Using "Memes" as a Marketing Communication Tool in Connecting with Consumers within the Age of Digital Connectivity

Sorina Vasile[1], Lebogang Mototo[2], Tinashe Chuchu[1]*

[1]School of Business Sciences, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa, [2]School of Management Studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa. *Email: tinashe.chuchu@wits.ac.za

ABSTRACT

The modern globalisation and the expansion of multinational brands and social communications has resulted in the youth-consumer market of today being relentlessly exposed to increasing competitive multimedia messages and advertising. This research explored the impact of brand attitude, brand perception and social influence on brand engagement. It also investigated the impact of brand engagement on behavioural intention. The data was collected through a sample of 350 questionnaires administered to a target population consisting of young consumers in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. The results indicated that Brand Perception and Social Influence both have a positive and significant effect on brand engagement. That is, while Brand Attitude positively influences Brand Engagement, the effect was not found to be significant. Brand Engagement, the mediator variable was strongly supported and had a highly significant effect on Behavioural Intention. Managerial implications, limitations, and further research directions.

Keywords: Memetic Marketing, Advertising, Behavioural Intention
JEL Classifications: M3, M30, M31

1. INTRODUCTION

Memetics "memes" have transformed the understanding of human culture (Murray et al., 2014). The term "meme" as it is broadly employed in advertising and popular culture has become the home of freely adapted and interesting online content (Gunders and Brown, 2010; Murray et al., 2014). The increasing complexity and saturation of modern consumer markets have resulted in many brands falling, with frantic and ineffective strategies and tactics. Memes have the potential to alter brand perception in consumers. A humorous or outrageous meme will affect a response in a consumer whether it is to laugh, cry, or another response. These responses are already established within the meme itself and by those who know it and understand it. By associating an affective meme with a brand, companies will be able to alter consumers' perceptions or the brand, by borrowing the memes affect and applying it to the brand. Brand engagement and connecting with consumers have become central to the sustainability and longevity of a brand in response to the rapidly changing business world, disruptive innovations and challenging consumer market (McKay et al., 2014). The paper introduces the concept of memetics as an integral part of the brand resonance model from a digital brand strategy perspective as found in marketing literature. Digitalisation has revolutionised communication and the interaction of human kind. As digital technologies are rapidly altering the way consumers interact with companies and brands, it is critical that marketing researchers consider memetic theory as an approach to the perpetually evolving digital landscape (Moutinho et al., 2014). Motivated by profits and market share over the years, there has been an overwhelmingly rapid growth in the number of new brands and redefined market strategies (Rizkallah and Miller, 2015). Brands have become saturated through proliferation with overlapping offerings, product line extensions and new market entries (Ghorbani, 2013).

This research introduces and applies the concept of "meme" or "memetics" from the original work of Richard Dawkins, Oxford Evolutionary Biology Professor, in the field of Biology to the study of marketing theory and practice as a concept with which to understand modern consumers' cultural and social motivators. What makes the world recognisably human is memetics- described as the reciprocal desire of imitation, the imitative behaviour that has become the new paradigm of consumer behaviour encouraged by the new age technologies including internet, images and music, the contemporary social movement (Coker, 2008). The word and term "meme", an abbreviation of "mimeme" derived from the Greek word mimesis (imitation), originated in 1976 from the landmark book -"The Selfish Gene"- written by a the famous Oxford Biologist, Richard Dawkins. One of the most influential modern thinkers, Dawkins revolutionised perspectives of contemporary notions of human evolution, and the spread of ideas and cultural phenomena confronting some of the deepest and most indelible questions of humankind: human cognitive behaviour (Goldberg, 2006).

This research therefore aims to first examine the role of digitalisation in global markets, modern consumer brand engagement-experience, and social media. The second aim is to also investigate memetic theory as an application tool to digital integrated marketing communication strategy. The third aim is to then examine the effect of consumer behaviour principles, including attitude towards brands, brand perception, social influence, and brand engagement, which ultimately influence behavioural intention. The last aim of this research is to explore whether the integration of memetic theory can be applied as a tool for companies to implement as part of their subsequent brand strategy.

1.1. Digital Environment
The global financial crises and economic recession has reached unpredictable peaks, methodically resulting in a domino effect, directly impacting a given population's purchasing power (supply and demand) and the consumers consumption behaviour. This has altered the dynamics and structure of consumer satisfaction criteria (Mitran and Bebeselea, 2012). In times of crises and budget cuts, brand building and consumer experience on the digital landscape is pivotal to making the leap from organisational budget cuts and downsizing, to unprecedented growth in market share, return on investment (ROI), and brand equity (Frank, 2013). Currently, there are over three billion digital users of which usage time spent on laptops, tablets, and mobile devices is expected to triple by the year 2019 (Internet Society, Global Internet Report, 2015), thus representing a major growth in the digital landscape.

1.2. Time Conscious Consumer Experience and Engagement
Modern consumers are regularly exposed to marketing messages, advertisements, and commercially created content. There are over 5000 overt marketing advertisements that consumers are exposed to every day (Ghorbani, 2013). Consumers may not be aware that they are exposed to these as they may have become accustomed to the messages. Only one to two percent of these advertisements are consciously processed (Ghorbani, 2013). In an intergraded consumer market of mass production, consumers have become more mindful of how they spend their time, seeking engagements, and experiences with brands and products, thus shifting from the formal decision making process centring on products, features, and benefits (Internet Society, Global Internet Report, 2015). During the industrial revolution an awareness of time and the time conscious consumer becaeme a pervasive characteristic of modern society. Time awareness gained momentum in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, with incrementally defined continuous work schedules, primarily due to the socio-economic development, cultural systems, and family pressures bringing about the "running against the clock consumer" (Blonde and Verhoeven, 2013). Subsequently, modern consumers have limited opportunity to process information, thus absorbing less information and are quicker to reject brands that have negative features (Hoyer et al., 2014).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Memetic Marketing
A meme is a cultural type of communication that is relayed from one individual to another Murray et al., 2014). Consumers are being exposed to viral marketing memes from angles (Jurvetson, 2000). Trending online topic initiated by individuals or organised groups with the ability to become widely popular were labelled as memes by Zubiaga et al. (2015). Zubiaga et al. (2015) added that a meme could be a representation of an event, not necessarily relevant for mainstream notworthy recognition but commands a large target audience due to its interesting nature. Memes developed to become assets for brands, similar to celebrities, as they feed into a large ready-made target audience that both identifies with them as we all enjoys them (Murray et al., 2014; Sax, 2012). Blackmore (1999) and Williams (2000) postulated that understanding successful memes could also help in comprehending the human mind.

2.2. Saturated Brands and Social Media Strategy
The adoption and implementation of social media brand strategies, has major implications for many industries, as social media simultaneously has the potential ability to increase brand visibility, consumer experience, and engagement, and building long term relationships with brands through online social community, communication, and feedback (Capitello et al., 2014). Furthermore, the need for businesses to integrate social media strategies as a brand communication and media plan cannot be overemphasised. Encouraged by economic crises, changing digital consumer behaviour strategies have cost-time saving advantages and can maximise brand identity (Capitello et al., 2014). Consumer engagement with a brand is central to social media strategies, yet it is understood in a very vague and unsystematic way. Studies have defined, measured, and conceptualised engagement as a psychological state that focuses on brand involvement. This is influenced by a behavioural manifestation from a customer toward a brand through brand perception, brand attitude, and social influence (Zheng et al., 2015).

2.3. The Digital Environment and Consumers
Digital innovations have resulted in major social and cultural change through the adoption of new forms of communication and social relationships (Russo, 2012). Contemporary consumers spend much of their time browsing the internet, social media platforms, downloading and streaming music and movies, and expanding their virtual identities. Consuming content has become an everyday occurrence allowing

users to co-produce, share, build identities, express themselves, and create relationships (Russo, 2012). Digitalisation is an important element of change in the universe of consumption experience. Modern consumer culture has shifted from coveting product features and benefits to seeking personalisation and live experiences. As markets have become saturated around the world, contemporary brands are competing for the attention of and positive interaction by the digital consumer. In virtually every industry a company's survival requires the ability to adapt and evolve to market needs and cultural changes, stimulating growth and competitive advantage (Trott, 2012).

2.4. Importance of Memes, Digitalization and Consumer Experience

The emergence, expansion, and rapid evolution of new technologies and the development of new media are the enabling forces that have triggered changes in consumer behaviour, experience, and culture (Hajduk-Nijakowska and Slovensky, 2015). The study of cultural evolution has occurred for thousands of years, yet, its modern penetration into the scientific world is very poor. As such, resistance from established academics may have significant impact, which could see society steering in a dangerous direction ultimately resulting in stagnation, revolutions, and genocide (Tyler, 2011). Liao and Keng (2014), defines online consumer experience as the psychological and emotional states experienced by consumers while interacting with products online. In their paper Liao and Keng (2014) denotes that while direct experiences provide an unmediated interaction with a full sensory capacity of the consumer (primarily- visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and somatic), virtual experiences involve only two senses, namely (visual and auditory). Memetics is the new era of marketing; an approach to understanding consumer experience and purchasing behaviour. In modern literature memetics plays an important role in contemporary society having entered into a time poor social order where capturing consumer time and attention is key to providing longevity and brand equity, goodwill and growth.

2.5. Brand Attitudes

Afiff et al. (2014) define brand attitude as consumers' overall evaluation of a brand. Beneke et al. (2015) further describe brand attitude as the way in which consumers evaluate a brand, whether positive or negative. de Villiers et al. (2018) suggested that both brand attitudes and brand experience directly impact a consumer's decision to purchase a product. Consumers judge whether the brand is beneficial, then form brand attitudes based on their judgement. Consumer attitudes towards brands are often described as an integration of specific driven evaluative beliefs, such as associations in memory, consumer mind-sets, attributes importance levels, beliefs, associations, social norms, and country of origin, all of which can drive and influence purchase intention and behaviour (Posavac et al., 2014). Research has shown that positive brand attitudes increases consumer purchase intention and profitability, which subsequently translates into increased profit margins, performance, and competitive advantage (Beneke et al., 2015).

2.6. Brand Perceptions

Hennigs et al. (2013) suggests that there are three value dimensions that drive brand perception, based on financial, functional, and social considerations related to cognitive affective and conative components of brands. In this context and from a social-psychological perspective,

brands represent strong identity with enhanced emotional and symbolic associations that can create a favourable or unfavourable social image for consumers (Hennigs et al., 2013). Furthermore, Maehle et al. (2011) states that consumers may form different perceptions of brands based on the diverse dimensions of the brand personality, which includes sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness of the brand. Sincere perceptions of a brand are associated with family and high morals, exciting brands related to fun and exciting experiences, competence with expertise, sophistication with brands that are feminine in nature, and ruggedness with masculinity (Maehle et al., 2011).

2.7. Social Influence

Social Influence is defined as social factors that influence others to conform to particular behaviours and expectations, while informational influence refers to influence that arises from sources of information in the world i.e. blogs and product ratings (Baek et al., 2015). Social influence is determined by strength, the importance of the influential group to the consumer, and the number of sources; the number of influencing sources (Baek et al., 2015). Thus, consumer attitudes and behaviours are augmented by the judgements and behaviours of others.

2.8. Brand Experience

Experiential marketing has developed into fundamental in advances made in retailing Atwal and Williams (2017). Brand experience is regarded as the entirety of subjective, internal customers' reactions, such as sensations, emotions and thoughts that are evoked by brand-related stimuli (Brakus et al., 2009; de Villiers et al. 2018). In addition, de Villiers et al. (2018) postulated that brand experience in a direct antecedent of purchase intention. Brakus (2009) stated that (the most important thing to customers is the ability of brands to offer attractive experiences to them.

2.9. Behavioural Intention

Behavioural intention is defined as the desire that consumers have to purchase a particular product or service (Che-Hui et al., 2015). In the Journal of Consumer Behaviour, Akar and Nasir (2015) suggests that the rapid development of the internet and technology has created a new global market in which time and space barriers do not exist, and where e-commerce consumers have different purchasing habits, lifestyles, and characteristics that are crucial to understanding their online purchase intentions and motivators. The authors continue, in stating that when studying online consumer behaviour and online purchase intention, it is necessary to analyse changing consumer characteristics, environments, and technological trends (Akar and Nasir, 2015). Marketing literature has found that purchase intention is a key predictor of actual buying behaviour, with brand image, price, trust, and value as the driving forces behind online purchase intentions (Che-Hui et al., 2015). In the following section, Figure 1: The Memetic Marketing Conceptual Model was tested for purposes of measuring the proposed hypotheses of the study.

2.10. The Memetic Marketing Conceptual Model

Based on the literature provided and proposed conceptual model the following hypothesis statements are proposed. Later the study's research methodology is discussed.

2.11. Proposed Hypothesis Statements

- H_1: Brand attitudes are directly related to brand experience
- H_2: Brand perceptions are directly related to brand experience
- H_3: Social Influence is directly related to brand experience
- H_4: Brand experience is directly related to behavioural intention.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative research design were convenience sampling, a form of non-probability sampling was used in selecting participants. This approached was deemed appropriate due to the difficulty of obtaining a sampling frame. The data was collected through a self-administered survey from 338 willing participants from the Braamfontein area, a business district in Johannesburg South Africa. They survey instrument used in data collection was divided into two parts. The first, consisting of demographic questions on gender, age, educational level and amount of time spent on social media. Ethical clearance was provided by the University responsible and anonymity as well as confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants. In addition, participants were not provided any incentives and were allowed to withdraw from the study at any stage.

In terms of data processing, SPSS 24 and AMOS 24 software were used to generate descriptive results (sample demographic profile) and hypothesis testing results respectively. Structural equation modeling was conducted in AMOS 24, following a two-step approach involving confirmatory factor analysis and hypothesis testing respectively. The following section presents the sample profile presented in Table 1 which is then followed by a description of the results.

Table 1: Sample demographic profile

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-24	252	74.6
25-34	59	17.5
35-44	21	6.2
45-54	6	1.8
Total	338	100
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	184	54.4
Female	152	45
Rather not say	2	0.6
Total	338	100
Current educational qualification	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
High school	64	19.0
Bachelor's Degree/Diploma	249	73.7
Master's Degree	17	5
Doctorate Degree	3	0.9
Other qualification	5	1.5
Total	338	100
Social media use per day	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Less than an hour	21	6.2
1 h	143	42.3
2 h	3	0.9
3 h	5	10.4
More than 3 h	136	40.2
Total	338	100

4. RESULTS

As observed in Table 1, in terms age groups, the most represented group is the 18-24 while the least represented group is the 45-54. As for gender, about 54% were male while female participants account for at least 45%. Only 6 out of the total 338 elected not to disclosures their gender identify. Almost 75% of the respondents stated that they had a bachelor's degree. Last, results in terms of participants' social media usage about 42% indicated that they spend at least an hour on social media. The accuracy analysis statistics are presented in the Table 2.

The accuracy analysis statistics are presented in Table 3, were all the means for all constructs ranged from 2 to 3 while most of the standard deviation values were around 1. Most of the item to total values were above 0.5. The reliability metrics used, the Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability values were all above the generally accepted threshold of 0.6. Last, factor loadings were mostly above 0.5. The data was acceptable for further analysis, therefore proposed hypotheses were tested with the results presented in Table 3.

As observed in Table 3, the first hypothesis, (H_1), (brand attitudes and brand experience) was found to be supported but not significant at $P < 0.05$ as it had a $P = 0.67$. This relationship had a weak path coefficient of 0.06. This finding suggests that even though brand attitudes influence a customer's experience with a brand it is however a weak influence. This therefore means that the better brand experience for the customer is dependent on positive brand attitudes. The second hypothesis, (H_2), (brand preference and brand experience) is observed to neither be supported nor significant. The relationship had a path coefficient of −0.16. This outcome suggested that consumers' preference of a brand does not necessarily mean that consumers will find the experience with the brand experience favourable. The third hypothesis, (H_3), (social influence and band experience) is both supported and significant at $P < 0.01$ as indicated by ***. This suggested that social influence from of brands is directly related to customers' experiences with the brands which meant that the higher the social influence led to a higher brand experience. The last hypothesis, (H_4), (brand experience and behavioural intention) was found to be both supported and significant at $P < 0.01$ as indicated by ***. This relationship had a path coefficient of 0.72. This meant that the more consumers found the experience with a brand positive the higher the intention they had of purchasing that brand.

4.1. Managerial Implications

Findings from this research generated numerous managerial implications. First, the study established that brand experience and behavioural intention were had the strongest of all relationships from the customer's perspective. This implies that managers or organisations involved in memetic marketing should constantly try to improve or at least maintain the experience provided to customers by their brands in order to convince them to pay for the brands. Since intention is solely dependent on experience (according to the study) it is therefore imperative that the customer experience is constantly enhanced at all times. The study also found that brand preferences actually had not effect of the

Table 2: Accuracy analysis statistics

Research construct		Descriptive statistics				Cronbach's test		CR	Factor loading
		Mean value		Standard deviation		Item-total	Alpha value		
BA	BA1	3.42	3.36	0.92	0.95	0.53	0.69	0.69	0.76
	BA2	3.30		0.98		0.52			0.69
BP	BP1	1.43	1.49	0.50	0.50	0.41	0.64	0.59	0.37
	BP2	1.52		0.50		0.50			0.59
	BP3	1.41		0.49		0.49			0.75
	BP4	1.59		0.50		0.30			0.37
SI	SI1	2.77	3.06	1.23	1.07	0.34	0.62	0.62	0.47
	SI2	3.32		0.91		0.28			0.32
	SI3	3.10		1.05		0.39			0.74
BE	BE1	3.43	3.20	1.24	1.12	0.25	0.69	0.61	0.51
	BE2	3.14		1.10		0.43			0,53
	BE3	2.64		1.26		0.52			0.48
	BE4	2.48		1.16		0.48			0.43
	BE5	3.86		0.93		0.40			0.37
	BE6	3.67		1.03		0.44			0.44
BI	BI1	2.86	2.90	1.17	1.13	0.64	0.85	0.85	0.66
	BI2	3.04		1.12		0.73			0.79
	BI3	2,83		1.14		0.80			0.92
	BI4	2.85		1.07		0.62			0.69

BA: Brand attitudes, BP: Brand preference, SI: Social influence, BE: Brand experience, BI: Behavioural intention, CR: Composite reliability

Table 3: Hypothesis testing results and discussion

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	P-value	Outcome
BA to BE (H₁)	0.06	0.67	Supported but not significant
BP to BE (H₂)	−0.16	0.03	Not supported and not significant
SI to BE (H₃)	0.67	***	Supported and significant
BE to BI (H₄)	0.72	***	Supported and significant

BA: Brand attitudes, BP: Brand preference, SI: Social influence, BE: Brand experience, BI: Behavioural intention, CR: Composite reliability

**Figure 1:** The Memetic Marketing Conceptual Model

experience. The implication is that marketing managers should not focus too much on memetic marketing that is centred solely on brand preference as this does not impact the customer's experience with the brand. In other words this means that simply because an individual prefers one brand to another, it does not translate to that individual enjoy the experience associated with the brand.

Further managerial implications can be taken from the relationship between social influence and brand experience. It can be said that because social influence had a fairly strong impact on brand experience, marketing managers ought to provide more resources such as increase social media practitioners/online public relations officers who constantly monitor social media discussions. This is because any negative content or undesirable talk on social media could harm the customer's brand experience. The last managerial implication can be taken from the relationship between brand experience and behavioural intention. Managers or sales practitioners should put make an increased conscious effort to improve brand experience and this could be done by having memetic marketing content that customers can easily relate to as this directly translates to sales or at least the intention to purchase.

4.2. Contribution of the Research
Marketing literature features little theoretical research within the discipline of memetics as an approach to digital communication,
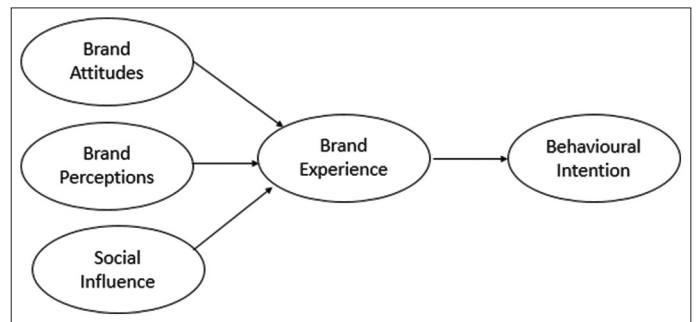
branding, and advertising. Despite the great attention given to memes in popular digital culture, memes and the concept of memetics has failed to gain widespread academic attention in marketing literature (Moutinho et al., 2014). This paper therefore draws on linking memes as a neurophilosophy and the concept of memetics to the field of corporate marketing in order to understand the mind of the modern digital consumer. Memes are contemporarily described as replicators, mind viruses that are contagious and selfish, and that influence human behaviour, and ultimately infect consumer minds.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research attempted to understand the impact of memetic marketing through a unique conceptual model. Brand preference, social influence, brand attitudes, brand experiences as well as behavioural intention was explored. Like any research this one was not without limitations. A limitation identified was that the research did not check the relationships between the predictors themes. As in, the impact of social influence on brand attitudes and brand preference is unknown. Conceptually, it is therefore recommended that further research investigates these two relationships (i.e., social influence on brand attitudes and social

influence on brand preference). This could help reveal relationship strength of predictors and possible reasons for why in this study, brand preference and brand experience had a negative relationship? Future research could also consider testing the following direct relationships (brand attitudes and behavioural intention, brand preference and behavioural intention as well as social influence and behaviour intention). Maybe this will generate results that could better explain how memes lead to behavioural intention or at least provide a different perspective from the current research?

Due to fact that the survey was self-administered it limited the reach of the study and potentially suffered with response bias to a certain extent that could have been the result of sampling participants from one area. These participants were likely largely exposed to the same environment and might have not provided much diversity in their responses. This would therefore call for future research to make use of an online-survey which is not geographically restricted and maybe also feel more confidential and anonymous for the participant. That being said, it would be interesting for additional research to actually have the survey distributed on the platforms that consumers receive memetic marketing for example, Facebook and Twitter. This would be the most natural habitat for such as study to be conducted and would probably yield more realistic findings and this would be done in a better context.

REFERENCES

Afiff, A.Z., Furi, W.N., Mertoprawiro, D.W. (2014), Influence of brand equity and movieliking in overriding impact of misleading brand placement toward brand attitude. South East Asian Journal of Management, 8(1), 65-86.

Akar, E., Nasir, V.A. (2015), A review of literature on consumers' online purchase intentions. Journal of Customer Behaviour, 14(3), 215-233.

Atwal, G., Williams, A. (2017), Luxury brand marketing-the experience is everything! In: Advances in Luxury Brand Management. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Baek, H., Lee, S., Oh, S., Ahn, J. (2015), Normative social influence and online review helpfulness: Polynomial modeling and response surface analysis. Journal of Electronic Commerce Research, 16(4), 290-306.

Beneke, J., Mill, J., Naidoo, K., Wickham, B. (2015), The impact of willingness to engage in negative electronic word-of-mouth on brand attitude: A study of airline passengers in South Africa. Journal of Business and Retail Management Research, 9(2), 68-84.

Blackmore, S. (1999), The Forget-Meme-Not Theory, Times Higher Education Supplement. Available from: https://www.susanblackmore. uk/journalism/the-forget-meme-not-theory. [Last accessed on 2019 Feb 14].

Blonde, B., Verhoeven, G. (2013), Against the clock: Time awareness in early modern Antwerp, 1585-1789. Continuity and Change, 28(2), 213-244.

Brakus, J.J., Schmitt, B.H., Zarantonello, L. (2009), Brand experience: What is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty? Journal of Marketing, 73(3), 52-68.

Capitello, R., Agnoli, L., Begalli, D., Codurri, S. (2014), Social media strategies and corporate brand visibility in the wine industry. EuroMed Journal of Business, 9(2), 129-148.

Che-Hui, L., Miin-Jye, W., Li-Ching, H., Kuo-Lung, W. (2015), Online hotel booking: The effects of brand image, price, trust and value on purchase intentions. Asia Pacific Management Review, 20(4), 210-218.

Coker, C. (2008), War, memes and memeplexes. International Affairs, 84(5), 903-914.

de Villiers, M.V., Chinomona, R., Chuchu, T. (2018), The influence of store environment on brand attitude, brand experience and purchase intention. South African Journal of Business Management, 49(1), 1-8.

Frank, P. (2013), Modeling Young Global Consumers' Apparel Brand Resonance: A Cross-Cultural Comparison between the United States and Thailand, Doctoral Dissertation. United States: University of North Carolina Greensboro.

Ghorbani, A. (2013), Marketing in the Cyber Era: Strategies and Emerging Trends: Strategies and Emerging Trends.

Goldberg, C. (2006), Richard Dawkins: How a Scientist Changed the Way We Think. Washington, DC: Society for Science and the Public.

Hajduk-Nijakowska, J., Slovensky, N. (2015), Towards the new folklore genre theory. Bratislava, 63(2), 161-173.

Hennigs, N., Wiedmann, K., Behrens, S., Klarmann, C. (2013), Unleashing the power of luxury: Antecedents of luxury brand perception and effects on luxury brand strength. Journal of Brand Management, 20(8), 705-715.

Hoyer, W.D., Maclnnis, J., Pieters, R. (2014), Consumer Behaviour. 6th ed. South Melbourne, Victoria: Cengage Learning.

Internet Society, Global Internet Report. (2015), Mobile Evolution and Development of the Internet. Available from: https://www.future. internetsociety.org/2015. [Last accessed on 2019 Dec 02].

Jurvetson, S. (2000), What exactly is viral marketing. Red Herring, 78, 110-112.

Liao, T., Keng, C. (2014), Online purchase delay: The roles of online consumer experiences. Journal of Electronic Commerce Research, 15(2), 133-150.

Maehle, N., Otnes, C., Supphellen, M. (2011), Consumers' perceptions of the dimensions of brand personality. Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 10(5), 290-303.

Mckay, A., Welch, A., Levin, J. (2014), Brands and Branding South Africa. 20th ed. South Africa: Affinity Advertising & Publishing CC.

Mitran, P.C., Bebeselea, M. (2012), About the crisis marketing and the crisis of marketing. Economics, Management and Financial Markets, 7(4), 660-665.

Moutinho, L., Bigné, E., Manra, A.K. (2014), The Routledge Companion to the Future of Marketing. United Kingdom: Routledge.

Posavac, S.S., Sanbonmatsu, D.M., Seo, J.Y., Iacobucci, D. (2014), How attitudes toward product categories drive individual brand attitudes and choice. Psychology and Marketing, 31(10), 843-852.

Rizkallah, E.G., Miller, H. (2015), National versus private-label brands: Dynamics, conceptual framework, and empirical perspective. Journal of Business and Economics Research, 13(2), 123-136.

Russo, G. (2012), The identity of consumers in social networks Italian internet users and new experience of consumption. Polish Sociological Review, 179, 401-412.

Sax, D. (2012). Pay Me! I is a Spokes-Ketteh!!. Bloomberg Businessweek. p67-69.

Trott, P. (2012), Innovation Management and New Product Development. 5th ed. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited.

Tyler, T. (2011), Memetics: Memes and the Science of Cultural Evolution. United States: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Williams, R. (2000), The business of memes: Memetic possibilities for marketing and management. Management Decision, 38(4), 272-279.

Zheng, X., Cheung, C.M.K., Lee, M.K.O., Liang, L. (2015), Building brand loyalty through user engagement in online brand communities in social networking sites. Information Technology and People, 28(1), 90-106.

Zubiaga, A., Spina, D., Martínez, R., Fresno, V. (2015), Real-time classification of twitter trends. Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology, 66(3), 462-473.