers / triggered your memory?
7. Do we choose to remember the smell, taste, texture of products, or is it true memory?
8. What products do you miss?
9. Discuss creativity in recycling and innovatively using certain product brands, now and when you were younger
10. What products do you miss?
11. How resourceful were we back then?

Examples of the related games

Games played in the townships that relate to *Motlotlo*, these games are fundamentally entrenched on brands.

The games are:

- Tsomo reka Omo
- Top Seven:
- Morabaraba
- Peter Stuyvesant
- How many cigarettes
- Zum Zaka Riza

- Ditini
- General Knowledge

Respondents' Drawings

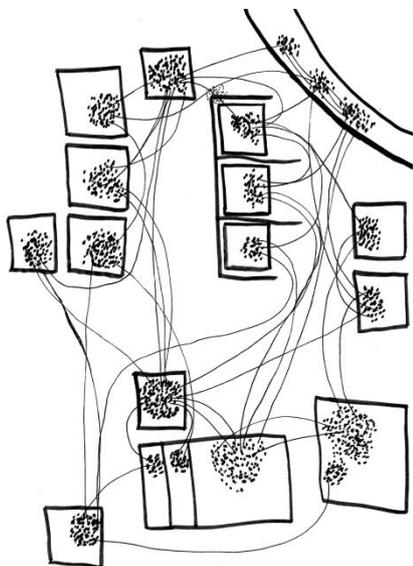


Figure 3 Motlotlo drawing by Moeketsi

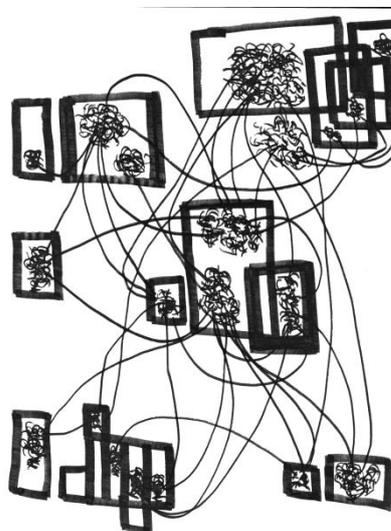


Figure 4 Motlotlo drawing by Ramela

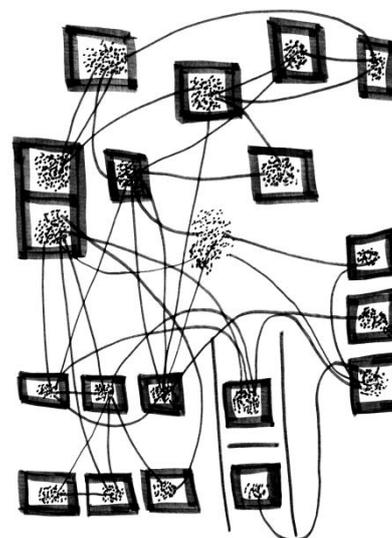


Figure 4 Motlotlo drawing by Makhubela

List of personal communication

1. Kebone Ramela, Female, 23, Gauteng Kagiso, Economics student
2. Maryjane Makhubela, Female, 22, Gauteng Kagiso, Human Resource
3. Thando Dube: Female, 27, Gauteng Soweto, Chartered Accountant
4. Tshepiso Mogotsi, is the one male, 23, Gauteng Kagiso and Soweto, Fashion designer
5. Boitumelo Moeketsi: Female, 24, from Eastern Cape King Williams Town, Copywriter.
6. Neo Marumo-Mphaphuli, Male, 28, Gauteng, Boksburg, Advertising and Brand Strategist.

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Alchemy Activation rational

“Our experiences globally have long been fundamentally captured and relayed through forms of storytelling. The “window” of accessing these experiences has been primary through the sharing of stories through word of mouth WOM. Word-of-mouth communication is one of the strongest sources of information for consumers” (Kotler 1988).

The activation at hand is in context to my research topic: *Analyzing the narrative in the game of Motlotlo to better understand the relationship that consumers have with product brands.*

I have chosen to pursue the game as an exploration tool, a process of unpacking the content of the game in light of identifying content that give insight to brand perception.

To remind us all, the game of Motlotlo is a storytelling game, which used to be played by children through the ages of five to thirteen. This game was most popular in the traditional Johannesburg townships; these are townships that were established in the 50's-60, townships such as Kagiso and Soweto. *Motlotlo* means “Storytelling” in SeTswana and SeSotho.

How I have decided to pitch this activation is through keeping the crudeness of the game and reenacting it within its setting “on the floor”.

Motlotlo, as an indigenous game of storytelling (within the township context), the authenticity and truth of the game is better understood through a specific treatment. By this it is meant that it requires an interactive and participatory engagement, therefore I propose the following:

Core insight informing the activation:

From a broad perspective, essentially when looking at the brand identity system of a brand, part of the story being told / developed is not even told by the brand itself. Thus, the creation of the brands' trajectory isn't fully controlled by the brand itself.

As a result (and learning from Leibniz as read in my literature review), we (brand managers) require a “window” – a state of effect that enables us to see / perceive outside influences. Thus our communication strategies are guided by the notions informed by major stakeholders – our customers.

Through the process of research, I have unpacked that more often than not the relationship with customers and the brands are often directed by the brand itself, either through online campaigns and concluded channels that only seek to pick up what the brand thinks is imperative to what they are currently dealing with at the time. What is failed to achieve is letting the customer take control and ownership of the conversation, willingly. Customers want to share, enthusiastically so too. If it is not sharing with the brand and its leaders, then it is sharing amongst them.

This is where Word-of-mouth communication becomes powerful. Word-of-mouth (WOM) is one of the strongest sources of information for consumers; research has also proven countless of times. It comes as a form of validity and reliability for people. If someone speaks about the brand and then couples it with personal experiences, what is there not to believe? “It’s bound to be true”. Furthermore, WOM is a form of Self-expression, expression within ones structure and perspective.

Message derived from the core insights:

Through the above mentioned, the message conveyed is that the route of storytelling is used as a tool that shares human interaction. The narrative of a brand is weaved into the customer experience.

Let the brands’ message resonate with what is being shared with and amongst the customers. Therefore brand leaders and managers are encouraged to look from the outside in, to further personify the human element to their brand because customers identify themselves with the brands they buy.

Activation Concept:

Through the research process, my participants have recalled a number of games influenced by product brands. One was about **Omo**: “Tsomo reka Omo” (translated as: “go buy Omo”) This is a hand clapping game kids used to play as a group.

Another one is “**Shubadu-tutu-tu**”, another hand clapping game inspired by Selati’s tag line “Nature gives us energy”. The other is of **Peter Stuyvesant**: kids would create a story plot about a man called “Peter Stuyvesant” based on the text written on the packaging of the cigarette box.

What all these games have in common is interactive participation. The idea is to carry through this thread. I am attempting to metaphorically eliminate what seems to be the problem: the barriers of communication with customers and brands / brand managers. In the instance of this activation, the audience will be behaving both as customers and brand managers.

The model is then aimed at directing the observers to engage in the same way that kids engaging in the game of Motlotlo would. Therefore the activation would be addressing the core insights of experiencing the brand story being told from an external perspective.

Interactivity can be entrenched in basic storytelling, forming conversations. In this case, I aim for the audience to be involved in order to allow the art to attain its purpose. This is to encourage the same relationship between brand and customers.

Practical Execution of the activation:

For the Alchemy activation, I propose to construct an installation of the game.

Set up: dark intimate room. In order to re-enact the game, I would have a video projected on the floor. Have bricks and lay them out in a “T” shape; 1 beer / cold drink crate and 2 coke 1.25lt bottle set up in a circle around the projection on the floor (these will become the chairs for the audience to sit on if they don’t want to sit on the floor). The reason why I have chosen these objects is due to the acknowledgement of the geographical location (townships) in where the indigenous game took place. This is what people / friends use to sit around in a circle. I have considered those members who will be in the audience who won’t feel comfortable with sitting on the floor.

This video will be of the amalgamation of key findings from my research process where people give key insights on their perceptions about product brands. The video will be edited in a way that weaves the dialogue amongst the participants as a brand perception thread. This will take place in a dark room, therefore shifting focus onto the floor, having the audience engage the floor such as in the game of Motlotlo. The audience will become active participants by listening to the stories being told about these product brands (such as the kids would).

My execution follows > observation > participation > discourse

Material needed: Projector, laptop, speakers, cold drink / beer crate(s), bricks

Audience for the activation:

Due to the games origins, ideally the audience would be those who grew up playing the game Motlotlo. That would touch on the areas especially mentioned in the literature review about contextualizing memory and how on a cognitive and emotional footing, brands are imprinted in memory. It would be valuable to witness their reception to the installation within a context of analysing and exploring product brands.

For the purpose of Alchemy, I am looking at the audience of brand managers, brand strategists and intellects that build brands in their own disciplines (including lecturers, moderators, etc.). Therefore, the audience experiencing the installation should allow their experiences and their perceptions carry a discussion as they are sitting around the installation.

The substance of the installation is open to the artist and art interpreters (as it is highly influenced by art). As a piece of art that requires an interactive performance / engagement from the audience, it would be appreciated to have the work received from a culturally exposed and unguarded perceptive. The pride of a nation lies in its artists; I would like this activation to translate into an enjoyment of creative discourse.

Why has the activation been structured accordingly?

I am from a fine arts background, having had produced work within the performance and digital arts arena, I found this concept as one that could be an opportunity that gives room to discussion and reflection to the audience.

The beauty about this take is that content is shared willingly by the storytellers (from their own perspective and experience), thus we get a sense of connection with customers and their product brands.

Primarily, I would like the activation to answer the last question in my research questions: How can the game of Motlotlo be a tool to analyze brand perception? In the true essence of Alchemy, experimentation and transformation are at the core of this activation concept and execution. Dale Carnegie said that “people rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing”. Through this process, we can conduct a strategic brand customer analysis: looking at trends, motivations, unmet needs, segmentations, and so on. As another advantage, this process can inform the competitor analysis.

The questions are: What are the outcomes of analyzing the narrative in the game of Motlotlo (in light of product brands)? In what other ways can the relationship between consumers and brands be monitored? Lastly, how can the game of Motlotlo be a tool to analyze brand perception?

I hope that this engagement contributes to creating value for the brands. I hope it becomes a way to represent customers’ perceptions through a new lens for viewing brand meaning. As brand managers, we could hold up this lens and see our world of brands from a certain perspective. This is a perspective that contains meaningful experiences to do with the roles of brands in our customers’ everyday lives.

-The End-

Perhaps **KOO** could learn that sometimes people’s stories leak into one another like flavours when cooked; **OMO** could embrace the truth that when one prays for rain, they have to deal with the mud. Imaginably, **PHILLIPS** could ignite two ways of spreading light: as the “candle” or the mirror that reflects it.