



DOCTORAL THESIS

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT IN A DEDICATED FACEBOOK CHANNEL: AN ANALYSIS OF RELATIONSHIPS TO EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT, SELF-BRAND CONNECTION AND BRAND COMMITMENT TOWARDS SPORTS SPONSORING BRANDS

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the formation of social media engagement and its relationship to emotional dynamics that underpin brand relationships between sport sponsors and their customers. The study focuses on two leading sport sponsors, and their respective use of social media (in this case two dedicated Facebook channels) to intensify self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment among subscribers. The study tested marketing assumptions that the degree of engagement with social media has important implications for levels of subscribers' 'self-brand connection', 'emotional attachment', and 'brand commitment'. In short, it explored whether subscribers engaging with the selected sponsors' brands within these two channels (Adidas Football, Nike Football) are more likely to develop stronger emotional bonds with the sponsoring brands.

To test these propositions, an inductive interpretive mixed-methods approach was used, utilising a triangulation of research methods. First, a blended content analysis was conducted in order to identify and evaluate experiences, thoughts and feelings that channel subscribers have when using the medium. This analysis was necessary in order to justify the use of, and further development of an existing media engagement scale in a social media setting. Second, a pre-test survey was conducted to gather insights into the usability of the existing media engagement scale, to collect data for its further development, and to collect additional qualitative data (by use of open-ended questions) on experience items that may have been missed out during the blended content analysis. Third, the main quantitative survey and structural equation modelling explored how far a perceived sense of social media engagement is positively related to users' self-brand connection, their degree of emotional attachment and commitment to the sponsors' brands. Finally, a discrete choice experiment using a conditional logit model provided insights into the question of whether the ultimate latent variable of the structural equation model - brand commitment – correlates positively with consumer stated choice behaviours.

By investigating user engagement in a social media setting, this study extends current applications of experience based measurement of media effects and, in this case, an understanding of relationships between football fans and a football-related sponsoring brand. This research provides two main contributions to existing scholarship. First, the thesis extends the research focus on sponsorship beyond the point of purchase, which has been the main focus in marketing studies, towards investigation of ongoing relationships between sponsors and consumers. Second, it answers questions about experience based media engagement in a social setting and explores the development of customer-brand relational outcomes under the themes of self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment.

Results indicate that the sum of ten key motivational experiences provides a basis for the formation and ongoing social media engagement with Facebook Football channels. Here, football domain involvement and team identification are found to be further positively related to social media engagement. The results also indicate that social media engagement is positively related to the degree of self-brand connection, emotional attachment and commitment with the sponsor's brand.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The term ‘market’ may be used to describe an aggregation of consumers, but it also refers to a place where goods and services are exchanged between firms and potential consumers. In a classical economic model, a company has autonomy in product design, development, production and sales, with customers involved at the end point – the actual moment of purchase (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a, 2004b). Within these business-to-customer (B2C) exchanges, achieving a sale is regarded by marketers as one major step towards obtaining ongoing customer loyalty (Gounaris 2005). It is not regarded as the completion of efforts to bond brand and customer. A key aim of marketers is to ascertain what drives a customer to continue to purchase a chosen brand, and so to determine what factors maintain a B2C relationship (Hechelmann 2010).

Conventional images and icons of market environments are now being challenged by “the emergence of connected, informed, empowered, and active consumers” who “seek to exercise their influence in every part of the business system” (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004a, p. 6). A new generation of consumers, not satisfied with limited options, is seeking flexible interactions with companies and firms. This change from traditional consumer-company interactions transforms the traditional market picture into a place with co-creation of value. If well managed, this enables additional possibilities to bond customer and brand (Gounaris 2005). Businesses are now increasingly repositioning their marketing strategies focusing not only on B2C *transactions* but also on B2C *relationships* (Hess & Story 2005). This latter process is commonly referred to as ‘brand engagement’, a construct based on rational and emotional engagement factors with the brand.

B2C relationships are of particular interest to this study, which is concerned with how businesses try to facilitate emotional bonds with their service, product or brand. The study focuses on one particular marketing approach – sponsorship – and its application in a single context – professional sport, in which sponsorship is particularly common. Furthermore, the study investigates possibilities to facilitate consumers’ self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment to

sport sponsoring brands through a specific marketing medium – social media channels via the Internet.

In an era of media fragmentation, with an array of platforms, modes of delivery and evidence of resistance to traditional forms of direct and explicit advertising, sponsorship has become an important marketing communication tool. For sponsorship rights holders it provides an opportunity for exclusive association with a league or sport that goes well beyond conventional advertising (Fahy, Farrelly & Quester 2004). Sponsorship is especially popular among companies seeking to reach global audiences by using indirect, implicit and subtly persuasive marketing (Erdogan & Kitchen 1998). Companies have reconsidered the inflexibility of traditional forms of advertising, particularly in new media environments, and one of their responses has been to activate and leverage sponsorship. The underlying assumption here is that sponsorship, as a marketing tool, is well placed to generate sponsor *goodwill* from a target group of consumers (Lagae 2005; Mullin, Hardy & Sutton 2007). Goodwill involves the customer entering into a more personal relationship with a company's service or product (Meenaghan 2001). By comparison with conventional advertising, which is widely perceived as an intrusive form of communication, goodwill is thought to lower customer resistance to the advertising messages in a sponsor's promotional repertoire (Meenaghan 2001). Here social media, such as Facebook and YouTube, provide interaction points between user and medium. These interactions are commonly referred to as 'touch points' where brand and customer 'meet' (Calder & Malthouse 2008; Evans 2008; Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster 2008). These touch points create a time and space for the development of experiences for the online customer and, if well managed, offer a basis for ongoing development of goodwill via social media (Hechelmann 2010). Here the primary objective is to foster self-brand connection, develop a sense of emotional attachment, and create brand commitment between the customer and the sport sponsoring brand.

Meta businesses (Weinberger 2007) like Facebook and YouTube are merely platforms and aggregators of content. Actors (such as Adidas and Nike) within these meta businesses do not merely create content (Burgess & Green 2009), but allow space for its development. In doing so, they provide a platform for the co-creation of value, hoping to turn customers into 'pro'-sumers (Beer & Burrows 2010; Humphreys &

Grayson 2008; Ritzer & Jurgenson 2010). Therefore, it is not just brand and customer that meet but also customers who meet other customers in a media-brand context. Customers participate in a spontaneous and discretionary manner (e.g., by commenting, referring, providing help, making suggestions) which on the one hand “uniquely customizes customer-to-brand experiences” (Van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pirner and Verhoef 2010, p. 254) but also increase (or decrease) other users’ experiences with the medium. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a, p. 6) and Van Doorn et al. (2010, p. 254) describe this as “co-creation experiences” that, if well managed, can add value to an ongoing development of goodwill via social media. According to Jefferson (2008), there has been an ‘explosion of touch points’ in social media that in marketing terms offer seemingly unlimited opportunities for interactions between brand and customer. Here the goals are sponsor-consumer intercommunication and the co-creation of value to encourage users to actively engage through content contribution and to passively engage with the medium and its content through the successful delivery of user experiences in an effort to facilitate “greater [brand] engagement” (p. 30).

The domain of media engagement has been widely researched by measuring users’ experiences with it. A frequently used theoretical and analytical approach into why consumers use different types of media vehicles is *uses and gratifications theory* (U & G) (Bronner & Neijens 2006; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Cotte, Chowdhury & Ratneshwar 2006; Fiore, Kim & Lee 2005; McQuail 1994). U & G theory has been criticised by some scholars as not being sufficiently rigorous in that:

- a) it has sometimes been applied narrowly by focussing on individual audience consumption while not considering societal implications of media use (Elliott 1974);
- b) it has tended to lack clarity around concepts such as user motives, needs, behaviour, psychological background and consequences; and
- c) it has been criticised for fuzzy thinking and inconsistent inquiry, for U & G researchers have tended to attach different meanings to U & G concepts (Ruggiero 2000).

However, proponents of U & G theory argue that it presents a cutting-edge, innovative approach to interpreting user engagement in a new mass communication medium (Ruggiero 2000), and that it can be systematic. Lin (1996, p. 574) argues that U & G theory is particularly fruitful when investigating “mediated communication situations via a single or multiple sets of psychological needs, psychological motives, communication channels, communication content, and psychological gratifications within a particular or cross-cultural context”. Further, the emergence of increasingly faster developing technologies of the Internet has altered structural relations among traditional forms of print and broadcast media and made traditional print-electronic, verbal-nonverbal distinctions less important in times of combined writing that includes text, images, videos and even smell, which have become part of the overall Internet experience (Newhagen & Rafaeli 1996; Ruggiero 2000). These continuing developments are expected to lead to profound changes in media users’ social and personal roles and habits, thus altering contexts of, and motives for, media use that mainstream mass communication theories insufficiently address (Newhagen & Rafaeli 1996; Ruggiero 2000; Weaver 1993). Additionally, communication via Internet-based platforms leave easily accessible and readily observable traces that can be recorded and analysed, providing information on user demographics, consumption choices or media behaviours, thus offering extraordinary research opportunities in terms of exploring motives, uses and gratifications (Newhagen & Rafaeli 1996; Ruggiero 2000). Hence, if the Internet provides new opportunities to study human activity, it also provides a platform for fruitful application of U & G theory in exploring user motives and media gratifications (James, Wotring & Forrest 1995; Ruggiero 2000).

This thesis explores experiences underpinning the formation of social media engagement by employing U & G theory, and it expands recent scholarly research investigating experiences as underlying explanatory variables for user motives and gratifications (Bronner & Neijens 2006; Calder 2008; Calder & Malthouse 2005, 2008, 2009; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009), as these may further provide a basis for a positive, emotionally laden, subscriber-brand relationship. Here an inductive-interpretive mixed methods research approach is employed utilising qualitative and quantitative methodologies and data sources, which in combination

provide a more holistic analysis and in-depth insights into social media engagement. Further, as part of a triangulational research design, the strategy will be to:

- a) develop a valid and reliable tool for the measurement of social media engagement within the boundaries of this study;
- b) investigate its suitability as predictor variable for brand-subscriber relational outcomes - namely self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment towards sport sponsoring brands; and
- c) investigate its relationship to team identification and football domain involvement (Gwinner & Swanson 2003).

A final discrete choice experiment using a conditional logit model will then explore if the ultimate latent variable of the structural equation model - brand commitment - has further impacts upon three brand choice attributes considered important when deciding for or against the showcased sport sponsoring brands. The choice sets for collecting data for the DCE will be collected together with the main questionnaire.

With this research background in place, Chapter 1 now addresses four core aspects of the thesis, these include:

- a) an articulation of the specific research problem;
- b) an outline of the purpose of this study including the thesis research aim and underlying research questions, which guide the development of the main research hypotheses;
- c) an explanation of the limitations of the thesis and delimitations of scope and scale of the thesis; and
- d) the thesis chapter structure.

1.2 Statement of the problem

During the past 30 years, sponsorship has grown from a small-scale activity to one of the fastest growing sectors in the marketing industry (Meenaghan 1998b). It is now an integral part of the marketing and promotional mix and, therefore, a form of commercial investment (Walliser 2003). Sponsorship is of particular significance to professional sport, where it is a key form of revenue. Most research in this area has focused on the effects of sponsorship within the period of a sponsorship contract and questions about renewal or otherwise. However, too little is known about strategies to optimise brand and consumer relationships within a sponsorship arrangement that may further the traditional effects and objectives of sponsorship - even going beyond the time for which a sponsorship relationship was formalised.

Within this engagement between sponsorship and B2C relationships, analysis of social media can make significant contributions to this body of knowledge. While current scholarship primarily focuses on sponsorship outcomes, such as sponsors' goodwill (McDonald 1991; Meenaghan 2001; Sandler & Shani 1993; Seguin, Teed & O'Reilly 2005; Wilkinson 1993), or positive brand attitudes (Jalleh et al. 2002; Lardinoit & Quester 2001) that may contribute to strong attachments to a sponsor's brand, the study at hand will explore emotional subscriber-brand *relationships* and the role of social media *engagement* within this process.

Dolles and Södermann (2009, p. 1) argued that "the proliferation of information technology has made it possible to serve the needs of fans all over the world. They can consume an event real-time or recorded from virtually anywhere. Within this, the opportunities for the promotion of sport, and the benefits for sport and its partners, are significant". In a similar vein, Roberts (2006) and Santomier (2008a) contended that emergent forms of social media are likely to be very influential in facilitating communication between sport sponsors and the fans of a league or team. Belagno (2010) and Santomier (2010) maintain that social media also has the potential to change the way that businesses and customers communicate. They argue that companies striving for "brand building" (Santomier 2010, p. 3) and intimate brand-customer-relationships are forced to create strategies to capitalise on a changing experience economy. This has particular implications for sport businesses where the

sponsor, the league, or the team have a confluent online presence: the sponsor is profiled and linked to the web page of the league or team, while the league or team is profiled and linked to the web page of the sponsor. This sponsor and sport dynamic is heightened further in dedicated social media–sport (sponsor) environments: Facebook, YouTube (or similar) channels for particular sport clubs or leagues (i.e. <http://www.facebook.com/ChelseaFC>) and Facebook, YouTube (or similar) channels for sponsors (i.e. <http://www.facebook.com/adidasfootball>).

Researchers acknowledge that marketing and sponsorship via social media channels and platforms have to be careful in terms of being perceived as intrusive or welcoming by audiences (Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster 2008). Indeed, Kilger (2008), Calder and Malthouse (2008), DiGangi and Wasko (2009), Heath (2007) and Postman (2009) each asserted that the effectiveness of a sponsorship message depends, in large part, on the degree to which consumers engage with the social media channel (i.e. dedicated brand channels) in which sponsorship messages are located. However, there is currently little academic research into the relationship between social media and sport sponsorship; and, importantly, little research on the perceived effects of social media engagement in terms of engaging customers with a sponsor's brand. Empirical studies exploring and measuring social media engagement and its relationship to emotional brand dynamics between sport sponsor and customer are limited in one or more of the following ways. They are:

- a) are based on assumptions rather than systematic theory and empirical testing;
- b) lack necessary depth and methodological rigour when exploring the social media phenomena;
- c) are based on approaches developed within the domain of 'classical' media (e.g., newspapers, television);
- d) are conducted in a general social media context (e.g. Facebook) rather than in a specific context (e.g. Facebook football sponsorship channels).

While sport sponsorship has grown from a small-scale activity to an important tool within the promotional mix, so have sponsorship spending and a concomitant desire to measure audience engagement with brands. Therefore sporting brands are looking for evidence of a positive return on their sponsorship investment. Hence it is important that stakeholders such as sport marketers, clubs, brand and online community managers, understand formational processes underlying social media engagement to be able to engineer an effective set of consumer experiences. Results from regular testing can be used as an early warning system (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009) in terms of providing evidence of whether social media experiences are adding value to brand-customer relationships.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study has three underlying conceptual goals. Firstly, it aims to produce a model of sponsorship effects that goes beyond the point of purchase to consider ongoing relationships between brands and consumers in a sport sponsorship setting. Secondly, by focusing on a social media environment, it will identify tools for the measurement of media engagement and adapt or further develop these for the measurement of engagement in social media settings. Thirdly, it will test whether the degree of users' engagement with these social media (dedicated Facebook football sponsor channels) demonstrably affects the relationship between brand / sponsor and channel subscriber.

Previous research into social media engagement has yet to systematically analyse this phenomenon by employing a combination of blended content analysis and online surveys together with open-ended questions. It is argued that all of these elements are necessary if our knowledge of this phenomenon is to go beyond the previously limited approach to investigating social media users' experiences. Therefore, this mixed methods research approach also provides a methodological contribution. Bucklin, Rutz and Trusov (2009) argued that the implementation of a mixed methods approach is useful to gain a fuller understanding of how and which experiences within a social media environment constitute engagement. This view is supported by Ryan and Jones (2009), who described social media environments as a hub of information where participants (in writing comments) tell others about their experiences. Marketers can benefit by reading and 'listening' (Ryan & Jones 2009) to these comments. In regards

to the question of emotional dynamics between brands and their customers, previous studies in brand-sport-media contexts have focussed on web-enhanced brand communities and their influence on community formation or community interaction. Anecdotal evidence suggests that participation in brand communities as well as social media environments is positively related to self-brand connection, emotional attachment to the brand and brand commitment (Houman Anderson 2005). Further, although academic interest in social media is growing and a number of studies into the role and effects of social media have been conducted (Postman 2009), there is still only limited academic research into the effects of social media as a marketing tool. At present there is no single academic study on the relationship between social media environments and emotional bonds, and sport brands and social media users.

Therefore, this thesis seeks to extend current sponsorship effects models, identify factors that underpin subscribers' media engagement in a social media-sponsorship setting, and test how social media engagement relates to self-brand connection, emotional attachment to the respective sport sponsoring brands and brand commitment. Framing the topic as described, the main aim of this research is to:

Identify, examine and analyse the relationships of 'Social Media Engagement' to consumers' self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment towards a sport sponsoring brand.

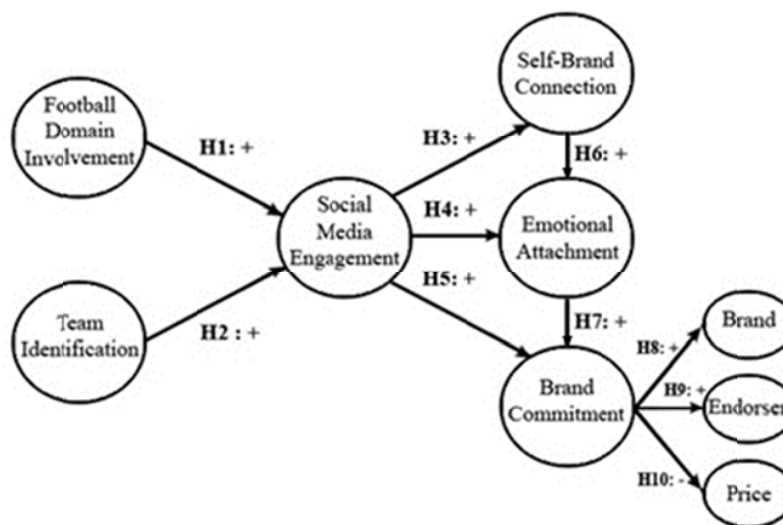
In addressing the central research aim and for developing the main research hypotheses, four related research questions were strategically developed to provide a systematic basis for the collection, analysis and discussion of the data. The research questions to be addressed and associated research hypotheses are:

1. What experiences are salient in the formation of social media engagement?
2. What is the relationship between football domain involvement and team identification with social media engagement in sport sponsorship dedicated Facebook Football Channels?

3. What is the relationship between social media engagement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment within a sport–social media context?
4. What is the relationship between brand commitment and three brand choice attributes – brand consciousness, player consciousness and price sensitivity?

Each of the four research questions is based on the assumption that the initial rationale for subscribing to either the Adidas or the Nike Football Channel stems from one or more of the following: an initial stage of domain involvement (domain of football); an initial degree of team identification; sponsor goodwill; or other forms of initial attachment to the sponsor. Therefore, an exploration of how social media engagement impacts upon self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment to sport sponsoring brands provides a basis for investigating the broader topic, which focuses specifically on the formation or relationships within B2C social media environments and measurement of social media engagement therein. While research question one will be addressed by using existing scales, content analysis and statistical analysis, the remaining three research questions will be examined by testing ten specific research hypotheses outlined overleaf.

Figure 1: Research Hypotheses



- H1:** The level of subscribers' football domain involvement is positively related to the level of subscribers' social media engagement.
- H2:** The level of subscribers' team identification is positively related to the level of subscribers' social media engagement.
- H3:** The level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers' self-brand connection.
- H4:** The level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers' emotional attachment.
- H5:** The level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers' brand commitment.
- H6:** The level of subscribers' self-brand connection is positively related to the level of subscribers' emotional attachment.
- H7:** The level of subscribers' emotional attachment is positively related to the level of subscribers' brand commitment.
- H8:** The level of subscribers' brand commitment is positively related brand consciousness.
- H9:** The level of subscribers' brand commitment is positively related endorser consciousness.
- H10:** The level of subscribers' brand commitment assumingly decreases price sensitivity.

1.4 Delimitations and limitations

There are boundaries and constraints that influence the scope of this thesis. First, the study acknowledges that a large number of social media technologies, communications channels, and media vehicles have emerged during recent times. Important dynamics, relations and interrelations exist in a social media-sponsorship relationship across a variety of emerging communication technologies. However, the intricacies of all such relationships and effects are beyond the scope of this thesis, which concentrates on one particular and highly popular media vehicle. Facebook has been purposely chosen for this research because both of the football sponsors selected for the study (Adidas and Nike) operates their own channels within the Facebook environment. Further, both channels fulfil three crucial criteria for analysis. Both channels:

1. have operated over a sufficient time for analysis (longer than 12 months);
2. have a sufficient number of subscribers to their channels (more than 8 million subscribers each);
3. regularly post news, pictures, videos and other contents that seek to actively engage subscribers (more than 400 during the time of analysis).

The second limitation of this study is that it focuses on social media activities and their consequences in a limited sponsorship context. Both football sponsors have sponsorship contracts and activities in a variety of areas and sports, each contributing in different ways to the sponsors. However, Adidas and Nike have been chosen as:

- ‘Sports consumer goods’ is the core business segment;
- Adidas and Nike have comparative size and business value;
- Adidas and Nike have Facebook channels (adidasfootball; nikefootball);
- Adidas and Nike’s Facebook channels fulfil the necessary criteria in regards to the length of operation, number of subscribers and frequency of new content as mentioned above;
- Adidas and Nike are worldwide the most financially active and involved sponsors of football.

A third limitation of this study is that it focuses on one segment of affiliates – those who are registered to either the Adidas or the Nike Football channel. It is recognised that there are other sponsorship segments worthy of analysis. However, to conduct the current study in appropriate depth and detail, it is necessary to limit research to a sample of individuals who are subscribed to either the Adidas channel or the Nike channel.

The fourth limitation of this study is that most social media environments (e.g. Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, etc.) have implemented a number of ‘direct contact policies’. These policies regulate how many subscribers a user is allowed to contact within a given period of time. By comparison to other survey techniques (e.g. publicly

recruiting as many participants as possible during a given time by random sampling), researchers in social media environments such as Facebook are limited to approximately five messages (for recruiting purposes) during a period of 24 hours.

Fifth, during the blended content analysis phase, a significant number of comments on the Adidas Football Channel and on the Nike Football Channel were not further analysed and coded as 'Others'. These comments were written in a foreign language (other than English, German, or Italian) and were not considered due to time and feasibility limitations of the study at hand.

Finally, the last limitation to this study is grounded in the snapshot nature of cross-sectional studies. While convenient in regards to ease of data gathering, data assessment and low costs, cross-sectional studies have its downside in that they don't provide a good basis for establishing causality. These types of studies are mostly descriptive in nature, not majorly causal or relational. It is acknowledged that the information on different variables is recorded at the same point of time and that variables have not been manipulated. Therefore, parts of the results of this research project essentially describe characteristics that exist in the observed population but only assumes cause-and-effect relationships between different variables; meaning, because of the cross-sectional design of this study it can sometimes only be assumed that different variables are related somehow, it however cannot be positively determined if one caused the other.

1.5 Chapter structure

This thesis has a six-chapter structure: introduction, literature review, conceptual framework and hypotheses development, research design, results, and discussion and conclusions. Chapter 1 has outlined the background to the study, the statement of the problem, and the purpose of the research. This chapter also discussed the scale and scope of the study as well as consequent limitations and delimitations. Finally, the major research aim and four underpinning key research questions were established in order to develop the research hypotheses that guide the investigation.

Chapter 2 locates the study in the context of current scholarly literature. It reviews the literature providing insights into concepts, theories and themes related to the research topic. The review of literature has five main interrelated parts: first, a discussion of key relationships in a sport-media environment, which provides an overview about motivations of both industries to interact with each other but also outlines the dependence of one from the other; second, a review of sport sponsorship as a context for this study provides a summary of current concepts and theories but also provides a point of view from which to understand why sport fans may develop a sense of emotional bonds towards a sponsor; third, an exploration of the concept of media engagement in offline and online settings is supplemented by a review of existing engagement research; fourth, the literature review provides insights into the emergent area of social media as basis for the development of a social media engagement scale; finally, the chapter provides a review of current scholarship on rational and emotional antecedents of brand engagement, framing the central topic of this research project — the investigation of the relationship of social media engagement to self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment.

Chapter 3 discusses the conceptual framework underpinning the thesis and develops the hypotheses for empirical testing. The first part of the conceptual framework represents a model of sponsorship effects in light of current scholarship. The second part of the framework extends the sponsorship effects model by including the category of emotional steps along a loyalty pathway that goes beyond the point of actual purchase of a product. Next, based on literature pertinent to sport-specific sponsorship theory, the third part of the framework illustrates how the researcher

explores social media engagement and its relationships to team identification, football domain involvement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment. Finally, this section also outlines how the researcher uses a discrete choice model to test whether brand commitment has positive implications among three brand choice attributes.

Following the conceptual framework, Chapter 4 provides an overview of the research design employed to examine the formation of social media engagement and its suggested relationships. This chapter locates the research in the context of a conceptual paradigm, and thus signposts the assumptions and principles that underpin the research approach. This chapter is broadly divided into two sections. The first reflects upon paradigmatic approaches, the triangulational mixed-methods approach, purposively selected cases and the research context. The second section describes each method employed including: the data collection instruments; pilot testing procedures; pre-test procedures; population and sample selection procedures, and scale verification and adoption procedures. The following section provides detailed exploration of structural equation modelling including processes and procedures for the development of the measurement model, the structural model and the full structural equation model. Finally, the chapter concludes with an illustration of discrete choice modelling techniques that were employed to test the behavioural outcomes of the overall engagement process. In short, the chapter is intended to explain how the research hypotheses are addressed by the chosen research methods, and how the investigator has implemented these in respect of data collection and subsequent interpretation as outlined in Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 5 presents the research findings from the empirical testing. First, the content structure of both the Adidas and Nike Football channel as basis for content selection for the blended content analysis is outlined. Second, results from the blended content analysis including identified themes, underpinning measurement items and references to positive and negative thoughts and feelings are presented. Third, results from the main quantitative survey are presented. This section begins with data about the population of both channels; based on this, a sample matrix outlines each possible combination of population characteristics and pre-testing results. Further, this section outlines the social media engagement scale that was developed from the results of the

confirmatory factor analysis, one factor congeneric model testing, and exploratory factor analysis. Next, results of the testing of various research related scales are described. Based on the preliminary results, the measurement model and the structural model are presented. Results from the hypotheses testing by use of structural equation modelling are reported. Findings from the discrete choice model testing by use of a conditional logit model conclude this chapter.

Chapter 6 discusses the empirical results analysed in Chapter 5. It explores the findings in relation to the main research aim, underpinning research questions, and research hypotheses. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the managerial implications arising from this research as well as its theoretical and conceptual contributions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a better understanding of the factors that frame social media engagement and its relationship to self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and commitment to sport sponsoring brands. It is important for various groups of stakeholders (e.g. sport marketers, sports clubs and associations) to understand the determinants of social media engagement with their online presence as engagement is considered a key ingredient for ongoing user loyalty (Kolah 2006; Santomier 2008a, 2008b; Santomier & Shuart 2008; Van Leeuwen 2001). Sport managers, sport marketers, teams, clubs or associations will be better positioned in satisfying and therefore retaining fans or users if they understand how social media engagement is created, and, equally important, how it relates to emotional, attitudinal or behavioural outcomes in terms of B2C relationships.

With these goals in mind, the following chapter presents a theoretical framework to guide and inform the evaluation process. In doing so, this literature review is presented in two sections. Part one provides an overview of the key theories (e.g., uses and gratifications theory, sponsorship theory, or theory germane to brand and social media engagement) and conceptual relationships underpinning the thesis. In part two, the academic literature in three key areas is examined – sport sponsorship, brand and media engagement and social media. The key objective of this chapter is to justify the research inquiry and to examine the literature that is germane to the topics under investigation. This will allow for the establishment of a conceptual foundation from which to pursue the research aim and questions. It will also provide a foundation for Chapter 4, which discusses data collection objectives and protocols in respect of the thesis goals.

2.2 Key Relationships

2.2.1 The sport-media symbiosis

Sport is currently experiencing unprecedented levels of financial growth, economic expansion and rising consumer interest. The media is central to the growing sport economy. As Real (1998, p. 157) stated: “the world of sports in the age of mass media has been transformed from nineteenth-century amateur recreational participation to

late twentieth (and early twenty-first) century spectator-centred technology and business”. Rowe (2003, p. 11) has described this as a process by which two worlds collide:

Over the past century, the boundaries between both institutions have blurred sometimes to the point of near invisibility, and they have become so mutually invisible that, one is literally unthinkable without the other. Literally, because it is almost impossible now to ‘imagine sport without the mind’s eye conjuring up replay, slow motion and multi-perspectival images, accompanied by the inner voice of phantom sports commentators.

In a similar way, Miller et al. (2001) suggested that media-sport links, like the televising of Michael Jordan’s exceptional athletic ability, the commercial success of Nike worldwide, and the spread of the NBA across worldwide TV screens, show that television in particular is inseparable from global sports as both a marker of globalisation and one of its prime movers. Modern sport and the media, as Miller et al. (2001), Jeanrenaud and Kesenne (2006) and Santomier (2008b) contend, have developed a symbiotic and reciprocal relationship, supplying each other with resources necessary for co-development: capital, audiences, promotion, and content. Indeed, Tessa Jowell (2006, p. 1), London 2012 Olympic Minister and Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, has described the electronic media as “the engine that has driven the growth of the Olympic movement”.

Yet the burgeoning media-sport symbiosis is a quite recent phenomenon. Around 30 years ago, many sports events were in desperate need of financial resuscitation. Examples include the Olympic Games (prior to 1984), and major sport competitions such as the English Premier League. Public interest and financial viability were under question. Now there is enormous demand for sport content on television, and it is subject to intense competition among free-to-air and pay TV providers. Televised sport is also subject to a range of regulatory mechanisms in terms of broadcasting rights and delivery platforms (i.e. cable, satellite). Where sport was once broadcasted through just one medium, sport telecasting has now developed into a multi-faceted, multi-organisational medium in various forms – radio, television and Internet (Turner 2007).

2.2.2 Social Media-Sponsorship-Engagement Dynamics

Santomier and Zagnoli (2007) argued that the rapid adoption of new media technologies has “changed the way that sport is produced, delivered and consumed” (p. 200), and this has created multiple opportunities for sport to transport promotional messages and move into new markets. For commercial sport, social media offers a range of opportunities for companies to build brand awareness, engage with customers, influence consumer behaviour and ultimately create higher brand loyalty (Holtz & Havens 2009; Ryan & Jones 2009). In short, new technologies, such as social media, mobile telephony and super-fast broadband have and will further change the way that:

1. People consume sport (Brown 2008; Lines 2008; Santomier 2008b);
2. Sport is produced and delivered (Ioakimidis 2010; Kelly 2009; Kolah 2006, 2007; Santomier 2010);
3. Fans, athletes, clubs, leagues and other sport franchises communicate with each other (Ioakimidis 2010; Kelly 2009; Santomier 2010)
4. Customers and fans correspond, interact and engage with sport brands and their marketers (Ioakimidis 2010; Kelly 2009; Santomier 2010) and;
5. How sport businesses pursue brand building and commerce by searching for and creating new ways to capitalize on the emerging sport media economy (Belagno 2010; Brown 2008; Kolah 2006, 2007; Lines 2008; Santomier 2010).

Kolah (2006, 2007) and Santomier (2008a) suggested that new and emergent forms of media, such as social media sharing platforms, will play a key role in further change and development processes of traditional sport sponsorship, and impact on brand owners, sponsorship right holders as well as customers and fans as a consequence of several key forces. Three forces are of particular interest to this research: behaviour, permission and technology.

Behaviour

Kolah (2007) contended that as brands become more global, customers are better informed about products yet also more demanding about the brands they consume and use. This means that customer insights and understandings will be at a premium; this in turn puts brand owners/managers under pressure to create a ‘whole’ brand experience for consumers. Marketers therefore need to engage in dialogue with the customer, which means *showing* rather than *telling* them about a brand and product (Kolah 2006). However, the act of showing does not necessarily create dialogue, which is a two-way communication and thus requires a relationship. As Jenlink and Banathy (2005, p. ix) put it, dialogue is characterised by a “turning together in a conversation, to create social space – a *betweenness* ...wherein persons conjoin in community to search for new meaning and understanding”. Kahle (2007, p. 1) argued that social media is particularly well positioned structurally to do this: “The internet has allowed individuals to receive broadcasts or webcasts at their own convenient times and in their own convenient ways”. This requires the creation of a two-way, interactive process.

Intelligent sport marketers are obliged to listen to the consumer more than ever before because “the individual has gained much control over the substance of sport” (p.1), and increasingly has “more control over their media experiences” (Gladstone & Passikoff 2008, p. 1). Fisher-Buttinger and Vallaster (2008) argued that activities which “invite the customer to engage at their own discretion, that are non-intrusive and genuinely interesting, will have greater chance of succeeding than strategies that simply take the offline print or TV ad online” (p. 185). Kotler (2008) contended that new technologies like digital video recorders (DVR) also foster this process. Online consumers have created a special form of “surfing behaviour” (p. Forword)(p. Forword) designed to decrease information overload, letting only the information they actively seek to pass into view (Kotler 2008).

Permission

Kolah (2007, p. 74) argued that “the continuing explosion and fragmentation of media will lead to further fragmentation of audiences – requiring the brand owner to seek permission (consent) to communicate with a particular group or *community of interest*”. Further, technological developments increasingly allow audiences to screen-

out messages; consumers will therefore have a greater capacity to actively avoid advertising messages (Kotler 2008). Therefore, the brand owner is obliged to ‘earn’ the right to interact with the audience rather than take this right for granted. In order to acquire the right to interact, trust must be established. Here non-classical advertising, such as sponsorship, has an opportunity to foster an on-going relationship with the consumer (Kolah 2006). Indeed, Jamieson (2008) argued that sponsors may be the winners in the wake of online brand-blocking behaviour because they tend to deliver to sports consumers mediated experiences that are welcome, such as highlights of a sport contest. What is more, the rise of new media technologies, such as 4G mobile communication, has produced innovations by which to transport a sponsor’s message. And this is done within an environment that sport consumers are familiar – club web sites, social media channels, and so on. Here the sport consumers can immerse themselves in an online setting and, should they choose to, involve themselves in a sponsor’s brand or service (Jamieson 2008).

Technology

Kolah (2007, p. 75) stated that “many of the forces for change in terms of globalisation, permission-based marketing and the fragmentation of media have been enabled by technology”. His point is that brand owners have to seek permission, a license to operate, or the trust and confidence of the consumer to effectively use these new communication channels. Lumme (2008, cited in Sport Business International Media Summit Report) contended that international sport organisations, such as the IOC, “have to maintain relevance with the new audiences in the digital age. Patterns of television viewing are changing and the youth audience in particular, places greater dependence on new ways of consuming media” (p. 28). Bernstein (2005) and Ryan and Jones (2009) provided lists of media technologies and web-based services that, they argue, are changing the way that people consume sports, if permission (see above) is granted. On the one hand, media technologies include Video on demand, Digital asset management, Optical tracking systems, 3G, Portable people meters, High-definition television, Personalized tickers, IPTV, Online video gaming and Satellite radio (Bernstein 2005). On the other hand, web-based services such as “blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, online discussions, social networks, peer reviewed sites and other online media” (p. 151) have rapidly evolved (Ryan & Jones 2009). However, some of these technologies and services will have more influence on

consumer behaviour than others. In particular, flexible delivery to mobile devices and social media channels is widely thought to have most influence on digital communication behaviour in the future (Brown 2008; Johnson 2008; Ryan & Jones 2009; Schneider 2008).

Brown (2008), Johnson (2008) and Schneider (2008) suggested that mobile TV will change the way that people consume sports. Games with simple rules, that are relatively slow, and require limited space will particularly benefit from mobile, Internet-based real-time information. According to Johnson (2008), traditional television needs to evolve to become non-linear and Internet connected, and therefore able to deliver mobile content from a cable/satellite TV, to DVR, to any place around the world. He concluded that the customer will have quality programming (live), depth of content (Internet), and ‘on-demand’ libraries to serve the customer at their fingertips. On the services side, social media is thought to have particular potential for producing a ‘conversation’ between customer and brand (Ryan & Jones 2009; Weber 2007). In a marketing sense, Fisher-Buttinger and Vallaster argued that social media ought “to be integrated into every customer engagement programme” (p.185) to foster inter-communication between customer and brand.

In summary, changes in web surfing behaviour, the need to gain permission to interact with customers and fans, technological changes and developments, as well as revolutions in consumer-brand-intercommunication have accelerated a change in traditional marketing. Former goods-centred views in marketing “in which tangible output and discrete transactions were central” (Vargo & Lusch 2004, p. 2) have started to transfer to a more “service-dominant view, in which intangibility, exchange processes and relationships are central” (Vargo & Lusch 2004, p. 2). The use of social media in sport sponsorship has a leveraging effect on the expansion of integrated marketing communications. The use of a variety of new platforms “enables brands to communicate effectively with consumers, develop brand awareness rapidly in new markets” (Santomier 2008b, p. 16), and enhance media experiences that may be helpful in engaging customers and strengthening positive emotions and attachment towards the brand (Calder & Malthouse 2008, 2009; Holtz & Havens 2009; Ryan & Jones 2009).

2.3 Sport Sponsorship

2.3.1 Introduction

According to Thwaites and Chadwick (2004), the nature of sport sponsorship has undergone a major change from its beginning as a philanthropic activity to a commercial phenomenon within the promotional mix of corporate bodies. It is important to understand that not only has the nature of sponsorship been transformed, but that commercial interest in the areas of sport and media have also undergone significant change. Today sport sponsorship is used to fulfil a variety of strategic marketing objectives. The high public profile and mass mediated visibility of sports, together with its ability to attract a broad cross-section of the community, have the capacity to attract both mass markets and niche markets (Thwaites & Chadwick 2004). For sporting organisations too, sponsorship is a vital source of generating revenue and raising profile. As governments are typically not able or willing to fund sports on a level needed for optimum development, sport organisations themselves seek sponsor support from the corporate sector to try to fill the financial void (Seguin, Teed & O'Reilly 2005). Additionally, the national or global reach of sponsors may provide much needed profile for a sport or league, with the sponsor's marketing messages also promoting the sport product.

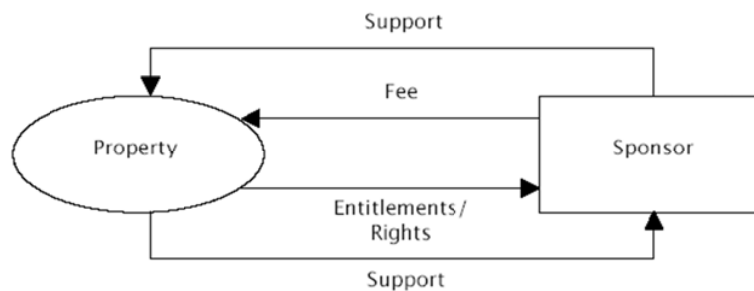
Most scholars located sponsorship within the traditional marketing communication mix (Armstrong 1988; Blais 2000; Bloxham 1998; d'Astous & Bitz 1995; Easton & Mackie 1998; Farrelly 2005; Farrelly, Quester & Burton 1997; Gwinner 1997; Harvey 2001; McDonald 1991; Meenaghan 1983; Passikoff & Gerber 2005; Seguin 2007), typically consisting of the "4Ps", place, price, product, and promotion. Sport sponsorship is thus grouped under the promotional area that includes publicity, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion and advertising (Farrelly 2005; Hoek et al. 1997; McDonald 1991; Meenaghan 1983; Michael, Clarke & Malhotra 2002; Smith & Stewart 1999; Wilkinson 1993). Sponsorship is, indeed, an integral part of a company's promotional armoury (Hoek et al. 1997; Seguin 2007; Sneath, Finney & Close 2005). The following section will now provide a detailed definition for sport sponsorship, discuss the unique characteristics of sport sponsorship in simultaneously addressing a range of publics and various sponsorship objectives, outline the process

of effective sponsorship management and finally discuss effects of sport sponsorship within the context of this study.

2.3.2 Sport Sponsorship - Definition

Historically, sponsorship was often associated with charity and altruism; it was a special form of donation for altruistic purposes and rarely part of an integrated marketing plan (Beech & Chadwick 2007; Shilbury, Quick & Westerbeek 2003; Wilkinson 1993). The *Oxford Dictionary* (1989, p. 323) states that a sponsor is “a person or firm that provides funds for a broadcast or for a musical, artistic, or sport event”. However, this definition misses an important principle of sponsorship. According to Shilbury, Quick and Westerbeek (2003), sponsorship is a key part of the marketing mix of many sport organisations and involves a reciprocal relationship: one party puts something in and the other returns the favour, such as with the provision of money, people or equipment in return for direct linkage with the event or transported values (Sandler & Shani 1993). This principle of exchange (Cordeiro et al. 2006) can be understood as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The Sponsorship Paradigm



Mullin, Hardy & Sutton (2007)

McCarville and Copeland (1994) argued that “the notion of mutual return distinguishes sponsorship from other forms of corporate support assistance like philanthropy, charity, and patronage, which do not involve the advancement of commercial objectives. Sponsorship is undertaken so that both parties can benefit”. While this highlights the reciprocal relationship of sport sponsorship, there is also potential for further value-added brand activity. Meenaghan (1991a, 1991b) defined commercial sponsorship as an “investment, in cash or kind, in an activity, in return for

access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity”. According to Otker and Hayes (1987, p. 57), commercial sponsorship is “buying and exploiting an association (*with an event, a group, etc.*) for specific marketing communications purposes”.

Tripodi (2001) and Olkkonen (2001) claim there are four underlying factors that characterise sport sponsorship:

- (a) sponsorship can be mutually beneficial to two parties being named as sponsor (usually companies) and sponsored (athletes, sport events, federations, competitions, etc.);
- (b) sponsorship, like any other business relationship in general, is about exchanging resources of various types between the participants involved;
- (c) sponsorship is utilised as a promotional instrument; and
- (d) companies and firms use sponsorship to extract commercial benefits.

With these four factors in mind it is clear that a definition of sponsorship ought to include two attributes. First, an indication of the purpose of the funding to the delivered party; second, acknowledgement of a wider scope of sponsor objectives (Cordeiro et al. 2006). The following working definition incorporates both of these perspectives, and will be deployed in the present study. It not only highlights reciprocal relationships developed through sponsorship, but emphasises objective setting – both of which are key to the present study: “[Sponsorship] is the provision of resources (e.g. money, people, equipment) by an organisation (the sponsor) directly to an individual, authority or body (the sponsee), to enable the latter to pursue some activity in return for benefits contemplated in terms of the sponsor’s promotion strategy, and which can be expressed in terms of corporate, marketing, or media objectives” (Pope & Turco 2004, p. 128). Sport sponsorship is a versatile medium. Thus it is prudent to examine different ways in which sport sponsorship can operate. First, it has the ability to simultaneously address a wide range of publics. Second, it has the capacity to address a wide range of strategic objectives (Meenaghan 2005).

The following two sections will further address these two unique abilities and provide a detailed discussion of sponsorship objectives in relation to this study.

2.3.3 Range of Publics

In reference to Meenaghan (1994, 2005), one of the major advantages of sponsorship is being able to fulfil a number of roles for sport organisations. This is reflected in two ways. First, sport sponsorship is able to address a variety of corporate objectives in a single campaign. Second, sport sponsorship is able to address a multitude of corporate stakeholders simultaneously. According to Parker (1991, p. 26) “the ability to communicate with such a diversity of targets” is one of the crucial benefits of sponsorship over traditional advertising. Both consumer and non-consumer audiences can be reached by having access to key stakeholders, such as the general public, internal staff, stockholders, public policy makers, politicians, media, suppliers, trade buyers, target market or the educational community (Crimmins & Horn 1996; Gardner & Shuman 1987; Meenaghan 2005). However, research into one further public domain, communities such as the Adidas and Nike Football channels within social media environments (e.g., on Facebook) have yet to be empirically investigated. Additionally, positive outcomes of brand communication efforts within the public domain also wait investigation. Anyhow, whoever the audience is, objectives and targets have to be specified in order to adequately measure its benefits.

2.3.4 Objectives

As stated earlier, attitudes towards sponsorship investments changed by the beginning of the 1980s as corporate bodies started to search for an improved return on investment for what had previously been regarded as donations (Seguin, Teed & O'Reilly 2005). To measure a return on investment, objectives were introduced to gauge whether sponsorship was successful depending upon strategic goals. Grimes and Meenaghan (1998) refer to this as the beginning of “applied commercial realisation” (p. 52), with expenditure on sport sponsorship and client demand for values increasing concurrently. In this regard, any increased expenditures via the medium of sponsorship needed to be justified by benchmarked objectives (Miles 2000).

Sponsorship objectives can be understood to have two key features. Firstly, the selection of an appropriate sponsorship proposal and secondly an evaluation of the impact of a sponsorship program (Marshall & Cook 1992). As in any other communication or promotion activity, objectives ought to be carefully set and prudently developed based on market knowledge. They must also fulfil certain characteristics; these can be usefully summarised under the acronym SMART - being specific, measurable, agreeable, realistic and time specific (Allen et al. 2005; Meenaghan 1983; Miles 2000; Otker 1988; Quester 1997; Seguin, Teed & O'Reilly 2005; Shanklin & Kuzma 1992; Sleight 1989; Thwaites 1995). Chadwick and Thwaites (2004) group sponsorship objectives into four key research categories that include:

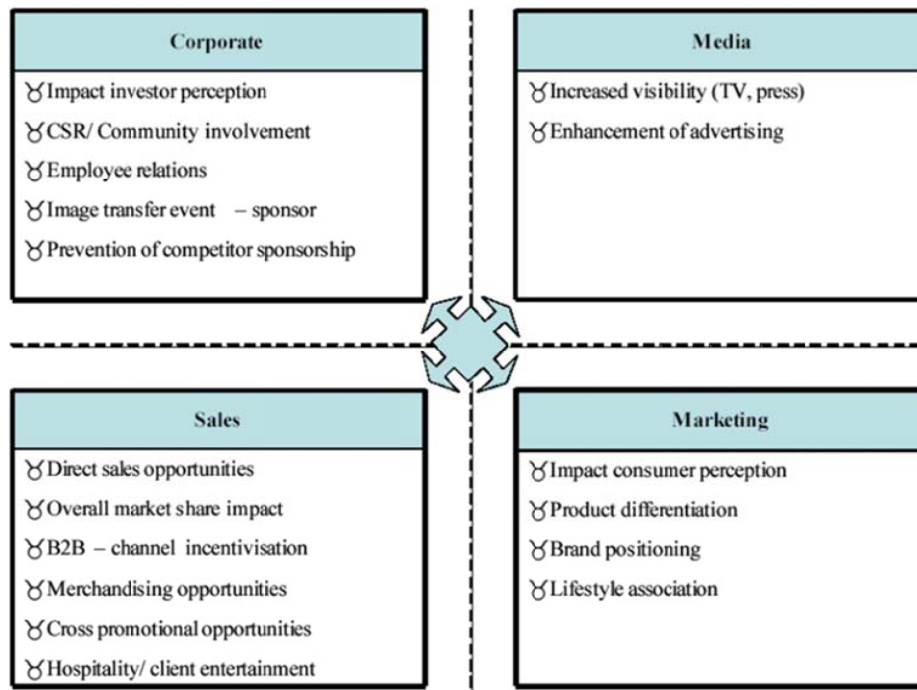
1. marketing communication objectives (Armstrong 1988; Bennett 1999; Crimmins & Horn 1996; Hoek et al. 1997; Meenaghan 1998a, 1998b; Miles 2000; Pitts & Slattery 2004; Seguin 2007; Tripodi 2001; Witcher et al. 1991);
2. Relationship marketing objectives (Chadwick 2002; Chadwick & Thwaites 2005; Farrelly 2002; Marshall & Cook 1992; Witcher et al. 1991);
3. Network objectives (Chadwick & Thwaites 2005; Crowley 1991; Olkkonen 2001); and
4. Resource objectives (Amis, Slack & Berret 1999; Chadwick & Thwaites 2005; Hoek et al. 1997).

For the purpose of this thesis, a model of four categories by Cordeiro et al. (2006) will be applied, as it allows specific measurement tools for groups of objectives. The categories are:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Corporate objectives | 3. Media objectives |
| 2. Sales objectives | 4. Marketing objectives |

Figure 3 overleaf provides an overview of the above four groups of objectives as summarised by Cordeiro et al. (2006).

Figure 3: Core Sponsor Objectives



Cordeiro et al. (2006, p. 42)

2.3.4.1 Corporate Objectives

Corporate image building has emerged as a significant area of academic research (Gierl & Kirchner 1999; Gwinner 1997; Javalgi et al. 1994; Pope & Voges 1997; Sneath, Finney & Close 2005). Within that context, several studies have pointed to the capacity of sponsorship to strengthen a corporation's image, thus resulting in improved market perception (Gwinner 1997; Javalgi et al. 1994; Karg 2007; Sneath, Finney & Close 2005). Meenaghan (1991a) highlighted the value of sponsorship to create public awareness about a business product or service, and the possibility of deploying sponsorship to positively alter a corporation's image and identity. Sponsorship has also become an effective tool for many corporations to enhance community involvement, to show good citizenship and to demonstrate a benevolent interest in the community. This is typically referred to as corporate social responsibility (McCook, Turco & Riley 1997). Sponsorship may also play a role in enhancing employee relationships with their own company. According to Grimes and Meenaghan (1998), "sponsorship as a medium is particularly appropriate for heightening awareness of, and imbuing the corporate brand with, positive corporate values in the eyes of that key corporate resource – the company's own staff" (p. 54).

2.3.4.2 Media Objectives

Effective media exposure is considered one of the most important objectives for companies engaging in sponsorship (Meenaghan 1983). This in turn can provide cognitive, behavioural and attitudinal benefits, such as a better market perception and increased brand values (Cornwell, Maignan & Irwin 1997; Javalgi et al. 1994; Karg 2007; Tripodi et al. 2003). Chadwick and Thwaites (2004) argued that media objectives are commonly related to other strategic objectives. In this sense sponsorship is not only a suitable medium to generate public awareness and media attention, but also highly beneficial in fostering more finite marketing objectives, such as increased sales. However, a lack of scholarly research exists in the investigation of the perceived effects (e.g., experiences that users of certain media may have) while using media. Additionally, further positive (or negative) outcomes of these communications and media efforts are in need of further scholarly testing.

2.3.4.3 Sales Objectives

According to Crompton (2004, p. 270), “the ultimate goal of total communication strategy is to enhance profitability by generating additional sales”. In this regard McDonald (1991, p. 36) highlighted the importance of “product relevance”, which he describes as the ‘perfect fit’ between a sponsor’s product and the sponsored event. McDonald (1991) thus concluded that there is a negative effect on the sponsor’s products if the two parties are perceived as incongruous.

Researchers suggested other potential sales benefits from sponsorship activities. Choi, Stotlar and Park (2006) pointed to benefits that may stem from sponsors adopting a product trial. It is advantageous for customers to get a ‘feel’ for what is being offered. There may also be efforts to block competitors, to increase market share and sales leads, to build up trade relations, and to increase brand awareness in order to attract interest from retailers and distribution channels (Amis, Slack & Berret 1999; Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou 2004; Chadwick & Thwaites 2005; Irwin & Asimakopoulos 1992; Meenaghan 1983).

2.3.4.4 Marketing or Brand Objectives

Objective setting in marketing terms typically overlaps with objective setting in corporate terms. Thwaites (1994) argues that marketing objectives usually approach short term results, are market led, and generally provide a better way of measurement due to their less speculative nature (Karg 2007).

However, marketing objectives can be closely connected to image building and awareness building on either corporate or brand levels (Gierl & Kirchner 1999; Harvey, Gray & Despaigne 2006; Javalgi et al. 1994; Marshall & Cook 1992; McDonald 1991). Strategic objectives, such as brand awareness, brand image, brand credibility and loyalty, are thus bringing the brand to the consumer's attention (Desbordes & Tribou 2007; Grimes & Meenaghan 1998; Gwinner 1997; Irwin, Assimakopoulos & Sutton 1994). Raising brand awareness, defined by Aaker (1996, p. 330) as "both the knowledge and the salience of the brand in a customer's mind", is regarded as a powerful tool when it is well targeted to a particular group of customers (Hoek et al. 1997; Miyazaki & Morgan 2001; Quester 1997; Shanklin & Kuzma 1992).

However, the objective of raising brand awareness also has its limitations. This is the case for global corporations, such as McDonald's or Coca Cola, who already have a high level of awareness. These companies do not use awareness as a primary objective because their brands are already firmly situated in the minds of their market. Instead they seek to combat a diminution of awareness levels, and therefore use awareness strategy as subsidiary and contingent to maintaining their dominant position (Desbordes & Tribou 2007). According to Meenaghan (1991a), a brand's image is formed in the mind of the consumer as a result of various stimuli, including, though not exclusively, the brand identity elements that are controlled and "sent" by the brand owner. Brand image is essentially a social construct that is delivered to the consumer; it has been described as "the set of beliefs held about a particular brand" (Kotler 2003, p. 206) or "a set of associations, usually organised in some meaningful way" (Aaker 1992). To achieve image effects, Otker and Hayes (1987) argued that a meaningful link between the brand and the sponsored event is essential. They state that brand image, brand credibility and loyalty are maximised through the concept of "perfect marriage" (p. 4). Effects are maximised when:

- a) the target group of the brand and the target group of the event fit;
- b) the desired image of the brand and the image of the event fit;
- c) the media covering the event and the target audience of the brand fit; and
- d) the product (characteristics) promoted and the authority/credibility of the sponsored party helping to promote it.

2.3.5 Sponsorship Management

As sport sponsorship has developed into a key part of marketing communications campaigns, corporations have been in need of advice in terms of designing and implementing sport sponsorship programmes (Cornwell, Pruitt & Van Ness 2001; Mullin, Hardy & Sutton 2007; Sandler & Shani 1993; Sleight 1989). As in any other marketing exercise, structure is essential in ensuring effective use of sponsorship investments and the delivery of beneficial outcomes (Fahy, Farrelly & Quester 2004). Dolphin (2003) concluded that “if sponsorship is to make an effective contribution to an organization’s communications objectives, it is essential to develop a comprehensive framework for its management” (p. 179).

Therefore, a number of guidelines have been developed for effective step-by-step sponsorship implementation. Irwin and Asimakopoulos (1992) provided a six step framework as follows:

- review marketing objectives
- prioritise specific objectives
- identify evaluation criteria
- screen proposals
- implement
- evaluation

This approach is “patterned after a typical management by objectives decision making process” (p. 44). Arthur et al. (1998) described the sport sponsorship management process using a nine step model comprised of the following steps:

- define sponsorship
- propose motives
- formulate objectives
- screen proposals
- choose property
- contract (including long-term commitment and ambush protection)
- sponsorship execution
- leverage
- evaluation

While Parker (1991) suggested that sport sponsorship has to be “supported by other marketing efforts” (p. 26), Pope and Voges (1994) view sport sponsorship as a “means of utilising different elements...be they personal selling, advertising, sales promotions or public relations” (p. 45). These elements are widely seen as mechanisms to leverage sport sponsorship, which Meenaghan (1991a) described as the additional effort, largely promotional, which must be invested by the sponsor in order to properly exploit the opportunity provided as a result of securing particular sponsorship rights” (p. 43). One way to do so is by use of various forms of new media. Yet, only a few scholarly studies exist that investigated opportunities for leveraging sponsorship activities within the domain of new media, even less within social media environments. Further, potential positive (or negative) attitudinal, emotional or behavioural outcomes on media and social media actors (e.g., subscribers to brand channels) need further theoretical investigation and empirical testing (Brodie et al. 2011a; Brodie et al. 2011b; Calder & Malthouse 2008, 2009; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; DiGangi & Wasko 2009; Kilger 2008; Passikoff, Batalis & Weisler 2006; Trier 2007a, 2007b; Wang & Calder 2009; Yang & Kang 2009; Yang, Kang & Johnson 2010). In understanding the basic principles of sponsorship effects and, in outlining where exactly opportunities for leveraging sport

sponsorship via a multitude of experiences may begin, a discussion of existing models of sponsorship effects will be provided in the following section.

2.3.6 Understanding Sponsorship Effects

As stated earlier, companies invest in sport sponsorship in the hope of securing benefits in a variety of areas such as raising awareness, enhancing a company's image or what Keller (1993) referred to as secondary benefits. Secondary benefits occur when favourable associations or personal meanings held by consumers are transferred to the brand by use of sport sponsorship (Gwinner 1997; Javalgi et al. 1994; Madrigal 2001; McDaniel 1999). Secondary associations are thought to be a unique benefit of sponsorship activities as they may form emotional bonds between a sponsor and a sponsored activity (Madrigal 2001).

This emotional connection is often referred to as the phenomenon of *goodwill* towards a sponsor (McDonald 1991; Meenaghan 2001; Sandler & Shani 1993; Seguin, Teed & O'Reilly 2005; Wilkinson 1993). The phenomenon of goodwill has been the subject of considerable research; it is generally considered as being part of an emotional chain leading to preference for a brand and behavioural effects (Ferrand, Torrigiani & Camps i Povill 2007). Meenaghan (2001) described this chain of goodwill using three different elements that distinguish sponsorship from advertising. His research has shown that sponsorship communication is different to advertising because sponsorship is "seen as subtle and indirect, involving a disguised intent to persuade resulting in a lowering of consumer defence mechanism" (p. 101)...while advertising is seen as "being selfish and in the interest of the advertiser" (p. 101). And sponsorship is "seen as involving a benefit to society" (p. 101); and seen as a benefit to the activity that is being sponsored.

According to Meenaghan (1991b, 2001), the level of goodwill varies by three different levels of aggregation:

- generic level (as an activity delivering a benefit to society);
- category level (sports, arts, etc.); and
- individual activity level (when the consumer is involved with the activity, e.g. football, tennis, golf, etc.).

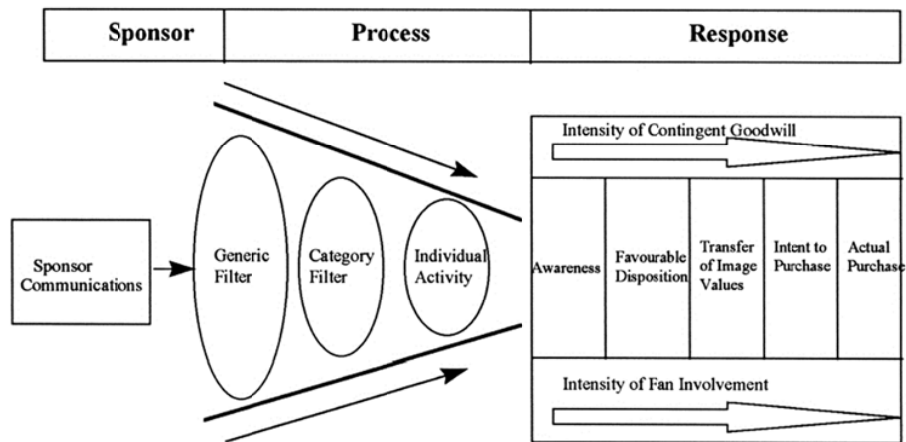
However, according to Marshall (1992), Crimmins and Horn (1996), Gwinner (1997), McDaniel (1999), Madrigal (2000, 2004) and Ferrand et al. (2007) the term *goodwill* should better be described as a minor, though enduring state of emotional attachment to the sponsor. Esch et al. (2006) described this as “a longer-lasting, commitment-inducing bond between the brand and the consumer” (p. 100). In a relationship context, between sponsor and fan, Bowden (2009a) referred to this as a key step in the development of affective engagement. Yet, some researchers argue that the intensity of this relationship is mediated by the intensity of fan involvement, which Meenaghan (2001) described as the basis for consumer reaction.

The term fan involvement is used by several scholars to describe a variety of different effects. However, general agreement exists upon the idea that fan involvement describes an individual’s perceived interest in a particular sport and the relevance of their personal identification with that sport (Capella 2002; Shank & Beasley 1998). In a similar vein, Gwinner and Swanson (2003) used the term domain involvement when describing the phenomenon. According to Meenaghan (2001, p. 106), fan / domain involvement refers “to the extent to which consumers identify with, and are motivated by, their engagement and affiliation with particular leisure activities”. From a sports context Gwinner and Swanson (2003, p. 2003) defined fan / domain involvement more generally as “the interest in a particular sport genre”.

The concept of domain involvement has undergone extensive research in both marketing and sponsorship contexts. Scholars argued that a distinction needs to be made between highly and lowly involved fans (Quick 2000; Shank & Beasley 1998). Highly involved fans are thought to be more knowledgeable and therefore more aware

of a sponsor's communication; if satisfied with the sponsor's behaviour these fans tend to be more capable of transferred values and image effects and therefore more likely to hold a favourable position toward the sponsors (Madrigal 2004; Meenaghan 2001). Below, Meenaghan's (2001) model of sponsorship effects illustrates how sponsor communication may move towards actual purchase of that company's product or service.

Figure 4: Modelling the sponsorship effects process



Meenaghan (2001)

However, what the above model does not include is the notion of leveraging sponsorship (e.g. by use of social media), which may have further positive outcomes for the relationship between sponsoring brand and customer that go beyond the illustrated last point (above) of 'Actual Purchase'. Further, another phenomenon said to influence sponsorship reaction is only briefly considered within the 'Individual Activity' filter of this model. The concept of team identification should be carefully considered in any sport communication effort that is aimed at influencing fan behaviour (Funk & James 2006; Volkov, Johnson Morgan & Summers 2008). In comparison to fan / domain involvement, team identification is not concerned with a sports genre but with an actor within this genre.

According to Gwinner and Swanson (2003, p. 276), team identification can be defined as "the spectators' perceived connectedness to a team and the experience of the team's failings and achievements as one's own". Drawing upon social identity theory, Madrigal (2000, p. 15) described team identification as a "level of psychological

attachment to and concern about a sports team”, which in the view of Hogg and Abrams (1988, p. 128) mirrors a self-definitional perspective: it is more than “support for the home team” but “the identification with that team and/or what it represents”. Indeed, highly identified supporters tend to: view a team’s success or failure as their own success or failure (Hirt et al. 1992; Madrigal 2000); attain ego enhancements from team affiliation (Cialdini et al. 1976; Madrigal 2000); bask in reflected glory of team success (Madrigal 2000; Wann & Branscombe 1990); unlikely distance themselves from their team in case of a loss (Madrigal 2000; Wann & Branscombe 1990); or, exhibit higher degrees of life satisfaction (when compared to other people who are not highly identified supporters) (Branscombe & Wann 1991; Madrigal 2000).

Further, from a managerial point of view, team identification is said to be one of the most important aspects to foster as a high degree of team identification may lead to: a strong sense of attachment to the team during periods of non-success (Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002; Sutton et al. 1997; Volkov, Johnson Morgan & Summers 2008); higher levels of support and likelihood of attending team events (Murrell & Deitz 1992; Volkov, Johnson Morgan & Summers 2008; Wann & Branscombe 1990); sponsor awareness, sponsor image building and transfer of image values (Cornwell 1995; Cornwell & Coote 2005; Madrigal 2000, 2004); and an increased likelihood of spending time, money and other resources towards the sponsors, thus rewarding the sponsor with patronage (Madrigal 2000, 2004). In terms of leveraging these positive effects of sponsorship communication, theoretical and conceptual models are yet to be developed for the domain of social media. Even more important, after reviewing scholarly literature, empirical testing underpinning these theoretical foundations is still in need of further scholarly attention.

2.3.7 Summary

This first section of the literature review described the evolution of sponsorship, highlighting the emergence of strategies to raise awareness of a sponsor, its products and services, promotion of brand image and other objectives. It was argued that sponsorship has an advantage over conventional advertising in being able to emotionally connect fan and brand through subtle creation or existence of customer

goodwill. Next, the process of efficient sponsorship management was outlined while discussing the advantages of each single step in this process. Following this, Meenaghan's (2001) model of sponsorship effects was discussed by focussing on the sponsor, the sponsoring process and five steps of potential customer response. Further, it was explained that the concepts of fan / domain involvement and team identification may play a significant role in successfully approaching traditional and thus far, non-traditional sponsorship objectives.

The next section will introduce and define different notions of engagement and its relevance in the contexts of media and brand engagement. First, a general perspective on media engagement will be provided. That section is followed by a detailed analysis of online engagement. Thereafter the focus is with social media, which will be discussed in the context of engaging users with the goal of increasing two underlying factors to brand engagement – rational and emotional engagement. The latter will then be discussed in further detail, notably in terms of examining the antecedents to emotional engagement.

2.4. Engagement

2.4.1 Introduction

Although television is still considered the premier medium to attract mass markets, marketing itself has undergone changes as a consequence of the technologically developing media environment (Schreiber 2008). Innovative marketers are searching for new marketing services, such as mobile media, alternative media, branded entertainment or direct marketing (Calder 2008). According to Kotler (2008), there is a need to further explore the relative effectiveness of both traditional media and digital media. Kotler concluded that new ways of thinking are needed to further explore mechanisms for optimized consumer media engagement.

Lumme (2008, cited in Sports Business International Media Summit Report) stated that developments within the social media environment will further enable brands, sponsors or sport organisations to more actively engage consumers. In this sense it is useful to think about two ways of engagement. Calder and Malthouse (2008) argued that, on the one hand, innovative marketers have to think about how and why

consumers engage with a medium and the advertising or sponsorship message within it (see 2.4.2 Media Engagement); and, on the other hand, they should be monitoring how consumers engage with the actual product or brand by use of the medium through which the message is conveyed (see 2.4.11 Brand Engagement).

McEwen (2005) contends that in practice, marketers look to the concept of brand engagement as a proxy measure of the strength of an organisation's customer relationship. According to Lowe and Skee (2007), market dynamics are changing and it has become necessary to focus more on consumer needs than merely on market technology. They have argued that a major emphasis of global corporations today, such as those in the telecommunications sector, is to grow by 'stealing' market share through innovative product offerings such as extra minutes on mobile phones, new tariff arrangements, or by extending geographical coverage. However, they concluded that what is often missing from this functional approach is for a corporation to differentiate itself in the market by appealing to the emotional sensitivities of customers. Indeed, according to Lowe and Skee (2007), consumer empowerment grows by virtue of emotional relationships; that is, savvy corporations endeavour to turn their customers into fans of a product or service through the process of brand engagement (Lowe & Skee 2007). Meadows-Klue (2008, p. 245) asserted that:

the command and control television era, where big brands were built by heavyweight messaging to the nation every night, is drawing to an end. For brands that can persuade their customers to fall in love and join in conversation, the pickings will be rich.

Based on rational and emotional bonds with a brand, psychological engagement is thought to include "feelings of confidence, integrity, pride, and passion in a brand" (Bowden 2009a, p. 65; McEwen 2005) driving purchase intent and brand engagement (Meadows-Klue 2008). Both media engagement and brand engagement rely on a variety of concepts that will be explained in the following sections.

2.4.2 Media Engagement

Advertising and media consumption have changed since the end of the last century. In the 20th century, media consumption and advertising were in a reciprocal relationship

whereby the consumer agreed to the appearance of advertisements in return for cheap, accessible media content (Calder 2008). New technologies, such as DVRs or TiVo, allow consumers to tailor media consumption to their specific needs (Choi, Stotlar & Park 2006). Television ratings have suffered in this new environment, such as in the USA, where the number of male prime-time TV viewers in the USA aged 18–34 years has dropped for 12 consecutive years (Poole 2004). According to Crompton (2004), the “location and nature of [media] coverage” (p. 273) as well as its medial presentation, will impact on the mentioned brand, product or sponsors. Many studies have explored different media – context phenomena. Typically, they have found that consumers who are highly engaged with a media vehicle tend to be more responsive to advertising messages within it (Aaker & Brown 1972; Bronner & Neijens 2006; Coulter 1998; De Pelsmacker, Geuens & Anckaert 2002). Given that conclusion it is surprising – even bewildering – that marketers rarely consider media engagement when planning their media / advertising space buying decisions (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009). In summary, engagement processes try to go beyond just reaching as many consumers in a defined target group; engagement tries to take into account positive impacts within the mediated environment in which the message is presented (Kilger & Romer 2007).

Although it is generally accepted that engagement to media, a product, company or brand embodies feelings of involvement, there is a lack of definition in the literature of what engagement with a medium really is (Calder & Malthouse 2008). Syndicated market research tries to measure media engagement by asking whether a media vehicle is one of their favourites or if they would recommend it to a friend. Behavioural research instead typically focuses only on how often people visit a website or how much time they spend on that site (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009). The Advertising Research Foundation suggests that “engagement is turning a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding context” (cited in Kilger & Romer 2007, p. 313). However, this does not clarify the nature of media engagement. Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009, p. 322) argued that all of the meanings “are consequences of engagement rather than engagement itself”. Some forty years ago Marc (1966) tried to define media engagement by examining the degree of involvement to media vehicles, such as magazines. He stated that *claimed involvement* can be measured by the degree of a consumer’s disappointment once the publication

stops. The importance of involvement as the root of media engagement has since been taken up by several scholars, such as Rubin and Perse (1987), who conceptualized media involvement as “cognitive, affective, and behavioural participation during and because of exposure” (p. 247). In this sense, Sun et al. (2006) referred to media involvement as a process within the individual; part of individual agency rather than the external agency via a media message or stimuli. They state that “media involvement stresses the interaction between audiences and extraneous factors such as messages and media” (p. 4) which is in line with the notion by Andrews et al. (1990) that consumers are the focus of involvement, not products. Calder and Malthouse (2008) supported the idea of involvement as a key to find out what media engagement ‘really is’. They state that “engagement comes from experiencing something like a magazine or TV program in a certain way ... and that experiences are thoughts and feelings that consumers have about what is happening when they are doing something” (p. 3). This idea is supported by various scholars in the academic literature who conceive of audience activity by their media motives e.g. utility (Blumler 1979; Perse 1990a, 1990b; Rubin & Step 1997; Sun, Rubin & Haridakis 2006). Here, the literature suggests that the Internet is widely used in fulfilling interpersonal and media needs that are driven by personal motives. These motives tend to be consistent between different types of media. In their research on functional alternatives to television, Ferguson and Perse (2000) found that audiences seeking diversion by watching television are at other times using the Internet for the same motive. Further, research by Kaye and Johnson (1998; 2002) revealed that television and Internet audiences share similar motives. These motives include entertainment, to pass time, information, social interaction, social utility and escape; and thus appear to be akin with other lists in terms of media experiences research (Calder & Malthouse 2008, 2009; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Sun, Rubin & Haridakis 2006). Both the idea of motivations and notions of experiences to explain media engagement are said to be grounded in uses and gratifications theory, a concept that will be developed later in this study.

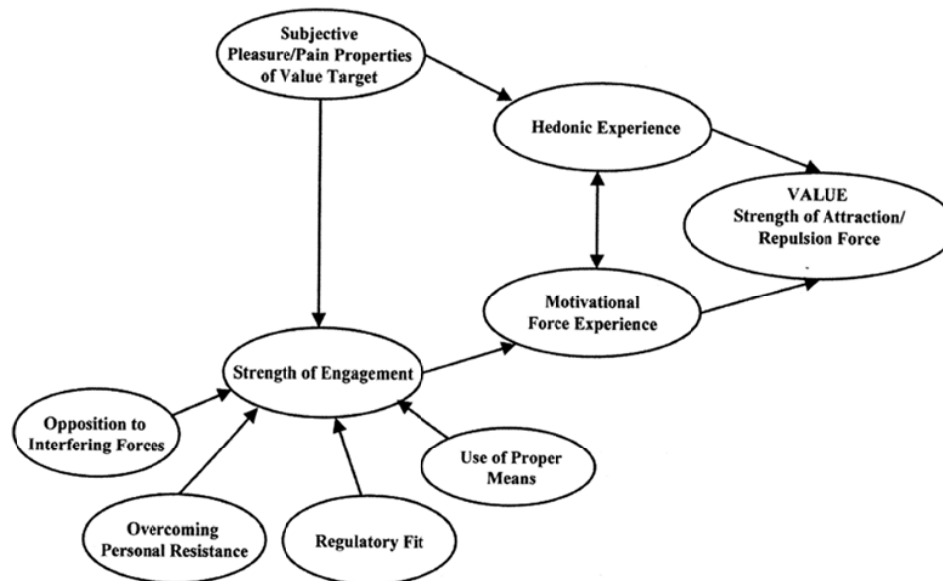
Taking a psychological approach, Higgins (2006) stated that engagement is one of two variables of experience in a value creation process. According to her, hedonic experiences such as pleasure or pain are forces in the understanding of values. Higgins concluded that the “strength of engagement further contributes to the

intensity of the motivational force experience – the intensity of attraction to or repulsion from something” (p. 439). In her view, the strength of engagement stems from the second force in value creation, the motivational experience. The second source:

does not involve the hedonic experience of pleasure or pain per se, but rather involves the experience of a motivational force to make something happen (experienced as a force of attraction) or to make something not happen (experienced as a force of repulsion). Although the *hedonic experience* and the *motivational force experience* often are experienced holistically, conceptually they are distinct from one another (p. 441).

Figure 5 below gives an overview of the relational influences among variables contributing to the value force experience.

Figure 5: Influences among variables contributing to the value force experience

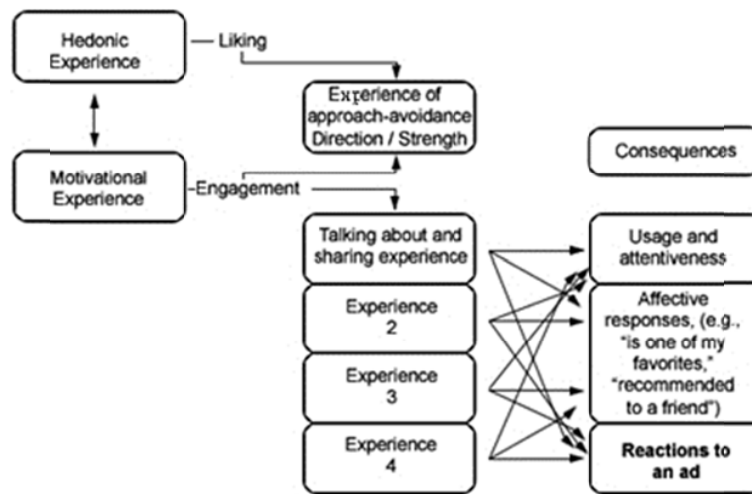


Higgins (2006)

Calder and Malthouse (2008) argued that it is useful to separate media engagement from the hedonic side, the “liking”, from the motivational side and to “view engagement as the motivational side of the experience” (p. 5). By doing this, media engagement is distinguished from the “liking” side and defined as a motivational

experience in “terms of making something happen (or not happen) in the consumer’s life” and may be seen as the “sum of motivational experiences” (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 5). Figure 6 below illustrates a series of experiences that consumers may have with media products.

Figure 6: Hedonic Experience and Motivational Experience



Adapted from Calder & Malthouse (2008) & Higgins (2006)

In their qualitative research investigating different types of media vehicles, namely magazines, newspapers, TV, and online sites, Calder and Malthouse (2008) came up with a set of experiences they consider to be most appropriate as criteria by which to measure engagement with a media vehicle. These are:

- talking about and sharing experience
- utilitarian experience
- makes me smarter experience
- credible and safe experience
- timeout experience
- visual imagery experience
- regular part of my day experience
- overload, too much experience
- ad interference experience
- community connection experience

A successful delivery/creation of such experiences is thought to be positively related to user engagement behaviours and ultimately a higher degree of advertising and sponsorship effectiveness, thus providing a basis for positive consumer reaction (Bronner & Neijens 2006; Calder & Malthouse 2008; DiGangi & Wasko 2009).

In summary, media engagement is a crucial part in the process of engaging brand / sponsor and customer in a media context. The effectiveness of an advertising or sponsorship message depends on two crucial factors. First, effectiveness traditionally depends on the advertised brand / product itself (see Chapter 2.4.12 Brand Engagement) and on the quality of the execution of the advertising or sponsorship message. The second factor, and focus of this research, is engagement with the media vehicle itself, which Calder and Malthouse (2009) defined as “the collective experiences that a reader has with the editorial content” (p. 2). A successful delivery of such experiences can create a basis for consumer awareness, persuasion, sales response and, hypothetically, ongoing emotional bonds to brands (Bronner & Neijens 2006; Calder & Malthouse 2008, 2009; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Wang & Calder 2006). The following section will further define media engagement in an online context.

2.4.3 Online Engagement

Online engagement emerges from experiencing a website in a certain way. Here Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009, p. 322) defined an experience as “a consumer’s beliefs about how a site fits into his/her life”. The utilitarian experience, for example, may be an indicator of online engagement for users who base their decision-making on information provided by the website. Here it is important to highlight that online experiences are not mutually exclusive. Website content can deliver a multitude of experiences. For example, a sponsor’s video on the Chelsea FC YouTube channel may offer useful information about a new football boot. This utilitarian experience may not be experienced by a different user. Instead he/she may have an intrinsically enjoyable experience, enabling them to escape from their daily routine. As content is experienced differently, so is the overall website. The same user of the Chelsea FC YouTube channel may have a utilitarian experience by watching one film clip and an intrinsically enjoyable experience by watching another film clip.

In order to determine online experiences for the purpose of this research, many different streams of academic and non-academic research have been examined. However, these different streams are not inherently consistent and substantial overlap of experiences often exists. Among those overlapping experiences, it is also common to conceptualize them in different ways (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009). For example, three experiences of one researcher may be subsumed into just one experience in a different model. A widely used analytical approach into why consumers use media vehicles is ‘uses and gratifications theory’ (see 2.4.8 Uses and Gratifications Theory). McQuail (1983, pp. 82 - 3, 1994) provides a concise overview (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009).

- information – finding out about relevant events and conditions in immediate surroundings, society and the world; seeking advice on practical matters or opinion and decision choices; satisfying curiosity and general interest; learning, self-education; gaining a sense of security through knowledge.
- personal identity – finding reinforcement for personal values, finding models of behaviour [sic]; identifying with valued others (in the media); gaining insight into one’s self.
- integration and social interaction – gaining insight into the circumstances of others; social empathy; identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging; finding a basis for conversation and social interaction; having a substitute for real-life companionship; helping to carry out social roles; enabling one to connect with family, friends and society.
- entertainment – escaping, or being diverted, from problems; relaxing; getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment; filling time; emotional release; sexual arousal.

The examples of experiences are discussed within the U&G framework above. For example, the utilitarian experience is part of information; the intrinsic enjoyment experience is part of entertainment. Many scholars applied variations to the U&G theory in their research (Bronner & Neijens 2006; Cotte, Chowdhury & Ratneshwar 2006; Fiore, Kim & Lee 2005). In terms of the present study, a handful of scholars have used U&G theory to understand the online media environment. They have

concluded that uses and gratifications are experienced differently in online media than in traditional media; hence they have postulated further dimensions to U&G theory in online settings, such as interpersonal communication (Brown, Broderick & Lee 2007; Ruggiero 2000; Tremayne 2005). Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) described this difference by using a “learning forward” versus “learning backward” comparison, and the “online experience is thought to be more active, participatory and interactive” (p. 323). Further, “the Internet is also thought to be more social in nature because it can be used for sharing and communicating and it therefore breeds social engagement” (p. 323). Hence, for the purpose of this research, a set of experiences has to be defined that is representative of online media, and drawn from previously tested literature.

In their research about the relationship between online engagement and advertising effectiveness, Calder and Malthouse (Calder & Malthouse 2005, 2008, 2009; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009) developed a scale for the measurement of online engagement based on eight different online experiences. These include (in modified form) McQuail’s (1983) four themes (Information, Personal Identity, Integration & Social Interaction, and Entertainment), plus the notions of ‘community’, ‘participation and socializing’ that are more relevant to online media (Calder & Malthouse 2008). Specifically, they identified the following eight online experiences:

- Stimulation and Inspiration
- Social Facilitation
- Temporal
- Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness
- Intrinsic Enjoyment
- Utilitarian
- Participation and Socializing
- Community

Having established a general understanding about media and online engagement, the following discussion will relate the concept of social media engagement to U&G theory. First, a general introduction of social media will provide a first glimpse into

current developments of social media as a marketing tool. A detailed discussion of various perspectives of social media as a context of study will then provide a working defining of social media for this thesis. Next, underlying principles enabling community managers, bloggers or other actors within social media environments to start and effectively manage these media vehicles will be discussed. This discussion of social media principles will provide the basis for a then following debate of current scholarly thinking in regards to what social media engagement is; how social media engagement may be created, enhanced, and managed; and which underlying theoretical concepts may provide a basis for a detailed examination of experiences that social media engagement is suggested to be based upon.

2.4.4 Social Media

In recent years, social media have grown more quickly than other forms of digital media (Tuten 2008). Not surprisingly, therefore, social media has attracted increasing interest in both academic and non-academic media studies literature. Marketers, too, wish to understand social media in order to establish new ways in which to connect with customers. The term ‘social media’ has become the new ‘buzz word’, since corporations and marketers moved into the digital environment during the past decade or so (Weber 2007).

However, the development of social media did not start as a marketing project (Holtz & Havens 2009). In the early days of the Internet, online publishing was the preserve of those who had coding and development skills, or were part of corporations and institutions that had requisite financial and human resources (Briggs & Burke 2005). Today, however, much less technical expertise is required to use social media. Indeed, various forms of social media have been designed to appeal to ‘ordinary’ Internet users. Additionally, social media software is readily available and most often free to users, being funded indirectly by Internet-based advertisers (Holtz & Havens 2009). Today, virtually anyone who has access to a computer and the Internet can publish online (Holtz & Havens 2009).

Simultaneously, borders to online communication have decreased and, together with the restructure of online publishing, more collaborative forms of social media have

emerged (Holtz & Havens 2009). Ryan and Jones (2009) saw declining trust in corporate messaging and the desire to have a voice as two reasons for this development. Blogs have become a popular form of online expression, with people discovering that, in an online social networking environment, they have an e-voice that enables them to tell stories and share experiences. This communication is dependent on people (users), and does not require technological language and sophisticated Internet training (Ryan & Jones 2009). Blogs are only one type of social media characterising the online communication evolution. Social media has developed far beyond blogs to include social networks, such as Facebook and GooglePlus, and media sharing sites such as Flickr (photo sharing) and YouTube (video sharing). Today, social media is considered to be virtually everywhere, or at least everywhere in the virtual online environment (Tuten 2008).

From a corporate branding perspective, social media is now said to offer seemingly unlimited possibilities to interact with customers, market new products or services, and/or strengthen relationships between customers and brands (Reinhard & Dervin 2010; Ritzer & Jurgenson 2010; Verhoef, Reinartz & Krafft 2010; Weber 2007; Wertime & Fenwick 2008; Williamson 2011). Here, Fisher-Buttinger and Vallaster (2008) highlighted “interaction points that are created solely to engage customers” (p. 184). According to these authors, opportunities to engage customers are unlimited, that creativity often seems to be rewarded, and that the use of a multitude of communication vehicles (especially online) will be a key to successfully engaging customer and brand (Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster 2008). In this sense Jefferson (2008) concluded that the fragmentation of media is a “good thing” (p. 30) because it results in an explosion of touch points that offer unlimited opportunities for individualised communication to create “greater engagement, increasingly through social networking” (p. 30). However, as Fisher-Buttinger and Vallaster (2008) put it, these measures “need to walk the fine line between being intrusive (like a pop-up ad) and welcoming (like a newsletter with appropriate and informative content)” (p.185).

2.4.5 Definition of Social Media

Although social media is widely recognised and discussed, the process of arriving at a ‘definition’ for social media is on-going. According to Tuten (2008), the reason for

this imprecision lies in the ever-changing nature of social media and the speed at which emerging technologies and communication forms, add, detract or change the processes of social media. Further, as Postman (2009) noted, a definition for social media relates to the underlying principles of social media (e.g. information is freely accessible and open for debate). In this sense, Evans (2008) proposed that a universally valid definition of social media can be found in those references that are built upon the principles of social media. In this context social media “taps the collective expertise” (Evans 2008, p. 32) and users’ collective will to find an acceptable working definition surrounded by changing parameters. A good example of this phenomenon is *Wikipedia*, an online encyclopaedia that is fast (wiki) in terms of adapting to author changes and builds upon the collective expertise of millions of volunteers. The most current definition for social media in *Wikipedia* is:

Social media includes web- and mobile-based technologies which are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue among organizations, communities, and individuals (Wikipedia Foundation 2012).

Although not regarded as a valid source of information for academic research, Wikipedia’s definition of social media reveals some similarities to definitions from scholarly research; for example, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) define social media as:

a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.

Alternatively, Ryan and Jones (2009, p. 152) define social media as:

the umbrella term for web-based software and services that allow users to come together online and exchange, discuss, communicate and participate in a form of social interaction. That interaction can encompass text, audio, images, video and other media, individually or in any combination. It can involve the generation of new content; the recommendation of and sharing of existing content; reviewing and rating products, services, and brands; discussing the hot topics of the day; pursuing hobbies, interests and passions; sharing experience and expertise – in fact, almost anything that can be distributed and shared through digital channels is fair game.

Tuten (2008, p. 20), meanwhile, emphasised the community aspect of social media:

online communities that are participatory, conversational, and fluid. These communities enable members to produce, publish, control, critique, rank, and interact with online content. The term can encompass any online community that promotes the individual while also emphasizing an individual's relationship to the community, the rights of all members to collaborate and be heard within a protective space, which welcomes the opinions and contributions of participants.

While social media appear in a variety of forms, all are based on three key parameters: (1) "The premise of personal interaction", (2) "creating, exchanging and sharing content", and (3) "rating content and discussing its relative merits as a community" (Ryan & Jones 2009, p. 157).

Forms of social media are increasing in variety and tend to mix a range of social components. However, generally accepted groups were introduced in which different forms are categorised by their main purpose. Based on the academic and non-academic literature (Evans 2008; Holtz & Havens 2009; Postman 2009; Ryan & Jones 2009; Tuten 2008; Weber 2007), the following groups of social media are suggested:

- Media sharing sites (for example YouTube, Flickr)
- Social network sites (for example Facebook, GooglePlus)
- Social bookmarking (for example Furl, RawSugar, NetVouz)
- Social media submission sites (for example digg, sphinn, reddit)
- White-label social platforms (for example CrowdVine, CollectiveX)
- Forums, Message boards, and discussion sites (for example Yahoo Groups, Google Groups)
- Blogs (for example EventSpotting, TheCoolHunter, LawBlog)
- Micro-blogging (for example Twitter, Pownce, Tumblr)
- Wikis (for example Wikipedia, Scholarpedia, Konol, Wikibooks)
- Virtual Worlds (for example Second Life, Lively)

However, despite the frequent use of social media in academic and industry literature, the term has limitations. Indeed, several researchers criticise positive connotations

associated with the concept of social media, instead arguing that this genre may also have negative impacts and work as an anti-social forum, such as with neo-fascist and 'hate' Internet discourses. In that sense, Marshall McLuhan's aphorism that "the medium is the message" (McLuhan 1964) reminds us that media is not just content but includes effects beyond it. Indeed, recent research on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter has revealed that irresponsible use of these media can include anti-social behaviours that are contrary to accepted standards of online community engagement. Although these platforms have codes of conduct, research has found that some users and groups have used this Internet space for questionable activities, such as spaces devoted to pornography. Yet, on the other hand, social media provides quite positive tools, such as the ability of construction and amplifying of human identity through what Giddens (1991, p. 100) called "narratives of the self". Davies (1993, p. 11) referred to this as a process whereby "we write ourselves into existence" using technology as a creative tool. Yet again, recent cases of harassment on the Internet illustrates only one example of the duality of social media (Macnamara 2008).

Despite the positives and negatives of the duality of social media it is said to offer a range of opportunities for brands to build product awareness and engage with customers (Holtz & Havens 2009; Ryan & Jones 2009). However, in open and dynamic spaces delivered by social media, critical success factors exist. As explored earlier, a successful delivery/creation of experiences within a chosen channel can positively influence sponsorship effectiveness and build a basis for consumer reaction (Bronner & Neijens 2006; Calder & Malthouse 2008). Other factors concerned with behavioural aspects of users are also important. These are commonly referred to as 'principles of engagement' and will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.4.6 Principles of Social Media Engagement

In a social media environment, where human relationships are tied, principles of engagement are a guideline to successfully starting and maintaining such relationships. As Ryan and Jones (2009) put it, the key thing to remember is that "people are going online to interact and exchange information and content with similar, like-minded people" (p. 169). They argue that people are typically not

interested in the latest sales-pitch or any promotional hype, but rather whatever they find to be “interesting, fun, freaky or addictive” (p. 169). It is not about sending a message, it is about inviting a response (Ryan & Jones 2009). From a marketing perspective Chandler (2009) argued that ‘interrupt marketing’ becomes “increasingly shrill” (p. 2), and that corporations have to market at a higher level where people engage with a brand and feel a sense of likeness and belonging. According to Weber (2007), brands have to act as an aggregator of customer communities, not just as a broadcaster. In an environment where customers are flooded with thousands of advertising messages, brands may participate in, organise and encourage social networks – where they talk *with*, not *at* end users. However, talking with customers requires two way communication, permission to do so, and principles within which to foster relationships. Chandler (2009) refers to these as ingredients for a self-growing community. However, in regard to Social Media Engagement, these are characteristics that describe the site itself “rather than how the site fits into the consumer’s life” (Calder & Malthouse (2009) p. 324). Based on the academic and non-academic literature (Chandler 2009; Evans 2008; Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster 2008; Holtz & Havens 2009; Holzner 2009; Miller 2009; Postman 2009; Ryan & Jones 2009; Tuten 2008; Weber 2007), the following principles are suggested:

- authenticity and honesty (brands should use social media in an authentic, honest and open way. For example fake blogs (“flogs”) that hide the commercial affiliation between the blogger and the corporation and pretend to be created by objective third parties will be damaging to the brand).
- dialogue (brands should turn monologue into dialogue with potential customers and foster exchange of views, ideas, and opinions – community members want to feel that they are part of the community and demand a voice).
- true communication (dialogue can only be fostered if a two-way platform for true communication via speech, writing or sign exists).
- relevance and entertainment (every measure or information a brand implements should add value to the community and entertain its members – only quality content becomes ‘sticky’).

- respect and helpfulness (brands should act respectful, constructive and helpful to all community members and respect policies, guidelines and rules of the medium).
- passion (brands should behave in an authentic manner and demonstrate a commonality of passion with their customers).
- socialcentricity (brands should remember that the community exists for the sake of the community – not for the sake of branding).

Having established a general understanding about the principles of social media engagement and how these may influence effective and efficient performance in regards to the prospective community of users, the following section will discuss in further detail the concept of social media engagement and how this may profit from a smart delivery of a multitude of experiences.

2.4.7 Social Media Engagement

Social Media is a recent focus of study. However, social media possesses several characteristics that have been available via the Internet since its early stages. Typical online features, such as discussion groups, e-mail, chat, forums or user comments have existed for many years. Social media, like social networking sites, are simply more elaborate ways of using all of these features in a single space (Royal 2008). What is new are the ways that people interact by using social media in an online “culture that encourages and rewards participation” (Royal 2008, p. 2). This culture has been described by Jenkins (2008) as a technology driven world in which consumers and producers are not bound by a particular communication medium but merged by a diverse online culture of sharing and participation. Social media, driven by new technologies, has encouraged the development of routinised participation that underpins this culture of collaboration and sharing. This is reflected in the earlier example of the online encyclopedia, *Wikipedia*, where the collaborative aggregation of knowledge and understanding provides a shared basis for decision making. However, when it comes to engagement with a particular social medium in the era of the Internet, new technologies are adapted, yet traditional communication theories continue to be used. As with theories of online engagement, ‘uses and gratifications theory’ has been identified as a means to understand what people are doing *with*

media, rather than what media is doing *to* people. This process is considered active, wherein consumers select and integrate media into their lives (Royal 2008).

2.4.8 Uses & Gratifications Theory

Uses and gratifications theory is often described as “a psychological communication perspective, that focuses on individual use and choice by asserting that different people can use the same mass medium for very different purposes” (Ko, Cho & Roberts 2005, p. 58). Specifically, Swanson (1987) asserts that recipients' psychological processes while exposed to different types of mass media have been explored by various uses and gratifications studies. Further, with reference to Ko, Cho & Roberts (2005) and Rubin (1994) the primary objective of uses and gratification theory is to make comprehensible why psychological needs of audiences shape the use of various types of media and what motivates them to engage in certain media-use behaviours for gratifying a variety of intrinsic needs. In this sense uses and gratifications theory assumes media users' behaviour is goal-directed and therefore active (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch 1974). Additionally, media users' are assumed to be aware of their particular needs and therefore actively seek and select suitable types of media to fulfil their needs (Ko, Cho & Roberts 2005). U&G theory is based upon earlier media effects research, and was initially used in trying to explain a variety of different phenomena. This involved studies that explored “gratifications that attract and hold audiences to the kinds of media and the types of content that satisfy their social and psychological needs” (Cantril 1942; Ruggiero 2000, p. 4); and studies that explored general ideas on how to better communicate or how to avoid unintended outcomes of messages (Klapper 1960; Ruggiero 2000); studies that focused on the motivation and selection process in deciding to use earlier types of mass media (Lazarsfeld & Stanton 1944; Ruggiero 2000; Waples, Berelson & Bradshaw 1940). Consequently, uses and gratifications theory has often been applied as an axiomatic theory in that its principles were accepted and applied to various research projects exploring mediated communications (Lin 1999a; Ko, Cho & Roberts 2005).

Since uses and gratifications theory was extensively applied in academic research to understand media consumption, various researchers questioned the theory, pinpointing that it has an indistinguishable conceptual and theoretical framework

(Ahn 2010), that it lacks major concepts (Ahn 2010; Elliott 1974; Swanson 1979), that it too much focuses on the individual (Ahn 2010; Elliott 1974; Swanson 1979) and because of the heavy reliance on self-reporting (Ruggiero 2000). Most notably, during 1980s and 1990s many uses and gratifications researchers therefore focused on developing and purifying conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, academic literature expanded by connecting other concepts or theories such as “expectancy value theory” and “dependency theory” to the area of uses and gratifications (Ahn 2010; Palmgreen 1984; Palmgreen & Rayburn 1982). Based on these influences the uses and gratifications theory has been reformulated regularly now stressing “comparisons between the gratifications sought from a medium with gratifications obtained. The underlying process is now conceived as an iterative one in which initial expectations about the outcomes of media exposure (the gratifications sought) are continually modified through observation of the gratifications actually obtained from the media, feeding back into the gratifications sought through future media exposure” (LaRose, Mastro & Eastin 2001, p. 396). Additionally, gratifications sought are suggested to be an unreliable predictive variable for media behavior; they are sought to have more convincing explanatory ability in relation to the gratifications obtained (LaRose, Mastro & Eastin 2001). Therefore the key purpose of this research project is in line with scholarly literature; experiences (or gratifications) sought are not explored as predictive variable for media behavior but as explanatory variable in relation to what was obtained (to be identified by analysis of user comments). These experiences (or gratifications) obtained in turn are treated as variable feeding experiences (or gratifications) sought which at the end of this iterative process may lead to higher engagement with the medium Facebook Football channel.

According to Ruggiero (2000), *uses and gratifications* have always provided cutting-edge theoretical approaches in the initial stages of each new mass communication medium: newspapers, radio and television, and now the Internet. It may be argued that the timely emergence of computer-mediated communication has bolstered the theoretical potency of U&G by allowing it to stimulate productive research into a proliferating telecommunications medium (Ruggiero 2000). Lin (1996) contends that the major strength of U&G theory lies in its ability to allow scholars to examine “mediated communication situations via a single or multiple sets of psychological needs, psychological motives, communication channels, communication content, and

psychological gratifications within a particular or cross-cultural context” (p. 574). For example, Ruggiero (2000) stated that “the use of personal computers has been linked to individuals’ motivations to use the Internet for communication purposes linked to the fulfillment of personal gratifications such as social identity, interpersonal communication, parasocial interaction, companionship, escape, entertainment, and surveillance” (p. 28).

A variety of studies have used U&G theory in Internet research and claimed that it is able to withstand the criticism of vague concepts and self-reporting (Ahn 2010; Calder & Malthouse 2009; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Chung & Kim 2008; Diddi & LaRose 2006; DiGangi & Wasko 2009; Park, Kee & Valenzuela 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke 2008). This body of literature insists that U&G theory is salient for Internet research because it allows systematic analysis of what was earlier termed the “active user” (Ruggiero 2000, p. 5). According to Rubin (1994) the Internet encourages users to become more active in controlling their media environment and its content. This view has been supported by Newhagen and Rafaeli (1996) who identified the high levels of user activity as one major strength of the Internet. According to these researchers, U&G theory therefore has particular salience in terms of exploring user motives and behavior (Ahn 2010). Within the domain of Internet research, two general aspects of U&G research are dominant: a) those that are focused on identifying motivational factors, and b) those that are focused on exploring relationships among user motivation and other psychological constructs, attitudes or social contexts (Ahn 2010).

In regards to the above, the work of Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) appears to be particularly suitable for the present research project. Firstly, they “view engagement as the motivational side of the experience” (p. 5), and by doing so describe media engagement as the “sum of motivational experiences” (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 5). Secondly, their research provides a framework that encompasses results of other studies into the social medium Facebook (Park, Kee & Valenzuela 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke 2008; Royal 2008). Thirdly, experiences fitting into U&G theory identified by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) are consistent with results from other academic studies into various effects of social networking sites (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke 2008), such as Facebook. And fourthly,

this research is about two particular sporting channels (AdidasFootball and NikeFootball) within Facebook, and therefore fulfills all of the characteristics of other online media (e.g. commenting, rating, content forwarding, 'friending' etc.). Also, the Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) definition of online engagement will be used for the present study on social media engagement. Engagement with the social media vehicle itself is defined for the remainder of the thesis as "the collective experiences that a reader has with the editorial content" (p. 2). Further, the eight online experiences identified shall be used as a starting point for the measurement of social media engagement.

Notwithstanding an increased amount of scholarly application of U&G theory in understanding media engagement, several scholars have pinpointed the unique nature of social media in documenting user activities (e.g. the number of comments a user leaves). The link to positive experiences (as identified by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) is that the more positive user experiences are, the greater the likelihood that the user will further involve themselves with the social medium and engage positively; this is then reflected by subsequent behavioral actions. The singular deployment of U&G theory and the measurement of experiences or gratifications have therefore been regarded as insufficient, as they usually only provide limited experience data – at a certain point of time when the measurement has been taken (Macnamara 2010). By comparison, the number of comments, ratings, content forwarding etc. are regarded as something directly and numerically measurable that happens over defined time frames (Bernhardt et al. 2010; DiGangi & Wasko 2009; Macnamara 2010; Park, Kee & Valenzuela 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke 2008; Royal 2008; Trier 2007a, 2007b; Van Dijck 2009). On the other hand, users may still be highly engaged with a medium without taking behavioural action at all. Therefore, as Becker-Olsen and Hill (2006, p. 75) suggested, smart brands should aim to increase and measure "both engagement intensity and activity, thus creating deeper and more frequent opportunities for interaction with the brand". These activity measures are comely described as customer engagement behavior (Bernhardt et al. 2010; DiGangi & Wasko 2009; Park, Kee & Valenzuela 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke 2008; Royal 2008; Trier 2007b; Van Dijck 2009; Van Doorn et al. 2010; Verhoef, Reinartz & Krafft 2010) and will be discussed in further detail within the following section of this thesis.

2.4.9 Customer Engagement Behavior

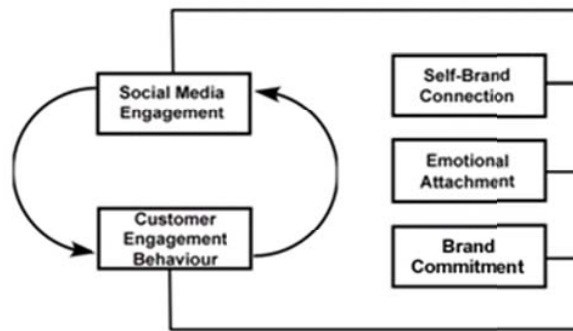
‘Customer Engagement Behavior’ is often described as the ultimate tool in measuring and exploring individual consumers’ engagement with a social medium (Bernhardt et al. 2010; DiGangi & Wasko 2009; Park, Kee & Valenzuela 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke 2008; Royal 2008; Trier 2007b; Van Dijck 2009; Van Doorn et al. 2010; Verhoef, Reinartz & Krafft 2010). Van Doorn et al. (2010) defined ‘Customer Engagement Behavior’ as “a customer’s behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers” (p. 254) (see Chapter 2.4.2 Media Engagement). These actions can be positive (such as posting a positive comment under an article) or negative (such as starting a wiki against a firm’s policies) in nature and are sometimes targeted to a much wider audience including other customers (current or future) or the general public (Van Doorn et al. 2010). Further, these behavioural actions invite active participation among audiences, providing a media-brand context where brand and customer meet and interact, and also where customers meet other customers. This form of participation is regarded as spontaneous and discretionary (e.g., if one user comments on the posting of a different user), which not only uniquely shapes customer-to-brand interactions but also influences experiences that the respective users have by using the medium (Van Doorn et al. 2010). In reference to Van Doorn et al. (2010), customer engagement behaviour such as commenting on editorial content within a social medium also embodies the notions of Hirschman’s (1970) classical theoretical model of ‘Exit, Voice, and Loyalty’. Their model is grounded on two sets of behavioural actions that customers of a brand or company may exercise based on their economic performance. In a brand context, customers:

may choose to exercise voice (communications behaviours designed to express their experience) or exit (behaviours designed to curtail or expand their relationship with the brand). The continuum of behaviours can signify pure voice (complaint behaviour, positive or negative recommendation, positive or negative Word Of Mouth) to pure exit (decrease consumption, non-renewal of a contract) and many behaviours in between (Van Doorn et al. 2010).

In a social media-brand context, a variety of these behaviours (such as participating in brand communities or blogging) mirrors both voice and exit – or non-exit if well

managed (Van Doorn et al. 2010). This suggests that constructs such as self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment may also be positively altered if the voices (behaviours such as commenting on content in a social media channel to express their experiences) are ‘heard’ and strategically well managed. Figure 7 below provides a systematic overview on how social media engagement and customer engagement behaviour may enhance each other and how this may reflect positively upon self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment.

Figure 7: Social Media Engagement – Customer Engagement Impact Cycle



Here, the link between social media engagement, customer engagement behaviour and the three other constructs is that the more marketers listen to their users’ voices (comments on their experiences within a social medium), the better experiences, as identified by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009), can be shaped. This in turn may increase the likelihood that the user will further engage with the social medium, again reflected by subsequent positive behavioural action (DiGangi & Wasko 2009). This concomitant relationship between social media engagement and customer engagement behavior (driving each other) may then have positive outcomes for customers’ self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment.

Researchers identified lists of customer engagement behaviour activity items that can be applied to a variety of different types of social media. However, these lists differ in regards to each type of social media, as some activity items are sometimes exclusive to certain types of social media. Lake (2009) provided a comprehensive list of engagement measures for both, social media as a whole and channels, pages or groups, within those social media:

- alerts (register and response rate / by channel / CTR / post click activity)
- bookmarks (onsite / offsite)
- comments
- downloads
- mail subscriptions
- fans (become a fan of something or someone)
- favorites (add an item to favorites)
- feedback (via the site)
- followers (follow something / someone)
- forward to a friend
- groups (create / join / total number of groups / group activity)
- install widget (on a blog page, website etc.)
- invite / Refer (a friend)
- word of mouth
- key page activity (post-activity)
- love / Like this (a simpler form of rating something)
- messaging (onsite)
- personalization (pages, display, theme)
- posts
- profile (e.g. update avatar, bio, links, email, customization etc.)
- print page
- ratings
- registered users (new / total / active / dormant / churn)
- report spam / abuse
- reviews
- settings
- social media sharing / participation
- tagging
- testimonials
- time spent on key pages (by source / by entry page)
- total contributors (and % active contributors)
- uploads (add an item, e.g. articles, links, images, videos)

- views (videos, ads, rich images)
- widgets (number of new widget users / embedded widgets)
- wishlists (save an item to wishlist)

This list is consistent with others from academic and industry-based research (DiGangi & Wasko 2009; Freeman & Chapman 2010; Kavada 2009; Ko, Cho & Roberts 2005; Royal 2008). Perhaps most importantly, it reflects overriding ideas of social media engagement. These new tools offer consumers the possibility to “shift away from expert-based advice through vertical, top-down transmission of information through traditional channels such as television, radio, expert websites, and print media” (Bernhardt et al. 2010, p. 9). Instead, former customers turn into ‘prosumers’, producing and consuming value (e.g. experiences such as intrinsic enjoyment, utilitarian) for each other (DiGangi & Wasko 2009; Santomier 2010; Trier 2007a, 2007b; Van Dijck 2009). One popular example of social media that compromises most of the above engagement measures is ‘Facebook’, the research context of this study and commonly referred to as a ‘Social Networking Site’.

2.4.10 Social Networking Sites

Prominent examples for interactive use of social media are Social Networking sites such as Facebook (see 4.2.6 Research Context), Xing, OpenSocial, Friendster or LinkedIn. These have gained much popularity “as venues to relationship formation” (Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten 2006, p. 284). Although, different forms of social networking sites vary by the different types of relationships they focus on, they are generally open to anybody wanting to join in (Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten 2006). Abhyankar (2011, p. 18) contends that social networks are populated by individuals or organizations “which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, likes / dislikes, or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige”. A working definition by Boyd and Ellison (2008, p. 210) will be used for the remainder of this thesis. They defined social networking sites:

as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

Next, although the term social networking sites implies that social connections can be tied between strangers, many subscribers use social networking sites to explore what Haythornthwaite (2005, p. 136) called “latent ties”; some offline connection grounded in their already existing, extended social network. These users are not primarily ‘networking’ or using the service to look for new people; often they use social networking sites to communicate with others whom they are already directly or indirectly connected (e.g., friends, same interest, same hobbies, similar live circumstances, same university, same neighbourhood etc.) (Boyd & Ellison 2007; Haythornthwaite 2005). Consequently, Boyd and Ellies (2008, p. 211) suggested the term “social network site” as more suitable in describing the phenomenon. Yet, as Livingstone (2008) noted, the increasing use of social network sites does not automatically mean face-to-face communication is diminishing. Livingstone (2008, p. 395) argues:

while social networking is displacing other forms of online communication to some degree (email, chatrooms, website creation), it incorporates others (instant messaging, blogging, music downloading) and remediates yet more (most notably, face-to-face and telephone communication).

Apart from these technical features, social network sites have implemented a wide array of technologies and applications, again pinpointing that various types of social media (see 2.4.7 Social Media Engagement) are simply more elaborate ways of using all of these features in a single space (Royal 2008). The main feature of social network sites is usually the profile page, which most often displays a list of friends and personal demographics to other users and friends. Further, adding photographs, leaving comments or sending private messages, photo and video sharing are popular features of most major social network sites (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe 2007; Haythornthwaite 2005; Livingstone 2008; Royal 2008). Yet, although a general understanding exists on how social networking sites are defined, how they technically are developed and how they structurally work, an understanding about the potential

positive (and negative) outcomes of sponsorship brand communication within these networking sites and its effects and emotional, attitudinal and behavioral attitudes and engagement still lacks further theoretical and empirical testing (Bhagat 2009; Evans 2008; Fotis 2011; Holzner 2009; Lundberg 2010; Postman 2009; Santomier 2010; Tuten 2008).

The previous sections have discussed a first series of engagement concepts, those of media engagement, online media engagement and social media engagement. Specific focus has been in establishing a general understanding about social media, principles of social media engagement that are central in providing a basis for community formation and experience-based thinking as one approach in creating social media engagement. The next section will provide an overview about brand engagement which is considered to be equally important in understanding the three other central variables to this research – self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment.

2.4.11 Brand Engagement

On a brand level, a high degree of consumer engagement is said to mirror higher levels of involvement with that brand. This in turn enhances brand associations, creates positive consumer feelings, engenders brand loyalty, and fosters strong brand-consumer relationships (Becker-Olsen & Hill 2006; Sprott, Czellar & Spangenberg 2009). Further, the notion of brand engagement is used to describe measures to emotionally bond a brand to the customer (Meyer 1999), to use interaction with the consumer to become part of its life (Namiranian 2006), or as “a means of (re) – establishing relevance” (Ellor 2007, p. 25). In other words, consumers are said to typically refuse any form of brand message that does not have personal relevance to them (Gladstone & Passikoff 2008). This is particularly important in an economic environment where companies and brands are increasingly competing for the hearts and minds of their consumers (Bowden 2009b). As Bowden (2009b, p. 38) put it: “Engagement with a brand, as opposed to simple satisfaction with it, captures the customer’s deep, emotional connections that are fundamental to determining strong and enduring brand loyalty”.

Although general scholarly agreement exists on the notion that visiting and / or participating in brand related websites or social networks may enhance loyalty (see 2.4.7 Social Media Engagement & 2.4.9 Customer Engagement Behaviour), the brand engagement process as an underlying construct to the development of brand loyalty needs to be further explored. According to Ellor (2007), brand engagement is a tool in (re-) establishing relevance with the consumer and is in that sense in line with advertising agencies and research consultants that see brand engagement as a “holy grail for greater accountability over ad effectiveness” (Bowden 2008, p. 43). The term has become the new buzz word for marketers and agencies, and at the centre of this is the Advertising Research Foundation which states that engagement is “turning a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding context” (Plummer et al. 2006, p. 1). However, in the context of brand engagement, this definition appears to be inadequate. In a brand engagement context the definition gives a brief description of what advertisers, consultants and scholars are trying to measure, but without providing a measurement solution (Bowden 2008; Ephron 2008). Sprott, Czellar, and Spangenberg (2009, p. 92) defined brand engagement as “an individual difference representing consumers’ propensity to include important brands as part of how they view themselves”. Their approach builds upon self-schema theory (e.g., Markus (1977, 1983), attachment theory (e.g., Ball & Tasaki (1992) and self-brand connection theory (e.g., Escalas (2004), but focuses on general engagement with brands and explores why consumers include brands (not a specific one) into their self-concept. In both the scholarly and industry literature (Bowden 2009a; Calder & Malthouse 2008; Heath 2007; NVP 2008; Ryder 2007) there is general agreement that brand engagement occurs on two different levels, rational engagement and emotional engagement.

2.4.12 Rational Engagement

Rational engagement occurs when there is a perceived sense of utility, usually along Kotler’s (2006) model of four P’s (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) (Bowden 2009a; Dibeehi 2009). The 4P’s paradigm is used to coordinate marketing activities, with the primary role to communicate a clear consumer benefit by reflecting this benefit (Calder & Malthouse 2005). In the advertising industry this is referred to as the

cognitive thinking-attention element, but in the consumer behaviour area it is typically referred to as calculative commitment (Bowden 2009a).

This cognitive / rational model is inherited from objectivism (Bowden 2009a), but as Penn (2007) argued, it “does not explain much of what we do, think and feel” (p. 1). In this respect Bowden (2009a), drawing upon neuroscience research, asserted that “reason is not separated from the brain, but embodied in it, and is mediated by unconscious emotional influences” (p. 1). Rational engagement has also been criticised for its deficiencies as an explanatory variable for loyalty, for it does not take into account the role of emotion in consumption choice (Bowden 2009a; Pritchard, Havitz & Howard 1999). In essence, calculative commitment fails to combine both personal and functional characteristics (Bowden 2009a; Hess & Story 2005).

Yet, as Bowden (2008) reminded us, corporate boards are still driven by a rational satisfaction approach (along the four P’s). She states that although satisfaction with a product only demonstrates a minimal sense of fulfilment and does not indicate emotional engagement or ongoing affiliation, it is still widely preferred because boards need ‘numbers’, associated with Kotler’s (2006) four P’s model. Single dimension approaches like a sales driven approach are widely deemed inadequate because they are:

- simplistic (Bowden 2008; Heath 2007; Passikoff, Batalis & Weisler 2006; Penn 2007);
- unable to measure or mirror a customer’s needs, expectations, motivations or perceptions of a brand (Bowden 2008; Gladstone & Passikoff 2008); and
- unable to mirror true commitment as the customer is viewed as cognitive, shallow and attribute-based evaluator of information whose depth of loyalty is based on nothing more than performance (Bowden 2009a; Oliver 1999).

This highlights the point that although rational engagement is a necessary constraint in the development of more affective commitment, it should be seen as the *beginning* of a transitioning period that can be further developed to lead into a more affective, *ongoing*, level of brand commitment (Bowden 2009a; Warrington & Shim 2000). This

is where emotional engagement comes in. While rational engagement opens the door, emotional engagement helps to keep the door open (Bowden 2009a).

2.4.13 Emotional Engagement

In marketing terms, emotional engagement is about trying to establish a sense of brand loyalty with the ultimate goal of ‘wedding’ the customer to the brand (Bowden 2009a; Hoeffler & Keller 2002). True brand engagement encapsulates the idea of emotional or psychological attachment to a brand (Gilliland & Bello 2002) within a product class where commitment describes firm entrenchment to a particular brand (Lastovicka & Gardner 1977; Traylor 1981; Warrington & Shim 2000). Further, emotional engagement to a brand captures the psychological approach that consumers form strong relationship with those brands that portray characteristics, values or personality associations that are similar to their own self-concept (Swaminathan, Page & Guerhan-Cancli 2007). Heath (2007, p. 1) describes emotional engagement as a “subconscious emotional construct”. Passikoff, Batalis and Weisler (2006) averred that true engagement is about creating a case of “satisfaction, supplemented by other perceptual factors”. Yet, in terms of the creation of a subconscious emotional construct, mechanisms have to be explored.

In the scholarly literature, trust is regarded as a key component to this subconscious emotional construct (Gounaris 2005; Heath 2007; Hess & Story 2005; Oliver 1999). A second mechanism is said to be the concept of involvement (Bowden 2008, 2009a; White 2007). Together they are said to lead to greater emotional engagement with a brand (Gounaris 2005; Heath 2007; Hess & Story 2005; LaPointe 2008; Warrington & Shim 2000; White 2007). In this sense consumers who feel connected to a brand are likely to have positive attitudes to and a sense of satisfaction about the brand (Escalas 2004; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Keller & Lehman 2006; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Next, consumer behaviour literature suggests that emotional (brand) attachment is a key driver in emotionally bonding a customer to a brand (Namiranian 2006; Passikoff, Batalis & Weisler 2006; Schouten & McAlexander 1995; Shimp & Madden 1988; Slater 2001; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Relational bonds of trust, involvement, satisfaction and brand attitudes are often regarded as contributing variables to emotional bonds between customer and brand. Yet, in a process that tries

to establish deep emotional bonds between customer and brand they are suggested to be empirically distinct from emotional attachment (Aaker 2004; Bernhardt et al. 2010; Bhagat 2009; Bowden 2008, 2009a, 2009b; Chandler 2009; Dibeehi 2009; DiGangi & Wasko 2009; Gilliland & Bello 2002; Gounaris 2005; Gustafsson, Johnson & Roos 2005; Hess & Story 2005; Namiranian 2006). It is important to appreciate that trust, involvement, satisfaction and brand attitudes may play an important role in establishing or better contributing to emotional attachment in social media settings, but there are also underlying emotional components to consumer engagement that are distinct from this, such as a user's identification with a brand, that exist outside of social media environments. With all this in mind, the following sections explore a) empirically distinct antecedents (trust, involvement, brand attitudes and satisfaction) to emotional attachment, b) self-brand connection which is said to be empirically alike to emotional attachment, and c) brand commitment as one ultimate goal of an engagement process along a loyalty pathway.

2.4.13.1 Trust

Heath (2007) sees the creation of trust as a necessary step in the development of emotional engagement, as it forms deeper relationships with the customer and more personal relationships with a brand. According to Hess and Story (2005), trust "is one of the factors that differentiate relationships from transactions" (p. 314). They suggest that trust enables a shift in consumer orientation from a more cognitive evaluation based on risk minimisation and utility maximisation to a more emotional state of brand attachment, affiliation and identification.

This emotional bond is described by Rousseau et al (1998, p. 395) as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations or behaviour of another". Farrelly (2002) views trust from a relationship marketing point of view and uses the word 'intention' instead of 'state'. He defined trust "as a psychological orientation comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of the other party" (p. 24). Accordingly, trusting a brand implies that a strong likelihood exists that the brand will accomplish activities which will benefit the relationship partner (Liu & Karahanna 2007). According to Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman (2001), brand trust can

be conceptualised as an active relational partner that acts in two different ways. First, their concept of brand trust is based on the premise of reliability of a brand in accomplishing value as expected. Second, Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman (2001) base the concept of trust on brand intentions. These are grounded on the premise that the brand will act in favour of the consumer in cases of unforeseen problems. Trust is therefore seen as a necessary component in engaging customer and brand.

Yet, although feelings of trust towards a brand are thought to be positively related to brand attachment, the literature suggests distinguishing it from emotional attachment as a single concept, for trust does not explain deep emotional bonds for consumers, like brand love (Liu & Karahanna 2007; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Literature suggests that brand attachments are in theory associated with specific attachment behaviours. In this regard, trust is described as a measure that provides confidence and a secure base that is revealed in attachment behaviours, such as proximity maintenance (Liu & Karahanna 2007; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Here, consumers search for “the attachment object as safe haven from and protector against stress” (Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005, p. 81).

2.4.13.2 Involvement

The concept and measurement of involvement have long been a topic of debate within marketing theory (Andrews, Durvasula & Akhter 1990; Harrell 1977). This began in the 1960s with Krugman’s (1965, 1966/67; 1971) suggestion that television advertising does not “appear to be communication as we know it” (p. 8). He argued that the television audience is an “active but clumsy, experience-oriented participant in life” (p. 9) whose passive learning of nonsense syllables in repetitive advertising leads into a new set of brand perceptions and beliefs (Lastovicka & Gardner 1977). However, this ran counter to the classical 1970s approach in advertising which saw the receiver as an engaged individual actively searching, avoiding, screening and distorting persuasive messages (Chaffee & McLeod 1973; Lastovicka & Gardner 1977).

In the following years, many different approaches to testing involvement-driven models emerged, these have included the ‘Elaboration-Likelihood-Model’ (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann 1983), ‘Integrated Information Response Model’ (Smith & Swinyard 1982), and the ‘Attitude Toward The Ad Model’ (Lutz 1983). Furthermore, new ideas and models to conceptualise involvement in advertising and approaches to measuring its effectiveness were developed (cf., Andrews, Durvasula & Akhter 1990).

Mittal and Lee (1989) stated that the concept of involvement “has been shown to mediate effects of media exposure, response to persuasion message, depth of processing advertising, extensiveness of decision-making process, and ongoing product-related behaviours such as word-of-mouth communication” (p. 363). According to Kapferer and Laurent (1985), involvement is an enlightenment in the process of understanding how the relationship of brands and customers can be optimised and sustained.

Meffert (1992) recommended a focus on the core of the involvement construct when defining it. In this sense, involvement is an expression of personality, which Zaichowsky (1985, p. 342) described as “a person’s perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values and interests”. Rothschild (1984) proposed a similar, more generic definition by stating that:

involvement is [an] unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest. This state exists in a process. It is driven by current external variables (the situation; the product / brand; the communications) and past internal variables (enduring beliefs; ego; central values). Its consequents are types of searching, processing and, decision making. (p. 217)

Scholars, such as Kapferer and Laurent (1985), provided useful proposals to develop definitions of involvement in different contexts (cf., Chaffee & McLeod 1973; Gordon, McKeage & Fox 1998; Lastovicka & Bonfield 1982; Traylor 1981). In their study on consumer involvement profiles, they ascertained that the concept of involvement should be regarded as “multidimensional” (p. 50) in delivering a more comprehensive description of the relationship between a product / brand and the customer (Kapferer & Laurent 1985). Instead of single scale involvement measures based just on perceived interest / importance, they suggested five different scales

based on interest or ego-importance of the product class, pleasure, sign, risk importance, and risk probability (Kapferer & Laurent 1985). Although Meffert (1992) argued that this construct is always mediated by the interplay of the situation, the person, and the product, Mittal and Lee (1989) came up with a model of involvement that distinguishes between sources and forms of involvement which, according to them, is sufficient in explaining each form of involvement. Their “causal model of consumer involvement” (p. 373) proposed an involvement dichotomy of product involvement and brand involvement which are both caused by three parameters. They concluded that product / corporate design, product / brand hedonic value and product / brand risk are sufficient parameters - not conditions - for any form of involvement (Mittal & Lee 1989). They state, that: “Brand involvement is the interest taken in making the brand selection” (Mittal & Lee 1989, p. 365). Mittal’s and Lee’s (1989) formal definition of brand involvement will be used for the remainder of this study as it:

- reflects other discussions of involvement (Beyer 2006; Busch & Houston 1985; Knox & Walker 2003; Peter & Olsen 1987; Pham 1992; Rothschild 1987; Warrington & Shim 2000);
- allows situational variation (the purchase of Adidas / Nike shoes or the purchase of Adidas / Nike shirts etc.) (Mittal & Lee 1989);
- allows for the incorporation of underlying definitions of other forms of involvement (fan involvement, advertising involvement, media involvement) (Andrews, Durvasula & Akhter 1990; Capella 2002; Celsi & Olson 1988; Funk, Ridinger & Moorman 2004; Gardner, Mitchell & Russo 1985; Gordon, McKeage & Fox 1998; Knox & Walker 2003; Laczniak, Muehling & Grossbart 1989; Pham 1992; Warrington & Shim 2000).

Yet, as with the earlier concept of trust, involvement should conceptually be distinguished from emotional (brand) attachment. While wide areas of definitions for involvement are exposed to literature, some consensus exists among researchers that “involvement means personal relevance or importance”. Further, some discussion evolved around the “notion of involvement as the level of motivation given to a stimulus, situation, or a decision task” (McWilliams 1997, p. 60). Consequently,

involvement describes more of a state of mental readiness arguably limited to the provision of “cognitive resources to a consumption object, decision, or action” (Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005, p. 79). By comparison, emotional attachment goes beyond a state of mental readiness. Emotional attachment induces a state of emotion-laden readiness that influences the allocation of more resources - not just cognitive - towards a particular object, decision or task; these are cognitive, behavioural and emotional resources (Liu & Karahanna 2007; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006a, 2008; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Involvement has also been suggested to be closely linked to brand commitment and incorrectly often been mixed up or overlapped with it in the scholarly literature (Beatty & Kahle 1988). In this regard Beatty and Kahle (1988) recommended a clear differentiation of both concepts. They state, that:

brand commitment may be defined as emotional and psychological attachment to a brand within a product class while involvement addresses a general level of interest or concern in an issue (i.e., with a product class or a purchase in that product class) without reference to a specific position or choice (i.e., brand) (p. 4)

The last concept suggested to be empirically distinct from emotional attachment is attitudes towards a brand.

2.4.13.3 Brand Attitudes

Brand attitudes are regarded as a further contributing variable to brand attachment. However, similar to the former constructs it should be differentiated from brand attachment. Thomson, MacInnes and Park (2005) argued that although positive attitudes towards a brand usually rebound in strong attachments, the two concepts themselves are different. Thomson, MacInnes and Park offer five key aspects of differentiation.

First, strong attachments develop over time and are often based on interactions between an individual and an attachment object (Baldwin et al. 1996). These interactions encourage the development of meaning and invoke strong emotions in reference to the attachment object. Attitudes reflect one’s evaluative reactions to an object and these reactions can develop without any direct contact with it. Thus, a consumer might have a positive attitude toward an object without ever having had any experience with it at all.

Second, consumers can have favorable attitudes toward any number of consumption objects and toward objects that have little centrality or importance to their lives. The objects, to which consumers are emotionally attached, however, are few in number and are generally regarded as profound and significant.

Third, strong attachments are attended by a rich set of schemas and affectively laden memories that link the object to the self (Holmes 2000; Mikulincer et al. 2001). In contrast, favorable attitudes do not necessarily link the object to the self and the self-concept.

Fourth, individuals who are strongly emotionally attached to an object also display specific behaviors such as proximity maintenance and separation distress (Bowlby 1979). These behavioral manifestations are not characteristic of favorable attitudes, the impact of which is highly situation- and context-dependent (Sheppard, Hartwick & Warshaw 1988).

Finally, individuals who are strongly attached to a person or object are generally committed to preserving their relationship with it (Johnson & Rusbult 1989; Miller 1997). This is not necessarily characteristic of favorable attitudes. For example, it would be unusual for a consumer with only a favorable attitude toward a brand to stay committed to it (e.g., brand loyalty) or pay more for it (e.g., price premium) if a more attractive alternative were introduced. In a similar vein, a strong emotional attachment is characterized by a perception that the object is irreplaceable. In contrast, a consumer with a positive attitude toward an object may be willing to replace it with another object that has equally desirable features (Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005, pp. 78 - 9).

This last characteristic of brand irreplaceability also distinguishes attachment to a brand from other concepts, such as brand equity. Brand equity “for one brand in a category is not mutually exclusive [...] Equity for multiple brands in a category exists simultaneously within a consumer” (Raggio & Leone 2007, p. 387). Thus, if a consumer in a purchase situation decides on one of these multiple brands (with high brand equity), this does not provide an indication about a consumer’s perception of equity to any other brand, which may be equal (Raggio & Leone 2007).

2.4.13.4 Emotional Attachment

In comparison to trust, satisfaction, involvement or brand attitudes, emotional attachment is said to better describe emotional bonds between customer and brand (Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006a, 2008; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Here, brand relationships become more meaningful the more the brand is

linked to the self-concept, the more positive thoughts and feelings that the brand elicits (Escalas 2004; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Hallberg 2004; Maheswari & Jawahar 2008; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005), and the more self-image congruence with the brand exists. Congruence is then seen to lower defensive attitudes when the self and positive experiences are linked (Sirgy 1982, 1985; Sirgy & Danes 1982; Sirgy et al. 1991). It is here, where the use of experience-based social media strategies is most beneficial as “the best relationships with customers are affective or emotional in nature [...] tangible attributes of a product or service have far less influence on consumer preference than the [...] sensory and emotional elements derived from total experience” (Pullmann & Gross 2003, p. 217).

Early work into the attachment domain is based “in the realm of parent-infant relationships” (Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005, p. 77). Based on this Bowlby (1988, pp. 26 - 7) defined attachment as emotion-laden behaviour “that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual”. These attachments are said to vary in strength, while stronger attachments are usually associated with emotional feelings such as affection, love, passion, captivation or connection (Aron & Westbay 1996; Brennan, Clark & Shaver 1998; Carrol & Ahuvia 2006; Feeney & Noller 1996; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). According to Esch et al. (2006), this formation process is ongoing throughout life. They argue that emotional attachment in early childhood between mother and child is only one of many forms of attachment that later extend to friends, pets, famous personalities, or cities and places. Similarly, in marketing terms research suggests that consumers can form attachments to gifts (Mick & Demoss 1990), collectables (Slater 2001), and brands (Esch et al. 2006; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006a, 2008; Schouten & McAlexander 1995; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). For example, in reviewing existing scholarly literature into emotion-laden consumption (Kleine, Kleine & Allen 1995; Richins 1994; Slater 2001) Thomson, MacInnes and Park (2005) were able to document a variety of emotions towards brands (Affection, Love, Peacefulness, Friendliness, Attachment, Bondage, Connection, Passion, Delight, Captivation) which suggest a state of emotional attachment to a brand.

2.4.13.5 Self-Brand Connection

The level of self-brand connection is widely thought to be positively related to emotional attachment to a brand. Yet, in comparison to trust, involvement, brand attitudes or satisfaction, self-brand connection is suggested to be empirically alike to emotional attachment (Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006a, 2008; Park et al. 2009). The scholarly literature is in general agreement that people use brands as a means to represent desired self-images to others or themselves (Escalas 2004; Escalas & Bettman 2003). Self-brand connection is broadly defined as “the strength to which a consumer’s self-concept is connected to the brand” (Van Doorn et al. 2010, p. 254). Here, it is assumed that customers form strong relationships with those brands that portray values and personality characteristics that are in line with their self-concept (Swaminathan, Page & Guerhan-Cancli 2007). Further, scholars are in agreement with the notion that self-brand connections are created in various ways and are used for various self-motivated goals (Escalas 2004; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Swaminathan, Page & Guerhan-Cancli 2007; Van Doorn et al. 2010). According to Escalas (2004, p. 171), “brands can be used to construct and cultivate one’s self-concept. They can be used to express one’s self-concept, publicly and privately. Brands can be used as tools for social integration or to connect one to the past. Brands act as symbols of personal accomplishment, provide self-esteem, allow one to differentiate oneself and express individuality, and help through life transitions”. Further, the connection of self-concept to a brand is suggested to be linked to positive experiences with the brand, the congruency, transfer and matching of brand values in the consumer’s mind as well as external factors such as social, community and reference group influences (Escalas 2004; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Park et al. 2009; Swaminathan, Page & Guerhan-Cancli 2007; Van Doorn et al. 2010).

2.4.13.6 Brand Commitment

Brand commitment, as noted earlier, may have significant relevance to customers that seek to establish a loyal connection with a brand (Hess & Story 2005). Consistent with the emotional attachment literature, commitment is defined as “a pledge or decision to maintain a long-term relationship with a brand in the future” (Park et al. 2009, p. 331). According to Bowden (2009a, p. 69), this pledge may be very beneficial in “leading to a greater desire to remain with that brand, a willingness to

invest in the brand, and a propensity to engage”. In this regard, Esch et al. (2006, p. 100) described emotional attachment as a “commitment inducing bond between the brand and the consumer”. This is supported by Bansal et al. (2004), Fullerton (2003) and Gruen et al. (2000) who concluded that emotional attachment is the root of brand commitment (Amine 1998; Beatty & Kahle 1988; Belaid & Behi 2011; Esch et al. 2006; Evanschitzky et al. 2006; Fullerton 2005; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2008; Park et al. 2009). Hence, in relationship marketing theory, consumer commitment is therefore often referred to as ‘affective commitment’ (Chauduri & Holbrook 2002; Fullerton 2003, 2005; Okazaki 2009). In addition to this affective element, the construct of brand commitment is built upon by a second, more cognitive element (Chauduri & Holbrook 2002; Fullerton 2005; Okazaki 2009). As outlined earlier, this element of brand commitment is often described as the cognitive thinking-attention element, which, in regards to consumer behaviour literature, is commonly referred to as ‘calculative commitment’ (Bowden 2009a). Although, calculative commitment fails to explain much of what customers think and feel, it does include functional characteristics (Bowden 2009a; Hess & Story 2005) that may benefit a longer lasting relationship.

Based on the above, Gundlach, Achrol and Metzner (1995) suggested caution with these two relational constructs; together they are very complex and sometimes overlapping. Yet, researchers still regard brand commitment as essential in forming long lasting brand – consumer relationships (Chauduri & Holbrook 2002). In essence, the scholarly literature is in agreement that brand commitment occurs when both attitudinal devotion and repurchase intentions are present (Chauduri & Holbrook 2002; Gundlach, Achrol & Mentzer 1995; Okazaki 2009; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2008).

2.4.13.7 Loyalty

The concept of brand commitment is understood as being central to a better understanding of repeat purchasing behaviour. This central role is particularly important to review when considering different forms of repeat purchasing behaviour of a brand such as ‘true brand loyalty’ and less probable forms, like ‘spurious loyalty’. The latter occurs when “several brands are approximately equal and induces some

buying habits that indeed remain unstable because they require no change in the selling conditions” (Amine 1998, p. 308). As a consequence, consumer brand loyalty may decrease and encourage brand switching when habitual supply conditions change (Amine 1998). This is supported by earlier research by Jakoby and Kyner (1973, p. 3) who stated that “the notion of commitment provides the essential basis for distinguishing between [‘true’] brand loyalty and other forms of repeat purchasing behavior”. Here, it has been suggested that brand commitment is essential in forming behavioural brand loyalty (Esch et al. 2006; Park et al. 2009) – the “repeat purchasing of a brand over time by a consumer” (Amine 1998, p. 306). This is supported by Malthouse and Mulhern (2008) who argued that brand loyalty should be differentiated between attitudinal and behavioural measures. In a brand context, they defined loyalty as “a consumers’ affective commitment to a brand in a way that relates to buying behaviour” (p. 62).

2.4.14 Modelling Brand Engagement

Having reviewed the literature on brand engagement, the following model (Figure 8 overleaf) is suggested as basis for the study at hand. The model outlines an engagement process which is built along the lines of a loyalty pathway (Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster 2008). The first stage ‘Purchase’ is also the last stage of Meenaghan’s (2001) sponsorship effects model (see section 2.3.6 Understanding Sponsorship Effects). Purchasing a product or service may then lead to satisfaction (the second stage of the loyalty pathway).

General agreement exists that customer satisfaction is a necessary constraint in forming loyal relationships. Yet a singularly focussed satisfaction approach has been criticised as being insufficient in terms of explaining brand attachment and ongoing customer loyalty. Still, an enormous amount of research has been conducted on customer satisfaction research, in order to better understand the emotional bonds that form between customer and brand (Bowden 2009a). According to Bowden (2009a), one of the most commonly used approaches for the measurement of customer satisfaction has been the confirmation-disconfirmation of expectations (or SERVQUAL) approach. The basic principle of this model is that the “consumer forms norms or expectations about product performance. Using these norms or expectations,

the individual consumer makes judgments about the product performance to determine if the expectations were positively or negatively disconfirmed and if satisfaction results from the process” (Peyton, Pitts & Kamery 2004, p. 51). This model is commonly used in academic research as it is practical and easy to follow (Bruhn 2003). However, this model, which conceptualises satisfaction as a cognitive post-consumption process, has also been criticised for failing to (Bowden 2009a, p. 63):

- “measure the depth of customers’ responses to consumption situations (Giese & Cote 2000; Oliver 1999);
- discriminate between true brand loyalty and inertia repeat purchasing (Amine 1998b);
- setting a grossly substandard benchmark for excellence (Reicheld 2001); and
- providing an inherently unreliable predictor for attitudinal loyalty (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele 2004)”.

It is because of these disadvantages and the vagueness of the expectation concept that scholarly literature highlighted the need for “developing a methodologically more precise scale. The ‘performance component of the Service Quality scale’ (SERVPERF) — developed by Cronin and Taylor (Cronin & Taylor 1992) — is one of the important variants of the SERVQUAL scale. For, being based on the perception component alone, it has been conceptually and methodologically posited as a better scale than the SERVQUAL scale which has its origin in disconfirmation paradigm” (Jain & Gupta 2004, p. 28). “However after an investigation of the psychometric properties of the SERVPERF scale and results of multi-industry study Taylor and Cronin (1994) suggest that SERVPERF appears to suffer from the lack of a consistent and generizable factor structure” (Gilmore 2003, p. 43).

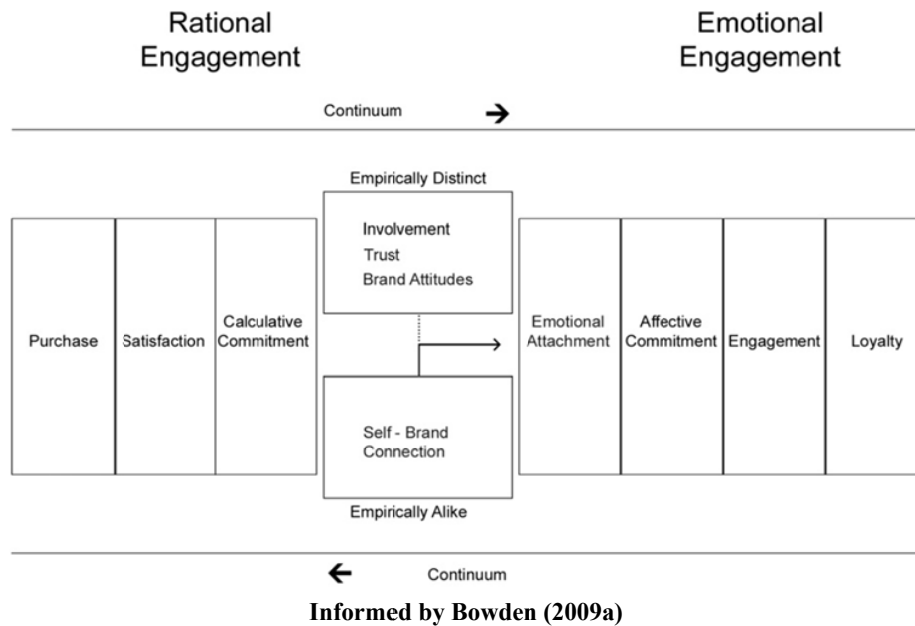
Further, in comparison to the three former potentially contributing variables to brand attachment, a simple satisfaction approach is regarded as providing only a basis for brand attachment. Different consumers may be equally satisfied with a brand or product, yet their degree of brand attachment can vary. Further, while satisfaction can

occur immediately after a purchase, brand attachment is said to “develop over time with multiple interactions” (Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005, p. 79).

Yet, satisfaction is considered a necessary facilitator to the third stage of the process - calculative commitment. However, being calculative committed to a product, brand or service only enables consumption experiences that are based on rational rather than emotional attributes (Hess & Story 2005). In emotionally bonding customer and brand other variables such as trust, involvement and brand attitudes are considered important in driving high levels of engagement with a brand. Yet, these are (see section 2.4.11 Brand Engagement) considered to be empirically distinct from emotional attachment (Aaker 2004; Bernhardt et al. 2010; Bhagat 2009; Bowden 2008, 2009a, 2009b; Chandler 2009; Dibeehi 2009; DiGangi & Wasko 2009; Gilliland & Bello 2002; Gounaris 2005; Gustafsson, Johnson & Roos 2005; Hess & Story 2005; Namiranian 2006). Therefore, within the model outlined overleaf the process of customer engagement with a brand that encapsulates the idea that factors such as trust, involvement or brand attitudes are to some extent connected with emotional attachment but that they are also conceptually separated from self-brand connection. Consequently, the conceptual model illustrates a direct relationship between self-brand connection and emotional attachment. In comparison, the conceptual model contends that self-brand connection is directly related to emotional attachment. This is regarded as the key attribute in developing longer lasting affective commitment to the sponsor or brand that may then induce engagement with it and ultimately lead attitudinal and behavioural of loyalty (Bowden 2008, 2009a, 2009b; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006b; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2008; Passikoff, Batalis & Weisler 2006; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005; Tsotsou 2010). Further, the conceptual model is informed by Bowden’s (2009a, p. 65) earlier work on customer engagement with service brands where customers “move through a sequential psychological process to become loyal”.

However, this process is illustrated as a continuum where steps within a customer – brand relationship can develop forward or backwards depending on external factors such as quality of a product, company ‘scandals’, advertising campaigns or new products of potential competitors.

Figure 8: A conceptual model for brand engagement



2.4.15 Summary

This second main section of the literature review described two different forms of engagement. First, the concept of engagement with media was discussed from three different perspectives – media engagement (a general discussion), online engagement and social media engagement. The general discussion of media engagement provided a broad understanding about hedonic (“the liking”) and motivational forces in a media engagement process. Further, the necessity to separate the hedonic side from the motivational side was outlined to view engagement in “terms of making something happen (or not happen) in the consumer’s life” (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 27). Here, ten different motivational experiences were suggested which, as a sum, describe media engagement and therefore a basis for its measurement. Following this general discussion, media engagement was discussed in the context of online media. Here, online engagement was described as a state of engagement emerging from experiencing a website in a certain way where experiences are described as “a consumer’s beliefs about how a site fits into his/her life” (Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel 2009, p. 322). By using U&G theory, Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) identified eight experiences for measuring online engagement. Next, based upon the discussion of online engagement, one area of online media – social media – was introduced. Different theories and principles of social media were explored and

dominant theories (such as ‘uses and gratifications theory’) from the online media domain were applied. The construct of ‘Social Media Engagement’ was approached, underlying concepts and principles were explored and the concomitant relationship with customer engagement behaviour was discussed.

After the discussion of various types of media related forms of engagement, brand related forms of engagement were discussed. Two underlying factors to brand engagement were identified – ‘rational engagement’ and ‘emotional engagement’. Emotional attachment has been identified as a key driver for creating emotional engagement. In relation to this, conceptually and empirically distinct (Trust, Satisfaction, Involvement, Brand Attitudes) and alike (self-brand connection) constructs to emotional attachment were explored. Next, the concept of brand commitment was discussed while pinpointing the overlapping antecedents of affective and calculative commitment. Finally, a conceptual model for brand engagement was suggested.

This chapter outlined in detail the literature and current thinking in relation to the initial main research aim and the underlying research questions. The purpose of the next chapter is to develop the research hypotheses and present a conceptual framework guiding the hypotheses testing.

3. Conceptual Framework & Research Hypotheses

3.1 Introduction

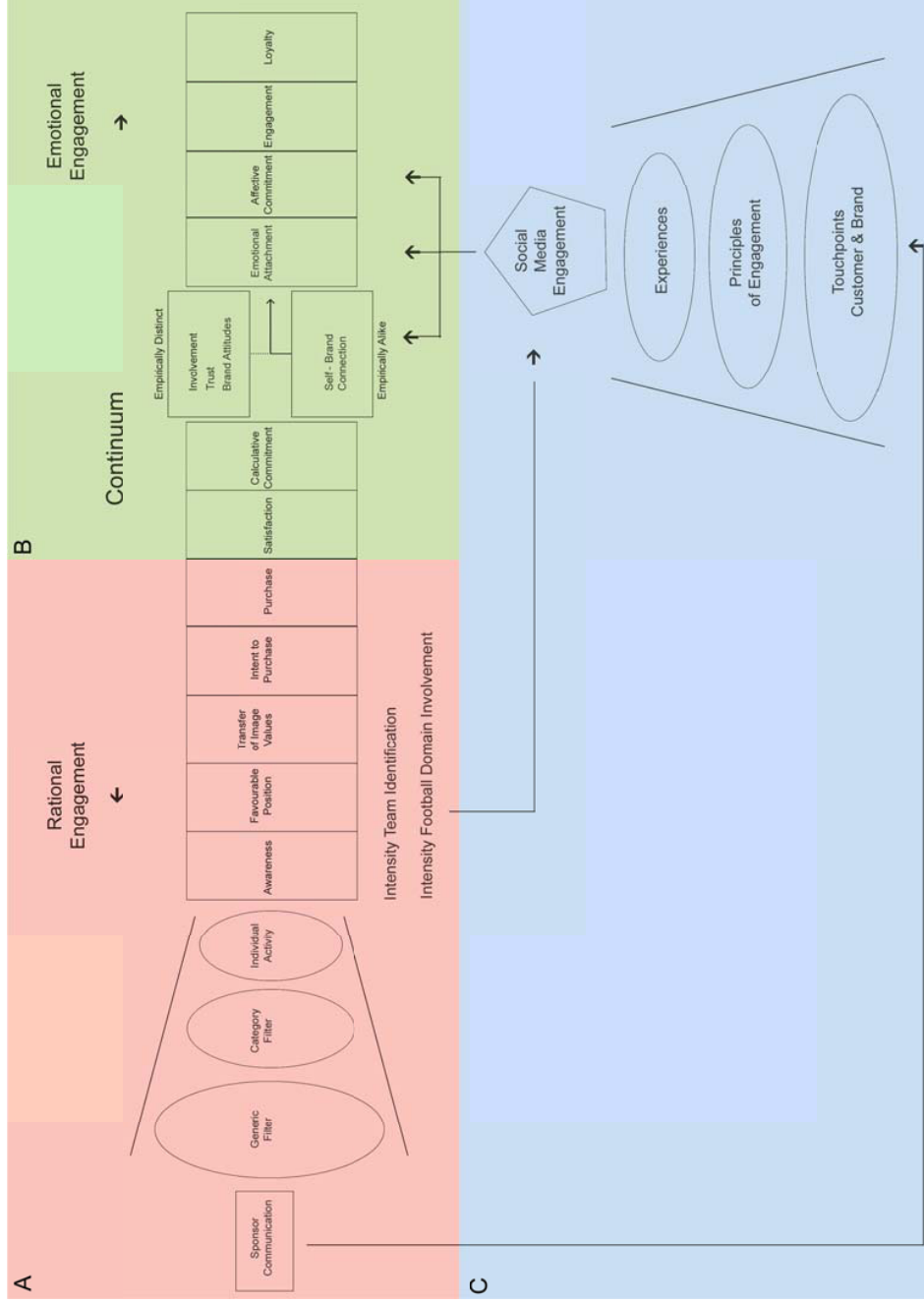
The previous chapter evaluated the literature germane to social media, brand loyalty and consumer engagement. It provided a context within which research of this kind has been developed, and it identified gaps in that body of scholarship. From there a key research aim was established:

Identify, examine and analyse the relationships of 'Social Media Engagement' to consumers' self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment towards a sport sponsoring brand.

Chapter Three now discusses the research assumptions and protocols that underpinned this investigation. This includes a conceptual framework and the hypotheses underlying data collection and empirical testing. While research question one – *What experiences are salient in the formation of social media engagement?* – will be addressed by employing existing scales, content analysis and statistical testing for constructs validity and reliability, research questions two, three and four will be answered through testing of ten hypotheses, as outlined below.

According to Veal (2006), conceptual frameworks are used in research to give a systematic overview of the logical linkages between different areas of literature and concepts. He suggests the use of theoretical frameworks to demonstrate distinctive relationships between these areas of literature. The following conceptual framework, devised for this thesis, consists of three parts. Part A considers sponsorship effects until actual purchase of a sponsor's product. Part B is conceived as an extension beyond Part A where customers (e.g. the fans) and the brand form an emotionally laden and, therefore, potentially longer lasting relationship. Part C suggests a vehicle through which to foster this emotional bond: the use of sponsor communication via social media to create and foster social media engagement and, assuming positive social media experiences, the development of emotional bonds to the sport sponsoring brand.

Figure 9: Conceptual Framework



3.2 Part A

Part A of the conceptual framework mirrors the ‘Model of Sponsorship Effects’ by Meenaghan (2001), discussed in Chapter Two. This part of the framework encapsulates the idea that a sponsor’s communication measures have to pass through three different filters (generic filter, category filter, individual filter) until a state of consumer awareness is achieved. Consistent with most exponents of sponsorship theory, Meenaghan (2001) suggests three further stages. They are a favourable disposition, transfer of brand or sponsor image values to the recipient and intent to purchase, followed by the fifth and final stage, actual purchase. In his original model, this process has two underlying assumptions. He suggests that consumer reaction to sponsorship activities is driven by: a) a sense of consumer goodwill towards the sponsor (the recognition of individuals that sponsorship is doing something positive to different activities that they are involved with), and b) fan involvement: “the extent to which consumers identify with, and are motivated by, their engagement and affiliation with particular leisure activities” (Meenaghan 2001, p. 106). Yet, as discussed earlier (2.3.6 Understanding Sponsorship Effects), the term fan involvement may be better understood as ‘football domain involvement’: “the interest in a specific sport genre” (Gwinner & Swanson 2003, p. 278).

Here, empirical research has shown that personal relevance of an object, situation or action has positive outcomes in the development of engagement with a particular group or field of study (Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Lascu et al. 1995), for example, with the actual type of media vehicle (Calder & Malthouse 2008; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Capella 2002; Funk, Ridinger & Moorman 2004; Jiang et al. 2008; Mittal & Lee 1989; Pham 1992; Shank & Beasley 1998; White 2007). It was typically found that consumers who are highly involved with particular contexts of study tend to be more involved with the media vehicle and, ultimately, are more responsive to advertising messages within it (Aaker & Brown 1972; Bronner & Neijens 2006; Coulter 1998; De Pelsmacker, Geuens & Anckaert 2002). Simply said, somebody who is not interested in football is unlikely to experience high degrees of involvement with a Facebook football channel.

Similarly, but from a psychological point of view, the results of this thesis should support the notion put forward by Higgins (2006) and Calder and Malthouse (2008): that it is important to distinguish motivational forces of engagement (the experiences in terms of making something happen [or not happen] in the consumer's life) from the hedonic side, in this case the 'liking' of football. In a more substantive way, this means that the more subscribers 'like' or are involved with the domain of football, the higher the likelihood that these subscribers experience the motivational forces of an engagement process. In terms of the Adidas and Nike Football channels this means providing entertainment, utility, intrinsic enjoyment etc. On the basis of the points articulated above, a hypothesis to be tested by this thesis is:

H1. The level of subscribers' football domain involvement is positively related to the level of subscribers' social media engagement.

Further, it was argued earlier that Meenaghan's (2001) original model does not fully consider one further concept – team identification as a potential driver for positive sponsorship communication outcomes. Team identification is consistently associated with domain involvement (Fischer & Wakefield 1998) and suggested to (among other objectives) increase the likelihood of spending time, money and other resources towards the sponsors (Madrigal 2000, 2004) such as subscribing to and participating in sport sponsor media outlets.

While a reasonable amount of scholarly literature (Christensen 2006; Lings & Owen 2007) examined the effects of various forms of media usage on team identification, studies exploring the opposite relationship, especially in an online and social media context, have so far not been conducted. Kwak, Kim and Zimmerman (2010), in their research into the effects of team identification on attitudes towards different forms of sports sites, provided evidence that these are positively correlated. When investigating the content of various types of sport sites, their empirical testing found that users of traditional sports websites and users of social media sites (in their research sports blogs) interpret the reliability and trustworthiness of the media vehicle, as well as its published content, differently. Kwak, Kim and Zimmerman (2010) provided statistical evidence that highly identified fans prefer mainstream content about their associated team over social media content. They also found that content (published on the sport

blog) as well as user generated content (e.g., user comments posted in response to it), is experienced as significantly less trustworthy compared to the 'expert' content published on traditional sport websites. Yet, they found that this lack of trust in information does not mean that no positive relationship of team identification and the attitude towards the social media vehicle exists, this relationship may however be statistically insignificant. Hence, it is hypothesised that:

H2. The level of subscribers' team identification is positively related to the level of subscribers' social media engagement.

3.3 Part B

The conceptual model of brand engagement (see 2.4.15.6) is the second element (B) of the conceptual framework. This part covers the embryonic stage, which is a point of satisfaction with a purchased product, until a mature stage when affective engagement between customer and brand is achieved. This is reflected in brand loyalty, which is a basis for an ongoing B2C relationship. As per the literature review, this engagement process is built along the lines of a loyalty pathway (Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster 2008). Here, satisfaction is considered a necessary facilitator to the second stage of the process - calculative commitment. During this stage, customer decision making and the evaluation of consumption experiences are based on rational rather than emotional attributes (Hess & Story 2005). Attributes such as trust, involvement and brand attitudes are considered important in driving high levels of engagement with a brand, but in regards to emotional attachment with a brand, they are thought to be empirically distinct (Aaker 2004; Bernhardt et al. 2010; Bhagat 2009; Bowden 2008, 2009a, 2009b; Chandler 2009; Dibeichi 2009; DiGangi & Wasko 2009; Gilliland & Bello 2002; Gounaris 2005; Gustafsson, Johnson & Roos 2005; Hess & Story 2005; Namiranian 2006).

In comparison, the conceptual model contends that self-brand connection is related to emotional attachment. This is regarded as the key attribute in developing "a longer-lasting, commitment-inducing bond between the brand and the consumer" (Esch et al. 2006, p. 100) that ultimately forges the ties that bind consumer and brand (Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Thus far it has been argued that Part A and Part B of the

conceptual framework build a loyalty pathway between customer and brand that are made up of eleven steps. However, arrows on the top of the loyalty pathway indicate that other external factors, such as social media communication may be perceived as intrusive (Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster 2008). A competitor's ambush marketing activities (Meenaghan 1998a; Payne 1998) or poor product experiences, may also have a negative impact upon the customer-brand relationship. Therefore, these eleven steps are suggested to be understood as a continuum on which a customer's rational and emotional state of engagement may change depending on these negative or positive influences.

3.4 Part C

The concept of social media engagement is explored in Part C of the conceptual framework. The implementation of a sponsor's communication into a social media environment is said to create touch points between customers and brand (first ellipse). These touch points offer opportunities for individualised communication with customers in an effort to create greater engagement. However, engaging with customers requires two-way communication, their permission to do so, and principles that are said to be supportive in fostering relationships. These principles (second ellipse) are commonly referred to as the 'principles of engagement' (Chandler 2009; Evans 2008; Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster 2008; Holtz & Havens 2009; Holzner 2009; Miller 2009; Postman 2009; Ryan & Jones 2009; Tuten 2008; Weber 2007). If one or more of these principles is not fulfilled, experiences with a social channel (third ellipse) may be negative and result in lower social media engagement (Bronner & Neijens 2006; Calder & Malthouse 2008; Gladstone & Passikoff 2008).

Although the literature generally agrees upon the notion that (social) media engagement may have positive impacts upon readers', viewers' or subscribers' self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment, research into these relationships has either been anecdotal, lacks empirical depth of investigation, or has been conducted in a more general Internet-based community environment, rather than with dedicated Facebook channels (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann 2005; Brodie et al. 2011a; Brodie et al. 2011b; Burns 2010; Casalo, Flavian & Guinaliu 2008; Muniz & O'Guinn 2001; Park et al. 2010a, 2010b; Van Doorn et al. 2010).

a) Self-Brand Connection

Consistent with prior research into self-brand connection (Escalas 2004; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Park et al. 2009; Wentzel, Tomczak & Herrmann 2010), it is assumed that a positive relationship between (social) media engagement and self-brand connection will provide additional empirical support for the notion that brand-media-context stories can enhance self-brand connection. Similar to these findings, it is assumed that subscribers to the Adidas and Nike channels link the brand to the self because of: a) positive experiences sought (provided by the brand), b) positive thoughts and feelings towards the brand (created by the aforementioned experiences) and, c) values of the brand that match their own values (as communicated via the channel and sought experiences). It is argued that this kind of incoming information is transported by the channels and matched with the self in the consumer's mind. As a consequence of this process, it has been argued that the portrayed brands, (Adidas, Nike) "become more important and valuable than others to the consumer, becoming connected to consumer's sense of self" (Escalas 2004, p. 176). From a social media, though not a brand perspective, the findings by Yang and Kang (2009) about the effects of blog engagement on cognitive, behavioural and attitudinal attachment to companies, provides empirical evidence that blog engagement is a valid predictor for self-company connections. Further, in regards to the sport sponsorship context, and considering classical sport sponsorship theory, it is assumed that higher levels of engagement with the medium increases the likelihood of positive sponsor image building and transfer of image values and symbolic meanings (Calder 2008; Cornwell 1995; Cornwell & Coote 2005; Madrigal 2000, 2004; Rhee 2007) from brand to customer. This in turn is thought to foster the self-brand connection process, where brands are used to create or represent the desired self-image (Madrigal 2000; Escalas 2004; Madrigal 2004; Rhee 2007). Based on the above, it is therefore hypothesised that:

H3. The level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers' self-brand connection with the sponsors' brand.

In regards to the above, and consistent with prior research on the relationship of self-brand connection and emotional attachment, it is further assumed that these connections are positively related in terms of B2C intercourse (Park, MacInnes &

Priester 2006b; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2008; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). For example, results from several empirical research studies indicate that customers who see the brand as a reflection of who they are or want to be, and the greater the personal self-brand connection between customer and brand, the stronger is their emotional attachment to the actual brand (Eng 2009; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006b; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2008; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H4. The level of subscribers' self-brand connection is positively related to the level of subscribers' emotional attachment.

b) Emotional Attachment

There are presently no comparable studies examining the relationship between (social) media engagement and emotional attachment. However, some researchers have examined the relationship between participation and loyalty to brand communities and brand commitment, finding a correlation between these two variables (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann 2005; Baade & Matheson 2004; Burns 2010; Casalo, Flavian & Guinaliu 2008; Jang et al. 2008). These studies are based on the premise that emotional attachment is positively related to brand commitment; it can be posited, in a similar vein, that a relationship between (social) media engagement and emotional attachment also exists. Further, based on research into the relationship of media consumption, editorial content and the creation of positive thoughts and feelings towards the brand (because of the editorial content) it is assumed that for those consumers who are highly engaged with the Adidas or Nike Football channel, these thoughts and feelings arise due to positive experiences while visiting the Adidas or the Nike Football channel (Andersen 2005; Arnone, Geerts & Scoubeau 2009; Gardner 1994; McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig 2002; Murry, Lastovicka & Singh 1992; Yoo & Kim 2005). These positive thoughts and feelings are suggested to be reflected in the brand, because “brands to which consumers are emotionally attached make consumers feel good [...] and brand related thoughts and feelings should be prominent in times of emotional distress, as the brand offers the potential to ease negative feelings and facilitates coping with stress” (Park et al. 2009, p. 328). Indeed, research by Park et al. (2009) found that as emotional attachment to brands increases, the higher the retrieval frequency of such positive thoughts and

feeling is. Therefore, for those users who are highly engaged with either channel and thus frequently visit it in terms of reducing emotional distress (and other motives), the frequency of positive brand related thoughts and feelings should increase. And this ought to be reflected in higher emotional attachment to the brand.

In essence, it is suggested that highly engaged subscribers to the Adidas or Nike football channel have meaningful experiences that: a) link the brand to the self, but, b) also have positive thoughts and feelings towards the brand (Escalas 2004; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Hallberg 2004; Maheswari & Jawahar 2008; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Therefore, it is assumed that emotional attachment between customers and brand is tied by “sensory and emotional elements derived from total experience” (Pullmann & Gross 2003, p. 217) – in this study social media engagement – that increase the frequency of positive thoughts and feelings towards the brand. Based on the above, it is therefore hypothesised that:

H5. The level of subscribers’ social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers’ emotional attachment to the sponsors’ brand.

Next, while emotional attachment is described as a characteristic of a relationship, brand commitment is described as an outcome regarding future behaviour (Escalas 2004; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Hallberg 2004; Maheswari & Jawahar 2008; Park et al. 2010a; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Here, emotional attachment acts as a “natural precursor to brand commitment” (Park et al. 2009, p. 331) in that it strongly predicts commitment behaviours. This view is widely supported in existing scholarship (Ahluwalia 2000; Beatty, Homer & Kahle 1988; Beatty & Kahle 1988; Belaid & Behi 2011; Maheswari & Jawahar 2008; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005), with researchers finding evidence that emotional attachment acts as a “commitment inducing bond between the brand and the consumer” (Esch et al. 2006, p. 100). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

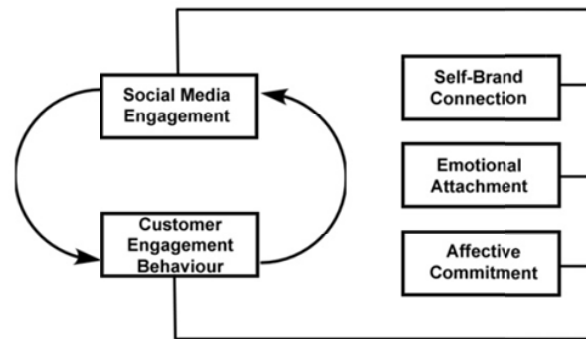
H6. The level of subscribers’ emotional attachment is positively related to the level of subscribers’ brand commitment.

c) Brand Commitment

Considering results from earlier studies examining the relationship of social media and brand commitment (Burns 2010; Casalo, Flavian & Guinaliu 2008; Muniz & O'Guinn 2001) it is assumed that social media engagement will be positively related to brand commitment. For example, in her research into three different Facebook channels (Starbucks, Chick-fil-A, Victoria Secrets), Burns (2010) analysed the content of subscriber comments in response to editorial content. Here she identified qualitative evidence that participation in these channels leads to higher brand commitment. Similar research, albeit using quantitative methods, investigated the relationship between community participation and brand commitment (Casalo, Flavian & Guinaliu (2008). Through the use of web surveys and structural equation modelling techniques, Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu (2008), were able to provide evidence for a positive correlation between high degrees of participation and brand commitment.

Both of the abovementioned studies focused on the relationship between group participation and brand commitment. Here it is argued that, by doing so, the reasons / motives for participation were not taken into account. The motives for participation are, as per this thesis, presumed to be more complex, grounded in a suite of ten types of experience that characterise the basis of social media engagement. Yet, both, behavioural participation and positive experiences with content are suggested to be valid predictors of brand commitment. This notion is based on what was discussed earlier (see 2.4.9 Customer Engagement Behaviour). Here, it was outlined that behavioural participation may enhance community and social facilitation experiences while perceived entertainment or intrinsic enjoyment may lead to behavioural action like commenting or participation in discussions.

Figure 10: Social Media Engagement – Customer Engagement Impact Cycle



Hechelmann (2011)

Figure 10 above contends that both social media engagement and customer engagement behaviour, together and individually, may be positively correlated to self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment. While the results of this study may provide some evidence that social media engagement is also positively related to (affective) brand commitment, some further brand commitment inducing factors have earlier been examined.

For example, in their research on various product-class effects on brand commitment, Chauduri and Hobbrook (2002) found that in addition to the more affective, emotional part of brand commitment, more functional characteristics, such as a perceived sense of utility also contribute to higher brand commitment. This element of brand commitment, earlier described by Bowden (2009a) as calculative commitment, has also been identified in other studies as an explanatory variable for functional benefits sought from brand to customer relationships (Fullerton 2003, 2005; Okazaki 2009). These functional benefits have been found to potentially translate into a higher level of calculative commitment and further positive emotional response to the brands; hence combined they are suggested to benefit a longer lasting relationship between customer and brand (Chauduri & Holbrook 2002; Fullerton 2005; Hess & Story 2005; Okazaki 2009; Belaid & Behi 2011). These findings are especially relevant to this thesis, which investigates a variety of different experiences within a social media context (e.g., the utilitarian experience) that may provide emotional and utilitarian outcomes positively related to both sides of commitment. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H7. The level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers' brand commitment to the sponsors' brand.

Finally, as noted earlier, brand commitment is said to be a pledge or decision to enter into a long-term relationship with a brand (Park et al. 2009). This, as suggested by Bowden (2009a), Park et al. (2008), Burns (2010) and Chauduri and Holbrook (2002), may be very beneficial in creating a greater desire to remain with that brand, may increase the willingness to invest in the brand, and form a basis for repetitive purchases. That is an area where this thesis aims to provide an original contribution to the body of knowledge. While the literature provides evidence for brand commitment and thus repeat purchase behaviour, this study goes further by exploring three different brand attributes - brand consciousness, brand endorser consciousness, price sensitivity - that may underpin the decision to stay behaviourally committed to the brand. Here, it is assumed that the editorial context of this study, focussing on football, football teams, individual players, skill, performance or technique in addition to the hypothesised positive relationships may provide a further basis for brand commitment. Based on the above premises it is hypothesized that:

H8. The level of subscribers' brand commitment increases brand consciousness.

H9. The level of subscribers' brand commitment increases endorser consciousness.

H10. The level of subscribers' brand commitment decreases price sensitivity.

Chapter Four now outlines the research design and methodologies undertaken for the thesis.

4. Research Design

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters provided the theoretical background and conceptual framework for the thesis. The review of the literature established that there exists a gap in our understanding of social media environments in a sporting sponsorship context. Further, the literature review revealed that limitations exist in the conceptual understanding of self-brand connection, emotional attachment, brand commitment and engagement in a social media-sponsorship relationship. Finally, it was argued that while current models of sponsorship indicate a chain of steps that lead to the purchase of a sponsor's product, they typically do not contemplate marketing strategies beyond this immediate event. In particular, conventional sponsorship models generally fail to strategise beyond the point of purchase and, in doing so, seek effective ways to engage and bond customer and brand. This provides a platform for repeat purchases of a sponsor's product or service.

This chapter describes the research approach, its conceptual underpinnings, and how it was designed to investigate the main research aim, the four underpinned research questions and ten hypotheses that are central to the thesis. It also discusses the rationale for data selection, data collection protocols, and the methods underpinning these aspects of the investigation. It is built upon two key interrelated parts: first, a critique of methodological theory and second, an explanation of the research methods employed for this study.

The first part of this chapter will outline and justify the use of an inductive-interpretive mixed methods research approach utilising qualitative and quantitative data sources and methodologies. Second, the chapter discusses the theoretical framework within which the thesis has been positioned, and the research context in which the thesis is located. The third part of the chapter evaluates a particular aspect of the research design – the use of triangulation. This is an important discussion because the research has been designed to collect and interpret data that is different in origin but complementary in regards to the thematic aims of the study. Fourth, tools used to gather these data sets are individually discussed in detail and justified, both in relation to previous research and existing scholarly literature. Considering the wide

range of questions addressed, and given that the area of social media is a fairly recent subject of inquiry, multiple methodological instruments have been used. Each of these will be described in detail by providing information on: the instrument, the pilot study, the respondent (where applicable), the procedure and data analysis. Lastly, the role of the researcher and ethical considerations arising from the research process are addressed.

4.2. Research Approach

4.2.1 Introduction

In this section, the research approach applied to explore social media engagement and its relationship to team identification, football domain involvement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment towards sport sponsoring brands is addressed. First, the use and purpose of a conceptual paradigm will be discussed in relation to this thesis. Second, the disadvantages and advantages of a mixed-methods research approach will be outlined in order to justify the approach chosen. Third, the merits of triangulation design of research methods will be presented while focussing on the finally selected ‘Validating Quantitative Data Model’. Finally, the case study approach which allows in-depth investigation of the purposively chosen Football channels and therefore the research context will be addressed.

To date, the majority of studies exploring media engagement constructs emanate from two different scholarly camps. First, there is the statistical, instrument-driven approach on the behavioural effects of engaging with media products, which has been a focus of North American scholarship (Calder & Malthouse 2008, 2009; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Fedorikhin, Park & Thomson 2008; Kilger & Romer 2007; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005; Wang & Calder 2009). Here, there is the common use of quantitative tools of inquiry — such as surveys — to examine media engagement, which is an understandable methodology given the need to collect representative information from potentially large usage / buyer populations. Second, a qualitative methodology, using focus groups, interviews and blogging has stemmed largely from Europe (Lievrouw & Livingstone 2002). Both methods have their strengths and weaknesses, as will be discussed.

By comparison to other media, social media is a recent and varied phenomenon that continues to change owing to emergent innovations in technology and the rapid development of different styles of social media and communication platforms (Holtz & Havens 2009). In that sense, Bucklin, Rutz and Trusov (2009) argue that methods in researching social media need to keep pace with those changing contexts.

4.2.2 Paradigms

Conceiving a conceptual paradigm is a particularly important aspect of advanced research, for it delineates a researcher's way of viewing 'reality' and 'the world', both of which fundamentally shape the way that investigations are pursued, data collected, and findings reached (Denzin 2005; Mertens 2005; Somekh & Lewin 2006). According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006, p. 194), these paradigms set "down the intent, motivation and expectations for the research". They do so by combining beliefs about epistemology (whether or how we can have knowledge of reality – and knowledge refers to both truth claims and their justification); ontology (the nature of existence, being and reality); and methodology (the systematic approach or manner that underlines and informs a style of research) (Jupp 2006). According to Usher (1996), paradigms are:

Frameworks that function as maps or guides for scientific communities, determining important problems or issues for its members to address and defining acceptable theories or explanations, methods and techniques to solve defined problems (p. 15)

Mathison (2005) describes a paradigm as:

A term to capture a worldview or perspective that, in the case of research and evaluation, includes conceptions of methodology, purposes, assumptions, and values....[A] paradigm typically consist of an ontology (the nature of reality), an epistemology (what is knowable and who can know it), and a methodology (how one can obtain knowledge) (p. 289)

Nominating a paradigm at the beginning of a thesis is crucial, as it provides a logical basis for subsequent decision making in respect of the research, its chosen theoretical approach, methodology and design (Mackenzie & Knipe 2006). However, there continues to be concerted debate about the appropriateness (or otherwise) of each

paradigm in terms of selecting methods for investigation. The major philosophical schools of thought in the social sciences that inform research are ‘positivism’ (and post-positivism) and ‘interpretivism’ which have markedly differing philosophical positions along a continuum of possible approaches (Bryman 2004). Competing schools of thought also have different methodological assumptions and implications (Brewer & Hunter 1989; Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003).

Therefore, the choice of a research approach and its linked research methods should be related to the object of the study and not purely to preconceived paradigmatic ideals (Bryman 1988, 2004; Creswell 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 2008; Jones & Gratton 2010). While research methodology in positivism and post-positivism is usually linked to a quantitative approach, interpretivist methodology is primarily qualitative in nature (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007). Both approaches are said to provide, through different assumptions and methods, information about a research goal. Specifically, hypotheses and/or questions that try to explore a broad section of a given population or seek to understand behavioural phenomena of it are suggested to be investigated using quantitative inquiry. By comparison, social phenomena and contexts are typically researched using qualitative tools (Jones & Gratton 2010; Lock 2009). However, there is no binary logic here: the reliance on a singular quantitative or qualitative approach has been challenged by scholars who maintain that, where possible, a mixed methods approach – quantitative and qualitative – can be advantageous (Creswell 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003).

Typically, quantitative research is based on the (post) positivist assumption that “behaviours can be observed and objectively measured and analysed” (Jones & Gratton 2010, p. 29). In broad terms, quantitative inquiry may be understood as the “collection of numerical data and as exhibiting a view of the relationship between theory and research as deductive” (Bryman 2004). This process is described by Denzin and Lincoln (2008) as the testing of pre-conceived notions, the seeking out of relationships and the quantification of measurable realities. Quantitative research methods can include the collection of scores, durations, ratings, or scales in “either controlled or naturalistic environments, in laboratories or fields studies” (Garwood

2006, p. 250). The defining characteristic of quantitative inquiry is that data are a result of a process involving systematic steps, such as the development of survey questions, the quantification and counting of survey responses and the statistical analysis of collected survey data or archival and historical information (Nardi 2003). Quantitative methods are dominant in marketing, advertising and media communications research (Petty, Brinol & Priester 2009; Stewart & Pavlou 2009) and the measurement of involvement constructs in advertising and consumer research, marketing, and media communications theory (Andrews, Durvasula & Akhter 1990; Mackenzie & Knipe 2006; Mittal 1989; Mittal & Lee 1988, 1989). Here the idea that a hypothesis can be developed from existing scholarship and then be tested using collected data is regarded as particularly fruitful in research where large samples are tested to make inferences about the wider population (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007; Denzin 2005; Denzin & Lincoln 2008). However, Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007, p. 9) argue that quantitative research lacks depth and understanding in explaining the complexities and nuances of social phenomena. They state that:

[...] quantitative research is weak in understanding the context and setting in which people talk. Also the voices of participants are not directly heard in quantitative research. Further, quantitative researchers are in the background, and their own personal biases and interpretations are seldom discussed. Qualitative research makes up for these weaknesses.

Qualitative research tries to capture meanings and qualities that are aligned to inductive and interpretive lines of theory. Phenomenological data such as thoughts, feelings or experiences of participants are collected to guide themes and the development of theoretical explanations. The key characteristics of qualitative inquiry are adapted from Rossman and Rallis (1998, pp. 8 - 11), they include:

1. qualitative research is orientated towards the natural world – researchers gather data about sensory experience: what people (including them) see, feel, hear, taste, and smell. Qualitative research tries to understand people's lived experiences;

2. qualitative research works in the field and tries to understand how people make sense of their worlds through multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic;
3. qualitative research values the ‘messiness’ of the lived world; it has a sustained focus on context integral to the work and assumes that a detailed understanding of human experience is gained by exploring these complexities;
4. qualitative research systematically reflects on how the investigator interprets and impacts upon a study;
5. qualitative research features an exquisite sensitivity to the investigator’s personal biography. This is because the researcher uses their individual, unique perspective as a source of understanding in respect of a study;
6. the sixth element is the emergent nature of qualitative research. Rather than reasoning from theory to a test of its applicability, qualitative researchers have traditionally been described as reasoning from the particular to the more general statement;
7. qualitative research relies on sophisticated reasoning that is multifaceted and iterative, moving back and towards the parts and the whole; and
8. qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive and focuses on approaches that try to describe, analyse, and interpret a phenomenon.

The positivists’ view that reality can be empirically understood is challenged by qualitative approaches (Rossman & Rallis 1998). Instead, it is assumed that social reality is a subjective experience that is “continuously constructed and related to the immediate social context” (Jones & Gratton 2010, p. 32). Qualitative research is therefore regarded as particularly fruitful in exploring smaller samples of a population in greater depth. That said, Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007, p. 9) point out that,

[...] qualitative research is [sometimes] seen as deficient because of the personal interpretations made by the researcher, the ensuing bias created by this, and the difficulty in generalizing findings to a large group because of the limited number of participants studied. Quantitative research, it is argued, does not have these weaknesses.

Considering the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches and by taking into account, that the choice of a research approach should be related to the object of study (Bryman 1988, 2004; Creswell 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007; Denzin & Lincoln 2008; Jones & Gratton 2010), several researchers suggested a marriage of qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007; Jackson & Sørensen 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; Jones & Gratton 2010). In this regard, the following section will discuss the virtues of applying a mixed-methods approach for this thesis.

4.2.3 Mixed-Methods Approach

More than twenty years ago, Bryman (1988) argued that epistemological foci on research were shifting. The merging of quantitative and qualitative approaches has historically been rejected by faithful representatives of different paradigms; they contend that “the two traditions reflect antagonistic views on how the social sciences should be conducted” (Bryman 1988, p. 127). Yet, Bryman (1988) stresses that studies employing mixed-methods are successfully bringing together the strengths of qualitative and quantitative research methods to examine complex problems. This view is supported by Brewer and Hunter (1989), who contend that no single method is ‘perfect’ and that a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches adds value by exploiting the strengths of both models, while also compensating for weaknesses in their capacity to singularly address a particular research problem. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007, pp. 8-9), also make a strong case for mixed methods, having established five supporting criteria:

- mixed methods research provides more comprehensive evidence for studying a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative research alone;
- mixed methods research helps answer questions that cannot be answered by qualitative or quantitative approaches alone;

- mixed methods research encourages the researcher to collaborate across the sometimes adversarial relationship between quantitative and qualitative researchers;
- mixed methods research encourages the use of multiple worldviews or paradigms rather than the typical association of certain paradigms for quantitative researchers and others for qualitative researchers;
- mixed methods research is “practical” in the sense that the researcher is free to use all methods possible to address a research problem;
- mixed methods research is “practical” because individuals tend to solve problems using both numbers and words, they combine inductive and deductive thinking, and they (e.g., therapists) employ skills in observing people as well as recording behaviour.

On the basis of the former discussion, an inductive interpretive mixed-methods research approach has been selected for this study, involving both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This has been done in an effort to draw upon the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative inquiry, and to reduce limitations and weaknesses of using only one method. Reinhard and Dervin (2010) argue a strong case for using a mixed-methods approach to explore different forms of media engagement in an effort “to triangulate and surround a user's experience” (Reinhard & Dervin 2010, p. 5). They suggest using quantitative survey data and adding participants’ words, thoughts and feelings to develop a deeper understanding. This suggests going beyond a quantitative-positivist paradigm to include inductive, interpretive elements that are consistent with a qualitative-interpretive paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln 2008). Indeed, recent research into the relationship of media, sport and brand related objectives promote the use of mixed-methods research (Arora & Stoner 2009; Fotis 2011; Greyser 2011; Pope & Turco 2004; Reinhard & Dervin 2010; Rohm, Milne & McDonald 2006). While quantitative research can be used for the numerical assessment of self-reported behavioural and descriptive aspects of media engagement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand

commitment, qualitative research can investigate user narratives in Facebook channel-generated editorial content.

The implementation of an inductive-interpretive mixed-methods approach consisting of qualitative and quantitative methods is underpinned by the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. These emerged from a critical discussion of existing scholarly literature on sport sponsorship, media engagement and brand engagement, and they inform the research strategy and choice of methodology (Bryman 2004; Lock 2009; Silverman 2010). The qualitative method employed emanates from the necessity to justify the use of identified online experiences (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009) in a social media context, and, further to identify additional themes and experiences that have not yet been identified but may exist within the context of this thesis. Quantitative inquiry was used to test these experiences upon its usability to explain the social media engagement constructs and its relationship upon self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment. As will now be explained, the mixed-methods approach employs triangulation (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007; Payne & Payne 2004) applied in a case study context to provide an opportunity to cross-examine the data.

4.2.4 Triangulation

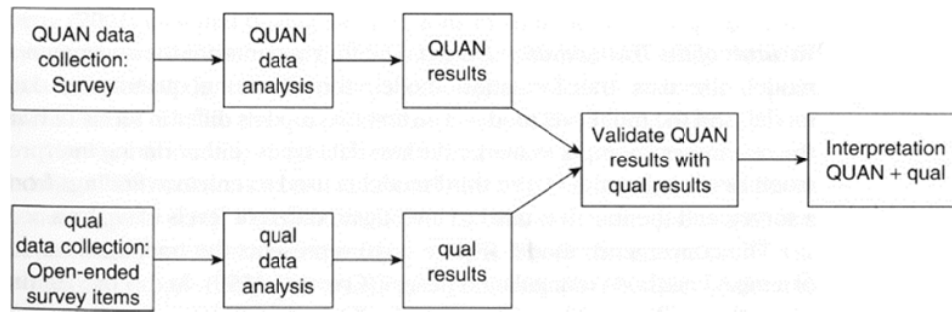
The purpose of triangulation is to gather topic related data that has different origins but is complementary in respect of the investigation (Morse 1994). The strategy is to reduce “the risk of chance associations and of systematic biases due to a specific method” (Maxwell 2009, p. 245), and to bring together strengths of different forms of inquiry (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007). The approach is a common part of contemporary research repertoire (Bryman 1988, 2004; Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007; Denzin 2005; Denzin & Lincoln 2008; Maxwell 1997, 2009; Morse 1994) and is most often used to “validate or expand quantitative results with qualitative data” (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007, p. 62).

However, triangulation design approaches differ. Creswell and Piano-Clark (2007, pp. 62 - 7) provide a succinct overview of five different approaches:

- concurrent triangulation design – one phase design in which the researchers implement the quantitative and qualitative data methods during the same timeframe and with equal weight;
- convergence model – quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed separately on the same phenomenon and different results are converged during interpretation;
- data transformation model – quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed separately. Yet, after an initial analysis the researcher uses varying procedures to transform one set of data into the other form;
- validating quantitative data model – the researcher uses a number of open-ended qualitative questions to validate or expand findings from the survey. Data are collected and analysed within one survey instrument; and
- multilevel model – different quantitative and qualitative methods are used to address different levels in a system. The findings from each level are merged into one overall interpretation.

For this thesis a validating quantitative data model was chosen in addition to a blended content analysis (see section 4.5), as it encompasses contemplation of both the chosen research methods and the case study approach. Figure 11 overleaf represents a design in which findings from different types of qualitative and quantitative research methods are merged into one overall interpretation.

Figure 11: Triangulation Design: Validating Quantitative Data Model



Creswell & Plano-Clark (2007)

Here, the researcher uses a triangulation design “to validate and expand on the quantitative findings from a survey by including a few open-ended qualitative questions” (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007, p. 65). This form of triangulation allows the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data within one survey (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007). The approach is said to be particularly fruitful when existing scales are adapted in a different research context. Creswell and Plano-Clark emphasise that, although open-ended questions are “an add-on to a quantitative survey [...] they provide the researcher with interesting quotes that can be used to validate and embellish the quantitative survey findings” (p. 65). Keeping validation in mind, this quote suggests that qualitative findings can also provide the researcher with information on positional measurement themes / items that have been missed out within the quantitative and other qualitative (blended content analysis) parts of the survey.

4.2.5 Case Studies

Case studies provide an opportunity for “in-depth investigation of one or more examples of a current social phenomenon, utilizing a variety of sources of data” (Keddie 2006, p. 20). According to Hakim (2000), one of the distinct features of the case study is its flexibility from simple narrative to more rigorous studies by the selection of cases or contemporary phenomena that usually have some real-life context. Case studies are widely recognised as a valid, although limited research method in academic research, and are typically either of descriptive, exploratory or explanatory nature. However, the case study is also frequently used in the process of decision making about a subject of study (Stake 1995), and it is this use of case studies that is applied here.

Cases chosen for this study have been selected using purposive sampling, which is also referred to as non-probability sampling or purposeful sampling, a technique that involves an explicit rationale for the selection of cases (Teddlie & Yu 2007). It is “based on a specific purpose rather than randomly” selected cases (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003, p. 713). Major developments in purposive sampling strategies have evolved over the past thirty years. Within this time, scholarly literature identified a need to define units (e.g., individuals, groups of individuals, institutions) in order to answer research questions based on the information that the selected cases can provide (Maxwell 1997). Several authors (Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 1990, 2002; Schrire 2006; 2003; Teddlie & Yu 2007) presented purposive sampling techniques which Teddlie and Yu (2007) summarised as:

- sampling to achieve representativeness or comparability;
- sampling special or unique cases;
- sequential sampling; and
- sampling using multiple purposive techniques.

As the following discussion explains, for the present study purposive sampling is used to achieve representativeness or comparability in order to represent a broader group of cases as closely as possible.

Case studies were selected for the study based on three main criteria. First, one social media environment – Facebook – was selected as it is:

- the biggest social media site in the world with currently well over 900 million users (facebook.com 2012);
- it is regarded as the most promising social medium in an effort to form stronger relationships between subscribers and brands (Holzner 2009);

Second, within Facebook the two biggest Sport-Sponsor-Channels (Adidas Football, Nike Football) were chosen as they provide information about clubs and teams from around the globe (and therefore have subscribers from the respective countries) and at elite level (national leagues, World Cups, continental cups). Third, the two sponsors

(Adidas, Nike) are suitable as they both sponsor a minimum of twenty elite football clubs or national football teams (about which they report on their respective channels). These specific cases provided the context to explore the formation of social media engagement and its suggested relationship to measures that may foster emotional bonds.

4.2.6 Research Context

The cases studied were the Adidas and the Nike Football Channels on Facebook and an Internet based social networking platform. Facebook is a social networking website (see section 2.4.10 Social Networking Sites) that allows subscribers to “present themselves in an online profile, accumulate friends who can post comments on each other’s pages, and view each other’s profiles” (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe 2007, p. 1143). Based on common interest, users may also decide to join in groups, share thoughts and feelings, start discussions on topics of mutual interest or learn about other hobbies, tastes, interest and relationships (Boyd & Ellison 2007; Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe 2007). Since its launch in February 2004, Facebook has developed into the world’s largest social networking site (Facebook.com 2012). More than 50% (Hepburn 2011) of all users have included the use of Facebook into their daily routines, making Facebook one of the most powerful marketing channels within the social web (Shih 2011).

The potential of Facebook as a communication and marketing channel seems to be virtually unlimited. Access to well over 900 million users (Facebook.com 2012) and the possibility to clearly define target groups are unique characteristics that provide enormous advantages in comparison to other types of media (Hechelmann 2011; Royal 2008). Companies from all sectors are increasingly shifting marketing budgets towards social media with Facebook taking the biggest share. For example, Facebook’s revenue for advertising alone increased from around US\$ 720 million in 2009 to well over US\$ 1.8 billion in 2010. US\$ 740 million of the 2010 spending were invested by globally acting companies such as Coca Cola and Procter & Gamble (O'Dell 2011). In this regard, Williamson (2011, p. 1) states, that those companies “are really juicing Facebook's growth. They buy advertising in bulk. They've done it for years on Google, and now they're taking that expertise to Facebook”. This

expertise is also used by Sports Apparel producers Adidas and Nike. Both are now increasingly investing into Facebook marketing campaigns to “leverage and as ongoing effort to build communities of football fans” (InvisiblePR 2010, p. 1).

4.3 Methods & Instrumentation

The data-gathering techniques and protocols followed to collect primary empirical data are described in further detail in the following sections of this chapter. Phase 1 describes how Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's (2009) media engagement scale, as the centre of this research project, has been adapted for use in this study. This process includes: a) a detailed description of the content analysis technique that was used for the justification of existing items and the possible identification of new items, and; b) a detailed description of the pre-test that was conducted in assessing and purifying identified measures (Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000). This section also includes a description of qualitative, open-ended questions that were asked of survey participants in terms of identifying experiences with the Facebook channels. This process description also includes pilot testing protocols, respondent characteristics, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

Phase 2 of the data collection process outlines a detailed description of the main survey that was conducted in order to gather empirical data for testing construct validity (social media engagement scale) and discriminant validity (among constructs / experiences). As with the pre-test, pilot testing protocols, respondent characteristics, data collection and analysis procedures are outlined. In addition, all other scales related to this research project will be outlined in further detail and then discussed in the context of a full structural equation model. Here, the quantitative measurement of the relationship between social media engagement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and customers' commitment to the sponsor's brand will be discussed. Finally, procedures and techniques used in estimating the discrete choice model parameters by use of a conditional logit model will conclude this chapter.

4.4 Phase One

The following section will outline phase one of the data collection. It begins with a discussion as to about why Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's scale (2009) for the measurement of media engagement has been chosen for the measurement of social media engagement. This will be followed by a discussion of procedures and tools that have been followed to test, verify and, if needed, to adapt their scale for the purpose of this thesis.

4.4.1 Measuring Social Media Engagement

The review of the literature presented in Chapter 2 provided a conceptual and theoretical understanding that the strength of media engagement may be positively related to emotional constructs along the loyalty pathway constructs, such as self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment. Further, this review provided an overview of a number of research approaches and theories that have been used to gather empirical data for the measurement of media engagement and, further, their suitability as a predictor for brand-related marketing objectives, such as the increase of advertising effectiveness in online settings. Taking this into account, an experience-based model for the measurement of online media engagement by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) has been identified as the most suitable measure for collecting empirical data in this study. This is because it a) incorporates earlier research and empirical evidence into the experience-based measurement of media engagement (McQuail 1983, 1994; Ruggiero 2000; Fiore, Kim & Lee 2005; Bronner & Neijens 2006; Cotte, Chowdhury & Ratneshwar 2006; Brown, Broderick & Lee 2007); b) is based on uses and gratifications theory (a widely used analytical approach for investigating why consumers use any new form of media) (McQuail 1983, 1994; Lin 1996; Ruggiero 2000; Diddi & LaRose 2006; Chung & Kim 2008; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke 2008) and; c) has been widely deployed as a suitable measure in predicting brand related behavioural and affective / emotional constructs in online media settings (Abdul-Ghani, Hyde & Marschall 2010; Calder & Malthouse 2009; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Henning-Thurau et al. 2010; Kilger & Romer 2007; Schijns & Smit 2010).

During their research, Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) identified eight different experiences for the measurement of online media engagement. The ‘Stimulation and Inspiration Experience’, ‘Social Facilitation Experience’, ‘Temporal Experience’, ‘Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience’, ‘Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience’, ‘Utilitarian Experience’, ‘Participation and Socializing Experience’ and ‘Community Experience’ have been successfully tested in representing the online engagement construct, as well as being a predictive indicator for online advertising effectiveness. In their research, these first order experiences were tested for construct and discriminant validity by use of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. Here, further exploratory testing identified two second order engagement constructs, later described as ‘Personal Engagement’ and ‘Social-Interactive Engagement’. Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) used these for subsequent hypothesis testing.

4.4.2 Scale Adaptation and Verification

In their research on media engagement and its relationship to advertising effectiveness, Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) contend that their scale may also be applicable to social media settings. However, although social media environments are often regarded as simply more elaborate forms of online media environments (Royal 2008), user experiences within a social media environment may be different. Indeed, this thesis explores the relationship of social media engagement on self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment in a sports sponsorship context. Sport is a particularly salient environment for both media and sponsor because, as Beech and Chadwick (2007, p. 9) note, it is a highly emotional ‘product’ that “creates atmosphere and excitement”. Consequently, team identification and football domain involvement to some extent already create and transport user experiences, thus building a bridge for engagement with the social medium. Considering this, the following procedures were applied in validating existing experiences and items and in further identifying other themes (experiences) or additional experience items for the measurement of social media engagement.

4.5 Content analysis

Content analysis was applied for three key purposes. First, it was used to descriptively analyse user comments posted by both Adidas and Nike Facebook channel subscribers in response to news posts consisting of text, pictures and/or videos. This has been done in order to qualitatively identify and then gather quantifiable data on experiences that users within the respective channels have. As argued earlier, engagement with a medium embodies the options of Hirschman's (1970) classical model of exit, voice, and loyalty in which users "may choose to exercise voice [...] to express their experience" with a product, brand; and, in relation to this thesis, brand-related news. Second, content analysis was conducted to identify evidence for positive (and negative) thoughts and feelings towards Adidas and Nike in response to experiences sought by visiting the channel. Third, content analysis was used to descriptively analyse four open-ended questions. These were asked during the pre-testing phase in an effort to add a further 'human' element that captures meanings and qualities that are aligned to inductive and interpretive lines of theory and that are able to a) verify items identified by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009); b) verify items identified during the content analysis of user comments; c) identifying further experiences / items that have not been identified by either Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009), or during the content analysis of user comments. The four added questions were also used by Malthouse, Calder and Tamhane (2007) in their original research into "the effects of media context experiences on advertising" (p. 7).

Content analysis is regarded as an important tool of inquiry if a researcher intends to identify patterns, meanings or themes (e.g., experiences within a social media channel) (Berg 2009). It has been used to analyse various forms of human communication, including written documents, photos, movies, and online media (Berg 2009; Mertens 2005; Silverman 2010). Abrahamson (1983, p. 286) contends that "content analysis can be fruitfully employed to examine virtually any type of communication". Additionally, content analysis has been used in a variety of disciplines (e.g., sociology, psychology, education etc.), where it is chiefly described as "a coding operation and [or] data interpreting process" (Berg 2009, p. 339).

There is broad consensus among scholars with respect to six major interrelated criteria when using content analysis – instruments should be accurate, objective, reliable, precise, valid and replicable (De Wever et al. 2006). However, there is ongoing debate about whether content analysis should principally be qualitative or quantitative (Bryman 2004). Some researchers suggest that because of the frequency of counting involved, content analysis is principally a quantitative method (Baade & Matheson 2004; Burns & Grove 2005; Silverman 2010; Teddlie & Yu 2007). Scott (2006, p. 40) defines content analysis as:

a method of analysing the contents of documents that uses quantitative measures of the frequency of appearance of particular elements in the text. The number of times that a particular item is used, and the number of contexts in which it appears, are used as measures of significance of particular ideas or meanings in the document.

Here, content analysis is used in communication to independently and systematically explore raw material (e.g. newspapers, magazines, television shows etc.) to either answer research questions or verify previously gathered data from other research methods (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook 2009). Therefore, quantitative content analysis is based upon two qualities of being independent of the text and systematic in the analysis of ‘words’ and ‘phrases’.

By comparison, qualitative researchers contend that pure quantification in content analysis only pinpoints textual statistics, not the character of available data (Miles & Huberman 1994; Maxwell 1997; Patton 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003; Berg 2009; Maxwell 2009). Here, content analysis is used as an analytical tool that goes beyond pure quantification of text to explore themes, patterns or meanings (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009). In this regard, content analysis has been defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon 2005, p. 1278). In the context of communication research, Mayring (2000, p. 2) defines qualitative content analysis as “an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts [...], following content analytic rules and step by step models, without rash quantification”.

Based on this discussion, a blended research approach has been chosen (Berg 2009). This approach is inductive in nature, but allows the inclusion of quantification. This hybrid approach allows the researcher to: a) “Condense raw data into categories or themes based on [...] inductive reasoning [...] and the researcher’s careful examination and constant comparison” (Mayring 2000, p. 2); b) be effective in analysing textual elements in gathering quantifiable ‘counts’ that provide a means for identifying and organising and indexing data (Berg 2009); and c) use predetermined scales for the measurement of media engagement (Calder 2008; Calder & Malthouse 2008; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009) for their application in a new context – in the case of this study of social media.

A key requirement of content analysis is that rules for undertaking the research are clearly stated prior to assessment of the material. The most important rule in this sense is transparency in the procedures on how to categorise the raw material (Abrahamson 1983; Babbie 2010; Bailey 1994; Bryman 1988, 2004; Burns 2000; Creswell 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark 2007). This is usually manifested in a coding list – a list of key words, phrases and/or concepts – and then searching texts to count appearances. If specific coding lists are used, content analysis is suggested to be reliable and objective as the researcher is looking at exact or close word matching (Merrigan & Huston 2009). In order to explore valid and reliable results, the following six steps (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009) have been used to direct the data processing and analysis.

1. Preparation of the data

Patton (2002) argues that if the raw data comes from existing documents, the choice and amount of data to be analysed needs to be drawn from and justified by the overall research questions or the problem to be investigated. Further, in cases where sampling is required to represent vast amounts of raw data, the researcher must establish criteria before the actual analysis “to account for each variation of message content” (Berg 2009, p. 342). The following two steps were followed for this thesis.

First, consistent with previous research using content analysis in social media contexts (Bender, Jimenez-Marroquin & Jadad 2011; De Wever et al. 2006; Fernandes et al. 2010; Malthouse, Calder & Tamhane 2007; Woolley, Limperos & Oliver 2010), all content posted by Adidas and Nike on their respective Football Channels has first

been grouped into categories of analysis. To do so, all content since the launch of both channels until 18 months into operation was coded by use of the following key characteristics – Date, Content relation (e.g., Team, League, Product, Player), Type of content (e.g., Text, Picture, Video, Poll), Number of “Likes” and Number of “User-Comments”. Based on this first categorisation of content, a total of 48 ‘posts’ (accounting for 9299 comments) were selected from both channels (24 from each channel) in an effort to sufficiently represent the overall content of each channel.

Second, consistent with research by Malthouse, Calder and Tamhane (2007), the answers provided by channel users on four open-ended questions during the pre-test (see 4.6.3 Pre-test) were downloaded in Excel format by use of the Qualtrics survey program. Here, all responses have been included for the later analysis.

2. Definition of the unit of analysis

In regards to De Wever et al. (2006, p. 9), the choice of units of analysis is in the hands of the researcher but “should be well-considered because changes [...] can affect coding decisions and comparability of outcome between different models. Therefore, critically defining the coding unit is regarded as most fundamental in doing social research” (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009, p. 3). While some researchers consider a sentence as a single unit of analysis, others take a two-step approach by identifying consistent themes or patterns which are then taken as single units of analysis (De Wever et al. 2006). A third approach is suggested by Rourke et al. (2001), who refer to computer-mediated environments when describing a unit of analysis as a discussion post at a certain moment of time. This latter approach has been chosen for the purpose of analysing user comments, for two key reasons. First, user comments on channel posts by Adidas or Nike are usually similar in length (rarely more than one short sentence or statement). Second, user comments within these channels can be traced back directly as an expression of their experience with the respective content – one single post by Adidas or Nike.

With regards to the answers on the four open-ended questions provided by channel users during the quantitative pre-testing of the first set of identified items and experiences, the above illustrated two-step approach has been applied. Here, answers

were screened for consistent themes and patterns which then have been used for further analysis (De Wever et al. 2006).

3. Development of categories and coding schemes

The scholarly literature generally agrees upon the three different sources (the data, earlier studies, theories) where categories or coding schemes can be drawn (De Wever et al. 2006; Zhang & Wildemuth 2009; Fernandes et al. 2010). While coding schemes can be developed either deductively or inductively, the earlier suggested blended approach (Berg 2009) of content analysis was applied for both sets of data (user comments and answers from pre-test), thereby combining both elements. For this study, the inquiry for both data sets was deductively based on the preliminarily developed scale by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009). This scale was then modified during the course of the analysis as new categories and items emerged inductively (Miles & Huberman 1994). Therefore, user comments and data from the pre-test questions were analysed for:

- the presence of specified categories (Stimulation and Inspiration, Social Facilitation, Temporal, Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness, Intrinsic Enjoyment, Utilitarian, Participation and Socialising and Community), and
- the presence of ‘other’ themes that were then qualitatively interpreted to further investigate which were relevant.

4. Testing of coding scheme

In order to fulfil criteria such as consistent coding procedures, objectivity and clarity in category definitions, it is recommended that coding tests be used at various points of time during the text analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994; Burns 2000; Patton 2002; Somekh & Lewin 2006; Maxwell 2009; Gratton & Jones 2010; Silverman 2010). According to Rourke et al. (2001, p. 7):

the reliability of a coding scheme can be viewed as a continuum, beginning with coder stability (intra-rater reliability; the one coder agreeing with herself / himself over time), to inter-rater reliability (two or more coders agreeing with each other), and ultimately to replicability (the ability of multiple and distinct groups of researchers to apply a coding scheme reliably).

Of these three tests, an inter-rater reliability test is regarded as crucial, and the most important in conducting content studies so as to be as objective as possible (De Wever et al. 2006). Inter-rater reliability is defined by Rourke et al. (2001, p. 6) as “the extent to which different coders, each coding the same content, come to the same coding decisions”. Recognizing this, intra-rater and inter-rater reliability have been tested at the beginning and at the end of the coding process.

5. Text coding & Assessment of coding consistency

After sufficient coding consistency has been achieved, the same rules have been applied to the entire amount of user comments. During this phase, intra- and inter-reliability have been tested at the beginning, half-way into, and at the end of the coding procedure. Throughout the above outlined processes, the NVIVO software program was used to assist with the task of storing and coding the data.

6. Conclusions

After both entire data sets had been coded, quantitative ‘counts’ of existing and newly identified themes (experiences) and additional items have been used for: a) the justification of use and further modification of existing experiences and items for measuring media engagement as per Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) and b) the justification for the measurement of additional experiences (other than those used by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009)). Based on these results, two online surveys (pre-test and main survey) were conducted to gather evidence on the identified experiences and items in the context of Facebook Football Channels. The structure and instrumentation of these two surveys will be outlined in the following paragraphs.

4.6 Instrument Online Survey

Structured survey questionnaires are one of the most common approaches to gather quantitative data in media environments (Stewart & Pavlou 2009). The extensive use of surveys is both practical and understandable. The provision of data expressive of certain media environments requires measures that represent a wider range of participants (Veal 2006). One approach to study a phenomenon in a sport-media environment is at the level of the media vehicle itself (Kinney 2006; McDaniel 1999; Meenaghan & Shipley 1999). Media vehicles encompass specific magazines,

newspapers, radio or TV stations, and, at a further level, specific programmes or channels on such stations - both digital and non-digital (Stewart & Pavlou 2009). Most often media vehicles are discussed in respect of their ability to transport persuasive communication messages (Stewart & Pavlou 2009). However, the term is also used in relation to the object of study that “possesses its own individual characteristics as perceived by the receiver” (Meenaghan & Shipley 1999, p. 333). These include online experiences, such as those Facebook channel subscribers may sense by engaging with channel content (Calder & Malthouse 2009; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009).

The pilot test, the pre-test and the main survey were delivered to subscribers via the Facebook ‘message tool’ and by using the independent online survey provider ‘Qualtrics’. Once the surveys were ‘ready’ for distribution, links to these surveys were created. These links were then copied and pasted into the text field of the ‘message tool’ and sent to the channel subscribers. There are two explanations for deploying an online survey tool. In terms of ethical protocols, distributing the survey online and by use of the ‘message tool’ negated the need to collect subscriber contact details or mail addresses. Further, by using this approach no personal details other than name, gender and region (of residence) were visible to the researcher. On logistical grounds, the use of an online survey instrument has proven to be a much easier, faster and cost-effective way of distributing the survey (Lock 2009). Finally, in addition to ethical and logistical advantages, the web-based survey instrument offered benefits that go beyond visible advantages. For example, the survey instrument provided the researcher with a skip-logic tool (Lock 2009). This tool allows: a) survey of participants to skip unrelated questions (this can be based on previous answers) and; b) the researcher to further explore user interests and their motivation for subscribing to the channel (e.g., subscribers interested in football may not be interested in a particular team).

In conclusion, if a survey participant answered 'no' to both the first and second question, it was assumed that these participants have subscribed to either channel because of brand, not football related motives. Therefore, these subscribers have not been included in the later analysis of social media engagement and suggested relationships to the brand as it is highly probable that these subscribers have already strong emotional bonds with the brand, but not the sport (Lundberg 2010).

4.6.1 Population & Sample

Prior to describing the procedures and methods implemented during the survey phase, the method for recruiting survey participants will be outlined (Lock 2009). Veal (2005) asserts that samples have to be selected from wider populations. These are described by Black (1999) as groups of various people bound by common traits. In regards to the thesis, various common traits have been identified as shared. First, the population surveyed shared the trait that they were all subscribers to Facebook Football channels. Second, these participants share a common trait in being involved with the domain of football. Finally, it is assumed that all subscribers are following either an individual professional club or a national football team.

In selecting actual participants for the pre-test and the main survey within the larger group of subscribers, quota sampling has been used. Quota sampling has been defined by Babbie (2010, p. 194) as a sampling method “in which units are selected into a sample on the basis of pre-specified characteristics, so that the total sample will have the same distribution of characteristics assumed to exist in the population being studied”. Therefore, two main criteria for user specification have been taken into account. Information on gender (male or female) and global region (e.g., Asia, Europe, North America) can be assessed by use of the Facebook “advertising tool”. These statistical details have been put into a matrix that considered all gender–region variations. Based on this matrix sample, the different variations were weighted to provide an accurate representation of the overall population (Babbie 2010). A more comprehensive description of sample procedures and a detailed description of the population characteristics of the Adidas and Nike Channels is provided in Appendix 4 of this research project.

4.6.2 Pilot Test

A pilot study was conducted before undertaking the pre-test and the main larger survey. This is widely regarded as an “essential precaution”, because surveys are often not “the best they could be” and therefore usually “need revising and testing” (Brace 2004, p. 163). Further, this “small-scale administration of the survey” (Gratton & Jones 2010, p. 140) was used to fulfil a variety of functions, such as testing the questionnaire, for any form of ambiguity or assessing the approximate length of time for completion (Gratton & Jones 2010). Further, the pilot study helped to explore whether the survey was set out in a clear, logical and understandable manner, and if response and completion rates were estimated correctly (Garwood 2006; Merrigan & Huston 2009; Nardi 2003). The participants in the pilot study were located using convenience (Veal 2005) sampling (staff from the Faculty of Business at the University of Technology, Sydney) and purposive (Miles & Huberman 1994; Teddlie & Yu 2007) sampling within the broader target group. The goal of the pilot study was to assess ‘understanding of questions’, ‘completion time’, ‘discrimination’, ‘comprehensibility’, and/or ‘accessibility’ (Brace 2004). The pilot test participants were asked to reply via e-mail (Business Faculty staff) or the Facebook “message tool” (sample from the Facebook Football Channels) indicating problems in terms of the above criteria. The pilot test was distributed to a sample of 80, of which 31 fully completed the questionnaire. In accordance with the criteria above, only minor changes to language, wording, appearance and skip-logic were required.

4.6.3 Pre-Test

Based on the initial catalogue of items identified by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009), together with results from the content analysis of user comments, a first pool of items was generated for further quantitative testing of the adapted / modified social media engagement scale. This pre-test was conducted for three key reasons. First, the pre-test was used to “assess and purify the measures” (Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000, p. 201) identified by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) for application in a social media context. Second, this pre-test was considered to be a necessary step in getting an initial insight into the usability of further measures (items) identified by use of the earlier blended content analysis of user comments. Third, the pre-test was conducted in an effort to collect further qualitative data on user experiences with the Adidas and

the Nike Facebook football channels that have potentially been missed out during the blended content analysis. In line with Malthouse, Calder and Tamhane's (2007) research on the effects of media content experiences, users were asked the following four open-ended questions:

1. What do you like about the [brand] football channel?
2. What do you dislike about the [brand] football channel?
3. Please describe what the experience of reading / visiting the [brand] football channel is like.
4. Please write one sentence about the [brand] football channel using one of the following words – experience, want, helps, worry.

The tools and procedures for the analysis of answers to these questions followed the same guidelines for the content analysis outlined above. Fourth, the pre-test was necessary in providing the researcher with a preliminary indication of the reliability and validity of the newly adapted social media engagement scale, as well as other research related constructs and measurement scales. The pre-test was sent to 511 subscribers of the Nike and Adidas Football channel, of which 87 responded. These data were used for further analysis. Both protocols and procedures for the pre-test were the same as for the main survey. Therefore, a detailed discussion of the tools and protocols followed for the analysis of the pre-test data collected is outlined below.

4.7 Phase Two

The following section will outline phase two of the data collection process. This section starts with a detailed outline of the main survey and data analysis procedures. This section is followed by a description of several logical steps taken in validating the social media engagement scale, as well as all other research related scales. Next, the research related scales are discussed in further detail by evaluating their origin, technical specifications and suitability for this thesis. Finally, structural equation modelling is examined as the main statistical technique for estimating and testing causal relationships among different data sets (Holmes-Smith 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010). This examination consists of three inter-related parts. First, structural equation modelling is discussed in relation to its main underlying principles – the two

step approach, the estimation method, the model fit and model re-specification procedures. Second, the first part of a structural equation model, the factor analytical component, or measurement model will be discussed before finishing with an evaluation of the path analytic component - the structural model (Holmes-Smith 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010).

4.7.1 Main survey

The survey was conducted for two main purposes; firstly, to verify and, if needed, further modify Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's (2009) online media engagement scale for use in a social media setting. Second, other research related scales were included into the questionnaire to enable subsequent hypothesis testing. The following scales were included in the survey: team identification (Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Mael & Ashforth 1992), football domain involvement (Fischer & Wakefield 1998; Gwinner & Swanson 2003), self-brand connection (Escalas & Bettman 2003; Escalas 2004; Park et al. 2009), emotional attachment (Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005) and brand commitment (Beatty, Homer & Kahle 1988; Park et al. 2009). In the next section, the general procedure of the survey will be outlined. This will be followed by a detailed description of how the media engagement scale has been verified and modified. Subsequent to this is a discussion of other pertinent measurement scales.

a) Survey procedure

As outlined earlier, all participants in the survey were contacted by use of the Facebook 'message tool' and provided with a link to the survey. This initial message included brief information about the researcher, the research thesis and incentives for participation. When clicking on the provided hyperlink, survey participants were directed to an introductory page outlining the purpose of the research project, ethical considerations, procedures in respect of safe data storage and handling, contact details of the researcher, and contact details of both the main research supervisor and the University's ethical research officer. This first page was then followed by the actual survey questions. These were divided into ten blocks, each introduced by a brief explanation of the measured scale. At the conclusion of the survey, participants were invited to: a) request information about the outcome of the research, and b) participate

in a guessing competition for a variety of prizes that were offered earlier as incentive for participation.

b) Data analysis

After closing the survey, all data was downloaded from the online survey database into the computer program SPSS (.sav) and securely (password protected PC) stored on the researcher's computer hard drive. This did not automatically enable the researcher to carry out detailed statistical analysis of the data collected. Alterations to variable names were necessary in order for data analysis to be performed within the SPSS statistical package. After the initial re-coding of the downloaded survey data, the following procedures were undertaken to achieve the first two goals of this survey, which was the validation of the existing scale (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009) and its experience items for use in social media settings. Second, validation of further experience constructs and / or items identified during the process of blended content analysis of user comments within the Adidas and Nike that were not previously been found or tested by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009).

c) Scale validation

The data analysis for scale validation followed a process of various logical steps (Hair et al. 2006; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000). All data on each of the experiences for media engagement was examined using confirmatory factor analysis in "testing how well measured variables represent a smaller number of constructs" (Hair et al. 2006, p. 773). Further, the social media engagement construct and other related constructs in this thesis were measured using the traditional reflective, not formative indicators or items (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer 2001; Jarvis, Mackenzie & Podsakoff 2003). First, descriptive statistics (sample size, range, mean, minimum, maximum, standard deviation) were measured to provide simple summaries about the sample as a basis for the quantitative analysis of the collected data. Second, item loadings were measured to provide initial insights into the statistical significance of each item in explaining the dependent variables (Chin 1998; Gruber et al. 2010; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000). Third, internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha. Fourth, to confirm the validity of each instrument, the average variance extracted (AVE) and the construct reliability (CR) were assessed (Fornell & Larcker 1981; Chin 1998; Gruber et al. 2010). If the items within an experience exhibited internal consistency (Cronbach's

Alpha higher than .7) and fulfilled scholarly threshold criteria for AVE (above .5) and CR (above .7) (Chin 1998; Gruber et al. 2010), they were combined into a total score for that experience (a more detailed description of this process will be provided later). Finally, discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker 1981) between constructs was measured by using the AMOS Graphics tool to assess if the different constructs are, in fact different, and not measuring the same thing (Fornell & Larcker 1981). In the following sections, a detailed description of the procedure for each test is provided.

d) Item loadings

When assessing construct validity, the items (indicators of a specific construct – the experiences) “should converge or share a high proportion of variance in common, known as convergent validity” (Hair et al. 2006, p. 776). One way to measure convergent validity is by looking at the size of factor loadings (Hair et al. 2006; Suhr 2006; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000). A high loading indicates that the factors converge on a common point. Here, scholarly literature typically suggests a threshold factor of minimum .6, and ideally .7 or higher (Allen et al. 2005; Cheung & Lee 2001; Denzin 2005; Denzin & Lincoln 2008; Farrell 2009; Gratton & Jones 2010).

e) Cronbach’s Alpha

First, Cronbach’s reliability check was first conducted for all existing and newly identified items for each construct. Reliability has been described by Field (2006, p. 1) as a logical relationship underpinned by “the fact that a scale should consistently reflect the construct it is measuring”. Here the idea is “individual (or sets of items) should produce results consistent with the overall questionnaire”. The most common way in measuring the reliability is by use of Cronbach’s Alpha (Field 2006), which “is based on the average correlation of items within a test if the items are standardised. Because Cronbach’s Alpha can be interpreted as a correlation coefficient, it ranges from 0 to 1” (Coakes, Steed & Price 2008, p. 118). For theory testing purposes the scholarly literature (Nunally & Bernstein 1994; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000) suggests a cut-off level for reliability for each individual experience as .70. Therefore, after this first step of analysis, all items that were not significantly contributing to the reliability for each single construct were not considered for parsimony purpose (Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000).

f) Construct Reliability

Beyond the examination of factor loading and Cronbach's Alpha, a further key approach in assessing the internal consistency of a measurement tool is by testing the construct reliability (CR) (Hair et al. 1995; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000). The construct reliability score is similar to Cronbach's Alpha, and is often used in conjunction with Structural Equation Models (Fornell & Larcker 1981; Hair et al. 1995; Hair et al. 2006). Construct reliability "is a measure of the internal consistency of the construct indicators, depicting the degree to which they 'indicate' the common latent (unobserved) construct" (Hair et al. 1995, p. 641). In comparison to Cronbach's Alpha, construct reliability extracts slightly different results and is computed by using the "squared sum of factor loadings for each construct and the sum of the error variance terms for a construct" (Hair et al. 2006, p. 777). The scholarly literature generally suggests that CR "should be .7 or higher to indicate adequate convergence or internal consistency" (Hair et al. 2006, p. 779).

g) Average Variance Extracted

Another method for assessing the validity of a construct is the average variance extracted score (Cheung & Lee 2001). The average variance extracted score has been defined by Farrell (2009, p. 3) as the "the average amount of variation that a latent construct is able to explain in the observed variables to which it is theoretically related". In theory, a latent construct 'A' does usually correlate with observed variables relating to 'A'. In the scholarly literature, this correlation is most commonly referred to as the factor loading. By estimating a square score for each of these correlations, the amount of variation for any of the observed variable that the latent construct accounts for is produced. When averaging this variance across all observed variables, the AVE is generated (Farrell 2009; Fornell & Larcker 1981; Gruber et al. 2010). In terms of the conventions within the scholarly literature, an AVE rate of .5 was regarded as sufficient for establishing convergent validity (Cheung & Lee 2001; Fornell & Larcker 1981; Gruber et al. 2010; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000).

h) Discriminant validity

The results of the previous AVE test were then used for assessing discriminant validity (DV) among constructs. Hair et al. (2006, p. 778) define DV as "the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs". More specifically, DV

means “that a latent variable is able to account for more variance in the observed variables associated with it than a) measurement error or similar, unmeasured influences, or b) other constructs within the conceptual framework” (Farrell 2009, p. 3). To test this, different constructs were evaluated by comparing the variance extracted estimates (of one experience at a time) with the square of the highest correlation between this experience, with any other experience. Discriminant validity is established if the variance extracted estimate is greater than the squared correlation (Fornell & Larcker 1981; Gruber et al. 2010; Hair et al. 2006; Lani 2009).

4.7.2 Measurement of Additional Scales

Based on the literature review (Chapter Two), other research related constructs were explored, hypotheses were developed and scales for the measurement of team identification (Mael & Ashforth 1992; Gwinner & Swanson 2003), football domain involvement (Fischer & Wakefield 1998; Gwinner & Swanson 2003), self-brand connection (Escalas & Bettman 2003; Escalas 2004; Park et al. 2009), emotional attachment (Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005) and brand commitment (Beatty, Homer & Kahle 1988; Park et al. 2009) have been identified. Construct validity for each of the following scales has been established by use of confirmatory factor analysis following exactly the same procedure as outlined above.

a) Team Identification

Based on Gwinner and Swanson’s (2003) earlier work into antecedents and outcomes of sport sponsorship, their adapted version of Mael and Asforth’s (1992) spectator identification scale was used to measure team identification. This scale has also been adapted by other scholar such as Cornwell and Coote (2005) and Lings and Owen (2007) who used similar modifications Mael and Ashforth’s scale to explore the role of team identification in forming higher levels of sponsor support. Using this modified scale has been done for four main reasons. First, Gwinner and Swanson (2003) applied their scale in the context of sport sponsorship. Here they have empirically tested the relationship of “fan identification on four distinct outcomes of sport sponsorship: sponsor recognition, attitude towards the sponsor, sponsor patronage, and satisfaction with the sponsor” (Gwinner 1997, p. 275). Consequently, by applying Gwinner and Swanson’s scale within the context of this study, their research will be

extended into another domain – its relationship to social media engagement with a sport sponsors football channel. Second, similar to this study, Gwinner and Swanson (2003) used structural equation modelling in supporting their findings that “highly identified fans are more likely to exhibit the investigated sponsorship outcomes” (p. 275). Third, their scale has been identified in the scholarly literature as particularly fruitful in predicting brand related outcomes in sports contexts (Becker-Olsen & Hill 2006; Hassay & Peloza 2009; Lings & Owen 2007; Wann 2006). Finally, modified versions of the team identification scale have, although in different contexts, been tested for scale validity and reliability and suggested to be valid and reliable measures (Cornwell & Coote 2005; Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Lings & Owen 2007). Therefore, a six item seven point Liker-type scale anchored at 1= “Strongly Disagree” to 7 = “Strongly Agree” based on Mael and Asforth’s (1992) was applied (see Appendix 1).

Table 1: Team Identification

Item	Item text
T1	When someone criticises your football club, it feels like a personal insult.
T2	I'm very interested in what others think about my football club.
T3	When I talk about my football team I usually say "we" rather than "they".
T4	My team's successes are my successes.
T5	When someone praises my football team, it feels like a personal compliment.
T6	If a story in the media criticises my football team, I would feel embarrassed.

Gwinner and Swanson (2003)

b) Football Domain Involvement

In sport and leisure environments the concept of activity involvement has been shown to be an important variable of leisure behaviour (Alexandris & Tsiotsou 2012; Kyle et al. 2004). Activity involvement with a sports activity represents “an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest toward a recreation activity or associated product” (Havitz & Dimanche 1997, p. 246). As outlined earlier, a similar term

(domain involvement) was used by Gwinner and Swanson (2003) who suggested that, in addition to a particular team, some spectators might also show interest in a particular sport (Alexandris & Tsiotsou 2012; Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Tsiotsou & Alexandris 2009). This suggestion is based on scholarly research (Lascu et al. 1995) that explored domain involvement among golfers (Alexandris & Tsiotsou 2012). In their research, Lascu et al. (1995) provided empirical evidence that sportsmen who were highly involved with golf also developed higher sponsorship awareness compared to those having low levels of involvement with golf (Alexandris & Tsiotsou 2012; Lascu et al. 1995; Tsiotsou & Alexandris 2009). Gwinner and Swanson (2003) provided further evidence that involvement with the sports also influences other associated variables such as attachment to a team. Several studies have then applied Gwinner and Swanson's (2003) domain involvement scale as provided further empirical support for the scales' validity and reliability (Tsiotsou & Alexandris 2009). As with the team identification scale, the utilised domain involvement scale has also been adapted by Gwinner and Swanson (2003) for the purpose of their study of identifying outcomes of sport sponsorship. They modified Fischer and Wakefield's (1998) involvement scale to distinguish involvement with the domain football from team identification. Next, to reliability and validity reasons, the suitability of this scale is based on the same three main reasons as explained above. Therefore, a three item, seven point Likert-type scale anchored at 1= "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree" based on Fischer and Wakefield (1998) was applied (see Appendix 1).

Table 2: Football Domain Involvement

Item	Item text
F1	Football is very important to me.
F2	I think about football all of the time.
F3	I watch football 'live' or on television whenever I can.

Gwinner and Swanson (2003)

c) Self-Brand Connection

The level of self-brand connection, “the extent to which individuals have incorporated brands into their self-concept”, has been measured by use of Escalas’s (Escalas 1996; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Escalas 2004) self-brand connection scale. The decision to use this scale in this thesis was based on three main arguments. First, Escalas’s (Escalas 1996; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Escalas 2004) scale has been identified as a main tool of enquiry in consumer behaviour research exploring a) consumer - brand relationships, b) consumer - media - brand contexts, and c) media engagement - brand dynamics (Chang 2009; Sprott, Czellar & Spangenberg 2009; Wang & Calder 2006, 2009; Wentzel, Tomczak & Herrmann 2009; Yang, Kang & Johnson 2010). Second, Escalas’s (Escalas 1996; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Escalas 2004) scale is regarded as especially useful in brand related media settings, as it allows researchers to “view brand-self connections not as the number of brands to which the consumer is connected, but rather the strength of connectedness a consumer has to a given brand” (Park et al. 2009). Third, Escalas (1996) self-brand connection scale has largely been used in academic research establishing scale validity and reliability in various different research setting (Moore & Miles Homer 2008; Moore & Wurster 2007). Therefore, Escalas’s (1996) seven item, seven point scale was applied. Accordingly, items have been anchored from 1 = “Not at all” to 7 = “Extremely well” (see Appendix 1).

Table 3: Self-Brand Connection

Item	Item text
SB1	(...) reflects who I am.
SB2	I can identify with (...).
SB3	I feel a personal connection to (...).
SB4	I (can) use (...) to communicate who I am to other people.
SB5	I think (...) helps me become the type of person I want to be.
SB6	I consider (...) to be “me” (it reflects who I consider myself to be or the way that I want to present myself to others).
SB7	SB7: (...) suits me well.

Escalas (1996)

d) Emotional Attachment

As outlined in the literature review in Chapter 2, the emotional attachment scale by Thomson, MacInnes and Park (2005) is currently the most comprehensive scale in measuring outcomes in a manner consistent with attachment theory. Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005) demonstrate that their measures of emotional attachment and attitude valence have distinct effects, with attachment better predicting brand loyalty, the ultimate goal of the earlier explained loyalty pathway. Further, their scale explains variance beyond other brand-relationship constructs, such as trust, involvement, brand attitudes and satisfaction. Additionally, the emotional attachment scale has previously provided empirical evidence to predict customer commitment towards a brand (Park et al. 2009). Finally, although being a fairly recently developed construct, scale validity and reliability has been established through empirical testing in various consumer-brand related studies (Albert 2010; Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence 2009; Park et al. 2010a; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Consistent with their approach this thesis employed a ten item, 7 point scale, anchoring at 1 = “Describes very poorly” to 7 = “Describes very well” has been applied (see Appendix 1).

Table 4: Emotional Attachment

Item	Item text
EA1	Affectionate
EA2	Friendly
EA3	Loved
EA4	Peaceful
EA5	Passionate
EA6	Delighted
EA7	Captivated
EA8	Connected
EA9	Bonded
EA10	Attached

Thomson, MacInnes and Park (2005)

e) Brand Commitment

Additionally, in an effort to gather comparative data to earlier studies by Thomson, MacInnes and Park (2005), and Park, Priester, MacInnes and Wan (2009) into the relationship of emotional attachment to brand commitment their scale for the measurement of brand commitment has been deployed. The “commitment measure resembles the measures used by Beatty, Homer and Kahle (1988)” and consists of five items, measured on a 10 point scale anchoring 0 = “Not at all” to 10 = “Completely” (Park et al. 2009).

Table 5: Brand Commitment

Item	Item text
COM1	To what extend are you loyal to (...)?
COM2	To what extend are you committed to (...)?
COM3	To what extend have you made a pledge to yourself to use (...) in future?
COM4	To what extend to you feel an allegiance to (...)
COM5	To what extend are you dedicated to (...)?

Beatty, Homer and Kahle (1988)

4.7.3 Structural Equation Modelling

This section of the research design chapter will introduce structural equation modelling (SEM), the main statistical method used for hypothesis testing. The section begins with an introduction to SEM, which is then followed by a description of the two-step approach to deploying SEM. After discussion of estimation methods and model fit tests, the section will conclude with a brief discussion of model re-specification measures and principles.

a) Introduction

In regards to Hair et al. (1995), multivariate techniques such as multiple regression, factor analysis and discriminant analysis offer powerful tools in assessing “a wide range of managerial and theoretical questions. But they all share one common limitation: each technique can examine only a single relationship at a time” (p.617). For this reason SEM, an extension of several multivariate techniques, has been developed to provide “a straightforward method of dealing with multiple relationships simultaneously while providing statistical efficiency” (p.617). Primarily, SEM “combines factor analysis with path analysis, but it also encompasses analysis of variance, analysis of covariance, principal component analysis, classical test theory, and non-recursive econometric modelling” (Holmes-Smith 2010, p. 11).

SEM is now used in many fields of study, and has gained credibility among marketing scholars (Baumgartner & Homburg 1996; Fornell & Larcker 1981; Tomarken & Waller 2005; Van Leeuwen 2001; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000). SEM has been widely applied as a statistical method in studies examining customer brand relationship in various contexts (Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000; Van Leeuwen 2001; Gwinner & Swanson 2003; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005; Park et al. 2009; Gruber et al. 2010).

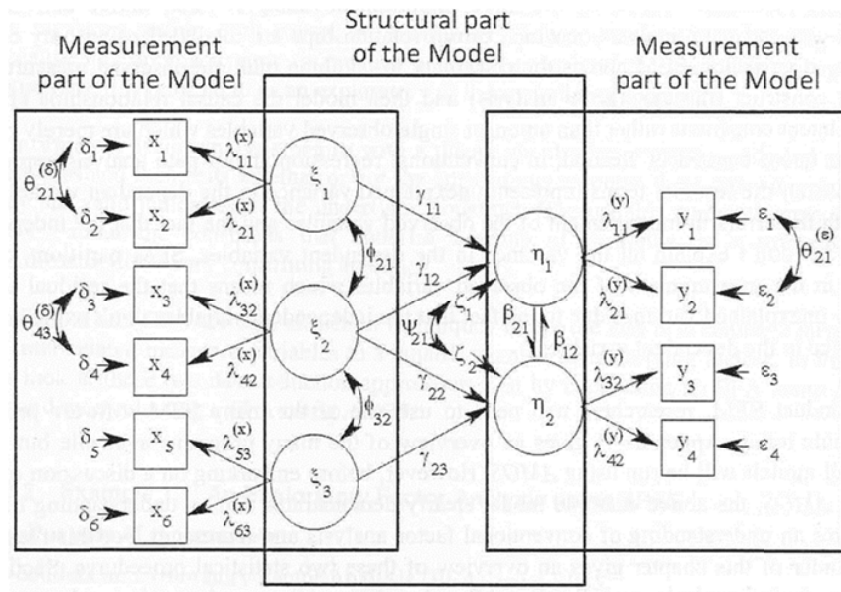
SEM is regarded as being similar to multiple regression and path analysis; this is a key reason for use in the simultaneous testing of relationships among a variety of variables (Van Leeuwen 2001). However, multiple regression is limited in that it does not allow “the same variable to be both predictor and criterion in the one analysis” (Van Leeuwen 2001, p. 148). Further, as Kline (2010) pinpoints, multiple regression does not account for a variable’s measurement error. By comparison to multiple regression, path analysis does allow a variable to be predictor and criterion at the same time, but not overcome the limitation of a measurement error (Van Leeuwen 2001). Here, Kline (2010) asserts, the main limitation of path analysis is that it relies on single item measures for any construct for which relations are attempted to be modelled. In this regard, the scholarly literature generally suggests that the use of SEM as a multi-item measurement is a superior approach (Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000; Van Leeuwen 2001; Schumacker & Lomax 2010).

Based on this discussion, SEM has been selected for this thesis as an ideal statistical technique for testing the research hypotheses that are based on what Anglim (2007, p. 1) has described as complex relationships “between observed (measured) and unobserved (latent) variables and also relationships between two or more latent variables”.

b) Two-step approach

Structural equation models typically combine two parts: a factor analytical component (the measurement model) and a path analysis component (the structural model) (Holmes-Smith 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010). The measurement part of the model specifies how the latent variables are measured in regards to observed variables; the structural model instead outlines relationships among latent variables (Van Leeuwen 2001). A generalised full model is outlined below. Within this model, three independent latent constructs (ξ_1 , ξ_2 and ξ_3) are measured by the observed variables x_1 , x_2 , x_3 , x_4 , x_5 and x_6 . Further, the two dependent latent constructs (η_1 and η_2) are respectively measured by the four dependent observed variables y_1 , y_2 , y_3 and y_4 . Measurement error associated with x_1 , x_2 , x_3 , x_4 , x_5 and x_6 (independent observed variables) is represented as δ_1 , δ_2 , δ_3 , δ_4 , δ_5 and δ_6 while measurement error associated with y_1 , y_2 , y_3 and y_4 (dependent observed variables) is expressed by the error terms ε_1 , ε_2 , ε_3 and ε_4 (Holmes-Smith 2010).

Figure 12: A Generalized Full Model



Holmes-Smith (2010)

The first step of the two-step development process usually involves the elaboration of the measurement model, which is then understood as the input for the structural model (Van Leeuwen 2001). Within this structural (path analysis) component of the model, “variance in the dependent latent constructs (η_1 and η_2) is being explained by one or more of the other latent variables in the model (ξ_1 , ξ_2 , ξ_3 and η_1) as described by the regression coefficients γ_{11} , γ_{12} , γ_{22} , γ_{23} and β_{21} ” (Holmes-Smith 2010, p. 1.2). Further, existing unexplained variance in the latent constructs η_1 and η_2 is defined in the above diagram as ζ_1 and ζ_2 (Holmes-Smith 2010).

Although some scholars advocate that both steps could be done simultaneously, others (Tomarken & Waller 2005; Anglim 2007; Holmes-Smith 2010; Kline 2010) recommend a separate analysis of the measurement and the structural model. In this regard, Joereskog and Soerbom (1993, p. 113) contend, “the testing of the structural model, i.e., the testing of the initially specified theory, may be meaningless unless it is first established that the measurement model holds”. A two-step approach was therefore followed for this thesis. The measurement model was developed by using composite measures established through one-factor congeneric models (as outlined in section 4.7.4 The Measurement Model) of this chapter. The analysis process for the structural (path analytic) models are outlined in section 4.7.5.

c) Estimation method

The estimation method refers to the method used in estimating “the values of the unknown parameters in a research model” (Van Leeuwen 2001, p. 149). The statistical program AMOS was used for this research project because it offered a variety of estimation methods. The two most frequently used methods are ‘Maximum Likelihood’ (ML) and ‘Asymptotic Distribution Free’ (ADF) (Hair et al. 2006).

The ML method is mostly recommended as a method of estimation for research projects with smaller samples sizes (Hair et al. 2006; Kline 2010). Although, the recommended sample size varies in relation to the complexity of the model; a general sample between 200 to 400 subjects is regarded as acceptable (Anglim 2007; Holmes-Smith 2010; Kline 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010). The ML method is based upon multivariate normally distributed data. However, if sample sizes are reasonably large, estimations derived are said to be reasonably accurate even if normality in distribution is violated (Kline 2010; Van Leeuwen 2001). In comparison to the ML method, the ADF method does not assume that data is multivariate normally distributed. However, in regards to Kline (2010), a major limitation of the ADF method is that a large sample size ($N = 200 - 500$ for simple models; minimum $N = 1000$ for complex models) is deemed necessary. The robustness of the ML methods in regard to non-normally distributed data, combined with the complexity of the model used within this thesis and a sample size of $N = 233$ led to the use of the ML method (Holmes-Smith 2010; Kline 2010; Tomarken & Waller 2005; Van Leeuwen 2001).

d) Model fit

After model estimation was complete, a model fit assessment was conducted. The scholarly literature suggests a variety of measures in assessing model fit. In structural equation modelling these are referred to as ‘model fit’ statistics (Tomarken & Waller 2005; Holmes-Smith 2010; Kline 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010). A common way of assessing model fit is to assess the normed chi-square which is the chi-square – degrees of freedom ratio (which ideally should not exceed a ratio of 5 to 1), complemented by several other fit statistics (Holmes-Smith 2010). However, the literature does not provide a set of ‘best’ fit statistics because of several factors that may influence the accuracy and ultimately the appropriateness of each single fit statistic (Van Leeuwen 2001; Tomarken & Waller 2005; Anglim 2007; Holmes-Smith

2010; Kline 2010). As Van Leeuwen (2001, p. 150) notes, “these include model misspecification, small-sample bias, estimation-method effect, the effect of violation of normality, independence and model complexity”. For the purpose of this thesis, seven tests were conducted to assess the fit of measurement and structural model. The decision to include these fit statistics was based upon the scholarly literature (Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000; Van Leeuwen 2001; Tomarken & Waller 2005; Anglim 2007; Coakes, Steed & Price 2008; Gruber et al. 2010; Holmes-Smith 2010; Kline 2010), which recommends and most commonly uses the following:

1. Normed Chi-square (χ^2/df) – The χ^2/df should be greater than 1 but smaller than 5 (Holmes-Smith 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010; Van Leeuwen 2001).
2. Probability level (P) – P should be larger than .05 (Arbuckle 2009; Schumacker & Lomax 2010). However, this p-value is measured in relation to the Chi-square, which is likely to be significant (p-value < 0.05) when the sample size is big (larger than 200). Therefore among the chosen fit statistics used, this value should be somewhat discounted, especially in complex models (Wang 2011).
3. Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) – RMSEA should ideally be less than .05 (Holmes-Smith 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010). However, Kenny (2010) suggests the RMSEA index may sometimes be misleading when the degrees of freedom and the sample size are relatively low.
4. Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), or R² in ordinary regression – An acceptable level for the GFI should be greater than .9 (Arbuckle 2009; Holmes-Smith 2010; Van Leeuwen 2001; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000).
5. Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) – An acceptable level for the AGFI should be greater than .9 (Arbuckle 2009; Holmes-Smith 2010; Van Leeuwen 2001; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000).

6. Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) – The TLI should be greater than .9 (Holmes-Smith 2010; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000).
7. Comparative Fit Index (CFI) – The CFI should ideally be larger than .9 (Anglim 2007; Holmes-Smith 2010; Kline 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010).

e) Model re-specification

The above fit statistics have been reviewed in order to determine whether the model fits the data. In some cases these fit statistics may indicate that the model does not fit the data well. The most common reason for poor fit is misspecification (Schumacker & Lomax 2010). In many cases, a poor model fit is grounded in “incorrect inclusion or exclusion of a parameter” (Van Leeuwen 2001, p. 155). Based on the scholarly literature (Bollen 1989; Hair et al. 1995; Hair et al. 2006; Holmes-Smith 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010), three basic principles have been followed during this research project, in cases where the fit statistics suggested model re-specification.

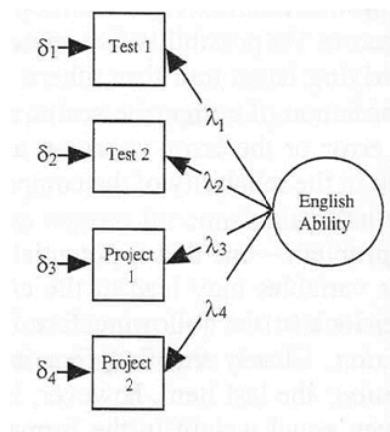
First, as Hair et al. (2006) suggested, researchers ought to make “modifications with care and only after obtaining theoretical justification for what empirically is deemed significant” (p. 644). Second, when looking for improvements, the researcher has considered standardised residuals (differences between the observed and estimated correlation / covariance) at a threshold level of + 2.58 (Hair et al. 2006), that the literature “considers statistically significant” (Hair et al. 2006, p. 644). The third principle followed in the modification process is that re-specification needs to be, as Van Leeuwen (2001) has put it, “iterative in nature. Parameters are to be added or removed one at a time, with the model being re-run after each modification until a conceptually sound and acceptable fitting model is achieved” (p. 155).

4.7.4 The Measurement Model

This section will outline how the measurement model was developed. As discussed earlier, the development of a measurement model should be the first step in the suggested two-step approach to SEM (Hair et al. 2006; Kline 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010; Van Leeuwen 2001).

As suggested by Van Leeuwen (2001) and Holmes-Smith (2010), the first step in establishing construct validity should be the development of one-factor congeneric models for each proposed scale to: a) further investigate uni-dimensionality, and b) convergent validity. Here, “congeneric means ‘of the same family’ or of the same kind” (Coote 2009, p. 5) and describes a model in which a single latent variable is described by “a set of putatively interrelated observed variables” (Coote 2009, p. 5). Based on this, Holmes-Smith (2010) described one-factor congeneric models as an extension of confirmatory factor analysis. Here, SEM “allows for complex modelling whereby error associated with the measurement of the indicator variables can be accounted for, the unequal contribution of indicator variables towards the measurement of latent variables can be accounted for, and the fit of these indicators as measures of the latent variables can be tested” (Holmes-Smith 2010, pp. 7-2). Thus, a more realistic representation of data is provided that maximises the reliability of latent variables (Van Leeuwen 2001; Hair et al. 2006; Holmes-Smith 2010). Figure 13 overleaf illustrates a simple one-factor congeneric model in which the observed indicator variables Test 1 (x_1), Test 2 (x_2), Project 1 (x_3), and Project 2 (x_4) represent the single latent variable ‘English Ability’ ($\xi = Ksi$) (Holmes-Smith 2010).

Figure 13: Congeneric Measures



Holmes-Smith (2010)

The measurement error associated with the observed indicator variables are labelled δ_1 , δ_2 , δ_3 and δ_4 ; factor loadings (regression coefficients) are labelled λ_1 , λ_2 , λ_3 and λ_4 . The equations for the one factor congeneric models can now be illustrated in structural form:

Test 1: $x_1 = \lambda_1 \xi + \delta_1$

Test 2: $x_2 = \lambda_2 \xi + \delta_2$

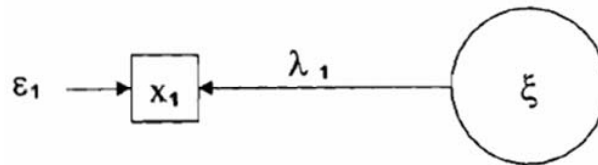
Project 1: $x_3 = \lambda_3 \xi + \delta_3$

Project 2: $x_4 = \lambda_4 \xi + \delta_4$

The Structural Equation Modelling software (AMOS) was used to estimate these parameters and evaluate the overall fit of each single model (e.g., the ten social media engagement experiences). For this purpose, the earlier explained fit measures were used in further confirming construct validity. Model re-specification procedures were followed in accordance with the principles outlined in the section above.

Once construct validity for each of the one-factor congeneric models was established, the scores of each single experience (items) were computed into an overall composite measure for each construct. A resulting composite measurement model is outlined in Figure 14 overleaf. This model outlines the composite observed variable X_1 , the regression coefficient λ_1 and the error variance ε_1 which have later been used for input to the overall structural equation model (Van Leeuwen 2001).

Figure 14: Composite Measurement Model



Van Leeuwen (2001)

Heatherton (1994), Hair et al. (2006) and Holmes-Smith (2010) “used a partial aggregation model” (Van Leeuwen 2001, p. 181) in which separate experience dimensions (e.g., Utilitarian, Temporal, and Intrinsic Enjoyment) of the latent variable Social Media Engagement “were treated as indicators of the latent variable, with each dimension being an aggregation of items” (Van Leeuwen 2001, p. 181). However, in comparison to the social media engagement scale (consisting of ten different experiences with variable numbers of items) all other composite measures were only aggregated from one set of items. Also, by using several measures of one concept - combined into a single variable - the number of variables is reduced. This not only

improves model parsimony but also improves the overall model fit (Schumacker & Lomax 2010; Van Leeuwen 2001).

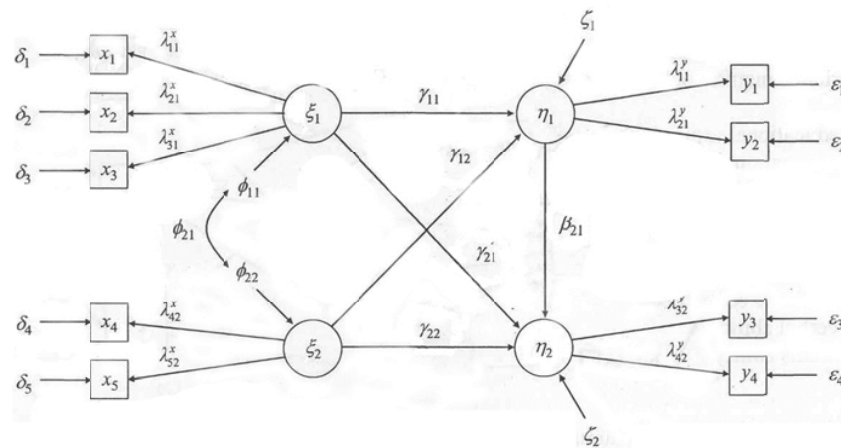
The scores for each single composite measure were derived by computing a 'Mean – Variable' with the SPSS statistical software (Hair et al. 1995; Hair et al. 2006; Schumacker & Lomax 2010; Van Leeuwen 2001). These scores were then used to a) assess discriminant validity among constructs, and b) assess second order engagement factors (for the experience constructs). There is much debate over the threshold level for discriminant validity. While a numerical coefficient value of +1.0 indicates a perfect positive correlation, a value of up to +.5 has often been regarded as acceptable when assessing the relative strength of the relationship between two variables (Hair et al. 1995; Hair et al. 2006). However, other scholarly literature (Bagozzi 1980; Gold, Malhotra & Segars 2001; Meng & Heyman 2002) suggests that “much higher correlations do not necessarily indicate a lack of discriminant validity” (Van Leeuwen 2001, p. 184). This stream of the scholarly literature argues that a cut off value of .9 may still indicate discriminant validity, if other indices such as residual matrices do not indicate a perfect correlation (Bagozzi 1980; Gold, Malhotra & Segars 2001; Meng & Heyman 2002).

In regards to b), the assessment of second order engagement factors, it is mentioned that the earlier content analysis had revealed two more experience themes (see 4.5 Content Analysis). However, these have also been identified during earlier research by Calder and Malthouse (2008). Therefore, the same procedures (CFA, congeneric model testing, composite measurement, etc.) have been applied to these two additional experience constructs. Next, in line with Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009), the total composite mean scores were then used to explore the feasibility of creating an overall engagement score and, if not possible, “develop second-order engagement factors by applying exploratory factor analysis” to the ten experiences (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009, p. 325).

4.7.5 The Structural Model

The second step in developing a full Structural Equation Model involves attaching the measurement model to the structural model. A visual representation of a full latent variable structural equation model is usually conducted by use of a path diagram. The example overleaf of a path diagram by Schumacker and Lomax (1996) theorises that the latent variable η_1 (student aspiration) is measured by y_1 and y_2 . Further, y_3 and y_4 can be understood as measures for the latent variable η_2 (educational achievement). Next, x_1 , x_2 and x_3 are measures for the latent variable ξ_1 (home background) while x_4 and x_5 are measures for ξ_2 (student ability). Within this path diagram, it is theorised that structural relations exist among the latent variables. Here, the underlying assumption is that “variation in student aspiration and educational achievement can be explained in part by variation in home background and student ability. An effect of student aspiration on student achievement is also theorised” (Coote 2009, p. 5). Figure 15 overleaf present a general path diagram as suggested by Schumacker and Lomax (1996).

Figure 15: Path Diagram



Schumacker and Lomax (1996)

“The λx ’s are the regression weights for the effects of the ξ ’s on the x ’s” while “the λy ’s are the regression weights for the effects of the η ’s on the y ’s” (Coote 2009, p. 6). Further error terms associated with the x ’s and y ’s are labelled δ_1 to δ_5 and ϵ_1 to ϵ_4 . The structural parameters of the path diagram are the regression weight β_{21} for the effect of η_1 on η_2 and the γ regression weights for the effects of the ξ ’s on the η ’s. Further, associated error terms for the η ’s are the ζ ’s. Finally, the Φ ’s are the

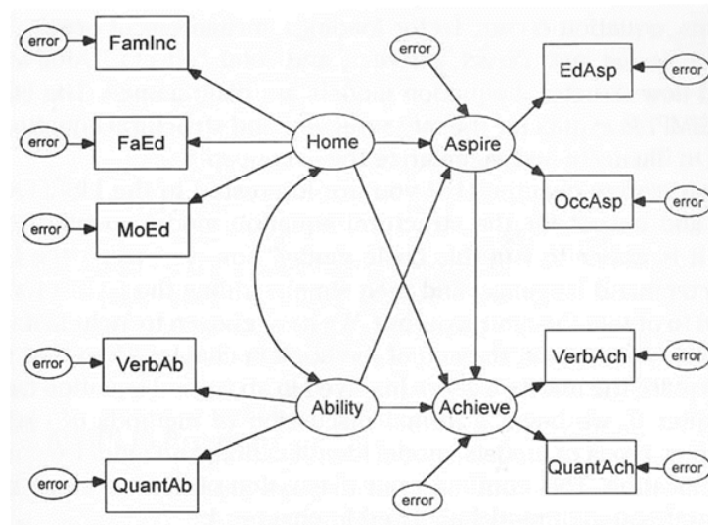
variances and co-variances of the ξ 's. Here it is usually assumed that ξ_1 and ξ_2 are correlated (Φ_{21}) which is why the majority of statistical scholarship illustrates this relationship by use of a single double sided arrow from ξ_1 to ξ_2 . However, this only assumes a correlation, not a causal relationship (Coote 2009). Respectively, the structural equations for the described path diagram are as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\eta_1 &= \gamma_{11}\xi_1 + \gamma_{12}\xi_2 + \zeta_1 \\ \eta_2 &= \beta_{21}\eta_1 + \gamma_{21}\xi_1 + \gamma_{22}\xi_2 + \zeta_2\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}x_1 &= \lambda_{11}^x \xi_1 + \delta_1 & y_1 &= \lambda_{11}^y \eta_1 + \varepsilon_1 \\ x_2 &= \lambda_{21}^x \xi_1 + \delta_2 & y_2 &= \lambda_{21}^y \eta_1 + \varepsilon_2 \\ x_3 &= \lambda_{31}^x \xi_1 + \delta_3 & y_3 &= \lambda_{32}^y \eta_2 + \varepsilon_3 \\ x_4 &= \lambda_{42}^x \xi_2 + \delta_4 & y_4 &= \lambda_{42}^y \eta_2 + \varepsilon_4 \\ x_5 &= \lambda_{52}^x \xi_2 + \delta_5\end{aligned}$$

Based on the model above, a more descriptive visual representation of indicator variables, latent variables, structural relations and error terms is outlined below in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Complete Structural Equation Model



Schumacker and Lomax (2010)

In regards to Schuhmacker and Lomax (2010), the total effects of this model can now be illustrated as:

Home	→	Aspire	= direct effect
Ability	→	Aspire	= direct effect
Home	→	Achieve	= direct effect + indirect effect through Aspire
Ability	→	Achieve	= direct effect + indirect effect through Aspire
Aspire	→	Achieve	= direct effect

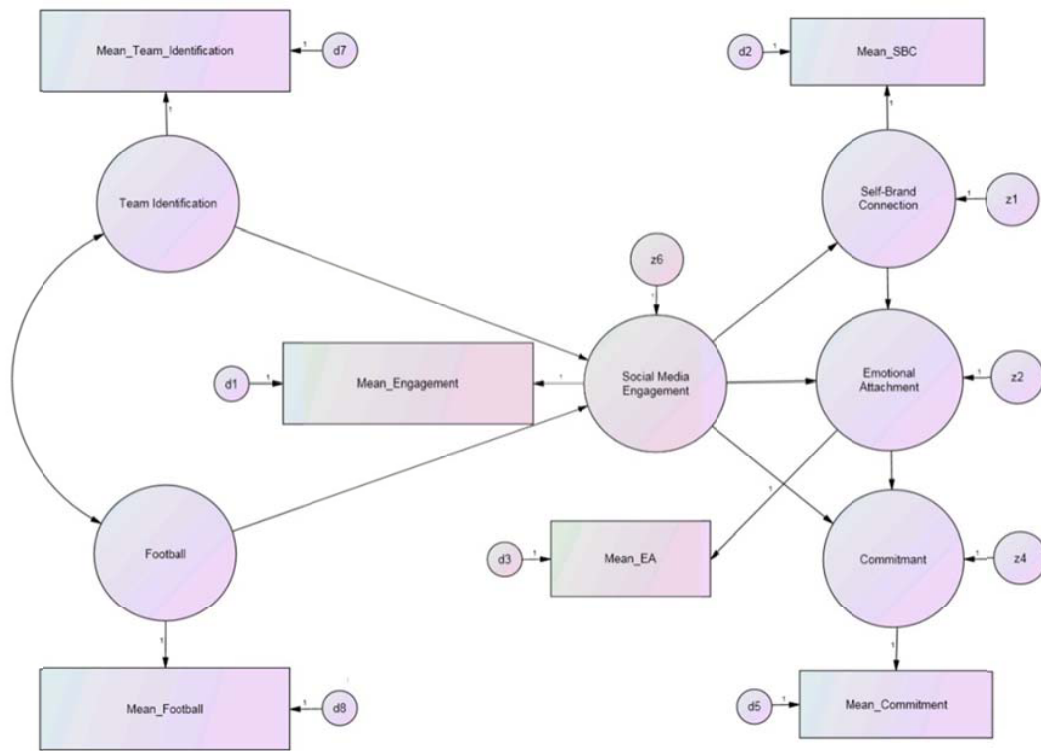
Consequently, the conceptual model outlined in chapter three was used as a guideline for the structural modelling process for this thesis. Here, all components derived from the measurement model processes were added to the structural model (Van Leeuwen 2001). Figure 17 overleaf represents the resulting model reflecting guidelines from the model above (in AMOS) and the researcher's theorising about the latent structure in the data. As per the literature review, content analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis, the model contends that:

- a) the composite factor Mean_Team_Identification is a measure of the latent variable Team Identification;
- b) the composite factor Mean_Football is a measure for the latent variable Football Domain Involvement (labelled 'Football' within the model).
- c) the composite factor Mean_Engagement is a measure for Social Media Engagement with Facebook Football Sponsor channels.
- d) the composite factor Mean_SBC is a measure for self-brand connection.
- e) the composite factor Mean_EA is a measure for emotional attachment to the brand / sponsor.
- f) the composite factor Mean_Commitment is a measure for brand commitment.

The squares enclosing the composite factors are used in AMOS to remind the user / reader that the composite factors are in fact observed rather than latent variables. The linked notations (in small circles) d_1 to d_8 in the path diagram overleaf represent the measurement error terms associated with the observed variables (compare δ_1 to δ_5 and

ε_1 to ε_4 in Schumacker and Lomax (1996) model above). The larger circles enclosing ‘Team Identification’, ‘Football’, ‘Social Media Engagement’, ‘Self-Brand Connection’, ‘Emotional Attachment’, and ‘Commitment’ are used in Amos to represent latent variables. Linked to these latent variables in medium-sized circles are the prediction errors (existing unexplained variance – compare ζ_1 and ζ_2 in Schumacker and Lomax (1996) model above), labelled z_1 to z_5 . As outlined overleaf, ‘Team Identification’ and ‘Football’ are assumed to be correlated, which is why this relationship is represented in this model as a single double sided arrow.

Figure 17: Structural Equation Model



4.7.6 Choice Experiment

Hypotheses 8 to 10 were examined using a discrete choice experiment (DCE) to understand if the ultimate latent variable (of the structural equation model) brand commitment moderates the relationship between three product attributes (brand, price, & endorser) and consumer choice behaviour. Specifically, the DCE was used to explore if brand commitment facilitates greater brand consciousness, decreases price sensitivity, and facilitates preference towards the brand endorsing football player.

Choice experiments have their origin in behavioural theory that links attitudes and behaviour; it takes “inter-linked behaviours into account” (Louviere, Flynn & Carson 2010, p. 62). This theory is heavily based on work by McFadden (McFadden 1974, 1986; McFadden & Train 2000) who extended Thurstone’s (1927) random utility theory (RUT) of paired comparisons to multiple comparisons (Louviere, Flynn & Carson 2010). As Louviere, Flynn and Carson (2010, p. 62) suggested, the key principle here is that RUT is based:

on choice behaviour of humans, not numbers [...] Specifically, RUT proposes that there is a latent construct ‘utility’ existing in a person’s head that cannot be observed by the researcher. That is, a person has a ‘utility’ for each choice alternative. But these utilities cannot be ‘seen’ by researchers, which is why they are termed ‘latent’.

Therefore, RUT is comprised of a systematic (explainable) component that is measured by a set of different attributes explaining different choice sets and a random (unexplainable) component that impact choices (Louviere, Flynn & Carson 2010). The basic formula for RUT is:

$$U_{in} = V_{in} + \varepsilon_{in}$$

Here, U_{in} describes “the unobservable utility that individual n associates with choice alternative i , V_{in} is the systematic, explainable component of utility that individual n associates with alternative i and ε_{in} is the random component associated with individual n and option i ” (Louviere, Flynn & Carson 2010, p. 62). In comparison to research designs relying exclusively on rating scales to measure preference, DCEs have three key advantages. These are summarized by Wise (2011, pp. 53 - 4) who states that:

- a) “DCEs assume that individuals are utility maximisers, a less restrictive assumption in contrast to those made by rating scales;
- b) DCEs yield multiple observations per participant at each observation (choice set), better informing choice models used to estimate/predict choice behaviour; and

- c) rather than determining the importance of individual attributes one at a time, DCEs allow the researcher to capture relative importance by asking respondents to make trade-offs between alternatives”.

Hence, for the reasons outlined above, a DCE has been used to measure the effects of brand commitment on three product attributes – brand, price and endorser for two types of football shoes.

After all the data were collected during the main survey period, the DCE was estimated by use of a conditional logit model. The terminology for conditional logit models is not consistent within general scholarly literature (Heiss 2002). Therefore, this thesis refers to Takanori and Kuroda (2006) in describing a conditional logit model that is based on RUT and widely used “because of its convenient form of the choice probabilities and due to its globally concave likelihood function that makes maximum likelihood estimates straightforward” (Heiss 2002, p. 230).

Within this model, x_{ij} is classified as an attribute vector of good j which the individual i faces; further, β describes the impacts of the changes of the attributes; while ε_{ij} illustrates the random component, the random utility function of good j for individual i is expressed as $U_{ij} = \beta'x_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}$. Assuming that good j is chosen over good k it is assumed that individual i will choose good j in order to maximize the random utility function, if $U_{ij} > U_{ik}$ for any $k \neq i$ (Takanori & Kuroda 2006). As ε_{ji} is to be understood as a random component within the individual utility function, “the probability that individual i actually chooses the good (or alternative) j is written as $P(U_{ij} > U_{ik})$ for any $k \neq i$ ” (Takanori & Kuroda 2006, p. 8). Next, as McFadden (1974), Takanori & Kuroda (2006) and Haan (2006) outline, if the error terms ε_{ij} are independently and identically distributed with type I extreme value distribution – written as $F(\varepsilon_{ij}) = \exp(-\exp(-\varepsilon_{ij}))$ – the logit choice probability can be obtained as:

$$P_{ij} = P(U_{ij} > U_{ik}) = \exp(\beta'x_{ij}) / \sum_{k=1}^K \exp(\beta'x_{ik})$$

The maximum likelihood method has been used to estimate this model. Here, D_{ij} describes a dummy variable that takes value 1 if the individual i chooses the good j

and otherwise 0. Accordingly, the following likelihood function is obtained (Takanori & Kuroda 2006):

$$L = \sum_{i=1}^I \sum_{j=1}^J D_{ij} \ln P_{ij}$$

Based on the above discussed approaches, the DCE for this thesis involved individuals choosing preferred football shoes among several alternative choice sets in a hypothetical setting. The data for the DCE was collected together with the main questionnaire in the second-last section of the survey. Individuals were asked during to perform several sequences of such choices while every single football shoe alternative was described by a number of fixed attributes (Alpizar, Carlsson & Martinsson 2001). When describing the profile of both alternative choice sets, three different attributes (brand, price, celebrity) were used when an individual had to make their choice. Based on Street and Burgess's (2007) optimal discrete choice design method, a 2 (Adidas vs. Nike) by 2 (\$250 vs. \$350) by 2 (Schweinsteiger vs. Villa) by 2 (choice design: block A vs. block B) DCE was created, providing 16 different experimental conditions. These 16 profiles were designed in a systematic way to create two blocks of eight series of choice sets. Respondents were then assigned to complete the choice task. In detail, respondents had to compare two profiles consisting of three attributes each at a time. For choice set one this means, respondents had to compare the brand Adidas in regards to Nike, a price of US\$ 250 for a pair of shoes and the football player David Villa (Spain) in relation to Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany). In comparison to this first choice set, in choice set number 5 the opposed attributes were changed in that no preference had to be made for a brand (Adidas in both profiles); yet the price of US\$250 for the first profile of this choice set had to be compared to a price if US\$350 in the second profile of this choice set. This design, (as outlined below in Table 6), allowed an estimation of the main effects (of each attribute), interactions among attributes, and two-factor interactions between these attributes and individual difference variables (IDV) such as brand commitment (Street & Burgess 2007).

Table 6: Choice sets with attributes

Choice set:				Choice set:			
1	Adidas		Nike	2	Adidas		Nike
	US\$ 250	vs.	US\$ 250		US\$ 250	vs.	US\$ 250
	David Villa		Bastian Schweinsteiger		Bastian Schweinsteiger		David Villa
3	Adidas		Nike	4	Adidas		Nike
	US\$ 350	vs.	US\$ 350		US\$ 350	vs.	US\$ 350
	David Villa		Bastian Schweinsteiger		Bastian Schweinsteiger		David Villa
5	Adidas		Adidas	6	Adidas		Adidas
	US\$ 250	vs.	US\$ 350		US\$ 250	vs.	US\$ 350
	David Villa		Bastian Schweinsteiger		Bastian Schweinsteiger		David Villa
7	Nike		Nike	8	Nike		Nike
	US\$ 250	vs.	US\$ 350		US\$ 250	vs.	US\$ 350
	David Villa		Bastian Schweinsteiger		Bastian Schweinsteiger		David Villa

The IDV – brand commitment – was based on mean corrected estimates (e.g., Mean_Brand_Commitment minus mean value) and effects-coded attribute variables identifying the effect of:

- a) Brand: Nike (1) in relation to Adidas (-1);
- b) Price: \$350 (1) in relation to \$ 250 (-1); and
- c) Endorser: David Villa (1) in relation to Bastian Schweinsteiger (-1)

As with all survey generated data, the results have been downloaded and transformed into an SPSS data file. Next, all data were copied into an EXCEL sheet and stacked according to each choice alternative (Kwak, Wang & Louviere 2010). STATA SE/9.1 software was used to estimate the conditional logit model. Specifically, the choice model was estimated by use of the ‘clogit’ command (Long & Freese 2006).

5. Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the empirical research outlined in the previous research design chapter, addressing research hypotheses 1 to 10. First, the content structure of the Adidas and Nike Facebook Football Channels is outlined. This involves a description of procedures used for blended analysis (see section 4.5) of social media content, which is intended to provide insights into user experiences, as well as their thoughts and feelings – whether positive or negative. Second, the results of the pre-test and the online questionnaire survey are outlined. The survey results present a detailed description of each channel's user profiles and characteristics used in the quota sampling process for the online questionnaire. Third, the results from the confirmatory factor analysis and one factor congeneric model testing are presented. Fourth, consistent with the two-step approach for structural equation modelling, the full structural equation model, overall model fit and first seven research hypotheses are tested and results presented. Finally, the results of the discrete choice experiment pertaining to the last three research hypotheses are outlined by presenting the relationship testing between the values of different product attributes to brand commitment.

5.2 Content Structure

The content of the first 12 (Adidas Football Channel) to 18 (Nike Football Channel) months since the launch of both the Adidas and the Nike Facebook Football channels has been structured by use of the following key characteristics – Date, Content relation (e.g., Team, League, Product, Player), Type of content (e.g., Text, Picture, Video, Poll), Number of 'Likes' and Number of 'User-Comments'. The difference in length of observation was deemed necessary as Nike published significantly less posts than Adidas during their first six months since launching the platform. However, posts have significantly increased during the following 12 months.

This structural analysis has been conducted for two main reasons. First, based on the initial categorisation of content a total of 48 (24 for each channel), 'posts' were evenly selected from both channels in representing the overall content of each channel. Second, all user comments to these posts were then used in a 'blended' content

analysis for: a) the justification of existing experience constructs and their respective measurement items, and b) the identification of new experience constructs and measurement items.

5.2.1 Adidas Football Channel

During the first 12 months since its launch, a total of 420 content items were posted on the Adidas Football Channel. However, only 386 have been selected for further investigation as some posts were appearing/posted at least a second time. First, a content structure analysis of all 386 items identified seven main categories. These included:

1. solely player related posts;
2. solely team related posts;
3. solely product related posts;
4. player and product related posts;
5. team and product related posts;
6. posts related to instructions or training; and
7. general news items.

Second, these posts were further sub-structured into posts consisting of just text; posts with additional pictures; posts with additional videos; and posts connected to a poll or vote. Based on this first categorisation of content, 24 posts were purposively selected (at least one from each category and sub-category) to represent the overall content of the Adidas Football Channel for further analysis. Further, only posts with a minimum of 150 user comments were selected. This has been done to: a) secure a sufficient number of comments for the analysis and identification of user experiences and experience measurement items with the content, and b) secure a sufficient number of user comments that allows a proportional estimate (in percentage) of the different weighting/importance/appearance of each experience. Table 7 overleaf outlines the content structure of the Adidas Football channel.

Table 7: Content Structure - Adidas Football Channel

Product (P)	No	Team (T) Total	No
P Total	49	T Total	129
P with Picture	34	T with Video	11
P with just Text	0	T with Picture	78
P with Video	15	T with just Text	40
		T with Poll	0
Product / Player (PP)	No	Team World Cup (WC)	No
PP Total	33	T Total	61 (53%) of 129
PP with Picture	17	T with Video WC	9
PP with Video	12	T with Picture WC	48
PP with just Text	4	T with just Text WC	4
Product / Team (PT)	No	Team (T) Champions League	No
PT Total	13	T Total	27 (21%) of 129
PT with Picture	11	T with Video CL	0
PT with Video	2	T with Picture CL	13
PT with just Text	0	T with just Text CL	14
Player (P) Total	No	Team (no WC, no CL)	41 (32%) of 129
P Total	117	T with Video	2
P with Video	50	T with Picture	17
P with Picture	47	T with just Text	22
P with just Text	9		
P with Poll	11		
Player World Cup (WC)	57 (49%) of 117	Instructions (I)	No
P with Video WC	28	I Total	6
P with Picture WC	19	I with Video	2
P with just Text WC	1	I with Picture	4
		I with Text	0
Player Champions League	17 (15%) of 117	General News (GN)	No
P with Video CL	7	GN Total	39
P with Picture CL	10	GN with just Text	39
P with just Text CL	0	GN with Picture	0
Player (no WC, no CL)	43 (36%) of 117	GN with Video	0
P with Video	15		
P with Picture	18		
P with just Text	8	Total:	386
P with Poll	2		

During the first twelve months a total of 33 posts were related to a single professional football player, as well as to a single Adidas product within a post (category Product/Player above). This player was either playing for an Adidas sponsored team or individually signed a sponsorship contract with Adidas. Of these 33 posts, the content of 17 of these posts consisted of text in combination with a picture. The content of 12 out of 33 posts consisted of text in combination with a video, while only 4 posts consisted of just text. In comparison, the content of posts related solely to a team was found to be a little more complex. These posts were sub-categorised into team-related posts that either have direct relation to the FIFA Football World Cup 2010 or the UEFA Champions League Season 2009 / 2010. Therefore, out of 129

team-related posts, 61 were further related to the 2010 FIFA Football World Cup and 27 to the 2009 / 2010 UEFA Champions League. The remaining 41 posts were connected to neither of these events. As with the earlier example, the content of these three sub-categories was separated into categories further detailing channel elements of text, picture and video.

5.2.2 Nike Football Channel

In total, 1057 posts were published during the observation period, of which 928 have been used for further analysis. As with the Adidas Football channel, this has been done because some posts were published at least twice during the period of analysis. As with the Adidas Football Channel, all content on the Nike Football channel has been categorised into seven different topics; posts related solely to a player, posts related solely to a team related, posts related solely to a product, posts that related a player with a product, posts that related a team with a product, posts related to technical instructions (use of a product) or football training, and general news items. Table 8 overleaf outlines the content structure of the Nike Football Channel.

Table 8: Content Structure - Nike Football Channel

Product (P)	No	Team (T) Total	No
P Total	92	T Total	237
P with Picture	60	T with Video	34
P with just Text	15	T with Picture	131
P with Video	17	T just Text	69
		T with Poll	3
Product / Player (PP)	No	Team World Cup (WC)	No
PP Total	65	T Total	72 (30%) of 237
PP with Picture	28	T with Video World Cup	13
PP with Video	22	T with Picture World Cup	44
PP just Text	15	T just Text World Cup	15
Product / Team (PT)	No	Champions League	No
PT Total	31	T Total	41 (17%) of 237
PT with Picture	28	T with Video CL	1
PT with Video	2	T with Picture CL	18
PT with Text	1	T with just Text CL	22
Player (P) Total	No	Team (no WC, no CL)	No
P Total	348	T Total	124 (53%) of 237
P with Video	75	T with Video	20
P with Picture	205	T with Picture	69
P with just Text	68	T with just Text	32
P with Poll	0	T with Poll	3
Player World Cup (WC)	90 (26%) of 348	Instructions (I)	No
P with Video WC	12	I Total	83
P with Picture WC	73	I with Video	49
P with just Text WC	5	I with Picture	18
		I with just Text	16
Player Champions League	16 (6%) of 348	General News (GN)	No
P with Video CL	1	GN Total	72
P with Picture CL	8	GN with Picture	36
P with just Text CL	7	GN with just Text	24
Player (no WC, no CL)	242 (68%) of 348	GN with Video	12
P with Video	62		
P with Picture	124	Total:	928
P with just Text	56		

Similar to the Adidas example with regards to posts related solely to a team (see 5.2.1 Adidas Football Channel), the table above illustrates the total number of player-related news (348) was split into three sub-categories. The sub-categories further outline player-related news in the context of the FIFA Football World Cup 2010 (90 of 348 posts), the UEFA Champions League season 2009 / 2010 (16 of 348 posts), and posts that had no relation to these competitions.

5.3 Blended Content Analysis

As outlined earlier within section 4.5, the blended content analysis was conducted in two phases: unitising and categorising. The unitising phase was guided by the earlier structural analysis of content on both the Adidas and the Nike Facebook Football Channels. The units of analysis were comments that channel users posted in reply to the published content. In representing the content of the Nike and the Adidas Football Channels, 24 different posts (at least one from each category or sub-category) have been selected from each channel. These accounted for 4951 comments (units of analysis) and 6095 references on the Nike Football Channel, and 4348 comments (units of analysis) and 5319 references on the Adidas Football Channel. These references related to the earlier explained purpose of a blended content analysis which allowed the researcher to: a) Filter data for themes and categories based on inductive reasoning and the researcher's diligent examination and perennial comparison (Mayring 2000, p. 2), b) be effective in analysing textual elements in gathering quantifiable 'counts' that provide a means for identifying, organising and indexing data (Berg 2009), and c) to verify the measurement items identified previously by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009). Here, each single comment was analysed for at least one, and at most two themes. Tables 9 and 10 overleaf outline categories, sub-categories, type of media, number of comments and the number of related references in further detail. As mentioned earlier, if possible (some [sub-] categories did not fulfil the threshold of 150) only posts with a minimum of 150 comments have been selected.

Table 9: Content Structure Adidas Football Channel

Category	Sub-Category	Type of Media	Comments	% Comments	References	% References
Player		Picture	160	3.67	165	3.11
Player		Poll	244	5.61	269	5.05
Player		Text	97	2.23	105	1.97
Player		Video	212	4.87	232	4.36
Player	Player CL	Picture	255	5.86	261	4.91
Player	Player CL	Text	171	3.93	183	3.44
Player	Player WC	Picture	152	3.49	156	2.93
Player	Player WC	Text	137	3.15	148	2.78
Player	Player WC	Video	225	5.17	228	4.28
Product		Picture	227	5.19	321	6.03
Product		Video	174	4.09	255	4.79
Product / Player		Video	153	3.51	265	4.98
Product / Player		Picture	171	3.93	189	3.55
Product / Team		Picture	197	4.53	255	4.79
Team		Picture	202	4.64	303	5.69
Team		Text	137	3.15	152	2.85
Team		Video	208	4.78	258	5.04
Team	Team CL	Picture	236	5.42	277	5.21
Team	Team CL	Text	167	3.84	186	3.49
Team	Team WC	Picture	225	5.86	275	5.17
Team	Team WC	Text	164	3.77	195	3.66
Team	Team WC	Video	114	2.62	157	2.95
Instructions		Picture	189	4.34	295	5.54
Instructions		Video	131	3.01	189	3.55

Table 10: Content Structure Nike Football Channel

Category	Sub-Category	Type of Media	Comments	% Comments	References	% References
Player		Picture	156	3.15	171	2.81
Player		Poll	174	3.51	189	3.11
Player		Text	199	4.01	220	3.61
Player		Video	223	4.51	241	3.95
Player	Player CL	Picture	279	5.63	361	5.92
Player	Player CL	Text	151	3.04	168	2.75
Player	Player WC	Picture	287	5.79	384	6.31
Player	Player WC	Text	136	2.74	147	2.41
Player	Player WC	Video	237	4.78	274	4.95
Product		Picture	285	5.75	327	5.36
Product		Video	164	3.31	179	2.93
Product / Player		Video	221	4.46	273	4.47
Product / Player		Picture	325	6.56	466	7.64
Product / Team		Picture	270	5.45	217	3.56
Team		Picture	369	7.45	499	8.18
Team		Text	281	5.67	360	5.91
Team		Video	161	3.25	183	3.01
Team	Team CL	Picture	173	3.49	185	3.03
Team	Team CL	Text	124	2.51	153	2.51
Team	Team WC	Picture	158	3.19	179	2.93
Team	Team WC	Text	97	1.95	114	1.87
Team	Team WC	Video	192	3.87	228	3.74
Instructions		Picture	154	3.11	181	2.96
Instructions		Video	187	3.77	238	3.91

First, in relation to point c) in the list above, the earlier identified eight experiences by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) regularly appeared within the user comments on both the Adidas and Nike Football Channels. These eight experiences (labelled ‘nodes’ in the NVIVO qualitative software package) have been identified throughout the analysis of the user comments of 48 (24 Adidas + 24 Nike) posts (labelled ‘sources’ in the NVIVO qualitative software package). These eight experiences plus the two additional experiences identified by content analysis are briefly defined in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Experiences

Experience	Description
Social Facilitation	"The goal is to become more interesting to other people. Media enables people to be more interesting because they can talk to others, and even to themselves, about what they read or view" (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 11)
Stimulation and Inspiration	"The Inspirational experience is about believing that one can do something" (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 31)
Temporal	"This is a Transportation experience in the sense that the media content puts people in a comfortable, calming state of mind" (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 14)
Community	"The experience is one of being able to connect to others and participate in a larger social collective" (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 15)
Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness	"People believe that news organizations are vital to the well-being of a community because they connect them with others in the community. They believe news organizations can serve as a balance against the powerful; in particular, investigative reporting that exposes government corruption or illegal business practices gives the reader this experience" (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 31)
Intrinsic Enjoyment	"The experience is one of having a break and forgetting about everything else, of being transported into a better mood or state of mind. With some kinds of media, it is also possible to separate out the experience of being transported into the narrative world of the content" (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 13)
Utilitarian	"A good example of content that is engaging in this way occurs with the experience of cooking TV programs, cooking magazines, newspaper “food” sections, and the like. Consumers use the advice or tips to do something in their own lives—new techniques, ingredients, recipes, and so on" (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 11)
Socializing	"This experience applies mostly to online sites and taps into the feeling that the site is replacing real-world activities. “Second Life” is a good example. Other media create a community around a topic (e.g., American Idol) that is so involving to its members, they feel they almost spend too much time with it" (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 31)
Entertainment	"This Transportation type experience is about feeling entertained and absorbed in a site, magazine, newspaper, or TV programming" (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 32)
Visual Imagery	"The experience is one of being absorbed visually into the content. Travel magazines may feature photography that makes readers feel as if they are there. Other magazines often feature pictures of beautiful homes and food that give a similar vicarious experience" (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 13)

Table 12: Experiences, Sources, References - Adidas Football Channel

Experience (Node)	Sources (out of 24)	References	References %
Social Facilitation	24	169	3.28
Stimulation and Inspiration	24	728	14.16
Temporal	14	31	0.61
Community	23	930	18.09
Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness	19	569	11.07
Intrinsic Enjoyment	16	409	9.53
Utilitarian	17	169	3.28
Participation and Socializing	24	1267	24.65
Entertainment Adidas	14	133	2.58
Visual Imagery Adidas	17	207	4.02
Others	24	527	10.25

Table 13: Experiences, Sources, References - Nike Football Channel

Experience (Node)	Sources (out of 24)	References	References %
Social Facilitation	23	387	5.49
Stimulation and Inspiration	18	675	9.57
Temporal	23	209	2.96
Community	24	1426	20.29
Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness	24	555	7.87
Intrinsic Enjoyment	18	678	9.62
Utilitarian	11	143	2.02
Participation and Socializing	24	1431	20.31
Entertainment Nike	21	208	2.95
Visual Imagery Nike	19	679	9.63
Others	24	655	9.29

As can be seen in Tables 12 and 13 above, in addition to the eight categories of experience, two more sets of experience, ‘Visual Imagery’ and ‘Entertainment’, were identified. These were also identified by Calder and Malthouse (2008) during their traditional media engagement research project, but were not tested within their online media research. The emergence of these two experiences provided a valuable contribution to the findings, as it suggests that there are experiences sought by subscribers in both traditional and online media. The results of these two experiences will now be briefly described, together with the eight other experiences, before undertaking a more robust examination in the discussion chapter (Chapter Six) to follow.

Finally, as outlined in Table 14 overleaf, 527 comments on the Adidas Football Channel and 655 comments on the Nike Football Channel were not further analysed and coded as ‘Others’. These comments were written in a language unfamiliar to the

researcher (neither English nor German), therefore they remained unanalysed due to time constraints and the unavailability of resources to have them translated. In line with earlier research into experiences with media content and media engagement (Calder & Malthouse 2008, 2009; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009), those experiences with a percentage coverage of at least 2.5 percent in two or more (sub-) categories were selected for the later quantitative survey. All ten experiences fulfilled this threshold criterion and were therefore included in the survey with all related items (questions), as outlined in the research by Calder and Malthouse (2008, 2009) and Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009). Table 14 below outlines the summaries extracted by using the NVIVO coding software. The first column details the percentages per experience for an analysed post from the Adidas Facebook Football channel within the category ‘Player’, and the use of video. As can be seen here, the experiences ‘Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness’ (0.41%), as well as ‘Utilitarian’ (1.63%), did not fit the 2.5 % threshold.

Table 14: NVIVO Coding by Experiences (Nodes) – Adidas

Node	Adidas / Player / Video %	Adidas / Product / Video %
Entertainment Experience	8.58	9.23
Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	9.24	29.72
Participation and Socializing Experience	31.59	5.34
Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	0.41	1.58
Social Facilitation Experience	13.05	6.91
Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	2.61	8.24
Utilitarian Experience	1.63	17.31
Visual Imagery Experience	14.67	36.85
Others	19.57	16.98

However, the second column draws a different picture of experiences for a post from the same channel within the category ‘Product’ with use of a video. Here the percentage for the ‘Utilitarian’ experience is much higher at 17 %. A detailed ‘NVIVO Coding Summary Report’ including % -figures for all categories and sub-categories for both the Adidas and Nike Channel can be found in Appendix 2.

As outlined earlier, a major advantage of a blended content analysis approach is that it allows the researcher to gather quantifiable ‘counts’ to justify the use of existing scales (and related items for their measurement), and also to allow for the qualitative identification of further items for the measurement of existing (or new) themes (experiences). After analysing all of the user comments in the data, two more items

were added to the existing catalogue of items for the measurement of two different experiences. These are: “I sometimes post a comment on the ... channel and wait or come back several times until I get a response” for the ‘temporal experience’ and; “Using the ... Football channel helps me express a sense of belonging to a group (e.g. fans, clubs)” for the ‘participation and socializing experience’.

The content analysis revealed that several subscribers to both the Adidas and Nike Football Channels posted comments that often included a question to the wider community. Although asking questions of the wider community is partly measured by items relating to the ‘participation and socializing’ or the ‘community’ theme, it also relates to the notion of ‘waiting’ and ‘return’. For example, in regards to the upcoming Champions League game between AC Milan (Italy) and Real Madrid (Spain), users asked questions like: a) “brothers can anyone plz let me know about its live streaming links” or b) “Can anyone tell when the match will be broadcasted in india?? Plz...”. These two questions can be interpreted as being part of the ‘Community’ experience, where some users are interested in input from other users, or they simply want to chat online with others to exchange football-related information and knowledge. Both questions can also be interpreted as being part of the ‘participation and socialising’ experience, which tries to measure the significance of socialising and contributions to conversations on social media engagement. However, these two experiences assume that the users get a reply on their questions, which in the two examples above was not the case. Yet it can be assumed that both have either waited for a reply or returned a number of times to the channels to see if they in fact received a reply. Therefore, the item “I sometimes post a comment on the ... channel and wait or come back several times until I get a response” has been added to the catalogue of questions for measurement of the ‘temporal’ experience.

Second, content analysis revealed that many subscribers use the Adidas and Nike Football Channels to express a sense of belonging to a group of fans, or to express their pride in being a supporter of a certain football team or club. Here, one initial item for the measurement of the ‘Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness’ experience partly captures the idea by asking if “The [...] Football channel makes me more a part of my community”. However, this item is mostly directed towards the users’ community of direct friends or other fans / supporters of the same club or team that

the users may know from their private life. However, the item does not sufficiently capture the idea of expressing a sense of belonging to a group of fans and supporters of the same or other teams that the user / subscribers to the channel may not know, hence is imagined, rather than real (Anderson 1991). More specifically, on July 2nd, 2010, one day before the World Cup quarter final between Argentina and Germany, a video was uploaded by Adidas showcasing the two team leaders, Lionel Messi (Argentina) and Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany). While some users expressed a moderate sense of belonging or support for either side, others exemplified their affiliation by using the third person “we”. For example, subscribers posted messages like: a) “I SUPPORT ARGENTINA”, b) “ARGENTINA WILL WIN!♥”, or c) “Vamos Vamos Vamos ARGENTINA vamos vamos vamos!!!”, each of which are relatively moderate. Other examples included, a) “C’mon Argentina!! We can do it! Time is now!!!”, or b) “Aaaaaaaargentina! Germany, we’ll beat you again!” showcase a more intense sense of belonging to the actual team, club or group of fans, but also a clear sense of opposition to the ‘other’. Therefore, one further item has been added to the initial catalogue measuring if “Using the [...] Football channel helps me express a sense of belonging to a group (e.g. fans, clubs).” These two questions were added to the catalogue of questions for the ten different experiences, which totalled 51 in all. The online questionnaire, including the items for the measurement of all other relevant scales, can be found in Appendix 1.

Additionally, in regards to the prominence of thoughts and feelings, blended content analysis revealed numerous counts of written expressions of positive and negative thoughts and feelings, as was tested previously by Thomson, MacInnes and Park (2005) for the measurement of emotional attachment. The following examples provide an illustration:

Adidas: “adidas is the greatest brand ever”, “adidas is da best”, “love adidas, nike s shit...umbro also cool”, “i love addidas”, “Adidas /// I love”, “Adidas ♥”, “always adidas! =)”, “adidas addict”, “adidas shit, nie yihaaa!”, “why adidas..go umbro, nike...”

Nike: “nice vid, gotta luv Nike”, “like nike all products”, “I love nike.....”, “nike i love youuuuu”, “nike shoes ♥”, “♥♥♥♥Nike♥♥♥♥”, “Nike forever!!!”, “Te amo..Nike!! ♥♥♥♥”, “never nike /// adidas much better”, “<<<fuck you nike>>>”

Table 15 below outlines the results of the blended content analysis for positive and negative thoughts and feelings in relation to 4951 comments from the Nike Channel, and 4348 comments from the Adidas Channel:

Table 15: Positive / Negative Thoughts and Feelings

Thoughts / Feelings	Adidas Football Channel	Nike Football Channel
Positive	374 / 8.61%	494 / 9.97%
Negative	34 / 0.78%	195 / 3.94%

5.4 The Measurement Model

5.4.1 Subscriber Characteristics – Sample Matrix

As outlined earlier, in selecting actual participants for the pre-test and the main survey within the larger group of subscribers, quota sampling has been used. Here, two main criteria for user specification have been taken into account. Gender (male and female) and global region (e.g., Asia, Europe, North America) have been assessed by use of the Facebook “advertising tool”. This section briefly outlines the sample characteristics, with Appendix 4 providing a detailed description of the population characteristics of the Adidas and Nike Channels.

Based on the percentages (as outlined in Appendix 4) the number of survey participants (out of 100) has been calculated. Consequently, when inviting Adidas Football channel subscribers to the survey 18 out of 100 came from Asia (16 male, 2 female), 41 from Europe (36 male, 5 female), 14 from North America (12 male, 2 female), 23 from South America (20 male, 3 female), 3 from Africa (3 male) and one from Oceania (male) (as outlined overleaf in Table 16).

Table 16: No. of survey participants by regions and gender – Adidas

Region	User	%	Number of Survey Participants	Male (86.96%)	Female (13.04%)
Asia	659940	17.61	18	16	2
Europe	1530160	40.85	41	36	5
North America	528820	14.11	14	12	2
South America	868120	23.17	23	20	3
Africa	110560	2.95	3	3	0
Oceania	48040	1.28	1	1	0

The same procedure as outlined in Appendix 4 has also been applied to the Nike Football channel. Consequently, 18 (15 male, 3 female) potential survey participants were recruited from Asia, 39 (32 male, 7 female) from Europe, 25 (21 male, 4 female) from North America, 17 (14 male, 3 female) from South America and one male participant from Africa (as outlined below in Table 17).

Table 17: No. of survey participants by regions and gender – Nike

Region	User	%	Number of Survey Participants	Male (82.45%)	Female (17.55%)
Asia	622440	17.85	18	15	3
Europe	1352720	38.79	39	32	7
North America	858560	24.62	25	21	4
South America	606780	17.4	17	14	3
Africa	37820	1.08	1	1	0
Oceania	8300	0.23	0	0	0

5.4.2 Pre-Test

The pre-test was conducted in order to assess and validate measurement items employed by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) for application in a social media context. Further, by adding four open-ended questions further experiences or items which may have been missed during the blended content analysis phase were explored. Based on the above user – region – gender matrixes (see Tables 16 and 17), the pre-testing survey was sent to 600 subscribers within the Adidas and Nike Football Channels, of which 87 were useable for further analysis. A detailed exploration of answers to the four open-ended questions revealed no further experience themes or items other than those already identified during the analysis of user comments on Facebook. Typical answers to the four questions were:

1. What do you like about the [brand] football channel?
 - a) "I like everything. In special the video about the backstages of a team"
 - b) "The news about new boots and football shirts"
 - c) "the player profiles / the team stories / i love it when people start arguing about football"
 - d) "It is a social channel that most of the adidas lovers like myself can share things and even make social bonds. Its great that we learn a the products just when they go out and we can think of what to buy and when to buy."
 - e) "Everything!!! The pics and movies are usually of fantastic quality and very entertaining...i also like the funny discussions and little arguements between fans of other teams or countries!!"

2. What do you dislike about the [brand] football channel?
 - a) "dont have anything i dont like"
 - b) "Nothing really..."
 - c) "chelsea fc ;-)"
 - d) "i dont think that there is something bad i love nike football channel"
 - e) "i think i only see them a few times on my recently statuses. i see my FC Barcelona fan page post up more news.."

3. Please describe what the experience of reading / visiting the [brand] football channel is like.
 - a) "It's interesting because there are many images and news about my nationalteam (Spain)"
 - b) "In my launch time I turn on my laptop, go to my web explorer and check my e-mail, read a journal, log on to facebook, check my profile and immediately after that I go to Adidas Football channel. It's a great experience in the context of a brand who gives info by de web. Adidas always innovates, in cloth, in merging with new brands like star wars, in technology for the football equipment and also in the web"
 - c) "just cool way to speak to people about football, connect with other fans, talk about next game, review cool goals"
 - d) "Like a trip to the Wonderland of Football, if there was one... :D"
 - e) "reading is a lot of fun, watching video and pic is best, very cool videos!!!"

4. Please write one sentence about the [brand] football channel using one of the following words – experience, want, helps, worry.

- a) “When i want to get experience and anticipate the future, i read the Adidas Football channel, because it helps me to improve my skills and it don't give me worries”
- b) “According to my experience the channel is a very good place to be chilling out in. I dont want anything more than there is now. The users anticipate to make the place even better. The admins are being very active which helps the channel build up. I have no worries about the channel getting lost some day. Adidas
- c) “Experience the future, anticipate to what you want, help your friends to seek the right path and do not worry about the competition, they are just afraid”
- d) “makes me more experienced”
- e) “Visiting the Nike Football channel may not turn me into the World's Best Player...but it sure helps me work harder everyday to become a legend!”

In comparison to the answers to the four open-ended questions, the scale-based quantitative data provided a first insight into the usability of the ten identified experiences, the experience items for their measurement, and the usability of the two added experience items. For this first pre-test item loadings, T-values and fit statistics were assessed with one factor congeneric models using AMOS Graphics software. Additionally, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using the SPSS software (to assess Cronbach’s Alpha) and Excel to calculate the composite reliability and average variance extracted.

One example of the results of the pre-testing of one experience (Visual Imagery) is outlined in Table 18 overleaf. As can be seen, confirmatory factor analysis results met all threshold criteria, suggesting construct validity of the scale. However, three fit statistics (Probability Level, RMSEA, AGFI) computed with AMOS Graphics suggest a poor model fit; thus, the data does not fit the model well. At first glance, this seems to be caused by factor VIE2, which does not meet scholarly threshold criteria of minimum .6 or better. All other scale based pre-test data is provided in Appendix 4.

Table 18: Factor Loadings Visual Imagery Experience – Pre-test

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
VIE1	I look at pictures or watch videos on the ... Football channel and think "Wow".	.770	8.265
VIE2	Most often I look at pictures / videos before anything else. I like to look at pictures / videos even if I don't read the story.	.459	4.338
VIE3	I sometimes show/share a picture / video on the ... Football channel to someone else.	.737	7.773
VIE4	I like to look at the pictures on the ... Football channel for a while.	.876	10.073
VIE5	I love the photography and videos on the ... Football channel.	.877	10.100
VIE6	The photography and videos are one of the main reasons why I visit the ... Football channel.	.853	9.666

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	0.890
Composite reliability	0.898
AVE	0.604

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	20.7 / 9
Probability Level	.014
RMSEA	.123
GFI	.924
AGFI	.822
TLI	.937
CFI	.962

5.4.3 Main Survey

The primary data analysis procedures and results of the main survey are outlined within this section, which address Hypotheses 1 to 10. First, the respondent characteristics provide an understanding of Adidas and Nike Facebook Football Channels subscribers that have fully completed the survey. Second, themes (experiences) relating to Social Media Engagement are considered in order to provide an assessment of whether they are a valid and reliable measurement tool for Social Media Engagement. As with the pre-test, the results of the scale-based measurement of themes (experiences) have been tested for construct validity with one factor congeneric models, the SPSS statistical package, and Excel. Third, other results of the measurement of scale-based data relevant to this research project are also presented. Finally, the results from the testing of the complete data set within the full structural equation model are outlined. The main survey was distributed to 2001 channel subscribers. Some 505 subscribers started the survey, of which 233 ended up fully completing it. This sample was sufficient for statistical testing (Cronbach's Alpha, Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability, Descriptive Statistics) in terms of selecting and assessing the final items for measurement of each individuals experience (Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000).

5.4.3.1 Respondent Characteristics

The respondent characteristics for the main survey ($N = 233$) are presented in Table 19 overleaf. An exact measurement of sampling error was infeasible since the true population values of the Adidas and Nike Facebook channel were only able to be assessed via the Facebook advertising tool giving only a rough estimate. However, considering the values presented, a realistic representation of the true population has been achieved. The table overleaf also highlights the relative youth of the sample, with 69 percent of respondents aged between 21 to 30 years, and a further 20 percent under 20 years of age. Within this age group, respondents were predominantly male (90%). Most participants had completed high school (26.2%), had some college education (31.3%), and a small percentage had attained a bachelor's degree (16.7%). Approximately half of the respondents were full-time students, with only a quarter of the sample in full-time employment (27%). Geographically the respondents were recruited from Asia (39.05%), Europe (21.02%) and the Americas (29.05%).

Table 19: Respondent characteristics - Main survey

Variable	Value	Frequency	Frequency %
Age	Under 20 years	47	20.2
	21 – 30	160	68.7
	31 – 40	17	7.3
	41 – 50	3	1.3
	Prefer not to say	6	2.6
Gender	Male	210	90.1
	Female	20	8.5
	Prefer not to say	3	1.3
Highest education attained	Less than High school	22	9.4
	High School / GED	61	26.1
	Some College	73	31.3
	Bachelor's Degree	39	16.7
	Bachelor of Honours Degree	11	4.7
	Master's Degree	17	7.3
	Doctoral Degree	1	0.4
	Professional Degree	6	2.6
	Prefer not to say	3	1.3
Region	Asia	91	39.1
	Europe	49	21
	North America	30	12.9
	South America	33	14.2
	Africa	16	6.9
	Oceania	9	3.9
	Prefer not to say	5	2.1
Employment	Home or family duties	12	5.2
	Student	116	49.8
	Full-time paid work	63	27
	Part-time / casual paid work	27	11.6
	Unemployed / looking for work	6	2.6
	Unemployed / not looking for work	2	0.9
	Volunteer	4	1.7
	Prefer not to say	3	1.3

5.4.3.2 Social Media Engagement

This section has two main purposes. First, it is intended to determine whether the ten experience scales are applicable in the context of social media (Facebook Football Channels). Second, it will outline why social media engagement should be measured as a single construct, and not by use of second order engagement factors as with earlier research by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009). Specifically, this section explores each single experience construct by use of confirmatory factor analysis and one factor congeneric model testing as outlined for the Visual Imagery Experience Tables 20 and 21 overleaf.

Table 20: Descriptive Statistics – Visual Imagery Experience (original)

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
VIE1	233	6	1	7	5.81	1.263
VIE2	233	6	1	7	5.48	1.267
VIE3	233	6	1	7	5.07	1.619
VIE4	233	6	1	7	5.35	1.376
VIE5	233	6	1	7	5.86	1.182
VIE6	233	6	1	7	5.57	1.407
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 21: Item Loadings - Visual Imagery Experience (original)

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
VIE1	I look at pictures or watch videos on the ... Football channel and think "Wow".	.864	16.109
VIE2	Most often I look at pictures / videos before anything else. I like to look at pictures / videos even if I don't read the story.	.556	8.856
VIE3	I sometimes show/share a picture / video on the ... Football channel to someone else.	.680	11.398
VIE4	I like to look at the pictures on the ... Football channel for a while.	.806	14.463
VIE5	I love the photography and videos on the ... Football channel.	.882	16.640
VIE6	The photography and videos are one of the main reasons why I visit the ... Football channel.	.734	12.626

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	0.884
Composite reliability	0.890
AVE	0.581

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	34.4 / 9
Probability Level	.000
RMSEA	.110
GFI	.957
AGFI	.899
TLI	.945
CFI	.967

As can be seen in the fit statistics for the 'Visual Imagery Experience', three values indicate that the data is not fitting the proposed model well. While the chi-square / degrees of freedom ratio (threshold 5 / 1), the goodness of fit index (GFI threshold .9), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI threshold .9), and the comparative fit index (CFI threshold .9) are relatively high but still suggest a good data-model-fit, the probability level (threshold .05), the root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA threshold .05) and the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI threshold .9) suggest the opposite. In this case, the relatively low loading of item VIE2 suggests (as with the pre-test

results) this item is the source of the data-model-misfit. However, before committing to withdraw the item from the measurement scale, other indexes should be called on. In such cases the literature (Schumacker & Lomax 1996; Coote 2009; Holmes-Smith 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010) suggests a variety of ways to explore the source of the ‘mis-fit’. First, Coote (2009) suggests reviewing the T-values (C.R.) that can be estimated by dividing the estimate (variance) by the standard error (S.E.). Although the t-value for item VIE2 (as outlined in Table 22 below) is relatively low compared to all other t-values, it is still acceptable when establishing model fit.

Table 22: Regression weights - Visual Imagery Experience

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
VIE6 <--- VIE	1.03	0.08	12.61	***	par_1
VIE5 <--- VIE	1.041	0.06	16.64	***	par_2
VIE4 <--- VIE	1.107	0.08	14.45	***	par_3
VIE3 <--- VIE	1.099	0.1	11.37	***	par_4
VIE2 <--- VIE	0.703	0.08	8.813	***	par_5
VIE1 <--- VIE	1.09	0.07	16.11	***	par_6

Next, Coote (2009) suggests reviewing the standardised residual covariances to see if one or more estimates exceed the threshold line of -2 to +2. However, as illustrated below in Table 23, the residual covariances are all within these criteria.

Table 23: Standardised Residual Covariances - Visual Imagery Experience

	VIE1	VIE2	VIE3	VIE4	VIE5	VIE6
VIE1	0					
VIE2	0.489	0				
VIE3	-0.045	1.468	0			
VIE4	-0.159	-0.26	0.667	0		
VIE5	0.188	-1.004	-0.411	-0.023	0	
VIE6	-0.46	0.734	-0.523	0.021	0.403	0

Finally, a third measure in identifying sources of a poor model fit is looking into the modification indices and covariances among error terms. As can be seen in the Table 24 overleaf, if the analysis is repeated treating the covariance between e3 and e2 and between e5 and e2 as a free parameter, the Chi-square value will fall by at least 7.412 for e3 and e2 and at least 11.870 for e5 and e2. In short, this means the unique variances of the indicators overlap and measure something common other than the

latent construct. As this is twice the case for e2, it is plausible (in addition to the low factor loading) that the model misfit is caused by item 2.

Table 24: Modification Indices & Covariances among Error Terms - Visual Imagery Experience

			M.I.	Par Change
e3	<-->	e2	7.412	0.235
e5	<-->	e2	11.87	-0.159

Based on the above tests and figures, VIE2 was removed from the catalogue of questions. The remaining five items strongly indicate convergent validity, but were again tested with a one factor congeneric model. The modified one factor congeneric model is outlined below in Figure 18.

Figure 18: One factor congeneric model - Visual Imagery Experience

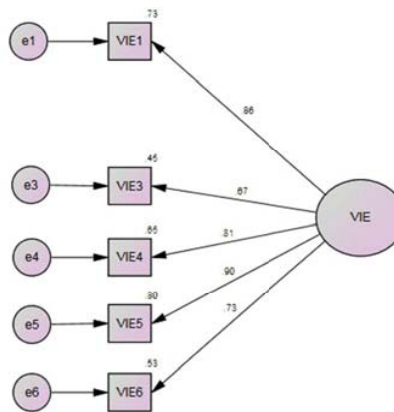


Table 25 overleaf outlines that loadings for the remaining five items have remained approximately the same. Table 26 however presents that the probability level, the TLI and the CFI have significantly improved, suggesting close to perfect model fit.

Table 25: Descriptive Statistics – Visual Imagery Experience (Final)

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
VIE1	233	6	1	7	5.81	1.263
VIE2	-	-	-	-	-	-
VIE3	233	6	1	7	5.07	1.619
VIE4	233	6	1	7	5.35	1.376
VIE5	233	6	1	7	5.86	1.182
VIE6	233	6	1	7	5.57	1.407
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 26: Item Loadings – Visual Imagery Experience (Final)

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
VIE1	I look at pictures or watch videos on the ... Football channel and think "Wow".	.857	17.458
VIE2	Most often I look at pictures / videos before anything else. I like to look at pictures / videos even if I don't read the story.	-	-
VIE3	I sometimes show/share a picture / video on the ... Football channel to someone else.	.667	11.679
VIE4	I like to look at the pictures on the ... Football channel for a while.	.805	15.687
VIE5	I love the photography and videos on the ... Football channel.	.897	
VIE6	The photography and videos are one of the main reasons why I visit the ... Football channel.	.730	13.357

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	0.885
Composite reliability	0.895
AVE	0.633

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	11.0 / 5
Probability Level	.51
RMSEA	.072
GFI	.981
AGFI	.943
TLI	.982
CFI	.991

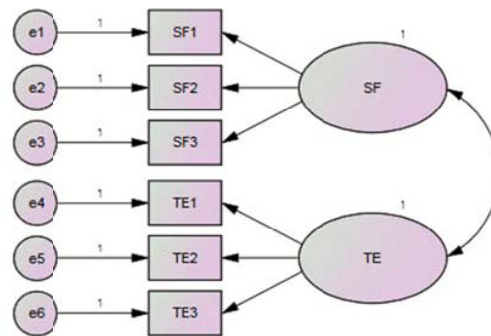
In comparison to the probability level, the TLI (0.982), the CFI (0.991), and the RMSEA (.072) have not improved equally, but still indicate a reasonably good fit. The same procedure as outlined for this example has been followed for all experience scales and all other research related constructs. Yet, for the 'Social Facilitation' experience, the 'Temporal' experience, and the 'Participation and Socialising' experience, an additional measure had to be conducted in order to establish the final scale for the measurement of each respective experience. While the 'Social Facilitation' experience scale consisted of only three items right from the beginning,

the other three had only three items remaining after the initial confirmatory factor analysis and the first one factor congeneric model testing. However, constructs with exactly three items are labelled “just identified” (Chan et al. 2007, p. 56). Here, as Chan et al (2007) put it,

the number of data variances and covariances is equal to the number of parameters to be estimated. Although a unique solution can be obtained for all of the parameters in a just-identified model, it is not scientifically useful, because it has no degrees of freedom and the model therefore cannot be rejected (p. 56).

Yet in these cases the literature suggests correlating two different constructs, with each finding out model fit statistics and factor loadings (Schumacker & Lomax 1996; Tomarken & Waller 2005; Holmes-Smith 2010; Kline 2010; Schumacker & Lomax 2010). The model in Figure 19 below illustrates such a correlation between two different experiences.

Figure 19: Social Facilitation and Temporal Experience - Correlated



The correlation between both constructs is estimated at .727 and therefore not suggesting a lack of discriminant validity among the two constructs (Kline 2005; Van Leeuwen 2001). Additionally, the squared correlation ($0.727^2 = 0.526$) is lower than the AVE's of 0.756 (Social Facilitation) and 0.821 (Temporal) for both experiences, also suggesting discriminant validity. Further, the factor loadings for both constructs meet the threshold criteria of at least .6, the AVE's are higher than .5 (suggesting convergent validity), while fits statistics for both suggest a good data-model fit. Tables 27, 28, 29 and 30 overleaf present these results in further detail.

Table 27: Descriptive Statistics - Social Facilitation Experience

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SF1	233	6	1	7	4.97	1.502
SF2	233	6	1	7	5.25	1.346
SF3	233	6	1	7	4.97	1.426
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 28: Item Loadings - Social Facilitation Experience

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
SF1	I bring up things that I have seen on the ... Football channel in conversations with many other people.	.862	15.990
SF2	The ... Football channel gives me something to talk about.	.861	15.927
SF3	I use things from the ... Football channel in discussions or arguments with people I know.	.886	16.654

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	0.902
Composite reliability	0.903
AVE	0.756

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	13.4 / 8
Probability Level	.098
RMSEA	.054
GFI	.981
AGFI	.950
TLI	.991
CFI	.995

Table 29: Descriptive Statistics - Temporal Experience

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TE1	233	6	1	7	4.76	1.540
TE2	233	6	1	7	4.84	1.534
TE3	233	6	1	7	4.69	1.650
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 30: Item Loadings - Temporal Experience

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
TE1	The ... Football channel is part of my routine.	.875	16.706
TE2	The ... Football channel is one of the sites I always go to any time I'm surfing the web.	.963	19.662
TE3	I use the ... Football channel as a big part of getting my news for the day.	.878	16.767

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

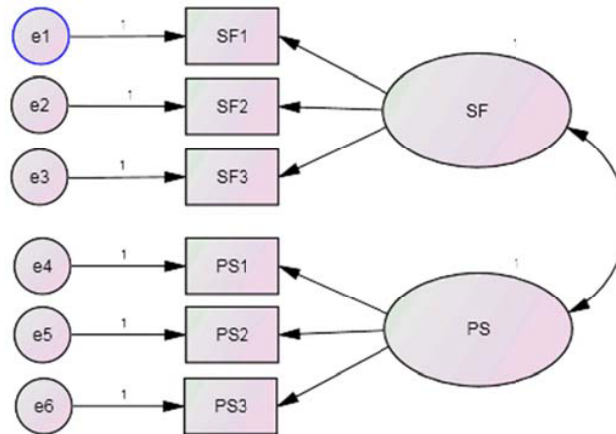
Cronbach's alpha	0.929
Composite reliability	0.932
AVE	0.821

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	13.4 / 8
Probability Level	.098
RMSEA	.054
GFI	.981
AGFI	.950
TLI	.991
CFI	.995

The same procedure outlined above has been applied to the remaining construct consisting of three items - 'Participation and Socialising'. Figure 20 (see overleaf) outlines the correlation between this experience and the earlier tested 'Social Facilitation' experience. As with the above example, the correlation between both constructs is not suggesting a lack of discriminant validity among the two constructs, with an estimate at .671 (Van Leeuwen 2001; Kline 2005).

Figure 20: Social Facilitation and Participation and Socializing Experience - Correlated



As with the earlier constructs the Tables 31 and 32 provide some further detail on descriptive statistics, factor loadings and results from the confirmatory factor analysis.

Table 31: Descriptive Statistics - Participation and Socializing Experience

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PS1	233	6	1	7	4.42	1.580
PS2	233	6	1	7	4.58	1.649
PS3	233	6	1	7	4.16	1.788
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 32: Item Loadings - Participation and Socializing Experience

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
PS1	I do quite a bit of socializing on the ... Football channel.	.811	14.266
PS2	I contribute to the conversation on the ... Football channel.	.868	15.679
PS3	I contribute to some conversations on the ... Football channel to provoke other subscribers and wait until they response.	.811	14.135

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	0.938
Composite reliability	0.869
AVE	0.690

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	14.4 / 8
Probability Level	.070
RMSEA	.059
GFI	.979
AGFI	.946
TLI	.986
CFI	.993

Details for the remaining six constructs - ‘Intrinsic Enjoyment’, ‘Stimulation and Inspirations’ experience, ‘Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness’ experience, ‘Utilitarian’ experience, ‘Community’ experience and ‘Entertainment’ experience are presented in the following tables. These include Tables 33 – 44 inclusive.

Table 33: Descriptive Statistics - Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
IE1	233	6	1	7	5.29	1.297
IE2	233	6	1	7	5.36	1.316
IE3	233	6	1	7	5.04	1.401
IE5	233	6	1	7	4.94	1.548
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 34: Item Loadings - Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
IE1	Using the ... Football channel is a great treat for me.	.861	15.965
IE2	Going to the ... Football channel improves my mood and makes me happier.	.913	17.423
IE3	I like to kick back and wind down with the ... Football channel.	.832	15.075
IE5	While I’m on the ... Football channel I do not think about other sites I might go.	.644	10.597

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha	0.902
Composite reliability	0.889
AVE	0.670

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	7.5 / 2
Probability Level	.027
RMSEA	.106
GFI	.985
AGFI	.927
TLI	.972
CFI	.991

Table 35: Descriptive Statistics - Stimulation and Inspiration Experience

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SI1	233	6	1	7	5.02	1.508
SI2	233	6	1	7	5.14	1.346
SI3	233	6	1	7	5.15	1.410
SI4	233	6	1	7	4.58	1.652
SI5	233	6	1	7	4.95	1.512
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 36: Item Loadings - Stimulation and Inspiration Experience

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
SI1	The ... Football channel inspires me in my own life.	.907	17.744
SI2	The ... Football channel makes me think of things in new ways.	.933	18.643
SI3	The ... Football channel stimulates my thinking about lots of different topics.	.882	16.939
SI4	The ... Football channel makes me a more interesting person.	.747	13.156
SI5	Some stories on the ... Football channel touch me deep down.	.792	14.315

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	.927
Composite reliability	.931
AVE	.731

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	11.8 / 5
Probability Level	.056
RMSEA	.071
GFI	.980
AGFI	.941
TLI	.988
CFI	.994

Table 37: Descriptive Statistics - Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SECM1	233	6	1	7	4.24	1.679
SECM2	233	6	1	7	4.58	1.598
SECM3	233	6	1	7	4.59	1.568
SECM4	233	6	1	7	4.53	1.511
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 38: Item Loadings - Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
SECM1	Using the ... Football channel make me feel like a better citizen.	.914	17.975
SECM2	Using the ... Football channel makes a difference in my life.	.928	18.452
SECM3	The ... Football channel reflects my values.	.850	15.941
SECM4	The ... Football channel makes me more part of my community.	.996	17.379

Confirmatory Factor Analysis**Cronbach's alpha** .942**Composite reliability** .958**AVE** .853**Fit Statistics**

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom 5.1 / 2

Probability Level .079

RMSEA .082

GFI .990

AGFI .948

TLI .989

CFI .996

Table 39: Descriptive Statistics - Utilitarian Experience

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
UE1	233	6	1	7	5.23	1.337
UE2	233	6	1	7	5.21	1.485
UE3	233	6	1	7	4.95	1.521
UE4	233	6	1	7	4.48	1.570
UE5	233	6	1	7	4.95	1.511
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 40: Item Loadings - Utilitarian Experience

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
UE1	The ... Football channel helps me make good purchasing decisions.	.805	14.595
UE2	You learn to improve yourself from the ... Football channel.	.839	14.452
UE3	The ... Football channel provides information that helps me make important decisions.	.937	18.604
UE4	The ... Football channel helps me better manage my money.	.802	14.452
UE5	I give advice and tips to people I know based on things I have read on the ... Football channel.	.763	13.404

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	.916
Composite reliability	.918
AVE	.691

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	17.6 / 5
Probability Level	.003
RMSEA	.104
GFI	.972
AGFI	.915
TLI	.969
CFI	.985

Table 41: Descriptive Statistics - Community Experience

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CE1	233	6	1	7	5.02	1.456
CE2	233	6	1	7	5.45	1.137
CE3	233	6	1	7	4.83	1.483
CE4	233	6	1	7	4.80	1.599
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 42: Item Loadings - Community Experience

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
CE1	I am as interested in input from other users as I am in the regular content on the ... Football Channel.	.829	14.757
CE2	The ... Football channel does a good job in getting its users to contribute or provide feedback.	.663	10.791
CE3	A big reason I like the ... Football channel is what I get from other users.	.860	15.554
CE4	I'd like to chat online with other people who regularly visit the ... Football channel.	.807	14.144

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	.867
Composite reliability	.871
AVE	.629

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	4.9 / 2
Probability Level	.084
RMSEA	.080
GFI	.990
AGFI	.948
TLI	.981
CFI	.994

Table 43: Descriptive Statistics - Entertainment Experience

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EE1	233	6	1	7	5.53	1.193
EE3	233	6	1	7	5.76	1.106
EE4	233	6	1	7	5.00	1.533
EE6	233	6	1	7	5.62	1.244
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 44: Item Loadings - Entertainment Experience

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
EE1	The ... Football channel always has something that surprises me.	.762	12.883
EE3	The ... Football channel is definitely entertaining.	.783	13.385
EE4	Once you start surfing around the ... Football channel, it's hard to leave.	.771	13.102
EE6	I really do have a lot of fun visiting the ... Football channel.	.817	14.212

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	.857
Composite reliability	.864
AVE	.614

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	1.4 / 2
Probability Level	.486
RMSEA	.000
GFI	.997
AGFI	.985
TLI	1.004
CFI	1.000

So far, convergent validity for each single experience has been achieved. However, it is yet to be confirmed that discriminant validity between constructs exists. Further, the following paragraph will outline if the social media engagement construct is to be measured as one factor (consisting of composite measures of each of the ten experiences), or if second order engagement constructs such as 'Personal Engagement' and 'Social-Interactive Engagement' in line with Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) should be used for hypothesis testing.

In measuring discriminant validity, the different constructs were evaluated by comparing the average variance extracted (AVE) estimates (of one experience at a time) with the squared correlation of exactly this experience with any other experience. By use of this first test, discriminant validity is established if the AVE is greater than the squared correlation (Fornell & Larcker 1981; Gruber et al. 2010; Hair et al. 2006; Lani 2009). The estimates for the AVE for each experience are outlined

below in Table 45. With an estimate of .614, the AVE for the entertainment experience is the lowest, while a .821 AVE score for the ‘Temporal’ experience is the highest. The AVE scores can now be compared to the squared correlations between each experience combination. As can be observed in Table 46 overleaf, all squared correlations are lower than the AVE’s for the respective correlation between each experience pair. Further, for all correlations the estimated factors are less than the suggested threshold of .85 (Kline 2005). With no violation of both tests, discriminant validity between constructs is therefore considered established for this research project (Fornell & Larcker 1981; Gruber et al. 2010; Hair et al. 2006; Lani 2009).

Table 45: Average Variance Extracted - All Experiences

Experience	AVE
Visual Imagery (VIE)	0.633
Stimulation & Inspiration (SI)	0.853
Social Facilitation (SF)	0.756
Temporal (TE)	0.821
Self-Esteem & Civic Mindedness (SECM)	0.799
Intrinsic Enjoyment (IE)	0.670
Utilitarian (UE)	0.691
Participation & Socialising (PS)	0.690
Community (CE)	0.629
Entertainment (EE)	0.614

Table 46: Correlations between experiences – r and r-squared

Correlation			r	r-squared	Results
SF	<-->	IE	0.626	0.392	Lower than AVE
SF	<-->	UE	0.674	0.454	Lower than AVE
IE	<-->	UE	0.798	0.637	Lower than AVE
IE	<-->	SECM	0.737	0.543	Lower than AVE
IE	<-->	PS	0.695	0.483	Lower than AVE
SF	<-->	SECM	0.647	0.419	Lower than AVE
SF	<-->	PS	0.598	0.358	Lower than AVE
UE	<-->	SECM	0.794	0.630	Lower than AVE
UE	<-->	PS	0.716	0.513	Lower than AVE
SECM	<-->	PS	0.680	0.462	Lower than AVE
IE	<-->	VIE	0.696	0.484	Lower than AVE
IE	<-->	TE	0.773	0.598	Lower than AVE
IE	<-->	SI	0.700	0.490	Lower than AVE
IE	<-->	EE	0.639	0.408	Lower than AVE
IE	<-->	CE	0.768	0.590	Lower than AVE
SF	<-->	VIE	0.539	0.291	Lower than AVE
SF	<-->	TE	0.676	0.457	Lower than AVE
SF	<-->	SI	0.717	0.514	Lower than AVE
SF	<-->	EE	0.627	0.393	Lower than AVE
SF	<-->	CE	0.567	0.321	Lower than AVE
UE	<-->	VIE	0.667	0.445	Lower than AVE
UE	<-->	TE	0.784	0.615	Lower than AVE
UE	<-->	SI	0.784	0.615	Lower than AVE
UE	<-->	EE	0.639	0.408	Lower than AVE
UE	<-->	CE	0.737	0.543	Lower than AVE
SECM	<-->	VIE	0.590	0.348	Lower than AVE
SECM	<-->	TE	0.775	0.601	Lower than AVE
SECM	<-->	SI	0.803	0.645	Lower than AVE
SECM	<-->	EE	0.612	0.375	Lower than AVE
SECM	<-->	CE	0.622	0.387	Lower than AVE
PS	<-->	VIE	0.487	0.237	Lower than AVE
PS	<-->	TE	0.726	0.527	Lower than AVE
PS	<-->	SI	0.636	0.404	Lower than AVE
PS	<-->	EE	0.536	0.287	Lower than AVE
PS	<-->	CE	0.734	0.539	Lower than AVE
VIE	<-->	TE	0.640	0.410	Lower than AVE
VIE	<-->	SI	0.659	0.434	Lower than AVE
VIE	<-->	EE	0.580	0.336	Lower than AVE
VIE	<-->	CE	0.600	0.360	Lower than AVE
TE	<-->	SI	0.770	0.593	Lower than AVE
TE	<-->	EE	0.657	0.432	Lower than AVE
TE	<-->	CE	0.696	0.484	Lower than AVE
SI	<-->	EE	0.649	0.421	Lower than AVE
SI	<-->	CE	0.612	0.375	Lower than AVE
EE	<-->	CE	0.588	0.346	Lower than AVE

With discriminant validity among constructs in mind, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) can reveal if the ten individual experiences measure a single construct ‘Social Media Engagement’, or whether a second order model is favourable. EFA using ‘Principal Components Extraction’ (PCE) and ‘Varimax’ rotation was run in line with the initial research by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) on the ten experiences (the composite measures). Using the statistical software SPSS, the following tests were conducted. First, prior to the actual analysis, two diagnostic tests were deemed necessary in establishing: a) the suitability of the sample (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure), and b) to see if correlations among the ten different experience items exist. Although correlations among experiences have already been confirmed by the above correlation matrix, the ‘Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity’ provides further proof (Field 2005).

With a score of .950, the KMO measure provided a first indication that the ten factors (experiences) provide what Field has described as “distinct and reliable factors” (Field 2005, p. 6). While factors close to 0 indicate diffusion between the different correlations (factor analysis yields inappropriate results), a factor above .9 is considered “superb” (Field 2005, p. 6).

Table 47: KMO and Bartlett's Test – Social Media Engagement

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.950
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2066.092
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

Next, as outlined in the table above, the ‘Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity’ - which measures relationships among variables – is highly significant ($p < 0.001$). In detail, a highly significant result means that the significance value is less than 0.05, that correlations exist between the ten experiences, and that the correlations matrix is not an identity matrix (Hair et al. 1995; Field 2005; Hair et al. 2006). However, the ‘Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity’ is suggested to be a small sample test only; and therefore of minor use for samples larger than 100 (Potgieter & Roodt 2004).

The next output table describes linear components (factors) and associated ‘Eigenvalues’. Here, the number of ‘Eigenvalues’ should normally mirror the number of variables, and therefore as many factors. These factors are outlined below in Table 48 before extraction, after extraction, and after rotation. The ‘Eigenvalues’ associated with each factor are outlined as ‘Total’ number (e.g. Component 1 = 7.055). Further, they are also displayed in terms of % (Component 1 = 70.553%) representing the variance explained by that factor. All factors greater than 1 are extracted (right column) by SPSS, leaving one single engagement factor – Social Media Engagement.

Table 48: Total Variance Explained - Social Media Engagement

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.055	70.553	70.553	7.055	70.553	70.553
2	.600	5.996	76.549			
3	.535	5.345	81.894			
4	.440	4.398	86.292			
5	.343	3.431	89.724			
6	.255	2.551	92.275			
7	.239	2.386	94.661			
8	.203	2.034	96.695			
9	.171	1.709	98.405			
10	.160	1.595	100.000			

Finally, Table 49 overleaf outlines the communalities before and after extraction. Principal component extraction works on the assumption that all variance is shared; therefore, the initial communalities (before extraction) are all set to 1.000. The second column (Extraction) outlines the common variance in the data structure. For example, the estimated 58.6% variance for factor VIE_FAC is a common or shared variance.

Table 49: Communalities - Social Media Engagement

	Initial	Extraction
Mean_SF	1.000	.624
Mean_VIE	1.000	.586
Mean_TE	1.000	.800
Mean_PS	1.000	.657
Mean_SI	1.000	.767
Mean_SECM	1.000	.755
Mean_IE	1.000	.783
Mean_UE	1.000	.825
Mean_EE	1.000	.597
Mean_CE	1.000	.661

Generally, the literature (Dugard, Todman & Staines 2009; Field 2005; Hair et al. 1995; Hair et al. 2006) suggests that values below .5 indicate factors do not fit well with the factor structure, and thus should be dropped from the analysis. As can be seen, none of the experiences are below that threshold mark, and therefore, no experience was dropped. In conclusion, the results of the four outlined tests and tables suggest one single factor ‘Social Media Engagement’ which was then used for further testing with confirmatory factor analysis and a one factor congeneric model.

The details of both the confirmatory factor analysis and the AMOS testing are outlined overleaf. As can be seen, confirmatory factor analysis and AMOS testing confirmed the ‘Social Media Engagement’ scale as a valid and reliable measure.

Table 50: Descriptive Statistics - Social Media Engagement

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean_SF	233	6	1	7	5.06	1.304
Mean_VIE	233	6	1	7	5.53	1.140
Mean_TE	233	6	1	7	4.76	1.474
Mean_IE	233	6	1	7	5.15	1.193
Mean_PS	233	6	1	7	4.39	1.487
Mean_SI	233	6	1	7	4.96	1.310
Mean_SECM	233	6	1	7	4.48	1.468
Mean_UE	233	6	1	7	4.96	1.287
Mean_CE	233	6	1	7	5.02	1.208
Mean_EE	233	6	1	7	5.47	1.070
Valid N (listwise)	233					

As outlined in Table 51 overleaf, three fit measures indicate an average model fit. Yet, although the literature generally agrees upon a threshold margin for the probability level (larger than .05), RMSEA (less than .05) and AGFI (larger than .9), all three are suggested to be acceptable. This is supported by Wang (2011), who suggests that the probability level, the RMSEA, and the AGFI are often too restrictive in cases where: a) other indices (normed Chi-square, CFI, TLI) suggest good model fit, and / or (b) standardised residual covariance indicates good model fit. Further, in regards to the RMSEA, recent scholarship argues that a threshold of less than .05 is too restrictive, and thus a threshold of less than .100 is suggested (Bizumic et al. 2009; O'Boyle Jr. & Williams 2011). Also, although an AGFI of .850 is not ideal, it is still regarded as acceptable in complex models (Ford & Greer 2005).

Table 51: Item Loadings - Social Media Engagement

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
Mean_SF	Mean Social Facilitation Experience	.759	13.516
Mean_VIE	Mean Visual Imagery Experience	.734	12.888
Mean_TE	Mean Temporal Experience	.886	17.133
Mean_IE	Mean Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	.873	16.733
Mean_PS	Mean Participation & Socializing Experience	.790	14.309
Mean_SI	Mean Stimulation & Inspiration Experience	.861	16.334
Mean_SECM	Mean Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	.862	16.398
Mean_UE	Mean Utilitarian Experience	.905	17.769
Mean_CE	Mean Community Experience	.798	14.520
Mean_EE	Mean Entertainment Experience	.734	12.887

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	.953
Composite reliability	.954
AVE	.677

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	137.1 / 35
Probability Level	.000
RMSEA	.112
GFI	.890
AGFI	.827
TLI	.937
CFI	.951

In addition, as can be seen in Table 52 below, the standardised residual covariances do not exceed threshold range from -2 to 2, which also indicates a good model fit. Finally, as Garson (2011) suggests, model fit should be interpreted in relation to progress in the field. He contends that although threshold values for model fit exists, it is often observed that these thresholds are arbitrary.

Table 52: Standardized Residual Covariances - Social Media Engagement

	Mean_VIE	Mean_SI	Mean_SF	Mean_TE	Mean_SECM	Mean_IE	Mean_UE	Mean_PS	Mean_CE	Mean_EE
Mean_VIE	0									
Mean_SI	0.337	0								
Mean_SF	-0.227	0.8	0							
Mean_TE	-0.127	0.071	0.056	0						
Mean_SECM	-0.553	0.71	-0.094	0.121	0					
Mean_IE	0.738	-0.619	-0.424	0.026	-0.184	0				
Mean_UE	0.033	0.03	-0.161	-0.218	0.132	0.106	0			
Mean_PS	-1.199	-0.561	0.004	0.344	-0.006	0.115	0.018	0		
Mean_CE	0.203	-0.854	-0.677	-0.183	-0.754	0.714	0.331	1.325	0	
Mean_EE	0.567	0.214	0.945	0.095	-0.271	0.012	-0.332	-0.562	0.059	0

5.4.3.3 Self-Brand Connection

As discussed earlier, self-brand connection is suggested to have a direct relationship upon emotional attachment, which in comparison to trust, involvement, brand attitudes or satisfaction, is suggested to be empirically alike (Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006a, 2008; Park et al. 2009). Further, it is assumed that customers form emotional bonds with those brands that meet values or personality characteristics that are in line with their self-concept (Swaminathan, Page & Guerhan-Cancli 2007). Based on recent scholarly literature, it was therefore hypothesised that self-brand connection will be positively related to emotional attachment. In assessing this relationship, the self-brand connection scale was assessed for construct validity and reliability by use of confirmatory factor analysis and one factor congeneric model testing. Table 53 and 54 overleaf outline the results of all testing procedures.

Table 53: Descriptive Statistics - Self-Brand Connection

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SB1	233	6	1	7	4.57	1.097
SB2	233	6	1	7	4.86	1.066
SB3	233	6	1	7	4.79	1.091
SB4	233	6	1	7	4.74	1.104
SB5	233	6	1	7	4.73	1.177
SB6	233	6	1	7	4.78	1.050
SB7	233	6	1	7	4.78	1.054
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 54: Item Loadings - Self-Brand Connection

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
SB1	(...) reflects who I am.	.867	16.476
SB2	I can identify with (...).	.892	17.257
SB3	I feel a personal connection to (...).	.844	15.771
SB4	I (can) use (...) to communicate who I am to other people.	.851	15.969
SB5	I think (...) helps me become the type of person I want to be.	.866	16.438
SB6	I consider (...) to be "me" (it reflects who I consider myself to be or the way that I want to present myself to others).	.795	14.385
SB7	(...) suits me well.	.823	15.165

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	.947
Composite Reliability	.951
AVE	.708

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	55.2 / 14
Probability Level	.000
RMSEA	.113
GFI	.932
AGFI	.863
TLI	.957
CFI	.971

As with the social media engagement scale, the RMSEA and AGFI suggest an unfavourable model fit. However, as argued earlier, these fit statistics are still regarded as acceptable when other indices suggest a good model fit (Ford & Greer 2005; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000). Additionally, as can be seen from Table 55 overleaf, the standardised residual covariances are all within the threshold range of -2 to 2.

This, together with the fit indices for the confirmatory factor analysis, also suggests an acceptable model fit.

Table 55: Standardized Residual Covariances - Self-Brand Connection

	SB1	SB2	SB3	SB4	SB5	SB6	SB7
SB1	0						
SB2	0.204	0					
SB3	0.499	0.379	0				
SB4	-0.036	-0.365	0.095	0			
SB5	-0.227	-0.263	-0.437	0.609	0		
SB6	-0.567	-0.052	-0.659	-0.092	0.739	0	
SB7	-0.103	0.13	-0.318	-0.186	-0.076	0.736	0

In order to conform with all other research related scales, the next step was to compute a composite score by use of the ‘Mean – Variable’ with the SPSS statistical software (Hair et al. 1995; Hair et al. 2006; Schumacker & Lomax 2010; Van Leeuwen 2001) for parsimony purposes. This composite score has then been used for the full structural equation model testing.

5.4.3.4 Emotional Attachment

It was argued earlier that emotional attachment better describes emotional bonds between customer and brand (Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006a, 2008; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005) than other related constructs, such as trust or involvement. It was further argued that brand relationships become more meaningful the more the brand is linked to the self, and the more there are positive thoughts and feelings associated with the brand (Escalas 2004; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Hallberg 2004; Maheswari & Jawahar 2008; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). For the purpose of measuring emotional attachment, Thomson, MacInnes and Park (2005) developed a scale in line with previous research into emotion-laden consumption research (Kleine, Kleine & Allen 1995; Richins 1994; Slater 2001). It consists of 10 items (EA1 = Affectionate, EA2 = Loved, EA3 = Peaceful, EA4 = Friendly, EA5 = Attached, EA6 = Bonded, EA7 = Connected, EA8 = Passionate, EA9 = Delighted, EA10 = Captivated). The results from statistical testing (see Tables 56 and 57 overleaf) indicate that two of these items (EA9 = Delighted and EA10 = Captivated) were not fitting well. As statistical testing with or without these two items did not result in a significant difference for the outcome of the full model testing, they have been left out for parsimony purposes.

Table 56: Descriptive Statistics - Emotional Attachment

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EA1	233	6	1	7	5.45	1.224
EA2	233	6	1	7	5.76	1.038
EA3	233	6	1	7	5.45	1.345
EA4	233	6	1	7	5.49	1.294
EA5	233	6	1	7	5.79	1.251
EA6	233	6	1	7	5.69	1.156
EA7	233	6	1	7	5.60	1.137
EA8	233	6	1	7	5.70	1.166
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 57: Item Loadings - Emotional Attachment

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
EA1	Affectionate	.840	15.634
EA2	Loved	.850	15.914
EA3	Peaceful	.836	15.502
EA4	Friendly	.792	14.261
EA5	Attached	.843	15.708
EA6	Bonded	.847	15.835
EA7	Connected	.797	14.411
EA8	Passionate	.736	12.837

Confirmatory Factor Analysis**Cronbach's Alpha****Composite Reliability****AVE**

.940

.942

.670

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom

Probability Level

RMSEA

GFI

AGFI

TLI

CFI

72.2/20

.000

.106

.917

.872

.950

.964

As with the two abovementioned scales, the RMSEA and AGFI suggest an unfavourable model fit. However, as outlined earlier, they are still regarded as acceptable in complex models (Ford & Greer 2005; Yoo, Donthu & Lee 2000) with sample sizes below 250 (Hu & Bentler 1999). Further, the standardised residual

covariances are all within the threshold range of -2 to 2 (as illustrated in Table 58 below), and therefore also suggest an acceptable model fit.

Table 58: Standardized Residual Covariances - Emotional Attachment

	EA1	EA2	EA3	EA4	EA5	EA6	EA7	EA8
EA1	0							
EA2	0.432	0						
EA3	0.254	0.211	0					
EA4	0.647	-0.219	0.898	0				
EA5	-0.355	-0.393	0.232	0.039	0			
EA6	-0.186	-0.03	-0.515	-0.536	0.283	0		
EA7	-0.276	-0.217	-0.662	-0.529	0.192	0.682	0	
EA8	-0.773	0.217	-0.609	-0.668	0.149	0.57	1.149	0

Next, as with all other scales, composite scores were derived by computing a ‘Mean – Variable’ with the SPSS statistical software (Hair et al. 1995; Hair et al. 2006; Schumacker & Lomax 2010; Van Leeuwen 2001) for parsimony purposes. This composite score has then been used for the full structural equation model testing.

5.4.3.5 Brand Commitment

As discussed previously, brand commitment has been described as a mechanism driving the desire to remain with a brand, and a willingness to invest and engage with the brand (Bowden 2009a). It was also argued that emotional attachment can be interpreted as the root for this brand commitment (Amine 1998; Beatty & Kahle 1988; Esch et al. 2006; Evanschitzky et al. 2006; Fullerton 2005; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2008; Park et al. 2009). However, before testing this assumed relationship, the existing brand commitment scale was tested for construct validity and reliability. While confirmatory factor analysis indicated construct validity and reliability, one factor congeneric model testing with AMOS did not.

Table 59: Descriptive Statistics - Brand Commitment (original)

Item	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
COM1	233	10	1	11	6.18	1.802
COM2	233	10	1	11	6.18	1.767
COM3	233	10	1	11	6.23	1.816
COM4	233	10	1	11	6.08	1.925
COM5	233	10	1	11	6.18	1.890
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 60: Item Loadings - Brand Commitment (original)

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
COM1	To what extent are you loyal to (...)?	.886	17.206
COM2	To what extent are you committed to (...)?	.908	17.926
COM3	To what extent have you made a pledge to yourself to use (...) in future?	.932	18.780
COM4	To what extent to you feel an allegiance to (...)	.948	19.378
COM5	To what extent are you dedicated to (...)?	.947	19.335

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	0.968
Composite reliability	0.967
AVE	0.855

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	57.1 / 5
Probability Level	.000
RMSEA	.212
GFI	.918
AGFI	.754
TLI	.932
CFI	.966

As outlined above, four fit statistics (Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom, Probability Level, RMSEA, and AGFI) suggest a poor model fit. Although factor loadings for all five items indicate convergent validity, the numbers above are significantly worse than results for the three earlier scales for social media engagement, self-brand connection and emotional attachment, and so a more rigorous approach was needed. A first look into the standardised residual covariances provided no identification for a misfit with all values within the threshold range of -2 to 2. However, the modification indices and the covariances among error terms provided an indication for the misfit. As can be seen in Table 61 overleaf, if the analysis is repeated treating the covariance between e5 and e2 and between e3 and e2 as a free parameter, the Chi-square value will fall by at least 21.676 for e5 and e2 and at least 15.967 for e3 and e2. In short,

this means that the unique variances of the indicators overlap and measure something common other than the latent construct. As this is twice the case for e2 with the two highest modification indices, it is plausible that the model misfit can be explained by item 2.

**Table 61: Modification Indices and Covariances among error terms –
Brand Commitment**

			M.I.	Par Change
e2	<-->	e1	10.552	0.149
e3	<-->	e2	15.967	0.15
e4	<-->	e1	6.718	-0.104
e5	<-->	e2	21.676	-0.167
e5	<-->	e4	13.485	0.113

However, the practice of correlating error terms is generally disapproved, as “it means that there is some other issue that is not specified within the model that is causing the covariation” (Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen 2008, p. 56). As no theoretical justification for correlating these error terms existed, item 2 was dropped from the catalogue of items, resulting in a much better model fit (as outlined in Table 62 below).

Table 62: Item Loadings - Brand Commitment (Final)

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
COM1	To what extent are you loyal to (...)?	.876	16.871
COM3	To what extent have you made a pledge to yourself to use (...) in future?	.917	18.226
COM4	To what extent to you feel an allegiance to (...)	.951	19.464
COM5	To what extent are you dedicated to (...)?	.963	19.899

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha 0.961
Composite reliability 0.961
AVE 0.860

Fit Statistics

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom 4.7 / 2
Probability Level .093
RMSEA .077
GFI .990
AGFI .952
TLI .993
CFI .998

A composite score has then been created from the remaining four measurement items for further testing within the full structural equation model.

5.4.3.6 Football Domain Involvement and Team Identification

As the football domain involvement scale consists of only three items, it is labelled “just identified” (Chan et al. 2007, p. 56). As with the ‘Participation & Socialising’ scale within the football domain involvement scale, the number of data variances and covariances is therefore equal to the number of parameters to be estimated. As this is scientifically not useful because no degrees of freedom exists, the model cannot be rejected (Chan et al. 2007, p. 56), so the scale was correlated with the team identification scale to estimate all parameters. Here, two factor model testing revealed an excellent model fit for the two correlated constructs. However, in comparison to the overall fit statistics, the standardised regression weights for the team identification items revealed that three items (T1, T2 and T6) had very low factor loadings (below .4). Further, confirmatory factor analysis for the remaining three items produced relatively low scores for the composite reliability (.707) and the average variance extracted (.452). Therefore these three items were dropped from further analysis, significantly improving the AVE and the CR score for the team identification scale. Table 63 and 64 overleaf outline the results for testing for both constructs.

Table 63: Descriptive Statistics Domain Involvement & Team Identification

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
T3	233	6	1	7	5.77	1.254
T4	233	6	1	7	5.39	1.487
T5	233	6	1	7	5.39	1.312
F1	233	6	1	7	6.20	.993
F2	233	6	1	7	5.52	1.314
F3	233	6	1	7	6.09	1.113
Valid N (listwise)	233					

Table 64: Item Loadings Domain Involvement & Team Identification

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
T3	When I talk about my football team I usually say "we" rather than "they".	.540	7.614
T4	My team's successes are my successes.	.798	10.797
T5	When someone praises my football team, it feels like a personal compliment.	.655	9.094
F1	Football is very important to me.	.895	15.521
F2	I think about football all of the time.	.755	12.563
F3	I watch football 'live' or on television whenever I can.	.738	12.161

Confirmatory Factor Analysis**Cronbach's alpha**

Team Identification	.696
Football Domain Involvement	.825

Composite reliability

Team Identification	.707
Football Domain Involvement	.840

AVE

Team Identification	.452
Football Domain Involvement	.639

Fit Statistics

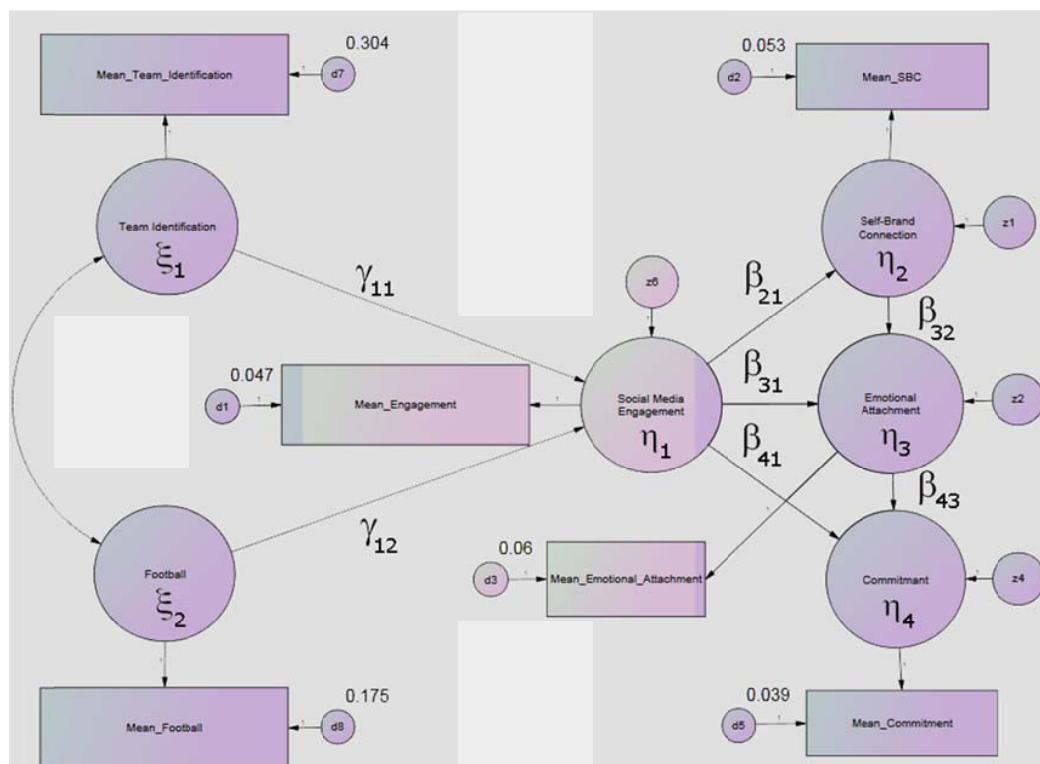
Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	11 / 8
Probability Level	.200
RMSEA	.040
GFI	.985
AGFI	.961
TLI	.987
CFI	.993

The correlation between both constructs is estimated at .432 and therefore does not suggest a lack of discriminant validity among them (Kline 2005; Van Leeuwen 2001). A composite score was created for both constructs for further testing within the full structural equation model.

5.5 The Structural Model

The previous sections presented the preliminary results of the analysis. The main purpose of these sections was to develop the measurement model as a necessary component of the two-step approach of structural equation modelling. The purpose of this section is to estimate the parameters and thus test the overall structural model fit and the research hypotheses as outlined in Chapter 3. Within this path diagram see Figure 21 below), the independent variables Team identification (ξ_1) and football domain involvement (ξ_2) are referred to as exogenous constructs in that they “cannot be influenced by any other variables in the model” (Holmes-Smith 2010, p. 3.1). In comparison, all other variables are referred to as dependent or endogenous constructs (η_1 to η_4). In addition, the variables social media engagement (η_1), self-brand connection (η_2), and emotional attachment (η_3), are also referred to as mediating constructs as they are on the one hand exogenous but in turn also influence the endogenous constructs (Holmes-Smith 2010).

Figure 21: Structural Model



Within this structural (path analysis) component of the model, variance in the first endogenous latent construct of social media engagement (η_1) is being explained by one or more of the two exogenous latent constructs in the model (ξ_1, ξ_2) as described by the regression coefficients γ_{11} and γ_{12} (Holmes-Smith 2010, p. 1.2). Next, variance in the remaining dependent latent constructs of self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment (η_2, η_3, η_4) are explained by the mediating construct of social media engagement (η_1) as described by the regression coefficients β_{21}, β_{31} and β_{41} . Finally, variance in the dependent latent constructs of emotional attachment and brand commitment are also explained by the mediating construct of self-brand connection (described by the regression coefficient β_{32}), and the mediating construct of emotional attachment (described by the regression coefficient β_{43}), respectively.

Goodness of fit statistics (as outlined in Table 65 overleaf), which indicate the overall acceptability of the structural model, suggesting the data supports the theorised structural model very well: Chi-square / Degrees of freedom = 7.5 / 7, Probability Level = .383, RMSEA = .017, GFI = .990, AGFI = .969, TLI = .998, and CFI = .999. Except for the γ_{11} parameter; all other parameters in the hypothesised model showed statistical significance. In identifying the statistical significance of these parameters, a simple comparison of the ratio of the parameter estimate to its estimated standard error has been applied (Holmes-Smith 2010). This ratio is described as the ‘Critical ratio (C.R.)’ within the AMOS Graphics software, but it can also be interpreted as the t-value. According to Holmes-Smith (2010, p. 5.17), “all parameters should be in the expected direction and statistically different from zero (that is, the critical ratio is larger than ± 1.96 – at the $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level)”.

Table 65: Parameters, Estimates, t-Values, Fit Statistics

Hypothesized Relationship	Parameters	Estimate	tValue	Conclusion
H1: The level of subscribers' football domain involvement is positively related to the level of subscribers' social media engagement.	γ_{12}	0.562	7.695	Supported
H2: The level of subscribers' team identification is positively related to the level of subscribers' social media engagement.	γ_{11}	0.123	1.619	Supported Not significant
H3: The level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers' self-brand connection.	β_{21}	0.504	8.296	Supported
H4: The level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers' emotional attachment.	β_{31}	0.498	7.628	Supported
H5: The level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers' brand commitment.	β_{41}	0.487	7.603	Supported
H6: The level of subscribers' self-brand connection is positively related to the level of subscribers' emotional attachment.	β_{32}	0.235	3.607	Supported
H7: The level of subscribers' emotional attachment is positively related to the level of subscribers' brand commitment.	β_{43}	0.305	4.772	Supported
Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom		7.5 / 7		
Probability Level		0.379		
Goodness of Fit Index		0.990		
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index		0.969		
Tucker-Lewis Index		0.998		
Comparative Fit Index		0.999		

As hypothesised, the level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the levels of subscribers' self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment. The relationship with self-brand connection (t-Value = 8.296) is slightly more significant than that the relationships with emotional attachment (t-Value = 7.628) and brand commitment (t-Value = 7.603). Further, as hypothesised, the level of subscribers' self-brand connection is positively related to the level of subscribers' emotional attachment (t-Value = 3.607), while the level of subscribers' emotional attachment is positively related to subscribers' brand commitment (t-Value = 4.772). This is also supported by the standardised regression weights overleaf, outlining these effects.

Table 66: Standardized Regression Weights

Social Media_Engagement	<---	Team Identification	0.124
Social Media_Engagement	<---	Football Domain_Involvement	0.565
Self-Brand_Connection	<---	Social Media_Engagement	0.504
Emotional_Attachment	<---	Social Media_Engagement	0.496
Emotional_Attachment	<---	Self-Brand_Connection	0.236
Brand_Commitment	<---	Emotional_Attachment	0.308
Brand_Commitment	<---	Social Media_Engagement	0.483

For example, the standardised regression coefficient of 0.504 for ‘Social Media Engagement’ → ‘Self-Brand Connection’ means that for one standard deviation increase in ‘Social Media Engagement’, there is a 0.504 standard deviation increase in ‘Self-Brand Connection’. In substantive terms, this represents a strong effect that suggests if the intent was to lift subscribers’ self-brand connection results, then trying to do so by increasing subscribers’ social media engagement would appear to be a potent strategy and to have a strong impact. Hence, the same suggestion would be made for the relationship of social media engagement to emotional attachment and brand commitment, and for football domain involvement to social media engagement. In comparison, one standard deviation increase in emotional attachment would cause a 0.308 standard deviation increase in brand commitment. In substantive terms this suggests that if the intent was to lift brand commitment, then increasing emotional attachment will have a milder but not insubstantial effect. The same suggestion is valid for the relationship of self-brand connection to emotional attachment. Finally, the relationship of team identification to social media engagement is considered to be statistically insignificant. As the earlier t-value already suggested, if the intent was to increase social media engagement by increasing team identification, the impact would be positive, but its magnitude is negligible.

Table 67 overleaf outlines the squared multiple correlations (SMCs). SMCs reflect item reliabilities in classical test theory and can be obtained by squaring the standardized factor loadings. For example, an SMC of 0.733 for ‘Mean_Team_Identification’ means that the factor ‘Team Identification’ explains 73.3% of its variance.

Table 67: Squared Multiple Correlations

Mean_Commitment	0.987
Mean_Football	0.820
Mean_Team_Identification	0.733
Mean_EA	0.923
Mean_SBC	0.941
Mean_Engagement	0.957

However, more importantly, these item reliabilities reflect the adequacy of the indicator in measuring the factor (Holmes-Smith 2010). As all SMCs are well beyond the threshold mark of .5, it is suggested that all six items (Means) reflect the factor very well.

5.6 Discrete Choice Model

The discrete choice model (DCE) was used to test hypotheses 8 to 10. As outlined earlier, the conditional logit (clogit) command was used to estimate the main effects (of each attribute) and two-factor interactions between these attributes and individual difference variable (IDV) of the last endogenous construct of brand commitment (Street & Burgess 2007). Accordingly, the following tables outline results from the clogit testing with the STATA SE/9.1 software.

Table 68 overleaf outlines the results for the main effects model of the three design attributes. As Adidas was chosen, the brand attributes were effects coded such that Adidas = 1 and Nike = -1. Accordingly, the price and the endorser (David Villa (Spain) and Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany)) of the brand were also effects coded (\$350 = 1, \$250 = -1 and Spain = 1, Germany = -1). Therefore, the positive t-value of 12.46 indicates that users of the Adidas Football Channel strongly prefer the brand Adidas over the brand Nike. Second, the negative t-value of -7.50 for the effects coded attribute 'price' indicates that subscribers to the Adidas Football Channel prefer a price of \$250 compared to \$350 for the same pair of shoes. Third, the negative t-value of -2.50 for the effects coded attribute 'Spain' (representing David Villa) indicates that subscribers to the Adidas Football Channel prefer the Adidas endorsing player Bastian Schweinsteiger over Nike endorser David Villa.

Table 68: Adidas - Main Effects

Iteration 0:	log likelihood =	-488.58165			
Iteration 1:	log likelihood =	-486.08704			
Iteration 2:	log likelihood =	-486.08134			
Iteration 3:	log likelihood =	-486.08134			
Conditional (fixed-effects) logistic regression					
	Number of obs	=		1792	
	LR chi2 (3)	=		269.96	
	Prob > chi2	=		0.0000	
	Pseudo R2	=		0.2173	
Log likelihood = -486.08134					
dv_choice_~a	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]
addidas	.7770221	.0623654	12.46	0.000	.6547882 .899256
price	-.3822896	.0509698	-7.50	0.000	-.4821885 -.2823907
spain	-.0990683	.0395686	-2.50	0.012	-.1766214 -.0215152

Table 69 below indicates the three individual interaction terms are all in the expected direction. In detail, a positive t-value of 12.35 for the design attribute ‘Adidas’, in addition to the positive t-value for the interaction between the design attribute ‘Adidas’ and the IDV brand commitment of 2.91, indicates that those subscribers who are highly committed to Adidas also evince a stronger preference for Adidas over Nike. Next, the positive t-value for the interaction between the design attribute price and the IDV brand commitment (t-value = 1.27) indicates that highly committed subscribers may, also become less price sensitive. Yet, as this effect is not statistically significant, such conclusion can only be assumed. Last, the interaction between the design attribute ‘Spain (for the endorser)’ and the IDV brand commitment (t-value = 0.69) indicates that those subscribers who are highly committed to Adidas also prefer the Adidas endorsing player. Yet, statistically speaking only the effect of brand commitment on brand preference was found to be significant. Thus, the results indicate that respondents are more likely to prefer the Adidas brand if they are committed but price sensitivity and sensitivity to particular celebrities is not different.

Table 69: Adidas - IDV Brand Commitment and Main effects

Conditional (fixed-effects) logistic regression					
	Number of obs	=		1792	
	LR chi2 (6)	=		280.99	
	Prob > chi2	=		0.0000	
	Pseudo R2	=		0.2262	
Log likelihood = -480.56336					
dv_choice_~a	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]
addidas	.7997354	.0647335	12.35	0.000	.67286 .9266108
price	-.3839171	.0511259	-7.51	0.000	-.484122 -.2837122
spain	-.0983028	.0398692	-2.47	0.014	-.176445 -.0201605
COMAvadidas	.1171941	.0402268	2.91	0.004	.0383511 .1960372
COMAvprice	.0417516	.0328647	1.27	0.204	-.0226619 .1061652
COMAvspain	.0175389	.0252773	0.69	0.488	-.0320037 .0670814

Finally, Table 70 below outlines the results for the main effect of the three design attributes plus their interactions with the individual difference variable ‘brand commitment’. Here, the LR chi2(3) - Likelihood Ratio (LR) Chi-Square - of 11.04 and the p-value (Prob > chi2) of 0.000 indicate that the overall interaction effect of brand commitment on the three design attributes is statistically significant.

Table 70: Interaction Main Effects – IDV Brand Commitment

Likelihood-ratio test (Assumption: <u>Main A</u> nested in <u>Interact COMA</u>)					LR chi2(3) =	11.04
					Prob > chi2 =	0.0115
Model	Obs	ll(null)	ll(model)	df	AIC	BIC
Main A	1792	-621.0599	-486.0813	3	978.1627	994.6359
<u>Interact C~A</u>	1792	-621.0599	-480.5634	6	973.1267	1006.073

Similar results as for the above conditional logit testing for Adidas have been computed for the second brand, Nike. Here, the negative t-value of -10.55 indicates that users of the Nike Football Channel strongly prefer the brand Nike over the brand Adidas. Second, the negative t-value of -1.34 for the effects coded attribute ‘price’ indicates that subscribers to the Adidas Football Channel prefer a price of \$250 compared to \$350 for the same pair of shoes. Third, the positive t-value of 2.11 for the effects coded attribute ‘Spain’ (representing David Villa) indicates that subscribers to the Nike Football channel prefer the Nike endorsing player David Villa over the Adidas endorser Bastian Schweinsteiger.

Table 71: Nike - Main Effects

Iteration 0: log likelihood =		-543.35862				
Iteration 1: log likelihood =		-541.29625				
Iteration 2: log likelihood =		-541.29464				
Iteration 3: log likelihood =		-541.29464				
Conditional (fixed-effects) logistic regression					Number of obs =	1760
					LR chi2(3) =	137.35
					Prob > chi2 =	0.0000
Log likelihood = -541.29464					Pseudo R2 =	0.1126
dv_choice_~a	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
addidas	-.5958437	.0564936	-10.55	0.000	-.7065692	-.4851182
price	-.064102	.047913	-1.34	0.181	-.1580097	.0298057
spain	.0771543	.0365713	2.11	0.035	.0054759	.1488327

In the Table above it can be seen that the Pseudo R2 (a measure of model fit goodness) for Nike of 0.1126 is much lower than the Pseudo R2 for Adidas with a score of 0.2173. It can only be speculated why the choice model for Adidas fits the data better than that for Nike but one reason may be a stronger focus of the brand Adidas on a single core business segment, that of football and subscribers stronger affiliation with the sport of football.

Table 72 below indicates the three individual interaction terms for this second test are also in the expected direction. In detail, a negative t-value of -10.55 for the design attribute 'Adidas' in addition to the negative t-value for the interaction between the design attribute 'Adidas' and the IDV brand commitment of -4.36 indicates that those subscribers that are highly committed to Nike also develop a stronger preference for Nike over Adidas. Next, the positive t-value for the interaction between the design attribute price and the IDV brand commitment of 1.21 indicates that highly committed subscribers also become less price sensitive. Last, the interaction between the design attribute 'endorser (here Spain)' and the IDV brand commitment (t-value = 1.51) indicates that those subscribers who are highly committed to Nike also prefer the Nike endorsing player. Yet, as with the first example only the interaction between design attribute and the IDV brand commitment is statistically significant. Therefore, the two other interactions have, although in the expected direction, only theoretical significance.

Table 72: Nike – IDV Brand Commitment and Main Effects

Conditional (fixed-effects) logistic regression				Number of obs	=	1760
				LR chi2(6)	=	160.69
				Prob > chi2	=	0.0000
Log likelihood = -529.62223				Pseudo R2	=	0.1317
dv_choice_~a	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
addidas	-.6367759	.0600352	-10.61	0.000	-.7544428	-.5191091
price	-.0628849	.0481068	-1.31	0.191	-.1571725	.0314027
spain	.0855793	.0373492	2.29	0.022	.0123762	.1587825
COMNvaddidas	-.1522255	.0348781	-4.36	0.000	-.2205853	-.0838656
COMNvprice	.034457	.0284511	1.21	0.226	-.0213062	.0902202
COMNvspain	.032994	.0219195	1.51	0.132	-.0099675	.0759555

Finally, Table 73 below indicates the results for the main effect of the three design attributes plus their interactions with the individual difference variable ‘brand commitment’ for Nike subscribers.

Table 73: Nike - Interaction Main Effects – IDV Brand Commitment

Likelihood-ratio test (Assumption: <u>Main N</u> nested in <u>Interact COMN</u>)				LR chi2(3) = 23.34 Prob > chi2 = 0.0000		
Model	Obs	ll(null)	ll(model)	df	AIC	BIC
Main N	1760	-609.9695	-541.2946	3	1088.589	1105.008
Interact C~N	1760	-609.9695	-529.6222	6	1071.244	1104.083

Here, the LR chi2(3) - Likelihood Ratio (LR) Chi-Square - of 23.34 and the p-value (Prob > chi2) of 0.000 indicate the overall interaction effect of brand commitment on the three design attributes is statistically significant.

5.7 Summary

This purpose of this chapter was to present the central research findings, specifically addressing the main research questions and ten underlying research hypotheses. The results included: a detailed outline of the content structures pertinent to the Adidas and Nike Facebook Football channels; an exploration of user comments and existing experience themes that emerged through a content analysis; a subscriber sample matrix; pre-test insights into experience measurement items that were missed out during the content analysis; demographic characteristics of the participants who responded to the main survey; ten experiences salient in the formation of social media engagement; how to measure social media engagement; the measurement of the relationship of social media engagement to other research related constructs; and, the discrete choice model testing of the relationship of brand commitment upon three brand choice attributes. Stemming from the findings presented in this chapter, the next chapter - Chapter Six - will discuss these results in relation to the four research questions and the underpinning research hypotheses.

6. Discussion & Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This thesis has argued that there is a significant gap in the marketing and communication research literature in which the dynamics between social media engagement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment require further investigation. This is of particular importance to the topic of sponsorship, which is predicated on assumptions of goodwill, and, in terms of sport, deep and regular involvement in branded social media by users – in this case football fans.

This study has furthered knowledge in the understanding of sponsorship effects in a sport-social media context by investigating two sport sponsorship dedicated Facebook football channels. The aim of the research was to evaluate the role of team identification, football domain involvement, and ten underlying experiences in the formation of social media engagement. Further, this involved evaluation of the relationship of social media engagement with self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment, with correlations between these individual constructs. Finally, a choice experiment explored relationships among different choice attributes and emotional, affective constructs to broaden understanding of behavioural patterns in respect of emotional bonds between social media user and sport brand.

This concluding chapter discusses the main findings of this study, its limitations, the relevance of the research to the sport sponsorship and media industries, as well as offering a set of recommendations for further research. A specific research aim, four underlying research questions and ten research hypotheses were outlined in Chapter One and Three that are used to structure this discussion. Three empirical phases were conducted in pursuit of the main research aim, the research questions and hypotheses, these included; a blended content analysis; a quantitative phase comprising a survey and structural equation modelling, and a choice experiment that employed a conditional logit model.

The following sections are presented as follows. First, the key findings of the study are discussed in relation to the main research aim, underlying research questions and the ten hypotheses. Second, conceptual outcomes of the study are presented. Third, managerial implications arising from the discussion of results and conceptual outcomes are illustrated. Finally, future research directions are suggested based on the results and the limitations and delimitations outlined in Chapter One.

6.2 Summary of Findings and Discussion

The primary purpose of this research project was to examine knowledge of the emotional determinants of a sport sponsor (sport consumer relationships) and empirically test user engagement in a particular aspect of this (the social media space). Specifically, the main research aim was to identify, examine and analyse the relationships of ‘Social Media Engagement’ to consumers’ self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment towards a sport sponsoring brand. A second focus of the research was to extend the existing knowledge on sponsorship effects models beyond the time of actual purchase. As discussed, this is a very limited way of understanding consumer behaviour and this thesis sought to broaden the understanding of social media engagement and its relationship to self-brand connection, emotional attachment and commitment to a sport sponsor’s brand.

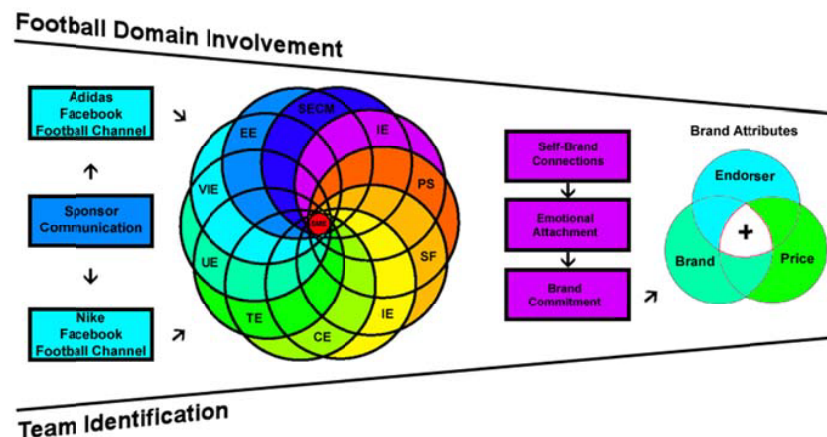
The theoretical underpinnings of the research were U&G theory, sport sponsorship theory, attachment theory, and self-brand connection theory. However, the thesis also invoked classical marketing and communications theory. A key aspect of this research was the extension of Meenaghan’s (2001) ‘Sponsorship Effects Model’ to include emotional dynamics (other than goodwill and fan involvement) as a basis for understanding ongoing sport sponsor–sport consumer bonds. These “ties that bind” (Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005, p. 77) were critically examined in a social media–sport sponsorship context. Further, a unique contribution of the research was the focus on dedicated Facebook Football Channels (Adidas and Nike) and the extension of an existing media engagement scale within this social media environment.

The research instruments used in the three stage main study, measured the constructs of team identification, football domain involvement, social media engagement, self-brand-connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment. Structural equation modelling was used to test the relationships among constructs as depicted by the research model. Finally, a choice experiment tested behavioural outcomes of these mainly emotionally laden constructs.

6.2.1 Conceptual Outcomes

A diagrammatic representation of the conceptual outcomes of this thesis is illustrated in Figure 22 below. This display incorporates the eight earlier identified user experiences by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's (2009) plus the additional two experiences identified by analysis of user comments and statistical testing. These ten experiences are presented as a kaleidoscope in circular form with each single experience contributing to media engagement in a social media context. Further, it provides an overview of the empirical testing and illustrates the assumed effects of team identification, football domain involvement on social media engagement as well as the assumed causalities to self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment. It also illustrates assumed linkages from the discrete choice model experiment by use of conditional logit testing. The subsequent sections will detail the identification and evidence for this conceptual representation.

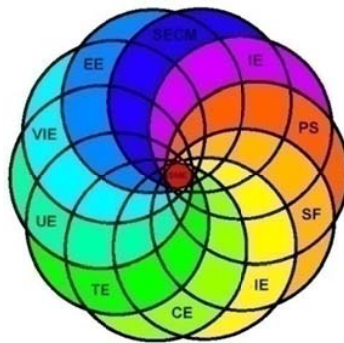
Figure 22: Sponsorship Effects Model - Social Media Communication



6.2.2 Formation of Social Media Engagement

In addressing the central research aim, four related research questions were strategically developed to provide a systematic basis for the collection, analysis and discussion of data. These research questions will now be addressed by discussion of the empirical results of this thesis. Research question one specifically addressed the formation of social media engagement with sport sponsor dedicated Facebook football channels and investigates experiences salient in its development. This study of the formation of social media engagement focused on experiences that channel subscribers to the Adidas and Nike Facebook football channels have in terms of sport sponsorship content posted in these channels. Following research by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009), which was underpinned by the results from a blended content analysis, eight main experience themes were identified as highly significant for the measurement of social media engagement and subsequent testing of hypotheses. These experience themes include (in other form) McQuail's (1983) original four themes (Information, Personal Identity, Integration & Social Interaction and Entertainment) but also mirror Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's (2009) notions of 'community', 'participation' and 'socialising'.

Figure 23: Social Media Engagement



Next, two more experience themes - entertainment (EE) and visual imagery (VIE) - were uncovered as further significant elements of social media engagement. Therefore, the eight expected experiences will be briefly discussed in relation to Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's (2009) theory. However first, the two newly conceived experience themes require an explanation in terms of social media engagement, as they had only been previously deployed and discussed in terms of

traditional media. In addition, as the social media engagement construct is the centre of this research project, all measurement items excluded after confirmatory factor analysis and one factor congeneric model testing will be discussed in detail.

6.2.2.1 Entertainment Experience

Although Calder and Malthouse (2008) contest that the ‘entertainment experience’ (EE) is in some way similar to the ‘intrinsic enjoyment experience’, it has been included for measurement of social media engagement as it better describes the more active and participatory characteristics of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010; Ryan & Jones 2009; Tuten 2008). For example, when either the Adidas or Nike Facebook site publishes a new post within their football channel, this post is also published on the user’s personal news feed. While the ‘intrinsic enjoyment experience’ can reflect the spontaneous enjoyment that a reader or user may have with this post after it appeared on their news feed, it is rather passive. Here, the intrinsic enjoyment was sought because of the provision of joyful content on the user’s newsfeed. Alternatively, it can be suggested that entertainment is a more active way of gathering enjoyment. For example, item 4 of the entertainment experience asks – ‘Once you start surfing around the ... Football channel, it's hard to leave’; this item is proactive in nature as it describes a scenario like this:

The subscribers to either of the channels clicks on the newly published post on his or her news feed and is then forwarded to the respective channel. After reading this first post the subscriber may decide to read an older post on which he or she has missed out earlier which is directly below the most recent post. This earlier post may consist of text elements but also include a video. After having watched the video the user may discover a link within the editorial text highlighting a prominent football player showcased during the video. After clicking on this link the subscriber is forwarded to a gallery of various videos showcasing the player, the players’ club team and the players’ national team.....

a) Theoretical Contribution

In answering main research question one, asking for experiences salient in the formation of social media engagement the entertainment experience has been identified as to be one factor underpinning subscribers' media engagement in a social media-sponsorship setting. Further, as per results from the confirmatory factor analysis and one factor congeneric model, testing item 2 (The [brand] Football channel often makes me laugh) and measurement item 5 (I like stories about the weird things that can happen in football) were excluded from further testing as they did not fit the model very well. Yet, considering the unique features of football and, connected to that, the content published on the Adidas and Nike Football Channels, both results seem to confirm what literature has inferred, albeit indirectly. For example, according to Hoyer et al. (2009), the uniqueness of any sport (compared to other products) is that it is built upon key factors: performance, skill and technique; passion for a team or player; or, excitement and tension because of an unforeseeable outcome. In that sense, football as a sport and product and the Adidas and Nike Football Channels by extension are usually not about *making somebody laugh* or about providing *weird things*.

b) Managerial Contribution

From a managerial point of view, this provision of relevant, entertaining and sometimes addictive information allows the subscribers to “engage deeply (or broadly) with a subject or worldview that matches theirs” (Rubin 1994, p. 162). This may result in a longer use of the Adidas and Nike Football Channels and, as per the research results herein, does carry benefits in regards to emotional bonds between subscribers and brand. Yet, especially in regards to purposively created ‘link-following patterns’, remarks by Einstein (2011) suggest that the unlimited digital availability of information and entertainment may forsake and betray all senses of proportion and balance, and therefore reject moderation and restraint. Further, while subscribers to these channels exchange time for the comforts of entertainment, they may become less capable of rejecting or interfering with the subtle messages that sustain the abovementioned emotional bonds (Karp 2011).

6.2.2.2 Visual Imagery Experience

Next, although the ‘Visual Imagery’ experience has not previously been tested within online or social media environments, it has been included in this study for several reasons. First, placing pictures and videos within social media environments such as the Facebook football channels offers new levels of engagement compared to traditional (online) media. As Gilbert and Mansfield (2005) suggest, the unique features of social media are that people can individually and instantly choose which pictures or videos they want to see, and, more importantly, they can share their own visual experience with others. This has been reflected in measurement item three of the visual imagery experience, which asked if the subscriber to either channel sometimes shows/shares a picture / video on the [...] Football channel to/with someone else.

a) Theoretical Contribution

In addition to the above, by adding the visual imagery experience, it was possible to capture and statistically measure what Gilbert and Mansfield (2005, p. 166) refer to as the “narrative wow”. This effect was considered especially important to the present study of social media, which was embedded in a sports context. Here, the narrative wow effect describes a phenomenon in which the reader can co-experience what French photographer Cartier-Bresson (2010) coined the “decisive moment”. This describes an instant when a photographer knows to ‘click’, capturing a moment that will only exist within this picture. These images (and videos) placed on the Adidas or Nike Football Channels help users to go to that very moment, and “allows the viewer to make the photographer’s experience his or her own” (Kline 2005, p. 166). This, as Gilbert and Mansfield (2011, p. 166) contend, creates an “immediate emotional connection with the story” which is, for example, reflected in measurement item one, asking the subscriber if he/she sometimes looks at pictures and videos on the [brand] Football channel and thinks “WoW”.

As per results from the confirmatory factor analysis and one factor congeneric model testing item 2 (Most often I look at pictures / videos before anything else. I like to look at pictures / videos even if I don’t read the story) was excluded from further testing. Existing media experience literature, which has earlier tested the visual

imagery experience in media context studies, does not provide an explanation on this matter. Yet, in regards to the Adidas and Nike Football Channels, it can be suggested that this is most likely caused by two individual factors: first, the length of new articles/posts within the Facebook environment, and second, the high relevance of the content to its readers. In detail, the text element published in conjunction with pictures or videos on the Adidas and Nike Football Channels is usually no longer than four lines. This may not prevent the reader from looking at the picture or video first, but it does potentially prevent subscribers from ‘skipping’ the text completely. Also, subscribers to the Adidas and Nike Football Channels usually showcase a high degree of football domain involvement. Their mutual interest in football, combined with the fact that pictures or videos in a sports context (compared to e.g., landscape photography), sometimes do not tell the whole story of a game (e.g., details on results or performances). This is assumed to be the second reason why subscribers tend not to ‘skip’ the textual elements of the post.

b) Managerial Contribution

Other than these sports–social media contextual implications, visual imagery experiences within the Facebook Football channels do have further important managerial implications. The use of dedicated football channels within the Facebook environment makes visual expression and therefore storytelling much easier and persuasive than ever before. Experiences that channel users have within these environments become more meaningful, personal and interactive. This helps users to express what moves them which can have significant consequences and potential for brands that are ‘listening’ (Kline 2005; Ryan & Jones 2009).

In summary, the addition of these two experiences provides a valuable contribution to the body of existing media–context studies and, therefore, media engagement scholarship focussing on the experience-based measurement of engagement. The findings suggest that commonalities exist between the experiences sought by users of traditional media as well as subscribers to social media channels such as the Facebook football media that this research investigated. Next, the evidence from this research is that both the entertainment and the visual imagery experiences contribute positively to the degree of social media engagement that subscribers have with the respective channels, and this strengthens and extends Royal’s (2008) earlier suggestions. While

Royal describes social media as providing more elaborate ways of using characteristics and technical features of traditional Internet in a common space, it appears as if social media does the same in regards to experiences. It does so by providing a common space on the Internet for the creation and delivery of all experiences both those commonly sought in traditional online media and those sought in traditional offline media.

The remaining eight expected experiences from Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's (2009) body of theory produced similar results in the context of this study. However, in regards to convergent validity of each individual experience, some measurement items were not considered further. Hence, all remaining eight experiences demand further discussion.

6.2.2.3 Social Facilitation Experience

a) Theoretical Contribution

The social facilitation experience was included with the aim of representing McQuail's (1983) integration and social interaction category (Calder & Malthouse 2005). In answering research question one, results from statistical testing indicate convergent validity of the social facilitation experience and therefore suggests including the social facilitation experience into a catalogue of experience when aiming for higher degrees of social media engagement. Compared to earlier research by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009), the measurement item loadings and internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) of the social facilitation experiences, as well as parameters in regards to the overall social media engagement construct, were slightly higher, therefore indicating higher construct reliability and validity. Overall, the results indicate that the social facilitation experience does have a high relevance in engaging readers in a social media context. In short, subscribers to the Adidas or Nike Football channel who sought high degrees of social facilitation use their respective chosen channel to try to make themselves more interesting to other people - in this case by talking about and sharing what they read or view (Calder & Malthouse 2008). This supports Davies' (1993) and Giddens' (1991) notion that some media participants use emerging technologies as a creative tool to construct and amplify

human identity, where they write, talk or share themselves into an online social existence.

b) Managerial Contribution

From the point of view of social media branding, a high degree of subscribers engaging via the social facilitation experience indicates that: a) they deliver this experience consistently throughout the medium, and b) that the brand satisfies subscribers' appetite for things they want to talk about. Therefore, for brands using Facebook channels it is important to ask the question if subscribers would talk about the news therein (Duke 2011). Here, the key to success is to understand that experiences do not describe the editorial content but rather subscribers' reactions to it (Calder & Malthouse 2008; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Duke 2011).

6.2.2.4 Temporal Experience

a) Theoretical Contribution

The temporal experience was included to represent McQuail's (1983) entertainment category (Calder & Malthouse 2005). Results from statistical testing indicated that measurement item 4 (The [brand] Football channel helps me to get my day started in the morning) and measurement item 5 (I sometimes post a comment on the [brand] football channel and wait or come back several times until I get a response) did not represent the construct well.

In regards to the latter, this item has only been added to the catalogue of measurement items after blended content analysis was conducted. Here it was proposed that posting comments that include a question to the wider community inherits a notion of 'waiting' and 'return'. Yet, given what was discussed earlier with respect to the entertainment experience, two main reasons are suggested as to why the item might not be applicable. First, it is assumed that subscribers to either channel may indeed ask questions and also have the intention to return, but then get 'caught' by the dovetail of links and entertainment and then simply forget about it. Second, by following the dovetail they may already have found the information within a different section of the channel, which makes the need for a return redundant.

In regards to item 4, no other media context study has so far produced similar results. It is argued that the measurement item is not applicable because of the specific context of this study and the specific nature of the media vehicle, which is embedded within a yet different media vehicle - Facebook. While earlier research by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) investigated specific websites (e.g., Reuters.com, Washingtonpost.com, About.com, King5.com) as a whole, this thesis investigated two dedicated football channels within the broader social medium of Facebook. While the earlier research provides evidence that some readers use specific websites (e.g., ESPN.com, Skysports.com) to start their day in the morning, the amount of content on the Adidas and Nike channel is very limited. It is therefore assumed that Adidas and Nike Channel subscribers typically visit the channel once a new post (by Adidas or Nike) appears on the individual user's newsfeed.

In regards to the remaining three items, results from statistical testing also indicated higher construct reliability and validity compared to what was measured previously by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) in an online context.

b) Managerial Contribution

The above discussion provides further evidence that for subscribers who are highly engaged, the use of the Adidas and Nike Football Channels has become a ritual, which as intended, transports subscribers into a comfortable, calming state of mind (Calder & Malthouse 2008). In turn, from the brands' point of view, this comfortable state of mind is thought to lower customer resistance to the sponsorship messages conveyed within the editorial content (Bronner & Neijens 2006; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Tuten 2008; Wang & Calder 2006, 2009).

6.2.2.5 Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience

a) Theoretical Contribution

The intrinsic enjoyment experience also represents McQuail's (1983) entertainment category within this thesis (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009). Here, results from statistical testing indicated that item 4 (I like to go to the [brand] Football channel when I am eating or taking a break) did not fit the model well. As with item 4 from the earlier temporal experience, no other media context study has so far produced

similar results. Again it is assumed that the measurement item does not fit because of the specific context of this study and the specific nature of the media vehicle (as outlined earlier). As outlined earlier, the Adidas and Nike Football Channels are in a sense merely channels within the broader medium of Facebook. Here, it is also suggested that subscribers may visit a sport-specific website (e.g., ESPN.com, Skysports.com) during their breaks, but most likely visited the actual Facebook channels only once a new post appears on their own, general Facebook newsfeed. In regards to the remaining four items, factor loadings indicated higher construct reliability and validity compared to Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's (2009) research in a general online media context. In answering the first main research questions, this thesis' contribution is a clear suggestion to include the intrinsic enjoyment experience into a catalogue of valuable experiences that may lead to higher engagement with a social media vehicle such as Facebook brand channels.

b) Managerial Contribution

The results above suggest that those subscribers who are highly engaged with the Adidas and Nike Football Channels make intensive use of them to improve their mood, to calm down, and to escape from troubles in their everyday life (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009). As with the temporal experience, from a brand management point of view this is also thought to lower customer resistance to the sponsorship messages conveyed within the editorial content (Bronner & Neijens 2006; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Tuten 2008; Wang & Calder 2006, 2009). Therefore, community managers should closely monitor how and why levels of the intrinsic enjoyment experience decline, take these indicators as early warning system and ultimately, try to facilitate intrinsic enjoyment by providing calming, mood improving content.

6.2.2.6 Participation and Socializing Experience

a) Theoretical Contribution

The participation and socialising experience was included to represent McQuail's (1983) integration and social interaction category. Here, measurement item 4 (I often feel guilty about the amount of time I spend on the [brand] Football channel) and measurement item 5 (I should probably cut back on the amount of time I spend on the

[brand] Football channel) did not meet the statistically significant threshold criteria. Again, no other studies into traditional or general online media using the participation and socialising experiences have so far produced similar results. Yet, similar to earlier items from other experiences, the suggested explanation for the misfit of both items may be reason to the context of this thesis - which investigates a channel within a wider system, in this case Facebook. It is assumed that both items are a valid measure for the participation and socialising experience within the context of Facebook. However, as the amount of content is relatively limited, and since it is assumed that subscribers do generally only visit the football channels once a new post appears on their general feed, it is not surprising that these two measures do not replicate similar results within the context of this study. Although, it is acknowledged that some subscribers occasionally spend a reasonably long time on either channel (e.g., by getting caught in a dovetail of links), it is believed that this does not happen on a regular basis. As with all other experiences so far, the factor loadings of the remaining measurement items of Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's (2009) research were on average higher within the context of this study. Therefore, in answering research question one, results indicate, that the participation and socializing experience (although with less items than the original) is a valid and reliable variable that may lead to higher engagement with a social media brand channel within a wider system; Facebook.

b) Managerial Contribution

In this sense, the above results indicate that the participation and socialising experience is a valid measure in terms of identifying how much the Adidas or Nike Football Channels do replace real world activities, such as speaking to friends (outside the channel) about the latest football results, or some spectacular performance by a team or player (Calder & Malthouse 2008). This is also supported by Humphreys (2011), who describes this form of engagement as a subscriber's transition phase from audience to producer, which from a brand management point of view may enhance other experiences (e.g., utilitarian, community). Further, by becoming a co-producer of news or utility, a fulfilling subscriber experience is created that in turn leads to greater engagement and loyalty with the medium (Humphreys 2011).

6.2.2.7 Stimulation and Inspiration Experience

a) Theoretical Contribution

The stimulation and inspiration experience was included to represent McQuail's (1983) integration and social interaction category (Calder & Malthouse 2005). Results from initial statistical testing indicate convergent validity of the stimulation and inspiration experience. Compared to earlier research by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009), the measurement item loadings and internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) of the social facilitation experiences, as well as parameters in regards to the overall social media engagement construct, were slightly higher, therefore indicating higher construct reliability and validity within the context of this study. In relation to the first research question the results of empirical testing suggest to also include the stimulation and inspiration when measuring media engagement in social media settings.

b) Managerial Contribution

The results of testing the stimulation and inspiration experience within the context of this study further support Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's (2009) results that subscribers engage with very specific content published on both channels. As outlined earlier, the product of sport is built upon the three pillars of performance, skill and technique (Hoye et al. 2009). These pillars combined with the showcasing of competitive encounters between teams and individual football stars is believed to be the main reason for the higher loadings. This conclusion is supported by Whitaker (2011), who found that specialised media vehicles like the Adidas and Nike Football Channels are concerned more with observing the art and skills of playing football rather than about skilfully playing football oneself. This in turn, as Whitaker (2011) suggested, has positive marketing outcomes for brands that are sponsoring or that are endorsed by a skilful team or player.

6.2.2.8 Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience

a) Theoretical Contribution

The self-esteem and civic mindedness experience was included in order to investigate McQuail's (1983) personal identity category (Calder & Malthouse 2005). Results from statistical testing indicated that measurement item 5 (I'm a better person for

using the [brand] Football channel) and measurement item 6 (Using the [brand] Football channel helps me express a sense of belonging to a group [e.g. fans, clubs]) did not represent the construct well.

In regards to the latter, this item has only been added to the catalogue of measurement items after blended content analysis was conducted. Here, it was proposed that some subscribers use the Adidas and the Nike Football Channels to express a sense of belonging to a group of fans or to express their pride in being a supporter of a certain football team or club. Further, it was outlined that item 4 “The [brand] Football channel makes me more part of my community” is directed towards the users community of direct friends (Calder & Malthouse 2009); in this case fans/supporters of the same club or team whom the user may know in their private life. It was assumed that the latter item insufficiently measures the degree to which the channel helps in fostering connections to the actual channel community. Yet, in regards to the results from this research project, it is assumed that item 4 does in fact measure these connections.

In regards to measurement item 5, no similar results exist so far that could offer a literature-based explanation for its unsuitability in explaining the latent construct of the self-esteem and civic mindedness experience. Yet it is believed that the sport specific content that focuses mainly on exceptional technique, skill, performance, professional players, teams or results only offers inspiration, which in turn may have positive outcomes in regards to personal development as a football player. Therefore, by providing football specific content and the possibility to chat with others interested in football, a subscriber may become a better football player, but not a better person in general.

While the above two measurement items were identified as not suitable in explaining the latent construct, the remaining four measurement items produced similar outcomes to Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel’s (2009) research. These results indicate that when considering the first research question, the self-esteem and civic mindedness experience may play an equal role, compared to Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel’s (2009) research, in fostering engagement with a social media brand channel.

b) Managerial Contribution

These results indicate that highly engaged subscribers use the Adidas and Nike Football Channels to find reinforcement of personal values, but also to gain insight into oneself. In doing so, they also connect themselves to a broader community (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; McQuail 1983, 1994). This notion is also supported by Shearer (2011) and Calder and Malthouse (2008) who both describe the need for connection to a broader group as: a) one way of seeking support for their own civic and personal values, and b) an extension to what was discussed in regards to the social facilitation experience, amplifying human identity by talking or sharing oneself into online social existence.

6.2.2.9 Utilitarian Experience

a) Theoretical Contribution

The utilitarian experience was included to investigate McQuail's (1983) information category (Calder & Malthouse 2005). Results from initial statistical testing indicate convergent validity of the utilitarian experience. In addition, compared to earlier research by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009), the measurement item loadings and internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) of the social facilitation experiences, as well as parameters in regards to the social media engagement construct, were overall very similar. Considering this similarity, the results support research question one in that the utilitarian experience may also facilitate engagement with social media, most notably Facebook brand channels.

b) Managerial Contribution

In accordance with Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009), these findings indicate that those subscribers who are highly engaged use the Adidas or Nike Football Channel for its utilitarian worth in providing information about products (e.g., pictures, videos, technical details) or specific training instructions – for example, on technical football skills or improve physical performance. These findings are also supported by Peck (2011), who found that social networking sites and dedicated channels like on Facebook or Youtube (e.g., in relation to brands or different topics of interest such as sports, cooking, gardening etc.), offer vast amounts of utility. That is

the utility gained from the publisher, but also the utility gained from other users within the same channel.

6.2.2.10 Community Experience

a) Theoretical Contribution

The community experience variable was included to investigate McQuail's (1983) information category (Calder & Malthouse 2005). Results from statistical testing indicated that measurement item 5 (I've become interested in things I otherwise wouldn't have because of the influence of others on this website) and measurement item 6 (Overall, the visitors to the [brand] Football channel are pretty knowledgeable about the topics the channel covers so you can learn from them) did not represent the construct well. Yet again, there are no comparable studies with similar results.

In regards to measurement item 5, it is assumed that the specific focus of both channels on football does not admit or advocate presentation, coverage or discussion around other topics. As the domain of football is the only overarching topic, the possibility to become interested in other topics is very limited. This is also supported by results from the analysis of subscriber comments during the blended content analysis phase. Here it became quite clear that all discussions were either about the topic covered within a news post, or about a different topic with a direct relationship (e.g., the same player, team, or a different game) to the initial one.

In regards to measurement item 6, it is assumed that subscribers to either channel already have a rich understanding about the topics under discussion. It is further assumed that the item may have recorded more suitable results if the question was formulated in a briefer format and did not include the educational aspect. This again points to significant differences to the earlier research by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009); in their analysis of media vehicles, the involvement content was much broader and technically informative, but less emotionally driven when compared to the pillars of sport excitement examined in this thesis. Calder and Malthouse (2008) suggested that this experience item was particularly relevant in engaging readers or users of a media vehicle that seeks specific, technical advice (e.g., for cooking or gardening) from other users.

The results of statistical testing for all remaining measurement items were in line with the earlier research by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009). Therefore, in regards to the first main research question and the formation of social media engagement, the community experience should also be considered when engineering and closely monitoring a set of experiences.

b) Managerial Contribution

Similarly to the previous nine experiences, the findings of this thesis indicate that subscribers who are highly engaged via the community experience use the Adidas and Nike Football Channels to connect to other football fans and “to participate in a larger collective” (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 17).

6.2.2.11 Social Media Engagement

As Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) suggest, it is generally believed that online and offline media are different in terms of media use. While users of offline media are described as learning backwards (reading and viewing edited content), those who are using online media are described as learning forward in regards to their active, participatory and interactive behaviour. Further, the authors contend that online media is most commonly believed to be more social in nature, as these types of media are often used for sharing and communicating content with others online.

a) Theoretical Contribution

For this thesis, ten different subscriber experiences (see Table 74 overleaf) were discussed within the uses and gratifications framework. Here it was outlined why some user experience measurement items used by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel’s (2009) were not suitable for testing within the context of this study.

Table 74: Mean and Standard Deviation - Social Media Engagement

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean_SF	5.06	1.304
Mean_VIE	5.53	1.140
Mean_TE	4.76	1.474
Mean_IE	5.15	1.193
Mean_PS	4.39	1.487
Mean_SI	4.96	1.310
Mean_SECM	4.48	1.468
Mean_UE	4.96	1.287
Mean_CE	5.02	1.208
Mean_EE	5.47	1.070

However, by considering the results provided evidence was presented for the reliability, discriminant validity and convergent validity of Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's (2009) experience scales in a social media setting. Through the use of factor analysis, one major construct has therefore been identified.

Yet the identified construct of social media engagement is, in part, manifested in different types of experiences that are very similar to those that users of offline media (e.g., newspapers) have. This is in line with Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009), who, compared results from their offline (Calder & Malthouse 2008; Malthouse, Calder & Tamhane 2007) and online research. For example, their research in the two media genres recognised that both offer social experiences (e.g., sharing a newspaper article physically and sharing a website article interactively). Equally, readers of a newspaper may have inspirational experiences while reading an online article from the same newspaper; this suggests that online and offline media are, in that respect, not different at all.

Yet, as outlined earlier, the research into online media by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) identified two second order engagement factors, later labelled personal and social-interactive engagement. Here, those experiences (e.g., temporal, social facilitation, stimulation and inspiration) are considered typical for newspapers and magazines, and featured predominantly in terms of measures of personal engagement. By comparison, those experiences (e.g., utilitarian, participation and

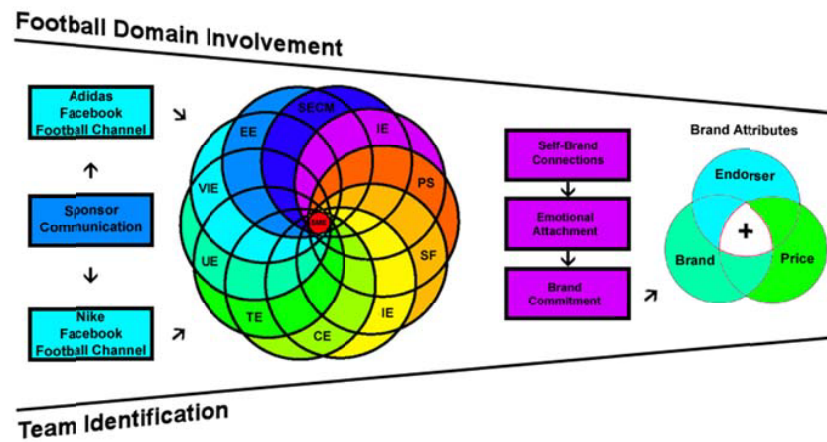
socialising) that are considered typical for the Internet featured predominantly in terms of measures of social interactive engagement. In essence, this provides empirical support “to the idea that the Internet is a different kind of medium” (Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel 2009, p. 329).

Yet again, exploratory factor analysis for this research project only revealed one major engagement factor. This, in comparison to Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009), gives support to the idea that those experiences sought in traditional media and those typically sought in online media are equally sought in the context of social media. The empirical evidence presented in Chapter 5 therefore supports an important notion about social media that was discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review. Here it was argued that social media, although being a fairly recent category of different mediums, possesses several characteristics that have been available via the Internet since its early stages (Royal 2008). Further, as Royal (2008) argues, technologies such as blogs, discussion groups, e-mail, chat, forums or user comments have existed for many years; different forms of social media are therefore more elaborate ways of using all of these features in a single space. It none the less appears that social media is not just a single space for combining technical features; more importantly, it is a single space for the creation/delivery of experiences - those typically sought in traditional media and those typically sought in online media.

6.3 Discussion of Relationships

As per the above, the statistical findings indicate that social media engagement should be measured as a single experience-based engagement construct within the context of brand–sponsorship dedicated Facebook football channels. As outlined in the conceptual outcome map (see Figure 24 overleaf), this experience-based constructs have been central to this thesis.

Figure 24: Conceptual Outcome



The following sections will now discuss the results from the testing of other research-related constructs: team identification, football domain involvement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment. Further, in light of the research hypotheses presented in Table 75 (overleaf), the results of the relationship tests between social media engagement and the constructs that induce emotional bonds will be discussed.

Table 75: Research Hypotheses

Hypothesized Relationship	Estimate	tValue	Conclusion
H1: The level of subscribers' football domain involvement is positively related to the level of subscribers' social media engagement.	0.562	7.695	Supported
H2: The level of subscribers' team identification is positively related to the level of subscribers' social media engagement.	0.123	1.619	Supported Not significant
H3: The level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers' self-brand connection.	0.504	8.296	Supported
H4: The level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers' emotional attachment.	0.498	7.628	Supported
H5: The level of subscribers' social media engagement is positively related to the level of subscribers' brand commitment.	0.487	7.603	Supported
H6: The level of subscribers' self-brand connection is positively related to the level of subscribers' emotional attachment.	0.235	3.607	Supported
H7: The level of subscribers' emotional attachment is positively related to the level of subscribers' brand commitment.	0.305	4.772	Supported

6.3.1 Football Domain Involvement and Social Media Engagement

Research question two specifically addressed the relationship between football domain involvement and team identification with social media engagement in sport sponsorship dedicated Facebook Football Channels. The results from this study support the premise that high degrees of football domain involvement can predict higher degrees of an individual's social media engagement with either the Adidas or the Nike Facebook Football Channels. As such, the results support the existing findings to the domain of social media in that the personal relevance of a particular object, situation, or action (the domain of football) is an important driver in the development of other forms engagement with a media vehicle (Calder & Malthouse 2008; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Capella 2002; Funk, Ridinger & Moorman 2004; Jiang et al. 2008; Mittal & Lee 1989; Pham 1992; Shank & Beasley 1998; White 2007). In the context of this study, this means that somebody who is not interested in football is unlikely to experience high degrees of engagement with a

Facebook football channel. This provides further support for Higgins' (2006) and Calder and Malthouse's (2008) notion that it is important to distinguish motivational forces of engagement (the experiences in terms of making something happen (or not happen in the consumer's life) from the hedonic side, here the 'liking' of football. The results indicate that for those subscribers that 'like' or are highly involved with the domain of football, the possibility that experiences sought do make a difference in their life is more likely. For example, they are more likely to use the channel as they receive an intrinsic enjoyment that improves their mood and helps them to escape from their everyday life.

6.3.2 Team Identification and Social Media Engagement

The results from this study support the premise that highly identified team supporters are more likely to exhibit higher degrees of social media engagement with the Adidas and the Nike Facebook Football Channels. Yet, statistically speaking (and as anticipated), this relationship is not significant. Therefore, the results of this study support Kwak, Kim and Zimmerman's (2010) earlier findings in that people who identify themselves as 'true' fans of a player or team prefer mainstream media in comparison to social media, and also user generated content when looking for credible information about their associated football team. This provides additional insights into how the level of team allegiance influences media choice and processing (Funk & Pritchard 2006). Additionally, this further strengthens the argument that principles of engagement (see section 2.4.6), such as authenticity, honesty or trustful information (Chandler 2009; Evans 2008; Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster 2008; Holtz & Havens 2009; Holzner 2009; Miller 2009; Postman 2009; Ryan & Jones 2009; Tuten 2008; Weber 2007) are a necessary requirement when seeking to engage customers and promote brands via dedicated Facebook channels. Further, it adds to Kwak, Kim and Zimmerman's (2010, p. 416) persuasive research findings that "attitude strength (or attitude certainty) toward the message target might be an important factor influencing individuals' media selection and source processing", but that it is not an important factor in regards to the individual's strength of (social) media engagement.

6.3.3 Social Media Engagement, Self-Brand Connection, Emotional Attachment and Brand Commitment

Research question three specifically addressed the relationship between social media engagement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment within a sport–social media context. The model tested in this thesis postulates that social media engagement has a positive relationship to self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment that are all individual constructs. Further, it suggests that self-brand connection is positively related to emotional attachment, and in turn the aforementioned is positively related to brand commitment. The latter is suggested to be positively related to choice behavioural outcomes. As brand commitment increases, one can expect an increase in brand consciousness, an increase in endorser consciousness, and less price sensitivity. However, as mentioned earlier only the effect on price sensitivity is statistically significant. This conceptualisation has been affirmed by the empirical results in this thesis, in which social media engagement is positively related to self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment. Moreover, it is affirmed that self-brand connection is positively related to emotional attachment, which in turn predicts brand commitment. Specifically, it was found that measures for self-brand connection, emotional attachment to and brand commitment with the sponsor to be higher for more highly engaged subscribers. Further, it was found that subscribers' self-brand connection is positively related to emotional attachment to the sponsors' brand. Meanwhile, in turn, it was found that the latter is positively related to (sponsors') brand commitment. From this it follows that brand commitment may be considered a link in a chain of direct relationships that connects social media engagement, self-brand-connection and emotional attachment with brand related choice attributes.

From the perspective of sponsor-brand-customer relationships, social media engagement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment are each highly relevant to the area of sport sponsorship scholarship, and the more general area of 'relationship marketing' that considers these to be key variables in relational exchanges (Bansal, Irving & Taylor 2004; Belaid & Behi 2011; Brodie et al. 2011a; Brodie et al. 2011b; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009; Escalas 2004; Esch et al. 2006; Fullerton 2005; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005).

a) Social Media and Self-Brand Connection

Research on the relationship between self-brand connection and emotional attachment has consistently emphasised that customers form strong relationships with brands that portray values and personality characteristics that are in line with their self-concept (Swaminathan, Page & Guerhan-Cancli 2007). Moreover, self-brand connection leads to strong emotional attachment in that it enhances self-identity by a process of individuals reflecting upon who they are or would like to be (Escalas 2004; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Park et al. 2009; Wentzel, Tomczak & Herrmann 2010). Comparable to these earlier studies, this thesis also found that self-brand connection is positively related to emotional attachment. The literature in this area has emphasised that self-brand connection and its formation are linked to various conditions, such as positive experiences with the brand, the congruency, transfer and matching of brand values in the consumer's mind, as well as external factors like the influence of social, community and reference groups (Escalas 2004; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Park et al. 2009; Swaminathan, Page & Guerhan-Cancli 2007; Van Doorn et al. 2010). Here, results from the present study provide further evidence to existing research that social media engagement, which is described as the sum of ten different experiences with the brand channel (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009), is positively related to self-brand connection. Further, in regards to sport sponsorship theory, the results also provide some indication that high levels of engagement also increase the likelihood of positive brand image building and the transfer of brand image values from brand to customer, which makes Adidas or Nike "become more important and valuable than others to the consumer, becoming connected to [a] consumer's sense of self" (Escalas 2004, p. 176).

The results indicate that because of the specific content on both channels - with focus on skill, technique, performance, dynamics, the sport of football etc. - it is likely that Adidas and Nike are also associated with human characteristics (e.g., image values such as cool, sportive, creative, skillful, dynamic) in the subscribers' minds. These additional characteristics are thought to further strengthen self-brand connection, which will also contribute to strengthening other relational bonds (Huang 2010), such as emotional attachment (Park, MacInnes & Priester 2008; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005).

b) Social Media and Emotional Attachment

Consistent with prior research on emotional attachment to brands, the results of this thesis indicate that emotional attachment can be predicted by the degree of self-brand connection (Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006b; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2008; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). Here results indicate that subscribers of the Adidas or Nike Channels who view the brand as a reflection of who they are or want to be, and the greater the personal connection the subscribers feel with the sponsor, the stronger is their emotional attachment to the sponsors' brand (Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006b; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2008; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). The relationship marketing literature (Andersen 2005; Arnone, Geerts & Scoubeau 2009; Gardner 1994; McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig 2002; Murry, Lastovicka & Singh 1992; Yoo & Kim 2005) has consistently emphasised that positive media-context experiences have positive outcomes for brand commitment. Based on this premise, it was argued that positive media-context experiences are also positively related to emotional attachment, as this variable is in turn said to be related to brand commitment (Esch et al. 2006; Maheswari & Jawahar 2008; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005). As expected, results indicate that social media engagement is indeed positively correlated to emotional attachment. So far no comparable studies examining the relationship between (social) media engagement and emotional (brand) attachment exist. These findings provide further support to earlier research in that positive media-context experiences have positive outcomes for the level of emotional bonds (Andersen 2005; Arnone, Geerts & Scoubeau 2009; Gardner 1994; McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig 2002; Murry, Lastovicka & Singh 1992; Yoo & Kim 2005). However, this thesis makes a significant contribution to these findings as it provides empirical evidence for the positive relationship of social media engagement to emotional attachment, it thus being an antecedent to brand commitment. Comparable to the relationship marketing literature on media-context effects and brand commitment, this study indicates that for those consumers who are highly engaged with either channel, the prominence of positive thoughts and feelings towards the brand is also higher, compared to those customers that are more lowly engaged. This indicates that the effectiveness of sport sponsor-initiated community channels in creating positive thoughts and feelings is indeed based on the delivery of positive experiences within that brand context.

For example, results from empirical testing indicate that the intrinsic enjoyment experience helps highly engaged subscribers to improve their mood, to calm down and to escape from troubles in their everyday life (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009). These positive feelings are suggested to be reflected in the brand, because “brands to which consumers are emotionally attached make consumers feel good [...] and brand related thoughts and feelings should be prominent in times of emotional distress, as the brand offers the potential to ease negative feelings and facilitates coping with stress” (Park et al. 2009, p. 328). Further, the findings of this study support the premise that visiting the Adidas and Nike Football Channels has become a ritual, which transports subscribers into a comfortable, calming state of mind (Calder & Malthouse 2008). Similar to the effects of the intrinsic enjoyment experience, it is suggested that the transformation of the subscriber into a comfortable, calming state of mind also creates positive feelings towards the brand. Further, the term ritual suggests that highly engaged subscribers visit these channels on a regular basis. This ritual provides some further indication on why highly engaged subscribers form strong emotional bonds with the sport sponsoring brand. As Park, MacInnes, Priester and Wan (2009) found, strong emotional attachment needs time to develop. Yet, as consumer resources (such as time) are scarce, they contend that consumers form strong emotional bonds with brands that provide meaningful experiences during the limited time they have available (e.g., when surfing the Internet). Therefore, the findings of this thesis support the contention that the best relationships between customers and brand are tied by “sensory and emotional elements derived from total experience” (Pullmann & Gross 2003, p. 217) – in this study the total experience of social media engagement.

While emotional attachment is said to have the characteristics of a relationship, brand commitment is described as an impetus towards future behaviour (Park et al. 2010b; Park et al. 2009). Here the results of this thesis provide evidence that emotional attachment acts as a “natural precursor to brand commitment” (Park et al. 2009, p. 331) in that it strongly predicts brand commitment. This finding supports earlier results of research studies investigating the same relationship but in different contexts (Belaid & Behi 2011; Didier & Lombart 2010; Jang et al. 2008; Maheswari & Jawahar 2008; Malär et al. 2011; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006b; Park et al. 2009; Thomson, MacInnes & Park 2005; Tsiotsou 2010), in which emotional attachment has

been described as a “commitment inducing bond between the brand and the consumer” (Esch et al. 2006, p. 100). However, within the context of this thesis, it was further hypothesised that social media engagement is also a valid measure for predicting brand commitment.

c) Social Media and Brand Commitment

While research question three specifically addressed the relationship between social media engagement and brand commitment within a sport–social media context, research question four further investigated the relationship between brand commitment and three brand choice attributes – brand consciousness, player consciousness and price sensitivity. From previous studies it is evident that a “strong brand community can lead to a socially embedded and entrenched loyalty, brand commitment, and even hyper-loyalty” (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001, p. 427). Other studies (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann 2005; Burns 2010; Casalo, Flavian & Guinaliu 2008; Kim et al. 2008; Koh & Kim 2004) found that users who often participate in brand-context related communities are more likely to exhibit stronger association with the brand and to exhibit brand commitment. In this thesis, the role of dedicated football-sponsorship channels, subscriber engagement with these channels, and their relationship to brand commitment has been corroborated by results from empirical testing. Here this study makes a contribution to the body of knowledge by showing that both relationship marketing theory and sponsorship effects theory can be broadened to explain brand commitment, which builds processes through media engagement in social community settings (Kim et al. 2008). Further, in addition to the investigation of the previously unexplored relationship of dedicated social media brand channel and brand commitment, this thesis is more comprehensive when compared to previous research in that it: a) investigated the relationship of social media engagement as the “sum of motivational experiences” (Calder & Malthouse 2008, p. 5) and brand commitment, and b) is more comprehensive in terms of research methods employed. Specifically, while Burns (2010) used content analysis to identify evidence for the aforementioned relationship, Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu (2008) employed a web survey and structural equation modelling techniques based on existing scales.

Burns' (2010) findings from qualitative analysis of comments of subscribers to the Starbucks, Chick-fil-A, and Victoria's Secrets Facebook Channels identified some evidence that participation in these channels leads to higher brand commitment. In comparison, Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu (2008) found quantitative evidence for the positive relationship of high degrees of participation and brand commitment. Yet both studies failed to provide further insight into the motives for participation. This thesis extends upon those findings in that it identified similar qualitative and quantitative evidence but also investigated the relationship of various forms of outcomes (the ten experiences), and therefore motives for subscribers participation (e.g., to improve their mood, to calm down and to escape from troubles in their everyday life) on brand commitment. Therefore, this study provides greater insight into the motivational structure that leads to participation and engagement with these channels in the first place. Further, Burns' (2010), Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu (2008) and others (Burns 2010; Chauduri & Holbrook 2002; Kim et al. 2008; Muniz & O'Guinn 2001; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006a; Park, MacInnes & Priester 2006b) each provide evidence that higher brand commitment will also translate into repeat purchase behaviours. Yet, while their research provides evidence for repeat purchase behaviour (will buy; will not buy in the future) this thesis explored three different brand attributes that are theorised to underpin the decision to stay behaviourally committed to the brand. In this thesis, discrete choice model testing provided empirical evidence that brand commitment positively influences brand consciousness, endorser preference and price sensitivity, which in turn are suggested to lead to a likelihood of repeat purchasing behaviours. However, as the results of this study indicate, only the effect of brand commitment on brand consciousness is statistically significant.

Regarding the relationship of social media engagement (as individual variables and as a driver for community participation) and brand commitment, results indicate that this relationship is similar to the earlier discussed relationship of social media engagement to self-brand connection and emotional attachment. These results were expected considering the affective and emotional background of all three constructs and the earlier notion that brands and consumers are emotionally tied by: a) a sum of sensory and emotional elements, that were derived from the total experience of visiting one of the two channels (Pullmann & Gross 2003, p. 217), b) the increase in positive thoughts and feelings towards the brand (Park et al. 2009), and c) the premise that

customers seek long-term relationships with brands that portray similar personality characteristics as the user when they describe themselves (Bouhlef et al. 2009). Additionally, results from this thesis indicate that other than the affective emotional component to brand commitment, social media engagement is also a valid measure when seeking to predict the calculative side of brand commitment. This second, more cognitive element (Chaudhuri & Holbrook 2002; Fullerton 2005; Okazaki 2009) of brand commitment includes more functional characteristics (Bowden 2009a; Hess & Story 2005) that arguably add benefit to a longer lasting relationship. Here, empirical results for the community and the utilitarian experience, which are representing functional elements of McQuail's (1994) uses and gratifications categories, provide evidence for this notion. In comparison to earlier studies, these functional benefits have, in all likelihood, been found to translate into a higher level of calculative commitment and further positive emotional response to the brands. Hence, combined with the affective attributes, they are suggested to have longer lasting benefits such as an ongoing relationship between customer and brand (Belaid & Behi 2011; Chaudhuri & Holbrook 2002; Fullerton 2005; Hess & Story 2005; Okazaki 2009).

6.4 Conclusion: Contributions and Implications

This study explored the formation of social media engagement that subscribers to sport sponsor dedicated Facebook football channels experience and its relationship with team identification, football domain involvement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment. While the results of hypotheses testing haven been discussed in relation to previous research results, theoretical and methodological contributions and managerial implications of the results have only been alluded to. Yet the contributions and implications of the findings of this thesis are potentially significant, especially for those marketers and sport sponsorship managers who are trying to shift away from intrusive ways of sponsorship or advertising to a more inviting and potentially engaging type of media execution.

6.4.1 Theoretical Contributions

This thesis provides one of the first tests of social media engagement context relationships in a sport sponsorship setting. Among the new findings, uses and gratifications theory proved to be a useful rationale in explaining the formation of social media engagement. From a theoretical perspective, this thesis provides support for the deployment of uses and gratifications theory in Internet research, and further extends it to the domain of social media. As Rubin (2009, p. 167) contends, the primary purpose of using this stream of theory are, “to a) explain how people use media to gratify their needs, b) to understand motives for media behavior, and c) to identify functions or consequences that follow from needs, motives and behavior”. Here, it has been outlined that the typical subscriber to either channel is indeed an “active user” (Ruggiero 2000, p. 5) controlling their online media environment (Rubin 1994). Additionally, in relation to b) and the identification of user motives, an extensive review of the scholarly literature, blended content analysis and statistical testing, supported the use of a set of ten different subscriber experiences within this social media environment. These experiences have proven to be sought by subscribers using the Adidas and Nike Football Channels and are a valid and reliable measure for social media engagement. These results are consistent with previous Internet studies that measured individual experiences within a uses and gratifications approach (Bronner & Neijens 2006; Fiore, Kim & Lee 2005; Nambisan & Baron 2007), but also with studies exploring the more complex construct of media engagement for general types of online media (Calder & Malthouse 2008; Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009).

Further, the relationship marketing literature (Andersen 2005; Arnone, Geerts & Scoubeau 2009; Gardner 1994; McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig 2002; Murry, Lastovicka & Singh 1992; Yoo & Kim 2005) consistently emphasised that positive media-context experiences have positive outcomes for self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment. This body of literature can now be extended twofold.

Firstly, the existing relationship marketing and sport sponsorship theory can be broadened to explain brand commitment building processes through media

engagement in social community settings (Kim et al. 2008). Comparable to the development of relationships between customers and service providers (Bettencourt 1997; Bowden 2008, 2009a, 2009b), not-for-profit organisations and their members (Gruen, Summers & Acito 2000), or buyers and sellers of businesses (Morgan & Hunt 1994) inviting relationship building efforts using Facebook channels, are found to result in positive affect and positive emotional attitudes towards the sponsor (Kim et al. 2008). Here, Ryan and Jones' (2009) notion becomes reality: social media marketing is not about sending a message; it is about inviting a response.

Secondly, Hirschman's (1970) classical model, which comprises the options of Exit, Voice, and Loyalty, can also be broadened to explain brand commitment building processes in social media in a Facebook setting. Within this setting, subscribers to the channels may choose to exercise one of two sets of behavioural actions based on the sponsors' communication efforts. They may either choose to exercise voice (expressing – in written form – positive thoughts and feelings towards the sponsor evoked from positive experiences while reading or viewing editorial content) or exit (expressing – in written form – negative thoughts and feelings evoked from positive experiences while reading or viewing editorial content). In Facebook channel settings the continuum of behaviours can signify pure voice (complaint behaviour, positive or negative recommendation, positive or negative talking and sharing) to pure exit (decreased participation, end of subscription) (Van Doorn et al. 2010). This knowledge is particularly pertinent to the sport domain where content, emotions, thoughts and feelings are particularly emotion laden, and social media provides an environment where exit and voice behaviours are executed within a matter of seconds.

6.4.2 Methodological Contributions

Previous research into social media engagement has not yet used the combination of blended content analysis and online surveys combined with open-ended questions to go beyond a one sided identification of experiences and positive thoughts and feelings towards a sport sponsors' brand. The approach taken in this research provides a significant methodological contribution, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively it used a cross-sectional examination of social media engagement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment through structural

equation and choice modelling (Casalo, Flavian & Guinaliu 2008; Kim et al. 2008). Qualitatively, the study investigated both channels from the viewpoint of a hub of information where participants shared their experiences, thoughts and feelings (Brodie et al. 2011a; Brodie et al. 2011b; Burns 2010; Ryan & Jones 2009).

By doing so, user experiences with both channels were triangulated and surrounded (Reinhard & Dervin 2010), which was favourable in terms of gaining a fuller understanding of how and which experiences within a social media environment constitute social media engagement. This implementation of an inductive-interpretive, mixed-methods approach consisting of qualitative and quantitative methods considered the strengths and weaknesses of earlier studies. By doing so, the quantitative inquiry was used to test these experiences upon its usability to explain the social media engagement construct and its relationship with self-brand connection, emotional attachment, and brand commitment. The addition of subscribers' comments, words, thoughts and feelings helped to justify the use of identified online experiences (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009), and to develop a deeper understanding about why social media engagement relates positively to the tested emotional variables.

6.4.3 Managerial Implications

In addition to the above theoretical and methodological contributions, this thesis has many applications for people working as marketing managers, sponsorship managers and sponsors investing in social media in order to gain positive outcomes for a brand or company. First, it is assumed that when managing a dedicated Facebook channel and creating a basis for subscribers' social media engagement this would involve engineering a set of valuable experiences for the subscriber, and subsequently measuring the degree to which these subscribers realise the intended experiences (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009). The social media engagement scale that extended Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel's (2009) original media engagement scale does however enable these managers to track the efficiency of each experience individually, but also to monitor social media engagement as a single construct. Likewise, this capability provides these managers with an early warning system giving indication of which experiences to work on when high degrees for a single

experience and likewise assumingly social media engagement are not achieved (Calder, Malthouse & Schaedel 2009). In this regard, high degrees of social media engagement are assumingly particularly important for sponsorship and community managers in a social media setting, for potential customers increasingly rely on social media for information (Kim et al. 2008; Shankar, Smith & Rangaswamy 2003), entertainment (Ahn 2010; Calder & Malthouse 2009), social interaction (Ahn 2010; Calder & Malthouse 2009), or for transporting themselves into a comfortable, calming state of mind (Calder & Malthouse 2008). And they can switch websites easily in a matter of clicks.

Second, a common managerial reason for using social media and Facebook channels is to tie emotional bonds between customers and a sponsor's brand with the goal of relationship marketing – to create brand engagement and ultimately enhance brand loyalty. The results of this study confirm that social media engagement may act as an important component in terms of positive outcomes on all three variables. For those that consistently manage to maintain high degrees of social media engagement, the affective emotional outcome probability is the highest. This thesis has shown that if a sponsor's brand (or any other brand) can sustain a sense of social media engagement among subscribers, then it can be assumed that this can link to stronger emotional ties. In that regard, this thesis provides advice to sponsorship managers seeking to implement dedicated sports channels in trying to induce stronger emotional bonds between subscribers and their brand, and further, to develop beneficial attitudes towards repeat purchase behaviour. On the basis of Meenaghan's (2001) classical sponsorship effects model, sponsorship managers need to develop an effective sponsorship strategy that includes leveraging sponsorship by the use of social media channels that assumingly develops stronger emotional bonds, especially after the point of actual purchase of a sponsors' product. In order to do so, the results from this thesis suggest in accordance with the scholarly literature (Chandler 2009; Evans 2008; Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster 2008; Holtz & Havens 2009; Holzner 2009; Kim et al. 2008; Miller 2009; Postman 2009; Ryan & Jones 2009; Tuten 2008; Weber 2007) to:

- provide various forms of interaction between the brand and the subscribers, and between subscribers;

- provide valuable experiences (hence relevance), and monitor the efficiency of these experiences in contributing to social media engagement;
- be open to subscribers' various opinions, monitor positive thoughts and feelings expressed, listen to these written voices and foster true communications and dialogue in order to exchange views, ideas, and opinions. Community members want to feel that they are part of the community and so demand a voice;
- Remember that the community exists for the sake of the community – as subscribers are participating voluntarily, do not become too intrusive. Instead, invite their responses.

These guidelines are designed to facilitate sponsor–customer relationship building processes that emotionally tie bonds between channel subscribers and a particular brand (Kim et al. 2008). Additionally, in regards to the latter two guidelines, sponsorship and community members should keep in mind that Facebook channels can be an important source to gather market intelligence. This thesis has provided evidence that Facebook channels provide real time access to the subscriber voice, providing insights into customer information related to products, services and reasoning in terms of thoughts and feelings towards the brand (Algesheimer, Dholakia & Herrmann 2005; Brodie et al. 2011b; Jang et al. 2008; Kim et al. 2008; McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn 2001). Finally, sponsorship and community managers can use the findings from this study to demonstrate sponsorship leveraging activities and relationship building processes may lead to a return on investment and the justification for investing money into these.

6.5 Conclusion: Future Research

There are boundaries and constraints that influenced the scope of this thesis. These limitations and delimitations were outlined in detail in Chapter One of this study. Yet, in addition to these limitations, a number of future agendas into the formation of social media engagement and its relationship to team identification, football domain involvement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment have been derived from the thesis. These include scale validity, scale reliability and model fit, demographics, sample size, conceptual outcome, and observation period.

a) Scale validity, scale reliability and model fit

Confirmatory factor analysis and one-factor congeneric model testing revealed that some measurement items did not represent their respective construct well. Furthermore, structural equation modelling revealed that in some cases the data did not fit the model well. Hence, threshold criteria for some goodness of fit statistics were not met. This is especially the case for the deployed team identification scale. Here, half of the measurement items were excluded from further testing. Although the exclusion of several items from this and other scales did statistically speaking have no significant impact on the overall results of the structural equation model testing, further research to validate and develop these scales is suggested.

b) Demographics

This thesis, as well as earlier research (Kim et al. 2008; McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn 2001; Park, Kee & Valenzuela 2009) investigating Internet-based brand and social media communities and affective, attitudinal or behavioural outcomes have mainly focussed on two demographical variables – gender and/or region – when approaching subscribers to participate in their studies. These studies have mainly applied these demographics in order to identify a population that is able to represent a wider group. Yet, testing for potentially different results between various demographically different groups has rarely been conducted. Consequently, the use and investigation of further demographic subscriber characteristics and their relationship among the tested constructs is another area for future exploration.

c) Sample size

The sample size of this thesis incorporates the suggestion for further research in a same or similar context. A larger group of respondents would have been desirable, but was not realisable due to privacy and ‘spamming’ regulations within the Facebook system and time limitations for this research project.

d) Conceptual outcome

This thesis provides a key contribution to the body of knowledge on the sport sponsorship literature in terms of exploring a relationship building mechanism in social media contexts. The central research questions, which this thesis answered by empirical testing, explored the application of uses and gratifications theory in a social

media context, as well as the formation, measurement and development of social media engagement, and further, its relationship to team identification, football domain involvement, self-brand connection, emotional attachment and brand commitment. Future research can benefit from re-testing the conceptual outcomes in various alternate settings, cases and contexts and, therefore, can extend this current application (Lock 2009) and enhance the findings from a more general perspective.

e) Discrete Choice Model

Future research could use more sophisticated choice models than the conditional logit model (McFadden 1974) used in the current thesis. Models such as mixed logit (Train 2003) and latent class models (Kamakura & Russell 1989) have the advantage of taking consumer preference heterogeneity into account.

6.6 Conclusion: Synopsis

This thesis investigated the formation of social media engagement and direct relationships with two sports related variables (team identification, football domain involvement) and three relationship enhancing variables (self-brand connection, emotional attachment, brand commitment) within the context of dedicated Facebook channels. Previous research emphasised the significant potential of social media and dedicated brand/sponsor communities as innovative tools, superior to classical relationship marketing efforts that are often perceived as intrusive, rather than inviting. While this study did not aim to identify the superiority of one measure to the other in binding emotional ties between customer and brand, it did provide evidence that relationship-building efforts through the use of social media may achieve these goals. This is of particular interest to the genre of sport sponsorship, which is built upon the promise of goodwill and the existence of some form of emotional bond that can be built upon. Although the context presented and studied represented some parallels with existing research into any media-context studies, it displayed sufficient non-generic distinctions to justify future research attention, specifically probing social media contexts and effects.

7. References

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Main Survey#

Page 1 – Question 1

The banner features the 'UTS: BUSINESS' logo in white on a teal background on the left, and the University of Technology Sydney crest and name on a black background on the right.

Do you consider yourself to be a fan / supporter of an (...) sponsored football team?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No



Page 2 – Question 2

The banner features the 'UTS: BUSINESS' logo in white on a teal background on the left, and the University of Technology Sydney crest and name on a black background on the right.

Do you consider yourself a fan/supporter of football?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No



Page 3 – Questions 3 – 8 Team Identification

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When someone criticises your football club, it feels like a personal insult.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I'm very interested in what others think about my football club.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When I talk about my football team I usually say "we" rather than "they".

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My team's successes are my successes.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When someone praises my football team, it feels like a personal compliment.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If a story in the media criticises my football team, I would feel embarrassed.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Based on: Gwinner and Swanson's (2003) & Mael and Asforth's (1992)

Page 4 – Questions 9 – 11 Football Domain Involvement

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Football is very important to me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

I think about football all of the time.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

I watch football 'live' or on television whenever I can.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

<< >>

Based on: Gwinner and Swanson (2003) Fischer and Wakefield's (1998)

Page 5 – Question 12 – 17 Visual Imagery Experience



This section will ask you a few questions about the images and videos placed on the (...) Football channel.

Please rate the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I look at pictures or watch videos on the (...) Football channel and think "WoW".	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most often I look at pictures / videos before anything else. I like to look at pictures / videos even if I don't read the story.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes show/share a picture / video on the (...) Football channel to someone else.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to look at the pictures on the (...) Football channel for a while.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I love the photography and videos on the (...) Football channel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The photography and videos are one of the main reasons why I visit the (...) Football channel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Based on: Calder and Malthouse (2008)

Page 6 – Question 18 – 22 Stimulation & Inspiration Experience

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This section will ask you a few questions in how far the (...) Football channel inspires you.

The (...) Football channel inspires me in my own life.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The (...) Football channel makes me think of things in new ways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The (...) Football channel stimulates my thinking about lots of different topics.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The (...) Football channel makes me a more interesting person.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Some stories on the (...) Football channel touch me deep down.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Based on: Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009)

Page 7 – Question 23 – 27 Social Facilitation Experience



This section will ask you a few questions in how far the (...) Football channel taps into your real life.

Please rate the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I bring up things that I have seen on the (...)Football channel in conversations with many other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The (...) Football channel gives me something to talk about.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use things from the (...) Football channel in discussions or arguments with people I know.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The (...) Football channel makes me more interesting to other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A big reason why I'm member of the (...) Football channel is to make myself more interesting to other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<< >>

Based on: Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009)

Page 8 – Questions 28 – 32 – Temporal Experience

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This section will ask you a few questions about the time you spent on the (...) Football channel.

The (...) Football channel is part of my routine.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The (...) Football channel is one of the sites I always go to any time I'm surfing the web.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I use the (...) Football channel as a big part of getting my news for the day.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The (...) Football channel helps me to get my day started in the morning.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I sometimes post a comment on the (...) football channel and wait or come back several times until I get a response.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Based on: Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009)

Page 9 – Questions 32 – 37 Self-Esteem & Civic Mindedness Experience



This section will ask you a few questions if and in how far the (...) Football channel is affecting your values and personal life.

Please rate the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Using the (...) Football channel make me feel like a better citizen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the (...) Football channel makes a difference in my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The (...) Football channel reflects my values.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The (...) Football channel makes me more part of my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm a better person for using the (...) Football channel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the (...) Football channel helps me express a sense of belonging to a group (e.g. fans, clubs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Based on: Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009)

Page 10 – Questions 38 – 42 – Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience

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This section will try to explore how much you enjoy the (...) Football channel.

Using the (...) Football channel is a great treat for me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Going to the (...) Football channel improves my mood and makes me happier.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I like to kick back and wind down with the (...) Football channel.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I like to go to the (...) Football channel when I am eating or taking a break.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

While I am on the (...) Football channel, I do not think about other sites I might go to.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Based on: Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009)

Page 11 – Questions 43 – 49 – Utilitarian Experience

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This section will explore how far you use advice and tips given on the (...) Football channel.

The (...) Football channel helps me make good purchasing decisions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

You learn to improve yourself from the (...) Football channel.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The (...) Football channel provides information that helps me make important decisions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The (...) Football channel helps me better manage my money.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I give advice and tips to people I know based on things I have read on the (...) Football channel.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The (...) football channel addresses issues and topics of special concern to me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The (...) Football channel updates me on things I try to keep up with.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<< >>

Based on: Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009)

Page 12 – Questions 50 – 54 – Participation & Socialising Experience

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Great, you are doing well! Just a few more questions!

This section will ask you a few questions about your socialising on the (...) Football channel.

I do quite a bit of socialising on the (...) Football channel.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I contribute to the conversation on the (...) Football channel.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I contribute to some conversations on the (...) Football channel to provoke other subscribers and wait for their response.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I often feel guilty about the amount of time I spend on the (...) Football channel.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I should probably cut back on the amount of time I spend on the (...) Football channel.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>


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Based on: Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009)

Page 13 – Questions 55 – 60 – Community Experience

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This section will ask you a few questions about your community experiences in the (...) Football channel.

I am as interested in input from other users as I am in the regular content on the (...) Football channel.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The (...) Football channel does a good job in getting its users to contribute or provide feedback.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

A big reason I like the (...) Football channel is what I get from other users.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I'd like to chat online with other people who regularly visit the (...) Football channel.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I've become interested in things I otherwise wouldn't have because of the influence of others on this site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Overall, the visitors to the (...) Football channel are pretty knowledgeable about the topics the channel covers, so you can learn from them.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Based on: Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009)

Page 14 – Questions 61 – 66 – Entertainment Experience



This section will ask you a few questions about the entertainment factor of the (...) Football channel.

Please rate the statements below.


	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The (...) Football channel always has something that surprises me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The (...) Football channel often makes me laugh.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The (...) Football channel is definitely entertaining.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Once you start surfing around the (...) Football channel, it's hard to leave.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like stories about the weird things that can happen in football.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really do have a lot of fun visiting the (...) Football channel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Based on: Calder and Malthouse (2008)

Based on: Escalas 1996; Escalas & Bettman 2003; Escalas 2004

Page 16 – Questions 74 – 78 – Commitment


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Please rate the following statements.

	Not at all 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Completely 10
To what extent are you loyal to (...)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To what extent are you committed to (...)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To what extent have you made a pledge to yourself to use (...) in future?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To what extent do you feel an allegiance to (...)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To what extent are you dedicated to (...)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Based on: Thomson, MacInnes and Park (2005) and Park, Priester, MacInnes and Wan (2009)

Page 17 – Questions 79 – 88 Emotional Attachment



UTS:
BUSINESS


Please rate how poorly or well the following statements describe your feelings towards (...).
1 = describes very poorly 7 = describes very well

	Describes very poorly	Describes poorly	Describes somewhat poorly	Describes neither poorly nor well	Describes somewhat well	Describes well	Describes very well
Affectionate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Loved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peaceful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Passionate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delighted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Captivated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bonded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attached	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Based on: Thomson, MacInnes and Park (2005)

Page 18 – Discrete Choice Experiment Football






Imagine yourself in a situation, where you are going to play an important football game. You need to buy football shoes for this game.

For each of the 8 choice sets below, please compare brand, price and player and afterwards pick one option for purchase.

Football Shoes	Adidas US\$ 250 David Villa (Spain)	Nike US\$ 250 Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany)
Please Chose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Football Shoes	Adidas US\$ 250 Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany)	Nike US\$ 250 David Villa (Spain)
Please Chose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Football Shoes	Adidas US\$ 350 David Villa (Spain)	Nike US\$ 350 Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany)
Please Chose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Football Shoes	Adidas US\$ 350 Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany)	Nike US\$ 350 David Villa (Spain)
Please Chose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Football Shoes	Adidas US\$ 250 David Villa (Spain)	Adidas US\$ 350 Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany)
Please Chose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Football Shoes	Adidas US\$ 250 Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany)	Adidas US\$ 350 David Villa (Spain)
Please Chose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Football Shoes	Nike US\$ 250 David Villa	Nike US\$ 350 Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany)
Please Chose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Football Shoes	Nike US\$ 250 Bastian Schweinsteiger (Germany)	Nike US\$ 350 David Villa (Spain)
Please Chose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page 21 – Demographics I



What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

Please state your age.

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

☐ Less than High School

☐ High School / GED

☐ Some College

☐ Bachelor's Degree

☐ Bachelor of Honors Degree

☐ Master's Degree

☐ Doctoral Degree

☐ Professional Degree (JD, MD)

Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

☐ Home or family duties

☐ Student

☐ Full-time paid work

☐ Part-time / casual paid work

☐ Unemployed, looking for work

☐ Retired, not looking for work

☐ Volunteer work

☐ Other

UTS:
BUSINESS

UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

Which country are you from?

What is your primary language (i.e., the one you speak most of the time)?

What is your secondary language?

If you have chosen 'Other' for you secondary language, please state the secondary language here.

Please indicate your marital status:

How often have you interacted with the (...) Football channel during the last six months? This includes for example:

- Clicking / reading (...) news on your wall
- Commenting on (...) content
- Forwarding of (...) Content
- Liking of (...) content
- Watching videos of the (...) Football channel

☐ Never

☐ 1 - 5 times

☐ 5 - 10 times

☐ 10 - 20 times

☐ 20 - 50 times

☐ 50 - 100 times

☐ More than 100 times

<< >>

Appendix 2 – Coding Summaries#

Coding Summary - Adidas

Hierarchical Name	Aggregate	Coverage	Number of References from Source Coded at Node	Number of Users Coding Source at Node
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Document

Internals\\Instructions\\Adidas_Instructions_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	27.24 %	74	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	29.78 %	43	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	1.27 %	2	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	6.62 %	16	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	7.55 %	17	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	2.87 %	8	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	3.41 %	7	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	32.65 %	50	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	0.82 %	2	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	1.41 %	4	1
Nodes\\Others	No	12.70 %	26	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	16.63 %	46	1

Internals\\Instructions\\Adidas_Instructions_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	27.30 %	61	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	1.54 %	3	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	2.92 %	5	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	8.85 %	18	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	5.96 %	10	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	3.40 %	2	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	14.01 %	22	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	4.40 %	4	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	0.46 %	1	1
Nodes\\Others	No	31.95 %	20	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	18.47 %	43	1

Internals\\Player CL\\Adidas_Player_CL_just_Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	2.38 %	1	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	5.87 %	15	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	36.22 %	74	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	0.71 %	1	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	4.94 %	3	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	19.53 %	55	1

Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	22.94 %	8	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	9.77 %	20	1
Nodes\\Others	No	14.33 %	5	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.52 %	1	1

Internals\\Player CL\\Adidas_Player_CL_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	2.62 %	12	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	21.21 %	93	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	4.96 %	2	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	10.58 %	43	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	1.96 %	2	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	1.95 %	1	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	8.45 %	45	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	8.91 %	9	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	6.80 %	13	1
Nodes\\Others	No	9.36 %	32	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	3.49 %	9	1

Internals\\Player WC\\Adidas_Player_WC_just Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	24.55 %	45	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	14.00 %	27	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	26.77 %	55	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	11.29 %	6	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	4.70 %	3	1
Nodes\\Others	No	8.20 %	12	1

Internals\\Player WC\\Adidas_Player_WC_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	2.47 %	4	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	6.49 %	14	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	14.13 %	37	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.24 %	1	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	5.01 %	3	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	29.02 %	70	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	7.62 %	5	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	1.89 %	5	1
Nodes\\Others	No	8.56 %	16	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.34 %	1	1

Internals\\Player WC\\Adidas_Player_WC_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	3.96 %	16	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	8.37 %	31	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	31.26 %	2	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	9.48 %	49	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	2.78 %	8	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	0.06 %	1	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	12.26 %	57	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	15.05 %	10	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	4.55 %	18	1
Nodes\\Others	No	21.82 %	30	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	1.73 %	6	1

Internals\\Player\\Adidas_Player_just Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	31.14 %	60	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	2.18 %	4	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	1.63 %	1	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	17.96 %	25	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	2.68 %	3	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	4.37 %	4	1
Nodes\\Others	No	4.97 %	8	1

Internals\\Player\\Adidas_Player_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	4.90 %	10	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	41.68 %	68	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	10.71 %	15	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	2.84 %	5	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	20.81 %	42	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	2.95 %	4	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	5.12 %	6	1
Nodes\\Others	No	5.20 %	8	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	3.26 %	7	1

Internals\\Player\\Adidas_Player_Poll

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	4.00 %	17	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	8.02 %	2	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	2.39 %	10	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	0.72 %	1	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	29.37 %	211	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	1.65 %	9	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	2.20 %	6	1
Nodes\\Others	No	15.51 %	13	1

Internals\\Player\\Adidas_Player_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	14.67 %	39	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	2.60 %	8	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	19.11 %	21	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	8.57 %	26	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	1.63 %	2	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	0.41 %	1	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	31.59 %	64	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	13.05 %	10	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	1.70 %	5	1
Nodes\\Others	No	19.57 %	27	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	9.24 %	29	1

Internals\\Player_Product\\Adidas_Product_Player_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	25.64 %	56	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	19.03 %	37	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.72 %	1	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	3.96 %	9	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	1.04 %	2	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	12.27 %	20	1

Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	3.28 %	6	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	3.07 %	7	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	1.03 %	2	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	0.04 %	1	1
Nodes\\Others	No	2.88 %	7	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	19.76 %	41	1

Internals\\Player_Product\\Adidas_Product_Player_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	16.45 %	60	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	19.96 %	35	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.62 %	1	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	3.99 %	7	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	9.07 %	26	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	7.69 %	16	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	4.56 %	6	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	13.05 %	26	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	11.40 %	11	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	3.95 %	5	1
Nodes\\Others	No	9.62 %	20	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	16.26 %	52	1

Internals\\Product\\Adidas_Product_picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	21.55 %	148	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	2.44 %	13	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.35 %	1	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	0.61 %	2	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	6.32 %	31	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	1.67 %	5	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	1.82 %	9	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	5.07 %	11	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	1.12 %	5	1
Nodes\\Others	No	24.63 %	44	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	8.56 %	52	1

Internals\\Product\\Adidas_Product_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	36.84 %	80	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	8.23 %	9	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	1.11 %	2	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	9.23 %	17	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	17.31 %	32	1

Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	1.58 %	2	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	5.33 %	7	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	6.90 %	10	1
Nodes\\Others	No	16.97 %	33	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	29.72 %	63	1

Internals\\Team CL\\Adidas_ TeamCL_just_ Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	0.06 %	1	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	2.40 %	13	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	15.16 %	4	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	15.72 %	72	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	4.88 %	4	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	0.45 %	3	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	27.69 %	57	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	23.25 %	12	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	7.85 %	12	1
Nodes\\Others	No	14.24 %	8	1

Internals\\Team CL\\Adidas_TeamCL_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	5.34 %	25	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.37 %	3	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	19.10 %	123	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.24 %	1	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	3.04 %	14	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	1.20 %	5	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	12.67 %	69	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	5.30 %	7	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	0.53 %	4	1
Nodes\\Others	No	11.79 %	26	1

Internals\\Team WC\\Adidas_TeamWC_just Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	1.50 %	3	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	3.23 %	3	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	13.03 %	44	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	3.94 %	5	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	1.25 %	5	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	31.11 %	113	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	4.22 %	6	1

Nodes\\Insulting	No	2.29 %	6	1
Nodes\\Others	No	4.29 %	10	1

Internals\\Team WC\\Adidas_TeamWC_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	9.66 %	61	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.86 %	4	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	9.80 %	67	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.06 %	1	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	1.01 %	12	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	8.05 %	67	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	0.95 %	3	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	1.58 %	13	1
Nodes\\Others	No	5.10 %	47	1

Internals\\Team WC\\Adidas_TeamWC_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	3.22 %	6	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	1.73 %	3	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	13.66 %	45	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.26 %	2	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	1.83 %	2	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	2.09 %	6	1

Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	18.82 %	59	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	2.22 %	3	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	2.92 %	9	1
Nodes\\Others	No	14.20 %	19	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.49 %	3	1

Internals\\Team\\Adidas_Team_just Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	4.81 %	19	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.30 %	1	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	13.46 %	76	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	7.33 %	32	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	3.89 %	5	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	0.41 %	2	1
Nodes\\Others	No	27.81 %	17	1

Internals\\Team\\Adidas_Team_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	10.68 %	54	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	16.46 %	72	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	12.13 %	51	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	1.18 %	4	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	1.98 %	2	1

Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	0.05 %	1	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	5.71 %	17	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	4.79 %	8	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	1.46 %	9	1
Nodes\\Others	No	11.51 %	55	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	5.52 %	30	1

Internals\\Team\\Adidas_Team_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	4.83 %	21	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	3.57 %	28	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	11.97 %	59	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	2.40 %	8	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	3.53 %	7	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	2.28 %	6	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	12.00 %	84	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	6.41 %	10	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	0.08 %	1	1
Nodes\\Others	No	10.91 %	21	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	3.27 %	13	1

Internals\\Team_Product\\Adidas_Team_Product_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	8.02 %	59	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration Experience	No	2.62 %	13	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	9.57 %	3	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	12.43 %	74	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	0.76 %	2	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	8.61 %	24	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	12.98 %	11	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	8.06 %	33	1
Nodes\\Others	No	7.54 %	23	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	1.36 %	13	1

Coding Summary – Nike

Hierarchical Name	Aggregate	Coverage	Number of References from Source Coded at Node	Number of Users Coding Source at Node
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Document

Internals\\Instructions\\Nike_Instructions_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	0.67 %	11	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.27 %	2	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.76 %	4	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	3.69 %	18	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	0.12 %	1	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	1.95 %	20	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	8.93 %	52	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.29 %	3	1
Nodes\\Others	No	5.98 %	40	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	4.54 %	17	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.81 %	7	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	1.60 %	6	1

Internals\\Instructions\\Nike_Instructions_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	9.63 %	80	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	2.80 %	9	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	11.84 %	26	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	0.05 %	1	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	4.86 %	25	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	11.65 %	31	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.87 %	8	1
Nodes\\Others	No	13.93 %	24	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	7.74 %	23	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.12 %	2	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	1.12 %	9	1

Internals\\Player CL\\Nike_PlayerCL_just_Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	0.29 %	3	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	4.62 %	7	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	12.74 %	31	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	20.20 %	67	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	9.69 %	17	1

Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.23 %	2	1
Nodes\\Others	No	2.75 %	10	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	9.59 %	14	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.34 %	3	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	3.20 %	14	1

Internals\\Player CL\\Nike_PlayerCL_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	0.70 %	12	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.06 %	1	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	4.15 %	18	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	9.66 %	41	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	18.22 %	111	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	9.38 %	52	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	1.01 %	9	1
Nodes\\Others	No	3.67 %	45	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	8.16 %	35	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	4.57 %	37	1

Internals\\Player WC\\Nike_PlayerWC_just_Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	1.37 %	1	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	2.40 %	7	1

Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	11.74 %	19	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	22.23 %	67	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	11.46 %	19	1
Nodes\\Others	No	5.72 %	23	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	7.97 %	11	1

Internals\\Player WC\\Nike_PlayerWC_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	0.50 %	12	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.27 %	3	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	1.97 %	13	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	15.91 %	47	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	0.07 %	1	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	11.55 %	135	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	18.23 %	94	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.10 %	3	1
Nodes\\Others	No	23.02 %	55	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	3.34 %	19	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.11 %	2	1

Internals\\Player WC\\Nike_PlayerWC_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	0.28 %	5	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.17 %	2	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	7.15 %	14	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	27.58 %	62	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	16.11 %	87	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	20.13 %	40	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.75 %	8	1
Nodes\\Others	No	13.32 %	34	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	4.75 %	16	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.82 %	6	1

Internals\\Player\\Nike_Player_Just_Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	0.07 %	2	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	6.63 %	2	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	21.62 %	20	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	9.70 %	31	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	13.72 %	110	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	2.10 %	10	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.27 %	3	1

Nodes\\Others	No	15.23 %	26	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	7.84 %	15	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.10 %	1	1

Internals\\Player\\Nike_Player_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	0.47 %	6	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	4.91 %	7	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	3.66 %	14	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	1.11 %	2	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	21.08 %	89	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	2.21 %	4	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.28 %	2	1
Nodes\\Others	No	11.09 %	23	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	12.20 %	24	1

Internals\\Player\\Nike_Player_Poll

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.20 %	2	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	3.49 %	9	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	2.14 %	7	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	8.59 %	53	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	18.97 %	87	1

Nodes\\Others	No	1.35 %	7	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	7.96 %	23	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	1.12 %	1	1

Internals\\Player\\Nike_Player_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	5.68 %	42	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.43 %	2	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	10.90 %	21	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	8.41 %	13	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	19.91 %	69	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	10.05 %	12	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	6.92 %	29	1
Nodes\\Others	No	5.99 %	18	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	15.41 %	32	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.46 %	3	1

Internals\\Player_Product\\Nike_Product_Player_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	6.58 %	132	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.55 %	4	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	2.61 %	16	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	8.47 %	23	1

Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	0.43 %	5	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	12.31 %	120	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	14.03 %	81	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.58 %	4	1
Nodes\\Others	No	10.95 %	56	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	3.79 %	23	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.23 %	2	1

Internals\\Player_Product\\Nike_Product_Player_Video

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	4.03 %	28	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	9.02 %	35	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.77 %	3	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	4.55 %	16	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	3.92 %	18	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	13.75 %	38	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	8.85 %	32	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	7.45 %	49	1
Nodes\\Others	No	2.85 %	17	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	4.42 %	13	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	2.57 %	19	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	0.96 %	5	1

Internals\\Product\\Nike_Product_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	16.76 %	155	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	1.50 %	1	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.21 %	2	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	7.61 %	13	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	1.97 %	6	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	5.42 %	18	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	12.18 %	36	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	3.24 %	35	1
Nodes\\Others	No	8.95 %	56	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.67 %	5	1

Internals\\Product\\Nike_Product_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	15.66 %	75	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	7.08 %	6	2
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	0.67 %	3	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	12.45 %	24	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	15.29 %	24	2
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	2.15 %	6	1
Nodes\\Others	No	9.14 %	28	1

Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	3.77 %	10	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.64 %	3	1

Internals\\Team CL\\Nike_TeamCL_just_Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	6.44 %	9	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	3.29 %	5	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	2.24 %	8	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	21.17 %	71	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	8.85 %	28	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.98 %	3	1
Nodes\\Others	No	4.95 %	13	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	7.15 %	9	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	4.26 %	7	1

Internals\\Team CL\\Nike_TeamCL_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	0.69 %	8	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.72 %	3	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	0.83 %	6	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	5.70 %	57	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	15.20 %	47	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.47 %	4	1

Nodes\\Others	No	2.15 %	17	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	19.46 %	34	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.59 %	4	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	1.22 %	5	1

Internals\\Team WC\\Nike_TeamWC_just_Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.45 %	1	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.14 %	1	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	1.39 %	5	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	3.63 %	16	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	24.47 %	71	1
Nodes\\Others	No	1.06 %	3	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	4.49 %	7	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	2.80 %	10	1

Internals\\Team WC\\Nike_TeamWC_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	0.99 %	9	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.05 %	1	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	1.99 %	6	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	8.27 %	16	1

Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	0.26 %	2	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	4.51 %	30	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	22.44 %	91	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.12 %	2	1
Nodes\\Others	No	1.71 %	8	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	2.19 %	6	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.01 %	1	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	1.12 %	7	1

Internals\\Team WC\\Nike_TeamWC_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	1.42 %	15	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.12 %	2	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	6.53 %	12	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	20.16 %	44	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	4.59 %	28	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	20.89 %	67	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.99 %	8	1
Nodes\\Others	No	24.59 %	32	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	0.80 %	4	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.77 %	8	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	0.98 %	8	1

Internals\\Team\\Nike_Team_just_Text

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	1.40 %	12	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	3.69 %	21	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	6.98 %	44	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	26.96 %	240	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.02 %	1	1
Nodes\\Others	No	1.06 %	8	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	2.56 %	16	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	2.54 %	18	1

Internals\\Team\\Nike_Team_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	2.39 %	52	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.28 %	1	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	2.07 %	13	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	8.96 %	44	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	0.03 %	1	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	9.20 %	114	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	26.98 %	165	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.70 %	12	1
Nodes\\Others	No	5.19 %	56	1

Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	3.11 %	21	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.71 %	7	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	0.75 %	13	1

Internals\\Team\\Nike_Team_Video

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	0.51 %	8	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.49 %	3	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	3.13 %	6	1
Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	14.57 %	30	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	4.72 %	24	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	11.70 %	43	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	1.84 %	13	1
Nodes\\Others	No	34.21 %	28	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	0.41 %	1	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	1.44 %	7	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	3.33 %	20	1

Internals\\Team_Product\\Nike_Team_Product_Picture

Node

Classification: Unclassified

Nodes\\Visual Imagery Experience	No	1.47 %	24	1
Nodes\\Stimulation and Inspiration	No	0.33 %	3	1
Nodes\\Temporal Experience	No	0.27 %	1	1

Nodes\\Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience	No	3.14 %	14	1
Nodes\\Utilitarian Experience	No	0.18 %	3	1
Nodes\\Participation and Socializing Experience	No	1.34 %	14	1
Nodes\\Community Experience	No	8.50 %	83	1
Nodes\\Entertainment Experience	No	0.08 %	4	1
Nodes\\Others	No	6.01 %	38	1
Nodes\\Social Facilitation Experience	No	4.08 %	14	1
Nodes\\Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience	No	0.40 %	6	1
Nodes\\Insulting	No	1.82 %	13	1

Appendix 3 – Population Characteristics#

5.4.1 Channel Population – Sample Matrix

As outlined earlier in selecting actual participants for the pre-test and the main survey within the larger group of subscribers, quota sampling was used. Here, two main criteria for user specification were taken into account. Gender (male and female) and global region (e.g., Asia, Europe, North America) were assessed by use of the Facebook “advertising tool”. The two screenshots below and overleaf outline the Facebook advertising page on which the potential advertising is able to generate exact numbers of users / targets. Firstly (see no. 1 within the screenshot), by using the country selection tool it is possible to filter the total number of subscribers from this country (in this case, India). Next, by setting the gender to ‘male’ (see no. 3 within the screenshot) and the user ‘Likes & Interests’ to ‘Adidas Football’ (see no. 4 within the screenshot) the total number for male subscribers with an interest in the Adidas Football Channel was able to be filtered, as illustrated in the example below to 232,200.

Adidas Football Channel – Advertising India Male

The screenshot shows the Facebook Ad targeting interface. The 'Location' section has 'Country' set to 'India' (labeled 1). The 'Demographics' section has 'Ages' set to 'Any' (labeled 2), 'Genders' set to 'Men' (labeled 3), and 'Relationships' set to 'All' (labeled 4). The 'Likes & Interests' section has 'Adidas Football' entered in the search bar (labeled 4). A sidebar on the right shows the 'Estimated reach' as 232,200 people, with a breakdown: who live in India, who are male, and who like adidas football.

2. Targeting

Location

Country: 1

Demographics

Ages: - 2

Require exact age match ☐

Target people on their birthdays ☐ 3

Genders: ☐ All ☒ Men ☐ Women

Interested in: ☐ All ☐ Men ☐ Women

Relationships: ☒ All ☐ Single ☐ Engaged

Languages:

Likes & Interests

4

Suggested likes & interests

☐ #Football at the Summer Olympics ☐ #Wayne Rooney

☐ #Andrés Iniesta ☐ Fernando Torres

☐ Andres Iniesta ☐ #Steven Gerrard

Estimated reach

- who live in India
- who are male
- who like adidas football

As with the above example, the same procedure is illustrated overleaf – in this case for female subscribers to the Adidas Football channel – totalling 33,180.

Adidas Football Channel – Advertising India Female

2. Targeting Advert targeting FAQ

Location

Country: 1

☒ Everywhere By City

Demographics

Age: - 3

☐ Require exact age match

☐ Target people on their birthdays

Gender: ☒ All ☐ Men ☐ Women

Interested in: ☒ All ☐ Men ☐ Women

Relationship: ☒ All ☐ Single ☐ Engaged ☐ Married

☐ In a relationship

Language:

Likes & interests

4

Suggested likes & interests

☐ #Football at the Summer Olympics

☐ #Wayne Rooney

☐ #Andrés Iniesta

☐ Fernando Torres

☐ Andres Iniesta

☐ Steven Gerrard

2

Estimated reach: **33,180** people

- who live in India
- who are female
- who like adidas football

Other criteria such as ‘Relationship’, ‘Age’ and ‘Education’ have been set to ‘All’ as these demographic statistics were part of the questionnaire itself. In total twelve (six Adidas, six Nike) tables were created outlining subscriber statistics for six different regions (Europe, Asia, North America, South America, Africa, Oceania). The table overleaf is an example from the Nike Football Channel outlining all European countries, respective subscriber numbers and a split of male and female subscribers.

Subscriber summary by gender

Europe	Male	Female
Germany	86,140	16,440
Italy	150,760	24,240
France	228,820	41,480
Spain	107,760	57,280
Netherlands	3,240	0,360
Belgium	4,260	0,860
UK	20,840	4,060
Portugal	78,460	40,540
Turkey	357,940	46,580
Norway	0,980	0,160
Denmark	0,800	0,140
Austria	16,880	1,660
Switzerland	12,540	2,100
Serbia	2,620	0,420
Bulgaria	1,700	0,440
Rumania	1,260	0,360
Greece	24,020	3,540
Croatia	0,640	0,140
Slovenia	0,360	0,100
Poland	1,140	0,300
Latvia	0,060	0,020
Estonia	0,080	0,020
Lithuania	0,220	0,100
Macedonia	0,980	0,200
Czech Republic	0,960	0,180
Luxemburg	0,720	0,280
Ireland	1,080	0,340
Sweden	1,300	0,140
Finland	0,440	0,140
Bosnia – H.	0,840	0,220
Belarus	0,080	0,020
Georgia	0,460	0,200
Azerbaijan	1,080	0,200
Total / in %	1109,46 / 38,58%	243,26 / 39,81%

The last row in this table provides further details on the percentages of male and female subscribers coming from Europe in relation to all subscribers to the Nike Football Channel at the point of analysis. The respective tables for all regions and both channels are provided overleaf by two summaries for the Adidas and the Nike Football Channel containing all six regions.

Subscriber summary by regions – Adidas Football Channel

Region	Total No.	Male No.	Male %	Female No.	Female %
Asia	659940	577340	17,70%	82600	16,76%
Europe	1530160	1335020	41,02%	195140	39,87%
North America	528820	449100	13,78%	79720	16,15%
South America	868120	757220	23,23%	110900	22,49%
Africa	110560	97380	2,97%	13180	2,65%
Oceania	48040	40560	1,22%	7480	1,43%

Subscriber summary by regions – Nike Football Channel

Region	Total No.	Male No.	Male %	Female No.	Female %
Asia	622440	540460	18,79%	81980	13,41%
Europe	1352720	1109460	38,58%	243260	39,81%
North America	858560	704540	24,50%	154020	25,20%
South America	606780	480720	16,72%	126060	20,63%
Africa	37820	33320	1,15%	4500	0,73%
Oceania	8300	6440	0,24%	1860	0,30%

Next, the total number and percentages for male and female users has been calculated. The statistical details had been put into a matrix (see table ...) which outlines all gender – region – variations. The overall population of the Adidas Football Channel totalled 3.745 million users. This count was taken one week before the actual pre-test started. The population of the Nike Football Channel totalled 3.486 million users at the same point of time. For example, as shown below the total numbers of male subscribers to the Adidas Football Channel is 3,256,620 equalling 86.96% of all users. In comparison the total number for female subscribers to the Adidas Football Channel is much lower with a total of 489,020 equalling the remaining 13.04%.

Subscribers by gender – Adidas Football Channel

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	3256620	86,96%
Female	489020	13,04%
Total	3745640	100,00%

Based on these percentages the number of survey participants (out of 100) has been calculated. Consequently, when inviting Adidas Football Channel subscribers to the survey 18 out of 100 came from Asia (16 male, 2 female), 41 from Europe (36 male, 5 female), 14 from North America (12 male, 2 female), 23 from South America (20 male, 3 female), 3 from Africa (3 male) and one from Oceania (male).

No. of survey participants by regions and gender – Adidas Football Channel

Region	User	%	Number of Survey Participants	Male (86.96%)	Female (13,04%)
Asia	659940	17,61%	18	16	2
Europe	1530160	40,85%	41	36	5
North America	528820	14,11%	14	12	2
South America	868120	23,17%	23	20	3
Africa	110560	2,95%	3	3	0
Oceania	48040	1,28%	1	1	0

The same procedure as outlined above was also applied to the Nike Football Channel. Consequently, 18 (15 male, 3 female) potential survey participants were recruited from Asia, 39 (32 male, 7 female) from Europe, 25 (21 male, 4 female) from North America, 17 (14male, 3 female) from South America and one male participant from Africa.

Subscribers by gender – Nike Football Channel

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	2874940	82,45%
Female	611680	17,55%
Total	3486620	100,00%

No. of survey participants by regions and gender – Nike Football Channel

Region	User	%	Number of Survey Participants	Male (82.45%)	Female (17,55%)
Asia	622440	17,85%	18	15	3
Europe	1352720	38,79%	39	32	7
North America	858560	24,62%	25	21	4
South America	606780	17,40%	17	14	3
Africa	37820	1,08%	1	1	0
Oceania	8300	0,23%	0	0	0

With these reasonably accurate statistics about the population of the Adidas and Nike Football Channel's the pre-test was conducted.

Appendix 4 – ‘Pre-test’ Data#

Detailed information on reflective constructs

The possible range of all measures was from 1 to 7
(‘totally disagree’ to ‘totally agree’).

Construct ‘Visual Imagery Experience’

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha	0.890
Composite reliability	0.898
AVE	0.604

Fit Statistics - One Factor Congeneric Model

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	20.7 / 9
Probability Level	.014
RMSEA	.123
GFI	.924
AGFI	.822
TLI	.937
CFI	.962

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
VIE1	87	5	2	7	5.16	1.138
VIE2	87	5	2	7	5.29	.922
VIE3	87	6	1	7	4.22	1.545
VIE4	87	5	2	7	4.77	1.254
VIE5	87	5	2	7	5.22	1.106
VIE6	87	5	2	7	4.97	1.238
Valid N (listwise)	87					

Item Loadings

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
VIE1	I look at pictures or watch videos on the ... Football channel and think "Wow".	.770	8.265
VIE2	Most often I look at pictures / videos before anything else. I like to look at pictures / videos even if I don't read the story.	.459	4.338
VIE3	I sometimes show/share a picture / video on the ... Football channel to someone else.	.737	7.773
VIE4	I like to look at the pictures on the ... Football channel for a while.	.876	10.073
VIE5	I love the photography and videos on the ... Football channel.	.877	10.100
VIE6	The photography and videos are one of the main reasons why I visit the ... Football channel.	.853	9.666

Construct ‘Stimulation and Inspiration Experience’

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha	.929
Composite reliability	.930
AVE	.728

Fit Statistics - One Factor Congeneric Model

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	11.5 / 5
Probability Level	.039
RMSEA	.125
GFI	.948
AGFI	.845
TLI	.963
CFI	.981

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SI1	87	6	1	7	3.92	1.354
SI2	87	6	1	7	4.20	1.242
SI3	87	6	1	7	4.18	1.406
SI4	87	6	1	7	3.20	1.288
SI5	87	6	1	7	4.07	1.379
Valid N (listwise)	87					

Item Loadings

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
SI1	The ... Football channel inspires me in my own life.	.921	11.091
SI2	The ... Football channel makes me think of things in new ways.	.938	11.466
SI3	The ... Football channel stimulates my thinking about lots of different topics.	.871	10.114
SI4	The ... Football channel makes me a more interesting person.	.765	8.282
SI5	Some stories on the ... Football channel touch me deep down.	.754	8.121

Construct ‘Social Facilitation Experience’*

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha	.914
Composite reliability	.915
AVE	.783

Fit Statistics - One Factor Congeneric Model

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	0 / 0
Probability Level	-
RMSEA	-
GFI	1.000
AGFI	-
TLI	-
CFI	1.000

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SF1	87	6	1	7	4.48	1.307
SF2	87	6	1	7	4.75	1.160
SF3	87	6	1	7	4.48	1.280
Valid N (listwise)	87					

Item Loadings

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
SF1	I bring up things that I have seen on the ... Football channel in conversations with many other people.	.891	10.250
SF2	The ... Football channel gives me something to talk about.	.897	10.373
SF3	I use things from the ... Football channel in discussions or arguments with people I know.	.866	9.818

* As the original scale by Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel (2009) consists of only three items the measurement of fit statistics was not further pursued (e.g., by correlating the ‘Social Facilitation’ experience with any other experience) for the purpose of gathering pre-test data.

Construct ‘Temporal Experience’

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach's alpha	.916
Composite reliability	.921
AVE	.705

Fit Statistics - One Factor Congeneric Model

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	29.1 / 5
Probability Level	.000
RMSEA	.237
GFI	.888
AGFI	.664
TLI	.874
CFI	.937

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TE1	87	6	1	7	3.98	1.466
TE2	87	6	1	7	4.09	1.331
TE3	87	6	1	7	3.90	1.399
TE4	87	6	1	7	2.85	1.414
TE5	87	6	1	7	3.94	1.497
Valid N (listwise)	87					

Item Loadings

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
TE1	The ... Football channel is part of my routine.	.941	11.510
TE2	The ... Football channel is one of the sites I always go to any time I'm surfing the web.	.949	11.687
TE3	I use the ... Football channel as a big part of getting my news for the day.	.872	10.076
TE4	The ... Football channel helps me to get my day started in the morning.	.570	5.665
TE5	I sometimes post a comment on the ... football channel and wait or come back several times until I get a response.	.808	8.887

Construct ‘Self-Esteem and Civic Mindedness Experience’

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha	.924
Composite reliability	.922
AVE	.669

Fit Statistics - One Factor Congeneric Model

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	36.0 / 9
Probability Level	.000
RMSEA	.187
GFI	.875
AGFI	.709
TLI	.899
CFI	.939

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SECM1	87	6	1	7	3.07	1.246
SECM2	87	6	1	7	3.49	1.332
SECM3	87	6	1	7	3.72	1.381
SECM4	87	6	1	7	3.74	1.396
SECM5	87	6	1	7	2.98	1.376
SECM6	87	6	1	7	4.45	1.349
Valid N (listwise)	87					

Item Loadings

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
SECM1	Using the ... Football channel make me feel like a better citizen.	.766	8.329
SECM2	Using the ... Football channel makes a difference in my life.	.949	11.764
SECM3	The ... Football channel reflects my values.	.949	11.782
SECM4	The ... Football channel makes me more part of my community.	.897	10.662
SECM5	I'm a better person for using the ... Football channel.	.592	5.934
SECM6	Using the ... Football channel helps me express a sense of belonging to a group (e.g. fans, clubs).	.688	7.183

Construct ‘Intrinsic Enjoyment Experience’

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha	.893
Composite reliability	.902
AVE	.652

Fit Statistics - One Factor Congeneric Model

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	30.6 / 5
Probability Level	.000
RMSEA	.244
GFI	.876
AGFI	.628
TLI	.858
CFI	.929

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
IE1	87	6	1	7	3.98	1.224
IE2	87	6	1	7	4.16	1.213
IE3	87	6	1	7	4.24	1.176
IE4	87	6	1	7	4.26	1.118
IE5	87	6	1	7	3.80	1.355
Valid N (listwise)	87					

Item Loadings

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
IE1	Using the ... Football channel is a great treat for me.	.821	9.188
IE2	Going to the ... Football channel improves my mood and makes me happier.	.967	12.042
IE3	I like to kick back and wind down with the ... Football channel.	.931	11.234
IE4	I like to go to the ... Football channel when I am eating or taking a break.	.815	8.989
IE5	While I am on the ... Football channel, I do not think about other sites I might go to.	.470	4.541

Construct ‘Utilitarian Experience’

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha	.945
Composite reliability	.945
AVE	.775

Fit Statistics - One Factor Congeneric Model

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	29.7 / 5
Probability Level	.000
RMSEA	.239
GFI	.903
AGFI	.708
TLI	.888
CFI	.944

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
UE1	87	6	1	7	4.60	1.191
UE2	87	6	1	7	4.34	1.334
UE3	87	6	1	7	4.10	1.399
UE4	87	6	1	7	3.21	1.350
UE5	87	6	1	7	4.36	1.370
Valid N (listwise)	87					

Item Loadings

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
UE1	The ... Football channel helps me make good purchasing decisions.	.865	10.018
UE2	You learn to improve yourself from the ... Football channel.	.929	11.343
UE3	The ... Football channel provides information that helps me make important decisions.	.960	12.109
UE4	The ... Football channel helps me better manage my money.	.794	8.772
UE5	I give advice and tips to people I know based on things I have read on the ... Football channel.	.844	9.589

Construct ‘Participation and Socializing Experience’

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha	.910
Composite reliability	.903
AVE	.658

Fit Statistics - One Factor Congeneric Model

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	66.9 / 5
Probability Level	.000
RMSEA	.379
GFI	.796
AGFI	.387
TLI	.665
CFI	.832

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PS1	87	6	1	7	3.82	1.361
PS2	87	6	1	7	3.90	1.448
PS3	87	6	1	7	3.50	1.399
PS4	87	6	1	7	2.94	1.271
PS5	87	6	1	7	2.96	1.200
Valid N (listwise)	87					

Item Loadings

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
PS1	I do quite a bit of socializing on the ... Football channel.	.911	10.891
PS2	I contribute to the conversation on the ... Football channel.	.954	11.784
PS3	I contribute to some conversations on the ... Football channel to provoke other subscribers and wait until they response.	.882	10.232
PS4	I often feel guilty about the amount of time I spend on the ... Football channel.	.654	6.708
PS5	I should probably cut back on the amount of time I spend on the ... Football channel.	.585	5.839

Construct ‘Community Experience’

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha	.929
Composite reliability	.911
AVE	.717

Fit Statistics - One Factor Congeneric Model

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	46.4 / 9
Probability Level	.000
RMSEA	.220
GFI	.836
AGFI	.618
TLI	.854
CFI	.912

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
CE1	87	6	1	7	4.32	1.288
CE2	87	6	1	7	5.28	.964
CE3	87	6	1	7	4.32	1.315
CE4	87	6	1	7	4.04	1.470
CE5	87	6	1	7	4.14	1.346
CE6	87	6	1	7	4.84	1.288
Valid N (listwise)	87					

Item Loadings

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
CE1	I am as interested in input from other users as I am in the regular content on the ... Football Channel.	.880	10.193
CE2	The ... Football channel does a good job in getting its users to contribute or provide feedback.	.770	8.316
CE3	A big reason I like the ... Football channel is what I get from other users.	.914	10.911
CE4	I'd like to chat online with other people who regularly visit the ... Football channel.	.829	9.255
CE5	I've become interested in things I otherwise wouldn't have because of the influence of others on this website.	.786	8.530
CE6	Overall, the visitors to the ... Football channel are pretty knowledgeable about the topics the Channel covers so you can learn from them.	.818	9.039

Construct ‘Entertainment Experience’

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Cronbach’s alpha	.936
Composite reliability	.870
AVE	.720

Fit Statistics - One Factor Congeneric Model

Chi-square / Degrees of Freedom	42.9 / 9
Probability Level	.000
RMSEA	.209
GFI	.853
AGFI	.658
TLI	.874
CFI	.925

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EE1	87	6	1	7	5.06	1.159
EE2	87	6	1	7	4.76	1.234
EE3	87	6	1	7	5.64	.997
EE4	87	6	1	7	4.50	1.241
EE5	87	6	1	7	5.44	.990
EE6	87	6	1	7	5.24	1.095
Valid N (listwise)	87					

Item Loadings

Item	Item text	Item loading	T-Value
EE1	The ... Football channel always has something that surprises me.	.868	9.966
EE2	The ... Football channel often makes me laugh.	.801	8.805
EE3	The ... Football channel is definitely entertaining.	.869	10.004
EE4	Once you start surfing around the ... Football channel, it's hard to leave.	.810	8.963
EE5	I like stories about the weird things that can happen in football.	.844	9.535
EE6	I really do have a lot of fun visiting the ... Football channel.	.894	10.480