



**Explore Gen Zs' brand experience within a mall in
Pretoria**

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Abstract

South African mall culture traditionally framed shopping centres as family destinations however as the social context has evolved it has motivated mall investors and owners to spend millions revamping malls across the South African landscape (CRE Africa, 2021). Consistently analysing best-performing properties to establish sector-based large scale investment assets that are future-orientated, and trend-focused. Considering the combined area of shopping space in South Africa consists of 24 million m² making SA the sixth most mall-rich country with a large variety of shared public spaces with a host of local restaurants that set safe spaces to connect with others (Freedman, 2020). Gen Z's most notable characterised by their desire for digital integration within all aspects of their lives intrinsically drives their desire for unique, shareable experiences by involving them in the co-creation of their experience by collaborating and taking on their opinions as part of ensuring a brand's success (IBM, 2018). Authentic and relevant brand experiences focus on the establishment of an environment that is distinctively personalised to establish brand-consumer relationships. Gen Z's desire for co-created brand experiences creates a point of leverage for shopping centres and malls to focus their future investments on Gen Z as a promising consumer group that sees connection driven shopping as a focal within leisure and entertainment spaces within a mall.

Keywords: Socially driven spaces, brand experience, Gen Z

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own work. It is submitted in fulfilment of my BA honours degree in Brand Communication at the IIE's Vega School. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1.1. Context

Malls have been designed to focus on developing infrastructure that offers a cultural and sociable pretext for consumer buy-in (Gilboa, Vilnai-Yavetz, Mitchell, Borges, Frimpong & Nourdine, 2020). Servicing malls to cater for socially immersive spaces illustrates how consumer centrism forms a focal point of consumer culture. As commercial spaces establish a focus on consumer convenience the idea of escaping reality through immersive consumption illustrates the power of branding establishes a consistent presence (Kennedy, 2019). Consumers are placed within a space that caters to their convenience through products and services being grouped within a set space to aid versatile brand accessibility where brands fit under a strategically designed mall space (Gilboa et al, 2020).

Brand versatility and accessibility within a mall is defined by the term 'brandscape' which describes how brands have become recognisable contributors to the mall experience through the attributes that add to the mall landscape (Bellini & Pasquinelli, 2015). Considering the saturated brand landscape set within a mall to facilitate consumer convenience marketing within this space encourages consideration for a refocus on the essence of marketing that drives on the concept of emotional connection (Finneman, Spagnuolo and Rahilly, 2020). The ability for brands to communicate and create experiences that in a way resonate with consumers through authentically connecting with them beyond the digitised brand story through the daily experience narrative of the brand. Omnipresence enables brands to onboard the consumer's ideal approach to brand-consumer connections as part of constructing the shopping journey that focuses on the value of the holistic experience for cross channel consumption (Finneman et al, 2020). Research into mall culture highlights the inherent shopper value derived from a mall's socially driven spaces (Gilboa et al, 2020). However, there is an underlying gap in research that assists in contextualising the type of value derived from alternative brand choices available within the context of the mall's socially driven

amenities.

Refocusing the consumer journey to consider the value of a brand's fully immersive experience is particularly relevant amongst Gen Zers who connect with others in the mall's leisure and entertainment spaces. Born from 1995 to 2010 Gen Z are encompassed by perquisites including the desire to temporarily escape their reality within a defined safe space (Priporas, Stylos and Fotiadis, 2017). This can plague similar-competing brands who need to capture and hold consumer attention which is visually present within a mall's socially driven spaces (Priporas et al, 2017). This, therefore, encourages the need to explore the Gen Z brand experience within a mall's leisure and entertainment space and the consideration for the influence brand experience has on Gen Z's intention to support a particular brand.

1.1.2. Rationale

Mall culture is framed by the reinforced focus on hyper-consumption even as malls expand to serve a social role in the lives of consumers through the addition of socially driven amenities (Frączkiewicz, 2013). Van Eeden (1998) highlights the significance of shopping malls within South Africa, recognising them as sites of leisure and commerce that offer post-shopping entertainment. Inherently driven by the intent to optimize consumer convenience, consumerism saw a move toward encouraging the addition of cultural context to satisfy hedonistic gratification (Cova, 2020). As malls transformed to offer socially driven amenities the motivation for consumers to spend time at the mall adapted to offer social and recreational spaces through the introduction of the concept of space-consuming (Frączkiewicz, 2013). Space consumption is observed through the lens of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) which broadens perspective into the consumer journey by including a focus on the sociocultural, experiential, symbolic and ideological drive that forms part of the consumer's context (Arnould and Thompson, 2005).

Alternative consumer journeys are ascribed with a pragmatic yet subjective attributes that contextualise their experiences with a brand which defines outlooks

on different brands (Arnould et al, 2005). This offers relevance for generation Z who Priporas, Stylos and Fotiadis (2017) identify to have an underlying expectation for brands to offer them experiences without guaranteeing brand loyalty. As identified by Francis and Hoefel (2018) Gen Z consumers through their altered outlook on consumption which focuses on access to valued products and services without being driven by the desire to own tangible products. As consumer culture centres the arrangement between cultural experiences and social resources it offers a foundational framework by which to mediate Gen Zs' consumer journey. To explore the influence of brand experience on the consumer journey of Gen Zers this study is concentrated within a mall's socially driven spaces. Further, this study expands on Kashif, Qureshi and Qazi's (2019) investigation into retail-based attention negotiation along their consumer journey that identifies the challenges faced by consumers within a brand versus brand landscape. By looking at the relevant attributes of consumer culture this study explores the influence of brand experience as a point of leverage in deriving brand loyalty amongst Gen Z consumers who are not known for their loyalty to brands.

1.1.3. Problem Statement

Francis and Hoefel (2018) identify the focus of Gen Z consumers to be on access to valuable experiences without the desire to own tangible products. With customer journeys further characterised by unpredictability through the prerequisite brand expectations without guarantee of brand loyalty (Priporas et al, 2017). The study explores the value of brand experience in supporting Gen Z consumers with the establishment of stronger brand-consumer connections in ultimately deriving their brand loyalty.

1.1.4. Research Purpose

The Gen Z consumer journey centres on experiential value focus and importance should be on brand experience to support consumer enjoyment of the entire journey (Francis and Hoefel, 2018). By exploring the overall value derived from brand experiences within a mall's socially driven spaces the

study aims to support brands in their understanding of the consumer experience along their consumer journey, further highlighting the importance of brand experience as a point of leverage in deriving brand loyalty amongst Gen Z consumers who are not known for their loyalty to brands.

1.1.5. Research Questions

Main Question

- How does brand experience influence Gen Z consumers continual loyalty to a particular brand within the mall's socially driven space?

Sub Question

- How do Gen Z consumers engage with brands within a mall's socially driven space?

1.1.6. Research Objectives

- To explore elements of brand experience that may support the establishment of brand-consumer connections which result in brand loyalty.
- To investigate the experiential consumer journey of Gen Zers within the mall's socially driven spaces.
- To gain a critical understanding of the experiential value offered within the context of a mall's socially driven spaces.

1.2. Theoretical background

1.2.1 Theoretical Framework

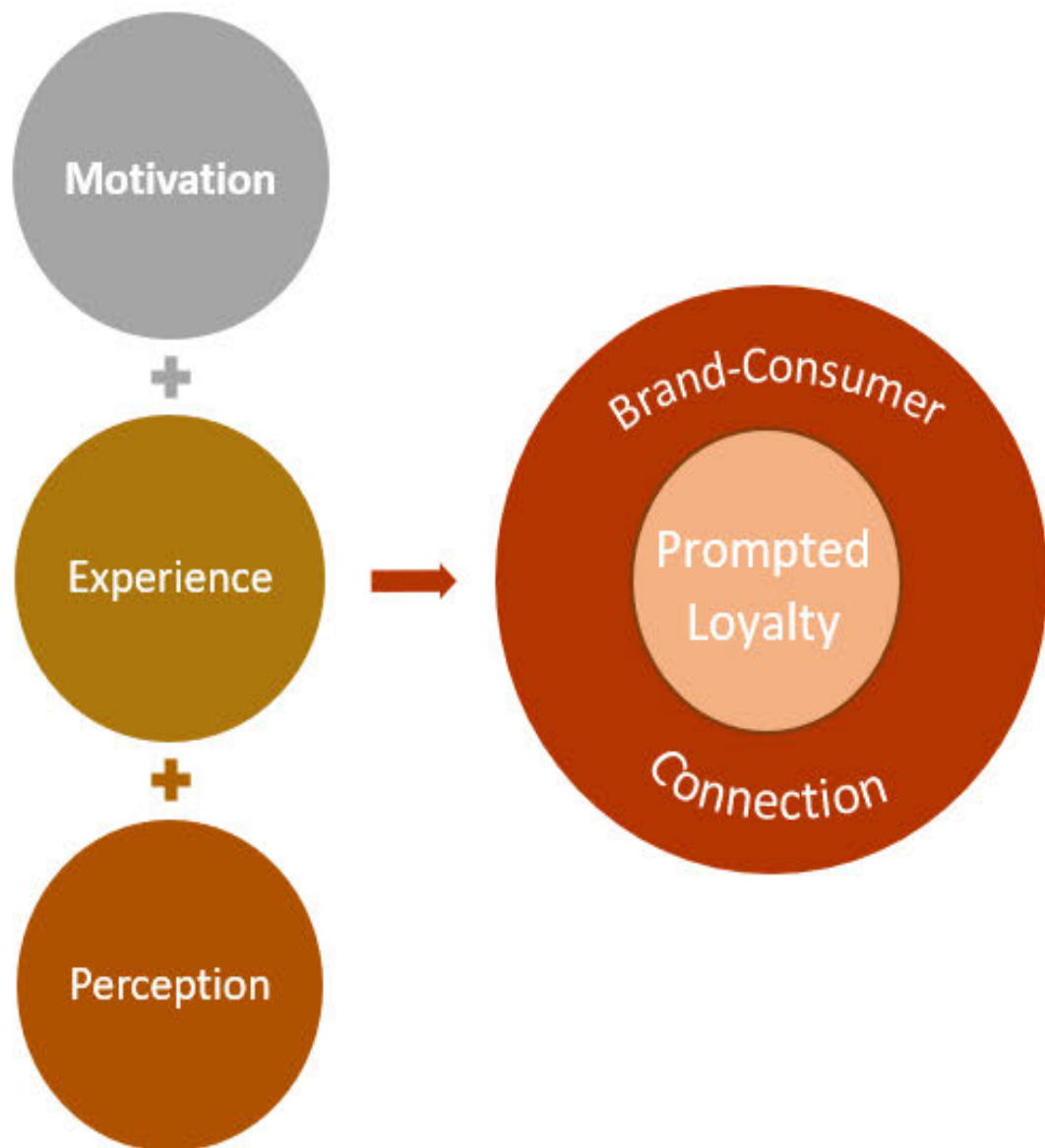
Consumer culture signifies a social arrangement between lived cultural experiences and social resources which are mediated by the commercial marketplace that supports the transaction of goods or services for financial compensation (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Perpetuated consumption of

goods and the induced desire for consumer buy-in are thus central to consumer culture. In the commercialised marketplace Arnould et al. (2005) note that continued consumer buy-in is only achieved by allowing consumers to freely choose and construct meaning in order to establish a collective sense of their environment. Furthermore, the social situations that contextualise the consumer journey also sees consumers negotiating the meaning and value derived from brand-consumer connections which ultimately influences their behaviour (Arnould et al, 2005).

Based on the aim of investigating the consumer journey from an experiential perspective the use of Rokka's (2021) focused outlook on the experiential aspect that forms part of CCT's various cultural dimensions directly frames the perspective by which to inform the basis of this study. Looking at consumption from a broader perspective that goes beyond the isolated consumer-brand interactions. Rokka's (2021) emphasis on assembling experiences that are informed by social and cultural dynamics brings to light the tendency of framing consumer experiences in isolation from their sociocultural context.

Along the consumer journey, Rokka (2021) notes that brand-consumer interactions always carry a particular sociocultural understanding and emotional charge that influences the way consumer-brand experiences unfold. Research into CCT sheds light on how consumers become the authors of brand meaning within a localised context and sometimes even go to the extent of constructing corresponding brand perceptions (Rokka, 2021). A perspective that helps contextualise the subjective meaning ascribed to brands by consumers. Consumers build affiliations with social groups and brands through linking value which is derived from a personable connection (Rokka, 2021). Cultural branding principles are noted as an approach that brands can take to leverage their value to consumers as Rokka (2021) points out brand-consumer encounters are rather complex. Influenced by the aesthetic and envisioned experience, the consumer's brand experience often takes an emotionally charged tone that is further contextualised by the atmosphere in which these encounters occur (Rokka, 2021). This directly

correlates with the context of the proposed study which will investigate the



experiential consumer journey within the mall space and the influence brand experience has on the Gen Z consumer's brand choice.

Consumer Culture Theory Model in Practice:

Figure 1: Consumer Culture Theory Model

Motivation:

This is contextualised by the envisioned experience and illustrated as motivation for Gen Z consumers to spend time within the mall's socially driven spaces. The context which Rokka (2021) serves for an understanding of the term envisioned experience is the social and cultural dynamics that form part of brand-consumer interactions that occur amongst the malls socially driven amenities.

Experience

Experience of the consumer journey which is stimulated by motivating context that influences the consumer to select one brand over another. The active and interactive consumer journey Rokka (2021) states carries a particular sociocultural understanding which is inherently influenced by emotion that ultimately informs how the consumer's experiences the interaction.

Perception

The consumer's perception of each brand on offer within the mall's socially driven spaces. It is contextualised by the physical attributes that form part of the brand-consumer interactions including the staff, aesthetic, design and performed functionality offered within the space (Rokka, 2021).

Brand-Consumer Connection

Brand consumer connection is established through the encompassment of motivation being fulfilled by experience and the perceptions derived within the space and with the brand contact points i.e. the staff. Which ultimately encourages consumers to show loyalty to a particular brand.

Loyalty prompt

Loyalty prompts are elements that link directly to the establishment of loyalty through programmes or partnerships that reward consumers for being devoted to a particular brand.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Traditionally consumerism is defined by centring human needs around the transactional value that is primarily measured by financial compensation (Baudrillard, 1998). In modern society, these boundaries have been blurred with the refined focus being placed on socially driven spaces designed to drive social experiences within marketplaces such as malls (Frączkiewicz, 2013). This study refines focus on consumerism toward the experiential consumer journey of Gen Z consumers highlighting various attributes that have already been researched within alternative contexts. Prefacing the exploration of the experiential consumer journey is the intent to investigate the notion that experiential value is offered to consumers by different brands. By looking at the influence of brand experience on the potential for brand loyalty amongst Gen Z consumers how have pre-set brand expectations without guaranteeing loyalty (Francis and Hoefel, 2018). Thus, what follows is a review of existing literature that serves as analysed context aimed at better understanding the existing knowledge, insight into the overall processes and limitations identified in the studies conducted on the various topics.

2.1.1. Consumer Society: SA mall culture & the impact of simulated spaces.

An overview of existing research that contextualises consumerism within society through a funnelled overarching perspective of consumerism driven marketplaces that includes malls which in present timing has been supported by simulation that drive the acceleration of a consumer society.

- **Mall Culture:**

Van Eeden (1998) coins the term “mallng” as means of describing how people are driven to leisure within the mall space by informing the notion of shopping as a social activity. Malls as noted by Van Eeden (1998) are symbols of materialism and landmarks of socio-spatial homogeny based on consumer demand for a contemporary space where cultural expression is the primary desire. Malls offer a one-stop space for consumer culture which is encapsulated by merchandising needs within a self-contained space that provides consumers with the capacity to inform and express their social identity by gaining some form of entertainment within the space (Van Eeden, 1998). Maybe as a result of financial constraints, Van Eeden (1998) notes South African malls are modestly designed with a limited focus on entertainment. Consumers are provided with a space that excites them, promoting a sense of escapism by providing experiences that are insistent on social cohesion (Van Eeden, 1998). Though Van Eeden (1998) contextualises the notion of mall culture within South Africa there is limited research done on the malls socially driven spaces as a focal point by which to argue the social role of a mall.

South African shoppers as noted by Katrodia, Naude and Soni (2018) are now recognising malls as dual purposed spaces that offer transactional outlets along with socially and recreationally driven spaces. Experiencing the holistic nature of the mall’s atmosphere involves the consumer’s cognitive, emotional, social, and physical responses to the social and physical stimuli on offer within the mall (Katrodia et al, 2018). Moreover, to maintain a fixed consumer base and enhance the quality of customer service within the mall space Katrodia et al. (2018) recognise the value of non-economic factors that impacts the physical shopping experience. These factors contextualise the importance of consumer experience for brands, justifying the basis of focusing this study on the socially driven amenities within the mall as a means of exploring the current context of consumer experiences.

Furthermore, Warnaby and Medway (2018) note that in order to remain popular amongst consumers malls adopt strategies to expand their potential. Blending retail and leisure thus creates hyper-real spaces including cinemas, theatres,

family entertainment centres and even ice-skating rinks as a means of shifting consumer-driven spaces into spaces that are designed to cater to the consumer experience (Warnaby et al, 2018).

- **Hyper-Reality:**

Glaser (1983) argues that simulations are already inscribed with a particular purpose to function exclusively with recurring aspects of reality. The contrast between reality and desire is further recognised as less dangerous than putting hyperreality into play (Glaser, 1983), thus in malls adopting the use of social and physical stimuli they are offered a measurable form of meeting consumer desires.

Edvardsson and Enquist (2005) measure the value of co-creating customer value using hyper-reality as a means of stimulating experiences within the space of an experience room that is designed to emulate physical infrastructure. Physical artefacts that fill the space are recognised as the feeling producers within the space which further contribute to the ambience being created (Edvardsson et al, 2005). In the context of the mall, this would include all the design elements and branded infrastructure in place within the entire space. The intangible artefacts which include mental imagery and brand reputation, Edvardsson et al. (2005) notes are aspects that can be engineered for a favourable customer experience by employing strategic tactics to influence change. Edvardsson et al. (2005) define the hyperreal experience as the physical impact and the intangible interpretation that occurs within the experience by bridging between reality and the influence of stimuli. The experience room in the context of this study offers an indicator of impactful hyperreality that produces value-in-use thus highlighting it as a tool to create favourable, memorable, and realistic experiences (Edvardsson et al, 2005).

Contrastingly, Landi (2018) offers a perspective on hyperreality on a citywide scale derived from challenging social and economic aspects which allows for an implicit arrangement of spatial landscaping that considers socialisation. Landi (2018) introduces an approach to preserving the conventional structural

elements and incorporating digital access points as a way of modifying common spaces through facilitating social grouping and interactions. The context of the hyper city sees Landi (2018) arguing the need to embrace psychological overstimulation, catering to the interests and routines of a space's inhabitants, which in the context of the mall space would mean catering to consumer interests and consumption patterns by offering them incentives based on their predictable and routine behaviour. Furthermore, Landi (2018) argues that employing the use of hyperreal elements reduces the individualised routines and boundaries that may occur within the space by synergising routine and place.

- **Consumer Society:**

The modern world propels the expansion of the law of supply and demand which operates through carefully managing and tailoring to the needs of humans for the appropriate financial compensation (Baudrillard, 1998). The perfect example of this idyllic equilibrium is the mall space and its competitive brand landscape, where consumer needs within different categories are catered to on various levels. The consumer society as referred to by Baudrillard (1998) enforces the notion that centring consumers is the focal obligation for businesses across the board. However, to remain competitive brands are often forced to develop similar offerings which in turn means consumers are surrounded by duplicated offerings that are differentiated through carefully organised emotive and personal relations (Baudrillard, 1998). The consumer's interaction with the brand is arranged to serve the humanising aspect of the brand-consumer interaction by instructing human assets on the best-suited service experience. Baudrillard (1998) notes that those who are humanised contact points are instructed to smile and be polite when interacting with consumers. The communication and exchange system that frames the brand-consumer interaction is thus collectively driven by social value and organisational structuring, establishing differentiation by easing any unconscious consumer constraint (Baudrillard, 1998).

Similarly, Moser (2013) highlights that ever-present consumerism sees an intertwined process of expansive growth and alluring stimuli that limits the ability for critical thinking. Within Moser's (2013) reflection on Jean Baudrillard's notion of manufactured reality, he identifies that consumers who are unconscious purchasers see themselves buying into the Utopian perspective of consumerism which is unachievable as it functions on the desire for more. Baudrillard's paradoxical perspective on consumption illustrates the context of a universal economic system that survives on consistently stimulating consumer buy-in (Moser, 2013). This adds to the relevance of the proposed research context of a mall as the distinct space in which the consumer-brand interactions take place within an ever-stimulating landscape.

2.1.2. Brand attributing: The brandscape & individualised brand experience

An overview of existing research on branding within public spaces provides context on the concept of brandscape as impressionable attributes that occur in public spaces such as malls where the different spaces are commercialised to influence consumers. Further as part of reviewing brand attributing the literature overview investigates existing research on brand experience as an additional attribute used to influence consumer outlooks on alternative brands.

- **The Brandscape Ecosystem**

City branding overlooks the role of individual brands that form part of space and inevitably contribute to city brand building failing to acknowledge the complex associations that link products, spaces and people (Bellini & Pasquinelli, 2015). This introduced the term brandscape which joins brands and landscape to offer context to spaces that offer consumers exposure to a multitude of brands. Brandscape is contextualised by Bellini et al. (2015) as the endless quantity of brands that shape the consumers daily life. Through the setting of a materialised and symbolic marketplace environment that is enhanced through physical products, imagery and messaging. The brandscape environment is ultimately set out for consumer access to a multitude of brands that to some extent shape the consumer's identity

through a process of 'consumer acculturation', an influenced and lived brand reality (Bellini & Pasquinelli, 2015). Established brandscapes are thus associated with value creation and are viewed as ecosystems that serve a purpose in society (Bellini & Pasquinelli, 2015).

Similarly, Löfgren (2014) identifies brandscapes as a key feature in place marketing as it supports the factors that attract people to a particular space in conjunction with elements like an appealing atmosphere and the setting's ambience. The human's experience of different settings can however be elusive and intangible as human interaction does influence the overall context of the experience (Löfgren, 2014). The cultural qualities given to commercial spaces are ultimately produced through the frequent use of the space based on the experience potential, sensory input and atmosphere derived from the facilities on offer within the place. Understanding the relationship between brandscapes and lived experiences thus requires recognition for the potential difference in the envisioned and actual outcome experienced within a space (Löfgren, 2014). Highlighting the need to focus on co-producing atmospheres including human and non-human interactions with the brandscape where tone and mood ultimately contextualises the experience (Löfgren, 2014).

Thompson and Arsel (2004) however offer alternative context for the term brandscape as a cultural system that structures discursive, symbolic and competitive market-driven relationships created through experiential branding. Brandscapes do not only offer a structure for the establishment of an experience economy but also shapes the consumer's lifestyle by functioning as a cultural space where the consumer is free to act, think and feel (Thompson and Arsel, 2004). The objectified meaning derived within the space supports the consumer's constructive use of the space. Furthermore, Thompson and Arsel (2004) note that the hegemony of the third-place designed to allow consumers a public escape from their private life by offering a space where a moral and exchange economy can occur.

- **Brand Experience**

To assist the approach to experiential branding strategies Santini, Ladeira, Sampaio and Pinto (2018) explore the influence of brand experience on satisfaction uncovering various mediation variables of the relationship that they suggest is influenced by brand credibility and word of mouth advocacy. The study focuses on relational influences between consumers and factors associated with the consumer journey where the traditional emphasis has been on the functional characteristics of products or services that the consumer seeks (Santini et al, 2018). This study shifts focus on investigating elements of the consumer journey that contribute to the overall brand experience which attributes to establishing brand loyalty. The concept of brand experience is defined by subjective internal responses along with behavioural reactions evoked by brand-related stimuli that consumers are exposed to including the spaces in which these interactions occur (Santini et al, 2018).

Brand experiences capture the overall attractive essence of the brand to ensure consumers are receptive to sensory experiences that evoke certain feelings and derive a cognitive response from consumers (Santini et al, 2018). The dimensions that construct brand experience includes dimensions of affect that explores the moods and emotions evoked by brands and an intellectual dimension of consequence that results from brand choice (Santini et al, 2018). The extended brand experience model focuses on offering broadened theoretical understanding of the alternative dimensions by incorporating correlative testing to explore brand experience through defined dependent and independent variables that support brand familiarity (Santini et al, 2018). Simply put satisfaction becomes the point of leverage from which to establish brand trust and in turn derives loyalty which ultimately encourages the need to maintain satisfaction so that the consumer can inherently defend brands (Santini et al, 2018). With a balanced view of hedonic and utilitarian benefits that weigh rational and physical benefits against internalised and subjective perceptual benefits derived by

consumers. Focusing more particularly on hedonic benefits that associate brand satisfaction with experiential motivation, pleasure and recreation that is evoked by sensory and emotional influences that impact the overall experience (Santini et al, 2018). Through conducting research into the relationship between brand experience and there the dimensional attributes Santini et al. (2018) highlight a gap in the depth of research on the topic. A subjective research approach can assist brands in factoring in the true impact of alternative experiential attributes that provoke behavioural actions from consumers where the ideal outcome is brand loyalty.

Similarly, Faladhin and Martina (2020) explore brand experience and the impact of first impressions in examining the brands offered within a mall. Through establishing an understanding of first impressions affecting perception and the determining factor in consumer purchasing, Faladhin et al. (2018) encourage the notion that in valuing impression brands can improve awareness of their brands. Formed through the integration of motivation, perception and attitude, brand impression supports brands in building brand equity that propels satisfaction and loyalty in the minds of consumers. Crucial to effective awareness is brands adjusting the physical and situational facilities that support brand-consumer transactions. As shopping is associated with the lifestyle of consumerism, malls experience processes and efforts that are sought after with the required investment to build brands within the space up. An impression is however formed through individualised shopping experiences which differs across alternative phases of consumer relations with a brand such as the initial impression versus the impression in a continuation which occurs with loyal consumers. In the long-term Faladhin et al. (2018) suggests that the shopping experience is beneficial to both the consumer and the brand, making it an important element in a mall's marketing strategies. To refine this perspective on individual brands the study suggests that brand experience should be developed to grow over time and be stored in the hearts and minds of consumers. The correlation between brand awareness and brand experience is also noted as one where consumers react to the experiential

attributes which evoke either positive or negative recall. Using the AIDA model Faladhin et al. (2018) interpret the experiential journey of consumers during the purchasing process integrating attitude and action noting that feelings evoke action. This framework offers perspective into the value of brand experience where shopping traditional focused on process and not the excess value that is on offer when desired elements are presented during the consumers' journey.

2.1.3. The Gen Z Experience Economy:

An overview of existing research on Gen Z consumers and the consumer experience along the consumer journey the literature outlined here offers an overview of existing research on Gen Z and the consumer journey experience in extension from the step-by-step process.

- **Gen Z Consumers**

Gen Z consumers as defined by Francis and Hoefel (2018) were born from 1995 to 2010 and are recognised as true digital natives. Experiences both virtual and offline inherently influences Gen Z relationships with brands, Francis and Hoefel (2018) identify Gen Z's attitude to consumption as access to experiences over obtaining possession to products noting this as an attribute of value creation. Defining Gen Z as a hypercognitive generation Francis and Hoefel (2018) recognise them as comfortable with collecting and cross-referencing information to establish a well-sourced opinion on a brand.

Gutfreund (2016) informs Gen Z's approach to building authentic relationships with brands through the term social contract which encapsulates their value of customised experience and communication that is tailored and efficient driving on the need for active brand-consumer relationships. Gutfreund's (2016) perspective on Gen Z consumers ultimately

values the notion of experiential branding that allows for collaborative participation in authentic brand experiences. This notion offers room for further research into the Gen Z consumer journey and the drivers that implicate their outlook on the brand based on their real-time interactions with the brand representatives and their overall experience with the brand.

Further, Merriman (2015) identifies the alternative cultural context that Gen Z is born into an active leisure culture that encourages productive enjoyment of activities to curb their creative and ambitious nature. In exploring consumer loyalty amongst Gen Zers the traditional loyalty initiatives such as programs, cards and promotions aren't appealing enough to pique their interest (Merriman, 2015). Counterbalancing the potential for loyalty with an adaptive outlook as suggested by Merriman (2015) is a complex and ongoing due to the ever-changing needs of Gen Z consumers. This research approach offers a suggestive limitation for the exploration of elements that drive loyalty for Gen Z consumers and their recommended alternatives to loyalty programmes.

- **Consumer Experience**

The experience economy is defined by co-produced events where consumers are active participants in structured experiences that take form through co-created interactivity and the subjective outcomes of these experiences (Zmyslony and Wędrówicz, 2019). Brand structured experiences thus need to centre the approach around the consumer by anticipating consumer desires and prompting their participation. In doing so consumers are allowed to immerse themselves in real-time experiences that provide an element of engagement (Zmyslony et al, 2019).

With the rising use of consumer experiences, the desire for more drove the introduction of extraordinary experiences which offsets dissatisfaction by offering an escape from reality (Cova, 2020). By adopting a cultural perspective on consumption Cova (2020) states that brands can ethically work

on providing consumers with the opportunity to derive individual subjective meaning from an experience offering them gratification within the social context (Cova, 2020), in turn, this supports a positive outlook on the brand.

Similarly, Kashif, Qureshi and Qazi (2019) recognise the need for experiential value particularly within the context of the space making note of the ability to reinvigorate malls by prioritising how the mall serves the needs of recreational shoppers. As brand variety usually extends consumer choice within the retail space Kashif et al. (2019) argue that malls should tailor the space to a modern lifestyle by means of investing in ideal consumer experiences that make it convenient for shoppers to spend if they wish within the mall. In adopting this approach, the mall space can centralise consumption by driving on the notion of experiential value and consumer pleasure.

Malls still play a prominent role in South Africa, recognised for offering consumers transactional outlets along with socially driven spaces designed to facilitate the consumer's social experience within the mall. Thus, in a review of literature into the mall space as a brandscape that allocates social spaces with a way of understanding brand-consumer experiences, the study is provided with a holistic understanding of the various aspects that form the basis for the study.

Ultimately, this study takes aspects of these broad research topics to generate a focus on the Gen Z consumer experience with a mall's entertainment and leisure brands, offering insight into the factors that fuel consumer loyalty amongst Gen Z consumers.

2.2. Key concepts

Based on the literature review, the concepts below are defined to clarify the context of the study's key variables and the context of the research investigation as justified by the study.

2.2.1. Consumer Society

The research problem looks at the value of brand experiences in deriving brand loyalty amongst Gen Z consumers. In exploring the value of brand experience by centring around the Gen Z consumer journey the establishment of stronger brand-consumer connections is one informed by perspective. Consumer society suggests that consumption is structured to persuade individuals into purchasing products through exposure to external stimuli (Baudrillard,1998). Further, it prompts the idea that people buy goods and human relationships from the human interactions imparted during the process of purchase (Baudrillard,1998), in the resulting brand-consumer interactions. This concept will work in conjunction with mall culture and hyperreal stimuli which both argue for the reinforced notion put out by Baudrillard (1998) which recognises consumer centralising as the focal obligation for businesses across the board. For the purpose of this study, consumer society will refer to the consumer's interaction with brands both through exposure to branded content within the mall space and the humanised brand interactions they encounter during their consumer journey.

2.2.2. Brand attributing

Branding within public spaces can be defined by a branscape ecosystem that serves consumer impression through different spatially enhanced attributes within commercialised spaces such as a mall. The mall-like alternative marketplace environment setting is materialised through physical products, imagery and messaging. By attributing elements of the mall as a branded landscape consumer identity is to some extent shaped through a process of 'consumer acculturation', an influenced and lived brand reality (Bellini & Pasquinelli, 2015). The factors that attract people to a particular space together with elements like atmospheric appeal and ambience are cited by Löfgren (2014) as enhancers of the consumer experience. The distinct setting of a mall is an intangible part of consumer interactions that through experiential potential and sensory input allows for brand-produced strategies that facilitate consumer experiences. The different attributes ultimately make up brand attraction which ultimately enables subjective internal

responses and evoked behavioural reactions (Santini, Ladeira, Sampaio and Pinto, 2018). This concept is derived from the objective-driven design of brand experiences within a mall's brandscape used to serve an enhanced consumer experience to support the built-up reality by the brand (Bellini & Pasquinelli, 2015).

2.2.3. Experience economy

The Gen Z consumer experience looks at virtual and offline experiences which inherently influence their relationship with brands (Francis et al, 2019). By recognising value creation brands focused on co-produced events are provided with the opportunity for interactive and subjective outcomes to brand experiences (Zmyslony and Wędrawicz, 2019). In a brand's approach to experience co-creation, they derive the notion of an economy of give and take where the consumer is central to building sustainable brand value. To establish authentic relationships with brands Gutfreund (2016) notes that there is a social contract encapsulated by their value for customised experience and communication. By allowing consumers to immerse themselves in real-time experiences that provide elements of engagement they prompt the desire to prompt consumer participation (Zmyslony et al, 2019). Based on the value Gen Z consumers derive from experiences and the influence experience has on their relationship with brands, the concept of experience economy will serve as an indicator within the study of the potential influence experience can have on consumer buy-in.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Research paradigm

Based on the exploratory nature of the study and the intent to critically investigate the Gen Z consumer journey an interpretivist approach is well-suited. Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014) contextualises interpretivism as suitable in research study's that are centred within the field of social science where studies are focused on humans and human experience. The use of semi-structured interviews supports this circumstance by opening dialogue on the consumer

journey of Gen Zers within Pretoria. By contextualising subjective brand experiences through the Gen Z consumer journey within a mall's socially driven spaces. Due to the study's aim to contextualise brand experiences within the socially driven spaces of a mall, it is crucial to understand each individual's unique experiences.

Further perspective into the subjective human experience encourages the use of an ontological position on interpretivism as a means of directly recognising the different experiences of a mall's socially driven spaces by the selected Gen Z consumers. An ontological position acknowledges the subjectivity of the study's context with the various perspectives as they are experienced by Gen Z participants. By taking this perspective, Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014) argues that reality is socially constructed and meaning is differentially ascribed based on people's experiences.

3.2. Research design

Following an interpretivist approach, it serves the exploratory nature of this study which seeks to investigate subjective human experience (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). The study makes use of a qualitative data collection method that supports access to the diversified subjective context into the influence of brand experience on brand loyalty investigated. The Study will employ the use of qualitative semi-structured interviews to gather rich data on the brand experiences of Gen Z consumers within a mall's socially driven spaces. Semi-structured interviews are used for further understanding of brand experience within a mall's social-driven spaces.

To analyse the data collected by conducting the semi-structured interviews a thematic analysis is used to search, identify, and group descriptive terms identified in the dialogue provided through the course of the interview (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). By employing inductive reasoning this research focuses on individualised meaning within the context of the complex consumer experience, recognising human experience as relative and constructed.

Moreover, phenomenological research approaches assists in describing the social meaning of brand experience from several Gen Z perspectives as a factor in influencing brand loyalty in a mall's socially driven spaces by exploring brand experience as an influential factor. Furthermore, in placing focus on the subjective perspective of Gen Z consumers they are established as the unit of analysis for this study.

3.3. Population and Sampling

3.3.1. Population

The population that serves as the focal consumer group of this study includes people born between 1995 and 2003 as it served the study's intention not to include minors as part of the Gen Z consumer group. However, for the feasibility of this study the distinctive population parameters assist in refining the sample of generation Z consumers included in this study. The population for this study consists of generation Z, where the size of the population contextualised by Francis and Hoefel (2018) resides in Pretoria, South Africa. The unique attributes of the population included their availability to participate in the study and past experience of participating in an experiential consumer journey at The Grove Mall in Pretoria East. Furthermore, they should have spent time in the locale of the mall where the social amenities are located.

3.3.2. Sampling

For the feasibility of this study, the use of non-probability sampling offered access to a portion of the entire population since it would be extremely difficult to gain access to the entire population (Maree, 2020). The study's sample includes the participation of 4 people Gen Zers (2 males and 2 females) who

were between 18 and 25 years older who reside in Pretoria as per the parameters set above. In selecting a sample from the larger population, convenience sampling was used as the method that offers ease of accessibility to research participants.

Convenience sampling allows for a comfortable research process that is underlined by quick and easy access where the researcher and participants are familiar with each other (Maree, 2020). The use of non-probability convenience sampling meant that Gen Z consumers who form part of the study eased the process of data collection and supporting access to a localised context that was easily relayed due to the prior connection to the participants. Although there was a concern for researcher bias, it should be noted that the structured approach to data collection insisted on objective reasoning and the use of neutrality when directing the questioning which forms part of the interview process.

3.4 Research approach

3.4.1. Data collection method

The qualitative nature of this study enforced the need for a descriptive data collection method which offered the opportunity for virtual correspondence due to COVID 19 safety regulations. The decided research method was semi-structured interviews that would take place virtually through zoom meetings. With the aim of contextualising how Gen Z consumers experience brands within a mall's socially driven spaces the use of semi-structured interviews offered context of their own subjective experiences of the brands that form part of the mall's socially driven amenities.

The data collection approach:

The initial processes behind the selected use of semi-structured interviews included communicating the study's intent with the prospective participants,

requesting their participation in the study by informing them verbally via a phone call. Following this, the willing participants were emailed a copy of the consent form for their completion. Further included in the email was reiterated informed consent of their right to withdraw from the study at any point that they deem necessary. Following completed consent forms being emailed back, the participants were able to select a time according to their schedule where they could participate in research interviews. On the day of the interview, the participants were also required to complete and email the consent form that requested permission for the interview to be recorded for the purpose of writing out the transcript post-interview.

The Interviews were then conducted virtually to ensure the safety of the research participants accounting for the legal restriction set out within South Africa due to COVID 19 lockdown restrictions and the looting of malls within Pretoria in the time frame set out for the data collection process. The technique for conducting these interviews was informed by a research report from the journal of virtual research that contextualised the protocol and approach to take when conducting virtual interviews. Informed descriptive data was collected through recordings of the virtual interviews conducted with the four Generation Z participants.

Each interview took place via Zoom for the duration of 20-30 minutes where the recorded conversation was served by a semi-structured list of questions that focused on core themes of the research study. The interview process took a total of 5 days where the interviews took place, and the data was typed back from the audio recordings into the transcripts for tubulation in the data analysis process.

3.4.2. Data analysis method

Paring with the qualitative data collection process the use of a thematic analysis provided the opportunity to refine the embedded meanings contextualised within descriptive data gained during the data collection

process by identifying and analysing themes brought up in the interview dialogues. In conjunction with the qualitative data collection process, a thematic analysis allowed for the refinement of embedded meanings within descriptive data gained through interview dialogues. Focusing on the interpretation of the raw transcribed data this approach aided the intent of gaining insight into the power of brand experience in generating brand loyalty among Gen Z consumers that are not known for their brand loyalty.

The data analysis approach:

As a first step prior to analysing the data, the research participants were asked to review the interview transcript to ensure that no dialogue was omitted or embellished in the researcher's type-up of the transcripts. Once the raw data provided from the interview process had been checked by the participants the data was proofread and an initial read of the transcripts was completed to identify similarities within the subjective context of brand experiences within the Grove mall's socially driven spaces. The data was then coded through highlighting phrases in the dialogues of each participant, conceptualising these phrases into shortened labels that summed up the participant's dialogue into simple categorical outlooks. Finally, the themes identified within the subtext of the interview response data were collectively merged into various uncovered themes including the level of engagement, appeal brand contact and outlooks on loyalty.

3.5. Trustworthiness

The research study took on a qualitative nature, in order to embody a valid and reliable study of the quality criteria that encompasses trustworthiness. Outside of ensuring transparency throughout the entire research process, there were elements of compliance that were employed.

Credibility: Supporting a plausible outlook of research findings the study worked on ensuring confirmation of the correct interpretations of the interview participants responses to the interview questions by having the raw data

reviewed and confirmed by participants to confirm it as their original words.

Transferability: Supporting the probability that the study's context and or settings could be transferred by means of conducting a similar study with different participants. This criterion required context to be provided on the nature of the study and details on the participants as Gen Z consumers residing within Pretoria, detailed context has thus been provided throughout the research report.

Dependability: Supporting the stability of the study's findings across the stand of time. The dependability of the interview transcripts was verified through participants reviewing their interview transcripts in a post-interview review of the transcripts.

Confirmability: Supporting the degree by which findings can be confirmed by other researchers they study focused on ensuring that the findings offered an authentic voice for Gen Z consumers through clear and correlative interpretation of the raw data provided in their interview transcripts.

Further reflectivity was also practised throughout the research process by employing best practice approaches to ensure that personal biases wouldn't interfere with the data sourced in the study through the interviews. As a result of accessing the research sample through a personal link to participants which influenced their eased ability to answer questions during the interview process. Thus, a level of neutrality was ultimately used in the interview process where the line of questioning was paired with further probing only through the use of why & how questions.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion



Presentation Of Findings

BUYERS INTENTION WHEN GOING TO THE GROVE:

Looking into the buyer's intention when going to the Grove Mall the participants want to enjoy an activity of some sort and activity-based interests ultimately drive people to the Grove Mall as opposed to alternative malls like Centurion Mall or Mall of Africa. The Grove mall has a set focus on a variety of entertainment offerings that extends past the common feature of a movie theatre into activity driven entertainment, further, people also have variety driven restaurant settings.

Figure 2: Buyer's intention

BRAND OFFERING APPEAL:

The variety of activity-based offerings including the arcade and ice-skating rink provide guaranteed fun time. The overall range of offerings included in the spacious entertainment area ultimately allow for a full day event within an environment that offers room for a good time spent socialising with friends and family.

Figure 3: Brand Offering Appeal

DRAW-IN POINTS:

The draw-in -points that encourage people to visit the Grove mall are a combination of unique offerings delivered within the Groves blended interior-exterior environment. People can walk within a clean, safe and open-air space whilst exploring the variety of food and activity-based offerings available to them at fairly affordable prices.





MOTIVATIONAL INFLUENCES FOR MALL VISIT:

Largely dependent on the intrinsic motivation of enjoyment a visit to the grove mall was as stated by participants meant for pleasant and fun activities that would be enjoyed with friends or family. Further with an underlying nostalgic link the variety and full-service experiences on offer at the Grove provide a sense of excitement and comfort to the visiting



Figure 5: Motivational Influences for Mall Visit

THE PAST EXPERIENCE CLAUSE:

Past experience and customer service are shown to have a direct link however consumers

that
differs
on the
branches
alternative
brands.



understand
experience
depending
different
of the
food

Alternatively, the expectation for a franchise stays the same because consumers have a certain level of expected guarantee that things remain the same even though this is sometimes shaped by misconception over the correlation between perceived quality of food and the respective cost thereof.

Overall positive past experience ultimately motivates repeated support because consumer expectations have been affirmed- they know what to expect and at what price. Further, a long-term link such as childhood nostalgia associated with a particular brand also enhances the choice to repeatedly support.

Figure 6:Past experience

FEELING ASSOCIATION:

The Grove's offerings allow consumers to keep busy by means of connecting with others. Further, the convinced of having a range of activities and restaurant options aided by consumer peace of mind within the safe and secure environment. Thus, allowing consumers to share fun and memorable experiences within the spacious entertainment and leisure area.

Figure 7:Feeling Association

FAVOURED EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES:

The ice-skating rink was a standout favourite either as a by-product of past trips or because of interest in the activity which drove them to search for the nearest ice-skating rink. The themed nights and favourable specials at the arcade and the ice-skating rink provide people with an anticipatable fun experience.





**SHARED
EXPERIENCES:**

People enjoy spending time with both friends and family offering fun bonding opportunities further with the range of restaurants and activity-based offerings optimal date night options that have an activity and restaurant dinner on the menu.



POTENTIAL BRAND EXPERIENCE ADD-ONS:



The Ice-skating rink and Ster-Kinkor Imax are the top recommendations amongst



BRAND CONTACT:

Keeping contact with brands hasn't been seen as a top priority, with people mostly suggesting they can keep an eye out for promotional offerings for the enjoyment of entertainment-based activities on a budget. Promotional offerings are beneficial and source-able knowledge on these offerings allow plans to consider time and budget as focal to a fun-filled event, further keeping up with the Grove's offerings is necessary because offerings and prices can change.



Figure 12: Brand Contact

BRAND & MALL LOYALTY:

Alternative types of loyalty were uncovered including convenience; reliability; satisfaction and comparability-based loyalty. The perfect placement of leisure and entertainment brands makes it quick and easy to ensure consumer convenience and satisfaction which ultimately drives their enjoyment of the brand experience. Knowing what to expect in contrast with the opportunity for an equally as good experience which makes consumers loyal to the brand offerings at the Grove.





Figure 13: Brand & Mall Loyalty

ALTERNATIVE BRAND LOYALTY:

For Food-based offers familiarity and reliability stand out as the strongest incentives to brand loyalty, relating back to childhood familiarity Wimpy and Spur were an optimal choice. Mugg & Bean was a reliable based decision based on the vegan-friendly option offered on the menu. Preference-based loyalty was also highlighted as a potential basis for brand loyalty.

Figure 14: Alternative Brand Loyalty

BRAND LOYALTY PROGRAMMES:

Co-Brand alliances are favourable to traditional loyalty programmes as they offer linked benefits. With the Discovery medical aid alliance is one such example, offering consumers Ster-Kinkor consumers movie discounts. Alternatively, traditional loyalty programmes that offer vouchers and promotional discounts hold a place but aren't desirable enough for consumers.

LOYALTY DRIVERS



3 of the 4 participants showed clear knowledge of some form of loyalty programmes whilst participant 4 didn't see the need to belong to a loyalty programme. Participants 1 and 3 both highlighted a medical aid alliance or brand partnership between Ster Kinkor and Discovery where they were offered discounts on movies. Further participant 2 also stated that they were part of Spur's loyalty programme because they receive vouchers, promotions and competition entry which was seen as a great motive for being part of Spur's loyalty programme as a long time Spur consumer.

LOYALTY PROGRAMME OUTLOOKS

Relevance of Interpretation:

To establish a fundamental understanding of how Gen Z consumers engage with brands within a mall's socially driven space the researcher questioned them on the following:

- 1. Do you intentionally go to Grove mall to enjoy its entertainment and leisure brands?***
- 2. Are there any entertainment and leisure brands on offer that you find more appealing than others?***
- 3. What draws you to these entertainment and leisure brands?***
- 4. What influences you to select a specific entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to visit or use?***

The findings highlighted that the Gen Z consumer who participated in the study were intentionally going to the Grove to enjoy the experiences on offer at the mall's socially driven space. This is supported by Francis and Hoefel's (2018) contextualisation of Gen Z as consumers with a shared attitude toward consumption as their access to experiences with value creation attributes for them outside of the product or service on offer. This corroborates the outlook provided by participants as they placed significant value toward entertainment-based offerings as it serves their interest in going to the Grove in contrast to alternative malls.

Findings provided by participants on elements of attraction toward the Grove's leisure and entertainment brands further elaborated on how Gen Z engage with the mall's socially driven space. Participant 1 pointed out the blend of open space and fresh air that form a central feature of the mall's socially driven space. That caters to access to a variety of fresh and attractive offerings at the Grove which supports their engagement with brands as the environment is open and the set offerings are uniquely set up. Further perspective offered by participants highlighted that brand selection for activity-based offerings was influenced by experience and enjoyment and further strong associations-based selection was made due to the nostalgic memories they associated with brands. The extended brand experience model

analyses the mediating factors between experience and brand satisfaction including hedonic and utilitarian benefits.

Santini, Ladeira, Sampaio and Pinto (2018) point out that hedonic benefits including experiential motivation, pleasure, and recreational elements offered by brands that are evocative of sensory effects that tend to create a positive emotional state for the consumer. Contrastingly, the utilitarian benefits associated with rational and efficient preference highlight the intellectual and behavioural dimensions of brand experience that are presented through logical judgement that confirms or disconfirms brand satisfaction (Santini et al, 2018). Based on this literature it is evident that in engaging with the Grove's leisure and entertainment brand a large part of Gen Z's experience is aided by hedonic benefits that ultimately drive their decision to go to the Grove mall as opposed to alternative malls.

With the intent of investigating how Gen Zers experience their consumer journey within the mall's socially driven spaces the researcher questioned participants on the following:

5. *Do you hold onto past experiences when you choose one of the entertainment and leisure brands over another?*

6. *Explain how it makes you feel when you spend time at these entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall?*

The findings highlighted the influence past experience has on the brand outlook held by consumers, participants were motivated to return to the Grove because they knew what to expect. As customer journeys are path-dependent ordering the events of direct and indirect contact with the brand offer significant leverage over how the consumer's experience will turn out which heightens the importance of past experiences on determining future one (Varnali, 2018).

Positive experiences with a brand also support the creation of an emotional link between the brand and the consumer. Further, based on the integrated sense of

excitement and fun along with the sense of convenience provided from the brand variety as highlighted by participants it is indicative that emotive context forms part of the experiential consumer journey. Varnali (2018) substantiates on this outlook stating that the customer experience of the consumer journey consists of cognitive, emotional, sensory and social responses to experiential elements. These elements ultimately support their interaction with the products and accompanying services on offer, with the co-creation of brand-consumer experiences both direct and indirect interactions can assist customers in ensuring their own satisfaction and memorability of their experiences.

In addition, with the participants sharing alternative outlooks on the premise of giving brands a second chance, where a male participant said they wouldn't continue supporting the brand and a female participant showing a willingness to give brands a second chance. There was a distinctive correlation to Gutfreund's (2016) context of the authentic relationships Gen Z has with brands which are based on the notion of entering a social contract. This study's finding aids readers in understanding the drive behind brand outlook as served by the participants real-time interactions with the brand resulting in the overall representation of their experience with the brand.

Based on the intention of exploring elements of experiential value offered by brands and the influence these elements have in the establishment of brand-consumer connections that result in brand loyalty. The researcher started off by investigating the consumer preferences as a means of establishing an understanding of potential cues for prompting their loyalty this included the following:

Q7: Are there any events and activities you like to take part in at Grove Mall?

Q8: Who do you like sharing these experiences with?

Q9: Do you feel that there are things these brands can add to their offering to improve your experience with them?

The outlook held by participants with an interest in the Grove's activity-based offerings where they derived fun and enjoyment from the ice-skating rink and arcade games. Faladhin and Martina (2020) elaborate on the fact that consumer interpretation of stimulus ultimately assists them in forming an attitude over the brand, this supports the outlook held by participants who identify the enjoyment potential at the Grove through the environment catering to fun with friends and family bonding time.

The interest in improving the Grove's offering provided significant insight into what might be missing from the Grove to support their impression and experience of the socially driven spaces. Participants seemed satisfied by the existing range of offerings but offered various suggestions for additions to their food options which pointed to a distinction between their attitude toward the Grove and further their overall experience being satisfactory despite the lack of alternative offering. Faladhin and Marinha (2020) point this out in their discussion, highlighting that impression and experience are formed by means of offering various elements that peak consumer interest including entertainment and leisure offerings.

To address the basis of the research question on whether Gen Z consumers could become loyal to brands within the mall's socially driven space. Thus, the researcher questioned the participants on their current connection with brands as a means of deriving a basis of their connection to brands through the following:

Q10: Have you recommended any of the entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to your friends?

Q11: Do you maintain contact with these entertainment and leisure brands outside of the mall?

As Gen Z becomes encouraged to recommend brands based on the chance that replicable enjoyment can occur with others through ensuring service uniformity and value for a variety of affordably priced offerings. The entertainment value offered to

Gen Z participants ultimately justifies their desire to support brands through recommendations. Priporas, Stylos and Fotiadis (2017) identify Gen Z based on an underlying expectation for brands to offer them experiences without guaranteeing brand loyalty. With their brand experiences being focused on a desire for safety and temporary escape from their reality (Priporas, 2017). There is a link between their study and the findings provided from conducting this study which is that in capitalising on the creation of spaces where consumers can enjoy themselves without breaking the bank brands will be afforded word of mouth recommendations from their consumers.

Further Gen Z's outlook on keeping contact with entertainment & leisure brands illustrates that they would like to initiate contact by means of seeking out the time and cost information based on their own needs. This assists an understanding of how Gen Z's contact with brands on their terms supports their autonomy as consumers where they serve their own expectations by means of developing perceptions.

Ultimately as a means of establishing criteria that could be utile leverage for prompting brand loyalty amongst Gen Z consumers, the researcher questioned participants on the following:

Q12: Are you loyal to any entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall?

This study's findings identified two key drivers in Gen Z's loyalty for a brand including the brand aiding to their convenience and further providing them with a focus on positive experience, there was also evidence of loyalty based on predictability and convenience which supports their taste and preference. Merriman (2015) justifies Gen Z brand loyalty to be based on self-reliance when creating solutions that suit them. Further, Merriman (2015) points out that for brands to gain a sense of loyalty with Gen Z it is important to intuitively deliver on their evolving needs by making them part of the solution. Based on these suggestions and the findings provided in this research study an indicative approach toward achieving loyalty with Gen Z is through aiding to their convenience and preferences both within the context of brand

service and brand offerings.

Q13: Are there any other brands you are loyal to?

Gen Zers aren't particularly loyal but there is a strong basis for loyalty based on experience and brand familiarity. Affordability is also a clear indicator for potential brand or product switching when it comes to entertainment and leisure brands. Merriman (2015) corroborates the finding of Gen Z lacking loyalty and states that due to their desire to remain highly informed they also become critical and observant of the impact of their own behaviour. Due to the difficulty of gaining Gen Z's loyalty, it is important for their experience and familiarity with the brand to be prioritised and although it may seem as if they have extremely high expectations brand affinity is ultimately established serving consumer needs and desires.

Q14: Do you belong to any Loyalty programmes from these brands?

Gen Z has clear knowledge of brand loyalty programmes and brand partnerships however in questioning their desire to form part of a loyalty programme there was distinctive hesitancy. Contrastingly, brand partnerships were a distinctive point for pivoting brand loyalty by means of connecting with their existing brand alliances. Overall, traditional loyalty programmes are on the decline across generations thus Merriman (2015) distinctively describes traditional loyalty programmes, cards and promotions as a losing battle and suggests that brands look for new ways to garner attention with consumers through establishing authentic connections. Based on the findings and current relevance of brand partnerships the establishment of authentic connection can be centred around distinctive co-brand partnerships that support their experiences and enjoyment.



Concluding research discussion:

In South Africa, malls still play a prominent role and Generation Z consumers are critical consumers with a high standard of expectations without guaranteeing loyalty. As a result, this study aimed to determine whether brands can offer this consumer

group valuable brand experiences as a part of supporting the establishment of brand loyalty. The research approach ultimately sought to explore Gen Z's experience with brands in the Grove mall's socially driven spaces. By using virtual semi-structured interviews, the exploration of brand experience was contextualised through questioned interrogation over past experiences of the leisure and entertainment-based brands. The process of questioning derived findings that are key to meeting this study's objective and responses that provided perspective into the research questions.

Experiential value facilitated through the spatial layout at the Grove mall is suggested to have created an environment that encourages personal enjoyment within the mall's socially driven spaces. In turn, supporting positive outlooks on the space and the brands which ultimately encourages the option for repeatable experiences, is a notable attribute toward achieving brand loyalty. An attributable approach to loyalty amongst Gen Z consumers suggests that they desire continuous involvement in the creation of their own experiences and the brand offerings to suit these offerings to their personal preferences. The Findings ultimately suggest that through co-created brand experiences brands can incentivise loyalty amongst Gen Z.

In investigating Gen Z's experiential consumer journey recognition of value derived from brand experiences should engage with all of the consumer's senses. Engagement with brands in Grove mall's socially driven spaces is based on spatial appeal and sensorially appealing starting with a memorable attraction that drives their interest in the Grove mall. Layout in combination with accessibility to a variety of brand choices underlies the Grove's approach toward catering to experiential value. However, holistic brand experiences amongst Gen Zers are equipped with a personal interest in particular brands or perceived outlooks on brand offerings.

Grouping leisure and entertainment-based brands within one space ultimately aids the Grove's approach toward targeted collective enjoyment which ties personalised appeal toward a good experience. Modern relatability is established through the creation of platforms set on evolving the desire for co-creation into something actionable and

appealing. Gen Z's take on loyalty suggests brands shouldn't force contact and demand a traditional process or rigid program guidelines, particularly with leisure and entertainment brands within a mall's socially driven spaces.

Heuristic Value of findings

With motivation, experience and perception as core dimensions in the adaptive Consumer Culture Theory model the establishment of brand-consumer connections ultimately prompts loyalty, the research process focused centrally on questioning these attributes in relation to Gen Z brand experiences along the consumer journey. Findings provided through this process serve the addition of new literature regarding brand experience and Gen Z as consumers. Further practical brand recommendations have also been identified as part of grounding the findings and the identification of new context provided as a result of this research process particularly centred around deriving Gen Z brand loyalty. Brand experience as the core component in this study offers context over Gen Z's role in the co-creation of their experience with a brand through the direct and indirect interactions with the brand and their offerings.

As brands work on supporting brand experience and focusing on brand loyalty prompts amongst a generation that shows limited interest in being loyal toward brands. The findings point to a generation with consistently evolving interests and needs, the work toward balancing individual desires, working on delivering satisfaction for a larger group of consumers. Gen Z consumers seek the support of brands along their experiential consumer journey with brands, they are characterised by their autonomy and the desire for brands to understand them. Catering to their convenience and preference across the brand's services and offerings. Further, to remain relevant with Gen Z the establishment of authentic brand partnerships that are put in place to support their experiences and enjoyment.

Ethical considerations

With the study's participants being Gen Z consumers who provided their perspective on brand experiences with leisure and entertainment-based brands within a mall various ethical considerations were required to ensure the morality of the study. It is worth noting that the study only commenced once the research approach had been approved by the IIE's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee. Further, while the study was conducted virtually, the study still relied on the participant's willingness to participate and their signed permission for the interviews to be recorded.

Moreover, as part of the ethical conduct of this study, before the interviews the participants were once again fully informed of the research purpose and their right to withdraw from the study.

The ethical considerations underlying the research approach highlighted various maintenance factors that ensured the study's integrity along the interview process including:

- 1. Confidentiality:**

The identity of all participants remained confidential across the entire duration of the study.

- 2. Consent:**

Participants were asked to sign consent forms to confirm participation and for the interview to be recorded.

Participants were provided with informed consent prior to their participation in the study.

- 3. No harm:**

Participants weren't harmed in any way due to the virtual approach taken to conducting the interviews which protected participants from conditions brought on by COVID 19 and the looting of malls within Gauteng, South Africa.

- 4. Access to data:**

Participants were provided with access to the data collected during the data collection process as it pertains to them. This also ensured the dependability of the research provided the interview transcripts.

Research Limitations

In this study, several challenges were encountered due to constraints of the research approach adopted, the length of time in which the study was conducted, and the availability of relevant information in support of the study's purpose. The study's scope was refined to focus on a mall within Pretoria and the research participants selected residing in Pretoria. Additionally, reliance on past-lived experiences of leisure and entertainment-based brands within Grove's socially driven spaces serves as a represented limiting factor in this research which is only the case because of the amended approach toward exploration of social experience. Further due to the subjective nature of the study and the researchers access to Gen Zers who reside in Pretoria the study can't be generalised and will not be reflective of society's general population.

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Ann exur e A

Ethical clearance

Date: 07 July 2021

Student name: Melissa De Sa

Student number: [REDACTED]

Campus: IIE Vega Pretoria Campus

Re: Approval of RESE8419 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns. However, please consult your supervisor with regards to your supporting documents and research instrument before collecting your data for your research. We hereby provide you with *provisional permission* to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below

being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor name: Dr SC

Engelbrecht Signature:



Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC) name: Dr Ria (HM) van Zyl

Signature:



Annexure B

Interview Question Outline

Interview Outline:

- Do you consent to participate in this study and further for the interview to be recorded for the purpose of transcribing the interview later?
- Have you been to the Grove mall?

Topic-based Questions:Motivation:

1. Do you intentionally go to Grove mall to enjoy its entertainment and leisure brands?
2. Are there any entertainment and leisure brands on offer that you find more appealing than others?
3. What draws you to these entertainment and leisure brand? (People/what it looks like, price, service?)
4. What influences you to select a specific entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to visit or use?
5. Do you hold onto past experiences when you choose one of the entertainment and leisure brands over another?
 - Give an example of a positive or negative experience with entertainment and leisure brands that make you feel this way...

Experience:

6. Explain how it makes you feel when you spend time at these entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall?
7. Are there any events and activities you like to take part in at Grove Mall? How does it work? Who invites you the Mall or the brand specifically?
8. Who do you like sharing these experiences with?
9. Do you feel that there are things these brands can add to their offering in order to improve your experience with them? Explain.

Perception:

10. Have you recommended any of the entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to your friends? why?
11. Do you maintain contact with these entertainment and leisure brands outside of the mall? (i.e., Via social media) Why? / why not?

Loyalty prompts:

12. Are you loyal to any entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall? Please explain why?
13. Are there any other brands you are loyal to?
 - What drives your loyalty to these brands?
14. Do you belong to any Loyalty programmes from these brands? Explain–

Annexure C

Interview Transcripts

Interview 1

Question 1:

Interviewer: Do you intentionally go to Grove mall to enjoy its entertainment and leisure brands?

Interviewee: 'I think I go there because they offer more entertainment-based activities than other malls like Centurion and Mall of Africa. Specifically, as a person that likes me who enjoys keeping active ice skating is definitely the largest reason why I would go to the Grove mall.'

Question 2:

Interviewer: Are there any entertainment and leisure brands on offer that you find more appealing than others?

Interviewee: Yes, definitely just because more entertain-based offerings are located at the grove they serve as landmarks on why I would go to the Grove as opposed to Centurion Mall & Mall of Africa, you aren't getting an Ice-skating rink, just clothing and food stores. If in the mood for entertainment-based activities I'm definitely going to go to the mall that offers me variety within that space.

Question 3:

Interviewer: What draws you to these entertainment and leisure brands?

People/what it looks like, price, service?

Interviewee: The Uniqueness, Ice skating rinks and arcades aren't found in every mall, pricing does range from season to season but it's practically the unique offerings that draws me to the Grove... They give me something I can't find at other malls.

Even the whole blended way of the mall allowing open space and fresh air as opposed to other malls like Centurion where the restaurants are indoors, the Grove definitely offer a Fresh environment, that allows me to walk around and not feel enclosed, it just gives customers a more pleasant environment.

Question 4:

Interviewer: What influences you to select specific entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to visit or use?

Interviewee: Depends on why I'm going, am I going to chill, to go and watch movies, am I going for an activity specifically. Am I going with friends or family, it all depends.

For me personally, because I would rather do something active, I'd go to the ice rink, because I find it the most pleasant & fun to do so that would be my main source of entertainment.

Question 5:

Interviewer: Do you hold onto past experiences when you choose one of the entertainment and leisure brands over another?

Provide an example

Interviewee: Depends if I'm going to the same store because obviously customer service is different. I haven't had a bad experience at the grove mall necessarily, it has been positive overall, I'm also someone that likes trying something new, so I'm always trying different options at different stores and different food.

Question 6:

Interviewer: Explain how it makes you feel when you spend time at these entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall?

Interviewee: For entertainment, I feel like it gives me something to do, it's something to occupy my time. So as I said I like keeping active so the ice skating rink or for relaxing where I'm just trying to wind down and enjoy my night movies for sure

I think Fournos is a good place to go to lunch with other people and connect with people. I feel Like the Grove is convenient it offers variety, the Grove also creates an environment that offers peace of mind and makes people feel safe- if Kids are at the ice skating rink your parents can be more at ease eating dinner at a restaurant within walking distance from the rink.- because you are still within the same environment.

Question 7:

Interviewer: Are there any events and activities you like to take part in at Grove Mall?

How does it work?

Who invites you the Mall or the brand specifically?

Interviewee: I think I definitely heard about it from other people, I've defiantly been influenced by cousins who took me to the Ice skating rink when I was younger, it sparked my own interest and I continued going to the ice skating rink because I enjoy it.

Question 8:

Interviewer: Who do you like sharing these experiences with?

Interviewee: So defiantly both friends and Family, with family I obviously go with my cousins, it's more close. With friends it's just fun, having a good time around the ice rink, spending time making memories. And with family, it's an activity we can do together and treasure doing.

Question 9:

Interviewer: Do you feel that there are things these brands can add to their offering in order to improve your experience with them? Explain.

Interviewee: I think they don't need to do anything because they have a good balance and at the end of the day it's a mall it's not an amusement park. For food brands I'd definitely love it they offered more local offerings can be beneficial, as I said I definitely love trying new things and supporting locals is something I defiantly value.

Question 10:

Interviewer: Have you recommended any of the entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to your friends? why?

Interviewee: Yah 100% after I went to the Ice skating rink with my family I defiantly came back to school and told people about it and about the experience, I influenced my friends to go ice skating because it sparked their interest.

Question 11:

Interviewer: Do you maintain contact with these entertainment and leisure brands outside of the mall? (i.e., Via social media) Why? / why not?

Interviewee: I don't keep in contact with leisure/food brands because it wasn't a major priority

I Keep an eye out for promotions so I can go enjoy the entertaining activities on my budget. Especially as a student, freebies and promotions are definitely a plus. So it's definitely beneficial so I can plan my time and budget for a fun-filled event with my friends.

Question 12:

Interviewer: Are you loyal to any entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall? Please explain why?

Interviewee: So loyalty for me comes out of convenience because I am vegan, there are only a hand full of food brands that cater to my needs, so when I go to the grove mall I am looking out for my options and I'm usually going to the same brands because I know the menu, I know its vegan, it suits my needs.

Question 13:

Interviewer: Are there any other brands you are loyal to?

What drives your loyalty to these brands?

Interviewee: Mugg & bean is one of the few places that I consistently go to because I know what they offer and I know I like it.

Question 14:

Interviewer: Do you belong to any Loyalty programmes from these brands? Explain.

Interviewee: Because of our medical aid's alliance to Ster-kinkor we get discounts on movies so that brand alliance is the only brand I'm essentially loyal to.

Interview 2

Question 1:

Interviewer: Do you intentionally go to Grove mall to enjoy its entertainment and leisure brands?

Interviewee: Yes but not always because I'm quite busy, I go there more the food places.

Question 2:

Interviewer: Are there any entertainment and leisure brands on offer that you find more appealing than others?

Interviewee: Yes, I love their Ocean Basket so I go there a lot for that, I also love the Spur a lot and the Ice rink on occasion... but the food is definitely my main form of entertainment and the way I enjoy spending time with people

Question 3:

Interviewer: What draws you to these entertainment and leisure brands?

People/what it looks like, price, service?

Interviewee: I definitely enjoy the Grove's food area because they offer a variety so no matter what mood I'm in I have my pick, like I said, I love food and sitting down and eating at a restaurant so the fact that offer a variety of options of things I like, Spur or If I'm in the mood for sushi they have a nice sushi restaurant. So that definitely draws me because I know no matter what food I'm feeling they have options for me. So the ice skating rink, I like to go there on occasion with my fiancé- it's a thing we do as a couple to spend time together.

Question 4:

Interviewer: What influences you to select specific entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to visit or use?

Interviewee: Variety of food brands, my main options would be Ocean Basket & Spur they have big ones, I also enjoy their movie theatre and the movie experience.

Question 5:

Interviewer: Do you hold onto past experiences when you choose one of the entertainment and leisure brands over another?

Provide an example

Interviewee: I've had positive experiences- I know the quality Spur has across all their restaurants, so I know what to expect, I know the menu pretty well, what they offer. The ice skating rink is also a place I know I'm guaranteed to enjoy the experience, I know the prices for the shoes and passes pretty well.

Negatives would definitely be more on brands not offering my types of foods- I know I stopped buying at Mugg and Bean because I feel they are overpriced for what they offer.

Question 6:

Interviewer: Explain how it makes you feel when you spend time at these entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall?

Interviewee: The Spur is always a positive experience, like again- I know what they are offering, I know I'm guaranteed good customer service so its always good to know what you are getting, it makes me feel satisfied and overall helps me enjoy my experience.

Question 7:

Interviewer: Are there any events and activities you like to take part in at Grove Mall?

How does it work?

Who invites you the Mall or the brand specifically?

Interviewee: No, not an event person, not into so many social activities but by invite from people like my Fiancé I definitely go. Interesting story about how I got into Ice skating was obviously based on my Fiancé's interest I also wanted to try Ice skating so I Googled nearest Ice Skating rink and The Grove popped up and ever since then its become routine to go to the Grove's Ice skating rink.

Question 8:

Interviewer: Who do you like sharing these experiences with?

Interviewee: With my Fiancé, I also go to the Grove with my family, I did introduce them to the grove's offerings. I definitely feel like based on my experiences The grove is catered to couple and family fun because I've enjoyed myself in both respects.

It offers exactly what I need for who I'm with for my Fiancé, we like to eat there Ice skate or watch a movie together, If we do a family thing I the arcade and the bowling they offer and the arcade because its good fun for everyone.

Question 9:

Interviewer: Do you feel that there are things these brands can add to their offering in order to improve your experience with them? Explain.

Interviewee: Add a Krispy Crème after Ice Skating my Fiancé and I enjoy a sweet treat, the Grove has a milky Lane but we like doughnuts so if they had a nice doughnut place it would be great.

Question 10:

Interviewer: Have you recommended any of the entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to your friends? why?

Interviewee: I've recommended the Ice Skating rink to my family and the Cinema because I enjoyed it and I thought they would too.

Question 11:

Interviewer: Do you maintain contact with these entertainment and leisure brands outside of the mall?

(i.e., Via social media)

Why? / why not?

Interviewee: Not actually, I've never thought about it, to be honest- I don't follow any brands specifically on social media so no.

Question 12:

Interviewer: Are you loyal to any entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall? Please explain why?

Interviewee: The Spur, I love their food, I love it it's exactly what I look for, I also like Wimpy but I know they don't offer that for my breakfast needs so that's disappointing so I'd probably go somewhere else for breakfast -not the Grove.

Question 13:

Interviewer: Are there any other brands you are loyal to?

What drives your loyalty to these brands?

Interviewee: Spur and Wimpy are my favourites because of familiarity, I've been going there since I was a child so it's what I'm familiar with so it's what I'm drawn to.

Question 14:

Interviewer: Do you belong to any Loyalty programmes from these brands? Explain.

Interviewee: I'm part of Spur's loyalty programme because I get vouchers, promotions and I also get into all their competitions- because I go there so often being part of their loyalty programme just makes sense.

Interview 3

Question 1:

Interviewer: Do you intentionally go to Grove mall to enjoy its entertainment and leisure brands?

Interviewee: Yes I do because they are the only ones with an Ice skating rink near me. The ice skating rink is the element that stands out for me, I also like the arcade bowling. Most malls only have a movie theatre and the grove offers the arcade and ice skating in addition to the cinema, so I go to the grove because they offer something different.

Question 2:

Interviewer: Are there any entertainment and leisure brands on offer that you find more appealing than others?

Interviewee: I go to the grove because between the arcade and the ice skating rink I'm guaranteed a more fun time. There are more options for a fun evening, I could go to centurion but that would just be for a movie. If I go to the grove I can have a day event planned if I'm feeling like ice skating-ice skating; If I'm feeling like bowling, bowling if I feel like bumper karts-bumper carts; arcade games-arcade games and if I feel like a movie- then a movie.

Question 3:

Interviewer: What draws you to these entertainment and leisure brands?

People/what it looks like, price, service?

Interviewee: I think it's very quick service, the prices are also not bad- it's a very good price for ice skating- if you do it a lot you can have your own ice skating shoes and then you just pay the R80 entry fee which I feel isn't bad considering you can spend the day there if you want- so prices are very good. I feel like it's very clean, the service is friendly and the grove mall is safe- like I feel safe at the Grove.

Question 4:

Interviewer: What influences you to select specific entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to visit or use?

Interviewee: If I were to go to the Grove mall my intention is to go and enjoy the entertainment activities because I have malls closer to me if I want to do some shopping. The grove is the only one that offers a variety of activities so I want to go for those activities specifically.

Question 5:

Interviewer: Do you hold onto past experiences when you choose one of the entertainment and leisure brands over another?

Provide an example

Interviewee: Yes, I've had positive experiences that have definitely motivated my return to the grove. The price and the fact that the Grove is kept clean and the ice skating rink is kept clean and also it's not so busy that's a bonus.

Question 6:

Interviewer: Explain how it makes you feel when you spend time at these entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall?

Interviewee: Okay so, ice skating is very joyful and very fun, it's a fun place to spend time with friends and family, it accommodates for beginners and people that are more skilled. It's very fun.

Bowling is also very fun and very competitive and it allows for multiple players so if I come with a big group (4-5 people) we can all enjoy some competitive fun.

I also enjoy the food variety they offer, also the fact that they incorporate the nature aspect in their sit down restaurants, you don't feel stuffy and you actually spend time outside which is very nice, it's a spacious and calming environment.

Question 7:

Interviewer: Are there any events and activities you like to take part in at Grove Mall?

How does it work?

Who invites you the Mall or the brand specifically?

Interviewee: I've gotten to enjoy activities at the Grove through other people inviting me to the mall and the ice skating rink defiantly has themed events which is very nice- they play a certain type of music on a certain night like a disco kind of night- they have different themed events that definitely increase my interest in going to the Grove

Question 8:

Interviewer: Who do you like sharing these experiences with?

Interviewee: Friends and Family

Question 9:

Interviewer: Do you feel that there are things these brands can add to their offering in order to improve your experience with them? Explain.

Interviewee: So specifically for the ice skating, I think they could offer sessions, so like beginners only because sometimes it does get busy. So if it's like a Friday night,

where it's quite a lot of people and it's jam-packed (obviously according to level 1 Covid regulations) and sometimes people who are more advanced will skate past the beginners and it sort of creates a clashing stuffy event.

Question 10:

Interviewer: Have you recommended any of the entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to your friends? why?

Interviewee: Yes all of them again for the reasons, of fun, entertaining, clean, safe- it's a very nice mall to be at they offer variety at a good price.

Question 11:

Interviewer: Do you maintain contact with these entertainment and leisure brands outside of the mall?

(i.e., Via social media)

Why? / why not?

Interviewee: No I don't keep up with any of them specifically but if I know and I'm thinking of going again I'll get up to date- maybe they are offering specials, something new that they've added- but not outside of the context of me wanting to go to the mall.

So I'd say I'm looking it up via social media or google when I'm planning a day or an evening to go out.

Question 12:

Interviewer: Are you loyal to any entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall? Please explain why?

Interviewee: I am loyal to the Grove's entertainment space as a whole, specifically with the restaurants so close to the entertainment area, they sort of placed everything in the same wing of the mall, so its all together- so you don't have to go far as opposed to other malls like you come for that experience of you are going to have a meal, we can go Ice skating or we can go bowling, like its all together. I think in terms of food brands I'd say I'm loyal to the Mugg and been but I think its purely out of convenience and enjoyment of a menu I already know

Question 13:

Interviewer: Are there any other brands you are loyal to?

What drives your loyalty to these brands?

Interviewee: Yes, a Starbucks for my coffee and I know the Grove doesn't offer me that- I love their products and the coffee culture they provide- so okay, maybe I can work there in their afternoon and whilst I'm there I can keep caffeinated.

I think maybe adding to a grab and go type of feel could be very nice because like with Starbucks they offer a personalised product and they also give you a

personalised experience through your drink and packaging.

Question 14:

Interviewer: Do you belong to any Loyalty programmes from these brands? Explain.

Interviewee: I'm part of the Sterkinkor loyalty program- because discovery gives me a discount, so can watch movies at half the price which is really attractive for me.

If more brands offered me discovery points- and discovery miles then I'd enjoy being part of loyalty programmes so maybe like adding the ice skating rink or arcade and more of the restaurants at the Grove on that then I'd definitely be part of more programmes.

Interview 4

Question 1:

Interviewer: Do you intentionally go to Grove mall to enjoy its entertainment and leisure brands?

Interviewee: Yes, I think that that might be the main reason for me going to the Grove mall because they have a set of entertainment-focused offerings.

Question 2:

Interviewer: Are there any entertainment and leisure brands on offer that you find more appealing than others?

Interviewee: They have a good movie theatre in terms of comfortable seating and full-service catering. In the arcade, the fact that they have bumper karts, really like that and the Ice skating rink.

Question 3:

Interviewer: What draws you to these entertainment and leisure brands?

People/what it looks like, price, service?

Interviewee: I think it's because it's the only mall I know that offers all of 3 aspects of a movie theatre, ice skating rink and arcade- no other malls near me offer those experiences.

I think they offer a good environment, with variety, a good place that is affordable as well.

Question 4:

Interviewer: What influences you to select specific entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to visit or use?

Interviewee: They have a Spur right opposite the ice skating rink, so when I take my girlfriend on a date to the ice skating rink- we both love Spur and it's right there. The arcade-the Fun company also offers me a small feel of Suncity -because I also go to Suncity a lot and the fact that they have something like that is really appealing, that's why I chose to go.

Question 5:

Interviewer: Do you hold onto past experiences when you choose one of the entertainment and leisure brands over another?

Provide an example

Interviewee: Yes, as I said because of my experience with the Fun Company in general, I know what they offer, the price they offer it at and the whole experience they offer so it definitely draws me there.

Also definitely the Sterkinkor -because I know Sterkinkor and have had good experiences with that brand in the past- I sort of know I'll enjoy the Imax experience.

So yes like I said always positive experiences from those 2 companies- I think it's also linked to my childhood.

Question 6:

Interviewer: Explain how it makes you feel when you spend time at these entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall?

Interviewee: Its a positive -Fun experience and its always fun to take my girlfriend to the Grove, to enjoy these experiences with her on a date because going just restaurants at a mall gets so tiring very quickly so the fact that we can have these fun experiences together, ice skating or watching a movie together or going to the arcade or bumper karting or bowling- is always a fun and memorable experience.

Question 7:

Interviewer: Are there any events and activities you like to take part in at Grove Mall?

How does it work?

Who invites you the Mall or the brand specifically?

Interviewee: I think I go to the mall because I know these brands are there, If they are running specials in the arcade that definitely brings me to there and then just obviously going to the mall because I want to do the activity.

Question 8:

Interviewer: Who do you like sharing these experiences with?

Interviewee: My girlfriend and my friend Reece and his girlfriend, we like to double date so it's a fun experience for the four of us.

Question 9:

Interviewer: Do you feel that there are things these brands can add to their offering in order to improve your experience with them? Explain.

Interviewee: I feel like they do a pretty good job already but I feel like they could definitely have more specials.

Question 10:

Interviewer: Have you recommended any of the entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to your friends? why?

Interviewee: I recommend the Grove because of what they offer- like the entertainment value on offer and the variety of what they offer like you really can never get bored there because of the vast things on offer- so like if you feel like a movie there is a theatre if you feel like ice skating they have it. I don't have any mall near me that offers just that amount of entertainment in 1 area.

Also, the variety that is there- no matter what we are feeling like that night or that afternoon they have it.

Question 11:

Interviewer: Do you maintain contact with these entertainment and leisure brands outside of the mall?

(i.e., Via social media)

Why? / why not?

Interviewee: I feel like I keep up with them at all because there's no need to like I know what I'm getting when I get there so I don't need to.

Question 12:

Interviewer: Are you loyal to any entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall? Please explain why?

Interviewee: I'm loyal to the fun company feel like I've definitely hyped them up because they've given me a little taste of what you can get at Suncity.

Question 13:

Interviewer: Are there any other brands you are loyal to?

What drives your loyalty to these brands?

Interviewee: I'm not very loyal I just shop for what I need and I just buy the cheapest option of what I want. For clothing, definitely after getting a girlfriend I've been influenced to shop at places, she likes like cotton On and Factory which just offers stylish clothing, I used to just wear what my mom gave me and now my girlfriend has definitely opened my eyes to more style-focused fashion.

Question 14:

Interviewer: Do you belong to any Loyalty programmes from these brands? Explain.

Interviewee: I don't belong to any loyalty program, I think I never really seen the need to be part of a programme

Annexure D

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis

Q1: Do you intentionally go to Grove mall to enjoy its entertainment and leisure brands?		
Participant	Response	Themes
Interviewee 1:	I think I go there because they offer more entertainment-based activities than other malls like Centurion and Mall of Africa. Specifically, as a person that like me who enjoys keeping active ice skating is definitely the largest reason why I would go to the Grove mall.	Offers more entertainment than other mall Activity
Interviewee 2:	Yes, but not always because I'm quite busy, I go there more the food places.	Quite busy Food
Interviewee 3:	Yes, I do because they are the only ones with an Ice-skating rink near me. The ice-skating rink is the element that stands out for me, I also like the arcade bowling. Most malls only have a movie theatre, and the grove offers the arcade and ice skating in addition to the cinema, so I go to the grove because they offer something different.	Activity Offers something different- in addition
Interviewee 4:	Yes, I think that that might be the main reason for me going to the Grove mall because they have a set of entertainment focused offerings.	Entertainment focused

Q2: Are there any entertainment and leisure brands on offer that you find more appealing than others?		
Participant	Response	Themes
Interviewee 1:	Yes, definitely just because more entertain-based offerings are located at the Grove they serve as landmarks on why I would go to the Grove as opposed to Centurion Mall & Mall of Africa, you aren't getting an ice-skating rink, just clothing and food stores. If I'm in the mood for entertainment-based activities I'm definitely going to go to the mall that offers me variety within that space.	Entertainment offerings are landmarks Activity recall Entertainment variety
Interviewee 2:	Yes, I love their Ocean Basket, so I go there a lot for that, I also love the Spur a lot and the ice rink on occasion... but food is definitely my main form of entertainment and the way I enjoy spending time with people.	Brand recall Activity recall-sometimes Food- main entertainment
Interviewee 3:	I go to the Grove because between the arcade and the ice-skating rink I'm guaranteed a more fun time. There are more options for a fun evening, I could go to Centurion but that would just be for a movie. If I go to the Grove, I can have day event planned, if I'm feeling like ice skating-ice skating; If I'm feeling like bowling-bowling, if I feel like bumper karts-bumper carts; arcade games-arcade games and if I feel like a movie- then a movie.	Activity recall-fun time More options for fun day/evening
Interviewee 4:	They have a good movie theatre in terms of comfortable seating and full-service catering. In the arcade, the fact that they have bumper karts, really like that and the ice-skating rink.	Activity recall Comfort & service

Q3: What draws you to these entertainment and leisure brand? People/what it looks like, price, service?		
Participant	Response	Themes
Interviewee 1:	The Uniqueness, Ice skating rinks and arcades aren't found in every mall, pricing does range from season to season but it's practically the unique offerings that draws me to the Grove...They give me something I can't find at other malls. Even the whole blended way of the mall allowing open space and fresh air as an opposed to other malls like Centurion where the restaurants are indoors, the Grove definitely offer a Fresh environment, that allows me to walk around and not feel enclosed, it just gives customers a more pleasant environment.	Unique activity range Pricing ranges Mall conditions Fresh environment is pleasant
Interviewee 2:	I definitely enjoy the Grove's food area because they offer a variety so no matter what mood I'm in I have my pick, like I said, I love food and sitting down and eating at a restaurant so the fact that offer a variety of options of things I like Spur or If I'm in the mood for sushi they have a nice sushi restaurant. So that definitely draws me because I know no matter what food I'm feeling they have options for me. So the ice skating rink, I like to go their on occasion with my fiancé- it's a thing we do as a couple to spend time together.	Offer a variety of food options activity attributes-spend time together on occasion
Interviewee 3:	I think it's very quick service, the prices are also not bad- it's a very good price for ice skating- if you do it a lot you can have your own ice-skating shoes and then you just pay the R80 entry fee which I feel isn't bad considering you can spend the day there if you want- so prices are very	Service Price Mall conditions

	good. I feel like it's very clean, the service is friendly, and the grove mall is safe- like I feel safe at the Grove	
Interviewee 4:	I think it's because it's the only mall I know that offers all of 3 aspects of a movie theatre, ice skating rink and arcade- no other malls near me offer those experiences. I think they offer a good environment, with variety, a good place that is affordable as well.	Variety Conditions Price

Q4: What influences you to select a specific entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to visit or use?		
Participant	Response	Themes
Interviewee 1:	Depends on why I'm going, am I going to chill, to go and watch movies, am I going for an activity specifically, Am I going with friends or Family, it all depends? For me personally, because I would rather do something active, I'd go to the ice rink, because I find it the most pleasant & fun to do so that would be my main source of entertainment.	Activity based entertainment Friends or Family-pleasant & fun
Interviewee 2:	Variety of food brands, my main options would be Ocean Basket & Spur they have big ones, I also enjoy their movie theatre and the movie experience.	Food variety Movie entertainment
Interviewee 3:	If I were to go to the Grove mall my intention is to go and enjoy the entertainment activities because I have malls closer to me if I want to do some shopping. The grove is the only one that offers a variety of activities-so I want to go for those activities specifically.	Entertainment- variety of activities

Interviewee 4:	They have a Spur right opposite the ice-skating rink, so when I take my girlfriend on a date to the ice-skating rink- we both love Spur and its right there. The arcade-the Fun company also offers me a small feel of Suncity -because I also go to Suncity a lot and the fact that they have something like that is really appealing, that's why I chose to go.	Blend of Food and entertainment spaces Entertainment- nostalgia
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Q5: Do you hold onto past experiences when you choose one of the entertainment and leisure brands over another?

Provide an example.

Participant	Response	Themes
Interviewee 1:	Depends if I'm going to the same store, because obviously customer service is different. I haven't had a bad experience at the grove mall necessarily, it's been positive overall, I'm also someone that likes trying something new, so I'm always trying different options at different stores and different food.	Good with giving a brand a second chance Open to new things.
Interviewee 2:	I've had positive experiences- I know the quality Spur has across all their restaurants, so I know what to expect, I know the menu pretty well, what they offer. The ice-skating rink is also a place I know I'm guaranteed to enjoy the experience, I know the prices for the shoes and passes pretty well. Negatives would definitely be more on brand's not offering my types of foods- I know I stopped buying at Mugg and Bean because I feel they are	Know what to expect Overall experience influenced choice Negatives- brands not offering my type of food

	overpriced for what they offer.	
Interviewee 3:	Yes, I've had positive experiences that have definitely motivated my return to the grove. The price and the fact that the Grove is kept clean and the ice skating rink is kept clean and also it's not so busy that's a bonus.	Overall experience influenced choice Pricing Cleanliness & not busy
Interviewee 4:	Yes, like I said because of my experience with the Fun Company in general, I know what they offer, the price they offer it at and the whole experience they offer so it definitely draws me there. Also, definitely the Sterkinkor-Imax, because I know Sterkinkor and have had good experiences with that brand in the past. I sort of know I'll enjoy Imax experience. So yes like I said always positive experiences from those 2 companies- I think its also linked to my childhood.	Know what to expect Overall experience influenced choice Positive- childhood linked experiences

Q6: Explain how it makes you feel when you spend time at these entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall?		
Participant	Response	Themes

Interviewee 1:	For entertainment I feel like it gives me something to do, it's something to occupy my time. So, as I said I like keeping active so the ice-skating rink or for relaxing where I'm just trying to wind down and enjoy my night movies for sure I think Fournos is a good place to go to lunch with other people and connect with people. I feel Like the Grove is convenient it offers variety; the Grove also creates an environment that offers peace of mind and makes people feel safe- if kids are at the ice-skating rink your parents can be more at ease eating dinner at a restaurant within walking distance from the rink because you are still within the same environment.	Excitement & relaxation Convenient -Variety security
Interviewee 2:	The Spur is always a positive experience, like again- I know what they are offering, I know I'm guaranteed good customer service so it's always good to know what you are getting, it makes me feel satisfied and overall helps me enjoy my experience.	Knowing what to expect
Interviewee 3:	Okay so, ice skating is very joyful and very fun, it's a fun place to spend time with friends and family, it accommodates for beginners and people that are more skilled. Its very fun. Bowling is also very fun and very competitive and it allows for multiple players so if I come with a big group (4-5 people) we can all enjoy some competitive fun. I also enjoy the food variety they offer, also the fact that they incorporate the nature aspect in their sit-down restaurants, you don't feel stuffy and you actual spend time outside which is very	Element of fun Variety of foods comfort and calm environment

	nice, it's a spacious and calming environment.	
Interviewee 4:	It's a positive -Fun experience and it's always fun to take my girlfriend to the Grove, to enjoy these experiences with her on a date because going just restaurants at a mall gets so tiring very quickly so the fact that we can have these fun experiences together, ice skating or watching a movie together or going to the arcade or bumper karting or bowling- is always a fun and memorable experience.	Fun enjoyable experiences Activities are memorable

**Q7: Are there any events and activities you like to take part in at Grove Mall? How does it work?
Who invites you – the Mall or the brand specifically?**

Participant	Response	Themes
Interviewee 1:	I think I definitely heard about it from other people, I've definitely been influenced by cousins who took me to the Ice-skating rink when I was younger, it sparked my own interest and I continued going to the ice skating rink because I enjoy it.	Relational influence personal interest
Interviewee 2:	No, not an event person, not into so many social activities but by invite from people like my Fiancé I definitely go. Interesting story about how I got into Ice skating was obviously based on my Fiancé's interest I also wanted to try Ice skating so I Googled nearest Ice Skating rink and The Grove popped up and ever since then it's become routine to go to the Grove's Ice-skating rink.	Relational influence & personal interest Searches -upon need
Interviewee 3:		Relational influence

	I've gotten to enjoy activities at the Grove through other people inviting me to the mall and the ice-skating rink definitely has themed events which is very nice- they play a certain type of music on a certain night like a disco kind of night- they have different themed events that definitely increases my interest in going to the Grove.	Themed events increase interest
Interviewee 4:	I think I go the mall because I know these brands are there. If they are running specials in the arcade that definitely brings me to there and then just obviously going the mall because I want to do the activity.	personal interest Specials Activity

Q8: Who do you like sharing these experiences with?		
Participant	Response	Themes
Interviewee 1:	So definitely both friends and Family, with family I obviously go with my cousins, its more close. With friends it just fun, having a good time around the ice rink, spending time making memories. With family it's an activity we can do together and treasure doing.	Friends & Family Friends- Fun Family bonding
Interviewee 2:	With my Fiancé, I also go to the Grove with my Family, I did introduce them to the grove's offerings. I definitely feel like based on my experiences The grove is catered to couple and family fun because I've enjoyed myself in both respects. It offers exactly what I need for who I'm with for my Fiancé, we like to eat their, Ice skate or watch a movie together, If we do a family thing	Grove caters to couple & family entertainment Significant other- eating and entertainment Family- Fun at arcade

	like the arcade and the bowling they offer and the arcade because its good fun for everyone.	
Interviewee 3:	Friends and Family	Friends & family
Interviewee 4:	My girlfriend and my friend Reece and his girlfriend, we like to double date so it's a fun experience for the four of us.	Significant other & friends Fun experience

Q9: Do you feel that there are things these brands can add to their offering in order to improve your experience with them? Explain.		
Participant	Response	Themes
Interviewee 1:	I think they don't need to anything because they have a good balance and at the end of the day it's a mall it's not an amusement park. For food brands I'd definitely love it they offered more local offerings can be beneficial, as I said I definitely love trying new things and supporting local is something I defiantly value.	Satisfied with entertainment Need for local new and local food
Interviewee 2:	Add a Krispy Crème after Ice Skating my Fiancé and I enjoy a sweet treat, the Grove has a Milky Lane but we like donuts so if they had a nice donut place it would be great.	Need for baked goods
Interviewee 3:	So specifically for the ice skating, I think they could offer sessions, so like beginners only because sometimes it does get busy. So, if it's like a Friday night, where it's quite a lot of people and its jam packed (obviously according to level 1 Covid regulations) and sometimes people who are more advanced will skate past the beginners and it sort of creates a clashing stuffy event.	Separate times for expertise levels I the entertainment area. Wants a calm space in the ice-skating rink

Interviewee 4:	I feel like they do a pretty good job already, but I feel like they could definitely have more specials.	Specials
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Q10: Have you recommended any of the entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall to you friends? why?

Participant	Response	Themes
Interviewee 1:	Yah 100% after I went to the Ice-skating rink with my family I definitely came back to school and told people about it and about the experience, I influenced my friends to go ice skating because it sparked their interest.	Recommend through experience allure
Interviewee 2:	I've recommended the Ice-Skating rink to my family and the Cinema because I enjoyed it and I thought they would too.	Recommend due to potential for similar experience
Interviewee 3:	Yes all of them again for the reasons, of fun, entertaining, clean, safe- it's a very nice mall to be at they offer variety at a good price.	Recommend the conditions Price & variety
Interviewee 4:	I recommend the Grove because of what they offer- like the entertainment value on offer and the variety of what they offer, like you really can never get bored there because of the vast things on offer- so like if you feel like a movie there is a theatre, if you feel like ice skating they have it. I don't have any mall near me that offers just that amount of entertainment in 1 area. Also the variety that are there- no matter what we are feeling like that night or that afternoon they have it.	Entertainment value Variety value

Q11: Do you maintain contact with these entertainment and leisure brands outside of the mall? Why? / why not?

• (i.e., Via social media)		
Participant	Response	Themes
Interviewee 1:	I don't keep in contact with leisure/food brands because it isn't a major priority I Keep an eye out for promotions so I can go enjoy the entertaining activities on my budget. Especially as student, freebies and promotions are definitely a plus. So, it's definitely beneficial so I can plan my time and budget for a fun filled event with my friends.	Not interested Keep an eye out for promotions Seek enjoyment on a budget
Interviewee 2:	Not actually, I've never thought about it to be honest- I don't follow any brands specifically on social media so no.	No Insignificant
Interviewee 3:	No I don't keep up with any of them specifically but if I know an I'm thinking of going again I'll get up to date- maybe they are offering specials, something new that they've added- but not outside of the context of me wanting to go to the mall. So, I'd say I'm looking it up via social media or google when I'm planning a day or an evening to go out.	Rarely no- only close to the time Eye out for promotions & add-ons. Social Media or Google search
Interviewee 4:	I feel like I don't keep up with them at all because there's no need to. Like I know what I'm getting when I get there so I don't need to.	No, insignificant

Q12: Are you loyal to any entertainment and leisure brands at Grove mall? Please explain why?		
Participant	Response	Themes

Interviewee 1:	So, loyalty for me comes out of convenience because I am vegan, there are only a hand full of food brands that cater to my needs, so when I go to the grove mall I am looking out for my options and I'm usually going to the same brands because I know the menu, I know its vegan, it suits my needs.	Loyalty by convenience Catered to needs
Interviewee 2:	The Spur, I love their food, I love it it's exactly what I look for. I also like Wimpy, but I know they don't offer that for my breakfast needs so that's disappointing so I'd probably go somewhere else for breakfast -not the Grove.	Loyalty based on experience
Interviewee 3:	I am loyal to the Grove's entertainment space as a whole, specifically with the restaurants so close to the entertainment are, they sort of placed everything in the same wing of the mall, so it's all together- so you don't have to go far as opposed to other malls, like you come for that experience of you are going to have a meal, we can go Ice skating or we can go bowling, like it's all together. I think in terms of food brands I'd say I'm loyal to the Mugg and been, but I think it's purely out of convenience and enjoyment of a menu I already know.	Loyalty based on centralised experience Food brands - convenience based loyalty
Interviewee 4:	I'm loyal to the fun company feel like I've definitely hyped them up because they've given be a little taste of what you can get at Suncity.	Loyalty based on experience

Q13: Are there any other brands you are loyal to? What drives your loyalty to these brands?

Participant	Response	Themes
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Interviewee 1:	Mugg & Bean is one of the few places that I consistently go to because I know what they offer, and I know I like it.	Experience based loyalty
Interviewee 2:	A Spur and Wimpy are my favourites because of familiarity, I've been going there since I was a child so it's what I'm familiar with so its what I'm drawn to.	Familiarity based loyalty
Interviewee 3:	Yes, Starbucks for my coffee and I know the Grove doesn't offer me that- I love their products and the coffee culture they provide so okay, maybe I can work there in there afternoon and whilst I'm there I can keep caffeinated. I think maybe adding to a grab and go type of feel could be very nice because like with Starbucks they offer a personalised product and they also give you a personalised experience through your drink and packaging.	Experience-based loyalty Unique attribution loyalty
Interviewee 4:	I'm not very loyal I just shop for what I need, and I just buy the cheapest option of what I want. For clothing, definitely after getting a girlfriend I've been influenced to shop at places she likes like cotton On and Factory which just offers stylish clothing, I used to just wear what my mom gave me and now my girlfriend has definitely opened my eyes to more style focused fashion.	Not loyal Influenced loyalty

Q14: Do you belong to any Loyalty programmes from these brands? Explain.		
Participant	Response	Themes

Interviewee 1:	Because of our medical aid's alliance to Ster-Kinkor we get discounts on movies so that brand alliance is the only brand I'm essentially loyal to.	Alliance /partnership loyalty between brands
Interviewee 2:	I'm part of Spur's loyalty programme because I get vouchers, promotions and I also get into all there competitions- because I go there so often being part of their loyalty programme just makes sense.	Rewards based loyalty
Interviewee 3:	I'm part of the Ster-Kinkor loyalty program- because discovery gives me discount, so can watch movies at half the price which is really attractive for me. If more brands offered me discovery points- and discovery miles then I'd enjoy being part of loyalty programmes so maybe like adding the ice skating rink or arcade and more of the restaurants at the Grove on that then I'd definitely be part of more programmes.	Discovery partnership = discount at Ster-Kinkor
Interviewee 4:	I don't belong to any loyalty program, I think I've never really seen the need to be part of a programme	No need