

Exploring consumer perceptions of Takealot's Facebook targeted advertising and the effect it has on building brand equity with Gen Z customers in South Africa.

Research Report

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Abstract

The purpose of this explorative qualitative research study was to explore consumer perceptions of Takealot's Facebook targeted advertising and the effect it has on building brand equity with Gen Z customers in South Africa.

Despite conducting a broad literature review on previous academic literature published prior to this study, a lack of research evidence on Gen Z consumer perceptions of targeted advertising in a South African context as well as evidence supporting both conflicting notions of targeted advertising's effect on building brand equity, suggest a gap in literature that this study aims to explore. Therefore, this research aims to provide Takealot with improved qualitative data on the topic to help make better marketing decisions in the future.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted on 5 purposefully sampled participants that meet the criteria of the population with the goal of reaching data saturation. A qualitative content analysis was used to code and transcribe the data and inductively analyse the themes.

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Introduction

Research Title

Exploring consumer perceptions of Takealot's Facebook targeted advertising and the effect it has on building brand equity with Gen Z customers in South Africa.

Contextualisation

Consumer privacy and data protection are becoming increasingly important to customers shopping online (Anant et al., 2020). Approaches to utilising consumer data on platforms like Facebook to market goods or services may have unforeseen consequences for companies in building strong customer relationships (Anant et al., 2020).

According to Keller (2013), Brand equity is the difference between brand knowledge and customer perception of a company's marketing.

The extent to which targeted advertising influences Gen Z perceptions towards brands may have consequences for Takealot in South Africa that must be determined in order to establish strong brand equity.

The research purpose is to explore how the Gen Z population perceives Takealot's online targeted advertising in South Africa, with the goal of determining whether it has a positive or negative impact on building brand equity with its customers.

The study's findings are intended to reveal customer perceptions of targeted advertising as a tool and give exploratory data on these perceptions towards Takealot so that they may make improved marketing decisions.

Rationale

Conclusions made from this study may be of key value to Takealot and brands alike in understanding their Gen Z consumers and the extent of the effect on perceptions when

Facebook targeted advertising is used as a method of customer acquisition by Takealot. Consumer privacy and data protection is being taken more seriously by consumers which may lead to unforeseen implications for brands if the sample studied has varying reactions to it (Anant et al., 2020). Researching various perceptions of this tool could highlight a variety of phenomena exhibited by the study's participants towards building brand resonance for Takealot.

The results of this study aims to uncover the perceptions of consumers towards targeted advertising as a tool and provide exploratory data on these perceptions to Takealot and other institutions alike to make better marketing decisions.

Problem Statement

The extent to which targeted advertising affects the perceptions of Gen Z consumers may impose possible brand implications for Takealot in South Africa that need to be identified to build brand equity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore Gen Z perceptions of online targeted advertising by Takealot in South Africa with the aim to describe the extent it may impose positive or negative effects on building brand equity with customers.

Research question/s

(Main and subquestions to this study that the research aims to answer)

Main Research Question:

What are the perceptions of Gen Z consumers towards Takealot's Facebook targeted advertising and how does it affect building brand equity for Takealot in South Africa?

Sub Questions:

What are the perceptions held by Gen Z consumers towards online targeted advertising by Takealot?

How do Gen Z consumers feel and judge their lived experiences of online Facebook targeted advertising by Takealot?

To what extent does the use of targeted advertising for Takealot affect key elements for building brand equity in accordance with Keller's CBBE model?

Does Facebook targeted advertising by Takealot positively or negatively influence building brand equity with Gen Z consumers?

Research Objectives

(Research objectives that the research aims to answer)

Explore the perceptions Gen Z consumers have towards Facebook targeted advertising by Takealot.

Identify the feelings and judgements by Gen Z consumers towards the lived experiences of Facebook targeted advertising by Takealot.

Assess the extent to which targeted advertising has an effect on communicating key elements for building brand equity at Takealot in accordance with Keller's CBBE model.

Identify the extent to which Facebook targeted advertising may positively or negatively affect the perspectives of Gen Z consumers of Takealot.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation

When evaluating the notion of brand equity in the context of this study, it is critical to understand that an interpretive approach seeks to explore the individual's perspective of Facebook Targeted Advertising by Takealot. A useful theory to explore the extent of the impact is Kevin Lane Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity Model (CBBE). The model focuses on factors influencing the building blocks of strong customer relationships and does so by approaching brand equity from the perspective of the customer rather than the business (Keller, 2013). Keller (2013) states that "in order to build a strong brand, you must shape how customers think and feel about your product". In this case, Keller's model was to be used as a foundation for analysing the data and interpreting which way the respondents' answers may prove to positively or negatively affect the development of Brand Equity for Takealot.

When critically analysing the model, there are four main facets that make up the CBBE Model which needs to be considered in the context of this research topic in order to interpret the extent Facebook targeted advertising may impact building brand equity. The model uses a bottom-up pyramid to develop brand equity; salience, performance and imagery, judgements and feelings, ending with brand resonance (Keller, 2013).

Salience refers to the identity and awareness factors that are crucial to communicating key information customers need to become knowledgeable about Takealot (Keller, 2013).

Performance and imagery are the capabilities of reaching customers and communicating on a psychological level with their deepest desires (Keller, 2013). In context, this evaluates whether Facebook as a platform and the ability to target customers with their data and personalise advertisements tailored for consumer groups is a benefit or not to their brand based on the answers by respondents. Judgements and feelings are the ability to evoke personal connections and develop a subconscious belief in attributes such as credibility, perceived quality and superiority (Keller, 2013). In reference to the study, consumer privacy concerns outlined by Anat et al. and the impact of positive or negative experiences in building perceptions of Takealot's use of targeted advertising can be interpreted. Finally, brand resonance refers to loyalty factors and the ability to nurture customers to advocate, engage and feel a sense of community (Keller,

2013). Keller (2013) believes that achieving strong brand resonance is a consequence of developing robust foundations for the pyramid and working from the bottom up the funnel.

As the goal for the model, achieving and maintaining strong brand resonance across the board can be a consequence of various factors that play a role in the four building blocks of the pyramid (Keller, 2013). In the case of this study, we will be using the model to refer only to Takealot's use of targeted advertising and how as an individual element in their marketing mix it may impact the extent to which they achieve brand equity.

Review Previous Literature

Consumer Based Brand Equity Model (CBBE)

Customer-based brand equity, according to Keller (2013), is the difference between brand knowledge and customer perception of a company's marketing. The CBBE concept's primary idea is that a brand's power lies in what customers have learnt, touched, observed, and talked about, occurring as a consequence of their experiences (Keller, 2013).

Brand Equity according to Keller (2013) is built on four levels:

1. Brand Identity

The first tier refers to the brand's ability to identify itself with its audience (Keller, 2013). Referred to by Keller (2013) as 'salience', it explores the depth of awareness consumers gain through advertisement content.

2. Brand Meaning

The second tier evaluates the performance and imagery that define its meaning (Keller, 2013). At this stage, Keller (2013) states that customers have become aware of the brand and are ready to question the look and feel as well as the durability, credibility and other features that are attributed to the content conveyed to them.

3. Brand Response

The third tier, according to Keller (2013), refers to the judgements and feelings consumers attribute to the brand. These judgments and feelings are adverse and can be at varying degrees of intensity (Keller, 2013).

4. Brand Resonance

The apex tier comes as a consequence of developing the previous three tiers (Keller, 2013). Resonance explores the extent to which customers have a relationship with the brand, are loyal to it and are willing to advocate for it (Keller, 2013).

Understanding these consumer facets that develop strong communication with customers' desires, as well as developing products and services to meet them, is at the heart of successful marketing and building long-term customer relationships (Keller, 2013). Therefore, Keller (2013) believes that businesses require a clear representation of how brand knowledge is stored in consumer memory.

In examining previous literature, this section reviews the extent to which Targeted Advertising as a marketing tool may affect the perceptions of Gen Z consumers and additionally how altered perceptions may affect the building of brand equity for Takealot.

Consumer Perceptions of Targeted Advertising

Advertisers are progressively tracking people's internet activities and exploiting the data to present them with specifically customized adverts (Boerman, 2017). Marketers recognise the advantages of using social media to directly engage consumers with similar interests and aspirations through advertising (Baglione, 2018). Including over 1.86 billion active users, Facebook has surpassed Twitter as the most popular social networking platform (Baglione, 2018). Advertising on Facebook engages a brand's target demographic rapidly and offers a fluid connection, allowing consumers to detail specific demands and provide meaningful feedback signals, as well as trend analysis (Baglione, 2018).

The outcomes of people's perceptions regarding social media advertising are divided (Baglione, 2018). A study by Martinovic (2020), found that consumers' perceptions of advertising value is influenced by the advertisement's trustworthiness and infotainment. Furthermore, Martinovic (2020) found that to enhance favourable perceptions toward targeted advertising, marketers should be aware of the variables that negatively influence the consumer's view of the advertisement, such as frustration and privacy concerns.

Invasive practices, such as using personal data to enter a consumer's private space and persistently advertising using the data are perceived as frustrating by consumers (Boerman, 2017). Other factors that may lead to frustration include the frequency, length, and positioning of

advertisements, as well as poor targeting and scheduling by marketers (Nivedita and Singh 2021).

According to a study by Nivedita and Singh (2021), the majority of people agree that targeted adverts are an annoyance. However, a large portion of respondents in the study indicated being neutral and that they may find the ads interruptive or non-interruptive depending on the type of activity they conduct on the social networking sites, their temperament, emotion, and current mental wellbeing (Nivedita and Singh 2021).

Consumer privacy concerns arise as a result of the practice's collection, use, and sharing of personal data (Boerman, 2017). Research by Boerman (2017) has proven that customer perception and efficacy are influenced by privacy concerns. According to Martinovic (2020), Privacy concerns result in a negative association with the perceived value of targeted advertising. Targeted advertising has the potential to make customers feel as though their anonymity is being invaded and given the chance, more so than not, will choose to protest targeted advertising and the acquisition of their private information (Martinovic, 2020).

Perceptions of Takealot and Advertising

According to Browdie (2021), Takealot is the largest and most commercially recognisable e-commerce retailer in South Africa. According to the general perceptions of respondents in a study by Van Huyssteen (2020), Takealot, as a company in general is perceived by South African consumers as dependable with competitive rates, quick delivery, efficient customer service, and overall ease of use.

The company generated \$392 million in revenue according to Nasper's latest annual report (Naspers 2020). To achieve these the country's best e-commerce sales statistics, marketers at Takealot use a wide variety of social media channels within their marketing mix to advertise including Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp and more (Similar Web, 2022). Facebook is the second highest traffic domain for the company accounting for around 25% of all social media traffic (Similar Web, 2022). By utilising Facebook's page transparency tool, it has been identified that marketers at Takealot utilise paid-for targeted advertising on Facebook as a part of their marketing mix (Facebook, 2022).

In recent news articles, the Takealot brand has seen allegations of sellers advertising fake products and utilising price hiking techniques to exploit consumers (Labuschagne, 2022). In a

business news article, writer Labuschagne made the claim that “Online fraudsters have scammed numerous South Africans on Facebook, claiming to be South Africa’s biggest online retailer Takealot”. The scams were so widespread, according to MyBroadband researchers, that their advertisements appeared on the Facebook search results page for "Takealot," (Labuschagne, 2022). According to respondent recommendations in the Van Huyssteen (2020) study, Takealot should take steps to make it easier for buyers to distinguish between genuine and fake items.

Impact of Targeted Advertising on CBBE

Advertising has the ability to enhance the perceptions of consumers by curating brand information that is stored in their memories of consumers (Makasi and Govender, 2014). These perceptions, in effect, amount to the brand's significance or value to the consumer, which is known as brand equity (Makasi and Govender, 2014). Building strong brands and brand equity is the goal of strategic marketing communications using advertising (Busen and Mustaffa, 2014).

According to a study by Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015), the impact of advertising on brand equity can be beneficial or non-beneficial depending on the circumstances in which consumers are exposed to them. In the study, it was discovered that in general advertising expenditure is positively connected to brand equity because it strengthens perceptions of the brand (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015).

Keller’s (2013) CBBE model provides a framework in which brand equity is built. The pyramid explained in the foundation of the theory for this study, depicts how various factors attainable through advertising build brand resonance - the nature of the relationship that customers have with the brand, often referred to as customer loyalty (Keller, 2013).

A research paper by the Global Journal of Management and Business Research identified that holistically, advertising on social media had a considerable beneficial impact on CBBE (Jayasuriya et al., 2018). Furthermore, entertainment, interactivity, and trendiness were found as important to customers in a deeper investigation of CBBE regarding advertising (Jayasuriya et al., 2018).

In contrast, the study by Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015) found that the effect of social media marketing tools on CBBE structures shows that social media marketing has only a minor impact on salience. In reviewing the study, results showed that brand equity and perceived quality were

not directly influenced by this form of communication (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015).

To summarise the review of previous, this secondary academic literature covers the topics of CBBE, perceptions of targeted advertising, Takealot and their use of advertising as well as the impact of targeted advertising on building brand equity, conclusions synthesised based on these main ideas have been identified.

As a model, CBBE is a pertinent model to be used in this study. It can be used to examine the relationship consumers have with the brand identity, brand meaning, brand response and brand resonance when looking at various factors, in this case, targeted advertising on Facebook by Takealot (Keller, 2013).

Consumer perceptions of targeted advertising tend to vary depending on the nature and intent of the use of the platform by participants as well as their mood and emotional state (Baglione, 2018). Martinovic (2020), found that consumers' perceptions of advertising value is influenced by the advertisement's trustworthiness and infotainment.

It was identified that Takealot is a meaningful brand in South Africa and that the company utilises a variety of advertising techniques including Facebook Targeted Advertising as a part of their marketing mix (Facebook, 2022). Takealot as a company is generally perceived as a reliable e-commerce retailer but has come under scrutiny regarding fake products and illegal price escalations in its advertisements on social media (Labuschagne, 2022).

Literature on targeted advertising and its effect on brand equity, specifically on the CBBE model, indicates varying results. Depending on the circumstance, advertising can be beneficial or non-beneficial in building brand equity. The study by the Global Journal of Management and Business Research indicates that holistically, there is a positive benefit to CBBE advertising on social media whereas a conflicting study result that only salience is affected by the same factors (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015).

The final thoughts conclude that previous literature provides a strong scope of knowledge on CBBE as a seminal model for this study, that consumer perceptions are influenced to varying degrees by targeted advertising and that there is a minimal to significant influence on brand equity. However, further research is required to confirm the extent to which Takealot's use of targeted advertising may affect its ability to build brand equity.

Conceptualisation

Brand Equity

When compared to a generic equivalent, brand equity refers to the value premium that an organization earns from a commodity with a recognised name. Businesses can increase brand equity by making their goods distinctive, easily identifiable, and superior in quality and reliability for example (Hayes, 2021). Consumers generally pay a higher price for a company's business when it has favourable brand equity, even if they could acquire the same for less from a rival (Hayes, 2021).

Brand Resonance

Brand resonance may be described as how effectively a business interacts with customers both professionally and casually (Keller, 2013). It is how people see the brand's values and objectives, the extent to which businesses may connect with their target audience and the extent to which their audience is willing to advocate for it (Keller, 2013). Brand resonance is developed on the building blocks of salience, performance and imagery as well as judgements and feelings as described in Keller's CBBE Model (Keller, 2013).

Targeted Advertising

In internet or online marketing, targeted advertising is displayed to a specified audience, which might be a demographic, a group, or an individual. Targeted advertising might simply mean that advertisements are selected based on their relevance to businesses' content, products or services, with the expectation that they will also be useful to the audience (Wigmore, 2017). Targeted advertising uses the collection of data, usually on social media or networking sites through various data capture procedures and allows businesses to refine the audiences they aim to reach with their advertisements (Wigmore, 2017).

Consumer Perception

Consumer perception is described as a process through which consumers notice marketing stimuli, and arrange, analyze, and attribute meaning to them (Jyosthna, 2020). Marketing stimulus may be anything linked to the product and/or brand, as well as any of the marketing mix's components (Jyosthna, 2020). In the context of this study, consumer perception focused on the use of Targeted advertising as an instrument of Takealot's marketing mix.

Research Methodology

Research Paradigm

The research paradigm chosen for this study is interpretivism. This paradigm, also known as interpretivist research, entails researchers interpreting study materials and incorporating human interest into a study.

When exploring the perceptions of participants in this study, it is important to consider the individual experiences and independent viewpoints making up the value-driven data to be analysed. Participants in this study are not considered 'puppets' of external forces but rather understood as intricate, complex and different people who are subject to the same objective reality but in different ways (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, Bezuidenhout., 2014).

Interpretivism asserts that social constructs emerge and that they take multiple truths into consideration (du Plooy-Cilliers. F., et al., 2014). This Epistemology evident in interpretivism is fully dependent on beliefs, values and the lived experiences of the participants (Killam, 2013). To accommodate for diverse experiences and participant truths as well as considering participant factors that could be unknown to or not answered by existing theory, this study would adopt a completely inductive method for data gathering and analysis.

Research Design & Approach

The goal of using interpretivism as a tradition for this study is to gain in-depth insight into the respondent's distinct truths regarding Targeted Advertising on Facebook by Takealot, empathising with their viewpoints and exploring these points to devise new knowledge on the topic. In this case, the researcher aims to be subjective in their Ontology while seeking clarification and explanation on the research questions (Killam, 2013).

By using qualitative methods for data collection, the researcher will have the flexibility to probe at answers, diving deeper into the question topics administered to respondents and drawing more value out of the data they are providing (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). As a key objective to utilising interpretivism and the subjective nature of the paradigm, the Axiology in this research is value bound and the researcher is considered inseparable from the research (Killam, 2013).

The type of research for this study is a form of exploratory research. Interpretivism advocates this type of research as its objectives seek to prove the existence of knowledge that is unknown and add it to the pool of logic and knowledge (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

Population Parameters

The variables that characterise groupings of the population under study are known as the population parameters. The target parameters of the population for this study included South African Takealot shoppers and Facebook users between the age of 18 and 26 (Gen Z). The population of the study is required to explore the perceptions towards Facebook targeted advertising and Takealot, and therefore are required to be both South African with an ID document to verify their nationality and be a frequent Takealot shopper and a user of Facebook.

The proportion of the target population that can be accessed by the researcher in this study has been denoted as the accessible group. Therefore, the accessible population included participants that share the exact characteristics with the target population and are available and willing to participate in an interview.

Participants were evaluated based on their real and organic responses, thus consumers must act like regular Takealot shoppers and Facebook users, with the parameters of this population serving as a foundation for the study.

These aforementioned parameters are data that describe the entire population for this study, but as the entire population was inaccessible due to the infeasibility and scope of this research, a sample describing a subset of that population was to be used to represent the population. This sample, when given for inspection is a representative part or a collection of items, specifically people from the larger group or population which fit the criteria for the parameters that have been mentioned for this study.

Sampling Method

Due to the limited study scope required for this research, the sample size for this study assignment, the sample population consisted of 5 participants who represented the population

as outlined by the parameters. Due to the small sample, the collected data is required to be saturated. When no new information is discovered through data analysis, this is referred to as data saturation, and its aim is to indicate to the researchers that data collecting may end at that stage in the study process.

For this study, as a methodology for sampling, a purposive non-probability sampling method was chosen. Non-probability sampling, as contrasted to probability sampling, is a sampling technique in which not all members of the sample have a fair or equal chance of participating in the survey (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). The sampling method chosen means the researcher selected the samples based on subjective judgement, rather than by random selection. In this case, the researcher had to become aware of whom the participant is, but their identity does play a role in the outcomes of this research. As a purposive method, the researcher has directly selected the samples rather than allowing for a randomised approach which means that prior knowledge and preparation about the purpose of the study was required in order to execute a strong sample selection. This method to sample selection is also a homogenous technique meaning that samples were selected based on sharing a set of similar characteristics outlined in the population parameters.

The benefits of utilising non-probability sampling as a method for this study include; that non-probability sampling is faster and more cost-effective than probability sampling and that participants are also likely to answer more rapidly than those chosen at random because they are highly motivated to engage with the study (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

Participants for the survey were gathered by reaching chosen individuals in on online platforms that justify the parameters of the survey; a South African citizen, a Facebook user and a frequent Takealot shopper.

Data Collection Method

As an instrument for acquiring interviewees, the researcher will use Facebook as a method to reach out to potential participants on the native platform as it makes sense that Gen Z users may encounter targeted advertising from Takealot on this platform which provides ease of access to the setting up the interview.

Potential participants were issued a preliminary questionnaire (Annexure B) asking sample questions such as their age, their nationality and their use of Facebook to determine whether or not they fit the criteria for the population. This was to ensure the study does not include age groups and locations outside of the specified guidelines for the study and that the participants as users of Facebook allow for targeted advertising on their personal platform, in which case they would have been illegible for the study.

Once the researcher had determined a sample group that fits the criteria of the research study, participants were be invited to partake in the interview.

This study utilised a qualitative data collection methodology in the format of a semi-structured interview that was be administered to participants of the sample in an online interview. The semi-structured interview consists of structured main questions that aim to collect data on the areas of key importance to the study but also enable the interviewee to elaborate on questions and the interviewer to investigate an answer in more depth (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

The advantage of using an online interview for the purpose of this research study was that it was convenient for both the researcher and the participant, allowing for an efficient and cost-effective approach to collecting qualitative data (Clovers, 2022). Online interviews also made it flexible, providing the opportunity to do remote interviews, which participants were more inclined to partake in, due to Covid-19 (Clovers, 2022). Much like a face-to-face interview, the online interview also allows the researcher to draw insightful qualitative data by asking questions to the answers provided by participants (Clovers, 2022). One major convenience the researcher found to doing the online interviews is the ability to record and collect the data all on one device, making an effective form of monitoring participant answers and translating them into data that was easily analysed and interpreted (Clovers, 2022).

The aforementioned interviews were conducted on Google Meetings, a highly reputable online meeting space powered by Google (Google, 2009). On an agreed date and time, the participant were issued a private link allowing them to access the Google Meetings space after which a prescribed set of research questions used as a guideline for the interview were to be conducted. Each meeting was recorded using AMD Radeon™ recording software and was stored on a local device with restricted access (Advanced Micro Devices, 2022).

Data Analysis Method

Once the data had been collected, it was evaluated using qualitative content analysis, which was centred on the study's chosen research paradigm. Qualitative content analysis is used to define and analyze value-driven data, as well as expose and adapt data to trends or topics (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Content analysis is critical to exploring and gaining a deeper understanding of the data gathered by the researcher during the interviews in this study (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

The first principle of qualitative content analysis is to prepare the data for coding. This involved creating a log of the interview, scripting the basic and deeper questions and answers that have expanded outside of the guideline questions for the interview as well as taking notes of reactions or behaviours exhibited by participants that could highlight certain trends in their responses (Luo, 2019).

Following the coding preparation, the data was coded and units of meaning were assigned to words, phrases and reactions. Coding is a method of transforming large quantities of data into manageable categories and the units of meaning assist in highlighting frequencies and trends in data (Luo, 2019).

Using a deductive approach, a qualitative codebook ensured the units of meaning fall within the relevant categories for analysis and that there is no margin for skewness in interpreting responses.

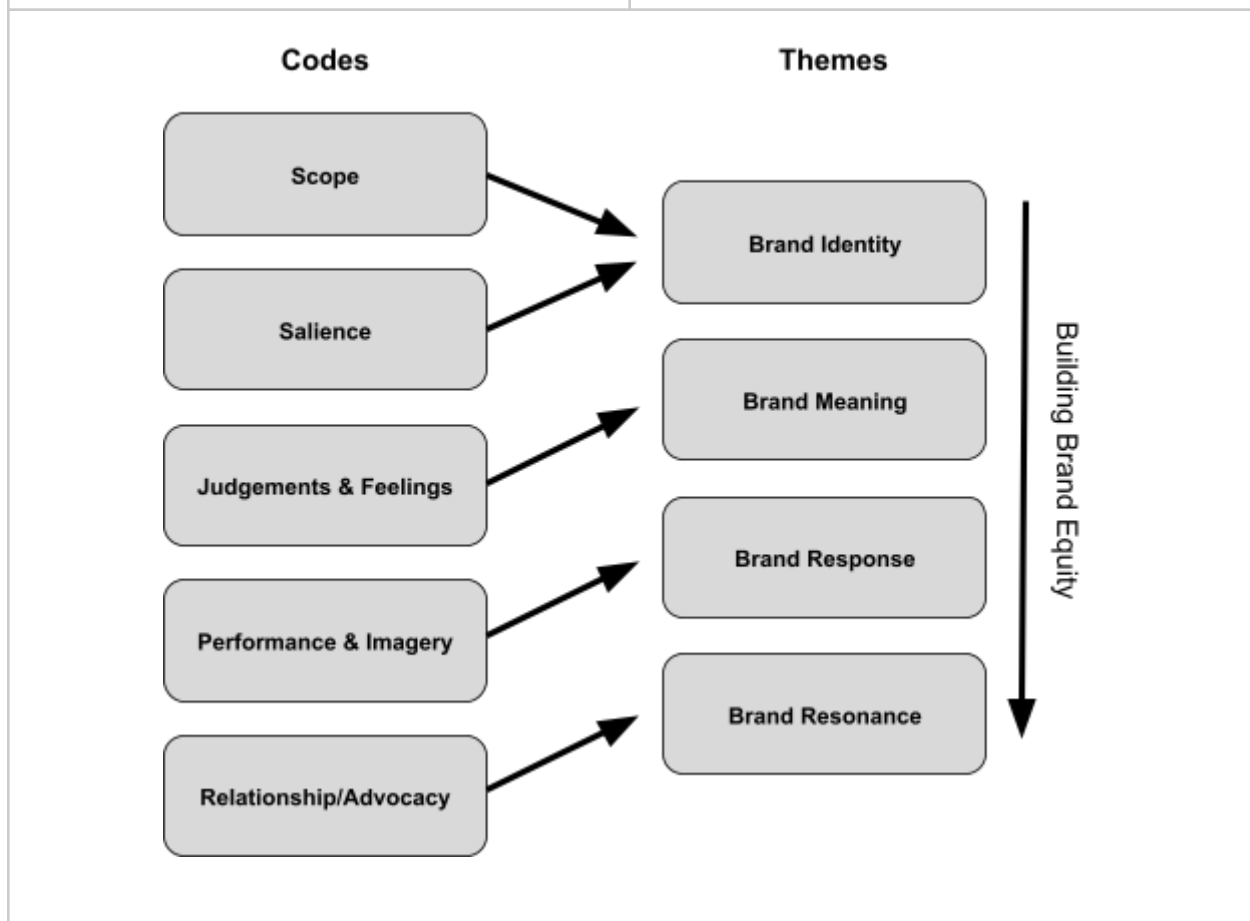
The structure of the interview questions in *Annexure A* is relevant to Keller's (2013), CBBE model for building brand equity and aims to answer the extent to which targeted advertising has an effect on building brand equity with Takealot.

The following elements are the categories on which the data is to be separated:

Qualitative Codebook	
Codes	Themes
Code 1: Scope Provides a scope of credibility for the	Theme 1: Brand Identity Awareness Brand identity refers to the extent to which

participant, allowing them to share in personal experiences and give an overview of their initial perception regarding targeted advertising on Facebook by Takealot. Code 2: Salience Salience looks at the ability of our respondents to identify with targeted advertising elements and the extent to which these elements leave an identifiable and lasting impression on participants in the survey.	participants identified the Takealot brand from their experience with targeted advertising as well as make a connection between targeted advertising elements on Facebook and Takealot. Examples: <i>personal experience, initial general perceptions, the ability to identify the brand, the extent of knowledge on the brand relationship.</i>
Code 3: Judgements & Feelings Judgements and feelings refer to the emotional elements to which the participants share their positive or negative responses to targeted advertising on Facebook by Takealot. Examples: <i>positive/negative response, shared feelings, emotional response.</i>	Theme 2: Negative Brand Meaning Brand meaning is the emotional concepts and introspective judgements that respondents express with regards to the Takealot brand and their experience with targeted advertising elements on Facebook. Examples: <i>positive/negative response, actions taken, brand perceptions.</i>
Code 4: Performance & Imagery Performance and imagery looked at how well participants respond to the nature of a targeted advertisement in terms of its design, communication and frequency and the extent of this impact on a brand becoming memorable to them. Examples: <i>positive/negative response,</i>	Theme 3: Mixed Brand Responses Brand response refers to how participants of the survey responses to the content, the objective and the design style of the advertisement based on their shared personal experiences with advertisements on Facebook. Examples: <i>positive/negative response,</i>

<i>memorability, brand perceptions.</i>	<i>personal experiences, engagement.</i>
Code 5: Relationship/Advocacy Brand resonance refers to the extent of advocacy and loyalty a participant shows towards a brand such as Takealot, that are known to be using targeted advertising in their marketing mix. Examples: <i>positive/negative response, the extent of advocacy, the extent of loyalty.</i>	Theme 3: Building Brand Resonance Brand Resonance is the nature of the relationship that customers have with the brand and the extent to which they feel that they are “in synch” with the brands (Keller 2013). Examples: <i>positive/negative response, personal experiences, actions taken, engagement, the extent of loyalty. .</i>



Data saturation, the key to reliable qualitative research occurs when the research is unable to

develop further attributes of the category due to a lack of further data (Luo, 2019). The study, therefore, aimed to be empirically sure that a category was saturated after seeing comparable cases over and over again.

Once the coding of the data has been completed, the following objective for the researcher was to analyse the coding to uncover useful trends, patterns and insights (Luo, 2019).

Content analysis is an essential investigative tool for this study because it enabled the researcher to identify related themes by analysing qualitative perceptions for participants expressed towards Facebook targeted advertising by Takealot by participants of the study (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

Research Findings

Brand Identity Awareness

Participants' responses towards the awareness of brand identity from a targeted advertisement were closely consistent with one another. The study showed that participants are aware of targeted advertising on Facebook and had all experienced it from Takealot in some form and were able to share in a personal experience they had with it. The participants further collectively shared that they don't take full cognisance of the brand associated with the targeted advertisement with one participant saying, *"I don't really remember the brand associated with the advertising"*. Participants discussed in unison how the extent to which their interest in the advertisement affected their want to engage with the advertisement, become more aware of the brand's identity and build a further relationship with one participant sharing, *"Brands that I am more familiar with, doesn't have much of an effect on building my awareness of the brand, but I love to interact with new brands that I have a keen interest in."* There were mixed responses towards the advertisement format, with some participants sharing they preferred advertisements that were guided at informing them about the brand and their identity, whereas other participants shared a similar notion to the following response; *"Brands who use targeted advertising to just explain who they are, I find myself just scrolling past. I would say that I am always in the mood to shop, so whenever I see an ad to shop with an item I am interested in I'll add it to my cart or my wishlist and think about it further"*, as opposed to a contradicting response of, *"I personally like seeing ads for things that appeal to me and my lifestyle because I wouldn't look for them"*

otherwise, however, the storyboard type ads from Takealot for example definitely put me off ”.

The participants indicated a clear separation between the advertisement and their perceptions of Takealot's brand identity with one participant stating, *“In general, I don't think the manner in which they advertise to me will influence me to think differently about the brand ”* and another stating, *“I think with specifically brand such as Takealot, they can do no wrong, its more about the personal experience of shopping with them such as if they didn't deliver on time that would affect my perception of the brand but I am not phased by they manner in which they advertise”.*

The study showed that participants shared in common agreement that excessive repetition of an advertisement did not further a need for them to take note of or engage with a brand, but what really spiked their interest in building salience was their interest in the advertisement content itself and its relevance to them.

Negative Brand Meaning

Participants displayed varying responses towards their judgements and feelings towards targeted advertising as used by Takealot, however, there were similar concepts amongst their responses. In general, participants expressed they felt negative about a targeted advertisement because of two common factors;

The first, 'irritation', a feeling that all participants shared in common with was due to constant repetition of advertisements, seeing ads that were not relevant to them or the frequency between adverts being too short with one participant saying, *“if it is an ad that keeps popping up, several times per day, I can find that a bit annoying but I think once every four days or once a week I wouldn't mind at all ”.* Amongst participants, 'irritation' resulted various judgements of the brand made by participants such as, *“I think it becomes a bit too desperate and in your face if it is every single day”, or “its excessive I may feel their ads are considered spam-like and I will ignore them more in future”.*

The second feeling expressed was “invasiveness”. Participants in the study commonly expressed that they felt 'invaded' frequently by targeted advertising, especially when conversations they had that day were used to display advertisements to them. One participant said, *“it makes me uncomfortable when its something that pops up just because of a random conversation I had ”.* Participants all shared that they have engaged in a discussion with friends or family where they would judge the brand based on this listening data collection type, often

with a negative perception such, *“Oh, me too, I’ve been getting that advert so much, its so irritating”*, shared by one participant.

Similar to associating brand identity, participants in the study shared that their feelings or judgements towards targeted advertising by Takealot on Facebook were separate to the brand and that their feelings of *‘irritation’* or *‘invasivness’* were with Facebook as an advertising platform, rather than the brand itself with one participant sharing, *“I may feel negatively about the ad itself or invaded by the advertisement being on my platform and having a connection to a conversation I had, my data or demographics but won’t perceive the brand negatively because of it specifically.”*

All participants commonly expressed that although they experienced the aforementioned feelings they did not see a problem with Takealot using their data or used for targeting them with advertisements, but rather Facebook as a social platform and its medium for advertisements with one participant stating *“I feel like I am being invaded by the whole system of targeted advertising rather than just that one brand and actively choose to not criticise them for it”*. In fact, the majority of participants said they understand the role it plays in serving convenience and that Takealot was, unsimilar to other brands, *“using targeted advertising and I can’t criticise the brand specifically in that way”*.

Mixed Brand Responses

Participant responses towards the imagery and performance of a targeted advertisement were greatly divided and found to depend upon their personal preferences regarding communication, style and advertisement format. When considering advertisement formats and objectives of the advertisement, one participant shared that those geared towards directly selling them something did not resonate with them by saying *“an ad that looks like its trying to sell me something for instance if the price is in the image or description I am more likely to scroll past it”*, whilst another expressed that they only engage with shopping driven advertisements.

The look and feel of an advertisement also seemed to play a crucial role in the response from the participants but only to the extent to which it appealed to their personal preferred aesthetic of advertisement design style. One participant described their ideal advertisement as *“an advertisement that is clean, minimal, not over designed appeals to me in many ways, if not*

more than a big, flashy promotion type one,” while another said, “I usually find myself clicking on the ads that are well crafted to fit my aesthetic, are not pushing a price or sale and are done really well so that I don’t have to think twice about whether it appeals to me or not.” One common thread between participants is that they all shared that an advertisement pushing a price drove a more negative perception of the advertisement and less chance of a response. The more organic and less ‘sponsor-like’ advertisement, seemed to have a great appeal amongst participants with one participant explaining, *“if it looks organic, I am more likely to interact and absorb the information whereas if it is too striking, it comes across as unappealing and interrupts my experience on the app”*, and according to the same participant it is *“because it fits so well, is so applicable, and only, later on, see that it is sponsored.”*

Amongst interview participants, targeted advertisements by Takealot that fulfil the aforementioned criteria established two clear brand responses from participants. The interviewer first noted that participants personal preferences played a crucial role in the extent to which an advertisement appealed to them and the second that the more subtle the advertising was in terms of disrupting the experience of using Facebook, the better perceptions participants displayed towards targeted advertisements.

Building Brand Resonance

In analysing codes, advocacy played a large role in the participants' responses to the extent to which they would be loyal to a brand such as Takealot and be willing to share their notions with friends, family and other acquaintances. Participants also shared their personal experiences of sharing various conversations relating to targeted advertisements and rationales for why they would act on their advocacy for a brand.

The most common thread between participant answers is that participants explained they were immediately willing to share positive perceptions towards a targeted advertisement, considering the advertisement had not been seen in repetition and that it appealed to their interests and that of others, which we will refer to as ‘relevance’. *“If I see something that is maybe relevant to something for me as well as to someone else I may have had a conversation with, I definitely have found myself sharing that with them via a screenshot or even recommending them to go look on Takealot for that item themselves,”* one participant shared.

Whereas the advertisement seemed to have the opposite effect on participants when the frequency of the advertisement was high and the targeting was not specific to the participant,

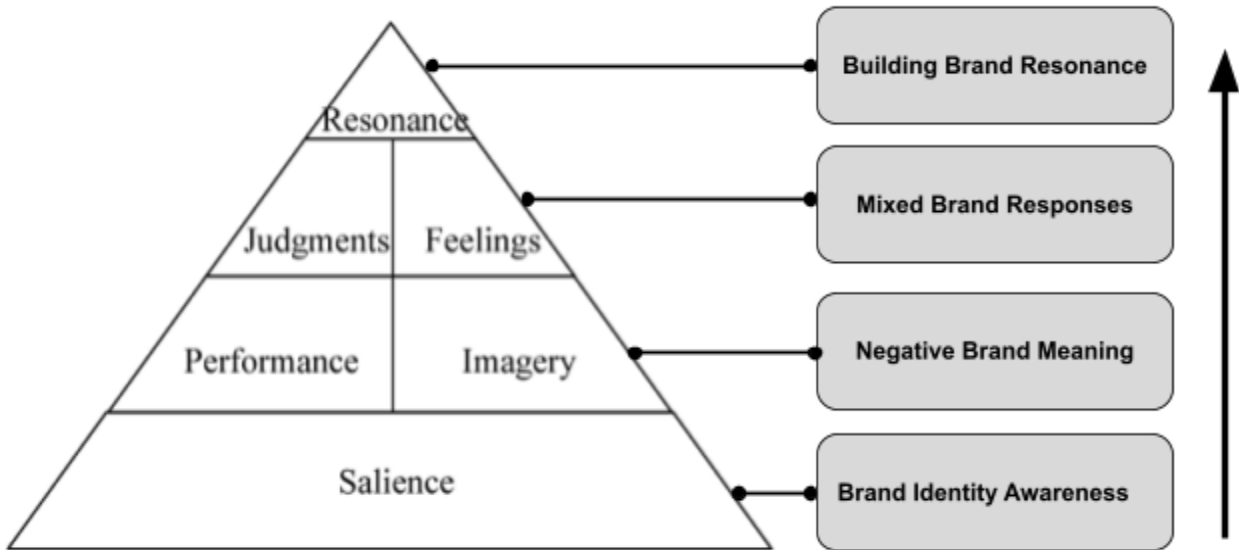
but rather the targeting was based on a single outlying condition such as “Beauty Products”, as suggested by a respondent. One participant summarized the previous detail as, *“I think seeing a targeted advertisement too often may incline me to tell my friends about or start a conversation about how bizarre it is, that you just feel like your privacy and personal space may be invaded to an extent”*.

Participants also expressed that in general, the linkage between their positive or negative perceptions and advocacy towards a brand such as Takealot was weak. In terms of a negative experience with a targeted advertisement, participants commonly shared that, Facebook targeted advertisement did pertain to making them a less loyal customer, but rather became an example of the invasiveness of targeted advertising as a tool, rather than reflecting negatively on the brand with one participant stating, *“it wouldn't change long-term view of the brand and my want or need to purchase from them.”*

One participant felt strongly that targeted advertising by Facebook as an improved utility, stating that, *“If Facebook had a button to turn off all targeted advertisements, I wouldn't turn it off.”* In the same vein, another respondent shared, *“Seeing targeted ads, definitely helps me purchase more from Takealot and has helped me become a more loyal customer because of the convenience of it being right there when I need it.”* This showed that although participants shared similarities in the extent to which they would advocate positively or negatively for a brand such as Takealot, in the lifetime of the customer their perceptions of that advertisement did not affect their need to purchase from the brand and their loyalty towards it.

Researcher Notes & Theory

When reflecting back upon Keller's (2013), the model for building brand equity, the following themes can be used to visually illustrate the extent of the developed themes from this research concerning the grounded theory.



To summarize the findings against the theory for this study, the above diagram shows the extent to which the themes identified in terms of can be related Keller's (2013) model. Findings for the them, 'brand identity awareness' refer can be analysed against salience, and so on for negative brand meaning, mixed brand responses and building brand resonance. With the bottom-up approach of Keller's pyramid geared towards building brand equity for a specific element, in the case of this study - targeted advertising on Facebook by Takealot.

Addressing Research Question, Problem, Hypotheses/Objectives

In addressing the vital elements of this research, the data analysis aimed to successfully explore the research question, 'What are the perceptions of Gen Z consumers towards Takealot's Facebook targeted advertising and how does it affect building brand equity for Takealot in South Africa?', which was supported by a variety of sub-research questions. Implications for answering the research question arose in framing relevant theory with the research question whilst still allowing for a qualitative collection and data analysis method that 'explored' responses rather than came to an immediate hard conclusion or correlative result. In managing to ensure the research was relevant, the goal was to address the research problem by answering questions that pertained to, 'The extent to which targeted advertising affects the perceptions of Gen Z consumers may impose possible brand implications for Takealot in South Africa that need to be identified to build brand equity as well as the relevant consumer-based

brand equity theory by Keller (2013). In reality, research limitations led to a relatively condensed sample, which drew weak conclusions from data through qualitative thematic analysis.

Keller's (2013), theory played a crucial role in framing interview questions that maintained the focus on brand equity, whilst the questions were geared to seek for perceptions of participants towards targeted advertising and Takealot. The theory also assisted with resolving implications in coding and theming the data to be relevant toward building brand resonance, the pinnacle of Keller's (2013) model for developing brand equity with customers.

Findings quite clearly addressed the objectives for the research, providing evidence of both positive and negative of Gen Z perceptions towards targeted advertising by Takealot in South Africa. Findings from the data highlighted common codes from Salience to Advocacy which assessed respondents' perceptions to the objectives for the study. The exploration further uncovered rationals for participant perceptions which were also coded, themed and assessed against the CBBE model by Keller's (2013) which can be reflected upon from the research question, to the research problem and to the objectives of this study. Because this study did not aim to prove its findings, but rather generate new insights, Facebook, Takealot and other similar brands may utilise the findings and researcher notes to assist in deciding whether or not to utilise Facebook targeted advertising as a tool in their marketing mix, the common themes participants displayed with regards to each level of building brand equity, to develop better advertisement strategies and foster stronger customer relationships by ensuring consumers positively advocate on this critical touchpoint.

Validity, Reliability & Trustworthiness

The results of qualitative research are frequently criticized for being essentially a collection of subjective beliefs subject to researcher bias, with the poor rationale of the methods used and lack of accountability (Stumpfegger, 2017). In a broad context, this study aims to reduce these assumptions of qualitative research by providing the highest possible standards for validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the data collected and analysed.

The validity refers to the accuracy with which the conclusions reflect the data, as well as the integrity and applicability of the methodologies used (Stumpfegger, 2017). The ethical guidelines for this study put an emphasis on the researcher's requirements to maintain integrity in the

application of the research from selecting samples to administering the research questions to interpreting the data. The methodologies used for analysing the data are widely recognised and used for qualitative research approaches and aim to provide consistent results from the data collected.

When concerned with the reliability of the data, the consistency of responses to different coders or code sets of data sets is a concern to reliability in qualitative research (Stumpfegger, 2017). Responses' accuracy in meeting the categories for coding provides a fundamental weakness for qualitative content analysis. This consistency was to be improved by taking extensive field notes during the research process to more accurately fulfil the coding criteria when analysing the data sets. Furthermore, the interviews were recorded as digital files and transcribed word-for-word into a textual document that was used by the researcher alongside the field notes, post the online interviews.

When understanding the elements that contribute to the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study, the following four criteria for managing a trustworthy study have been put in place:

Credibility

The first factor that needs to be developed in this study is robust credibility. It is regarded as the most crucial factor or standard for determining trustworthiness in this study's data. This is due to the fact that in order to demonstrate the veracity of the research study's findings, credibility essentially requires the researcher to directly connect the research study's findings with actuality. Comparing the other three qualities of trustworthiness, credibility also has the most methods for establishing it. In this study, credibility is based on the quality of the data and analysis, which may be improved by triangulation while depending on a sample size that is meant to reflect the study's population (Stumpfegger, 2017).

Transferability

Transferability and generalisability, or external validity, are the same concepts in considered in quantitative research (Stumpfegger, 2017). By showcasing to the readers that the research study's conclusions might be applied to different settings, locations, eras, and populations, transferability can be established. It's vital to remember in this case that the researcher cannot

vouch for the applicability of the research study's findings. Instead, it is the researcher's responsibility to offer proof that it might be relevant and applicable to a generalised assumption for broader groups.

Validation of generalising this study's findings therefore equates to transferability. A clear explanation of the study setting and underlying assumptions have been provided to assist with transferability. The study findings, in this case, may be translated from the primary research environment to a similar scenario in the supplied context (Stumpfegger, 2017).

Dependability

Dependability defines the research study's conclusions as being consistent and reproducible, which is crucial to achieving trustworthiness in this study. The researcher in this study wants to make sure that the conclusions drawn in the findings are supported by the original data that was gathered. This is to ensure that if other researchers examined the data, they would come to the same conclusions, interpretations, and findings (Stumpfegger, 2017). This is crucial to ensure that nothing was missed throughout the research study or that the final report was written carelessly or in the wrong direction.

Dependability in this study is intended to take the place of reliability in the context of a quantitative study, which simply demands that when duplicating tests are employed, the same findings be obtained. Alternative criteria include broad comprehension, the flow of reasoning, and logic, as this is likely to occur in a qualitative situation. Thus, the research method, as well as the final result, are required to be consistent (Stumpfegger, 2017).

Confirmability

Conformability is the term for the research's impartiality during data gathering and analysis. The accuracy, relevance, or interpretation of the data must be agreed upon by two or more independent parties (Stumpfegger, 2017).

In qualitative research, the researcher's impartiality of study interpretations is necessary rather than generic objectivity. A confirmability audit, which comprises an audit log of raw data, analytical notes, reconstructions, synthesis results, field notes, and preliminary developmental information, is required in to evaluate the trustworthiness of this study (Stumpfegger, 2017).

Contribution, Ethical considerations and Limitations

Anticipated Contribution

Anticipated contribution refers to this study's particular investigation and the various contributions the researcher deems applicable to society at large. As the main contribution for this study, researching various perceptions of Gen Z users of Facebook as a tool for marketing by Takealot aims to highlight a variety of trends, insights and phenomena exhibited by the study's participants towards building brand equity for Takealot. Furthermore, this study could assist Takealot and other, similarly positioned brands to make better marketing decisions when it comes to utilising digital marketing tools as a part of their marketing mix, as well as understand to what extent Facebook as a tool affects their ability to build brand equity.

The following individual aspects account for various contributions that could arise as a result of the outcomes of this study:

- Lead to an enhanced understanding of the nature and characteristics of targeted advertising as a tool for marketing to Gen Z consumers on Facebook by Takealot.
- Provide insightful information to the extent to which targeted advertising enables or inhibits Takealot's ability to build brand equity.
- Become a useful addition to the body of knowledge on how Gen Z consumer perceptions of targeted advertising vary or are consistent with Keller's (2013), model for building brand equity.
- Improve the assumptions on which the planning of fundamental marketing mix elements by Takealot are made.
- Provide the foundation for effective use and integration of targeted advertising tools by Takealot and similar brands.
- Benefit further application areas of targeted advertising as a method of marketing to consumers.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to any sample participation, participants were to be informed of the study's ethical principles, confidentiality, and integrity in order to provide informed consent (du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Participants were also made aware prior to the data collection that if they partake in the interview, their responses and camera are to be recorded for the purpose of data collection. Sample participants for the interviews were made aware that their participation was also be entirely voluntary, and they were informed that they can opt-out of the study at any time they may wish to.

To ensure the protection of the participant's confidentiality, anonymity parameters have had to be put in place. Due to the nature of a qualitative study, the sample participants was not anonymous to the researchers, however, their identity does not play a role in the research results, instead, participants in the study were assigned a miscellaneous title in numeric values such as Participant 1, Participant 2 etc. Furthermore, the researcher signed a non-disclosure document detailing his/her obligation to not disclose any identifiable information about the research participants which were to be distributed to interviewees prior to the survey.

Due to the parameters of the population, the study excluded participants under the age of 18 navigating any ethical guidelines with regard to gaining consent from children.

As any study may have the potential to harm the integrity or beliefs of participants, the study aims to minimise the risk of physical, social, psychological, and other forms of harm during the interview process.

Integrity in this research study aims to ensure equal participation of all demographic, and sociographic groups in the target market. Thus researchers during the sampling process made significant efforts to be competent and inclusive in race, gender, and culture and ensure diversity throughout the study. Furthermore, the study aims to provide participants with useful questions and is not malicious in nature. To ensure this, the parameters study was reviewed by an external examiner and ethical clearance was granted before it was implemented to ensure that the project meets the regulatory standards for the participants.

As a central ethical component of using secondary research in this study, the researcher aims to

guarantee that the work is devoid of plagiarism and research misconduct, and that the results are appropriately represented or interpreted with minimal to no personal bias, taking into consideration conserving the subjective nature of the interpretive paradigm.

Limitations

Time constraints

This study has a final deadline to be submitted by the 2nd of December 2022, leaving the researcher with limited time to collect the data, analyze the data, interpret the data, present the findings and file them into a concise report. This creates viability limitations on the sample size and data collection methods, which could allude to an improper representation of the target population outcomes from the sample's responses.

Budget limitation

As a student paper, this research is not funded by the researcher, the institution or any third party and was therefore be conducted with a limited budget. For the research itself, this limits the access to a greater sample size which could allude to an improper representation of the target population. Furthermore, a limited budget means that the researcher is constrained to using free or affordable data collection and analysis tools which could hinder the potential for accurate and extensive interpretation of the data collected.

Limited access to data

As Takealot is owned by the Naspers group, secondary information on the company's marketing methods and customer data is limited to annual reports published by Naspers and third-party articles such as news sites. Access to interviews with high-level employees at Takealot may also be a limitation to the study due to their potential unwillingness to participate in a student survey.

Implementation of data collection & analysis methods

Due to limited experience with data collection and analysis methods by the researcher required at the level of this study; the research approach, methodologies, instruments, and ability to

interpret the data may provide a weakness in the research outcomes.

Lack of previous studies in the research area

There is a lack of previous or secondary research that has been conducted directly for the scope of this study, this has created profound limitations on the ability of the researcher to find accurate, proven qualitative and quantitative sources for specifically Takealot, the perceptions of Gen Z consumers on targeted advertising on Facebook and the effect which these perceptions may affect Brand Equity in relation to Keller's (2013) CBBE model.

Final Thoughts & Reflection

In self-evaluating the extent of the success of this study, the researcher has noted that due to limitations, the study could have been furthered by including a bigger sample which could have increased the dependability of the results gathered.

Otherwise, the researcher is content with the extent to which the findings in the report are indicative of an explorative research study that answers to the purpose of this research and the research question/'s. Furthermore, the research provides applicable contributions to various segments of society and business which be furthered in future research or utilised as a secondary source for various applications.

There is a concise flow from the beginning to the end of the research where theory, methodologies, tools and techniques used in this research aim to support one another to provide an integrated research report with consolidated findings which the researched believes have achieved the desired outcomes for this research report and have answered the research question at hand.

Annexure A

Interview Research Questions Example

The following research questions will consist of 5 main questions, with the opportunity for the researcher to explore the subquestions around the topic and ask deeper questions based on the respondent's answers. These research questions centre around the pyramid framework in Keller's (2013) CBBE model, providing data relevant to and within the scope of the theoretical foundation for this study.

Question 1 - Scope

Can you discuss your experience with targeted advertising on Facebook from brands such as Takealot?

Sub-questions (exploration):

- Do you feel like targeted advertising is used too much or too little by brands and Why?
- Can you explain whether you feel like targeted advertising hinders or improves your Facebook experience and why?

Question 2 - Salience

Can you discuss whether you feel these experiences with targeted advertising have made you aware more or less aware of brands such as Takealot and why?

Sub-questions (exploration):

- Can you explain whether you feel more or less informed on a brand like Takealot using targeted advertising?
- Can you discuss any experience you may have had with targeted advertising by a brand such as Takealot that has assisted you in becoming a customer of that brand?

Question 3 - Judgements & Feelings

Can you explain the extent you feel these experiences influence your judgement or feelings

towards a brand such as Takealot?

Sub-questions (exploration):

- Can you discuss these feelings if any at all?
- Can you discuss how you judge the brand differently if so at all?
- Can you explain how long these feelings or judgements sit with you and why?
- Do you feel like your feelings and judgements of a brand impact your advocacy for a brand and why?

Question 4 - Performance & Imagery

Can you discuss to what extent you think the imagery or performance of a targeted advertisement hinders or improves your perception of a brand?

Sub-questions (exploration):

- Can you discuss whether a well-crafted and/or a badly-crafted targeted advertisement may affect your perception of that advertisement?
- Explain to what extent you feel the strength of the communication of the targeted advertisement hinders or improves your perception of the brand.

Question 5 - Brand Resonance

Can you explain whether or not you would be more or less loyal to a brand such as Takealot using targeted advertising and why?

- In the context of sharing the brand with friends/or family, explain how, if so at all, your advocacy for the brand may change due to the use of targeted advertising.
- Can you discuss the extent of the effect targeted advertising may or may not have on your willingness to purchase from a brand such as Takealot repeatedly and on frequent occasions?

Annexure B

Preliminary Questionnaire

The following questionnaire will consist of 4 questions and will be distributed to participants prior to the interview. The purpose of this questionnaire is to ensure that samples fit the population parameters and will not play a role in the analysis.

What is your age?

(Required to be Gen Z)

e.g. 21

What is your nationality?

(Required to be South African)

e.g. South African

Do you use Facebook regularly?

(Required to be a user of Facebook)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Have you shopped with Takealot before?

(Required to be aware of or consumer of Takealot)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Annexure C

Participant Explanatory Sheet & Consent Form (example)

To whom it may concern,

My name is Ehren Braunlich and I am a student at Vega School (online). I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Tish Taylor and Dr. Cerneels Coetzee on exploring consumer perceptions of Takealot's Facebook targeted advertising and the effect it has on building brand equity with Gen Z customers in South Africa. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of various perceptions of Gen Z users of Facebook as a tool for marketing by Takealot with the aim to highlight a variety of trends, insights and phenomena exhibited by the study's participants toward building brand equity for Takealot. .

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because (insert reason). If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to (explain exactly what participation will involve).

You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your (insert what you are examining). If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Takealot, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Bcom Honors. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Ehren Braunlich

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Tish Taylor

[REDACTED]

Cerneels Coetzee

[REDACTED]

Participant or respondent consent

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Ehren Braunlich on exploring consumer perceptions of Takealot's Facebook targeted advertising and the effect it has on building brand equity with Gen Z customers in South Africa.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

- I agree to be interviewed for this research.
- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature	Date

Annexure D

Consent Form For Audio Recording (example)

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow Ehren Braunlich to audio record my interviews as part of the research on exploring consumer perceptions of Takealot's Facebook targeted advertising and the effect it has on building brand equity with Gen Z customers in South Africa. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private; • The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer; and • Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date

Annexure E

Ethical Clearance Letter

Date: 18/6/2022

Student name: Ehren Braunlich

Student number: [REDACTED]

Campus: Vega School (online)

Re: Approval of RESE8419/RMET8429 Proposal and Ethics Clearance HONOURS/PGDip

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 and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with 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 Cerneels Coetzee

Signature:



Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC) name: Dr Tish Taylor

Signature:



Annexure F

Concept Document Table

<u>Project details</u>	
Your Name: Ehren Bräunlich	Student Number [REDACTED]
Supervisor: Cerneels Coetzee	Date: 07/04/2022 Version: 1

<u>Proposed Title</u>	
Title	Exploring consumer perceptions of Takealot's Facebook targeted advertising and the effect it has on building brand equity with Gen Z customers in South Africa.

<u>Research details</u>	
Problem statement	The extent to which targeted advertising affects the perceptions of Gen Z consumers may impose possible brand implications for Takealot in South Africa that need to be identified to build brand equity.
Purpose statement	The purpose of this study is to explore Gen Z perceptions of online targeted advertising by Takealot in South Africa with the aim to describe the extent it may impose positive or negative effects on building brand equity with customers.
Research question/s	Main Question: What are the perceptions of Gen Z consumers towards Takealot's Facebook targeted advertising and how does it affect building brand equity for Takealot in South Africa? Sub Questions: What are the perceptions held by Gen Z consumers towards online targeted advertising by Takealot? How do Gen Z consumers feel and judge their lived experiences of online Facebook targeted advertising by Takealot? To what extent does the use of targeted advertising for Takealot affect key elements for building brand equity in accordance with Keller's CBBE model? Does Facebook targeted advertising by Takealot positively or negatively influence building brand equity with Gen Z consumers?
Hypotheses/ Objectives	Explore the perceptions Gen Z consumers have towards Facebook targeted advertising by Takealot. Identify the feelings and judgements by Gen Z consumers towards the lived experiences of Facebook targeted advertising by Takealot. Assess the extent to which targeted advertising has an effect communicating key elements for building brand equity at Takealot in accordance with Keller's CBBE Model. Identify the extent to which Facebook targeted advertising may positively or negatively affect perspectives of Gen Z consumers of Takealot.

Research rationale	Conclusions made from this study may be of key value to Takealot and brands alike in understanding their Gen Z consumers and the extent of the effect on perceptions when Facebook targeted advertising is used as a method of customer acquisition by Takealot. Consumer privacy and data protection is being taken more seriously by consumers which may lead to unforeseen implications for brands if the sample studied has varying reactions to it (Anant et al., 2020). Researching various perceptions of this tool could highlight a variety of phenomena exhibited by the study's participants towards building brand resonance for Takealot. The results of this study aims to uncover the perceptions of consumers towards targeted advertising as a tool and provide exploratory data on these perceptions to Takealot and other institutions alike to make better marketing decisions.
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Literature overview						
Key theories	Customer-Based brand equity model (CBBE), The theory of planned behavior & Customer experience					
Seminal authors/sources	Kevin-Lane Keller, David Aaker					
Literature review themes	<u>Theme 1</u> Facebook Targeted Advertising	<u>Theme 2</u> Brand Equity (CBBE)	<u>Theme 3</u> Consumer Perception	<u>Theme 4</u> Takealot Advertising	<u>Theme 5</u> Consumer Privacy	<u>Theme 6</u>
Sources	Baglione, S.L. and Tucci, L.A. 2018. Perceptions of Social Media's Relevance and Targeted Advertisements. <i>Journal of Promotion Management</i>, 25(2): 143–160. [Online]. Available at: https://web-p-ebscobhost-com.ezproxy.iielearn.ac.za/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=7&sid=4b9aeea0-e038-4bc9-859e-ac75d0a9308d%40redis [Accessed 2 April 2022]. Browdie, B. 2021. Online shopping is taking hold in mall-loving South Africa. [online] Quartz. Available at: https://qz.com/africa/2001584/takealot-is-a-winner-in-south-africas-online-shopping-growth/ [Accessed 7 May 2022] Boerman, S.C., Kruikemeier, S. and Zuiderveen Borgesius, F.J. 2017. Online Behavioral Advertising: A Literature Review and Research Agenda. <i>Journal of Advertising</i>, 46(3): 363–376. [Online]. Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00913367.2017.1339368?needAccess=true [Accessed 6 April 2022]. Bhatti, A., Arif, S., Mehar, M. and Younas, S. 2018. Impact of Social media brand communication on Brand Knowledge: Mediating role of Brand Image & Brand Awareness Application of CBBE model theory of Keller. <i>Journal of Management Info</i>, 4(4): 12–18. [Online]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324163910_Impact_of_Social_media_brand_communication_on_Brand_Knowledge_Mediating_role_of_Brand_Image_Brand_Awareness_Application_of_CBBE_model_theory_of_Keller [Accessed 2 April 2022]. Keller, K. 2013. Strategic Brand Management Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity Global Edition: Pearson Publishing. [eBook] Available on BrandAbout at: http://brandabout.ir/wp-content/uploads/Keller_Strategic_Brand_ManagementBookFi.pdf. [Accessed 1 April 2022]. Jayasuriya, N.A., Azam, F., Khatibi, A., Atan, H. and Dharmaratne, I.R. 2018. The Role of Social					

	Media Marketing on Brand Equity. [online] Research Gate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Nisha-Jayasuriya/publication/326412855_The_Role_of_Social_Media_Marketing_on_Brand_Equity-A_Literature_Review/links/5b4c1020aca272c60946fc90/The-Role-of-Social-Media-Marketing-on-Brand-Equity-A-Literature-Review.pdf [Accessed 3 May 2022] Labuschagne, H. 2022. Beware fake Takealot scams on Facebook, <i>Mybroadband</i>, 7 January 2022. [Blog]. Available at: https://mybroadband.co.za/news/security/429270-beware-takealot-scams-on-facebook.html [Accessed 2 April 2022]. Martinovic, M. 2020. Consumer perceptions on Targeted Advertising: A study on Facebook personalization practices. Master Thesis. [Online]. Available at: http://essay.utwente.nl/82455/1/Martinovic_MA_BA.pdf [Accessed 2 April 2022]. Naspers. 2020. <i>Building leading companies: Integrated annual report 2020</i>. Cape Town. Naspers. [Online]. Available at: https://www.naspersreport2020.com/ui/pdfs/naspers2020_integrated_annual_report.pdf [Accessed 2 April 2022]. Nivedita, H., Nivedita, N. and Singh, A. (2021). Perception of advertisement value and its effect on purchase intentions: a comparative analysis of youtube and facebook users. <i>International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts</i>, 9(2): 2320–2882. [Online]. Available at: https://ijcrt.org/download.php?file=IJCRT2102500.pdf [Accessed 2 April 2022]. Schivinski, B. and Dabrowski, D. 2015. The impact of brand communication on brand equity through Facebook. [online] Emerald Insight. Available at: https://www-emerald-com.ezproxy.iielearn.ac.za/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JRIM-02-2014-0007/full/html [Accessed 29 April 2022] Van Huyssteen, F. 2020. <i>Researching Customers Experience with The Takealot Brand</i>. Honors Thesis. Vega School of Brand Leadership. [Online]. Available at: https://iiespace.iie.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11622/567/Frederik%20van%20Huyssteen%20-%20Thesis.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y [Accessed 2 April 2022].
Key concepts	Brand Equity Targeted Advertising Takealot Consumer Perception Consumer Privacy

Provisional Research Approach

Paradigm	Paradigm	Epistemology	Ontology	Axiology
	Interpretivism	The study will explore existing (secondary research of targeted advertising and Takealot) and new knowledge (Interviewee perceptions).	The study will account for the lived experiences of participants and their unique beliefs or truths.	The study will account for the individual's origins of value and judgment in evaluating Interviewee perceptions.
	Interpretivism is the model or research tradition for this analysis. The goal of this study is to recognize South African Gen Z consumer perceptions of Facebook targeted advertising by			

Approach/ design	Takealot and to explore the individuals perceptions that may impose positive or negative effects on building brand resonance for Takealot. Interpretivism claims that social constructions occur in existence and that they take into account various truths (du Plooy-Cilliers. F., Davis. C., Bezuidenhout., R.M., 2014). This study would therefore establish a solely inductive approach to data collection and analysis to account for varying experiences and participant truths. The type of research for this study is a form of exploratory research. Interpretivism advocates this type of research as its objectives seek to prove the existence of knowledge that is unknown and add it to the pool of logic and knowledge (du Plooy-Cilliers. F., et al., 2014).
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Provisional Research Plan

Population	The parameters of the population for this study will include 3-5 South African Takealot shoppers and Facebook users between the age of 18 and 26 (Gen Z). The population of the study is required to explore the perceptions towards Facebook targeted advertising and Takealot, and therefore are required to be both South African and be a frequent Takealot shopper and user of Facebook. The accessible population will include participants that share the exact characteristics with the target population and are available and willing to participate in interviews. Participants will be evaluated based on their real responses, so they must act like regular Takealot shoppers and Facebook users, with the parameters of this population serving as a foundation for the study.
Sampling	For this study, a purposive non-probability sampling method is chosen. Non-probability sampling, as contrasted to probability sampling, is a sampling technique in which not all members of the sample have a fair or equal chance of participating in the survey (du Plooy-Cilliers. F. et al. 2014). Participants for the survey will be gathered by reaching random individuals in person or on online platforms that justify the parameters of the survey; a South African citizen, a Facebook user and a frequent Takealot shopper.
Data collection method(s)	This study will utilise a qualitative data collection methodology in the format of a semi-structured interview that will be administered to participants of the sample in face-to-face interview, in person or online. These consist of structured main questions that aim to collect data on the areas of key importance to the study but also enable the interviewee to elaborate on questions and the interviewer to investigate an answer in more depth (du Plooy-Cilliers. F. et al. 2014).
Data analysis method(s)	The data will be evaluated using qualitative content analysis, which will be centered on the study's chosen research paradigm (interpretivism). Qualitative thematic analysis is used to define and analyze value driven data, as well as expose and adapt data to trends or topics (du Plooy-Cilliers. F. et al. 2014). A content analysis is critical to exploring and gaining a deeper understanding of the data gathered by the researcher during the interviews in this study (du Plooy-Cilliers. F. et al. 2014). Content analysis is an important investigative tool for this study because it enables the researcher to identify related themes as well as gain a qualitative mutual understanding for Gen Z perceptions expressed towards Facebook targeted advertising by Takealot by participants of the study (du Plooy-Cilliers. F. et al. 2014).

Ethical considerations and limitations

	Participants will be informed of the study's ethical principles, confidentiality, and integrity in order to provide informed consent (du Plooy-Cilliers. F., et al., 2014). The survey participants will not be
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Ethics	anonymous to the researchers, but their identity will not play a role in the research results. Their participation will be entirely voluntary, and they will be informed that they can opt out of the study at any time. The parameters of the population exclude participants under the age of 18 due to ethical guidelines with regards to gaining consent from children. To ensure equal participation of all groups in the target market, researchers will make significant efforts to be competent and inclusive in race, gender, culture and ensure diversity throughout the study. Furthermore, the study aims to provide participants with useful questions and is not malicious in nature. To ensure this, the study will be reviewed by an external examiner before it is implemented to ensure that the project meets the regulatory standards for the participants.
Limitations	Time constraints This study has a final deadline to be submitted by the 2nd of October 2022, leaving the researcher with limited time to collect, analyze and interpret the data and file it into a report. This puts limitations on the sample size and data collection methods, which could allude to an improper representation of the target population. Budget limitation As a student paper, this research is not funded and will be done with a limited budget. This limits the access to a greater sample size which could allude to an improper representation of the target population. Limited access to data As Takealot is owned by the Naspers group, secondary information on the company's marketing methods and customer data is limited to annual reports published by Naspers and third-party articles such as news sites. Access to interviews with high-level employees at Takealot may also be a limitation to the study due to their potential unwillingness to participate in a student survey.

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