

Brand-Made Children in New Zealand: An Interactionist Perspective on Children's Use
of Social Media for Interacting with Consumer Brands

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Abstract

This research set out to explore how children's use of social media affects their interactions with consumer brands. The research goals were formulated to find out how children's use of social media helps them to interact with brands, to learn about brands, how such use interacts with other sources of brand information, and how social media use shapes children's relationships with consumer brands. This topic is interesting because of the fact that social media platforms are showing massive, global growth in the numbers of people of all ages using such platforms to communicate with each other. Such communications include people sharing information with each other, and it is known that people share market-related information such as talking about brands, forming brand preferences, and joining brand communities. Such social exchanges might offer opportunities for brands to participate.

Based in an interactionist perspective, this study used thematic analysis to code children's qualitative interview data for major themes relating to their use of social media for brand interactions. Themes were transformed into a source code which was applied to the dataset, so subsequent line-by-line analysis could be undertaken. This research reveals that eleven to fourteen year old children use processes when interacting with consumer brands on social media. The processes consist of three big conditions, and these are knowing, reacting, and deciding. Each of these conditions has two smaller, interactive conditions attached to them. Knowing has identifying and noticing; reacting has describing and evaluating; and deciding has watching and relating. The combinations of bigger and smaller conditions are salient, because such combinations explain how children are interacting with brands on social media. These findings have theoretical value for academic marketing scholars in the emerging area of children's social media use. These findings have value for parents and educators, seeking to understand aspects of children's social media use, especially with how children are using social media as a source of market-related information. These findings also have value for business marketers seeking insights into how the next generation of consumers are using social media to interact with brands.

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Attestation of Authorship

“ I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other insitution of higher learning.”

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Chapter One

1.0 Background to this Research

Communicating with others in social relationships, especially about everyday, unremarkable things, is one of the ways that people cooperate together to achieve a sense of social order (Gergen 2009). A sense of order about the social world, about social relationships, and about what the natural world is, is important because without order and agreed ideas about what is real, social cooperation breaks down and communities cannot function effectively (Gergen 2009). Now new communication technologies that are available via the Internet (e.g. Web 2.0 developments), such as social media, have enabled many more people to participate in communication faster, so people are sharing their social realities with each other and, often, cooperating across international borders to achieve social, business, or political goals. Social media tools offer one of the fastest-growing ways that people all over the world are communicating and cooperating with each other, and the communication activity underway on social media on such a global scale is unprecedented, because of the reach to others that social media tools offer people. Social media has developed (and was originally created) for people to socialise with each other in collective conversational webs (Fournier and Avery 2011), but in the past decade or so has undergone a metamorphosis from a small-scale web-based network of friends talking with friends, to a huge, global, democratised way for people to communicate and share digital content with others. Such digital content-sharing activity involves people also sharing market-related information within their social interactions and, because children are adept at using digital tools to form friendships and socialise (Antheunis, Schouten, and Krahmer 2014), then it is expected that they will be interacting with market-related information as part of their social activity too.

Marketing researchers have known for some time that successful consumer socialisation of children (that is, children learning the prevailing consumption values, attitudes, and consumption behaviours of the culture in which they live), depends upon the relative levels of influence of market-related information sources (Hayta, 2008). Since the advent of social media technology such as Facebook, interest from parents, educators and researchers upon the influence the use of these communication technologies have in

promoting teens and children's opportunities for identity development, formation of friendships, and socialising has grown (Livingstone 2008). Social media technology's ability to connect many millions of people together in social interactions is unprecedented, and some suggest that such technologies are permanently changing the scale and nature of the relationship between marketers and consumers (Hendrix 2014). So, online branding activity is growing because of the perceived opportunities that social media offers marketers for enhancing consumer brand engagement (Schultz and Peltier 2013). Children are consumers as well, so it is expected that their use of social media technology could also be changing their brand-related interactions. One of the largest social media platforms, Facebook, the social networking website service, privately owned and operated by Facebook Inc, had over 1.3 billion active users at November 2014. Facebook allows anyone who declares themselves to be at least 13 years of age to become a registered user of the site, and collects user statistics, but it is unknown how many users are under the age of 13 years, so the scale of children's social media use is unexplored.

Presently, it is not known how influential the use of these social communications technologies are, or if their use is overtaking conventional socialisation agents such as friends, family, or mass media. Understanding the influence of the use of such communication technology on how children learn about and interact with consumer brands, and how this use shapes children's brand relationships is relevant, because today's children are tomorrow's consumers. Academic research over the past decade has focused upon young people's uses of social media, emphasising motives for their use of e.g. Facebook (Joinson 2008), investigating relationship building or maintenance activities (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), developing social capital (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007), or very early work looking at defining the characteristics of social network sites (boyd and Ellison, 2007). Few studies have focused on children's social media experiences and uses, especially by those under the age of 18, and those studies that are available have not provided insights about the role of social media in facilitating children's brand interactions (e.g. Dunne, Lawler et al. 2010). This literature gap suggests that academic marketing research has not kept pace with the changes in who uses social media, and what the implications of such use might be for consumer brand relationships. Because children have different consumption expectations and how they interact with brands because of their access to the internet (Barber 2013), there is a

need for academic marketing research to increase our understanding in this area. So, it is known that children use social media platforms (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010), even in circumstances where their use might be deemed illegal; e.g. Facebook terms state that users should be at least 13 years of age. There is evidence to show that children both lie about their ages and open Facebook accounts anyway, provided they have access to an email account, or parents enable their children to have social media accounts. Some of children's motivation to learn about and use technology tools comes from learning about technology at school with the shift to learning with digital technologies in classrooms, and this includes learning how to use technology to do things such as make and upload movies, e.g. to YouTube. It is not a big jump for a pre-teen or young teenager to make and upload movies to Facebook or to the Vines¹ platform if they have learnt the basics at school. Learning about technology is deemed important for children in the twenty-first century, and is a formal part of the school curriculum in countries such as New Zealand². So while schools in New Zealand are not teaching social media, they are responding to societal shifts in how people are using internet technology to communicate with each other.

The communication technologies such as social media platforms have been envisaged by marketers as a way for them to engage consumers in interactive relationships with brands (Fournier and Avery 2011), as part of larger relationship marketing settings. But earlier experiences show marketers that brands are often not welcome in people's web-based social spaces (Fournier and Avery 2011) because social media was created for people to interact socially, not for brands to communicate what they wanted. Resistance from consumers to marketers' attempts to use social media to communicate brand messages for example, has led to patchy results (Schultz and Peltier 2013) in the attempts to achieve consumer brand engagement in this way. So, because very little is known about how children use social media to interact with consumer brands, the central goal of this research is to increase understanding in this area.

¹ <https://vine.co/>

² <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInitiatives/UFBInSchools.aspx>

1.1 Locating this research

The shift in how people are communicating with each other by using internet-based technologies is clearly reflecting in the ways in which young people, including young teens (e.g. those under the age of 15 years; Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), are using social media to communicate and share content with their friends. Young people are known as early adopters of new ideas and concepts (Barber 2013), especially Generation Y, children born between the late 1970's and early 1990's and sometimes called the Millennials (Ferguson 2011). The children younger than this group, born from the late 1990's to the early 2000's, are sometimes referred to as Generation Z (Barber 2013). Both groups of children are known for their high levels of media literacy, expectations of having a choice in what they do, see, and wear, their high image consciousness and their attachment to celebrities to help them acquire "coolness" (Ferguson 2011).

Because these aspects of youth culture are shared widely on the internet and discussed in young people's social relationships, even much younger children are learning about this culture in their social interactions with family and friends. So the shift to highly media-literate, image and celebrity conscious children (Ferguson 2011), is part of the consumer socialisation landscape now, which is saturated with influencing agents. These agents include consumer brands, and brands are very important influencing agents to children's consumer socialisation, because how and what children learn about them plays a part in governing their later brand interactions (John 1999).

The topic of children's brand interactions is of interest to marketing academics and business marketers, because of the positive effects for brands that children's consumption of them can generate (Ferguson 2011). For example, children forming emotional attachments to consumer brands as a result of positive brand interactions represent potential lifetime customers for such a brand, this represents ongoing profitable relationships for the brand owner, plus an experience for consumers deepening their brand involvement (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009). Such attachments represent other things too. For example, some consumer brands activating embedded values act as "moral guides," acting as vehicles for conveying specific values from one generation to the next, such as the American Girl doll brand (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009). Brands can offer a sense of rebellion, such as using the tumblr social media

microblogging platform, and expressing such differences in consumption patterns is important to young people's developing sense of identity in order to be different from other generations, especially from their parents (Ferguson 2011).

Academic marketing research looking at how young people use social media technologies for communicating, socialising, and learning has generally focused on the experiences of university (or college-age) students (Schultz and Peltier 2013). Not much is known about how effective social media is with children in the pre-teen age group (e.g. from ages eleven to fourteen). An exception to this is a study conducted in Ireland, looking at what young 12 to 14 year old girls' use of the social media platform Bebo was (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). Findings from this study showed that the girls used Bebo primarily for personal reasons, such as managing their online identities, which involves the creation and management of personal information made available on Bebo, or communicating with friends and for entertainment (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). Pre-teen or early teen children are known as an established consumer market (McNeal 1969), and also represent an economy's future consumers. Children at this age (and younger) are known as quick adopters and users of twenty-first century technologies, including communication technologies and digital applications (for online shopping, entertainment, and so forth), and represent the first, large group of consumers who will have their consumption behaviours shaped by their use of the internet (Barber 2013). Brand interactions are part of children's consumer behaviour, so the research interest in the current study is in exploring the idea that such interactions could be being shaped in different ways because of children's use of social media.

1.2 Research problem

Not much is known about if, or how children use social media platforms to interact with consumer brands. Such a topic is important because social media platforms represent new ways for consumers to find out about and engage with consumer brands, and because child consumers today are growing up with the internet as part of their lives (Barber 2013), it is thought that their relationships with brands will be shaped differently from that of their parents' generation, for example (Barber 2013; Nairn, Griffin and Wicks, 2008). Social media platforms are perceived to offer marketers opportunities to foster brand relationships with consumers (Schultz and Peltier 2013),

but little is known about how such relationships could be fostered, and very little is known about how children might be using social media platforms to interact and relate with brands. Thus, there is a clear gap in the academic marketing literature, so this research project seeks to extend our understanding in this area.

1.2.1 Research objectives and research questions

The central research objective guiding this study is “how is social media (e.g. Facebook) influencing children’s brand relationships, both as an information source and a communication medium?”

The resulting four research questions flowing from this objective are:

Research Question One (R 1):

- How are children using social media?
- R 1 (a) to interact with consumer brands?

Research Question Two (R 2):

- How is children’s social media use helping them learn about consumer brands?

Research Question Three (R 3):

- How is children’s social media use interacting with other sources of brand information?

Research Question Four (R 4):

- How are children’s social media interactions shaping their consumer brand relationships?

Before outlining the research methodology, the researcher’s values and their relevance to this study are first clarified. This is a qualitative study, and qualitative research (or all research, really) is influenced by the researcher’s values, because someone’s values play a part in determining what is worthy of study, and how such a study will be conducted.

Researchers bring their own assumptions into their research, and their assumptions have an impact upon how research results are interpreted, who gets to consume the results, and what the results should be used for (Murray and Ozanne 1991).

1.2.2 Researcher's values (reflexivity)

Adopting a qualitative paradigm attracts criticism on several counts (Goulding, 2002). For example, criticisms can be made about the perceived "looseness" of the research because of the lack of specific rules and procedures (Goulding, 2002; pg. 19). Some of the criticism could be justified if the researcher fails to take proper account of how the research has been conducted, and does not fully describe the sample (the people who contributed the information), data collection (the information shared with the researcher) and analysis methods. However, other views about the looseness of qualitative studies hold that this characteristic is an advantage; "loosely-constructed studies" enable a qualitative researcher to fix mistakes (Borman and Preissle-Goez, 1986; in Goulding, 2002; pg.19).

Other criticisms centre on the role that the researcher's own values, as a potential source of bias, might play in the development of a qualitative enquiry (Goulding, 2002; Grant and Giddings 2002; Smythe and Giddings 2007). Logically though, bias cannot be confined solely to qualitative studies just because the researcher brings his or her own values into a study. Because all researchers bring their own selves into their studies to some degree (Smythe and Giddings 2007), it makes sense that quantitatively-bound studies must also account for how researchers collect and interpret data, what they decide counts as knowledge, and ultimately how they generate reliable (trustworthy) results. The difference in criticisms, though, could be in the intensity of involvement of the researcher with the contributors of the data. Thus, for example, qualitative studies may be assumed to be biased unless proven otherwise (Goulding, 2002; Smythe and Giddings 2007), because the researcher lives with, becomes immersed in the data, and is the primary analytical tool. This does not seem to be the case for quantitatively-bound studies (Goulding 2002; pg.10), so researchers engaged with a qualitative paradigm end up defending their choice by arguing why they did *not* use the logical, deductive objectivist approach. So, as Goulding (2002) states, researchers adopting a qualitative paradigm in areas of interest to management such as consumer behaviour, end up

defending very fundamental things (pg.17). This is an ontological and epistemological debate, and the result of this debate is that the researcher in a qualitative enquiry, as primarily the research tool and interpreter, is presumed to bring more bias to the study.

In contrast, unlike a quantitative enquiry where a more remote data manipulation tool like path analysis is used, which subsequently becomes the basis for analytical interpretation, an assumption of a bias free study is made. These differences reflect the genesis of conflicting philosophical orientations about how to do research in the social sciences and what counts as knowledge (Goulding, 2002; pg. 12). The way in which academic research is reported, plus the writing style employed attracts more criticism for a researcher working from a qualitatively-oriented paradigm (Patton, 2002). The qualitative style of writing can be expressive to the point of avoiding the detached, more objective style that Patton (2002) describes as the predominant mode for e.g. academic journal articles (pg.63). How does this relate to this study? Because this study is based in social constructionism and informed by a qualitative paradigm, the writing style will be different sometimes, although still within the bounds of what is deemed acceptable for a doctoral study. So this brings this section to reflexivity, or the researcher's voice and perspective. This calls for a researcher to develop self-awareness about how, for example, her own perspective influences what she thinks of as knowledge, and how she knows that what she looks at in this study counts as knowledge or is not knowledge (Patton, 2002). To think in this way means that a qualitatively-oriented researcher needs a high degree of self-awareness, not only of her own values and voice, but also of the cultural and social context she is living in at the time (Patton, 2002). The reason for this is because the knowledge that we know comes from our own perspectives, and our own perspectives have been (and are) actively shaped by the contexts we live in. So for this researcher, it is important to reflect on and understand her own perspective, because this informs how this research is done (Patton, 2002). This reflection also serves to raise this researcher's awareness of the role that her own values play in her interpretations of what the children share as information and what she is calling knowledge (Gergen, 2009).

This section explains how this researcher's values and research ethic are accounted for, and what things were done to avoid bias to produce an authentic, credible account of the phenomena being investigated (Goulding, 2002; pg.19). This research strives to give a voice to children about the things that are important to them in the social media space

(especially social media use), the larger consumer economy, and especially their interactions with consumer brands. The underlying theme here is an emancipatory view (Murray and Ozanne, 1991) that the researcher identifies that she holds regarding children's interests and their rights to talk about these. It is acknowledged that the motivation in this research is to enable children to express their thoughts and feelings about particular aspects of being a child in a consumer culture like New Zealand. In one sense, this viewpoint fits well within a New Zealand context of parenting, but it could be argued that this fits best within a highly-educated (and perhaps privileged) context of parenting. So the researcher needs to recognise that her values and beliefs as a mother that children have rights and the ability as emerging consumers to express their views, as much as adults do, may not be universally shared. The researcher also needs to recognise that her background as a parent *is* a privileged background, and that she has not lacked resources or the ability to do things for her own child that others have. There is a specific incident that illustrates this point in the early days of the study.

The researcher was networking to invite parents and teachers to consent to their children being part of the study, and wanting to ensure diversity of contributors, for example, regarding ethnicity, invited a school that in decile terms, scores a two³, to participate. The eventual feedback from the school teachers was that they “didn’t think any of the children would have anything much to say (to her), so what would they talk about that could be useful for the study?” and declined. The researcher’s contact, who worked closely with the school, was surprised at this response, and after some discussion the invitation was tried again, but it was not possible to persuade the school to agree to distribute the research invitation to their parents. This experience can be contrasted with a later invitation to a Decile 10 school community to participate in the study. This invitation was immediately accepted, the school distributed the invitation to their parent community, and the researcher proceeded.

The researcher cannot assume that the response of “no interest” from the first school invited was just because they are located in a Decile 2 community. It is possible though

³ New Zealand uses a community-based socio-economic status ranking tool to rate schools to determine education funding allocations. Decile 2 schools are at the low socio-economic end of the scale & qualify for more funding compared to Decile 10 schools at the top end.
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/AllAges/EducationInNZ/SchoolsInNewZealand/SchoolDecileRatings.aspx>

that the teachers felt overwhelmed; or they may have felt the study would highlight any disadvantages (especially material) that their children might have; or even that the idea of a (privileged?) university researcher asking “their children” “marketing” questions was too much. This particular school is located in an area with a high number of Maori and Pasifika students, and a high adult unemployment rate plus a low socio-economic score. The researcher had to acknowledge that probably because she is not a member of that community she would not be given access. The denial of access was difficult to think about; even though the researcher has considerable Maori heritage herself (a member of Ngati Apa from the Rangitikei), that was insufficient. The researcher learned from this experience that even though she might think she has the right motivations in terms of conducting a study that is supposed to be free of bias, some communities will still perceive her as the privileged outsider and will deny access. The researcher also learned that it is not enough to just have her own Maori heritage and assume that will grant access into New Zealand Maori communities. If the researcher wants to invite specific communities such as Maori to join in the research, she will have to learn to live more fully with this part of her heritage, learning to share the research, including the processes and how it is to be done, because research done in these community contexts is a community endeavour (Ellis, 2011, in Waring and Kearins, 2011). What was also learned from this experience is that approaching a school to help gain access to child contributors for a research study can be problematic. That is, schools and teachers do hold power in terms of the information they will distribute, so it is possible that teachers could feel that by “distributing” a research invitation to their parent community, the community may feel they must participate “because the school sent me the invitation”. The researcher tried to deal with this issue in the ethics application for this study and thought it was resolved, but perhaps in practice this has been more difficult to implement.

There was another dilemma as part of constructing this study. This relates to how the researcher was to reconcile the fact that the research findings from this study will probably inform marketing practice, but the question is, will this be ethical practice? To think about this the researcher had to try to understand what ethical marketing practice might look like (Murray and Ozanne, 1991). It was found that by asking certain questions about marketing, there is a flow on to asking questions about the philosophical foundations governing contemporary marketing practices (Ellis, 2011, in

Waring and Kearins, 2011). It was also found that the question needed to be asked about why the researcher believed that ethical marketing practice was important, especially in the context of children's markets (Hayta, 2008). The ethical question has been difficult to resolve. On reflecting about the goals of western marketing practice, there seems to be a focus over many decades on encouraging consumers to consume "more" goods and services, to divulge their own interests and passions, and to agree (implicitly or explicitly) to being shaped by, monitored by and interacted with by brand owners (Murray and Ozanne, 1991; Roper and Shah, 2007). Children are not excluded from this research activity and have been the subjects of measurement and investigation on a range of consumer behaviour topics for many years (e.g. John 1999). This research interest is evident in the consumer behaviour marketing literature, with many articles illustrating knowledge about how children's market responses are shaped by their family environment, development stage, social and cultural environment, and of course by the market itself. The researcher has participated in the research process too, and her participation is visible in the literature reviews in Chapters Two and Three, which canvass what is known about children's consumer socialisation and their subsequent interactions with brands, from various marketing-related perspectives. The genesis of this present study for the doctorate was not just to gain the academic qualification, but was also motivated by the researcher's curiosity in understanding how children were using social media, what this might mean for their interactions with consumer brands, and how their use of such technologies to communicate was changing (or not) the nature of their consumer socialisation. So the researcher's participation in marketing research looking at children's development as consumers was already there once the present study was envisaged.

So how does this discussion relate to the questions the researcher is asking? The discussion identifying her emancipatory interests (Murray and Ozanne, 1991), in pursuing research like this shows up in questions such as "who gets the insights that research like this generates?" and "how will the insights be used?" These questions have been difficult to resolve, lying at the heart of the earlier question, asking what ethical marketing practice might look like in the context of children's markets. In attempts to resolve the ethical question, a range of views was sought, from literature and colleagues (Goulding, 2002; Hirschman, 1993; Jones and Barrie, 2009; Martens, 2005; Murray and Ozanne, 1991; and Tomes, 1986). The researcher discovered early on after discussion

with a senior research colleague that in his view, the main purpose of academic marketing research “is to provide insights for marketers” (*personal communication, Lloyd and Jones, February 2014*). So how then to proceed?

According to Murray and Ozanne (1991), there is room in consumer behaviour research for generating knowledge about consumers that they can use to make better lives, via their consumption choices (pg.129). Not only can consumers be helped to change their lives for the better by making different consumption choices, but it might be possible for consumers to use these choices to imagine, and enact, a better world (Murray and Ozanne, 1991). This is some of the thinking behind what Murray and Ozanne (1991) have called emancipatory interests in consumer research. Such research can be transformative and empowering (Black, 2002; in Waring and Kearins, 2002) and seeks to make more explicit the connections between knowledge, theory, and application. This kind of research can help generate social change, tackle questions of social justice, or, in the consumer research context, help resolve aspects of consumer behaviour that are damaging, such as reducing young people’s engagement with harmful practices like binge drinking (Jones and Barrie 2009).

So how is this relevant for this research? The thinking raises questions such as are children able to choose how to engage with each other using new ways of communicating and getting information, such as using social media? Can children choose how to interact with consumer brands and marketers on the children’s terms, using social media tools? Is it possible to find out how children might be using social media to interact with consumer brands, and if so, what are the implications for marketing practice? Such knowledge should be shared with the children and their parents, so that they become better educated about the ways that children might be interacting with brands when using social media platforms. This also means that the research insights will be shared with other interested parties to such research, which includes academic and business marketers. There is guidance from Hirschman (1993) and Murray and Ozanne (1991) as to what happens to such research insights, and on how to advise consumers about how such insights could be used. This will mean that the children will be consulted too for their ideas on what should happen to the research insights, and what uses the insights could serve. Consulting the children about how the insights could be used is important, because the researcher has an obligation to her

research contributors and to their parents, who agreed that their children could participate. This obligation means that the researcher must fulfil what was promised; complete the research and ensure anonymity for the children, give the results to the children and their families, and think about how the insights will be used by other interested parties. Finally, there are other perspectives about the role that consumer brands play in consumer's lives, and this role is not insignificant. For example, brands are used as material for young people's identity formation (Malar, Krohmer, Hoyer and Nyffenegger 2011), for enabling social relationships with others in the form of membership of brand communities (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001), for helping people maintain a sense of order (Gergen 2009), as signifiers of social or economic status (Belk, Mayer and Driscoll 1984), and, sometimes, partnering with people in relationships similar to real relationships (Fournier 1998). These outcomes can be psychologically healthy for people, so perhaps because people choose to live in advanced consumer economies and help their children become consumers, means that insights about how aspects of children's consumer development might work, with social media platforms as part of this, are helpful enough. The next section explains what a range of social media platforms are, and the common user terminology associated with them.

1.3 Definitions

Social media use comes with a language and terminology that is platform and user-generated, with different terms that are relevant to each social media platform. Some of the terminology is borrowed from everyday language but assigned new meaning for use in the social media context. Some terminology has been adopted into everyday language, becoming part of consumer culture, and this is particularly so for the language used to talk about activities on Facebook, Twitter and tumblr, such as Facebook likes, tweets on Twitter and fandoms for tumblr. An example of this is the term "like," which forms part of children's and young people's speech, especially that of young women's speech, and has evolved into everyday language to the extent that many adults use the term as well⁴. Most social media terminology has an equivalent in ordinary language,

⁴ http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/28/science/young-women-often-trendsetters-in-vocal-patterns.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

but part of being a social media consumer is learning to use the language consistently. Because language is critical to how social relationships are conducted, and even more so in how people construct reality (Gergen 2009), the special social media terminology shared by users should provide some clues as to the kind of reality that users create and experience.

The term “social media” is loosely defined in the literature, referred to as social network sites in earlier research (boyd and Ellison 2007). Such sites were created as web-based services allowing individuals to construct public profiles within partially bounded systems (e.g. such as MySpace which barely exists now; Bebo, Facebook, or tumblr), on which people could articulate and make visible their social contacts, and see other people’s social contacts. The ability that the sites’ give users to articulate their social contacts results in people forming and showing extended social networks (boyd and Ellison 2007). People in such social networks are held together by social ties (Granovetter 1973), and how these ties function within social networks is explained in greater depth in Chapter Three. Some academic researchers define social media as Facebook, QQ (in China), YouTube, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, tumblr, Instagram, and Wordpress blogs (Schultz and Peltier 2013). Others take a wider viewpoint, talking of a social media ecosystem (Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden 2011), which consists of a range of technology platforms such as those enabling people to create wikis and blogs (pg.268), plus the other sites mentioned previously, and more. Definitions of what social media actually is, are evolving from early definitions as web-based services enabling people to create and make visible social connections within bounded systems (boyd and Ellison 2007), to consumer interaction paradigms made possible by Web 2.0 technologies (Schultz and Peltier 2013). However, the literature generally avoids defining social media in more precise terms, using “social networking sites” to describe social media in the earlier part of the decade (Joinson 2008), to mixing the term “social media” with “social networking sites” (Kabadayi and Price 2014) to describe web-based services enabling consumers to interact and engage with consumer brands. What, then, are social media sites or platforms? A reasonable categorisation is that they are mobile and web-based technologies used to create interactive platforms that enable people to form communities to share, create, discuss and modify user-generated material, usually referred to as “content” (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre 2011). Such a definition widens the range of interactive platforms that people can use to “be social”,

and there are varying degrees of social interaction provided for by each social media platform. The platforms included in the present study range from Facebook, the site with the largest user population of over 1.3 billion active users, to Instagram, Reddit, Snapchat, Twitch, Twitter, tumblr, YouTube, and Wikis. Facebook provides a social networking service which allows users to create a network of friends, a personal profile page, and to post photos and other content to share with friends in their network. There are a variety of tools available to users to indicate their affinity for content and that includes branded content that marketers have posted onto created brand pages. Instagram and Snapchat are mobile photo sharing applications, designed so users can construct their own photo records of their daily lives, make comments, and share such content to their network or share publicly.

Twitter and tumblr are microblogging services enabling users to create their own personal profiles, to tweet (microblog) their thoughts and opinions to their network of followers (Twitter), and to blog and post visual content to followers (tumblr). Both Twitter and tumblr enable users to socialise with others but the social relationships are different to those of Facebook, so this is explained more fully in Chapter Three. Twitch is an online social gaming, community-based website enabling gamers to socialise with each other in the context of “live” online real-time games. Reddit is a community-based social news website forum whereby users post stories about topics that are shared to the wider community via a voting system. Reddit users often write about consumer brands or write to interact with brand marketers. Such communications are not always positive. YouTube is a video sharing platform enabling users to create and upload videos to their own channels for viewing, for which they pay a fee to YouTube. Viewers can subscribe to content creators’ channels, and can interact with the creators via a question and answer and comment forum. Video creators can and do post parodies of brands, and some are widely shared. For example, a recent and widely shared music video about United Airlines, created by a country and western singer, Dave Carroll, in response to the airline’s treatment of his Taylor guitar which resulted in its breakage (Dave Carroll’s “United Breaks Guitars.” <http://youtu.be/5YGc4zOqozo>), was not only widely shared on YouTube but eventually resulted in a share price drop for United Airlines. Finally, Wikis, the most well-known of which is Wikipedia, are websites developed collaboratively by a community of users, to which any user can post and edit content.

The following Table 1.0 on the next page provides definitions of some common terms used on social media platforms that are included in this study.

Table 1.0 Social Media applications, terms and definitions

Social Media Platform	Applications, terms & definitions
Facebook	<p>Page – user created home page; consists of a profile photo & other details users choose to share.</p> <p>News Feed – a continuously updated content stream posted by other users in a users network or from pages that a user has “liked”. Main way for users to keep up to date with what people in their network are doing, saying, posting, sharing, liking, & who they are following.</p> <p>Friends - contacts that a user has added to their own network or responded to invitations to “friend” another user, thus increasing their network.</p> <p>Randoms – unknown people inviting a user into their network; invitations are often refused.</p> <p>Following – tracking other users or other favourite content.</p> <p>Post - uploading content to one’s own page or posting a comment or message to another page.</p> <p>Share – enabling other people in one’s network to see content by activating a “share” function.</p> <p>Like/s - signifying agreement with or liking another’s posted content.</p> <p>Comment – commenting on another’s posted content.</p> <p>Messages - creating and sending or receiving messages “in-house” using the Messenger app.</p> <p>Notifications - visual reminders of messages or activity by others relevant to a user’s network.</p> <p>Tagging - identifying another user in a photo that has been posted to one’s own page.</p>
Instagram	<p>Social photo sharing site; users interact with shared photos by “Like”, comments, or follow. If a user follows another then the other’s photos show up in (your) photo stream. Instagram users have #hashtags and use these in similar ways to Twitter. Instagram is designed for mobile use.</p>
Reddit	<p>Social news website and forum whose stories are socially curated and promoted by site members. Reddit uses “threads”, storylines relevant to specific topics. Reddit has “subreddits” and these are sub-communities each with their specific topics. Members submit and vote on content before such content is shared to the “front page”.</p>
Snapchat	<p>Snapchat is a photo messaging application, designed for mobile, whereby users can take photos, make videos, add their own text and drawings, and then send the content to a “controlled” list of recipients in their social network. Photos sent to a recipient “self-destruct” after about 10 seconds unless the recipient takes a screenshot.</p>
Twitch	<p>Twitch is an online social gamers site, created for the gaming community. It is one of the world’s largest video streaming platforms, uses live streaming of games, organises competitions, providing “streamers” and “broadcasters” with the opportunity to develop and play video games with others. Has achieved 100 million unique monthly viewers (2014).</p>
Twitter	<p>Tweet - the microblog written by a user. Limited to 140 characters.</p> <p>Retweet – a user’s microblog shared by another user to her/his own followers.</p> <p>Reply-to - Twitter equivalent of a message replying to a user.</p> <p>Following - people active on Twitter that a user has elected to follow; Followers - the people who are following a specific user. Favourite – equivalent of the Facebook “like”; a user’s followers see content that a user has “favourited”. Promote/d - users promoting content (possibly commercial) to their network.</p>
tumblr	<p>Blog page - the home page with a user’s profile, allowing the user to create microblogs and post to their page. Reblog - equivalent of the Facebook share; followers in a user’s network will see content that a user has reblogged to her/his home page. The more “reblogs” of content a user gets the greater their influence in the community. Fandom - virtual equivalent of a brand community.</p> <p>Posts - content generated by users and uploaded to their home page. Followers of the user see the posts.</p>
YouTube	<p>Channel – content creators pay a fee for their own “channel”, to which they upload video content.</p> <p>Like – viewers can signal their approval of video content in the same way as the Facebook “like”.</p> <p>Views – refers to people watching a posted video; the more “views” for a content creators video, the better regarded is the content. Subscribers – viewers paying a fee to subscribe to a content channel.</p>
Wiki	<p>A website or database developed collaboratively by a community of users, allowing any user to add and edit content. The children will refer to “go wiki something”, which is the contemporary equivalent of the old “go look something up in the dictionary”.</p>

The social media sites and the terminology summarised in Table 1.0 are amongst the most common used by the children in the present study. The children have access to an array of social media applications, and, in this study, most are comfortable with “social media language” mixing the terminology with their everyday conversation. Photo sharing sites, such as Instagram and Snapchat are included in Table 1.0 because these sites provide the opportunity for users to comment on content and to add their approval or not, in similar ways to using Facebook. So, it is possible to “be social” when using a photo sharing application. The wiki is included (at the end of Table 1.0) because the children refer to getting information about topics, especially using the internet to search for information as “go and wiki it”, which is slang for going to the internet and searching for a wiki that provides information on the topic. What follows in the next section is an outline of the Research Methodology of the present study, which provides details of the philosophical approach, data collection, and data analysis.

1.4 Research methodology

This research takes a social constructionist approach (Gergen 2009), with an interpretivist theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism (Charon 1998). Pragmatism as the methodological choice informs the selection of thematic analysis for the analysis of the children’s qualitative interview data (Crotty 1998). Thematic analysis is drawn from grounded theory (Goulding 1998), and this is a good fit because grounded theory has its genesis in symbolic interactionism (Crotty 2003). Semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews were selected as the information collection method, and this choice fits with the social constructionist approach of the study. The study topic is focused on children’s use of social media platforms for interacting with consumer brands, and because children’s use of such platforms is known to involve socialising with friends (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), it is envisaged that children are potentially sharing brand related information in such relationships. Social constructionists take the view that people construct their social reality within their social interactions (Gergen 2009), so, children’s social interactions using social media are potentially ways that they are constructing their relationships with consumer brands in the way that Fournier (1998) highlights for adults. Social media platforms also offer other ways by which children can potentially interact with consumer brands, e.g. by liking or following a brand, and such ways are thought to occur in the context of

children's social relationships. For example, the children will be able to talk about what they do on social media and who they talk to, like or follow, so for the researcher to be able to use this information, a qualitative paradigm with qualitative techniques has been selected.

People's verbal information is known to indicate deeper social processes (Boyatzis 1998), and specific qualitative techniques offer ways of uncovering such processes. This explains the choice of thematic analysis for this study, because of the way that such a technique for analysing verbal information (such as that provided by in-depth interviews), enables a researcher to work at uncovering latent processes to give insights about, or to explain the phenomena of interest (Boyatzis 1998). So, the current study is adopting a different research paradigm to previous academic marketing research, which is reviewed in Chapter Two. Previous research has generally used a quantitative paradigm (e.g. John 1999; McAlister and Cornwell 2010; Rossiter 1978), partly because of a historical use of paradigms such as Piaget's (2003) psychological cognitive perspective, and also because of the academic training of marketers, which tends to focus on quantitative measurement techniques. This focus is in turn probably driven by business marketers who consume research, and who focus on returns on investment and profitability, so a mathematical quantitative approach is probably viewed as more "accurate" at generating research answers. So, the perceived "softer approach" of a qualitative paradigm has not been as favoured for academic marketing research, but there have been calls for a move away from the quantitative perspective, to more nuanced and complex ways of investigating children's relationships with brands (Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008).

Such calls are responding to the need to enable research to take account of broader social and cultural factors (Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), e.g. such as the rise in social media technologies. So, because the children in this present study live in a society where there have been marked changes in marketing and branding practice towards them (Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), and their social and cultural environment is more complex than in previous times, such as from the 1940's to the 1980's for example (e.g. now, brand saturated environments in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries; Schor, 2004), a qualitative paradigm has been chosen because of the ability to take such context into account. Finally, the ethical environment towards children's participation in

research is well-monitored, so inviting children to participate in such a study must be undertaken with invitations to their parents, so a range of ways were used to invite parents to agree to their children participating in the study. Ethical clearance was granted for the researcher to approach local schools (teachers and principals), for permission to invite their parent community to agree to their children participating. Other ways of inviting potential participants were using snowballing, with suggestions from other participants about who to contact next. A total of twenty-three children (with their parents agreement) agreed to participate, and to help the child participants feel comfortable talking to a researcher, children were offered the opportunity to have a friend participate with them, in a paired interview setting. Most children elected not to have a friend with them at the interview, and some parents (Mothers) decided that their children would take the interview more seriously without a friend present. The friendship paired interviews were originally thought to be the best way of helping the children feel comfortable talking to an unknown adult researcher, but in practice most children talked easily in their individual interviews at their homes.

Some academic marketing researchers do seem to use schools as the settings for children's research (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010; Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), probably because of potential ethical concerns or logistics with large numbers for focus groups. This study found that by talking with parents and providing a detailed information sheet, plus a special children's information sheet and assent form helped parents and children feel able to participate. Parents were also asked for their interview venue preferences, and all but one selected their homes. Being interviewed at home, with Mom or Dad nearby probably helped the children feel able to talk to the researcher. Finally, the researcher enjoys working with children and young people, is capable of building positive relationships quickly, and this is likely to have contributed to the children's ability to talk freely. Children's development stage, particularly with their language skills has the potential to be a communication issue if for example, the children do not have the language to explain their thoughts about something (McAlister and Cornwell 2010). But, such language skills are usually in place for pre-teen children, and in any cases of confusion, it is up to the researcher to ensure that the interview questions are asked in plain language. Only one child did not always understand the questions, so these were reframed for this child to enable her/him to talk more easily about the topic.

Chapter Five, Results, provides more details of the interviews and the literature used to support the choice of methods for the study.

1.4.1 Analysis

Analysis of the interview information proceeded through several stages. The first stage was a quality step, with the preparation of the information (data) for subsequent analysis. This step involved the researcher listening to all the interview recordings and checking these against the typed transcripts for accuracy. Typing errors were corrected where possible, however the occasional “unclear” notation in a transcript was left, because, for example, the children talked over each other in the interview, or, in one case, two of the girls “got the giggles” and couldn’t talk for a short time. The second step involved the researcher transcribing one interview as a check; this took a very long time (six hours to transcribe one 43 minute interview), so on advice all the remaining interviews were professionally transcribed. These steps formed part of the data quality control for the study and to provide for trustworthiness (Guba and Lincoln 1982).

Development of the thematic source code to enable thematic analysis involved four stages, in an effort to ensure that the code reflected the data. Details of these steps are provided in full in Chapter Five, Results. The final code was tested by two coders, (the researcher and one other, independent coder) with disagreements about coding resolved by discussion. All interview transcripts were coded and entered into NVivo for subsequent analysis. Whilst NVivo provided the analytical software tools for a part of the data analysis, the researcher undertook line-by-line analysis and used her own interpretive thinking, not just to interpret the results of the NVivo output, but to think about and analyse the answers to the questions in a more pattern-oriented way, as well as using the tools offered by NVivo. This was undertaken because NVivo software does not interpret data, only people are able to interpret, and it became clear early on in the analysis that NVivo, like all software, has limitations. Where possible and relevant, one or two diagrams were used to help with the analysis, and these have been explained in terms of how the diagrams were generated (e.g. word frequency analyses), and what each diagram means. Screenshots of parts of the source code development steps, and data analysis procedures for each question have been included in Chapter Five to provide an audit trail of procedures, and to verify that the researcher herself has

undertaken all the interviews, code development and coding, and subsequent data analysis. Naturalistic inquiries, such as this current study, can be at risk of criticism because of the perceived lack of scientific method (Guba and Lincoln 1982) used in such studies, and the fear is that such a lack of method might lead to a sloppy study. However, the counter to the sloppy study argument is to construct and conduct a study that clearly explains the research decisions taken along the way, the reasoning behind the paradigm of choice, and for the researcher to divulge, and acknowledge, the role that her or his values play in how the study proceeds (Guba and Lincoln 1982). Because this research project is a naturalistic inquiry, it is important to be able to show that certain steps have been taken so that readers of the research can trust the findings, so the steps for this study are briefly reviewed next.

There are four main steps, the first being credibility, referring to how much the reader can trust that the study participants would find the analysis and interpretations believable. Some of this is resolved by the prolonged engagement at the site (two years; Guba and Lincoln 1982), and by the persistent observation undertaken by the researcher. Step two, transferability, refers to sampling adequacy, representativeness of the population sought, and purposive sampling. This study talked to children who use social media platforms, and has provided thick description of the children's responses to each of the research questions, including descriptions of the contexts of the research interviews. Dependability, step three, requires the demonstration of acceptable research practice, with details of methodological decisions and access given to the raw data. Such decisions are fully explained in Chapter Five; the raw data is available in the form of a dataset with all the interview transcripts saved to this, located in Appendix Two. Confirmability has been established in several ways, first, with discussion about the epistemological assumptions of the researcher (Chapters One and Four), and second, with a discussion in Chapter One clarifying the researcher's values and the implications of these for the study.

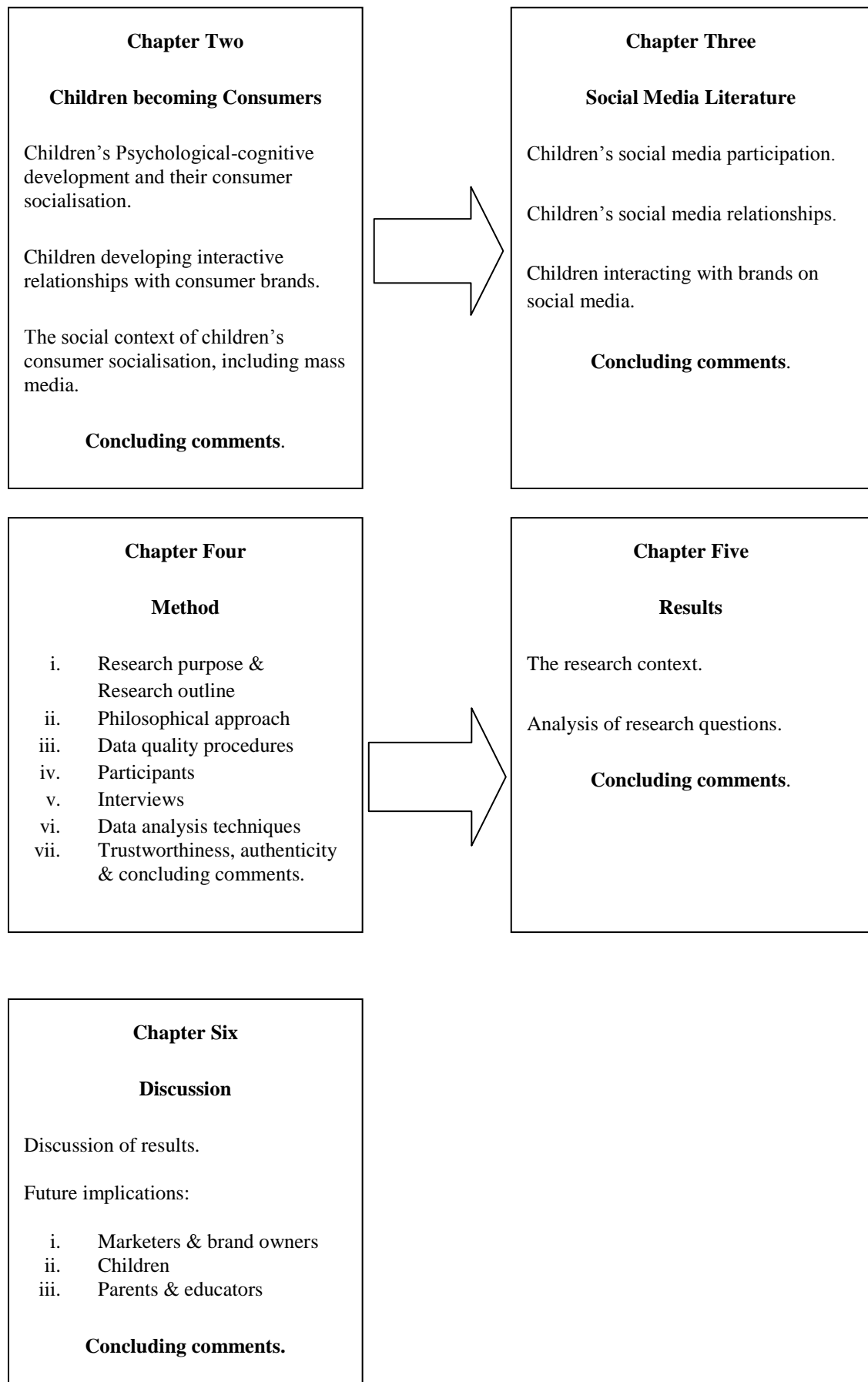
1.5 Delimitations

All research studies have limitations, so too this inquiry. The way that social media has been defined in the literature is inconsistent, and has the potential to affect the scope of the study in terms of what "social media" should be included. A working definition of

social media (or social network sites) proposed by boyd and Ellison (2007) that social media is a bounded system whereby people make visible their social connections, was applicable in 2007 when only a few social media sites were available. Since then, sites have been created such as Twitter and tumblr, and photosharing and online social gaming sites, and these all enable people to make their social connections visible, although it is clear that such sites are still bounded. So, this study has allowed for a range of social media sites, to allow for children who use e.g. online social gaming (Twitch), to be included, as well as those who use Facebook. Thus, some of these social media sites are very large bounded systems, with millions of users, thus people can access extremely large numbers of others if they wish.

Drawing boundaries around the literature considered relevant to the study is another potential delimitation. That is, this study is situated within the marketing discipline, and although the marketing literature cuts across other disciplines too (e.g. advertising and education), not all literature from disciplines allied to marketing, such as advertising, should be used. Because the current study is focused on children's use of social media to interact with brands, with four research questions flowing from this, the literature reviews focused on the discipline topic areas most relevant to the research questions. Literature was drawn from computer science, marketing, nursing, psychology and sociology. The advertising and education disciplines were explored in the early stages of this project with a small number of articles found to be relevant and subsequently reviewed. Overall, literature from both these disciplines did not provide the bulk of the material deemed relevant to the research context. What follows next is a detailed outline of each of the six Chapters of this thesis. The contribution to knowledge that this thesis represents, and a final conclusion end this Chapter.

Figure 1.0 Chapter outline and main focus – Chapters Two to Six



1.6 Outline of this Thesis

The thesis has been organised with a review of the marketing literature as it relates to children's consumer socialisation and how children develop an understanding of brands. This literature review is presented in Chapter Two. The next chapter, Chapter Three, reviews the literature relevant to marketing understanding of the new topic of social media. Chapter Four details the Method of the study, establishing criteria by which the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study can be assessed. Chapter Five, Results, presents the analysis of the data. Interpretation of the results and implications for the future forms the Discussion in Chapter Six.

Chapter Two: Literature review:

Children becoming consumers.

Cognitive perspectives.

Building brand understanding.

The social contexts of children's consumer socialisation.

Chapter Two reviews what is known from the academic marketing literature about the processes of children's socialisation as consumers. The Chapter is divided into three sections; the first, reviewing children's psychological cognitive development, and how this development results in cognitive gains from children's increasing age. Such gains enable children to reason in more sophisticated ways, and such reasoning and associated information processing capabilities help children with consumer decision making tasks. The first section of Chapter Two also explains children's development of a theory of mind (McAlister and Cornwell 2010), a social development skill enabling them to take the perspective of another person. This is an essential step for children because it gives them the ability to think about the meaning of other's consumption choices (McAlister and Cornwell 2010), and to understand brand symbolism (Belk, Bahn et al. 1982). Such understanding is important in explaining why children interact with some brands and not others. Children's developing relationships with consumer brands forms the review in the second section of the chapter, and explores how children form brand perceptions (Bahn 1986) and how these perceptions culminate in brand preferences. The third section reviews the social contexts in which children's consumer socialisation progresses. This literature discusses the role that family and friends play as socialisation agents, with the role of mass media, especially television, reviewed last.

Chapter Three: Literature review:**Children and social media.**

Children's social media participation.

Children's social media relationships.

Children's brand interactions on social media.

Chapter Three provides a review of the academic marketing literature relevant to children and social media. Because this Chapter has a role in setting the scene for the second half of the thesis, it has been divided into three sections, the first focusing on children's social media participation. This section discusses aspects of children's social media participation, such as behaviours (e.g. liking, sharing, commenting, following), the task of identity formation, and uses and gratifications obtained from social activities. The second section considers children's social media relationships from the perspective of social capital and social exchanges. The final section, children's brand interactions on social media, takes a symbolic interactionism perspective, considering how children use social media to engage with brand symbols, including the role that content creation might play in this.

Chapter Four: Method.

The research purpose.

Philosophical approach.

Data quality procedures.

Participants.

Sources of interview questions.

Data analysis techniques.

Trustworthiness and authenticity.

There are seven sections to Chapter Four, the first explains the purpose of the research and provides the research outline. The second section explains the philosophical approach of this study, consisting of an explanation of the epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods, and justifies the qualitative paradigm the research is situated in. The third section explains the procedures used to ensure data quality, and section four provides information about how the participants were selected,

the things that were undertaken to keep the children safe and how they were helped to feel comfortable in an interview setting. The fifth section provides information about the sources of the interview questions, summarising key literature used to help formulate the questions. Data analysis techniques are outlined in section six, including a discussion of the development of the thematic Source Code. Subsamples of the children's interview information used for developing the Source Code are explained, and screenshots and quotes taken from these children's interviews provided as part of the audit trail. This section provides details of the development of the Source Code, through four iterations. The explanation takes the reader from the initial, broad clusters of themes identified in the data by the researcher, to the final Source Code. A screenshot is provided of the final Source Code entered into the NVivo project. The final section discusses issues of trustworthiness and authenticity, providing evidence of the work that the researcher did to establish a trustworthy study.

Chapter Five: Results.

The research context.

Analysis of research questions.

The first section of Chapter Five explains the research context and the four research questions. The research context includes demographic details of the participants, length of interviews and locations, and information about the interview contexts, e.g. six mothers elected to be present at their children's interviews. Data quality control and data analysis procedures are described. This section concludes with a commentary explaining manifest and latent analysis. The second section consists of the full analysis of the research questions. The analysis uses techniques drawn from NVivo, but mostly focuses on the researcher's interpretive thinking.

Each research question has a separate analysis and conclusion. The analysis and interpretation for Research Question Four (R Q 4) draws the preceding three research questions together.

Chapter Six: Discussion.

Discussion of results.

Future implications for the children, their parents, for marketers and brand owners, and educators.

Chapter Six, Discussion, concludes this study, drawing the threads together of what children's social media use means for their interactions with consumer brands, and how this use plays a part in shaping children's brand relationships. The Discussion is situated in the overall context of children's socialisation as consumers, and focuses on the role that their social media use plays in the socialisation process. The implications of these insights for the children and their parents are reviewed. The insights provided from this study are potentially of interest to marketers and brand owners, so to match with the researcher's values of thinking through how the insights could be used, some guidelines are offered in this part. Educators may also be interested to learn about children's social media use, so guidelines are offered for this group too. The scope of the study is large, so Chapter Six concludes with thoughts about future research topics in this area.

1.7 Contribution to knowledge

This thesis has made a contribution to academic marketing in three key areas. The thesis makes a theoretical contribution by showing how children use a process to interact with consumer brands on social media. The methodological contribution constitutes research about children in an emerging consumer age group, ages eleven to fourteen years, and how these children are using social media to interact with consumer brands. The managerial contribution falls into the social, educational, and business areas, with a caveat that future reflection and research is required in the business marketing area regarding the consumption of the results.

1.8 Conclusion

The first goal of Chapter One was to situate this research into the social media and marketing environment, and to provide the backdrop to children's social media activity. The introduction to the Chapter was detailed in order to provide sufficient background for the reader about the scale and global reach of people's social media activity. The potential of social media from a marketing communications perspective is untapped, but the rules of engagement are different for marketers seeking to relate to consumers, because the power balance has changed to one of empowered consumers (Fournier and Avery, 2011) unafraid to express their opinions.

Chapter One located the research into the academic marketing literature, and articulated the research problem. The research objectives and research questions were outlined next, followed by a discussion of the researcher's values. This discussion was followed by the terms and definitions of social media, including a table explaining the social media language relevant to each platform. An explanation of the research methodology was provided next, followed by a detailed explanation of the analysis. Next was a discussion of the delimitations of the study, with the remainder of Chapter One given over to presenting a detailed outline of each Chapter of the thesis. Finally, the contribution to knowledge that this thesis represents provided the link to this conclusion. So, this conclusion now leads to the first of the literature reviews, Chapter Two, reviewing what is known in the academic marketing literature about how children develop as consumers, and how such development enables them to interact in sophisticated ways with consumer brands.

Chapter Two

2.0 Children becoming consumers

The previous Chapter One (Introduction), situated this research in the marketing context. The implications of the previous chapter's comments are significant for this research, because this study proposes that the sources of marketplace information and influence relating to consumer brands may be transforming. This study proposes that the new social media contexts, in which children are interacting with each other and with the marketplace, represent powerful agents helping children interact with consumer brands in more sophisticated ways.

Thus, this Chapter has two goals, and the reason for reviewing this body of literature rests upon two main ideas. First, for children to become consumers, they need access to information about the marketplace, and plenty of opportunities to practice in learning how to use this to make consumption choices (Cram and Ng 1999). Second, an outcome of this learning and practice can be conceptualised as children gaining economic understanding of how the marketplace works, especially about the role that consumer brands play in consumer's lives (Achenreiner and John 2003; Bahn 1986; Diamond, Sherry, Muniz, McGrath, Kozinets, and Borghini 2009; Fournier 1998).

Some academic marketing literature, then, explains what happens as children develop physically, cognitively, and in social/emotional ways, and how this development helps them form an understanding of complex economic concepts (Cram and Ng 1999; Hayta 2008; Martens 2005), for example, such as the notion of the ownership of things (Cram and Ng 1999). The concept of exchange, e.g. using money in exchange for something (Cram and Ng 1999; Martens 2005) also needs to be acquired. Children's understanding of these concepts must include building knowledge of the function of price (Cram and Ng 1999), and what the price of a good signifies to a consumer. For example, in Cram and Ng's summary of North American research from 1983 (e.g. Burris 1983; in Cram and Ng 1999), findings that younger children (e.g. four and five year olds) envisage price as dependent on the physical size of a good, but older children realise that price is related to the utility of something, is taken as evidence of children's acquisition of core consumer skills with their increasing age, social interaction, and marketplace practice.

In order for children to form a more complex understanding of marketplace activity, such as the intent of television advertising, they need to have developed the ability to distinguish advertisements from actual program content (Moses and Baldwin 2005), and to infer the intent of advertising, e.g. to sell a product; to make money; and to persuade people for example. To do this, children need to have perspective-taking skills (Moses and Baldwin 2005; pg. 187), which require a recognition that others have interests and beliefs that are different from one's own. This particular ability is dependent upon children's theory of mind, and this is known to develop during the pre-school years, as children begin to understand about mental states as representations of the world, not what it really is, and that others act on the basis of these mental states (Moses and Baldwin 2005).

Children's symbolic understanding of consumer brands (e.g. of brand logos and what these mean to others; McAlister and Cornwell 2010), is linked to their early development of theory of mind. That is, once children can demonstrate their ability to think about another's intentions and desires for example, they are capable of understanding other's desires to own a popular product in order to achieve some goal (for example, a self-expression goal of "being cool"). This ability is very dependent upon theory of mind development, and the use of specific executive functioning (McAlister and Cornwell 2010). Both these topics are explained more fully later in this section.

This study proposes that marketplace information (for example, in the form of information about consumer brands) is becoming available to children in different ways, e.g. via their social media interactions. The more traditional academic perspectives have not specifically investigated the role that social media interactions, and the brand relationships developed as a consequence of these interactions, might play in children becoming consumers. This Chapter examines some of the dominant (perhaps the traditional), perspectives in the literature that explain how children's access to, and interaction with, marketplace information helps them to become consumers. These perspectives are found in topic areas such as the psychological cognitive development perspective (e.g. Achenreiner and John 2003; Bahn 1986; John 1999; John and Whitney 1986; Piaget 2003), which links children's development as consumers as contingent on their cognitive maturation, proceeding in tandem with increasing chronological age and

more complex social interactions. The behavioural and social learning views (e.g. Bandura 1997; Cram and Ng 1999; Kolb and Kolb 2009; McNeal 2007; Ward 1974), hold that children's development as consumers generally results from their product (or service-related) experiences, and the resulting social and everyday interactions, that provide explanatory opportunities about e.g. marketplace phenomena (Cram and Ng 1999). A large body of academic research constructed over the past three decades (since the 1970's), utilising these broad perspectives has yielded a wide range of findings, useful to both academic and business marketers.

The perspectives act as lenses in terms of increasing our understanding of how children become consumers. The order of this Chapter Two is as follows: first, a review of the literature from the psychological cognitive development perspective is presented. This includes research incorporating an information processing approach. Second, the stream of marketing literature explaining how children learn about and interact with consumer brands, and what this means for their development as consumers is reviewed. The third part of this chapter addresses the literature from a social influence perspective, looking at more interactive influences upon children's consumer development, e.g. family interactions and mass media influence for example, and how these factors contribute to consumer socialisation. These streams of literature have been formative in increasing marketing academics understanding of how children become consumers.

So the processes governing children's development as consumers are complex, and this study seeks to understand some aspects of this. This study is exploring the possibility that the sources of information typically dominating cultural discussions about, for example, consumer brands, and the appropriate relationships children may have with these, could be transforming. The first part of this Chapter reviews the cognitive landscape through which marketing academics and business people have understood how children become consumers.

2.1 Psychological-cognitive development: explaining how children become consumers

2.1.1 Introduction

Academic attention began focusing on children as potential emerging consumers as early as 1954 in the USA, in response to their perceived buying power, influence, and sheer size as a group (Schor 2004). Even before this, Dorothy Miller's protest at the article discussing the youth market, written by Eugene Gilbert for the *Journal of Marketing* in July 1948, was made at his assertion that "children under age five had no influence or purchasing power of their own" (Miller 1949; pg. 88). Her point was in relation to the influence her own children wielded in making their brand preferences known, even at the very young age of fourteen months (Miller 1949). Dorothy Miller reminded her audience that even young babies had an ability to discriminate among brands, pointing out that her own fourteen-month old son "liked the brand of baby food that had a picture of a small child on the label," and that he "didn't stand up and demand it, but his meals were pleasanter and consumed more readily when the label was present" (Miller 1949; pg. 88). She went on to remind her readers that the purchasing power of babies and young children was certainly significant. Her conservative calculation that at an intake of 1500 jars of baby food consumed by her son between the ages of fourteen months and three years, multiplied by the number of little children in America at the time (estimated to be around ten million), the numbers became "not a negligible market" (Miller 1949; pg. 88). Even allowing for problems with big numbers and uncertainty about the actual numbers of American children consuming branded baby food, Dorothy Miller had a point.

The topic of children as consumers was raised again at a conference by Robertson and Feldman (1976), who argued for more interdisciplinary research on children's consumer behaviour. Their paper proposed that researchers consider adopting multi-theoretical perspectives when working in this area, because of the complex natures of consumer behaviour and children's development. They argued against the use of one perspective (or meta-theory) for studying this topic, instead suggesting that researchers look to

match perspectives with their research questions. This broadening of perspectives has been partially achieved, albeit with a reliance on experimental designs, and a strong focus on using a psychological cognitive model of children's development as consumers. The next section explains the basis of the psychological cognitive model, derived from Jean Piaget's (2003) work on children's cognitive development, reviewing the application of this and other cognitive theories used to explain children's consumer development.

2.1.2 Children's consumer socialisation

An early paper authored by Roedder (now John), Didow, and Calder (1978), proposed clustering major theories of socialisation into three groups; via a process, content, or goal orientation (pg.523). Their aim was to highlight the wider range of formal theories of socialisation that could be adopted by marketing researchers to explain children's consumer socialisation. A secondary aim was to foster a move away from the reliance researchers had upon the Piagetian (2003) cognitive framework as the only explanatory tool for the process of children's consumer socialisation (Roedder, Didow, and Calder 1978). The cognitive development framework (Piaget 2003), links chronological age to specific milestones in cognitive development. The milestones explain the qualitative changes in cognitive structure organisation as children mature, and this affects the way in which children learn and apply e.g. consumer-related information (Ward 1974). Thus, the paper authored by Roedder, Didow, et al., (1978), probably represents one of the earliest attempts by consumer researchers to respond to the call for multi-theoretical perspectives advocated by Robertson and Feldman (1976).

In her synthesis of the body of research for the twenty five years prior to 1999, John (1999) pointed out that the main findings of the staged progression in children's knowledge of products, brands, advertising and pricing, shopping, and decision-making strategies about consumption, is well-linked to their age and concurrent stages of cognitive and social development. This holds despite some variance in findings showing low or no support for the Piagetian framework as the determining factor (e.g., Bahn 1986). The review by John (1999) showed that there were three development stages,

linking to the major cognitive and social shifts children make from their preschool years to adolescence. Each stage is characterised by more sophisticated reasoning and decision-making as consumers (John 1999). Stage one, typically viewed as “preoperational” in Piaget’s theory of cognitive development (Piaget 2003) is linked to children aged two to seven years. In the consumer setting John’s (1999) summary renames this stage “perceptual” but continues to follow Piaget’s notion of a focus on single dimensions of stimuli. This takes the form of children’s reliance on using perceptual features of events or objects to describe what they observe, and to use this information to make choices. Children show familiarity with brands but no understanding beyond surface cues. Children are described as limited processors, bounded by cognitive limitations in using their storage and information retrieval capacities even when helped to do so (John 1999). Analytical capabilities, the second stage in the review (John 1999), and in concert with Piaget’s stage four, i.e. formal, or hypothetic deductive reasoning (Piaget 2003), explains the gains made by children in their cognitive development and information processing capacities as they shift from a perceptual focus to analytical thought. This development stage culminates in a more sophisticated understanding of products, brands, and advertising and a greater level of sophistication when making consumption choices (John 1999). In sum, this age-stage literature concludes that as children mature cognitively and socially, their relationships with brands become more abstract and compelling at the psychological level, as brands are incorporated into their identities.

Researchers engaged in other early work, e.g. investigating children’s acquisition of consumption stereotypes and recognition of consumption symbolism, continued to apply Piaget’s cognitive development framework in some way (Bahn 1986; Belk, Bahn, and Mayer 1982; Belk, Mayer, and Driscoll 1984; Mayer and Belk 1982). For example, using their findings, Belk et al., (1982) argued that by second grade (in New Zealand, year 3, age 7 years) children had learnt a significant amount of the “consumption language” (pg. 13) required to recognise the social consequences of others’ consumption choices. By this age, it was found that children have a well-formed capacity to draw inferences about other people’s social status, success, and happiness by observing others’ consumption behaviour, identified through their product ownership (e.g., cars and houses). This study was largely based around a developmental and maturation perspective, using the Piagetian framework (Belk, Bahn et al. 1982).

Extending this original study further, Belk, Mayer, and Driscoll (1984) hypothesised that there would be variations in children's abilities to recognise consumption symbols on the basis of differences in age, gender, sibling influence, and social class. This study found that the greatest differences in symbol recognition were among children of different ages. Older children's inferences about others (on ten attributes) ranging from popularity to attractiveness were clearer and, interestingly, strongly related to the interaction experiences the children had of the (children's) products themselves.

Main findings from each of these studies highlighted the determining role that the children's age played in the extent to which they had learnt (and could communicate) their understanding of consumption stereotypes, symbolism, and the development of brand preferences, in children's and adult's products. One study, (Belk, Mayer, and Driscoll 1984), tested the notion that children's consumption-related experiences were at least as important as other factors in the development of their ability to make inferences about other's consumption choices. This particular study is notable for its strong focus upon investigating the role of experiential learning in children's acquisition of consumption symbolism (Belk, Mayer et al. 1984). Findings overall indicated that product ownership resulted in stronger stereotypes of the product's owners (Belk, Mayer et al. 1984; pg.396), and that the child's age, while related, was not as important as product experience. This finding could be conceptualised as some of the earliest thinking about the formative role that children's interactions with brands plays in e.g. preference formation.

While this latter study still utilised the tenets of the Piagetian framework, the experiential learning perspective was introduced to provide theoretical support. Experiential learning in this context referred to the opportunities that older children had to experience consumption situations (such as owning products, or seeing others having ownership experiences; Belk, Mayer et al. 1984). Experiential learning essentially means that people create knowledge through transforming the differing experiences they have, from a variety of situations (Kolb 2009). Therefore, children experiencing actual product ownership more frequently, and observing other's ownership experiences, create consumer knowledge from these experiential events. These findings (Belk, Mayer et al. 1984) also suggested that children's understanding of the symbolic meaning of products and brand names transcended an understanding of just the physical attributes

of the products and their categories. This kind of knowledge gained from children's greater experience with products is linked to their ability to make abstract judgements about others (Belk, Mayer et al. 1984).

In 1978, Rossiter argued for greater rigor from the academic community in their investigations of children's consumer behaviour (Rossiter 1978). He was particularly concerned about the lack of theory used to construct and inform studies before they were conducted. Along with criticisms of poor reliability and generalisability of results due to less-than rigorous development of measures, Rossiter (1978) suggested academics, when planning studies in this area, focus their attention on four factors; theoretical contribution, practical value, adequate measurement, and generalisability. Each of these factors were expected to be utilised when planning research studies, in order to make useful contributions to the growing body of knowledge about how children become consumers.

2.1.3 Information processing theories and the development of memory structures

Researchers investigating children's acquisition of, and cognitive organisation of marketplace information, contributed studies prior to or after 1978, that met some or all of the criteria suggested by Rossiter (1978); for example, John and Whitney, 1986; Klees, Olson, and Wilson, 1988; Peracchio, 1992; Wackman and Ward, 1975; and Wartella, Wackman and Ward, 1978. Some of these studies used the cognitive development framework as their theoretical base. Additionally, they incorporated information processing models illustrating how children's age determines their selection, evaluation, and use of marketplace information to make consumer decisions (Wackman and Ward 1975). Other research (Klees, Olson et al. 1988) found that young children's (e.g. age six years), potential to process consumer-related information had been underestimated in previous research.

Studies investigating children's development of memory structures to help them learn and organise consumer knowledge found, though, that more information provided to

younger children (ages four to five years) made no difference to their descriptions of the sequencing in common purchase events (John and Whitney 1986). More information provided to older children resulted in enhanced organisation of the sequence of purchase events, in more complex forms (John and Whitney 1986). This study used the idea of “scripts” (John and Whitney 1986). Scripts refer to the way that (in this context) children develop memory structures to organise knowledge and their experience of events (John and Whitney 1986).

A later study (Peracchio 1992), using a similar format to John and Whitney’s (1986) work, found, however, that if the materials and ways to respond to purchase events are matched to the children’s information processing abilities, then any age differences in learning vanish (Peracchio 1992; pg.436). This later study had a general goal of finding ways of helping children become informed consumers. Detailed findings indicated that young children (ages five to eight years) required multiple exposures of audiovisual information about a consumer-related event (e.g. returning a faulty product to the store), before age differences in knowledge retrieval about the event were minimised. Additionally, “contextual support” (pg. 436; things such as context retrieval cues and presentation contexts) were needed if age differences were to be effectively minimized. In her conclusion, Peracchio (1992), argued that young children (aged under seven years), if given specific information about the consumer event to help them with their inferences about the intent of the (in this study) “event story,” performed as capably as the older children.

2.1.4 Children forming brand representations

An interest in the processes by which children come to form brand perceptions, and determine brand preferences, saw Bahn (1986) frame a study using Piaget’s (2003) psychological cognitive development model. This particular study, along with others of its time, assumed that Piaget’s cognitive development framework would provide sufficient explanatory power to account for the results. This particular study used branded breakfast cereals and beverages as the experimental stimuli, with the goal of having children discriminate among the brands and to show formed preferences (Bahn

1986). Each product was represented by fourteen brands; children were to complete various sorting, discriminating and comparison tasks for the 28 brands (Bahn 1986).

Findings were mixed. There was some support for Piaget's (2003) theory that differences in children's cognitive stages e.g. pre-operational children aged two to seven years, focused on single stimuli to make choices; and concrete-operational, children aged eight to eleven years, able to consider several dimensions of a stimulus concurrently (John 1999), were the most important determinants of children's ability to form brand perceptions and preferences (Bahn 1986). However, other factors were involved in the development of the perception and preference ability in children, such as product category, and children's actual experience with the product/s (Bahn 1986; pg. 391). That is, older children with more experience of cereal brands, for example, made finer discriminations among brand attributes in forming brand perceptions, than did the children with less product experience. This experiential factor links to the earlier findings of Belk, Mayer, et al., (1984), suggesting that the more chances children have of interacting with branded products (e.g. gaining product experiences, either through ownership or through consumption activities; Belk, Mayer, et al., 1984), the more discriminating they become and the more assured in their ability to form preferences (Bahn 1986).

Cognitive representations of brands that are developed by consumers, includes multiple dimensions of brand knowledge referred to by Keller (2003). This information (for example, descriptive and evaluative; Keller 2003) contributes to the personal understanding consumers have about the brand, and is stored as memory traces. In the case of children's abstract representations of brands, the earlier studies (e.g. Belk, Bahn et al. 1982; Belk, Mayer et al. 1984) rested on the premise that very young children, e.g. under the age of seven, were unable to develop and retain these representations in abstract forms, nor communicate the meaning of these to others.

These early findings are important for several reasons; first, the studies reviewed to this point do provide some evidence that consumer researchers were incorporating theoretical frameworks other than Piaget's (2003) cognitive development model (e.g. using information processing theories; Klees, Olson et al. 1988; Peracchio 1992) to explain aspects of children's consumer socialisation. However, all the studies reviewed

focused upon investigating children's cognitive development as consumers in some way; e.g. by focusing upon information processing capabilities, or memory structure development and organisation, often in conjunction with increasing age. Only one of the studies reviewed considered the role of children's social interactions or product interaction experiences in developing their symbolic understanding of consumption (e.g. of products and/or consumer brands; e.g. Belk, Mayer et al. 1984). Many studies were experimental in nature (e.g. Bahn 1986; Belk, Bahn et al. 1982; Belk, Mayer et al. 1984; John and Whitney 1986; Klees, Olson et al. 1988; Mayer and Belk 1982; Peracchio 1992), and none offered a more holistic understanding of the wider social and cultural influences on children's development as consumers.

Children's social interactions as a potential influential factor in their consumer socialisation were hinted at in Belk, Mayer, et al., (1984), with their investigation of the influence that older siblings might have on the nature of the consumption stereotypes that younger children acquired (pg. 396). In this study, though, these findings were of a weak effect. This could have been because the study limited children's social interactions to older siblings only, instead of considering the wider social dynamics that children are engaged in, such as with their peer groups at school (Nairn, Griffin, and Wicks 2008).

These earlier studies have been formative in terms of developing approaches for others to investigate children's development as consumers. However, the strong focus on using Piaget's (2003) theory as the single explanatory framework for children's consumer socialisation meant that other potential influences (such as the role of product interaction experience, or the influence of children's social interactions) were unexplored. This focus has persisted into more recent studies (e.g. Dotson and Hyatt 2000; Valkenburg and Buijzen 2005) and these are reviewed in the next section, as part of the general theme of children's cognitive development providing the impetus for increasing their brand understanding.

The topic of brand understanding, and the impact of this on the development of materialistic values in children, was raised by Achenreiner and John (2003). They asked questions about how children use the meanings that they derive from brand information to make judgments about themselves and others. This particular question was linked to

global concerns about the strong brand consciousness displayed by young people (Achenreiner and John 2003), and the personal outcomes associated with this. When children are asked about the meaning of brand names, Achenreiner and John's (2003) study found that age-related cognitive differences prevail. That is, their main findings provided support for the psychological cognitive model as an explanatory framework in understanding aspects of children's developing relationships with brands. They found that children of different ages relate to brands in different ways (Achenreiner and John 2003).

Further, their study found that children under six years of age generally use brand names as simple perceptual cues; e.g. helping them identify a familiar product with specific features, such as "Oreo cookies" when referring to any chocolate cookie with sweet filling (Achenreiner and John 2003, pg. 207). Once children reach age eight, their ability to think conceptually about brands is developing, although this is still dependent on age-stage cognitive maturation. However, by the ages of ten or twelve, children's abilities to think about brands in the abstract sense are more sophisticated, along with the beginnings of an understanding about the social significance of brand consumption as well (Achenreiner and John 2003; Belk et al. 1984). This latter point is behind the acquisition of materialistic, or consumer values as children in later childhood (from age ten to twelve) demonstrate the capacity to judge others on the basis of the brands they consume.

Investigations of the role of televised images in the development of brand awareness in young children (ages five or six, up to age twelve years), have used age and cognitive maturation-related themes. The developmental and memory approach used by Valkenburg and Buijzen (2005), found that multiple exposure to brand information materials (particularly via television images) is an important factor facilitating children's brand recognition at young ages, even as young as two. Psychological research has shown that even very young children (e.g. pre-schoolers) have good, accurate, recognition memories (Valkenburg and Buijzen 2005) needing help with recall because of their language limitations. This finding makes sense in the context of very young children's quick recognition of, for example, the symbolic "Golden Arches" (McDonalds), and their ability to say who and what the Golden Arches symbol represents (Charon 1998; McAlister and Cornwell 2010).

The psychological cognitive development model (Piaget, 2003) typically states that children younger than age seven cannot think about, or understand abstract concepts such as symbols (McAlister and Cornwell 2010). However, some consumer behaviour studies reviewed here have achieved results that would indicate very young children *do* have a symbolic understanding ability. This is discussed further in the next section. In an investigation comparing children's knowledge of brands and advertising slogans with that of their parents, Dotson and Hyatt (2000) based their method on children's cognitive ability to recognise advertising slogans. Children at the preadolescent stage (ages nine, ten and eleven), were given a questionnaire containing different brand-slogan statements. Children were to match the slogans with the brands; their parents were given the same questionnaire to do the same task independent of their children. Results confirmed that the preadolescent children had as much (if not more) familiarity with the specific brands and their matching slogans as their parents (Dotson and Hyatt 2000; pg.227).

In a study investigating how children learn value information about brands, Marshall, Ng and Na tied their work into two approaches; the use of cognitive heuristics which are simple, experience-based rules (Marshall et al. 2002), and Piaget's (2003) cognitive development framework. They found, in their study of two fast food brands (McDonalds and KFC), that there was a clear distinction between the ages of children and the extent to which they learn value information about brands (p. 266). Generally, their study supported the premise that as children mature cognitively, the brand associations they make undergo a shift from tangible (attribute focused) to intangible (benefits and value focused). These intangible benefits and values may be constantly reinforced for consumers in a positive way as a result of their continuous interactions with the brand (referred to here as co-creation activities; Merz, He, and Vargo 2009), provided the brand does not disappoint.

In their study of fast food compared to healthy food brand name and logo recognition (conducted among predominantly Hispanic children), Arredondo, Castanada, Elder, Slymen, and Dozier (2009) found that on average, children recognise fast food restaurant logos at a greater frequency than other food logos. Second, overweight children and those from homes with low socio-economic status recognised fast food logos at faster rates than younger children (e.g. seven to eight year olds recognised fast

food logos at a rate eleven times more than younger children; pg.77). These findings were also linked to the marketing strategies used by fast food brands, and to the higher density of fast food outlets found in lower socioeconomic areas. One of the interesting comments from this study is that of the authors advocating for regulation of the fast food “marketing industry” (Arredondo, Castaneda, et al. 2009; pg.77). The increase in children’s logo recognition of fast food logos was explained in two main ways. First, the child’s age was found to be positively associated with food logo recognition; this was linked to successful influential marketing strategies used by fast food brands. The authors could have speculated that these marketing strategies were effectively increasing children’s brand knowledge (Keller 2003), leading to greater brand awareness (recognition), thus leading to greater motivation to interact with these brands, e.g. via purchase requests from parents.

The results reviewed prior to this point, then, support the Piagetian (2003) framework whereby children at these ages (concrete-operational; ages nine to eleven), do have the ability to make conceptual judgements about brands, leading to the formation of perceptions and thus preferences (e.g. Achenreiner and John 2003; Bahn 1986; Belk, Bahn et al. 1982). Thus, the development and exercise of this judgmental ability is important, because such an ability should be connected to the willingness of consumers (in this case, children), to form interactions with a brand, such interactions potentially creating what Merz, He et al., (2009), term perceptions of “value-in-use” of the brand (pg. 334). The formation of this perception is important because of the implications such perceptions have for the brand (e.g. if positive, this would mean that children could be involved in co-creating brand value; Merz, He et al. 2009). This topic of discussion is picked up in greater detail in Section Two of this Chapter, which discusses children’s brand interactions and subsequent relationships, and also in Chapter Three, because of the relevance of the “value-in-use” brand concept in children’s use of social media for interacting with brands.

Further extending the work investigating nine to eleven-year old children’s conceptual ability with regard to interpreting brand symbolism, other researchers following these lines of enquiry (e.g. McAlister and Cornwell 2010), proposed that even younger children, for example at ages three to five, had similar conceptual abilities as their older counterparts, they just lacked the language skills to communicate easily (pg. 205). Thus,

in order to find out if younger children really could make conceptual judgements about brands, McAlister and Cornwell (2010) devised a series of experiments to test children's abilities of some fundamental branding concepts. The first of these, brand recognition, was found to be salient for children as young as three years of age, and they easily recognised brands from categories that had a good "fit" for their age group (e.g. fast food and some grocery brands; McAlister and Cornwell 2010; pg. 208). The brands were presented to the children in their logo format, with original font and colour on a white background (pg. 207). Experimental work progressed to test children's understanding of brand symbolism; this was defined as an understanding that brands can be used for self-expression, and brands can represent market qualities, e.g. popularity. Findings showed that children as young as age three are capable of making, and holding, mental representations of brands. If this is the case, then these mental representations could be envisaged as a child's emerging perceptions of a brand, which suggests that the child has formed (or is certainly capable of forming), some ideas about the value of that brand (Merz, He et al. 2009). This further suggests that the child is probably capable of arriving at some conclusions about the "value-in-use" of a specific brand to them (Merz, He et al. 2009), but at these very young ages will have difficulty articulating what this might be. Thus, even very young children could be expected to represent a group of consumers with capabilities (presently untested), for participating in the co-creation of a brand's value.

Clarifying their results further, McAlister and Cornwell (2010), refer to the finding that the capability of very young children to form mental representations of brands is contingent upon the children using their emerging executive functioning capabilities, and a psychological attribute called "theory of mind" (McAlister and Cornwell 2010; pgs. 209-210). Theory of mind refers to a form of social development enabling a child to take the perspective of another person. This means that the child can envisage another's intentions, or beliefs and desires, and can think about the other person's future intentions as well as their own. Theory of mind really refers to the mental capacity to think about the mental state of others (McAlister and Cornwell 2010; Moses and Baldwin 2005). This ability links with executive functioning abilities; and these refer to higher-order cognitive functions such as inhibiting (undesirable) responses, adhering to rules, planning specific behaviour, and mental flexibility (McAlister and Cornwell 2010; pg.210). Thus, if these abilities are present in a young child, then their capability

for understanding the symbolism of brands is also present (McAlister and Cornwell 2010).

At this juncture, it is worth asking what this kind of experimental result means for our understanding of how older children learn about consumer brands. The typical framework in much of the consumer behaviour literature reviewed previously for studying how children learn about, and interact with consumer brands, has been to use Piaget's (2003) staged psychological cognitive development approach (McAlister and Cornwell 2010). However, it is suggested that this approach to understanding children's consumer behaviour and, specifically, their interactions with consumer brands should be revised. Instead, studies could focus upon using age-appropriate tasks (e.g. sorting tasks for very young children using brands relevant to them, such as toys or fast foods; not fashion brands for example) in order to enable the children to demonstrate their understanding of e.g. brand symbolism (McAlister and Cornwell 2010). Studies could explore how children's understanding of brand symbolism gives rise to children's notions of brand value; the concept of value-in-use (Merz, He et al. 2009), could be investigated to increase the understanding of children's roles as stakeholders in a brand's value creation. This latter factor is especially relevant for Chapter Three, and is discussed further in relation to children's social media use. Finally, studies need to account for individual differences more precisely (some of these are directly related to cognitive ability; McAlister and Cornwell 2010), and the use of non-child brands in future studies is discouraged (McAlister and Cornwell 2010; pg. 223). Taking these kinds of factors into account, research investigating very young children's understanding of e.g. brand symbolism, and the outcomes of this understanding, can be better designed so that a more complete understanding of the early start to children's consumer socialisation can be formed.

2.1.5 Conclusion

Prior to 1999, much of the body of academic marketing research into children's consumer socialisation used a theoretical approach derived from Piaget's (2003) psychological cognitive development model (e.g. Bahn 1986; Belk, Bahn et al. 1982; Belk, Mayer et al. 1984; John and Whitney 1986; Klees, Olson et al. 1988; Mayer and Belk 1982; Peracchio 1992; Wackman and Ward 1975; Ward 1974;). This model, originally formulated in the 1960's (Myers 1993), provided an explanatory framework for the staged progression observed in children's cognitive understanding of factors in their social and physical environment. The model is notable for providing a framework that signifies qualitative changes in children's cognitive organisation (e.g. of knowledge structures; of children's responses to environmental stimuli becoming more abstract and less perceptually-cue based as children get older; and of developing cognitive abilities enabling a more reflective approach to the environment; John 1999; Piaget 2003). Allied to this perspective is the cognitively based information-processing approach (John 1999; Klees, Olson et al. 1988), that explains many of the constraints upon children's abilities to acquire, encode, process and retrieve complex information (John 1999). Both these theoretical approaches are based in an individual cognitive change framework, contingent upon the child meeting milestones of physical and cognitive maturity, thus enabling her or him to interact with the environment in increasingly complex ways.

The cognitive approaches are unidirectional (Cram and Ng 1999), and do not allow for other factors such as the child's active role in their own consumer socialisation (Cram and Ng 1999), or for the influences that social relationships play in fostering children's development as consumers (Hayta 2008; Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008). The wider, more diffuse role that social, and cultural influences play upon consumer-brand interaction opportunities that e.g. social media offers people, is minimised by the cognitive approach (Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008). Greater attention to these influences could provide new ways of understanding children's development as consumers in our digitally-connected societies (Barber 2013).

An understanding and use of consumer brands is an important consumer skill (Achenreiner and John 2003; Keller and Lehmann 2006; Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), and

social and cultural influences upon children's consumer socialisation are relevant to how children develop their understandings of such brands (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009). Children's interactions with consumer brands occur in dynamic social contexts, for example in their social interactions within families, with peer groups and friends at school (Cram and Ng 1999; Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009; Hayta 2008; Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), as part of their brand perceptions (e.g. Bahn 1986; Achenreiner and John 2003), and, as witnessed in the past five to seven years, using social media applications (Barber 2013; Schultz and Peltier 2013).

The next section reviews the literature related to explaining how children develop their understanding of consumer brands, and how certain brand-related capabilities develop. These are things such as brand recognition and awareness, useful for helping children identify salient brands (to them) in order to meet a range of expressed needs (and desires), and the development of perceptions about, and preferences for particular brands. This skill is useful in fostering children's abilities to discriminate among brands so they can make consumer choices, such as determining which brands they wish to interact with, and the types of relationships they may wish to form. Learning how to use consumer brands in complex marketplaces (such as advanced consumer economies), is a part of what enables children to develop as skilful and informed consumers (Cram and Ng 1999). This in turn enables them to participate effectively in the economy. Because individual well-being in a society is linked to people's effective participation in that society's institutions and social and cultural life, some of the abilities children must develop are how to behave as informed consumers (Cram and Ng 1999). Being able to understand and relate to consumer brands in decision-making situations is part of this.

2.2 Children becoming consumers: developing interactive relationships with brands

2.2.1 Introduction

Artefacts of young people's popular culture carry brands. When thinking about (Western) young people's popular culture, brands are everywhere (Schor 2004), representing value to consumers, firms, and other stakeholders (Merz, He et al. 2009). Tangible goods like clothing, food, and drinks carry brands, and so do intangibles like body art (tattoos and piercings), rock music lyrics and online social network groups. Because brands convey meaning to children, while simultaneously having meaning for children, questions arise such as how do children learn such things (Schor 2004).

The previous section provided a review of relevant literature explaining how children learn about consumption matters and consumer brands, from the psychological cognitive development viewpoint. Much of this explanatory literature is also relevant here, so links back to these studies will be made in this section. Consumer brands can be thought of as forming a core part of Western consumer culture (Holt 2002). There are conflicting views, though, about the utility and appropriateness of consumer brands in their roles as culture creators and transmitters; for example, Holt (2002), in his paper exploring the "anti-branding movement" (pg. 70), describes the rise of a counter-culture movement in North America, aimed at taking back the cultural authority that society grants to marketers. Some scholars have argued (e.g. Firat and Tadajewski 2010), that the concept of value, the construct driving the distribution of the economic resources of a society, is only ascribed to some things and not others (pg. 129). The argument is that the practice of ascribing value in this way makes sure that consumers follow the achievement ideology and that this ensures the constant consumption of mass-produced things, including branded goods (Firat and Tadajewski 2010). The net result is a perpetuation of consumer culture.

Others argue that the acquisition of the behaviours, skills, and perceptions needed to function as consumers, and the skills needed to acquire and use branded goods (and

brands) in advanced consumer economies is a necessary part of children's socialisation (e.g. Belk, Bahn et al. 1982; Belk, Mayer et al. 1984; Chan, Tufte, Capello and Williams 2011). These skills and the exercise of them becomes an important consumer experience, helping children's consumer judgments (Achenreiner and John 2003). Further, constant and consistent exposure to consumer brands is necessary for the proper maturation of children into their roles as economic adults, able to contribute to advanced consumer economies (Hayta 2008). So the place that consumer brands occupy in consumer-oriented societies is an important one (Keller and Lehmann 2006), because of the valuable functions that brands fulfil.

This section sets out some of the key academic literature explaining the processes by which children learn about consumer brands. The section is divided into three parts; first, a discussion is presented of brand meaning and symbolism, and how children come to understand brands in this way. Second, brands and consumers interact with each other in relationships, and these relationship interactions vary in strength and type (Fournier 1998). Thus, in the context of this study, an explanation of how children learn about and develop preferences for brands, and the kinds of interactive relationships these preferences might facilitate, is discussed. Third, consumer brands live in social and cultural contexts (Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), and children are not immune from these contextual influences, so relevant literature discussing this aspect of children's developing relationships with brands is discussed last.

2.2.2 Children understanding brand meaning and symbolism

Asking the seemingly simple question "what is a brand?" (Stern 2006), actually presupposes a shared meaning of the word. Branding as a special subset of marketing has developed a language of its own and, according to Stern (2006), is now such an "overdefined" term (pg. 216), that the variable meanings in use saying what "brand" is create instability and therefore the potential for researchers to think they are studying the same things when they are not (Stern 2006). This has some clarification in referring to the service-dominant view of brand advocated by Merz, He, et al., (2009) in which they propose a move away from marketing's "old" conception of the brand as an organisation-provided series of goods (that are the property of that organisation), to brand as a collaborative value-creating venture shared by a range of stakeholders (Merz,

He et al. 2009; pg. 329). However, brand as a construct still has a premarketing meaning (Stern 2006; pg. 218), originating from Old English, which had its genesis in Germanic languages. The point here is that the word “brand” dates from the fifth century, and found its way into marketing language in the 1920’s (Stern 2006), so the word itself is very old with a long history of usage. The problem, though, with the multiple meanings in use of the word “brand” is that researchers need to be able to clarify in an absolute sense what is actually being investigated, because this informs how the results can be used (Stern 2006). A classification of the word “brand” into four major categories (e.g. nature of brand, function, locus and valence; Stern 2006; pg. 216) provides a way to inform both the design of future consumer-brand research, and to help interpret current brand-related literature.

Two salient aspects of the nature (or meaning) of “brand,” using the four categories suggested by Stern (2006), relate to the real-world meaning of brand, and people’s mental associations, or metaphorical meaning (both signifying the nature of brand; Achenreiner and John 2003; Stern 2006). These aspects are relevant for using the brand literature that explains how children come to understand brand meanings and to make symbolic associations from visual images. Children learn to use brand metaphors, or symbols, to differentiate amongst the many marketplace brands, and such symbolic (metaphorical) knowledge is acquired at very early stages in children’s consumer development; e.g. once children have acquired a “theory of mind” (the ability to think about the mental states of others; covered previously in this Chapter; refer to pages 50 - 51), and once they are also capably using aspects of executive functioning (McAlister and Cornwell 2010; pg. 209; Moses and Baldwin 2005). This means that children at this stage of their social development have the capacity to understand that the symbol the brand uses to represent itself, e.g. the Lego symbol, or McDonald’s Golden Arches, signifies specific market qualities and other meanings too, and that these are desirable things to acquire (or sometimes, not). Acquisition of this symbolic understanding capacity is explained in more detail in the following section.

The body of psychological literature confirming the ability of even very young children (e.g. ages eighteen months to three years), to make inferences about other’s intentions, and to understand the motivational states of themselves and others (Moses and Baldwin 2005) provides the explanatory framework for how children come to understand brand

symbolism. This inferential ability develops during the preschool years, as children acquire large amounts of working knowledge about the world through intensive social interaction and social learning (Bandura 1997; Moses and Baldwin 2005). This working knowledge is organised into usable “framework theories” in useful domains, e.g. numerical reasoning (Moses and Baldwin 2005; pg. 189), and these frameworks undergo adaptive change as children interact more with their social environment.

This working knowledge, as a result of children’s interaction with the world, helps children form a representational theory of mind (Moses and Baldwin 2005; pg. 189). This individual mental state in turn enables children to understand that mental states are representations of the world and that people then act on these representations, not on what is actually “out there” (Moses and Baldwin 2005). This is a critical development point for children to reach, and once achieved, provides the mental basis for them to understand and interpret other symbolic visual representations, such as McDonalds Golden Arches. This mental development milestone explains how children as young as eighteen months old can recognise and interpret e.g. the brand logo of McDonalds Golden Arches, understanding that these symbols represent food, comfort, and familiarity. The fact that young children do not have all the language skills to easily communicate their understanding of brand symbolism does not mean that they do not understand the social significance of these symbols (McAlister and Cornwell 2010).

Learning the symbolism of brands, then, means that understanding has been reached at the conceptual, abstract level (Achenreiner and John 2003). This is important, because a person’s developed understanding and acceptance of abstract concepts such as specific values represented by a brand (e.g. trendiness, prestige, or quality; Achenreiner and John 2003), should provide the impetus for subsequent consumer commitment to that brand, but only if the consumer holds these values in positive regard in some way. Positive outcomes of this kind of commitment to a brand should be consistent memory traces, thus enabling the consumer to retrieve this brand more quickly than others, and to form strong positive associations from brand interactions, which culminates in brand loyalty and repeat purchase behaviour (Jensen and Hansen 2006). So in order for children to obtain the benefits of brands (e.g. such as using brands as symbols indicating the self; identifying with brands to depict one’s own attributes; using brands to support or develop values and attitudes; using brands as heuristics in decision-making situations

and using brands as markers of belonging to a specific group), researchers have argued that children need to develop understanding of the symbolic meaning behind brands in order to obtain the benefits of these meanings that brands can add to their lives (Belk, Bahn et al. 1982; Belk, Mayer et al. 1984; Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1988).

Therefore the role of brand symbols in helping facilitate children's development as consumers is complex, but some key aspects can be clarified. The first is that children need to have the mental ability in place to understand the meaning behind, or the symbolism of, a brand. This review has shown that this particular ability is contingent upon children developing the "theory of mind" and aspects of executive functioning (e.g. the ability to make inferences), that enable them to understand and respond to brand symbolism. The second is that children need to have many, ongoing social interactions so that they can acquire, and adapt, the knowledge needed to operate effectively in the social and consumer contexts they are living in. This kind of knowledge is about some fundamental consumer-related concepts (Moses and Baldwin 2005), such as understanding the value of money and the concept of price (Cram and Ng 1999), some general understanding of competition in the marketplace, e.g. among brands, and direct product experience, both positive and negative (Baxter 2009; McNeal 2007). So the complex task of children learning the symbolism of brands depends upon the development of their cognitive resources in conjunction with interactive contexts. These interactive contexts are always social and cultural (Valentine 2003); thus, children learn the meaning and value of a symbol (e.g. such as a brand) and the culturally accepted, shared agreements, and therefore consistent responses to this symbol, via their social interactions (Solomon 1983). The issue of whether, and to what extent, children collaborate with brands to co-create value (Merz, He et al. 2009), is more difficult to conceptualise, and is discussed in more detail in the second part of this section that relates to how children develop emotional connections with brands. The next section, divided into two parts, focuses upon children relating to brands. The first part discusses how children develop brand perceptions and preferences, and the second part looks at how these preferences help children develop emotional connections with brands. The specific topics of this next section relate to the larger topic of this study, which is exploring how children's interactions with consumer brands forms a core part of their consumer development.

2.2.3 Children relating to brands

People have always related to brands in some way, since the very earliest times when the word appeared in ancient stories about mythical heroes (e.g. the poem of Beowulf; brand as a synonym for sword; Stern 2006; pg. 219). As identified previously in this Chapter, the word brand did not appear in marketing usage until 1922 and, as Dorothy Miller pointed out in 1949 (in the introduction to this Chapter, page 4), even very young children are aware of a brand and show preferences for one over another (Miller 1949).

The purpose of this section is to review the relevant literature explaining how children's brand perceptions and preferences develop, and how these factors influence the nature of children's relationships with brands. Because the recognition of, knowledge about, and use of consumer brands is an important development task for children to achieve as part of their consumer socialisation (e.g. Belk, Bahn et al. 1982; Belk, Mayer et al. 1984; Ward 1974) the perceptions about, and preferences for brands that children do develop will logically dictate the nature of their brand relationships, and this includes their ability to influence the brand relationships that their parents and peers have as well (Lindstrom 2004). So how do these brand perceptions and preferences arise? What are some of the processes that lead children to actively select some brands above others, and to develop closer and more interactive relationships with these brands and not the others? Children's brand perceptions and the later exercising of brand preferences could be envisaged as the activation of the sum of all the (mental) associations and knowledge that people hold about a brand (Keller 2003), or, as a dynamic, socially constructed process involving children in social relationships with other brand stakeholders (e.g. those in the brand community; the organisation; opinion makers, and so forth; Merz, He et al. 2009). This activation could be further envisaged as being translated into consumer-related actions, such as forming some kind of emotional attachment to the brand (e.g. Thomson, MacInnis and Park 2005), consuming the brand as part of forming and maintaining a sense of identity (Ferguson 2011) or, as Fournier's (1998) study with adult women suggested, forming a special, ongoing and reciprocating relationship with the brand which provides psychological benefits.

The cognitive view of brand perception formation (e.g. Bahn 1986), holds that children's perceptions about brands develop as part of their sensory perception of

objects in their environment. This view states that the cognitive capabilities needed to organise these perceptions develops as a result of children's developing maturity as they become older, and with increasing interaction with their environment (Bahn 1986). This results in children's ability to form more elaborate cognitive structures with which to organise marketplace information and to discriminate among different marketplace stimuli, skills which are eventually used for decision-making (Bahn 1986). If children are organising environmental stimuli information with increasing sophistication as part of their cognitive maturation, then this might explain some of how children learn about product (and presumably brand information) without being aware of their exposure to marketing messages.

The theory of mere exposure (Toomey and Francis 2013), suggests that even a limited exposure to a product has the effect of introducing the product and increasing implicit memory and levels of preference for the product that was the subject of the exposure (Toomey and Francis 2013). Thus, it makes sense that children's exposure to television branded product advertising, for example, should, via mere exposure, have the effect of increasing implicit memory and preference levels for the exposed brand. This links to the results of the study produced by Dotson and Hyatt (2000), which could have used the mere exposure theory to explore further their findings that children at the age of nine had as much knowledge of advertising slogans as their parents. Were these findings linked in some way to the mere exposure effect operating? So the mere exposure effect could be a powerful agent in developing children's implicit memories and preferences for specific branded products (Toomey and Francis 2013). However, there are constraints as to how this effect actually works. For example, Toomey and Francis (2013) did not actually find this effect at work in their experimental study of branded product placement in a pre-teen television program (pg. 186). Their findings showed that even after exposure to a branded product placement the pre-teen participants were not more likely to choose that brand either immediately after exposure, or in two weeks' time (Toomey and Francis 2013, pg. 186). The explanations for these results varied from suggesting that consumer choices made by pre-teens are more complex than at first realised, to the experimental design where the actual branded product exposure was probably too long (pg. 187).

The issue of whether the prominence of brand placement (within media programming; Reijmersdal 2009) results in better audience memory and positive attitudes towards the brand, is also relevant to how children develop brand perceptions and preferences. Children are exposed to a wide range of media channels, many of which utilise branded product placement, especially on television, and e.g. recently in reality shows such as Pop Idol (Pompper and Choo 2008; Tingstad 2007). Findings in Reijmersdal's (2009) study showed that generally, the prominence of brand placement can have a positive effect on memory of the brand, but differential effects on attitudes towards the brand (Reijmersdal 2009, pg. 151). That is, if audiences are involved with the media vehicle being used (e.g. reality television) and become aware of the placement attempt (selling), then they will form negative attitudes towards the brand (Reijmersdal 2009). The question here is does this hold for child audiences? Some earlier studies have confirmed that in conditions of low or no awareness of brand placement, both adult and child audiences' brand preferences changed after viewing a brand placement, despite explicit memory of the placement (Reijmersdal 2009). Thus, based on this information it would seem that children's brand preferences can be influenced by a more subtle agent of consumer socialisation in the form of branded product placement.

Chapter Three explores this topic further in the context of social media and product placement on e.g. Facebook pages, looking at the phenomenon of banner blindness. However, there are criticisms of branded product placement involving child audiences, too (Pompper and Choo 2008), and these revolve around the subliminal nature of such a technique (pg. 51). Because theory of mind suggests that children can form very good understandings of brand symbolism at ages much earlier than anticipated by previous research (McAlister and Cornwell 2010), then, logically, branded product placement in e.g. children's television programming or movies should be very effective at fostering perceptions and preferences. This technique could also be very effective at communicating online with children, especially with tweens because of their use of multiple channels (Lindstrom 2003). The topic of online communication (e.g. through social media) as used by children is explored in more depth in Chapter Three.

The number of branded product placements varies amongst children's movies with, for example, only eight brands featured in the movie "Madagascar," compared to the whole movie in The Lego Movie. This is saturation, and while young children may lack the

language skills to render their understanding of what is occurring in the movie, it is likely that they are responding to branded products relevant to them, and these responses are likely to be about forming an understanding of the brand's symbolic meaning, and potentially forming positive perceptions and thus preferences for specific brands (McAlister and Cornwell 2010; Reijmersdal 2009; Toomey and Francis 2013).

Other, socially-interactive views about how children acquire and exercise the ability to form brand perceptions, and thus preferences, acknowledge the powerful role that children's social interactions with socialisation agents play. These are agents such as family and peers, and children's exposure to mass media through predominantly television advertising (Toomey and Francis 2013). The influence of these socialisation agents in the overall process of children's consumer socialisation (Hayta 2008) must logically be connected to influencing children's formation of brand perceptions and preferences, too.

Macro changes in society and in consumer culture are said to create distinct and different patterns of consumer behaviour for each generation (Ferguson 2011). The advent of Web 2.0 tools, especially the creation of the software needed to enable social networking can be regarded as one of these macro changes. This means that children now have the opportunity to view and interact with a multitude of different media channels, where consumer brands have some sort of presence, so it is possible that their formation of brand perceptions and preferences could be accelerated, just because of the sheer amount of information and brand interaction opportunities available to children while they are connected (Lindstrom 2004). As an example of some of these macro changes, the role of product placement is predicted to increase because of the opportunities this offers for consumer brands to be part of children's online worlds (Lindstrom 2003). This prediction was made eleven years ago, and since that time there have been significant developments in online social applications that children have access to that are potentially easy for brands to have a role in, e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, Vines videos (six-second humorous videos using props of the consumer's choice; the "best Vines" uploaded to Facebook). The recent developments with the YouTube website show that this kind of channel has the potential to become a powerful agent in fostering children's consumer socialisation through enabling interactive experiences

with brands (e.g. gaming, commenting on videos, content creation and so forth); opportunities perhaps as powerful (or more so), than television.

The remaining question left is to explore how children learn about and create relationships with consumer brands. Thus, the next section is given over to exploring the literature explaining how children develop emotional connections with brands, and what this means for the nature of their brand relationships.

2.2.4 Children developing feelings for consumer brands

Consumer brands can evoke hatred, e.g. children's rejection of Barbie dolls and their perpetration of physical violence towards the dolls (Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), or love, e.g. consumer's love for the Apple brand which connects to their own values, such as creativity and self-expression or actualisation (Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi 2012); or young girls' fascination with the American Girl doll products and brand (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009). But the question here is how do children develop such intense feelings for consumer brands, particularly at young ages? For example, the youngest children expressing hatred toward the Barbie dolls in the Nairn, Griffin et al., (2008) study were aged seven, and the girls who are the primary consumers and some of them in love with the American Girl brand, range in age from seven to twelve (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009). Developing intense feelings for consumer brands is often linked to people's identity formation, specifically the development of the self, and also linked to how people use consumer brands to communicate their self-concepts (identities) to others (Chaplin and John 2005; Malar, Krohmer, Hoyer, and Nyffenegger 2011; Ross and Harradine 2004).

Individual identity formation is an important aspect of human development (Maalouf 2000), and it is known that brands play a part in helping people with the formation of their individual and social identities (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1988). The use of consumer brands for communicating one's self-concept can provide a social link to others who also identify with the brand; these are similar others and they enable social interaction and participation in the form of joining a brand community (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). This level of community interaction with other admirers of a brand provides individual benefits e.g. a sense of belonging through shared identity, which is

supported by rituals and traditions (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001); these activities in turn build emotional bonds with other community members. Because these emotional bonds are built within a brand context, the brand is constantly renewed via its use in the social and identity construction of the brand community members (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). Strong emotional bonds form among community members as an outcome of this activity; this can be observed in the strength of the emotional bonds that, for example, many young girls form with the American Girl brand (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009). These bonds are helped along by the emotional bonds their mothers (and often their grandmothers) form with the brand too, because of the adult women's appreciation of the cultural and moral values communicated by this particular brand, values that can (and are) used by the women as a manual for socialising girls (pgs. 126 -127).

These emotional bonds, then, serve to strengthen the ties an individual has with the brand, and with the small-scale interactions individuals have with each other involving the brand (Granovetter 1973). These interactions are replicated on a larger, brand community scale, and such interactions and social ties are consistently reinforced as the brand community members reinterpret and negotiate the meaning of the brand in this social context (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). This social constructionist activity within a specific reference group (in this case, the brand community; Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009; Chaplin and John 2005; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001) influences individual behaviour (Bearden & Etzel, 1982), and is a powerful socialisation agent, ensuring individuals receive feedback on, for example, the expression of their self-concept (Berger and Luckmann 1966), via their use of the admired brand to do so. This social activity ultimately builds the value of the brand, because of individuals' collaborative efforts within the brand community, resulting in their shared perceptions of the value of the brand (such perceptions derived from the brand's value-in-use; Merz, He et al. 2009).

Additionally, the development of strong emotional ties an individual has with a consumer brand can be explained in terms of the congruency between the actual self and the brand (Malar, Krohmer et al. 2011). This congruency is important because for people to develop an emotional response to a brand, certain conditions need to be satisfied (Malar, Krohmer et al. 2011). These conditions are things such as, for example,

the involvement of the consumer's self-concept (Chaplin and John 2005), that is, consumers incorporate the brand into their self-concept by taking and using aspects of the brand that appeal to them, such as specific personality traits (Aaker 1997). This is illustrated in Chaplin and John's (2005) study of the development of self-brand connections in children. They found that the children selected brands that they said provided good descriptors of themselves, and the describing words used were things such as "Nike is sporty", and "Gap is preppie" (Chaplin and John 2005). Another condition to be satisfied before a (positive) emotional response can be generated is the congruency of the actual self with a consumer's preferred reference group/s and the user characteristics associated with the brand (Bearden and Etzel 1982; Chaplin and John 2005). In sum, when these conditions are satisfied, the chances of consumers forming positive emotional responses and ultimately emotional attachments to brands are enhanced (Malar, Krohmer et al. 2011).

A relational perspective on how consumers form emotional attachments to brands was offered by Fournier (1998), in her phenomenological study of adult women consumers and their brands. Relationship theory was used in this study as an explanatory frame for understanding the types of bonds consumers form with brands. The idea of this work was so a diagnostic tool could be formulated to help consumer researchers conceptualise, and evaluate, the strength of such bonds (Fournier 1998). To ground the study theoretically, the proposition was advanced that consumers treat brands as active, viable, and reciprocating relationship partners (Fournier 1998; p. 344), so in similar ways as their engagement in interpersonal relationships. Four core themes were identified to serve as the framework within which the study was conducted (Fournier 1998), and these are explained next.

First, relationships involve some sort of reciprocity between the partners; so the expectation here is that the brand and the consumer are involved in a partnership, with both partners contributing "something" to each other. This "something" refers to reciprocal exchange (Fournier 1998), and can be observed in the relationships young girls describe with the American Girl brand (e.g. Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009). For example, a quote from a young girl comparing her life to that of some of the doll characters; "I think it's because they (the doll characters) are somebody we can look up to, because a lot of their stories are inspiring..." (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009; pg. 129)

is illustrative of this aspect. That is, the young girl purchases the brand via the dolls, providing in return admiration of the brand in the exchange; thus this is likely to help perpetuate the brand, provided the young consumer shares her admiration with others. Thus, interdependence is established between the consumer and the brand (Fournier 1998).

The second condition suggests that relationships are purposive and meaningful to those participating in them (Fournier 1998). This can again be observed in the American Girl brand study (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009); with, for example, a grandmother using the brand and the visit to the flagship store, as a way to create memories and an emotional connection with her own childhood for her granddaughter to experience (pg. 126). In a study of children's preferences for branded sportswear (Ross and Harradine 2004), children stated that wearing brand labels (e.g. Adidas or Nike) made them feel "cool, older, and they wouldn't be left out" (pg. 21); it can be argued that this is quite a purposive use of brands, suggesting that the second relationship condition of purpose and meaning identified in Fournier's (1998) conceptual model is important. The third condition relates to the multiplex nature of the relationship (Fournier 1998; pg. 344), and refers to the many forms that relationships can take; for example, some relationships are distinguished by the benefits participants can gain, others by the type of bonds holding the relationship together (Fournier 1998; pg. 346).

Benefits for participants in consumer-brand relationships can be conceptualised as socio-emotional (e.g. encouragement and support for identity formation and of self-image, and help with social integration; Fournier 1998), and other, more instrumental benefits such as helping with the achievement of short-term goals (Fournier 1998; pg. 346). Avoiding the use of particular brands can also be regarded as affirming one's self-identity by specifying what one "is not"; e.g. this can be seen in the self-image responses of seven to eight-year old girls when asked about their relationships with the Action Man action figure: "Unless girls can really, are really really tough tomboys just like a boy and have hair exactly like a boy, um, they probably will like them. But apart from that no girl likes them..." (Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008; illustrating a response to identity and self-image; pg. 636). A similar response can be found from children when asked about sportswear brands (Ross and Harradine 2004), with children in the study rejecting the "weaker" sportswear brand (Hi Tec) compared to Reebok (pg. 20).

Unsurprisingly, though, this particular study found that the ability of very young children (ages four to five years), to be very poor in naming brands (although they recognised the logos; Ross and Harradine, 2004; pg. 18). This is because clothing brands (even sportswear) are not salient to this age group (McAlister and Cornwell 2010). The researchers may have achieved an entirely different, more positive result for the youngest children's brand recall ability if they had used brands more relevant to children at this age; e.g. fast food, and this may have altered the children's responses to questions about the benefits to them of particular brands. Finally, the fourth condition suggested by Fournier (1998), refers to the processes relationships are subject to; that is, relationships evolve over time and respond to interactions and variability in the social environment (pg. 344). Thus, the "time factor" is important; that is, consumers and brands need relationship time to develop emotional bonds, not just isolated transactions (Fournier 1998). This factor is especially evident in the American Girl study, with findings discussing the ability of the brand to transcend time in the form of the generation gap between grandmothers, mothers and their daughters, and granddaughters (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009; pg. 123). The very active role taken by grandmothers and mothers in helping the young girls in their families interact with the American Girl brand, illustrates how consumers can and do involve themselves in the creation and perpetuation of a consumer brand (Merz, He et al. 2009). This thinking illustrates the importance of the networks involved in the creation and maintenance of consumer brands, and this point is taken up further in Chapter Three because of the relevance to social media networking.

The American Girl brand, then, provides the opportunity to observe relational changes between consumers and the brand with older girls (e.g. age twelve), ceasing their deeper involvement with the brand, e.g. "I don't play with them anymore (the dolls), but sometimes I get them down to change their clothes and brush their hair. I'll never give them up. They are part of me. They are in me" (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009; pg. 130).

2.2.5 Conclusion

The preceding section's review of salient aspects determining how children develop relationships with brands has shown how complex these processes are. From the individual cognitive perspective, it is clear that children need to have in place a theory of mind (McAlister and Cornwell 2010), before they are able to understand the symbolism of consumer brands. Children also need the cognitive ability at this point (a level of intellectual ability), to activate certain aspects of executive functioning, and information processing capabilities, (Bahn 1986; Klees, Olson et al. 1988; Peracchio 1992), so that they can capably organise and act upon brand information. These capabilities determine the formation of children's brand perceptions and preferences, in concert with their social interactions (Hayta 2008; Solomon 1983; Valentine 2003).

Environmental influences such as mass media, e.g. in the form of branded product placement in television shows, for example, can play a significant role influencing children's perceptions of a particular brand, via the mere exposure effect (Reijmersdal 2009; Toomey and Francis 2013), although there are constraints on how effective this technique actually is (Toomey and Francis 2013). With the acceleration in children's access to new forms of media (e.g. social media platforms and YouTube), and their ability to avoid conventional forms of advertising such as television, branded product placement is predicted to become one of the primary ways for brands to connect with children (Lindstrom 2003).

The development of intense feelings for brands (e.g. hatred for Barbie; Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008; or love for American Girl; Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009) is explained on an individual basis as part of the task of children's identity formation, whereby they incorporate brands into their self-concepts (Chaplin and John 2005). The developmental task of identity formation shows that children can utilise relevant aspects of a consumer brand's personality to show "who they are", or even "who they are not" (Aaker 1997; Chaplin and John 2005). The notion of congruency between a brand and a person's actual self is important for the development of positive feelings towards a brand (Malar, Krohmer et al. 2011), and this includes identification with the consumer's preferred reference groups (Bearden and Etzel 1982), ultimately leading to social interaction and participation in a brand community (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001). The resulting social

interactions using the brand, and the renegotiation of its meaning within the brand community, help determine the value of the brand which is an outcome of this co-creation process (Merz, He et al. 2009). This latter aspect is very relevant in the context of social media networking, and this is elaborated upon in Chapter Three.

Strong emotional attachments to consumer brands can be formed in the context of reciprocating relationships (Fournier 1998). This is contingent upon four core conditions (reciprocal exchange, purpose and meaning, beneficial interactions, and evolving and flexible relationships; Fournier 1998; pg. 344), offering consumers the opportunity to interact with brands in similar ways to their interpersonal relationships. It is suggested that similar intensities can be experienced with consumer brands as in personal relationships.

So the nature and quality of children's relationships with brands are clearly contingent upon many complex factors working together. As shown, some factors operate on an individual basis (e.g. developing cognitive structures; McAlister and Cornwell 2010; John 1999), while others are socially determined via children's social interactions (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009; Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008). Other brand relationship influences may be the result of brand co-creation activities, within which children consistently interact with a brand and a range of stakeholders (e.g. American Girl; stakeholders are grandmothers, mothers, friends, the flagship store employees and so forth; Merz, He et al. 2009).

The next section addresses the topic of children's social interactions within their larger social and cultural environment, and how these interactions play a role in shaping children's consumer development.

2.3 Children becoming consumers: a social context

2.3.1 Introduction

Consumer behaviour researchers have called this broader social context “consumer socialisation” since the 1970’s (Moschis and Moore 1979; Ward 1974), linking the development of children’s consumer knowledge and skills as a result of their interactions within the social environment, to how they will present as adult consumers in later life (Cram and Ng 1999; Ward 1974). The next section explores the consumer research literature relating to how children become socialised as consumers in advanced economies, connecting this discussion to children’s understanding of the importance of consumer brands. The reason for this is to provide a link as to how we can think about children’s use of the new area of social media as a potentially “new” socialisation agent. This latter topic is picked up in greater detail in Chapter Three. The following discussion focuses specifically upon social aspects of children’s consumer socialisation, reviewing the marketing discipline’s understanding of how this process of enculturation occurs. This discussion draws upon strands from sociology in the initial stage to clarify the meaning of “socialisation” as used in the marketing literature (Ward 1974).

Advanced consumer economies rely upon the continuous consumption of products and services so they can survive; and for businesses, and ultimately communities and thus individuals, to prosper. In the past consumer economies were production-driven (Cram and Ng 1999), and could rely upon creating a steady stream of consumer goods that were consumed quickly, with consumers ready for the new model of whatever it was (Cram and Ng 1999). However, big, structural changes since the 1970’s in terms of how consumer economies function as part of the global marketplace have changed the terms of engagement, so that consumers can now purchase products from any part of the world if they choose, no longer limited to their own, domestic economy. These kinds of changes have implications for how new consumers may behave, and could potentially alter the dynamics of how young consumers learn the behaviours, skills, and attitudes needed to be able to function competently in an advanced consumer economy (Cram and Ng 1999; Schor 2004).

It is relevant to note that there are also critics of the practices of children's socialisation as consumers, and of other prevailing disciplinary social practices. In particular, Hayta (2008), who criticises the role of the media for creating a "wasteful" consumer culture (p. 176), with television advertising singled out as one of the most influential ways that children learn wasteful consumption messages, and Schor (2004), who advocates against the kinds of deep brand attachments that children may develop which can foster unthinking or senseless consumption. Drawing on Foucault's (1969) ideas about power relations exercised through social institutions, Stone (2007) explored social practices, of which consumer socialisation is one. In her exploration of notions of disciplinary power (that is, the regulation of people to take responsibility for themselves and to behave in specific ways; Foucault 1969), Stone (2007) concluded that specific social practices must serve the interests of the dominant social class, and these become expressed through various social institutions.

The conceptual idea here is that the consumer socialisation of children constitutes a social practice, and because this practice must serve the interests of the dominant social class, children's consumer socialisation cannot be left to "just anyone" (Hesmondhalgh 2006). This is because one of the central tenets of the advanced Western capitalist economy is to ensure the reproduction of the economic capital of the dominant class (Hesmondhalgh 2006), thus ensuring the market size for symbolic goods (Levy 1959) constantly expands.

Broad marketplace information available during children's development is filtered by many things. Important filters here are the contextual things in children's lives, for example, the family, friends, school, and other institutions that children are involved with. Then there are other, more commercially-oriented filters, such as mass media advertising (especially television), and the general commercial landscape children live within in advanced consumer economies. For example, it is nearly impossible to avoid commercial messages in a consumer economy such as New Zealand; even everyday activities such as riding the bus to school or work still mean exposure to advertising messages on, and in, the bus, or in the bus shelter (McNeal 2007). The cross-cultural work completed by McNeal, Viswanathan & Yeh (2007) focuses on the consumer socialisation status of children in three economies (Hong Kong, New Zealand, and Taiwan; pg.58). Their consumer socialisation status was measured by children's

income, saving, and spending patterns, along with attitudinal measures seeking their perceptions of the marketplace (McNeal, Viswanathan et al., 2007; pg. 58). Data collected was compared to United States of America data on the same dimensions. Social media interactions as potential sources of socialisation were not measured.

Findings showed that children in the Asia-Pacific region are socialised into the consumer role very early (before school age; based on the behavioural measures used in this study; McNeal, Viswanathan et al. 2007), and that the sociogeographic culture (pg. 65), comes second to what McNeal, Viswanathan et al. call a “children culture,” (2007, pg. 65). The next section explores aspects of this children’s culture, starting with findings about the influence of socially-oriented agents involved in children’s development as consumers, that of family and peers. The section concludes with a review taken from the marketing perspective of the influence of mass media in children’s consumer socialisation, especially that of television’s influence.

2.3.2 Family as a socialisation agent

Macro-environment changes in advanced consumer economies (Ferguson 2011), such as demographic changes in family composition (e.g. the increasing numbers of single-parent households, blended families, the later age of child-bearing among women) are important variables affecting how children become functioning consumers (Neeley 2005; and for the New Zealand context⁵ see footnote below. For young children to become competent, functioning consumers some specific behaviours, attitudes, and skills must be acquired (Ward 1974), and for this to happen there must be some sort of process at work (Cram and Ng 1999). One of the key roles of family in the context of developed (or developing) consumer societies is to provide the culture within which young children can be socialised into their roles as consumers. The family can foster their children’s knowledge of brands and their emotional associations with them by consuming (using) them at home (Gil, Andres, and Salinas 2007). These activities can also build family memories and a sense of family history, ultimately providing

⁵ <http://www.familiescommission.org.nz/sites/default/files/downloads/New-Zealand-Families-Today.pdf>

emotional meanings that serve to augment consumer's familiarity with, and attachment to, specific brands (Gil, Andres et al. 2007). Repetitive consumption of specific brands within the family can reinforce a habit within individuals which may express itself later as loyalty to that brand. Additionally, Hayta's (2008) view is that the family is the primary and most effective instrument for socialising children into their roles as consumers (p. 173). The prominent connection between the consumption behaviour of the family and how, through observation, the child learns to consume is regarded as the most significant influence. In concert with John's (1999) review of children and consumption socialisation, Hayta (2008) concluded that the patterns of communication within the family directly influence the relationships children have with other socialising agents. For example, children living in families characterised by infrequent communication are more susceptible to the influence of television advertising and peers (p. 174).

The family as a socialisation agent has been the subject of extensive review, with studies since the 1970's influencing the direction of research, e.g. most of these investigations were trying to explain the processes by which adolescents developed as consumers. Studies explored the role the family plays in consumer learning (e.g. Ward and Wackman 1971), and the influence of different types of family communication patterns on the acquisition of consumption knowledge, and the mediating effect of family on other socialisation agents (Moschis 1985). Other family-related topics, such as the role of intrafamily communication about consumption (in conjunction with other variables, e.g. mass media exposure, product information seeking and motivations to watch television commercial content) were explored for their impact upon adolescents' motivations to learn consumer-related content (Moore and Stephens 1975). Consumer decision-making is an important outcome of the consumer socialisation process (Moschis and Churchill 1978; Moschis and Moore 1979), and the family is considered to be an influential agent of this aspect of consumption. The family was expected to be particularly influential at the point where an adolescent decided which product to buy (Moschis and Moore 1979), but was found to be less influential than brand name and reduced prices (pg. 106).

A thorough consideration of the role that family communication patterns play in children's socialisation as consumers (Moschis 1985), explored how social interaction

processes within the family shapes consumer learning (pg. 902). Specifically, Moschis looked at the direct effects of family upon three key areas needed for developing consumer knowledge; first, the content of learning, e.g. such aspects as price-quality relationships; learning to use money and ways of choosing brands; (1985, pg. 902). Second, communication processes; the focus here is upon overt processes such as deliberative consumer training, and observation opportunities given to the child, along with positive reinforcement to encourage socially acceptable consumer behaviours (Moschis 1985). Third, the structure and patterns of communication within the family were examined, focusing upon whether the family communication pattern was predominantly socio-oriented (encouraging respect for others and developing sensitivity towards others); or concept oriented (developing sensitivity towards more functional or rational types of information about e.g. consumption and products; Moschis 1985; pg. 906).

Previous correlation research (e.g. Moore and Moschis 1981; Moschis and Moore 1979b; in Moschis 1985) suggested that children from homes with more socio-oriented communication patterns were more likely to hold materialistic attitudes (potentially sensitive to the effect of their consumption actions upon others), than those from homes with a more concept or functionally-oriented pattern (Moschis 1985; pg. 906). Family communication processes will also mediate the effects of other socialisation agents (Moschis 1985; Hayta 2008), and this is well documented with regard to television advertising, provided parents and children engage in frequent discussions about consumption (Moschis 1985). However, an earlier study (Moore and Stephens 1975), investigating the variables associated with consumer learning in younger and older adolescents (age not specified but American school grades used), found a low frequency of consumption communication in both the younger and older adolescent's households (Moore and Stephens 1975; pg. 85). This was a surprising finding, in contrast to earlier studies investigating consumer learning among adolescents (e.g. Ward and Wackman 1971). This earlier study investigated four criterion variables of interest, e.g. recall of commercial content, attitudes towards television advertising and materialism, and the effects of advertising on buying behaviour; in conjunction with "intrafamily" communication about consumption (Ward and Wackman 1971; pg. 417). Broad findings from Ward and Wackman's (1971) consideration of the four variables, including intrafamily communication patterns, resulted in their conclusion that actual

consumption is a social process (Ward and Wackman 1971), as is learning consumption behaviour, and communication within the family about aspects of consumption is an important variable influencing eventual purchasing behaviour (Ward and Wackman 1971; Ward 1974).

Intergenerational influences (transmission within the family of information, beliefs and resources; occurring from one generation to the next; Moore, Wilkie, and Lutz 2002; pg. 17), upon the building of brand equity (the added value a product enjoys as a result of past marketing activity for the brand; particularly relevant for product brands; Keller 2003), were explored in mother-daughter contexts as sources of influence upon brand equity for consumer packaged goods (Moore, Wilkie et al. 2002). Findings indicated that not all brands investigated benefit from intergenerational influence, which ultimately translates into generational loyalty to the brand (Moore, Wilkie et al. 2002). Brands that benefit from this influence which adds to their brand equity tended to be from specific product categories; e.g. prepared foods (such as cooking sauces, soup, and peanut butter), personal hygiene products (toothpaste, tissues, and pain relief), instant coffee, and household detergents (Moore, Wilkie et al. 2002). Lastly, this study investigated aspects of repetitive purchase (Gil, Andres et al. 2007; Moore, Wilkie et al. 2002), finding that some daughter consumers had internalised their mother's brand favourites, and used these as simple decision rules when in purchase situations.

Other influences were found to be at work here too, such as the emotional bonds daughters had formed with specific brands because those brands had given their family "faithful service...in years gone by" (Moore, Wilkie et al. 2002; pg. 26), resulting in repeat purchases and brand loyalty from the daughters. In sum, intergenerational influence was found to be a powerful source of brand equity for a range of brands, and, for some brands, endures into adulthood, although the introduction of new influencers (e.g. roommates at university, or new partners) disrupts this pattern (Moore, Wilkie et al. 2002).

So it can be seen from this review that the family does play a powerful role as a socialisation agent in children's development as consumers (Ward 1974), but this influence is not unidirectional. That is, children have an active role as consumers too (Ironico 2012; Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008) interacting with the consumption culture and

using commercial objects (e.g. brands and products) as symbolic resources for their own projects (Ironico 2012). This last aspect is an important point of children's development as consumers, is potentially related to how children interact with consumer brands using social media, and will be explored in greater depth in Chapter Three.

2.3.3 Peers as socialisation agents

Some of the studies reviewed in the preceding section also considered the role of peers as socialisation agents e.g. Moore and Stephens (1975); their hypothesis that peers are less influential than family sources in adolescent consumer decision-making was not supported, and the formative study of Moschis and Churchill (1978), which explored the hypothesis that adolescent peers help each other learn the "expressive elements of consumption" (pg. 602), that is, the styles and moods of e.g. fashion clothing. This latter hypothesis was supported. Interactions with peers were shown to help adolescents gain some important cognitive skills necessary for development as a consumer; e.g. the gain in basic consumer knowledge (such as buying processes and awareness of products), and of social factors relevant to consumption such as the social significance of products or services, values of materialism, and using television as a source of marketplace information (Moschis and Churchill 1978). Following up the Moschis and Churchill (1978) study, Moschis and Moore (1979) investigated the role of peers (amongst other influencing variables), in the consumer decision-making behaviour of adolescents. Findings confirmed that peer influence was significant when decisions were being made about buying products that represented a risk of being accepted by peers; e.g. these are things such as sunglasses; statistical results supported the hypothesis that peers did exert influence on adolescents' product evaluation (Moschis and Moore 1979; pgs. 106 - 107), but this was not as important as brand name and price (pg. 110).

Peers form important reference groups especially for adolescents, and group acceptance is an important part of human development and a determinant of behaviour (Bearden and Etzel 1982). A reference group can be described as a person or a group of people that significantly influences an individual's behaviour (Bearden and Etzel 1982), and this influence takes many different forms, e.g. individuals will seek out information to

help with decision-making, and will accept information from those that are considered credible, and referents with high credibility tend to be those people (or groups) who have special expertise (Bearden and Etzel 1982). The influence of reference groups has been accepted as important in many consumer decision making situations, with group influence dynamics observed and used by e.g. advertisers in developing marketing communication programs (Bearden and Etzel 1982).

The previous review has shown that much of children's consumer socialisation is achieved through their social interactions (e.g. Cram and Ng 1999; Ward 1974; Ward and Wackman 1971), so it is logical to suggest that children are influenced by the referent groups they identify with as part of the socialisation process. This can be demonstrated in the responses of young consumers to the American Girl brand (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009), whereby the characteristics of the brand itself have such an intense appeal to its young consumers, that girls' identification with the doll characters, as well as with their family and friends who share the same emotional bonds with the brand, could be considered to be their way of enlarging their reference group by including the inanimate dolls.

Reference groups, while influential, can also increase children's feelings of vulnerability if they are unable to meet the specific criteria set down for acceptance into the group (Roper and Shah 2007). In their two-country study (the UK and Kenya), investigating the social impacts upon children who could not afford to buy premium brands, Roper and Shah (2007), found that children from both countries in the study associated the lack of brands in a child's possession as that child being financially poor, and went on to decide that the child would be a "poor quality person" (pg. 719). The study results suggested that to the children, owning the same brands as others provided them with equality with those more economically fortunate; it was important to have the right brands to be part of the "cool group", otherwise children were vulnerable to peer pressure to conform (Roper and Shah 2007).

The previous review has shown, then, that peers are indeed influential in children's consumer socialisation processes. The scope of peer influence varies, from providing help with knowledge acquisition of basic consumer skills, to reinforcing the social significance of products (Moschis and Churchill 1978). Peers provide guidance to each

other when the product purchased is socially significant and there could be a risk of non-acceptance (Moschis and Moore 1979), and are important because they constitute the reference group to which young people like to belong (Bearden and Etzel 1982). Finally, there are negative aspects to peer influence and these relate to the inability of some children to purchase the latest “cool things” (generally branded goods; Roper and Shah 2007; pg. 720), which can result in bullying and exclusion from important reference groups.

The next, and final, section in this Chapter explores the influence of mass media, specifically television, upon children’s consumer socialisation. The literature exploration here is limited to the academic marketing perspective, because the overall goal of this study is an investigation into the marketing implications of children’s use of social media, for brand interactions. This section reviews literature investigating the influence of the whole of television programming, thus advertising and children’s commercial programs are considered jointly.

2.3.4 Television and other mass media as socialisation agents

Academic marketing research in the past few decades has focused on two broad areas relating to children, and the impact of their television viewing on their consumer socialisation. These areas can be conceptualised as firstly, the social learning perspective, using social learning theory, with researchers employing this to explain how various sources of influence (agents of socialisation), interact within a child’s environment to foster the learning and development of consumer-related attitudes, values, and behaviours (e.g. Atkin 1976; Buckingham 1991; Churchill and Moschis 1979; Nefat and Dujmovic 2012). The second area can be characterised as a more instrumental approach, with studies focusing upon explaining how individual children build an understanding of e.g. the persuasive intent of advertising (e.g. Lawlor and Prothero 2008; Oates, Blades, and Gunter 2001; Robertson and Rossiter 1974; Wright, Friestad, and Bousch 2005). Within this area of interest others were exploring issues such as how children respond to television advertising (e.g. Brucks, Armstrong and Goldberg 1988; Derbaix and Pecheux 2003; Goldberg and Gorn 1974; Linn, de Benedictis & Delucchi 1982; Riecken and Samli 1982; Roedder 1981), and, concurrently, researchers were considering the implications for children of their

exposure to television advertising. This latter issue culminated in some researchers looking at the impact of television advertising on children from low income families (Gorn and Goldberg 1977); the unintended consequences of television advertising to children (Goldberg and Gorn 1978), and health-related implications of children's viewing of e.g. fast food ads (Desrochers and Holt 2007; Kelly, Hattersley, King, and Flood 2008). Therefore academic marketing researchers have treated the role of television advertising as an important, influential factor in children's development as consumers.

The next section explores this literature in greater depth, focusing firstly on the social learning perspective and how this explains the influence of television (mass media) advertising upon children's consumer socialisation. Secondly, this section reviews the more individual approach to television as an influential socialisation agent, looking at children's understanding of persuasive intent, how this is relevant to their consumer socialisation, and how this knowledge translates into consumer responses. This section is completed with a brief review, consisting of a small sample of relevant literature, which considered the unintended consequences of children's exposure to television advertising.

2.3.5 Television's role in children's social learning

Television has been around in advanced consumer economies for a long time (since the 1950's; and, in September 2013, it was 84 years since the first television program was aired 1929; in the United Kingdom). But it was not until the 1950's that the quality and population reach of television started to show its potential as a source capable of providing mass information, and ultimately contributing to the socialisation of the youngest members of society, the children⁶. New Zealand was not immune to the new trend of television viewing, and from the first black and white experimental programs aired in the 1950's, rapidly caught on to the commercial and entertainment possibilities, airing the first complete programs on the first of June, 1960⁷. Since then, and up until three years ago, television viewing time by people aged five years plus (e.g. in New

⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2013/sep/07/history-television-seduced-the-world>

⁷ <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/culture/tv-history>

Zealand; Nielsen Report Think TV; Television Trends in New Zealand 2011)⁸ has remained as strong as that recorded in e.g. 2010.

Big changes in viewing platforms since 2007, though, show the changing way television is being viewed by New Zealand's population. In 2007, 43 percent of New Zealand viewers aged five years plus watched television on digital platforms, compared to 72 percent of New Zealand viewers in 2011. This is a substantial change in the way television is being viewed; and has implications for television advertising because of the ease in which viewers watching on a digital (especially mobile) platform can avoid advertising altogether, by saving programs for later consumption, or just skipping over ads. A counter to this, though, shows that American projections of media advertising record television as the dominant advertising channel to date (e.g. holding 38.1 percent of all media spending in 2014 compared to 27.9 percent of media spending on digital), but with a convergence predicted of the two channels in terms of media spending by 2018.

The point of citing this history and these statistics is to show that the era of television advertising is not yet over, but is subject to changes in how and where consumers view content, and how much exposure to advertising they are willing to engage in. The role of television as a socialisation agent in children's development as consumers is expected to remain prominent, albeit with some significant changes in the type of content viewed, and how it is delivered (e.g. mobile; Hendrix 2014).

Television as a social learning agent has been the subject of research interest since the early 1970's (Atkin 1976), with this particular study using an experimental approach based on social learning theory, investigating children's responses to toy and food product advertising. Findings were reported on many aspects of social learning, e.g. attention, observational learning, reaction to characteristics of the models in the advertisements (e.g. in this study, racial identity; Atkin 1976; pg. 516). Other variables of interest explored were sex role socialisation (responses measured from the children participating in the experiment to seeing girls playing with racing car toys; Atkins 1976;

⁸ <http://www.thinktv.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/Television-Trends-New-Zealand-2011.pdf>

pg. 517), and the impact of the advertising in fostering “candy consumption disinhibition” (pg. 517). This experiment exposed children to an advertisement featuring models (other children) consuming excessive amounts of candy with apparently adult approval. Summarised results showed that exposure and consumption are related in functional terms, and that reduced levels of guilt about eating excessive amounts of candy were correlated with exposure to the advertisement showing “candy eating” (Atkin 1976; pg. 517). Using these findings here, and some speculative leaps to consider how e.g. young consumers could be engaged in co-creating harmful behaviours with alcohol energy drinks (AED’s; e.g. Jones and Barrie 2009), then it becomes easy to see how brand owners could foster disinhibition (Atkin 1976), relating to young people’s consumption of AED’s (Jones and Barrie 2009). This issue is picked up further in the last section to this Part three, discussing unintended consequences of advertising.

Some other research using a social learning theory perspective (Bandura 1997), explored the opportunities children had for discussing the content of programs and advertisements with family and peers, and for using these interactions to help them make meaning out of viewed televised content (e.g. Buckingham 1991; Churchill and Moschis 1979). The findings of these studies indicated that children’s *social interactions* (emphasis added), between themselves, their family (mainly parents), and peers about the televised content they have viewed is the important variable here in helping children develop as consumers.

The role of parents and the interactions they and their children have in contexts of television viewing (especially of viewing advertisements), was taken up in a study situated in a non-western country, Turkey, by Emine Ozmete (2008). This particular work looked at adolescents (ages thirteen to eighteen years), responses to television advertisements, their interactions with their parents about the advertisements, and the levels of influence their viewing of the advertisements had upon subsequent purchasing decisions. Findings from this and other non-western countries (e.g. Kapoor and Verma 2005, India; Nefat and Dujmovic 2012, Croatia), are in some areas similar to those studies conducted on this topic in the USA (e.g. television plays a strong role in children’s consumer socialisation), but parental involvement and interaction with their children, and monitoring of television viewing is stronger in these cultures than in the USA; and this clearly is a cultural effect. The real conclusion to be drawn from these

differences is that future research into the role that television plays in children's socialisation should be conducted from specific cultural viewpoints, despite the impact of globalisation; because not all cultures follow the North American model. Specific findings from these three studies showed, for example, that Turkish children (Ozmete 2008) were not influenced directly to purchase products, but relied heavily upon parental involvement and interactions in helping them make decisions about which products to purchase (pgs. 376-378). Additionally, this study found that boys were more involved with television advertisements than girls (pg. 377). This suggests a cultural factor. The lack of influence of television advertising found in this study is generally counter to that of Atkin's (1976) research. This showed that children's exposure to very specific television advertising, e.g. of candy or cereals, had a "direct response" effect (pg. 518) upon the children, meaning that disinhibition occurred (in the case of less guilt when over-eating candy), or an increase in product purchase requests of parents (in the case of breakfast cereals). The children in Atkin's (1976) study were younger (oldest children aged ten years), than those in Ozmete's (2008) study, but the differential effects of advertising cannot be put to different ages alone. The study conducted with Indian children (Kapoor and Verma 2005), found, though, that television advertisements did play a significant role in influencing children's purchase requests (pg. 31). Their finding supports the Atkin (1976) study.

Parental involvement in Croatian children's exposure to television advertising was explored by Nefat and Dujmovic (2012), who concluded that while parents held "no positive attitude" regarding the effects of advertising messages on children (pg. 185), in this study, parental mediation of children's television watching behaviour was very active (pg. 186). Figures given for this study, of 84 percent of Croatian children watching televised advertisements, do point to a high level of television viewing in this culture. Overall, though, parents believed they were responsible for children's television watching, put in place restrictions, and discussed advertising content with their children (Nefat and Dujmovic 2012). Another, earlier study conducted in the Netherlands (Bijmolt, Claassen and Brus 1998), in which the authors investigated many aspects of children's understanding of television advertising (e.g. parental influence, gender, and the child's age), replicated some results of later studies but not others. That is, young children (ages five years to eight), were found to have some understanding of television advertising, with age positively related to this understanding. Second, and last, gender

and parental interaction about television advertising were found to have little impact on children's understanding of advertising (Bijmolt, Claassen et al., 1998; pg. 189).

Cultural differences in children's television viewing show up when later statistics are reviewed; for example, American children's television viewing is changing⁹ with 59 percent of young American teens television viewing consisting of live television, and 41percent consisting of "time shifted viewing", that is, either online or on mobile devices, or on DVD's (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010). The differences, then, in children's television viewing across even two cultures is illustrative, with, as cited previously, the Croatian study citing 84 percent of children viewing televised advertisements on television (Nefat and Dujmovic 2012). Other findings e.g. Dotson and Hyatt (2000), confirm that north American children show levels of knowledge of advertising slogans as much as their parents, and of children's impressive recall results of the content of television advertisements (Maher, Hu and Kolbe 2006). This latter study, investigating the differences in ad recall between visual only, audio only, and audiovisual, found support for the superiority of recall of advertising information in the audiovisual format (nearly 90 percent; Maher, Hu et al., 2006; pg. 28), than in either of the single formats.

Finally, in their summary paper reviewing the potential detrimental effects on New Zealand children of their electronic media exposure to violence and what are labelled negative values (Eagle, de Bruin and Bulmer 2002), Eagle, de Bruin et al. (2002) drew upon a wide range of social science findings in an attempt to inform the public debate about the role of marketing communications within the electronic media environment. Research questions of specific interest contained within their pilot study canvassed parental (or caregiver) perceptions of the influence television advertising (compared to other potential influences) exerted upon children wanting to buy products (Eagle, de Bruin et al., 2002, p. 29). Findings from the pilot study indicated that parental perceptions of the influence of advertising in children's television programmes did not deem advertising to be an "overwhelming influence" (Eagle de Bruin et al., 2002, p. 32) in comparison with other sources, such as school friends and siblings.

⁹ <http://kff.org/disparities-policy/press-release/daily-media-use-among-children-and-teens-up-dramatically-from-five-years-ago/>

While it cannot be claimed that the variation in results of these studies in terms of television advertising's influence upon children is mainly due to cultural variations (e.g. societies such as north America or New Zealand adopting more permissive attitudes to children's access to television viewing, with parental monitoring of children's viewing perhaps less vigilant?), the results of the sample of studies reviewed here do point to the dangers of assuming that in all societies children become socialised as consumers in the same ways and at the same rate. Overall, media of all types communicates persuasive product and brand information, and such communication can influence people's expectations and attitudes to different extents. Children are not immune to such influence, however, the effects of such communications must be mediated to some extent by children's interactions with other socialisation agents in their own cultures.

Next, the following section discusses the potential influencing effects upon children's brand interactions (with new celebrity brands) via the use of new formats in television, such as the creation of pop stars via television reality shows.

2.3.6 New format television advertising: reality shows as socialisation agents

Children's social interactions with family and peers as part of their consumer socialisation, and their growing sophistication in social relationships spills over into new forms of media, such as reality television shows. These new forms of media provide children with direct, interactive experience of brands, and may be a new way that television advertising can play in their development as consumers. The reality television show illustrated in Tingstad's (2007) study of "Pop Idol" (pg.17), highlights the formative role that the show played in enabling child consumers to directly participate in the on-screen lives and successes (or failures) of the various Pop Idol contestants (Tingstad 2007). Thus, the child audience was able to engage with the "idols" using a wide range of communication tools (e.g. emails, online discussions, text messaging and voting via mobile phone for their favourite "idol"; Tingstad 2007; pg.21). There were also many other ways that children had a direct experience of the "idol product," by doing things such as making their own videos, or sending electronic idol cards to friends and buying mobile phone accessories (Tingstad 2007). This kind of activity relates directly to the brand co-creation concept advocated by Merz, He et al.,

(2009), and provides a reasonable explanation of how the popularity of a show such as “Pop Idol” comes to be established. That is, the value of the brand is directly established through the children’s value-deriving activities with the brand (Merz, He et al., 2009); e.g. making their own videos of Pop Idol (content creation), or relating directly to the “idols” via text messages (Tingstad 2007). This should have the effect of ensuring consumers connect with the brand and continue connecting, investing their emotional resources to do so, and sharing the connecting with other, brand community members (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001).

The development of children’s sophisticated consumer behaviour, of which a necessary part is learning about and using e.g. consumer brands competently (Lundby 2011), can be here envisaged as a behavioural as well as a social process (McNeal 2007; Tingstad 2007). That is, children learn essential information about e.g. consumer brands through trial and error, using objects and learning about their attributes, and through imitating others (Bandura 1997; McNeal 2007). Possessing a product or brand for use has a direct and significant impact on, for example, the child’s logo recognition ability (Baxter 2009), because of course, experience promotes memory (pg. 3). The outcomes for children of learning through experience vary, but generally, experiential learning provides the practice that emerging consumers need to develop competency in making consumer decisions (Cram and Ng 1999; Martens 2005). For children, this kind of learning occurs through many experiences, such as family socialisation via shopping trips, learning about brands consumed at home, television viewing, interaction with peers (even at pre-school age), children’s own experience with branded goods (e.g. Baxter 2009; Belk, Mayer et al., 1984; Hayta 2008; McNeal 2007), and, now, direct interaction with celebrity brands e.g. Pop Idols (Tingstad 2007).

Setting these results into the context of the current study, it is expected that children’s interactions with consumer (celebrity) brands followed on reality television shows e.g. Pop Idol, will vary in intensity, and that this intensity will characterise the nature of some brand relationships more than others, e.g. relationships with celebrities may be more intense than relationships with product brands (Alperstein 1991; Tingstad 2007). This intensity might show in terms of children’s deeper emotional connections with celebrity brands, seen in, for example, children’s social media talk about their (emotional) reactions to actions the celebrity might have taken, or things that have

happened to the celebrity that are shared with her/his followers (Tingstad 2007). So, connecting with celebrity (or people) brands may be easier for children to do using social media because of the functionality offered, such as being able to follow and talk to a celebrity closely using a tumblr or Twitter account. This aspect of connecting with a celebrity on a regular basis helps to keep the relationship current (Alperstein 1991), and fosters involvement (Tingstad 2007). This is important because regular, consistent exposure to, and interaction with, the celebrity brand via e.g. social media activity should function to build children's implicit brand knowledge (e.g. via the mere exposure effect; Toomey and Francis 2013), and foster emotional connections through closer "relational" activities (Fournier 1998), much faster than just watching the celebrity on television (Tingstad 2007). This in turn could help children incorporate aspects of celebrity brands into their self-concepts potentially earlier and faster than previous research suggests (Chaplin and John 2005). This topic, and the relationship with social media, is explored more thoroughly in Chapter Three. The following section discusses how children come to understand persuasive intent embedded in e.g. television advertising, and explores the implications of this for children's consumer development.

2.3.7 Children's understanding of the persuasive intent of television advertising

Attribution theory (from social psychology; the theory explaining how we explain other's behaviour; e.g. either by attributing other's behaviour to their internal dispositions such as motives or attitudes, or to external situations; Myers 1993); formed the basis for Robertson and Rossiter's (1974) study that investigated the extent to which children were capable of understanding the purposes behind television advertising (pg. 13). Essentially, their study was aimed at investigating the attributions children made about the intent of television commercials, or what the communicator intended (Robertson and Rossiter 1974; pg. 13). One of the main goals of the study was to begin to answer some of the substantive questions academics and business people had about children's abilities to understand and act upon commercial advertising. For example, questions such as the abilities of children to separate advertising from programs, to understand the purposes of advertising, and whether or not children could develop some kind of resistance to advertising as a result of understanding advertising's intent, were

questions of great interest. Their study explored a range of hypotheses, from predicting associations with the understanding of persuasive intent with development factors such as age, family structure and parental educational attainment, and, interestingly, the level of children's social interactions with their parents (Robertson and Rossiter 1974). The role of peers was also included (Robertson and Rossiter 1974). Further hypotheses included the role of cognitive factors, and the outcomes of understanding, e.g. motives to consume (pgs. 14-15). Because this study was early and quite formative in the marketing literature, a notable flaw was that the participating children were all boys; the authors proceeded to generalise their findings to "all children," barely acknowledging near the end of their results that "it is possible that girls may have somewhat different processes of attributional development" (Robertson and Rossiter 1974; pg. 19). The results suggested that older boys, and those with parents with higher educational attainment, understood that the purpose of commercials was persuasive (pg. 17). These boys also met antecedent criteria such as the ability to distinguish programs from commercials; they understood the idea of an audience and commercial sponsors; and were aware that commercials were symbolic in nature; perhaps this finding alone foreshadowed much later research thirty six years on (e.g. McAlister and Cornwell 2010), confirming theory of mind as a necessary precondition to children's understanding of marketplace symbolism (especially of brands). The final area of interest in this particular study looked at the outcomes of children's understanding that commercials had persuasive intent; findings here indicated that boys who did attribute this to advertising trusted the commercials less and disliked them; plus this attribution had the effect of dampening motives to consume (the advertised product; Robertson and Rossiter 1974; pgs. 18-19). The authors suggested that, in fact, attributions of persuasive intent potentially act as a cognitive defence for children against advertising; this topic was picked up by Brucks, Armstrong and Goldberg (1988), in their study investigating children's use of counter-arguments against advertising claims.

This later study proposed a series of advertising concepts that children must have knowledge of before they could use this knowledge in defending themselves against persuasion; the concepts generally relate to children's theory of mind (and executive functioning abilities), but these were not well-understood concepts for academic marketing research at this time, and academics were not using these as conceptual frameworks (McAlister and Cornwell 2010). So, Brucks, Armstrong et al., (1988),

concluded that children of this age group (ages nine to ten years), could use counter-arguments to defend themselves against persuasive attempts, but to do this successfully (as it was not a spontaneous action), they needed a cue to access prior advertising knowledge (e.g. Roedder 1981; young children function as cued processors, capable of using strategies to store and retrieve information but only when they receive prompts to do this; pg. 145). Children also needed better product evaluation and product class knowledge in order to activate their own advertising knowledge and to make counter-arguments against persuasive attempts (Brucks, Armstrong et al. 1988).

Food advertising to children is frequently an area of contention (Kelly, Hattersley et al. 2008). In their recent study of the links between persuasive food advertising using cartoon characters on television and obesity among children, Kelly, Hattersley et al. (2008) found frequent use of cartoons, promotional characters and premium offers (e.g. to fast food restaurants) during Australian children's programming time (pg. 342). The authors reasoned that these marketing techniques encourage children to pester their parents to buy the food products, especially when collectibles are included (e.g. the toys provided with McDonalds Happy Meals). These authors concluded that there is a need for debate about limiting the use of such persuasive techniques aimed at children (Kelly, Hattersley et al. 2008).

Pre-schoolers have been thought to be very susceptible to television advertising (Macklin 1987), especially for food products (Desrochers and Holt 2007; Kelly, Hattersley et al. 2008) so research interest started in the 1970's and 1980's to clarify how much (and what kind) of understanding preschool children had of television advertising. In Macklin's (1987) study, the focus was on clarifying the children's understanding of the informational function of television advertising. The results of this experimental study suggested that some pre-schoolers (7.5 percent of four year olds and 20 percent of five year olds; with an assisted task), understood the information function of the commercials (pg. 235). In her second study using improved methods, Macklin (1987) found about the same result as study one; that is, the results from the two experiments converged (pg. 237). So what did this study mean in terms of children's understanding of the informational content of television advertising? The first explanation was that these results contradicted the common assumption made by policymakers at the time, that children under eight years old could not perceive

commercial meaning (Macklin 1987). This was an important finding of the time, because policymakers in North America and other developed economies were charged with providing protection for children because of their assumed vulnerabilities as consumers, and to e.g. television advertising (Macklin 1987).

So where did this leave marketing's understanding of how children perceive television advertising's persuasive intent? Nearly two decades later, some relevant studies investigating different aspects of this topic can be found e.g. (Lawler and Prothero 2008; Oates, Blades, and Gunter 2001; Wright, Friestad, and Boush 2005). The perspective of age-related gains in advertising understanding was used (Oates, Blades et al. 2001), and from a theoretical perspective (domain-specific knowledge; Wright, Friestad et al. 2005) and, finally, a qualitative approach used to explore children's understanding of television advertising (Lawlor and Prothero 2008). The age-related study (experimental), tested a large group of children (96 participants) spread equally across relevant age groups of four, six, eight and ten year olds; (Oates, Blades et al. 2001; pg. 240); children watched a popular program into which two advertisements were inserted, and then were asked a series of questions a day after the viewing (e.g. scene recognition from the advertisements, brand recall of advertised products, content questions about the advertisements; pg. 241). In the end these authors conducted two experiments, the second using products and advertisements that were unfamiliar to the children. Results showed (as expected), high recognition of visual stills (still shots; pictures from the video of the program and/or the advertisements) across all age groups. This is probably not surprising given the excellent ability of even younger children to recognise visuals from previous encounters (e.g. brand logos; McAlister and Cornwell 2010).

However, the main point of this particular study was to investigate children's recognition and understanding of the persuasive intent of advertising; results showed age differences in the children's responses with the youngest (age six years) showing no understanding that the aim of advertisements is to persuade (Oates, Blades et al. 2001; pg. 243). The final conclusion to this study was that these results contradicted those found in other work (e.g. Donohue et al. 1980; Kline 1995; in Oates, Blades et al. 2001; pg. 244) whereby others had argued that young children do have an understanding of the persuasive nature of television advertising. The contradictory results argued for by

Oates, Blades et al. (2001) would seem to be unusual, particularly when referring to the study conducted by McAlister and Cornwell (2010). This later study used theory of mind acquisition to show that children as young as age three understand the symbolism of brands; the authors reminded readers that children who have acquired such an ability to think about other's intentions can understand that brands may be used for e.g. intentional purposes (pg. 211). Very young children can and do make attributions about others (e.g. popularity; McAlister and Cornwell 2010), and since this is the case, then it is quite likely that young children can think about the purposes of advertising in much more advanced ways (e.g. Moses and Baldwin 2005). For example, children should be capable of making attributions about advertising intentions for products relevant to them, if such a study were conducted carefully using brand advertising that the children had previous exposure to. The review article written by Wright, Friestad et al. (2005), generally concurs with this reasoning. That is, in their review of many studies conducted in the 1970's and 1980's investigating children's understanding of advertising's persuasive intent, more careful interpretation of the results showed that children did indeed use insightful knowledge about the intentions of advertisers (Wright, Friestad et al. 2005; pg. 225).

Findings from the qualitative approach employed by Lawlor and Prothero (2008), exploring young children's (age seven to nine years) understanding of whose interests advertising serves, (thus avoiding the older stimulus-response models common to the work conducted in the 1970's and 1980's; Lawler and Prothero 2008), showed the children had sophisticated reasoning in response to the question "why are there ads on television?" (Lawler and Prothero 2008; pg.1208). Findings were grouped into three main themes, with the children indicating that the reasons for advertising are linked to the advertiser's perspective, the viewer's perspective, and the television channel's perspective too (Lawlor and Prothero 2008; pg. 1208). The authors concluded that the children were able to discern the persuasive intent of some advertisements (pg. 1209), and could understand the need for the television channel to make money, thus advertising was needed. So the overall conclusion to this study was that children possess a more highly developed understanding of advertising intent, seeing it as beyond the advertiser's perspective, than previous literature suggests (Lawlor and Prothero 2008).

This review has shown that children's understanding of the persuasive intent of television advertising is present, potentially from very young ages (e.g. under the age of six; but this is untested). Many earlier experimental studies did not try to measure, or ignored, children's abilities to use their general knowledge and reasoning to arrive at some insightful conclusions about the purposes of advertising (Wright, Friestad et al., 2005). This is probably because academic marketing researchers were using the stimulus-response models in experimental studies to explore "what advertising can do" to children, instead of adopting a perspective looking at what children will do with advertising (or with other market-related stimuli such as consumer brands). The use of individual psychological models such as the development of theory of mind and increases in children's executive functioning capabilities (McAlister and Cornwell 2010), may have been ignored as influencing factors in children's understanding of advertising's intent.

Finally, because children are able to engage with a much wider range of advertising and marketplace communication content (Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), delivered over a range of technology (Hendrix 2014), and because social media is changing the rules of engagement for advertisers and marketers (Hendrix 2014), it would seem sensible that research investigating the influence of television and other mass socialisation agents (such as Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube; Patterson 2012), is updated to reflect the new, very dynamic advertising environment children are living with.

2.3.8 Children's responses to television advertising

In keeping with the positivist orientation of the 1970's and 1980's, other studies from several different perspectives were conducted to investigate children's responses to television advertising. Children's reactions to specific television advertising (measured by the children's motivations for trying to obtain the advertised products), were investigated in the context of toy commercials by Goldberg and Gorn (1974); the aim was to find causal links between television advertising and impacts upon children. A later study conducted by Goldberg, Gorn, and Gibson (1978), set out to find causal links between children's exposure to one food commercial generalising to a preference for other, similar types of snack foods (Goldberg, Gorn et al. 1978). Findings from both these studies showed that, in study one (Goldberg and Gorn 1974), eight to ten year old

boys are affected by television advertising of a valued toy; a single exposure to the commercial increased the boys' motivations to obtain the toy (pg. 74). In the second study (Goldberg, Gorn et al. 1978), five to six year old children showed preference changes for sugary snack foods when they watched television commercials for these; and when the children watched pro-nutrition related advertising, preferences changed for foods higher in nutrition value than sugary snacks (Goldberg, Gorn et al. 1978; pg. 77). The theory of mere exposure is referred to here as one of the explanatory variables accounting for these effects; this has been explained previously in this Chapter in the context of the powerful effects of product placement upon determining children's branded product preferences (pgs. 22 -23; and Toomey and Francis 2013).

Children's attitudes towards television commercials were measured in a study conducted by Riecken and Samli (1981); but the main purpose of this study was scale validation so that future researchers could use a standardised, valid scale for measurement. Attitudinal data was only reported in table form and not interpreted; final results provided a replication of previous research producing a reliable, valid standardised scale (e.g. Rossiter 1977; in Riecken and Samli 1981). Further research examining children's attitudes towards advertising used a reasoning perspective (Linn, de Benedictis et al. 1982), and tested adolescents reasoning about advertisements across two main dimensions, such as scepticism towards advertisers, and criticism of advertisers reporting product tests (e.g. comparability and product claims tests). Results suggested that the adolescents in this study held generally negative beliefs about advertisers, with two-thirds saying that advertisers often (or always) lie and cheat (Linn, de Benedictis et al. 1982; pg. 1601). In another study thirty years later (e.g. Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), children viewed "hard-sell commercialism" with suspicion and negativity (pg. 633), although Lawlor and Prothero (2008), did not find such negative opinions amongst the group of children they interviewed in their advertising intent study. So the findings from older studies reviewed here regarding children's behavioural responses to television advertising do suggest that children's exposure to specific advertisements for products relevant to them (e.g. toys or snack foods; Goldberg and Gorn 1974; Goldberg, Gorn et al. 1978) indeed result in attitude or behaviour changes (measured by e.g. motivations to acquire the toy, or preference changes to sugary foods). These findings have been set into the next section, which reviews some research discussing findings that reveal some of the unintended

consequences of television advertising to children. Following this section, concluding comments are made completing this Chapter.

2.3.9 Unintended consequences of television advertising

Despite the early focus of a handful of researchers upon understanding children's responses to television advertising, e.g. in terms of children's product preference formation, or their consumption behaviour (e.g. Goldberg and Gorn 1974; Goldberg, Gorn et al. 1978), the issue of potentially unfavourable consequences of such influence on children's consumer development was thought relevant. Some of the concerns expressed were about the influences that pre-schoolers were being exposed to as a result of their television viewing (e.g. Goldberg and Gorn 1978), resulting in an experimental study investigating the unintended outcomes of advertising, e.g. four and five year old (pre-school in north America), children's unhappiness at seeing a child in a commercial being denied an advertised toy, and the effect of this upon parent-child relationships (Goldberg and Gorn 1978). The study included the children's mother's opinions of the toy (advising the child of another preferred option; pg. 24), to determine the extent to which the child's viewing of the commercial would override their deference to their mother's judgment. On all counts, the results showed that viewing the commercials induced significant effects in the experimental group; that is, the children who viewed the toy commercial showed increases in preferences for playing with the toy than friends; for playing with a child described as "not-so-nice" (pg. 27), who had the toy than a "nicer" friend; with mixed findings about the influence of mothers and fathers on the child's preferences. The main conclusion was that the children projected a higher level of unhappiness onto the child in the commercial whom they witnessed being denied the toy (Goldberg and Gorn 1978). In a sense, this single study disappeared under the avalanche of others investigating the influence of television advertising on children's consumer development. However, the thinking may have paved the way for studies conducted much later, e.g. Desrochers and Holt (2007), and Kelly, Hattersley et al. (2008), investigating the links between food advertising and children's development of obesity problems. These latter two studies focused on understanding the advertising landscape of children's television programming in advanced consumer economies. They conclude that children's television (in the USA and Australia, for example), is saturated with advertisements for a wide range of snack foods, sweets, and drinks (Desrochers

and Holt 2007), and is particularly compelling for young viewers because of the clever use of cartoon characters (Kelly, Hattersley et al. 2008), that are credible and easily identifiable by young children.

But a direct comparison of (North American) children's exposure to paid television advertisements from 1977 to 2004, found a modest decrease in both this, and in their exposure to food advertisements (Desrochers and Holt 2007). However, these authors did not conclude that this meant that children's television viewing of food advertisements had nothing to do with any links between these advertisements and obesity (Desrochers and Holt 2007; pg. 198). Instead, the comprehensive changes in the marketing communications landscape (e.g. the use of integrated marketing communications, for example) were cited as having potential impact; that is, the increase in children's total exposure to all other marketing communication is probably a key factor (Desrochers and Holt 2007). The academic marketing literature investigating any unintended consequences of children's exposure to influential television advertising is relatively silent. The health marketing-related literature is more likely to have investigated this topic, but this is not the main focus of the current study. Given the wide sweep of social media platforms, though, and the easy access children have to this technology, opportunities to conduct research investigating individual and social consequences of children's interactions with brands and products using social media would seem to be relevant.

2.4 Conclusion

This brings to an end the review of the processes governing children's development as consumers. These processes consist of multiple factors working concurrently to help children advance their consumer understanding. The role of children's cognitive development and the milestones achieved as they mature is clearly important. Despite some issues with applying Piaget's (2003) psychological cognitive development model (Cram and Ng 1999; Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008; Roedder, Didow et al. 1978), it is clear that children's cognitive organisation and memory structure development to enable information storage, processing, and retrieval, is critical to their ability to use market-

related information to make consumer decisions (e.g. Klees, Olson et al. 1988; Peracchio 1992; Wackman and Ward 1975). Even very young children have the ability to use market-related information in cognitive ways (Peracchio 1992), provided the research tasks are sensitive enough so the children can organise a coherent response.

Interacting with market-related information means interacting with consumer brands (John 1999), and in order for children to do this, for identity and broader social purposes (Chaplin and John 2005; Malar, Krohmer et al. 2011), they need to develop basic understandings of e.g. brand symbolism and the social significance of other's brand choices (Achenreiner and John 2003; Belk, Bahn et al. 1982; Belk, Mayer et al. 1984; Mayer and Belk 1982; McAlister and Cornwell 2010). Developing this kind of understanding is dependent upon aspects of cognitive development, the salient aspects here being theory of mind, and children's ability to use their emerging executive functioning skills (McAlister and Cornwell 2010). Theory of mind refers to the ability of a child to take the perspective of others, to make mental representations of others and the world outside the self (e.g. of a brand), is a social as well as a cognitive skill, and, once acquired, provides the capacity for a child to, for example, understand the symbolic nature of brands (McAlister and Cornwell 2010; Moses and Baldwin 2005) and relate to these in a social way (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009). Theory of mind can account for the way in which children begin to form perceptions and preferences for consumer brands (McAlister and Cornwell 2010), although this concept was not used in early academic marketing research to explain this phenomena (Bahn 1986). Early research findings contributed to the understanding of children's brand perceptions and preferences by highlighting how children's growing interactions with sensory aspects in their environment shapes their ability to discriminate among different marketplace stimuli (Bahn 1986), and to form brand associations, which later helps in choice formation (Keller 2003). More recent research points to the powerful effects on brand choice of even limited exposure to a product, suggesting that children's implicit recognition and later memory retrieval of branded products is fostered via the mere exposure effect (Toomey and Francis 2013), and by deliberate brand placement within media programming (Reijmersdal 2009). This effect probably accounts for the results of many studies investigating even young children's quick and accurate recognition and recall of e.g. fast food logos and other advertising slogans (Arredondo, Castanada et al. 2009; Dotson and Hyatt 2000; Valkenburg and Buijzen 2005).

Children's emerging executive functioning abilities are important, because they represent organised (and organising) cognitive structures; this development is needed for successful information processing, as it relates to children's ability to organise their knowledge of the world into usable, adaptive frameworks (Moses and Baldwin 2005). These frameworks of information are acquired through observation, social learning, and practice with marketplace tasks e.g. in purchase situations (Bandura 1997; Cram and Ng 1999; McNeal 2007).

The role of social learning in fostering children's consumer development cannot be understated, and provides a way of understanding children's own efforts in their consumer socialisation apart from the more unidirectional psychological cognitive views (Cram and Ng 1999; Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008). Social influences are powerful forces in fostering children's understanding of the consumer role, mainly because of the modelling and the small-scale social interaction opportunities socialisation agents such as family and peers provide (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009; Granovetter 1973). These interactions influence individual behaviour and shape responses to e.g. consumer brands, either encouraging (or discouraging) the formation of emotional bonds with brands (Bearden and Etzel 1982; Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009). A sense of belonging socially can be further fostered as children may seek to belong to a brand community (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001) which offers the opportunity to interact with like-minded "brand fans" thus sanctioning the use of the consumer brand for the expression of oneself (Malar, Krohmer et al. 2011). The brand community offers extra opportunities for interaction and these are social and relational, serving to strengthen the emotional bonds children may form with the brand (Fournier 1998). Emotional bonds can take the form of admiration and respect for the brand (Diamond, Sherry et al., 2009), or even hatred (Barbie dolls; Nairn, Griffin et al., 2008).

Social interactions with family form the background to children's development as consumers (Hayta 2008), and many studies have investigated the role of the family in fostering older children's (adolescents) consumer learning (Moschis 1985; Ward and Wackman 1971). Results point to the powerful mediating effects of aspects of family life (e.g. family communication patterns; Moschis 1985) but findings emerged showing a more complex picture than solely intrafamily communication, with positive reinforcement for socially acceptable choices (e.g. Moore and Stephens 1975; Moschis

and Moore 1979). Nevertheless, learning about consumption aspects within the family is found to be a critical variable influencing eventual purchasing behaviour (Ward and Wackman 1971; Ward 1974), and this effect can reverberate through generations (Moore, Wilkie et al., 2002). Intergenerational influences (transmission within the family of market-related information, beliefs and resources; Moore, Wilkie et al., 2002), are found to be sources of influence for brand equity (Keller 2003), providing an answer as to why, generations later, older children will continue to use their mother's preferred brand "because (the brand) has given our family faithful service..." (Moore, Wilkie et al., 2002; pg. 26). Peers, too, have a role to play in children's consumer socialisation, helping each other gain basic consumer knowledge (Moschis and Churchill 1978), and providing significant influence at the point when e.g. adolescents are involved in purchasing decisions relating to socially risky products (Moschis and Moore 1979). Peers provide reference group information and interaction about the "right brands" (socially significant purchases; Moschis and Churchill 1978), to have for social acceptance (Roper and Shah 2007), pressuring each other to conform to meet the criteria for continued membership of the reference group (Roper and Shah 2007).

Mass media influence upon children's development as consumers, and especially the effects of television advertising in shaping children's branded product preferences and later consumer behaviour, provoked a steady stream of north American experimental research from the mid 1970's (e.g. Atkin 1976; Churchill and Moschis 1979; Goldberg and Gorn 1974; Goldberg, Gorn et al., 1978; Linn, de Benedictis et al., 1982; Macklin 1987; Robertson and Rossiter 1974). Findings confirmed television advertising's power to persuade, with explanations of this linking the way advertisements provide children with social learning opportunities, e.g. by watching other children play with specific toys, or seeing other children eat too much candy, thereby reducing the disinhibition of consuming candy to excessive levels (Atkin 1976), thus normalising this behaviour. Understanding the persuasive intent of advertising was advocated as a research topic by regulatory authorities in response to concerns about the advertising of contentious products (e.g. snack foods) to children (Desrochers and Holt 2007; Kelly, Hattersley et al., 2008; Macklin 1987).

The role of parents in mediating what children watched and when, and of peers in social interactions about televised content was researched early on (Churchill and Moschis

1979), and found to be formative in helping children's consumer development. Parental mediation and interaction with children about television content varies from culture to culture (e.g. Turkey; Ozmete 2009), and is potentially related to the permissiveness of certain cultures enabling children's easy access to, for example, television viewing of reality shows (Norway; Tingstad 2007). New format reality television shows foster consumption, and encourage children's direct interaction with celebrity brands (Tingstad 2007). Connecting with these brands in the twenty-first century is easy because of the multiple media channels available to children to do this (Barber 2013; Tingstad 2007). Such connections foster ever greater interactions between the child and the celebrity brand, and this helps keep the relationship current and relevant (Alperstein 1991; Fournier 1998). The child derives pleasure from the brand interactions, and this serves to reinforce the emotional connections forged with such a brand (Diamond, Sherry et al., 2009; Fournier 1998).

The interactivity of key socialisation agents (family; peers; television advertising) in concert with children's growing cognitive and social competencies leaves no doubt that children's development as consumers is a complex and dynamic process. Consumer brands are embedded in this process, providing children with a relational and potentially aspirational focus, from which they can gain a sense of belonging, use to help with identity formation and other psychologically important tasks. The wide sweep of social media channels available to children in the twenty-first century are participating in this consumer development process, thus, the following Chapter Three sets out to review what is known about children's interactions with consumer brands using these channels.

Chapter Three

3.0 Children and social media

The processes governing children's development as consumers, and how such processes encourage children's brand interactions were the subject of Chapter Two. However, children's use of social media platforms and how such use helps them learn about and interact with consumer brands, is not addressed in the literature reviewed in the previous Chapter. There is a gap in academic marketing understanding of social media's role in fostering children's brand interactions, and how such interactions might facilitate brand engagement (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie 2014). Chapter Three seeks to address this gap, and to achieve this, is organised into four sections. The first section provides a brief introduction to the world of social media, canvassing what is known from the academic perspective of the role, function, and value to users of social media sites. The second section discusses literature relevant to children's social media participation, highlighting the role that children's social media behaviour of "liking" and "sharing" content, relates to the processes by which children learn about and interact with brands. The second section includes literature about people's identity formation (Oyserman, Elmore et al. 2012), because it is known that children do use social media platforms for their identity projects (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). However, little is known about how children's use for such projects actually involves interaction with consumer brands.

The second section also draws on contemporary literature about young adult's specific social media activities, such as user-generated content, known as UGC (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012), and discusses ideas about how UGC could help children interact with brands. Children's social media use is discussed from a uses and gratifications perspective, known as U and G Theory (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). This is because both perspectives relate to children's social media participation, e.g. UGC activity requires users to actively create content (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012), whilst U and G theory reports on the social media user's activities (or uses) that result in certain gratifications (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). Such gratifications are envisaged to provide the motivation for the user to continue such activities. So, the second section draws on three main ideas, the first, relating to how children's social media participation behaviour such as liking and sharing, helps children interact with brands; the second,

how children's identity formation tasks provide a reason for interacting with brands; and the third, how specific social media activities such as user-generated content, and uses of social media for specific gratifications, provide the motivation for children's ongoing social media participation and potential brand interactions.

The third section of Chapter Three focuses on children's social media relationships, discussing the influential nature of such relationship connections. This section introduces the reader to symmetric and asymmetric connections between people on social media (Goggins and Petakovic 2014), reviewing such relationships within the context of people's social exchanges, to build an understanding of how influence in children's social relationships works (Emerson 1976; Tyrie and Ferguson, 2013). The subject of social ties (Young 2011), and how such ties work to foster interdependent, influential social media relationships within which consumer brands may participate, forms part of the discussion. Finally, the notion of social capital (Burke, Kraut and Marlow 2011) is discussed as a motivation for children to maintain their social media use. So, the third section draws on two main ideas, the first, how the nature of children's social media connections are formative in generating social influence, and the second, how children's social ties enable or disable brand participation in such relationships.

The fourth and final section of Chapter Three introduces the subject of children's use of social media for brand interactions, and how such interactions relate to influence (Rohm, Kaltcheva et al. 2013). Symbolic (Charon 1998) brand interactions that children participate in using social media are known to occur for example, for the purposes of downloading "cool" music (Cluley 2013), or in children's interactions with reality television celebrity (person) brands (Tingstad 2007). Such celebrity interactions occur in mixed media contexts, such as using text messaging, emailing, or interacting with the celebrity's Facebook page. Children's social media brand interactions may result in brand advocacy (Wallace, Buil et al. 2012), or may encourage children to champion a brand to others. What is known about social media user's responses to advertising is discussed, along with what such knowledge might mean for children's responses to advertising in their social media space. So, the fourth section draws on three main ideas, first, how children use social media for symbolic brand interactions, second, how such interactions might influence children to advocate for a brand, and third, children's potential responses to social media advertising. What follows next,

then, is a brief introduction to the world of social media, canvassing current academic understanding of the role, functions, and value to users of social media sites.

3.1 Understanding social media (social network sites; or SNS)

Connecting with others in social relationships is how people express their humanity, and these conversations are how people actively construct the world (Gergen 2009). Such social connections involve constant communication, and in this communication lies the possibilities of changing the things that people think they know about the world, even “standing trusted assumptions on their heads” (Gergen 2009, pg.3). Such a comment relates to the phenomenon of social media sites and the way in which people globally have taken to this way of communicating (Schultz and Peltier 2013), surprising researchers and marketing practitioners by the speed of uptake of such technologies, and the resulting changes in the branding landscape from marketers in control, to empowered consumers (Fournier and Avery 2011). The growth in the numbers and the scale of social media networking sites as ways for people to communicate and share their lives is unprecedented, demonstrated by examples such as “more video uploaded to YouTube in one month than the three major networks in the USA created in 60 years” (Hoffman and Novak 2012; pg.69). Clustering social media sites into three groups provides a more systematic way of envisaging how people engage with social media; so Facebook is a social network; Twitter and tumblr are both microblogging sites; and YouTube is a content community (Smith, Fischer et al. 2012). There are continuing new entrants to the social media space, so it is far from saturated, and such entrants seem to attract large numbers of users quickly, e.g. the site Zynga with the social game known as “CityVille” achieved status as the fastest growing game of all time, moving from zero to 100 million users in a mere 43 days (Hoffman and Novak 2012).

Because of the interconnections among people that social media activity fosters, marketers have assumed that they and consumer brands can be part of these conversations too (Fournier and Avery 2011). However, a problem with such an assumption is that social media sites were created to enable people to converse together in collective conversational webs (Fournier and Avery 2011), so the focus is upon people and their network of friends or contacts, and shared conversations. Branded

products and brand conversations were not intended to be a part of social media sites' activity, and many marketers and brands are finding that they are not always welcomed into these conversations (Fournier and Avery 2011). However, many of the activities that people engage in using social media do result in people influencing each other, and these networked pathways allow for fast diffusion of ideas and information into sometimes very large networks, because of the easy technology that enables information sharing (Barber 2013), and the speeding up of people's interactions.

So, the role of the internet, and especially of social media as active agents in shaping children's development as consumers, can be conceptualised as influencing children because such technologies allow the breakdown of communication barriers between geographically and socially dispersed communities (Barber 2013), facilitating much easier social interaction between people. The possibility of enabling brands to be involved in pathways of influence between consumers networking on social media is an attractive idea for consumer brand marketers, because of the potential for increasing consumer-brand engagement (Hollebeek, Glynn et al. 2014). Managing brands in the social media space is a key challenge for marketers, because of the constantly evolving, real-time interactions among consumers that might involve brands, and over which brand marketers have little control (Gensler, Volckner, Liu-Thompkins and Wiertz 2013). Thus, because people's social media interactions are known to involve consumer brands, such interactions should be envisaged as collective, co-creation activities among people involving many brand authors of a brand's story, and some of these authors are consumers (Gensler, Volckner et al. 2013). Further, because children's development as consumers is so socially-directed (Hayta 2008), then it is envisaged that children's social media interactions with consumer brands may also involve co-creation activities, such as sharing and commenting upon a brand to their Facebook friends, or appropriating brand materials for generating content (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012). Presently, little is known about how children use social media to interact with consumer brands, so the following sections explore what is known from the academic literature, commencing with children's social media participation.

3.1.1 Children's social media participation.

Academic marketing researchers already know that children participate as users on social media sites (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010), and that such participation involves behaviours such as creating an online identity, for example, which provides children with a social outcome, acceptance by peers. However, nothing much is known about children's other, quite specific social media behaviours (such as liking, following, commenting, or creating content), and what is known has been drawn from studies involving college students (Park, Kee and Valenzuela 2009), or young adults (Joinson 2008). Additionally, many studies were undertaken in the first few years of social media use (2004 to 2009), notable for the heavy use by university students, but with overall internet usage by adult New Zealanders at 92% in 2013,¹⁰ and four out of ten stating that social networking sites are important to their daily lives, it is logical that children's access to various internet tools has increased too, particularly since schools are also fostering technology skills. Thus children's social media participation is a relatively new area of inquiry, and is an important topic because of how the Internet and the associated Web 2.0 developments (including social media sites) are available for children's use, and because children are growing up in an online environment (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). The following sections discuss aspects of children's social media participation, with the first section looking at their social media behaviour.

3.1.2 Children's social media behaviour

Indicating a "like" for content or comments that someone has posted, is a way of behaving on Facebook to indicate agreement with friends (Goggins and Petakovic 2014), and is a basic form of social media participation. Such behaviour helps reinforce already existing social relationships, and for pre-teen and early teenage children, creating and maintaining such relationships is important, because friendships are more important than family relationships (Antheunis, Schouten and Krahmer 2014). So, it is expected that children in this age group will be using the tools available on e.g.

¹⁰ http://www.aut.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/473576/ONLINE-WIPNZ2007_20137_7-0702a.pdf

Facebook that help them maintain their friendships. However, it is unlikely that children's participation on social media is limited to just simple "likes" of their friend's posted content, because with children's participation in social media, simple "likes" potentially signify more influence than the equivalent for adults. For example, if a child is commenting on a television show that another in her network likes, this becomes agreement (Goggins and Petakovic 2014), but, because children are influenced by social learning in peer relationships, agreement with a peer signified by a "like" on Facebook (and made public to the child's social network), could be regarded as more than a low level of influence. This is because peers are important referents to teen and pre-teen children (Bearden and Etzel 1982), so meeting the criteria to belong to one's reference group, such as "liking" a particular television show and signifying this on Facebook, could be a much more important part of being accepted for children than for adults (Roper and Shah 2007).

What is known about the social media behaviour of teenagers (ages 13 to 19 years) is that because of their high need for friendships (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), much of their behaviour consists of reading and responding to posts to their page, sending or responding to messages and editing their own profiles (Reich, Subrahmanyam and Espinoza 2012). "Likes," as one of the social media behaviours identified above, is probably buried in the teenagers' responses to posts to their page (that is, a response might be a "like" to a friend's posted content). Using social media to keep in touch with others or for looking at others, are known as motivators to encourage young adults to keep using, *inter alia*, Facebook (Joinson 2008), and such use relates to creating or maintaining friendships, so children could be expected to show similar motivations as reasons for their social media use, too. Children can participate in social media by using the "following" tool available on Facebook, Twitter, and tumblr, and such use provides a practical way by which children can indicate their affinity for someone or something (such as a consumer brand). Such following behaviour constitutes influence (Goggins and Petakovic 2014), because it shows children's affiliations with either people or content. For children to behave in this way, there must be some link with either improving the quality of their friendships (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), or with portraying their self-concepts, because there are risks attached to publicly show that one is following someone or something. In these situations, children are likely to portray themselves as positively as they can (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010), following people or

content known to be acceptable to their reference group, or that helps them express who they are (Clarke 2009).

Commenting and sharing behaviours are forms of social media participation (Kabadayi and Price 2014), potentially representing more engaging behaviours, especially when consumers are interacting with brands (Hollebeek, Glynn et al. 2014). Children commenting on brands for example, or their friend's posted content are signalling affinity for the brand (Kabadayi and Price 2014), and since Facebook is constructed in such a way that an individual's comments appear on their network friend's Newsfeeds, such commenting can be regarded as influential sharing behaviour (Goggins and Petakovic 2014). When children participate by sharing their content with others, such as posts about either their own activities or other topics with a wider audience, influence can be seen to be diffusing to a wider social network (Goggins and Petakovic, 2014). The greater the children participate in commenting and sharing a post by others outside of their own network, the greater the aggregated influence becomes, so the children would be influencing their peers with such simple liking, commenting and sharing behaviour (Kabadayi and Price 2014). Children's participation in social media could also be motivated by similar things as young adults, such as looking for emotional support and using social media sites as information resources (Joinson 2008). Children could also participate in social media for the useful function that such sites serve, in enabling them to search for, and track the interests and activities of groups that they belong to (Joinson 2008). Participation in these kinds of activities fits with what is already known about children's need to identify and belong to specific reference groups and to gain peer acceptance (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). Wanting to gain peer acceptance and to belong to reference groups links to children's identity formation, so the next section discusses how children's participation in social media might be facilitating this part of their development.

3.1.3 Children using social media for identity formation

The notion of "identity" refers to the traits, characteristics, social roles and social relationships that a person has, plus that individual's social group memberships; all these things taken together define "who a person is" (Oyserman, Elmore et al. 2012). The notion of self-concept is derived from identity, and can be described as the complex

of identities (people possess more than one “identity”), that comes to mind when a person thinks about her or himself (Oyserman, Elmore et al. 2012). Another way of thinking about identity and the tie to self-concept is to think about identity/s as collaborating to create a person’s theory of their own personality, or what a person believes is true of her or himself (Oyserman, Elmore et al. 2012). The two constructs are often used interchangeably (e.g. Hollenbeck and Kaikati 2012), or self-concept is discussed on its own, with no reference to the defining role of identity/s (e.g. Chaplin and John 2005, Malar, Krohmer et al. 2011).

Considering the terms ‘identity,’ ‘self,’ and ‘self-concept’ as nested elements (Oyserman, Elmore et al. 2012) might help when thinking about how children could be participating in social media, perhaps using brands to reflect their self-concepts (Hollenbeck and Kaikati 2012). It is already known that children use consumer brands because they offer rich materials that can be used in identity formation (Malar, Krohmer et al. 2011), but what is not known is how children might be using social media to interact with brands for identity purposes. So, some aspects of brands that children could be interacting with, when participating on social media, such as following grunge fashion, could be helping them to form a self-concept. Since older social media users are known to use brands and products as cues (Hollenbeck and Kaikati 2012) to present themselves socially on e.g. Facebook, then it is expected that children will participate in social media in this way too. So since children appropriate aspects of consumer brands to help them form a sense of identity, and since children’s learning about brands develops in social relationship contexts (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009), then the social relationship contexts characterising social media should provide another medium through which children can perform the identity formation tasks that are part of becoming a consumer (Chaplin and John 2005).

Social media participation could also be facilitating the continual renewal of children’s identities, because of the way in which they can easily appropriate content or think about content that is relevant to their current identity (Oyserman, Elmore et al. 2012). Such participation activities would include doing things such as belonging to a particular group (e.g. belonging to a brand fan group on Facebook such as being a fan of Coca-Cola), liking particular brand pages, or posting photos or other information about themselves that includes branded content for example, to show aspects of their identity.

Such identity-forming activities of children can be envisaged as the child being influenced because of the links being constantly established between her or himself and the consumer brand (Hollenbeck and Kaikati 2012). So what the brand stands for symbolically (Charon 1998), is appropriated by children to indicate aspects of identity, and this development task continues through adolescence (Hughes and Morrison 2013). Such social media participation might be giving the children much more agency (or freedom) in constructing their identities (Hughes and Morrison 2013), and this could be motivating for children, encouraging them to keep using social media platforms such as Facebook. The social aspect of identity development is important too, because identity is formed in social contexts (Oyserman, Elmore et al. 2012), and social media could be offering children ideal social contexts. Such contexts include relationships such as group memberships (e.g. ethnicity, gender, or a member of a Facebook group), family roles such as being the oldest child, or being a sporty person or a “massive nerd”, such as someone who likes Dr. Who, and shares this on Facebook. Such social contexts of identity formation can also be seen in how online brand communities form, in order to bring brand users into a social group so they can share product (or service) information, knowledge and experiences, and to foster identity among group members (Wang, Butt and Wei 2011). It is expected that children will join brand communities on social media for reference group membership, but not much is known about the factors encouraging children to join, or if joining a brand community to socialise could be more important to some children than socialising with friends e.g. “on Facebook.” If this were so for some children, then a brand and its followers could potentially replace a child’s friends on social media, and such an outcome would have implications for children’s commitment to a brand, potentially fostering stronger links between the child and the brand. This would likely be a topic of public policy interest. So, for children, forming an identity means that they need to make connections with others in social relationships, and need to make connections to relevant content that is available for appropriation. Brand-related materials are easily available and appropriated from the internet, and such activities fall into user-generated content, or UGC (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012), which is the subject of the next section.

3.1.4 Children creating social media content

It is known that young adults create UGC on social media platforms, and that a significant amount of brand-related materials are used to do this (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012). Creating UGC offers a way for people to participate online, but nothing is known if children participate on social media sites in this way, what factors could encourage such participation, or what the outcomes could be for the children creating such content, or for their relationship with a brand. What is known is that teenagers and young adults (aged 16 to 25 years), can be inspired to create content and share stories using social media if such topics are made manageable, relevant to them (such as climate change), easy to check-in with, and visually interesting (Greenhow 2008). There are four main groups of general factors thought to be relevant in motivating consumers to create brand-related UGC; co-creation, empowerment, community, and self-concept (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012), but the social factors of self-concept, self-expression, identity shaping and creativity are probably the most relevant motivators for children's participation in this type of activity. However, there is no empirical research available about children's propensity to create brand-related UGC as a way of participating in social media activity. But, because of children's participation in using internet technology tools such as social media platforms, and the resultant gains in new media literacy skills fostered by such use (Ahn 2013), it is expected that children would have the capabilities to create UGC if they wished, but whether such material would be brand-related, and positive for the brand, is not known. So while UGC may offer possibilities for encouraging children's social media participation, nothing is known about what benefits children might derive from participating on social media in this way, or of any reciprocal benefits to consumer brands of being used in this way. The topic of UGC is discussed further in this Chapter in section three, from the perspective of children's brand interactions on social media. The next section here takes a "uses and gratifications" perspective (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010), to explain some of the benefits that children gained from using a social media platform, in this case, Bebo.

3.1.5 Children participating in social media – a uses and gratifications perspective

The uses and gratifications perspective is known as U and G theory, and focuses on the gratifications, or benefits that attract audiences to various types of media, and then hold their attention (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). The perspective takes account of the type of content that is likely to satisfy an audience's social and psychological needs.

Essentially, the uses and gratifications theory focuses on what people actually do with media. The perspective has been used across a range of research settings, especially in the study of mass media and media content, such as the study of radio, television, and print media for example (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010), but until the reviewed studies, not in a social media context. Of the six domains commonly assessed within U and G theory, the most useful in the social media context are likely to be the domains that build understanding of children's motivations for using social media, and that offer a way to measure the gratifications that children obtain from such use. Previous research from the perspective of U and G theory (Park, Kee et al. 2009), found that college students (university age; 18 to 29 years) used Facebook (and joined Facebook groups) primarily to find information and to socialise with friends. Adding to their self-status and wanting entertainment were the other uses (or motivations) that students said they had for joining a Facebook group. Some of these reasons should be similar motivators then for children to use social media platforms, but because children are still forming relationships with friends and have strong needs for peer acceptance (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), socialising and communicating with friends are expected to be the primary reason for use. What the literature has not yet undertaken is a hierarchical analysis of the uses and gratifications that young people and children say they have for participating in social media; such an analysis would be useful to provide insights into the differing contributions that children might be motivated to make to social media groups they are a part of, or to their motivations to create UGC.

Some of what is known about adult's use of social media from the U and G perspective (Karnik, Oakley, Venkatanathan, Spiliotopoulos and Nisi 2013) shows that adults' reasons for joining Facebook groups (e.g. such as a music sharing group), are more diverse than those found in the children's study (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). Girls in the Dunne, Lawlor et al. (2010) study used Bebo primarily for communicating with their

friends, for creating an identity, and for entertainment. In contrast, the adults in the Karnik, Oakley et al (2013) study were primarily using the Facebook group to discover new content and cultures; to interact socially, use content by listening, and for nostalgia reasons (pg.823). However, some of the adult reasons for use could be classified as entertainment, such as consuming content, and this use is similar to what the girls in the Bebo study reported (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). So, social media reasons for use (or gratifications) can be diverse, and such diversity would be expected between children and adults. However, because children are more engaged in formative tasks such as making friends and identity creation, their uses of social media may be more complex than adults in terms of what they want to obtain. For example, creating and managing identity is potentially a more complex task for children than for adults, especially with children's need for peer acceptance, so it could be that children's use of social media reflects their preoccupation with one or two formative tasks that adults have already negotiated. If this is so, then the gratifications that children obtain from such uses of social media could be more difficult for them to achieve. Nothing is known about this, although the study of girls using Bebo did report that they obtained peer acceptance (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010) and that this social outcome was linked to the use of Bebo for identity creation and management (pg.54).

Online gaming communities use their platforms for networked socialising, and such platforms show similarities to the conventional social media platforms such as Twitter or Facebook. Players can interact and play with others in teams, interacting with each other in bounded virtual communities (Chuang 2014). Such players (gamers), and the virtual communities they interact within are regarded as social media interactions (Chuang 2014; pg. 472). The uses and gratifications perspective involves three uses; achievement, enjoyment, and social interaction (or gratifications sought; Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). Whether or not such gratifications are obtained is not reported in Chuang's (2014) study, but the social interaction gratification/use makes sense, and reflects other work using the U and G perspective to argue for people's motivations to use social media. The U and G perspective makes visible children's and young people's motivations for using social media, framing these in a gratifications sought and obtained perspective (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). The perspective is helpful in extending understanding of the reasons why children might be motivated to use social media, and for providing a framework to evaluate the outcome of such use. What follows next is a

discussion of children's social media relationships, and the link between such relationships and reasons for children's social media participation.

3.2 Children's social media relationships

Facebook use is strongly associated with the maintenance and strengthening of already existing social relationships that adults have with each other (Goggins and Petakovic 2014). What is known is that adult's use of social media platforms such as Facebook enables them to increase their social capital (Burke, Kraut et al. 2011). Social capital is a measure of the benefits derived from having and maintaining social relationships with others (Lampe and Ellison 2012), or, in a more complex way, social capital refers to the benefits that a person obtains from their position in a social network. Social capital also refers to the number and the character of the social ties that a person maintains, and the resources that these social ties possess (Burke, Kraut et al. 2011). In a sense, then, the notion of social capital is essentially a restatement of older sociological constructs around strong and weak ties (Granovetter 1973), and the benefits that people obtain from maintaining and making these social ties. There are two types of social capital, referred to as bonding and bridging (Lampe and Ellison 2012), and both bring benefits from social ties. Bonding social capital really refers to strong, emotionally-supportive, reciprocal relationships such as those people have with close family and friends, whilst bridging social capital describes weaker-tied relationships (Granovetter 1973), that provide benefits in the form of novel information and diverse perspectives (Burke, Kraut et al. 2011).

3.2.1 Social capital in children's social media relationships

Social capital, in the social media context, is used to explain how adults use platforms such as Facebook, and it is known that adults use social media platforms for building and maintaining their social capital (Lampe and Ellison 2012). Not much is known about how children might use Facebook for such relationship purposes, although a recent study looking at children's use of the Dutch equivalent to Facebook, Hyves (children aged 11 to 14 years; Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), found that the children's central concerns about their social lives were about the quality of their

friendships, and that in this area, their use of Hyves had a positive relationship with the children's friendship quality. In this study, friendship quality was envisaged as simply satisfaction and contentment with friends (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014). Friendship quality is a different aspect of children's social media relationships than social capital, because social capital refers to the benefits people receive as outcomes of such social ties (Lampe and Ellison 2012). Since it seems logical that friendship quality and social capital are connected, it could be expected that if children's social media use has a positive effect on their quality of friendships, then it can be expected that there will be positive effects on children's bonding and bridging social capital, too, and this is what further research finds (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014). In terms of children's social media relationships, the use of social media platforms would seem to be important in helping children maintain or foster their social capital.

3.2.2 Social exchanges in children's social media relationships

People become influenced within, and as a result of, their interactions in their social relationships (Gergen 2009), and such relationships can be envisaged in social exchange terms (Emerson 1976). For children to continue to maintain, or to develop, social relationships as part of their social media activity, there must be some value derived from these relationships (Tyrie and Ferguson 2013). Otherwise, there would be little motivation for children to continue interacting within their relationships. There are suggestions that the value inherent in such social relationships consists of social reward factors such as trust, commitment to others, and power (Tyrie and Ferguson 2013). Setting these factors into the context of children's social media relationships, social rewards such as commitment between children can be easily observed when children signify a "like" of another's content on Facebook. Activating the Facebook "like" function in response to a friend's posted content is rewarding, signifying a two-sided, reciprocal process (Emerson 1976, pg.336), which is contingent for continuation on each person in the relationship receiving some kind of rewarding reaction from the other person. Such reciprocal reactions (activating a "like" on Facebook) work to influence children to continue to post content to their network in order to gain more rewarding reactions. If a Facebook user posts content to her/his network and receives many "likes" for the content, and the child user values the "likes," then it seems probable that the child will continue to post content to her/his network. So the motivation driving a child

user to post content in the Facebook situation is just a simple example of reinforcement (Emerson 1976) from operant psychology. So, children become influenced as a result of their social media relationships through social operant behaviour, activated by others in the child's network in the form of rewarding activity, such as giving "likes" in response to other's content posting activity. Such rewarding reactions from others in the child's social media network will serve to strengthen the child's satisfaction with the quality of their friendships (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), and this satisfaction will provide some of the motivation for the child to focus on maintaining their social media relationships so that they succeed (Tyrie and Ferguson 2013).

Finally, there is other evidence that children's use of social media platforms makes a positive difference to their relationships (Reich, Subrahmanyam et al. 2012), with 43% of young people aged 13 to 19 years reporting that their social media use made their friendships closer. The same study, though, found that 44 % of young people said that their social media use made no difference to their relationships (Reich, Subrahmanyam et al. 2012). Social media platforms (such as Facebook), are constructed in a way that foster interdependencies among people tied together socially (i.e., to extend one's network one must either invite others to be a "friend," be invited to "friend" someone else, or be included into someone's else's network by one's own friends *via* a share), and such interdependencies produce joint activities that, in turn, generate positive or negative emotions (Lawler 2001). These relationships represent social ties (Young 2011), and children's social ties are known to act as influential agents, especially for the social learning opportunities that such ties offer (Bandura 1997). Children's social ties in their social media relationships represent different ways of connecting, and these connections are discussed next.

3.2.3 Symmetric and asymmetric connections in children's social media relationships

Some current research suggests that adults signifying their agreement with another's posts via the "like" function on Facebook constitutes a low level of influence between symmetric connections, because the parties already know each other and already agree on a range of topics. Thus, it is suggested that opinions are not really changed, but reinforced (Goggins and Petakovic, 2014), and, because children tend to interact with

others that they already know online (Reich, Subrahmanyam et al. 2012), it is likely that children's interactions with each other in symmetrical connections, such as those fostered by Facebook, serve to strengthen their emerging opinions and views. When children agree with each other via the "like" function on Facebook about for example a specific brand or a television show, they are strengthening each other's already-held opinions.

Asymmetric connections, such as those found on Twitter and tumblr, though, enable users to create more weakly-tied social relationships; but within such relationships children can potentially increase their social media participation in a conversation thread (Goggins and Petakovic, 2014) and this can signal increasing influence, provided the context of the conversation is more than just social engagement (pg. 1384).

However, the way in which social media platforms are constructed plays a dominant role in the type of relationship connections children are able to develop. So, the Facebook social model of friendship (Guille, Hacid, Favre, and Zighed 2013) fosters closer social relationships of directed communication (Burke, Kraut et al. 2011), and such relationships offer more rewarding connections for children because of their potential for strengthening friendships. In contrast, asymmetric connections, such as those fostered by the Twitter and tumblr models of following (Guille, Hacid et al. 2013), are less likely to help children strengthen their online friendships, but will help children become part of a larger sphere of influence because of their exposure to so many unknown others in a social media ecosystem (Hanna, Rohm, and Crittenden 2011). The Facebook friendship model and the Twitter/tumblr 'following' model offer children different social media relationship opportunities. However, the paths of influence that such relationships (when formed), actually possess, are quite different because of how the social models operate (Goggins and Petakovic 2014).

Understanding the way that influence works within children's social media relationships is important, because of the potential effect of such influence on shaping children's consumer brand relationships. Research Question Four (RQ4), explores this gap, asking how children's social media interactions shape their consumer brand relationships.

Twitter enables asymmetric connections between users; that is, people can follow another without being followed (Goggins and Petakovic, 2014). This is an important point because, for example, a child Twitter user who follows another user on Twitter is

thought to grant the other some influence (Goggins and Petakovic, 2014), and the more followers a single user has, the greater their potential for influencing others, simply because of the increase in their audience. However, what is also known about these asymmetric or directed connections, from previous (offline) social network research, is that people tend to follow and to interact with those who matter to them, and who reciprocate their attention (Huberman, Romero and Wu 2008). Thus it would be expected that children using Twitter to build social media relationships will most likely follow either current friends, or those people that they have a closer relationship with. However, it is also possible that children using Twitter will follow celebrities (person brands) if such brands matter to them, because following such brands could help children build friendship quality (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014). This implies that there could be some hierarchy of importance of people who matter to children on social media; with their friends first in importance, celebrity brands second to friends, and ‘followers’ if they can add to children’s friendships and help build social capital (Lampe and Ellison 2012). The network of actual friends is the network that matters for influencing children about new ideas or brands, and not the larger, dispersed, follower/following network such as that fostered by Twitter (Huberman, Romero and Wu 2008). In contrast to Facebook, there is no basic level of agreement or “like” in Twitter; one way it is thought that users signify being influenced by others is to “retweet” someone else’s content to their own followers (Gruzd & Wellman, 2014). However, the problem with thinking about relationship activity within such asymmetric connections is that just because a person retweets Twitter content to his/her followers does not mean that interactions have or will occur between people (Huberman, Romero et al. 2008). For social influence to occur, when, for example, promoting a new brand to others within one’s own social network, social interactions need to occur, and such interactions are the small-scale, everyday interactions (Granovetter, 1973), that help people maintain their close relationships through building trust and support (also known as relationships with bonding social capital; Ellison, Vitak, Gray and Lampe 2014). Children’s social media relationships are potentially more enduring and more influential when constructed using Facebook, than when constructed using asymmetric connections such as those offered by Twitter and tumblr. This is because children’s Facebook relationships should offer the opportunity for children to interact often with their friends, and it is already known that influence occurs within such small-scale social interactions.

However, influence in social media networks is shown to operate on larger scales too, outside of people's close relationships (Hanna, Rohm et al. 2011), otherwise the creation and spread of social contagion and viral campaigns via people's social media relationships would not happen. Spreading influential messages amongst large numbers of loosely-connected people on social media is shown to be successful, and such loosely-connected relationships can be characterised as Fandoms, for example, on the tumblr platform. Popular tumblr microbloggers can create these Fandom communities; these are large groups (e.g. numbers of 200,000 followers or more), and a popular fandom has large numbers of followers who enjoy the same things and willingly engage with the ideas and things of interest. For example, many fandoms exist for television shows, such as #fandom#supernatural#drwho, and especially for fashion e.g. veryelegant#chanelstore; users can directly search for brand stores via tumblr via www.tumblr.com/tagged/brand-stores. So, children's social media relationships on some of the larger, distributed social media platforms (such as tumblr or Twitter), could still be subject to the influence of others that they do not have close relationships with, and this could be because of bridging social capital (Ellison, Vitak et al. 2014). Social capital is an important factor in children's social media relationships, because it relates to the relationship quality (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), and has implications for how influence works. Bridging social capital has its genesis in the notion of weak ties (Granovetter 1973), and is described as enabling the movement of novel information across social relationships, such as information shared from a friend of a friend (Ellison, Vitak et al. 2014). So, children's social relationships on social media outside of Facebook, such as tumblr or Twitter, could be expected to exert some influence on the propensity of the child to interact with a consumer brand for example, because of the access that children have to new information flowing from bridging ties about new products or about celebrity brands.

So, the idea of children building social capital in their social media relationships is also tied to how social media platforms foster relationship development (Ahn 2012), and this aspect of children's social lives is a natural link to the building of social capital. So, this suggests that children who build social media relationships across a range of platforms, using the whole social media ecosystem for example (Hanna, Rohm et al. 2011), should enjoy greater social capital benefits than those who restrict their relationships to just Facebook. Such relationship benefits should also provide children with the opportunity

to consume a more global, broader range of market-related information, potentially transcending the knowledge provided by close friends and family, and this in turn will act to increase the range of influences upon children's knowledge of e.g. consumer brands. Very little is known about how children's use of social media to interact with brands links with their use of other brand information sources, so this gap is where Research Question Three (R Q 3) is situated. What follows in the next section is a discussion of the literature relating to children's brand interactions on social media.

3.3 Children's brand interactions on social media.

New formats for television, such as reality television shows, were singled out as one way children are enabled to directly interact with a celebrity brand, thus building strong emotional connections (Alperstein 1991, Tingstad 2007). With these new media formats such as reality television, developments in advanced viewer connectivity with the celebrity brand are made possible now because of social media platforms, so children have the opportunity to interact directly with a favourite celebrity on a real-time basis. Such interactions are easily seen with television shows such as The X-Factor in New Zealand, where audience members easily interact with the show and its pop star hopefuls *via* Twitter during the performances, or *via* the show's Facebook page. Practical experience suggests that such interactions quickly build interest and foster high levels of emotion among audience members at the time, and this can be evidenced by comments made to Twitter by audience members when things go wrong on the show, such as dissatisfaction with a judge's decision. In a recent New Zealand example, an audience member uploaded a video to YouTube accusing the show's producers of rigging the judging outcome, via special hand signals indicating acceptance or rejection of contestants, communicated to producers from a person seated in the front row. The audience member filmed some of the activity, uploaded the content to YouTube, using Twitter to help broadcast the video. But an analysis of the factors that prompt such brand interactions over social media, and how influential such interactions might be upon consumers' propensity to engage with the brand (Hollebeek, Glynn et al. 2014), is missing from the literature.

Hedonic motives (such as enjoyment and achieving social status), and the search for entertainment experiences are known to drive older teens and young adult's use of Facebook and Twitter for brand interactions (Rohm, Kaltcheva et al. 2013). Meshing in

with such motivations is the possibility that people co-create brands among their network, via their social interactions with friends (Wallace, Buil et al. 2012), and such co-creation activities represent interaction. It is possible that children have similar motivations as young adults do for interacting with brands on social media, but it is also possible that children's motivations for such interactions are prompted by other, latent factors, such as the drive to form a personal identity (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010), or to improve the quality of their friendships (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014). One way children may be able to signify their developing identities on social media, and that might provide the impetus to interact with brands is by participating in developing user-generated content, or UGC. Such activity would offer children brand interaction opportunities because of the constant interactions with brand-related materials needed to develop such content (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012). Brand-related UGC can be defined as consumers creating content that is made available through public transmission media such as the Internet; such content reflects a degree of creative effort, and is created free outside professional routines and practices (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012; pg.55). The next section discusses how such content creation prompts consumer brand interactions on social media.

3.3.1 User-generated content and children's brand interactions

Social media users can be influenced by consumer brands as a result of interacting with the brand and brand-related materials, as part of the activity of generating original content for uploading to a social media platform (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012). Such user-generated content, or UGC, is known to be relevant to brands, because such content either includes brand-related materials in their original forms, or the content generation involves consumers interacting with brand materials to change them in some way, integrating such materials into their own content. Some of this UGC activity is a natural result of people's (especially young people's) gains in new media literacy skills (Ahn 2013), so it is unsurprising that teens and children have the capabilities to construct such content and spread it through their social media networks. These capabilities are easily seen in how teens construct their social media profiles (Livingstone 2008), even from the earlier days of social media platform use. From this perspective, UGC should offer children sociocultural learning opportunities (Ahn 2013), and consumer brands can form part of these opportunities. Because the creation of UGC

involves the appropriation of content from a range of sources, and because previous research has already established that children appropriate aspects of brands for use in the development of their self-concepts (Chaplin and John 2005), then it is expected that children will be participating in UGC creation to help them with identity formation projects. Brand-related UGC is suggested to play a support role in adult consumer's self-presentation and self-promotion activities, such as when constructing their personal profiles on Facebook (Smith, Fischer et al. 2012); such a finding supports the idea that children would use brand-related materials to create their social media identities, too.

Since UGC creation involves constant interaction with brands and brand-related materials (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012), then it is expected that children's UGC activity will influence their perceptions and probably brand preferences, because of the learning opportunities about the brand that such constant interaction with and exposure to brand materials provides (partially *via* mere exposure effects; Toomey and Francis 2013).

The role of UGC in prompting children's brand interactions on social media may be preceded by other, latent, factors such as children's need to form an identity, and their search for, and use of, materials to help them with such a task. Therefore, UGC as a way of fostering brand interactions may be more effective with children than with older teenagers or young adults, but nothing is known about this. What is known from one study is that young people aged 20 to 21, classed as digital natives, (Rohm, Kaltcheva et al. 2013), tend to interact with brands on social media for entertainment, willingly sharing such content with their friends. This group and those who are older adults do not tend to create UGC, acting more as broadcasters or communicators of content rather than creators (Kabadayi and Price 2014). However, digital natives 20 to 21 years of age were known to create UGC (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012) on early versions of social media platforms, e.g. in 2008, but this could have been because of the novelty that such platforms offered people to create content. Some other findings about young people's UGC creation report a passive role in content creation with, for example, university students acting as spectators in the social media ecosystem, creating content for two main purposes; promoting events on campus, or promoting products and services for the companies they worked for (Williams, Crittenden et al. 2012 , p.133). However, because UGC varies across social platforms, taking on different forms

(Smith, Fischer and Yongjian 2012), it is expected that children could be participating in creating UGC. This is especially true of their small-scale, everyday social interactions, because such interactions are so easy to do, such as those enabled by Facebook (e.g. liking, sharing, commenting), with such interactions potentially involving brands. Finally, brands are at more risk from UGC than the literature suggests; because UGC is highly liquid, going where it wants in the social media ecosystem without brand permission (Kietzmann, Hermkens et al. 2011), brand mistakes can be amplified by damaging UGC and “go viral” on social media, potentially culminating in damage to a company’s share price (Kietzmann, Hermkens et al. 2011). Creating UGC then involves consumers using the symbolic resources of brands, and this means that social media users must understand such brand symbolism in order to access content for their UGC purposes. Thus, the next section discusses children’s symbolic interactions with brands and how such interactions might occur on social media.

3.3.2 Children’s symbolic interactions with brands on social media

Fostering brand advocacy by consumers on social media depends upon consumers interacting with the brand in particular ways (Wallace, Buil et al. 2012), so symbolic brands, such as those that offer children opportunities for self-expression, socialising with others, or signifying social status, such as coolness (Ferguson 2011), are more likely to prompt positive interactive behaviour such as “liking” the brand on Facebook. Such behaviour could be characterised as interactions with abstract things, and it is known that other people in a network tend to respond to abstract things with more “likes” and less comments on Facebook (Wang, Burke and Kraut 2013). This is potentially because people are unsure about what to say but want to offer support (Wang, Burke et al. 2013). It is possible that children’s symbolic responses to brands, such as indicating their “like” for the brand as part of their profile or identity, making visible the connection to their network, should be supported by their friends with “likes” as well. This could have the effect of increasing the exposure of the brand to a wider network (the child’s friends), that the brand may not otherwise have been able to achieve. Further, because the use of symbolic brands is very important to young people, and especially to pre-teens because of the need to belong to reference groups (Charon 1998), then it would seem logical that children joining Facebook brand pages (via the

“like” function) as “fans” could be expected to interact with the brand/s more heavily. While this seems to be so for adults (Nelson-Field, Riebe et al. 2012), nothing is known if this is the same for children. An issue, though, with the heavier interaction of Facebook brand fans is that such interactions are skewed towards the already committed fans; that is, those people who already “like” the brand and are heavy buyers, so “light buyers” or potential buyers are not reached (Nelson-Field, Riebe et al. 2012). If this pattern is similar for children who become fans of brands via Facebook’s brand pages, then this could indicate that children using a brand to belong to a reference group may join a community of brand fans, but such a community will not reach out to newer, potential members, because the brand interactions are skewed towards those who are already committed.

The role of UGC (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012) could be important in such interactions, because such activity increases the interactions that children can have with the brand and brand related materials. So, children interacting with brand symbols to signify their identity, for example, may become influencers in their own networks and, depending on the type of connections between people that the social platform facilitates, could reach out to unknown others, thus sharing the brand to a more dispersed network. Such activity is known to occur on platforms such as Twitter (Huberman, Romero et al. 2008), and can be assumed to occur on the tumblr social platform because of its similarities to Twitter in the dispersed way that people’s social connections operate. However, Facebook is constructed to support already existing social relationships (Guille, Hacid et al. 2013), so such network construction would be expected to work against such dispersed sharing, even of powerful brand symbols, and this is known to be so because of the limited reach that Facebook offers to brand marketers, apart from those already committed brand fans (Nelson-Field, Riebe et al. 2012).

Which form of social media children use to communicate with others can be construed as a symbolic act, too; that is, using some social media or internet platforms in preference to others says something about a person because of the associations others make about particular platforms. For example, tumblr potentially represents a more rebellious platform for communications, and “illegal” risky downloading torrents sites such as Demonoid.ph, Torrents.to, and Torlock, represent only three of the more than

thirty sites¹¹ available to download content such as movies and music (Cluley 2013) to enable digital piracy (Turri, Smith and Kemp 2013), or unauthorised file sharing. Sometimes the shared meanings and the proper use of cultural symbols are challenged (Cluley 2013), and this is easier to see with people's use of social media. For example, a challenge can be seen in young people's activity in downloading music or movies from unauthorised sources. File sharing pirated content with friends is proving difficult to stop in advanced economies (Cluley 2013), the authorities consider this consumer misbehaviour and are trying to regulate this in many economies to prevent illegal downloading¹² (e.g. Copyright Infringement Act 2011 in New Zealand). But, as Cluley (2013) points out, music is highly symbolic, is consumed by listeners (especially young people) who are interacting in the marketplace and who have different expectations than their parents (Barber 2013) about how music is to be obtained and consumed (Cluley 2013). So the issue of downloading music from unauthorised sources can be reframed as a battle between consumers and marketers over who has the rights to set the social rules for the consumption of powerful symbolic goods such as music (Cluley 2013). Because social media sites function as collective conversational webs (Fournier and Avery 2011), and as places for free social exchanges to take place (Emerson 1976), the freer context within which social activities occur on social media and other sites around the internet is bound to be defended by users (Fournier and Avery 2011).

Children's use of social media, then, constitutes interaction with a range of cultural symbols (such as brands, or when downloading free music) and because children's use of brand symbols is part of their consumer development (Chaplin and John 2005), it is expected that they will want to interact with brands on social media to achieve a range of different goals. Such goals might be similar to young adults' motivations to interact with brands using social media, e.g. to find out product information, for fun and entertainment, and to take advantage of incentives (Rohm, Kaltcheva et al. 2013). Other, more symbolically-oriented interactions that children might engage in are expected to involve identity projects such as building a perception of themselves online as fashionable, for example, or engaging in social surveillance of others to "keep up" (Joinson 2008), to avoid missing out. Children's brand interactions using social media will probably enable them to create contacts with brand managers, and such contacts (if

¹¹ <http://netforbeginners.about.com/od/peersharing/tp/30-Best-Torrent-Download-Sites-Visual-Guide.htm>

¹² <http://www.netsafe.org.nz/the-copyright-infringing-file-sharing-amendment-act-what-schools-should-know/>

positive) could be expected to strengthen the links between the child and the brand, but there is little understanding of children's responses in this area. What is known is that young adults use of Facebook shows that digital relationships between them and brand managers of brands other than Facebook, is frequent (Patterson 2011 pg.532), with consumer-to-consumer interactions also taking place on the brand's page frequently. This does not mean that children will follow suit, but it could be likely that children using social media are prepared to interact with brands and brand managers more easily on sites such as Facebook, because of the social distance between the children and the brand manager (they are not friends and are probably perceived as less threatening). Children can also control any interactions with brands if they choose (Wallace, Buil et al. 2012), by simply clicking "unlike" to stop further interactions, and this sense of agency is likely to appeal to young pre-teens and teens (Hughes and Morrison 2013).

3.3.3 Children, brand interactions and social media brand advertising

Social media sites (or platforms) are regarded by brand advertisers as offering potential for reaching consumers (Taylor, Lewin and Strutton 2011), but only if users accept such advertising communications. So, determining social media users' receptivity towards advertising in their social media spaces should be an important aspect of a brand's communications strategy. Presently, little is known about how receptive children are to brand advertising in their social media spaces, but an industry study in 2010 (Taylor, Lewin et al. 2011) suggests that only 22 percent of adult consumers show a positive attitude towards social media advertising (pg.258). Such a statistic does not mean that children feel the same about social media advertising and, given children's wish for social acceptance from their peers, it could be that advertising enables them to gather information about specific branded products that they can use to signify their social status. Such consumption of advertising is known for Generation Y (Ferguson 2011), and, because these young people are at least as digitally connected as the children in this current study, then it is possible that the younger children are also consuming advertising on social media. Some scholars have linked the consumption (and therefore acceptance) of social media brand advertising to users' motivations for going online (Taylor, Lewin et al. 2011), so from a media uses and gratifications perspective, children might respond positively to social media advertising that meets their specific needs. Such needs could be factors such as looking for entertainment, and, because this

factor is known as a gratification sought by, for example, the girls in the Bebo usage study (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010), it is expected that children in the current study could also be motivated to consume social media advertising for entertainment purposes.

Facebook advertising seeks to motivate users to interact with brands, but little is known about how this works for child Facebook users. One of the issues with Facebook's advertising format is the use of banner advertising, criticised because of the banner blindness phenomenon, resulting in Facebook users avoiding the placed advertising. Banner blindness refers to how people's visual scanning of web-based material works, specifically the shape of how people scan a web page (Barreto 2013). Thus banner advertising that (usually) is placed on the right side of the screen is not scanned, and social media users were found to avoid looking at placed banner advertising which appeared on their Facebook wall or in their Newsfeed pages (Barreto 2013). This occurred because users decided that the information was not likely to be interesting or relevant. Since the processing of visual information of web-based pages relies on people being able to scan outside the visual scan path, it is expected that children could show banner blindness towards Facebook advertising. However, little is known about such a phenomenon in the context of children's responses to social media advertising, but what is known about older users from the banner blindness study is that they paid much more attention to recommendations from their friends on Facebook, and to other social network members, than to paid advertising (Barreto 2013).

Using advertising in social media spaces to connect brands and consumers in positive relationships is a brand management goal (Gensler, Volckner et al. 2013), but brand managers have to adapt because of the way that social media-using consumers are empowered to create and share their own brand stories (pg. 243). Responses to such brand communications are found to be more effective if the brand itself can signal interactivity and openness in communication (Labrecque 2014), which means consistently using message cues indicating responsiveness and listening (Labrecque 2014; pg.136). With regard to paid advertising on Facebook for other users, such as women university students, Logan, Bright and Gangadharbatla (2012) found that they responded more positively to informative and entertaining advertising, with entertainment found to be the most important predictor of advertising value. Since children seek connection and entertainment as part of their social media experiences

(Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010), it is possible that children might respond positively to social media brand advertising that offers them friendship aspects (such as responding and listening), and entertainment value.

Using storytelling in a theatrical context to encourage consumers to co-create brand stories has been suggested as a way to enhance social media consumers' brand connections (Singh and Sonnenburg 2012), especially those fostered by advertising. Children's use of YouTube might, for example, offer a platform for brand storytelling, but not much is known about how children's use of such a platform could encourage co-creation of brand stories. However, an example provided by the brand Mountain Dew (Holt 2003) shows how young people can and do become involved in brand storytelling, with the "Do the Dew" campaigns (Holt 2003; pg.49). Based on previous findings that children seek entertainment as one of the gratifications of their social media use (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010), fostering collaborative brand storytelling efforts may be attractive to children, provided there is a clear entertainment gain for them. The Vines platform (a video site for consumers to upload six-second humorous videos, the best of which are uploaded to Facebook's Vines page) is an example of a social media platform whereby such brand-children storytelling collaboration could take place¹³. Finally, taking the perspective of co-creation, envisaging children as stakeholders in creating brand stories (Gensler, Volckner et al. 2013), might offer ways that brands could invite children to connect with them, such as offering entertainment, or fostering group membership via an "us versus them" strategy (Gensler, Volckner et al. 2013).

3.4 Conclusion

What is known about young people's social media participation is that teenagers spend most of their social media time reading and responding to posts on their page/s (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014) and editing their own profiles and that college students use Facebook to find information and to socialise with friends (Park, Kee et al. 2009), whilst older social media users are known to take advantage of brands and products to use as social cues for presentation purposes on sites such as Facebook (Hollenbeck and Kaikati 2012). Furthermore, hedonic motives such as enjoyment,

¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/BestOfVines>

achieving social status, and entertainment experiences are known to motivate older teens and young adult's use of Facebook, and such motives encourage interactions with consumer brands (Rohm, Kaltcheva et al. 2013).

What is known about children's social media use is that they participate in order to interact with their friends (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), and such interactions involve sharing of ideas and content, creating an identity, and for entertainment (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). Children use a range of social media behaviours that enable such interactions, such as agreeing with their friends via the Facebook "like" function, or sharing, commenting on or following social content. What is also known is that such sharing of ideas and content between friends on a social media site such as Facebook, helps children strengthen already existing friendships (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), but not much is known about the type of content that children share, or if it includes interactions with consumer brands. Earlier research showed that children's interactions on social media with celebrity brands can be fostered within the context of reality television shows such as Pop Idol (Tingstad 2007). Such interactions with a celebrity brand (or manufactured celebrity) have been shown from previous research to build strong emotional connections with the brand (Alperstein 1991), but there is little empirical research to draw on about children's social media use fostering such connections with a brand, beyond Tingstad's (2007) work. Very little is known about how children might use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or tumblr to interact with consumer brands, although it is probable that children are likely to follow brands that matter to them, because this could help improve their quality of friendships (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), by following socially significant brands. So, there is empirical understanding that children are motivated to use social media to fulfil needs such as interacting with friends, creating an identity, and seeking entertainment (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). However, not much is known about how children might be interacting with consumer brands as part of their social media participation, so this literature gap is where Research Question One (RQ1) is situated, so RQ1 asks how children are using social media to interact with consumer brands.

Previous research has already established that children learn about consumer brands through their cognitive development gains (McAlister and Cornwell 2010; John 1999), through interactions in their social relationships with family and friends (Cram and Ng

1999; Hayta 2008), and from viewing mass media, especially television advertising (John 1999; Maher, Hu et al. 2006). Learning essential market-related information such as the “right” brands to consume is also known to be fostered as a result of children’s membership and relationships within their reference groups (Roper and Shah 2007) and, in the context of social media, children’s social media relationships are known to focus on the quality of their friendships, so positive relationships with friends as a result of social media use helps children build their social capital (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014). Increasing social capital brings benefits such as building strong, emotionally-supportive reciprocal relationships (bonding social capital; Burke, Kraut et al. 2011), and can provide people with access to novel information (bridging social capital; Burke, Kraut et al. 2011) and access to resources they might not otherwise have. Such novel information could include new information about brands, but not much is known about how children’s social media use might be helping them learn about consumer brands. So, this literature gap is where Research Question Two (RQ2) is situated, and the intent of RQ2 is about how children’s social media use is helping them learn about consumer brands.

Previous research has already established that children have access to a wide variety of brand information sources (John 1999; Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), and such information is shared with them in social exchanges by influential socialisation agents such as family and friends (Hayta 2008). Children’s social media use is known to include social exchanges (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), and within such social exchanges there is value e.g. in the form of social rewards (Tyrie and Ferguson 2013), that are given for sharing information. The social rewards gained by children in their social media exchange relationships occur when, for example, children “like” another’s post on Facebook. The act of “liking” a friend’s posted content is rewarding to the friend, provided the child values the “likes.” Such a social exchange signifies a two-sided, reciprocal process (Emerson, 1976), and will be repeated if the child posting the content continues to receive “likes.” But being able to respond to others within such social media relationships in such ways is contingent on how social media platforms are constructed, so Facebook, for example, with a social model of friendship (Guille, Hacid et al. 2013), using directed connections, potentially offers more rewarding connections for children because of the ability to strengthen friendships. However, such connections are closely held, and it is known that users in these types of social relationships less

readily share novel information with each other, so such relationships may not provide the context for interacting with brand information from a range of sources. However, the asymmetric connections offered by the following models such as those of Twitter and tumblr (Guille, Hacid et al. 2013), are potentially more interesting because of the larger spheres of influence that socialising agents have for sharing information, such as a celebrity brand, and this is because of the increase in audience (Goggins and Petakovic 2014). Children's access to sources of brand information includes sources on and off social media, but not much is known about any interactions between the sources. So, the gap in understanding of how children's social media use interacts with other sources of brand information they have access to forms Research Question Three (RQ3).

Creating social media content or brand-related user-generated content (UGC; Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012) is known to be an activity that young adults or older teenagers will participate in using social media platforms, but such participation requires that the materials are manageable, relevant, and visually interesting (Greenhow 2008). Brand-related UGC is suggested to play a supporting role in the construction of Facebook personal profiles by adult social media users (Smith, Fischer et al. 2012), and it is known that the creation of user-generated content (UGC; Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012) on social media can strengthen the ties between consumers and brands, potentially shaping people's brand relationships, but it is not known if children participate on social media in this way. But because identity formation is an evolving task for people as they mature (Oyserman, Elmore et al. 2012), it is envisaged that children might use social media interactions for materials to continually update and communicate aspects of an evolving identity, and such interactions may include establishing connections with consumer brands (Hollenbeck and Kaikati 2012). Latent factors, such as children's drive to form an identity might provide the impetus for children to create UGC (Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012). Children's symbolic interactions with brands might provide the motivation to engage in social media brand interactions too, because of their need to use brand symbols to communicate identity, or to signify social status such as coolness (Ferguson 2011). So, children appropriating brand-related materials for use in identity formation are undertaking a different activity than that of creating social media content, although both activities would require children to establish connections with consumer brands.

Older social media users are known to connect with consumer brands if the brands adopt friendship behaviours, such as responsiveness and listening (Labrecque 2014), and such connections offer brands opportunities in their ongoing interactions to shape their relationships with consumers. However, not much is known about how such interactions work for children using social media, and this gap is where Research Question Four (RQ4) is situated. This question asks how children's social media interactions are shaping their consumer brand relationships. What follows next, in Chapter Four, is the detailed explanation of the method of this study including, at the close, a discussion of how trustworthiness was established.

Chapter Four

4.0 Method

The preceding chapters have reviewed relevant literature to identify gaps in the understanding about children's social media use, and the influence these interactions may have upon their brand understanding. Chapter Two explored children's emerging brand understanding and their brand relationships from the more traditional perspectives and mechanisms known to govern their socialisation as consumers. This review was conducted within the framework of the psychological model of cognitive development (Piaget 2003), the social contexts of children's development as consumers, and the role of mass media in facilitating children's consumer socialisation. Critical comments were provided at the close of this Chapter discussing this models' contribution to a deep understanding of the societal contexts governing children's brand relationships. Chapter Three used three sections, the first section exploring the literature relating to children's social media participation. Four perspectives are used here; children's user behaviour, their tasks of identity formation, the creation of user-generated content, and a uses and gratifications theory perspective. The second section explores the literature relating to children's social media relationships, from a social capital, social connections, social ties and social exchange perspective. The third section, children's use of social media for brand interactions, explores the literature from a symbolic interactionism perspective.

The overarching goal of this whole study then, is to seek answers to a basic question about children's consumer socialisation in advanced economies. This question asks how children's use of social media influences their relationships with consumer brands. This question forms part of a set of larger questions asking about the processes of children's consumer socialisation. The research interest lies in how their socialisation as consumers may be transforming, from a focus upon traditional forms of influence as socialisation agents (such as family values and contexts or mass media advertising), to new forms of influence and information, for example social media interactions.

The major goal of this method chapter is to clarify the philosophical basis for this study, explaining the decision to adopt a social constructionist approach, and clarifying the

subsequent theoretical and methodological choices. To accomplish this goal, the first part of the Chapter clarifies the epistemological perspective on which the study rests. Following this, explanations of the theoretical perspective and methodological choices are provided, including the logical flow from these perspectives to the choice of methods. This present Chapter outlines the choice of method carefully, including justifying why just one method was selected for this study. The final part of the Chapter explains the choice of analytical techniques, and how the results will be interpreted to give meaning and answers to the research question.

Chapter One, Introduction, contained a discussion clarifying the role of the researcher's values within this study. This early discussion is important for two reasons; first, it served to position the researcher in relation to the research, and to the larger topic of children's consumer socialisation. Second, clarifying the researcher's values brought to this study links to how trustworthiness has been established.

4.1 Research purpose

The main objective of this study is to ask questions about the phenomenon of children's use of social media, both as an information source and a communication medium. The interest in this area lies in how children use social media, especially in how they might be using these tools to find out about, and build relationships with consumer brands. This objective relates to the larger question about how the sources of children's consumer socialisation may be transforming.

Prior research from the marketing discipline has investigated the sources of children's consumer socialisation from a number of perspectives. The studies relating more closely to the research objectives of this study are briefly reviewed. For example, Hayta (2008) conceptualises an input/output model of socialisation (pg.168). This model includes individual factors, relational and group factors (e.g. family members, friends, mass media tools) and learning mechanisms. The output of the combination of these factors is the socialised consumer (Hayta 2008). Research Objective Three, looking at how children's social media use interacts with other sources of brand information can usefully be explored from this perspective. Children's influence upon family purchase decision making situations in India was examined using a correlation study. Children's

social media use was investigated as a source of information and as a socialisation agent in the context of these purchasing decisions (Senthilkumar and Ramachandran 2011). Social media in this context was conceptualised as a source of product and brand information, whereby once acquired, children could influence the family buying decisions (Senthilkumar and Ramachandran 2011; pg.345). This study reached the conclusion that there was no significant correlation between children's membership in social network media, or SNM (the authors' term; pg.346) and their word-of-mouth sharing of product and/or brand information (pg.352). Research objectives one and two, (how children are using social media to interact with consumer brands, and how this use is helping them learn about brands), can be explored and insights reviewed in concert with the conclusions of the Senthilkumar and Ramachandran (2011) study.

A recent USA study investigated the potential of the Internet as a new socialisation agent of young people (Barber 2013; Generations X and Y; the oldest people in this cohort are now aged 50 and the youngest are 16 years); compared to traditional agents (family, peers, and mass media; Barber 2013; pg. 179). The study proposed that the youngest age cohort, Generation Y (those born between 1978 and 1998), with their immersive use of social media networks for continuous peer connection, have internalised internet technology and formed a different set of expectations about consumption (Barber 2013; pg. 183). This is explained in the context of information and experiences sharing using internet tools, so that Generation Y young people will share their consumption choices with peers to gain acceptance and approval (pg.183), and will connect with or abandon brands on impulse in response to advice from peers. The current research objectives relating to how children use social media and how these interactions are shaping their consumer brand relationships (objectives one, two, and four), can be informed by this conceptualisation of young people's internet use.

So, in concert with the ideas reviewed briefly here, this current study is also asking about how the sources of information about consumer brands might be transforming. The difference with this current study is the research interest and focus is upon future consumers (now children, ages 11 to 14), and how they might be using new ways of interacting with consumer brand information sources, for example, social media. This particular age group is characterised by many as Generation Z (Barber 2013), born

between 1996 and 2013; their hyper-connectivity and facility with digital technology, especially with social media applications outpaces all other generations.¹⁴

Set in the context of children's consumer socialisation, it is appropriate that this area receives more research attention. This research makes a new contribution to the literature discussing children's consumer socialisation. The research extends the marketing literature investigating consumer social media use, and the intersections with the development of consumer brand knowledge. The research provides a new perspective on an emerging consumer group's social media use, and any links between this and their developing relationships with consumer brands. This is beneficial for marketing professionals.

The research extends the qualitative methodology literature in the marketing discipline with the application of an innovative method for working with child contributors (self-selected friendship pairs). The research will benefit parents, educators, technology advocacy groups, and Society who are interested in the processes and outcomes of children's social media use.

This research enquiry is about asking and answering certain questions about new social media phenomena as children relate to this. The focus of interest is how children's interactions with these phenomena relate to ways they might be learning essential information about and interacting with consumer brands. A key aspect of the research question to answer is how the ways children are using to learn about consumer brands interact with other information sources. This is of interest because these interactions are said to help children create their brand relationships, especially in the form of building attachments to brands (Fournier 1998; John 1999; Thompson, MacInnis and Park, 2005).

Thus, an overall research question and four research objectives were formulated to address these areas of interest, and these are given next.

¹⁴ http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=11247694.

The central research question guiding this study asks how is social media (e.g. Facebook), both as an information source and a communication medium, influencing children's brand interactions?

The resulting four research objectives (including one sub-objective to focus R1) are:

Research Objective 1: How are children using social media?

R1(a) to interact with consumer brands?

Research Objective 2: How is children's social media use helping them learn about consumer brands?

Research Objective 3: How is children's social media use interacting with other sources of brand information?

Research Objective 4: How are children's social media interactions shaping their consumer brand relationships?

4.1.1 Research outline

The researcher takes a social constructionist approach (Crotty 1998; Gergen 2009). This epistemological stance holds that knowledge and meaning is socially constructed, not discovered, and that "the truth" is not lying around somewhere waiting for researchers to pick it up (Crotty 1998; Willig 2013). This approach is appropriate for this study because of the complex social and cultural contexts in which child consumers are embedded (Nairn, Griffin et al., 2008). Being a child in an advanced consumer economy in the twenty-first century means exposure to multiple sources of brand information, all requiring some kind of social interpretation and meaning-making (Nairn, Griffin et al., 2008).

The social constructionist approach flows on to an interpretivist theoretical perspective, and this study takes an interactionist perspective (Crotty 1998). This is a logical progression for this research, because symbolic interactionism treats as significant the social forces that shape people (Crotty 1998). Children are embedded in complex social

contexts such as family and friendship groups, and these groups are subject to the forces in New Zealand society. The forces that have an impact upon children are wide-ranging, but those especially relevant to this study could include things such as changing regulations about internet activity; for instance prohibiting free downloads of movies or music; cyber safety advocates in schools seeking to restrict or curtail children's internet activities or the advent of new legislation such as the "Anti-Smacking Bill" prohibiting parental discipline of children by force.¹⁵

Symbolic interactionism, as a theoretical perspective, views people as active and creative participants in the world, who attach meaning to things, and then act on the basis of that meaning (Benzies and Allen, 2001). This perspective resonates with the fundamental premise of this study's epistemology, social constructionism, in that people define "reality" (or things) from a specific standpoint or view, and these definitions are used, agreed, or transformed in communication with others (Gergen 2009). These descriptions and definitions constructed in social relationships become how "reality" is made real in social constructionist terms (Gergen 2009).

Pragmatism informs the methodology, and from this flows thematic analysis for the analytical techniques. Pragmatism offers links backwards and forwards to social constructionism and symbolic interactionism, offering the researcher a way to focus closely on the social forces and processes shaping people's social relations and communication (Crotty 1998). Thematic analysis is the analytical choice. This technique is drawn from grounded theory (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Goulding 1998, 2000, 2002; Tan 2010) which has its genesis in symbolic interactionism (Crotty 1998). Thus, clear and logical links are established for the study, flowing from the social constructionist epistemology, to symbolic interactionism as the theoretical perspective, underpinned by a pragmatism approach, to the choice of thematic analysis. From this progression, semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews were selected as the choice of methods. The details of the research approach for this study show how each of the "parts" resonate with each other (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). This is an important aspect of establishing trustworthiness for this study. That is, because all methodological

¹⁵ <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/>

approaches to inquiry grow out of particular assumptions and values about how the world can be known and interpreted, the methodological and theoretical paradigms of an approach need to resonate with each other. If this is so, then a sense of validity can be provided to the findings (Guba and Lincoln, 1982; pg.243).

The research objectives are met as follows. Research Objective One is explored in Chapter Three, from a range of perspectives. The focus is on understanding how children use social media to interact with consumer brands. This objective is also satisfied as part of the research findings from the qualitative interviews. Research Objective Two is fulfilled from the critical review in Chapter Three, and the interview findings. Research Objective Three is met partially from the critical literature review in Chapters Two and Three, and from the interview findings. Research Objective Four is satisfied from the critical literature review contained in Chapter Three, and from the interview findings.

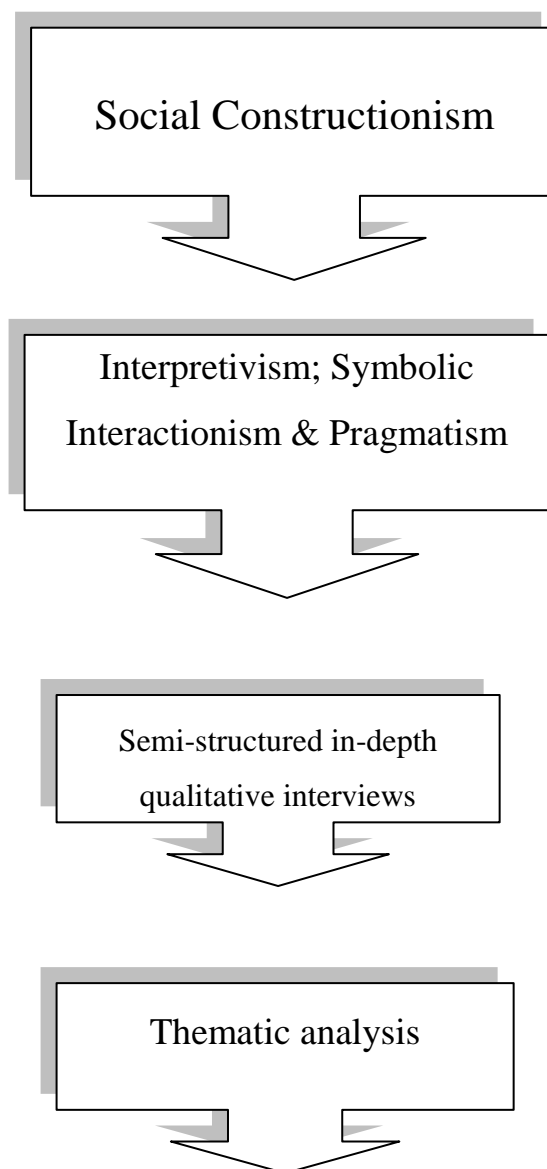
Other possible approaches for this study were considered but rejected (for example, objectivism-positivism coupled with survey research and scaled questionnaires). This is to maintain the consistency of the philosophical approach in this study from the overarching research tradition of social constructionism, through to the final choice of methods, in-depth qualitative interviews. This is also because the level of complexity inherent in the highly-contextual nature of advanced consumer economies cannot be accounted for by an approach that looks only at the “parts” to understand the whole (Crotty 1998; Guba and Lincoln, 1982). The nature of this research calls for an approach that enables a constant movement from parts to the whole, and back again. Thus, the high-context consumer culture in which children live requires a more sympathetic and complex research approach. Such an approach needs to be able to take account of the multiple links between consumers, their actions, the market, and culture (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Nairn, Griffin et al., 2008), and how people’s social interactions create meaning about these contexts (Crotty 1998).

The following sections justify the reasoning for this research approach, so the philosophical stance underlying this study is explained next.

4.2 Philosophical approach

This section explains the philosophical approach to this study, with the acknowledgement that the researcher holds certain beliefs about what knowledge is, and about its creation. The philosophical approach outlined here provides the logic for the subsequent methodological and methods choices made for this study (Crotty 1998). The research approach can be seen in the following diagram:

Figure 4.0 Research approach



4.2.1 Epistemology

The philosophical grounding to this study is Constructionism (Crotty 1998). This philosophy of knowledge holds that “meaning” exists when consciousness is engaged, through people’s social interactions using language (Crotty 1998; Gergen 2009). Thus, people actively construct the meaning of phenomena that they experience as part of living in the world, using language. This meaning is constructed in the context of people’s communications within their social relationships. Because the way in which meaning about phenomena in the world is actively constructed by people communicating with each other in these social contexts, the Constructionist view becomes more specifically that of Social Constructionism, the social construction of reality, (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Gergen 2009), and this is the perspective of this study.

Social Constructionism is characterised by five fundamental assumptions that embody the central ideas about this philosophy of knowledge (Crotty 1998; Gergen 2009). The first two assumptions relate to that of how reality is accounted for; that is, people make “what is” (reality) to be that, by the way language is used to construct beliefs and understandings of the world and phenomena in it (Gergen 2009). An important part of this meaning making is that people will make use of already available meanings that are “there”, and these are given as lenses by the particular culture people are born into (Crotty 1998; pg.54), thus helping with the sense-making of the world. This is important to understand for this current study; because children are already embedded into a consumer culture world whereby brands and social media are present, it is likely that the lenses children will be using to explain their understandings of this world will be specific to an advanced consumer culture. The immediate question from the social constructionist’s perspective then becomes, what are these lenses? Working on an understanding of this question will give insights for the main research question posed for this study; that is, how social media, (e.g. Facebook), both as an information source and a communication medium, influences children’s brand relationships.

The second assumption clarifies how people actually make meaning of phenomena. This assumption holds that people construct meaning about phenomena in the world as outcomes of their social relationships (Gergen 2009), and that this is an active

construction. That is, people compare views with each other of specific phenomena, and undertake negotiations about the meaning of things or events, form agreements, and so forth (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Gergen 2009). These shared agreements or shared meanings about phenomena become the collective way of understanding and explaining the world's "reality" (Gergen 2009). Thus, these shared agreements become the accepted way of viewing the world, become the reality of everyday life, and eventually transform into "common sense" provided the shared agreements about meaning remain (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; pg.37). Thinking in this way about how groups of people construct social reality, and how this becomes "common sense," then, makes it easy to understand how some of the deep dissensions between groups in one society or between societies have formed and are perpetuated.

Relating to this second assumption is the matter that the shared agreements of the "meaning of things" changes over time (Gergen 2009), or in response to some kind of larger event or issue. This becomes the basis by which social life is in a constant state of flux, if we choose to think about various aspects of it (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Gergen 2009). An example of this kind of change can be found in the eventual outcomes from "moral panics" (Kell 2008) that, as Kell (2008) puts it, sweep across societies every now and then when a particular issue or challenge arises that hints at deeper symptoms of some impending cultural change to the way we do things (Kell 2008; pg.1). This perspective is relevant to this study, because an aspect of this study is seeking information about children's use of the collection of internet tools called social media, and New Zealand society has been discussing for some time what an appropriate use (or non-use) of these tools constitutes for children. Some people want the use of some social media sites banned for younger children (e.g. those under 15)¹⁶ however, this would be an unusual response in New Zealand. So the basis of this discussion could thus be re-envisioned in social constructionist terms as, for example, an appropriate use of social media could be for children to practice building skills in socialising with others, or of learning to manage their social presence (important for future employment opportunities), or learning to manage large amounts of complex written, visual or spatial data, or of extending their creativity (Hendrix 2014). An aspect related to this

¹⁶ http://www.nzherald.co.nz/bay-of-plenty-times/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503343&objectid=11073665

study could be re-envisioning the terms and opportunities by which consumer brands can engage with young consumers over social media; for some, thinking about these possibilities will be a contentious issue (Roper and Shah, 2007).

A third assumption underpinning social constructionism relates to the social utility, or usefulness, of people's constructions (Gergen 2009). This refers to how people understand and come to use acceptable ways of talking and behaving in everyday, social contexts (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). These ways (or cultural traditions; Crotty 1998) need to be useful, especially in face-to-face interactions in order to help people survive in society and to cooperate together. This assumption of the social utility of people's constructions relates to the current study. That is, the ways that children might be communicating using social media likely have utility in specific social contexts and not others. These ways, or "social media talk" (Gergen 2009; pg.10), might involve actions such as posting a status update to Facebook, or commenting upon a celebrity brand on Tumblr, within the social contexts of making new friends, or sharing specific information with online friends about "cool" celebrities to follow (i.e. the eventual outcome of this social media talk is the building of brand knowledge).

Thus, the focus of constructionism on the utility of social relationships means the nature of these relationships can be accounted for in this research. This is an important aspect because of the context in which children live in advanced consumer economies today (Nairn, Griffin et al., 2008). This context is characterised by cultural, economic, and political frameworks shaping people's social relationships. These relationships in turn shape how people are to respond in the market-place (Nairn, Griffin et al., 2008; pg. 630). Children are not immune to how their social relationships are shaped, and as some scholars have noted (for example, Cram and Ng, 1999; Hayta 2008), children are socialised into their roles as consumers readily because of the constellation of influences they experience when growing up. These are factors like individual differences, cultural and familial factors, and the impact of learning mechanisms like social learning, all applicable to shaping children's social relationships (Hayta 2008). Finally, these relationships are salient because interactions with friends and others are formative in terms of making meaning of phenomena and for developing social capability (Bandura 1997).

The ability to create the future is the fourth assumption underpinning social constructionist ideas (Gergen 2009). This relates specifically to how people use language to describe and explain things within relationships, how this use of language sustains cultural traditions, and how language and meaning is continuously modified so that the cultural traditions deemed important can survive (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Gergen 2009). The critical understanding from this assumption is an acknowledgement that domain specific languages can be modified to regenerate meaning (Gergen 2009). This is relevant to the current study, because what the children may be doing, learning, and negotiating from their involvement with social media is (potentially) transforming their interactions with consumer brands in some way, and this could be an indicator of how future consumers will behave (Hendrix 2014).

The fifth and final assumption underpinning social constructionist ideas relates to reflecting upon the taken-for-granted understandings of a society's valued traditions (Gergen 2009; pg.12). In the context of this current study, it will be important for the researcher to reflect upon the traditions prevailing in New Zealand (the site of the study), to determine what these might be in the context of children's consumer socialisation. This will mean reflecting on traditions such as the general motivation to protect children from internet "predators" by restricting their ability to use the internet freely e.g. applying restrictions as to how children can use the internet; contained within such public advocacy groups such as Netsafe; and supplying special tools for teaching children about digital citizenship and internet safety, for example the learning package found at "Hectors World" (see footnote for link)¹⁷. In summary, the Social Constructionist epistemology underpins this study. This gives rise to the following premises: first, a researcher can understand how a child interacts with social media phenomena to learn (and construct) essential information about consumer brands. The child is capable of conveying this information (Docherty and Sandelowski, 2009). Second, that this interaction is subsequently reflected in the child's relationships with brands, especially in emotional connections to brands as part of this relationship (Fournier 1998; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park, 2005). Third, that this interaction is part of the social reality of children participating in advanced consumer economies today,

¹⁷ <http://www.netsafe.org.nz/hectors-world-cybersafety-for-children-aged-2-9/>

and this relates to how children are socialised as consumers (Cram and Ng, 1999; Hayta 2008; Nairn, Griffin et al., 2008). Fourth, the child's interaction with social media and how this is described and explained is what makes it meaningful. Fifth, it is the intensity of interaction that matters and without these interactions social media is merely a collection of Internet-based tools.

The preceding section's discussion focuses on the nature of children's interactions with social media tools, and what these interactions might mean for their involvement and participation with consumer brands. This leads to the theoretical perspective adopted for the study, that of symbolic interactionism. The social constructionist approach resonates with symbolic interactionism as the theoretical perspective, and the reasoning for this is explained in the following section.

4.2.2 Theoretical Perspective: Symbolic Interactionism

This study focuses on uncovering the significance of aspects of children's social life, in the sense that they experience this interactively as part of living in New Zealand's consumer culture (Charon 1998). The key aspects this study is interested in are children's use of social media, and how these interactions relate to children's consumer brand relationships. These aspects have been explored from the perspective of the current literature, in Chapters Two and Three. The task then of the theoretical perspective of this study, Symbolic Interactionism, is to provide a way of coming closer to understanding the children's social reality (Charon 1998). The first task of the theoretical perspective is to provide a framework, or a way of envisaging the data within the much larger context of the consumer culture that the children live in (Meltzer and Petras, 1973; in Shibutani 1973), and second, to continuously remind the researcher that the children, and the consumer culture they live in, are inseparable. For this study, then, this second task refers to the proposition that the way to understand the children's relationships with consumer brands and social media, is to understand the social situations and interactions they are participating in (Meltzer and Petras, 1973; in Shibutani 1973). A critical point from symbolic interactionism is the focus upon directing the researcher to look for the symbols and the language "in which social life gets done" (Plummer 1998; in Stones, 1998; pg.88), so this perspective makes sense for this current study.

The symbolic interactionist sees people as active, creative participants who construct their social world (Benzies and Allen, 2001). Three main assumptions underpin symbolic interactionism, and these have important implications for this current study. First, the way people act towards things is explained on the basis of the meaning these things have for them. These actions occur both individually and collectively (Benzies and Allen, 2001). Symbolic interactionism acknowledges that things in the world (and the world), exist outside of and apart from the individual, but are interpreted using various symbols (e.g. language; Benzies and Allen, 2001; pg. 544).

The immediate link to this current study is acknowledging the ability of individual children to conceptualise consumer brands as symbols, the meaning of which, and interpretations of, can be explained by the children using language (Belk, Bahn, and Mayer 1982; Belk, Mayer, and Driscoll 1984; Levy 1959; John 1999). An interactionist perspective also allows for the possibility that the children (in this current study), may be using social media interactions to re-envision and re-interpret cultural symbols (in this instance consumer brands) that have been handed to them by the macro-consumer culture (Nairn, Griffin, et al. 2008; Solomon 1983). This is because of the potential social media tools offer to consumers to change the meanings of, re-invent, or regenerate accepted cultural symbols (Hendrix 2014) without interference by brand or culture creator-owners.

For example, the website Tumblr provides specific examples of these “cultural symbol transformations” by website users, e.g. the New Zealand singer, Lorde (see footnote for a link to her Tumblr site)¹⁸. A perusal of this site will show visuals of luxury iconic brands positioned in unusual or threatening situations, for example, a Louis Vuitton handbag being used as barbecue fuel in place of charcoal. The symbolic imagery of the Louis Vuitton brand is strongly associated with art, particularly the creation of art (Dion and Arnould, 2011), and maintains its iconic status via this activity (Dion and Arnould, 2011). Of course, it is always possible that a Louis Vuitton handbag being used as barbecue fuel could be reinterpreted as a contemporary art piece.

This meaning does not arise alone; that is, the meaning of things arises from people’s interactions with each other social interactions (Benzies and Allen, 2001). These

¹⁸ <http://lordemusic.tumblr.com/>

meanings and actions are interpreted, resulting in the generation of collective or shared meaning (Solomon 1983). A key emphasis of symbolic interactionism is the focus upon the social nature of individuals; so all individual interpretation is best understood in the social context in which the individual lives (Benzies and Allen, 2001; Solomon 1983). This is important to understand for the current study.

Children's use of social media (for example), occurs within high-context social settings, set within an advanced consumer culture, with the interactions mediated by internet technology tools called "social media." Consumer brands are parties to these interactions too, offering information and positioning themselves "as symbols" that stand for something (Levy 1959). Symbolic interactionism offers the opportunity to access these social settings, building insights into how children construct meaning about these interactions, the symbols they use as part of these interactions, and what meaning these have.

Symbolic Interactionism has a clear focus upon uncovering and understanding social processes (Benzies and Allen, 2001). The use of social media to find out information, for example, about consumer brands, and to share findings with friends, can be conceptualised as a social process. Symbolic Interactionism provides the means by which understanding of this process can be sought. The means by which children may use social media to find out about, interpret, and transform behaviour towards consumer brands can be investigated from a Symbolic Interactionist perspective (Solomon 1983). Finally, the focus on uncovering process is important for understanding the viewpoints that the children are developing as future consumers. Symbolic Interactionism provides a lens for looking at this aspect of children's consumer socialisation. The interpretive and meaning-making process is continuous and changing in social life, and this means that redefinitions occur and these can be transformative (Benzies and Allen, 2001) in enabling people to create new ways to respond to things, thus actively shaping their own futures (Benzies and Allen, 2001). This is a relevant perspective for this current study, because today's children are New Zealand's future consumers, and there may be a fundamental shift going on in terms of the roles they will agree to play as consumers in the future, pushed by their use of digital technology now (Hendrix 2014).

In summary, Symbolic Interactionism forms the theoretical perspective of this study, and this perspective provides a way for the researcher to read and interpret the children's transcribed interview information (Benzies and Allen, 2001).

The preceding section provides an outline and justification for the theoretical perspective of this study, symbolic interactionism. The next section explains the decision to adopt a pragmatic focus as the underlying methodological approach, and thematic analysis as the analytical technique. While thematic analysis is a technique drawn from grounded theory, the perspective has its genesis in symbolic interactionism (Crotty 1998). Thus, the following section continues to develop the congruence of the research approach to this study.

4.2.3 Methodological approach: Pragmatism

The roots of pragmatism are essentially constructionist and critical in nature (Crotty 1998), and offer researchers opportunities to ask critical questions about how social forces and social relations shape how people come to be themselves in society (Crotty 1998). Such ideas fit with this study's theoretical approach, with pragmatism being regarded by some as the same as symbolic interactionism (Crotty 1998).

However, pragmatism can be grounded in contemporary and critical forms of enquiry too (Hoffer 2012), so taking such a perspective offers the opportunity for this research to consider how children's use of social media for brand interactions relates to how such interactions help children shape their social selves (Crotty 1998). Research Objective Four (R Q 4) asks how children's social media interactions are shaping their consumer brand relationships, and embedded in this objective are questions about how such shaping contributes to children's socialisation as consumers.

Pragmatism as a methodological perspective does offer a way for the researcher to think about the outcomes of research in terms of the practical outcomes, such outcomes being strongly linked to the social practices within which they are embedded (Crotty 1998). Such a practical perspective makes sense for this study, given that the focus for this research is on exploring interaction processes that children use on social media to interact with consumer brands.

However, a criticism of research adopting a pragmatism approach is that such research may in fact become just an exploration of aspects of the social world, avoiding subjecting the social world to criticism (Crotty 1998). To counter this, more contemporary views hold that issues of social justice and truth-telling should underpin the pragmatism perspective (Hoffer 2012). These ideas make sense for the current study, offering a way for the researcher to think about the implications for children and brands of any interaction processes used on social media.

Finally, pragmatism lends itself to data collection and analysis techniques that take seriously the point of view of “the actor” in social relations (Crotty 1998). Thematic analysis provides the techniques for working with social and communication data, such as that provided by the children in the qualitative interviews. What follows next is the discussion of the reasoning for using qualitative interviews as the data collection method, and of thematic analysis as the analytical approach for the data.

4.2.4 Method: Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative face-to-face interviewing was the method selected for this study. This is congruent with thematic analysis (analytical approach), the symbolic interactionist and pragmatism approach (theoretical perspective), and social constructionism.

Face-to-face interviews as a research technique have long been used as a key tool of qualitative inquiry (Crotty 1998). However, critics of this method of information gathering have in the past focused on a constellation of issues trivialising the interview as a trustworthy research technique (Kvale 1994), not capable of eliciting thoughtful and accurate information about the participant’s experiences and interpretations of these. Because this study uses in-depth face-to-face interviews as the only method of information collection, it is important to establish at the outset the veracity and trustworthiness of this method so this is discussed next.

Naturalistic inquiry (Guba and Lincoln 1982) has “setting” as a design consideration (pg.245). Social settings and social worlds, and how people speak about these, need to be observed as they naturally occur. The main concern here is to avoid contrived or controlled settings such as those done under laboratory conditions (Guba and Lincoln 1982). It could be argued that face-to-face interviews are in contrived settings, as it is not usual for people to be interviewed by a stranger for up to an hour. The use of paired

interviews in this study was a way, then, of creating more comfortable conditions for the children, to approach as “natural” a setting as possible (that is, talking with a friend about topics) so the children would feel able to talk more freely (Highet 2003).

The use of longer in-depth interviews involving children in the academic marketing literature is less prominent. There is little guidance about how to involve children in in-depth interviews so as to ensure they are able to provide information in ways that work for them (Docherty and Sandelowski 1999). A small selection of previous child-based research from the marketing literature (e.g. Andronikidis and Lambriandou 2010; Belk and Mayer 1982; Chan, Tufte, Cappello and Williams 2011; Maher, Hu and Kolbe 2006; Moore and Lutz 2000; and Tingstad 2007) show that all have utilised a range of face-to-face interviewing techniques enabling their child participants to provide their information at the time of the studies.

For example, two studies used in-depth interviews with children exploring their involvement with television advertising and product experiences (Moore and Lutz 2000; Tingstad 2007); one study used focus groups evaluating children’s understanding of television advertising (Andronikidis and Lambrianidou 2010), one study used interviews exploring the perceptions of images collected by the children in relation to the research question (Chan, Tufte et al. 2011), and one study utilised short (12 minutes duration) interviews exploring children’s recall of elements of television advertisements (Maher, Hu et al. 2006).

This particular study takes the position that children are the best sources of information about themselves (Docherty and Sandelowski 1999) and therefore can be thought capable of participating fully in an in-depth interview on topics that might interest them.

All children were offered the choice of a paired interview; most children and their parents opted for individual interviews. So despite the researcher offering paired interviews to increase the children’s comfort, only six paired interviews were conducted and eleven individual interviews (of a total of twenty-three children interviewed).

Prior to the interviews the children were given their own special Information Sheet and an Assent Form; this was an important part of the process to try to put the children at the centre of the interview process right from the start (Docherty and Sandelowski 1999). These materials can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Older children's narrative ability means that their ability to participate in face-to-face interviews needs fewer cues and they can provide rich information; so many of the Interview Guide Questions were designed to help younger children talk about their thoughts and ideas and were more explicit in asking for information (view this in Appendix 1).

Free recall as an interviewing technique (Docherty and Sandelowski 1999) using very open-ended unstructured questions to help children start talking (e.g. in the present study, free recall questions range from things like asking children "so what are some of the things that you're really into?" or "what are some of the favourite things you like to do?") were used to help children respond more spontaneously.

4.2.4.1 Sources of interview questions

The use of prompts to help younger children (under age 12), to access their experiences in the interview links to the way interview questions are used (Docherty and Sandelowski 1999). In particular, the use of indirect questioning (Fisher 1993) is promoted as a way of helping reduce social desirability bias resulting from interview participants trying to formulate (perceived) socially acceptable responses. According to Fisher (1993), indirect, structured projective questioning is an accepted technique used to diminish the effects of bias due to social desirability. The kinds of questions most usually framed in this way ask the interview participants to imagine themselves as "the other person" in a situation, and to predict or explain how "the other person" would behave, or what they might think or feel about being in the situation (Fisher 1993). For example, the kinds of indirect questions the present study asked the children were designed to get children's views on the characteristics of "the other users" in their group (for Facebook users), or "what Facebook users their age" might be like (for non-users). Questions were asked about sources of information for finding out about new things e.g. using the format of "imagine being the new boy/girl at your school...how would they find out about the cool things to be into?"

Interview Guide Questions can be viewed in Appendix 1. The following Table 4.0 summarises the supporting literature from consumer behaviour, and other fields that was used to help formulate the interview questions.

Table 4.0 Sources of Interview Questions

Topic/concept	Summary	Reference
Interview questions: warm-up questions	Discusses the processes of designing and undertaking interviews; defines types of interviews; offers suggestions for warm-up questions; provides advice on interview duration (under half an hour not useful; over an hour too lengthy); provides a source of directly relevant interview questions for children relating to brands & children's consumer activities.	Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008; Robson 1993.
Interview structure: free recall & unstructured interview schedules; using direct questions.	Provides a discussion of ways to interview children; discusses the accuracy of information obtained from free recall & suggests this is more accurate than relying on specific questions; suggests using prompts for young children to help retrieval; suggests using direct questions to help fill blanks especially for young children; reminds researchers that children tell stories about salient events & these are captured as the interview information.	Docherty and Sandelowski 1999; Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008.
Justifying the use of qualitative interviews.	A thorough outline of the many objections to qualitative interviews; provides a well-reasoned response discussing the benefits using this method gives to the production of knowledge; gives suggestions for improving the quality of interviews.	Kvale 1994.
Qualitative interviews; evaluating qualitative research and trustworthiness.	Preferred methods (interviews, observation, non-verbal cues, document analyses) characterise naturalistic paradigms; discusses the issue of power imbalance when interviewing children & offers suggestions for overcoming this, e.g. informality, building the research relationship, informal conversations; advocates explicit description of procedures to enhance assessment of trustworthiness.	Bricher 1999; Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Spiggle 1994.

Qualitative interviews; indirect questioning benefits.	Interview or self-report data is prone to social desirability effects; the use of indirect questioning has potential to reduce these distorting effects and can prove useful when investigating socially sensitive issues.	Fisher 1993
Friendship pairs; methodological considerations of qualitative interviewing with children.	Promotes use of paired interviews for young people; paired interviews provide social interaction data; increase naturalistic context; enable access into closed emotional worlds e.g. that of boys; discusses interviewing very young children (under eleven years) & ways to act ethically; enable children to give their assent freely to an interview; ways of forming questions (for youngsters, focus on concrete facts); using clarifying & reflecting techniques to help reduce inconsistencies; advocates pilot interviews.	Hight 2003; Kortessluoma, Hentinen and Nikkonen, 2003; Spratling, Coke, and Minick, 2012.

4.2.5 Analytical approach: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis, as an analytic technique drawn from grounded theory, is a way to work in a systematic fashion with the children's qualitative interview information.

Thematic analysis can be used in many research traditions (Boyatzis 1998), and is sufficiently flexible to be able to help researchers move between more interpretive approaches (such as that exemplified in this current study) to more positivist approaches (Boyatzis 1998). To continue establishing congruence for this current study, the use of thematic analysis is compatible with the constructionist perspective of this study (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is also compatible with the choice of qualitative interviews as the data collection method, and is the data analysis process (Crotty 1998).

Thematic analysis brings other benefits to this study. As a methodological approach, it provides a systematic way for the researcher to increase her sensitivity and accuracy in understanding and interpreting the qualitative interview data (Boyatzis 1998).

Increasing the researcher's sensitivity to the data is important for this study, because the interview data is provided by children, and the adult researcher is the analyst. So, a process is needed that is sensitive to the ways children represent things, and that enables themes or patterns to be perceived in what might appear as random information (Boyatzis 1998; pg.3).

Thematic analysis is an inductive technique, and this study takes an inductive approach (Atkinson and Delamont, 2008; in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Guba and Lincoln, 1982). An inductive approach is appropriate when little is understood about the phenomena of interest (Guba and Lincoln, 1982) and, as the critical analysis in Chapter Three shows, little is understood about how children use social media (Research Objective One). Also, little is understood about how children's use of social media might be helping them learn about consumer brands (Research Objective Two), and how this use might be interacting with other sources of brand information (Research Objective Three). Finally, little is understood about how these interactions might be shaping children's relationships with consumer brands (Research Objectives Three and Four).

Thematic analysis requires the use of specific procedures for getting the data ready (Boyatzis 1998) so the researcher (analyst) is able to do the work of developing themes to answer the research objectives. These procedures are explained for this study in the next section, including, first, an explanation of terms used in thematic analysis such as theme, and the analytic terms latent and manifest, and how these relate to this study (Boyatzis 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006).

4.2.5.1 What is an authentic theme?

In the research context the word “theme” denotes a motif, or a unifying idea that is a recurrent element in the information being investigated (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Themes represent “codable moments” (Boyatzis 1998; pg. 9), and, to be fair representations of the phenomena being investigated, need to be identified reliably and consistently (Boyatzis 1998). The skill of reliably and consistently coding themes and developing a source code so that others can use it, relates to the development of the overall trustworthiness of the study (Guba and Lincoln, 1982), especially that of establishing credibility and dependability.

The above discussion includes the idea of authenticity in regard to themes being derived from the children’s information. This relates closely to the development of the source code, and from that the consistent application of this code to the information set to reliably identify themes (Boyatzis 1998). Another way to verify authenticity in this study is the use of other raters (e.g. trained colleagues) to determine the interrater reliability of the coding of themes (Boyatzis 1998). Finally, authentic themes are those that have a relationship with the research question, and can say something important in relation to it and the research objectives (Braun and Clarke, 2006). So, in this study’s case, authentic themes will be considered as those that closely capture, or relate to, the research question, and may not be those themes that occur most frequently in the information.

The development of the source code needed to identify authentic themes is accomplished by, in this study, reducing the raw information from a subsample of five transcripts taken from the main sample (Boyatzis 1998; pg. 45). These sub-sample

scripts will form the criterion-referenced information, and serve as the basis for the inductively-developed code (Boyatzis 1998; pg. 41). The code is then applied across the remaining transcripts from the data set. This process is explained in more detail later in this section under the heading of Data Analysis Techniques: Source Code Development. Here, the next section begins by explaining the two types of thematic analysis, latent and manifest, then moves to the explanation of the development of the source code, and ends with a discussion of how quality assurance was achieved for this study.

4.2.5.2 Latent and manifest analysis for themes

The notion of an authentic theme has been previously explained, and it can be seen that identifying themes reliably and consistently in qualitative data requires specific analytic techniques (Boyatzis 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Miles and Huberman, 1994). It is possible to distinguish between two types of analysis when using thematic analysis to generate themes; latent and manifest analysis (Boyatzis 1998). Both types of analysis can be used simultaneously (pg. 16). This study focuses primarily upon latent analysis because the research question and subsequent research objectives call for an approach to uncover underlying processes of influence (Athens 2010; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Latent analysis is an interpretive approach; this study takes an interpretive approach; thus internal congruency continues to be established and this supports the trustworthiness of the study (Guba and Lincoln, 1982).

Latent means dormant, hidden or concealed, underlying something that is responsible for the expression of that something outwards. This thinking makes sense for this study. The overarching aim of this study is to seek answers to a basic question about children's consumer socialisation in advanced economies. This question asks how children's use of social media influences their relationships with consumer brands, and, because children's consumer socialisation is a social process (Hayta 2008), there will be underlying processes at work. These processes are thought to give rise to the nature of these social interactions and their eventual outcomes (in this study's context, for example, building consumer brand knowledge and relationships; John 1999). So the task of the latent analysis, then, is to identify those themes that say something about the

underlying processes that explain how children's use of social media influences their consumer brand relationships (Research Objectives Two and Four; Boyatzis 1998).

Manifest analysis is looking for the more obvious in the information set; for example the actual content of something (Boyatzis 1998). This is a useful approach for partially investigating Research Objective One (how are children using social media?); and Research Objectives Two and Three (how is children's social media use helping them learn about consumer brands; and interacting with other sources of brand information). Manifest analysis is conducted at the literal level, and will be used in this study to establish some basic factual information about the topic of inquiry (Boyatzis 1998).

Thematic analysis as a methodological approach demands the application of specific steps so the actual analysis process is reliably conducted. The steps provide quality assurance that the themes claimed to be representative of the phenomena of interest are reliably those, and this is an essential first step in the development of the Source Code (Boyatzis 1998). The first of these steps is readying the raw data, so the next section provides an explanation of how the children's interview data was readied for thematic analysis. This explanation also outlines the steps taken to ensure quality assurance for this stage; these steps mostly relate to sampling decisions and preparation of the raw data and how these steps support the trustworthiness of the study (Boyatzis 1998; Creswell 2013; Guba and Lincoln, 1982; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

4.2.5.3 Data Quality and Data Readiness Procedures for Thematic Analysis

Undertaking thematic analysis demands particular procedures in relation to working with the raw data to be used for source code development. This is because the quality of the data (e.g. qualitative interview data) affects the degree to which the eventual themes represent the phenomena of research interest (Boyatzis 1998). Thus, the quality of the raw data is dependent upon several things, especially sampling decisions (Miles and Huberman, 1994), and these are outlined in **Table 4.1** below. All procedures summarised here are drawn from a variety of credible sources; these sources are summarised in **Table 4.2** following **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1 Data quality and data readiness procedures

Sampling Strategy	Explanation
Snowball (chain) sampling	<p>Snowball sampling strategy was used to connect with parents & schools to explain the study, & invite participation. Study documentation & invitations were sent to interested parents & teachers; email follow-ups of interested parents were made & where agreed, interview appointments booked.</p> <p>Naturalistic settings for interviews were used; this was in all cases but one at children's homes; ethical clearance required a parent to be at home at the time of interview. Parental consent obtained & children's assent obtained before interviews. View these in Appendix 1.</p>
Minimum of twenty children: Facebook and/or other social media users.	<p>Twenty-three children provided information via qualitative interviews; this generated seventeen transcripts. Twelve children were interviewed in pairs (thus six transcripts), and eleven children were interviewed on their own (eleven individual transcripts plus six paired scripts makes seventeen scripts in total). Fourteen children of the twenty-three interviewed directly used social media. These children formed the Facebook and/or other social media user subgroup; nine children did not use Facebook but did use other internet applications and they formed the other user subgroup.</p>
Purposive sampling for diversity. This was difficult to achieve. Reasons for this are discussed later in this section.	<p>Purposive sampling was used to achieve diversity and to gain subgroups. Children eleven to fourteen years of age at the time of the study were the participants. The children attended schools ranked from Deciles¹⁹ 8 to 10 in the Auckland and Hawkes Bay regions.</p>
Setting.	<p>Naturalistic settings for the qualitative interviews; all children apart from one were interviewed at their homes with a parent present in the house. One child was interviewed after school at a school venue that the parent selected.</p>
Data collection method: in-depth qualitative interviews.	<p>In-depth qualitative interviews. All interviews audiotaped and transcribed. Field notes made at the close of each interview & entered as supporting material into NVivo. All interviews reviewed "by listening" to check transcribing quality and correct typing errors (e.g. sequencing of responses, correcting content mistakes compared to audio).</p>
Sources of interview questions.	<p>Relevant consumer behaviour studies involving children reviewed to provide guidelines for constructing & obtaining specific interview questions relevant to this topic. These studies are summarised in Table</p>

¹⁹ Decile ratings are calculated by the NZ Ministry of Education to determine the operating resource requirements for schools and reflect the socio-economic status of the surrounding school community:
<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/SchoolOperations/Resourcing/ResourcingHandbook/Chapter1/DecileRatings.aspx>

Friendship Pairs.	<p>4.2 at the close of this section. Interview questions were modified after the first two interviews in response to how the children answered; this was an ongoing process & quality check.</p> <p>Twelve children participated in six paired interviews; eleven individual interviews. All children were asked if they wanted to have a friend at the interview; three of the eleven interviewed individually said they “did not need to have a friend there;” the other eight children were interviewed by themselves at their or their parent’s requests.</p>
Data Readiness Procedures	Explanation
Subsample identification.	Subsamples were used to develop the criterion-referenced material for development of the Source Code (Boyatzis 1998).
Subsample identification criteria.	Five subsamples were used in this step; these were drawn from children in both groups. Three subsamples were characterised as “frequent, high Facebook & other social media users”; of this subsample one was a paired interview and two were individual. The two other subsamples were characterised as “low Facebook & other social media users”; of this subsample one was a paired interview and one was individual. These characterisations were adopted from the children’s descriptions of their social media use; summary descriptions can be found in Table 4.3 at the close of this section.
Criterion reference material identification.	The criterion reference material is the five subsamples explained above. The criterion reference material contains the criterion variable and in this study is the degree of social media use. Theoretical support for this is found in relevant literature summarised at the close of this section.
Variable of research interest.	In this study this is the nature of children’s consumer brand relationships. Theoretical support for this is found in relevant literature summarised at the close of this section.

Table 4.1 (above) provides a summary of the literature used to support the research variables; the reference (or criterion) variable, which is children’s use of social media, and the research variable of interest, how children’s use of social media enables them to interact with consumer brands.

The procedures described above provide specific details about what was done at the sampling stage to build quality assurance for this study, and to ensure the early steps taken in the development of the source code lead to the creation of a reliable code (Boyatzis 1998; Miles and Huberman 1994). **Table 4.2** (below) provides the summary of literature drawn upon to support the quality and data readiness procedures utilised here.

Table 4.2 Summary of Key Literature for Data Quality Assurance and Data Readiness

Topic/concept	Summary	Reference
Research questions; study design.	Discusses the process of designing a qualitative study; identifies key characteristics of qualitative research; determines when appropriate to use qualitative research and research question development; discusses outcomes e.g. exploratory, theory development, complexity, explaining mechanisms and linkages; offer advice on qualitative research designs.	Creswell 2013; Miles and Huberman 1994.
Sampling; data collection.	Types of sampling; discussion of purposeful sampling; definition of snowball (chain) sampling (cases of interest from people who know which cases are information-rich); overall purpose of sampling is to “boundary” data collection (impossible to sample everyone).	Creswell 2013; Miles and Huberman, 1994.
Sampling; sample size.	Factors to consider when sampling; adequacy of sampling strategies; preferred size of samples (numbers) can determine credibility of research findings; specific sample sizes for purposeful sampling directed at six participants for phenomenology studies to 20 to 50 for grounded theory studies.	Creswell 2013; Sandelowski 1995.
Sampling; criterion material; inductive codes; themes.	Steps for inductive code development for thematic analysis; identifying and using subsamples for development of the source code; explanation of latent and manifest analysis.	Boyatzis 1998; Braun and Clarke 2006.
Qualitative interviews; evaluating qualitative research and trustworthiness.	Preferred methods of interviews, observation, non-verbal cues, document analyses for naturalistic paradigms; criteria for evaluating interpretive research is: usefulness, innovation, integration, resonance, adequacy. Advocates explicit description of procedures to enhance assessment of trustworthiness.	Guba and Lincoln 1982; Spiggle 1994.
Qualitative interviews; indirect questioning benefits.	Interview or self-report data is prone to social desirability effects; the use of indirect questioning has potential to reduce these distorting effects and can prove useful when investigating socially sensitive issues.	Fisher 1993

Friendship pairs.	Promotes the use of paired interviews for young people; paired interviews provide social interaction data; increases the naturalistic context; can enable access into often-closed emotional worlds e.g. that of boys.	Highe 2003.
Trustworthiness in Naturalistic Inquiry.	Provides for and argues in support of four criteria for establishing trustworthiness; compares these to traditional criteria used in rationalistic inquiry; discusses each criterion's applicability and offers definitions; e.g. credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.	Guba and Lincoln 1982;

What follows is clarification of more specific parameters for this study to explain how trustworthiness is supported. So this next section describes the participants and explains how the qualitative interviews were conducted. Then the final parts to this section discuss, in turn, the analytic procedures including the source code development for theme identification, and the use of NVivo software for analysis assistance. The Chapter concludes with a summary discussion of how credibility and trustworthiness was established for this study.

4.3 Participants

This study is interested in the perspectives of children who are of intermediate or very early secondary school age; in New Zealand this is 11, 12, 13 or 14 years old. This study is interested to recruit children in this age group who identify themselves as “Facebook and/or other social media users.”

4.3.1 Who is a child?

The definition of “child” has varied across countries and also within state legal systems (Julich 2001), and, as Julich points out, while there is agreement on the biological end to childhood, there is as yet no consensus on the socio-legal end to childhood. The New Zealand socio-legal context specifies the definition of a “child” as that encapsulated in

the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 which defines a child as a person under 14 (Julich 2001).

Whilst this study followed the general definition of a child given in the New Zealand context, it was also considered important to promote diversity in the sample and capture legitimate Facebook and/or other social media users. For these reasons, children in the age range eleven to fourteen years were included in the study. Young children (e.g. age eleven or younger) in New Zealand do have access to a range of internet applications that could be called emerging social media that enable children to talk to each other in a controlled way. For example, a young (eleven years of age) participant frequently used the in-class social blogger application (delivered over the school intranet accessed by log in) set up by the class teacher. The school principal advised that this was to enable the teaching of digital citizenship and to let the children interact with each other in a safe way.

Other publicly-available internet applications catering for the youngest children (age eleven and under) such as Club Penguin²⁰ incorporate social blogging features, so children can demonstrate to each other global citizenship by doing good deeds in the context of various games. The provider is Disney. The relevant critical analysis of what is known about how people (children, in particular) use established and emerging social media is provided in Chapter Three so is not repeated here.

4.3.2 Sample size

Minimum sample sizes (or number of observations) for grounded theory studies are advised to be in the range of thirty to fifty (Sandelowski 1995). The goal is to enable a sample sufficient in size (numbers) to ensure the credibility of the findings (Goulding 2002; Sandelowski 1995). Sample sizes for grounded theory studies reviewed here tended to vary from, for example, twenty individual interviews with adults (Goulding 2002), thirty interviews (many paired), with children aged thirteen to fifteen years (Highet 2003), and up to forty-two focus groups with very young children, eleven years of age or younger (Andronikidis and Lambrianidou 2010). However, Guba and Lincoln (1982) point out that one of the hallmarks of naturalistic enquiry is an emerging design,

²⁰ <http://www.clubpenguin.com/>

arguing for flexibility, whilst making sure that the specifics of the study are divulged to support trustworthiness claims (pg.245). Other important aspects that were considered relating to sample size are effectiveness and efficiency (Boyatzis 1998). That is, thematic analysis demands detailed coding and subsequent analysis of large amounts of material generated by the study's method (in this study, in-depth qualitative interviews; Boyatzis 1998).

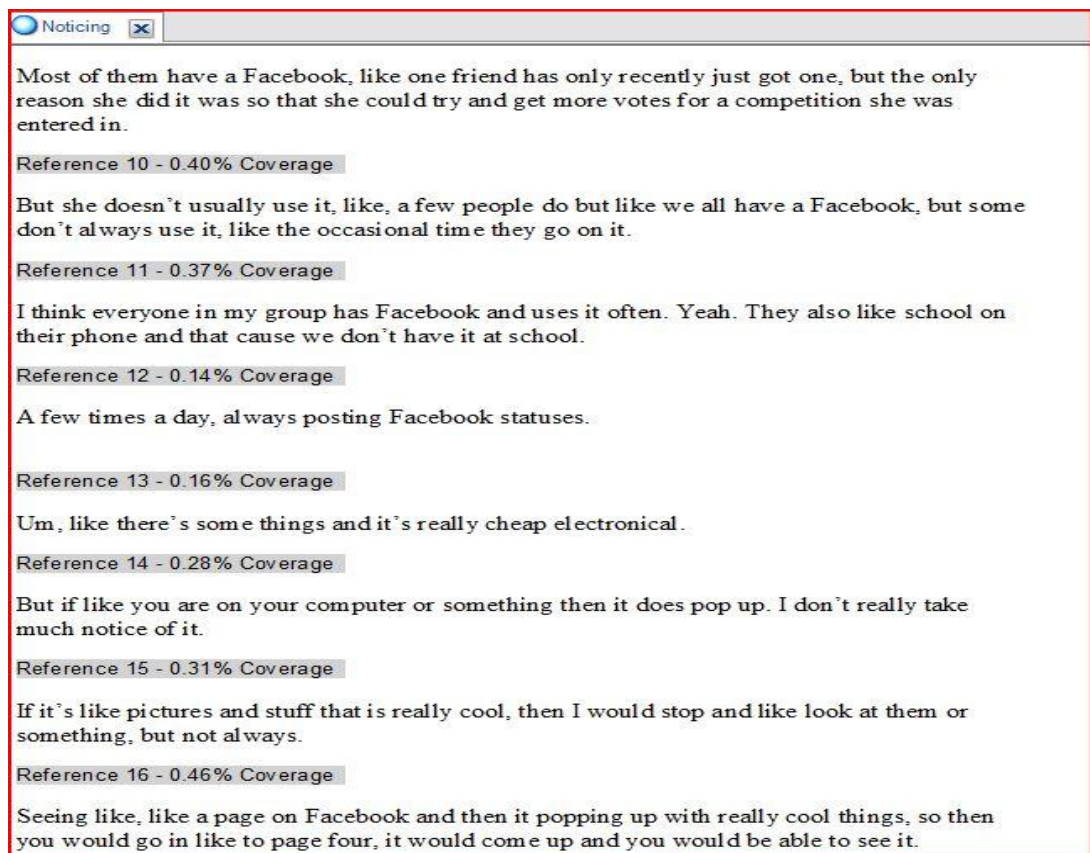
The time needed to code raw data grows in a multiplicative way for every participant added to the interview schedule; that is, each in-depth qualitative interview of one hour will generate approximately twenty-five pages of typed transcript (Boyatzis 1998). Each transcript, for completeness and coding will need repeated reading, in some cases up to eight times, such as the scripts used for source code development. Re-reading scripts for source code development (e.g. reading five scripts up to eight times) will take thirty-two hours (Boyatzis 1998). So reading 20 scripts up to eight times means approximately eight to sixteen hours work per script (a minimum of one to two hours to read each script through), and this translates into 160 to 320 hours of script reading, not beyond the scope of the study but potentially near the margins in terms of efficiency (Boyatzis 1998). So the aim of the study was to recruit a sufficient number of children (e.g. twenty participants) to provide diversity in the sample, while at the same time give the researcher the opportunity to draw a subsample from the larger sample to focus her analytical attention upon. Given this, twenty three children (from nine different schools; decile ratings 8 to 10) agreed (in conjunction with parental agreement) to participate.

What follows next is a detailed explanation of how the Source Code for the thematic analysis was developed. The explanation covers the four iterations of the code development.

4.4 Data Analysis Techniques: Source Code Development

Source code development used a subsample of five scripts; three scripts drawn from users who described themselves as frequent, high, Facebook and other social media users, and two drawn from non-frequent, low, Facebook and other social media users. The subsample scripts were reviewed in-depth, summarised, compared with each other and themes identified within the subsamples. These themes, collected together, formed the basis of the source code (Boyatzis 1998). NVivo software was used for this process, and once the source code was established it was applied across the remainder of the transcripts for all children who identified themselves as Facebook and/or other social media users. The results of this analysis are discussed in detail in Chapter Five, Results. The next analytic step involved the development of the Source Code, and this explanation follows. The code was developed using five subsamples, and all the subsample outlines used for the code development are available in **Appendix 2**.

Figure 4.1 Subsample source



Source: LA5&6; Node: Knowing-Noticing.

The node (or parent theme) of Knowing consists of two subthemes, Identifying, and Noticing. Interview questions such as how children use social media, and other questions such as what things they notice when they are using social media, were the triggers for the children to talk about this topic, shown in the following quote:

But if like you are on your computer or something then it does pop up. I don't really take much notice of it...[LA5&6].

The excerpt above (paired interview; two girls; Facebook users), shows the way in which the girls talk about Facebook advertising and “stuff”, and highlights their talk about what they do, if anything, when they notice things “pop up”. This comment was responding to a question about what the girls pay attention to (noticing), and how much attention they pay.

Figure 4.2 Subsample source

The screenshot shows a software interface with two tabs: 'Noticing' and 'Watching'. The 'Noticing' tab is active. Below the tabs, there are seven entries, each consisting of a text excerpt and a reference label with a coverage percentage.

Reference	Coverage	Text Excerpt
Reference 2	0.43%	I don't go on it as much as other people do. Like I, there's a lot of girls that are just like on it all the time, all the time, all the time.
Reference 3	0.20%	No they just um, just the typical person is like the person you see every like five posts and they're either like commented on something or posted something and then, oh yeah a typical one is someone who's got like 81 likes.
Reference 4	0.11%	we are all like, like you see this, like oh you should look at the trailer for this or just look on like...
Reference 5	0.25%	On like the, like the um, what's it called, like IGM...
Reference 6	0.29%	This is how I learn about most stuff for like gaming in particular. Ah I've got channels who just do Indy games which is just...
Reference 7	0.47%	I do occasionally when they look pretty cool, I'll jump into them. They turn out to be terrible. If they're on Facebook they turn out to be terrible.
		No, no, no, just cause I am looking up something on the web and there's like and um no one

Source: DH20&21: Node: Deciding-Watching.

The node (or parent theme) of Deciding includes two subthemes, Relating and Watching. In the screenshot above (paired interview, two boys, YouTube and social gamers), the boys are talking about watching others or platforms to find out about or do new things.

The following excerpt shows the use of friends as a source of information for how the children let each other know about new games or movies available.

we are all like, like you see this, like oh you should look at the trailer for this or just look on like...DH20&21

The excerpt has been coded to “watching”, which plays a part in Deciding.

This excerpt could have been coded to “noticing”, but was not, because the subtheme of “noticing” is less interactive, and children do not tend to talk about “noticing” a family member or friend interacting with a new character. However, “watching” implies social learning, and is more connected into family or friends as sources of influence than “noticing”. The following example discusses an excerpt of complex coding from a child’s information also used as a subsample source. The level of complexity present in the following excerpt tends to be present for children who use multiple social media platforms compared to those who use just one or two.

Figure 4.3 Subsample source

The screenshot below shows an example of text that has been coded to several nodes, in this order: Reacting-Evaluating (RE), Interacting-Consequence (IC), Knowing-Noticing (KN), Knowing-Identifying (KI), and then Interacting-Selective (IS). The first part of the text refers to Facebook advertising for a Dr Who convention, and the child’s response to noticing and then acting on this. The second part continues the discussion about Facebook advertising and the child’s views on this.

Interviewer That's interesting. So you know when you were on Facebook do you remember, or in fact cause you still use, you know how the ads come up on the right hand side, yeah, what do you think about those, do you respond or?	
Response Sometimes they are for quite interesting things. Like see cause, like earlier on in the year, like I'm a massive nerd, and I saw an ad on Facebook for a big Dr Who convention and I was like I need to go to that.	RE; IC; KN; KI; IS; multiple codes
Interviewer How cool.	
Response It was pretty cool.	RE; single code
Interviewer Cool.	
Response But a lot of the time it's just ads for things like on line games and hair products and stuff that I kind of just like, no, not very interested in that, kind of ignore it most of the time.	RD; DW; RE; multiple codes

Source: KA01; multiple coding.

RE = reacting-evaluating; RD = reacting-describing; DW = deciding-watching

KN = knowing-noticing; KI = knowing-identifying; ISC = interacting-selective-consequences

Complex coding such as the example is associated with children who use more of the social media ecosystem. There could be a hierarchy within the process of interaction, so this is explored later in Research Question 4 (R Q 4). What follows next is a discussion of the subsamples used for the Source Code, and then the detailed analysis of the development of the Source Code.

4.4.1 Subsample details: used for Source Code development

The intention of this study is to develop and apply a data-derived thematic code (Boyatzis 1998). Five subsamples were drawn from the main dataset, and these reflected varying social media usage. Three subsamples were drawn from four girls' interviews; two individual and one paired interview; all the girls considered themselves frequent social media users, using more than one platform, or using Facebook frequently in preference to other platforms. The youngest of the girls was 12 years; one girl was 13 years and two were 14 years of age. Two of the girls were from North Auckland, while the other two were from Hawkes Bay.

The remaining two subsamples were drawn from three boys, one individual and one paired interview. The boys also considered themselves' social media users, saying in addition that they were committed gamers, using YouTube and other internet sites such as Reddit and Twitch²¹. Both these latter sites are user-created, community-based sites, enabling users to create content, watch others, play games with others (online or live) and engage in online chat. The youngest of the boys was 12 years, one boy was 13 years, and the other was 14 years. Two boys were from East Auckland and the other was from Central Auckland. Once the subsamples were determined, the transcripts from each of the children were summarised in the format recommended by Boyatzis (1998, pgs.45-49).

Each of the transcripts was read repeatedly, and each piece of raw data paraphrased or summarised to form a synopsis. This resulted in smaller, but denser outlines of each transcript. These outlines are given in **Appendix 2**. The subsample outlines were then compared separately; each outline in the first user's subsample was compared within this group to identify similarities within the group. The same was done with the second group's information. Then the similarities were compared between the two groups. The next step required writing sets of statements to differentiate the two subsamples from each other. These initial statements formed the set of preliminary themes, and this was the raw code. This step was difficult, requiring several iterations to determine the presence or absence of each of the themes.

What follows in the next section is a discussion of how the Source Code was developed using the subsamples, with details of each of the code iterations.

²¹ <https://www.reddit.com/>
<http://www.twitch.tv/>

4.5 Source Code Development

Reducing or managing the subjectivity of qualitative research can be a difficult issue to work with, because there are many factors that intrude into establishing the quality of the study (Boyatzis 1998). An important aspect to increase the quality of the study at the code development stage is paying attention to the way in which the data is treated for code (and theme) development (Cresswell 2013). Because the idea of thematic analysis is about sensing themes and developing codes that can be applied consistently to the data (Boyatzis 1998), code development is one of the most important stages after data collection. The code for this study was developed over four stages, with the first three iterations of the code reworked by being closer to the data each time, before a final code was developed and applied to a sample of the data by the two coders. The first code was developed as a result of several readings of all the transcripts, checking against the voice files, and noting of what the researcher thought were major categories of interest in the data. As it turned out, these preliminary themes were more instrumental and were mainly a reflection of some of the text and categories of text that the researcher thought contained insights. The themes from this step are in the table on the following page:

Table 4.3 Initial list of thematic codes for qualitative transcripts

Culture	Socialisation	Process	Who I Am
Culture production	Opinion Leader/s	Information	User
Culture creation	Influencers	Brands	Non-user
Rules of culture -explicit, implicit, history	Family	Names	Sophisticate
Control of culture	Friends	Fads	Opinionated
Counter-culture	Trust	Exchanges	Group member
Influences on culture	Conforming	Costs	Leader
Explains culture	Not conforming	Negotiating	Follower
Cultural timeframe	Consequences	Judging	Story-teller
Play	Rebelling	Collaborating	Explainer
Games	Interacting	Play	
	Tolerance	Games	
	Confidence	Facebook	
		-usage, understanding	
		-influence, tool	
	Brands		
	Products		

4.5.1 Explanation of the first set of thematic codes

The first set of thematic codes were taken from the first multiple readings of the transcripts by the researcher, and were more text-based, at the manifest level than looking for underlying processes and phenomena. This was mostly due to the researcher learning how to “do thematic analysis”, with the result that the codes in Table 5.1., were identified and organised into categories based partly on the literature that the researcher was reading.

For example, “culture” was thought to be an important theme because of literature explaining how children are socialised into a consumer culture, and how youth culture is a part of this, so “culture” provided a focus for searching the transcripts for references to the development or production of culture. The code of “socialisation” was thought to be important because a goal of the study is to consider the role of social media as a socialising agent in children’s consumer socialisation. Influencing agents were included in this code as these are well-known in the literature, such as family, friends, and consumer brands.

The code for “process” was potentially the most useful from the whole table, and was the researcher’s attempt to isolate some kind of process by which children were interacting with consumer brands via their social media use.

One or two of the subcodes in “Process”, such as information, judging, and negotiating offered more potential usability for inclusion in a thematic code. The final code, “who I am”, refers to the attempts by the researcher to include some sense of the children’s identity projects as part of their social media use. This researcher has previously trained in psychology and this has resulted in a tendency to focus upon factors relevant to individual’s psychological development, so it was thought important to allow for children’s identity development in the thematic code. As it turned out, this aspect of children’s social media use can be accounted for in the final codes that comprise the Source Code.

The first set of thematic codes represented an attempt to develop codes from multiple readings of the transcripts and from the background literature. Further work on every iteration of the thematic code though, helped the researcher to learn to focus solely on the children’s data, which was the focus needed to develop an inductive or data-derived

code, identified in Chapter Four as the goal for this study. What follows next are the three remaining iterations of the development of the Source Code and explanations of how this work was carried out.

As discussed previously, some of the thematic codes from the first iteration made it into the second iteration, which was focused more strongly on the data. The researcher found it difficult to move past behaviours that were explicit in the data, so the resulting code, whilst appearing usable, was thought to be focused on describing the data at the semantic level. This code, though, was closer to the data and some of this code was used in the third, and in the final source code. This second thematic code is provided in **Table 4.4** on the following page:

Table 4.4 Thematic code development: second iteration

Code	Definition
<p>Social media</p> <p>actions: code the things they do; see definitions.</p> <p>Connecting [with consumer brands]</p> <p>Follow, Friends</p> <p>Belonging</p>	<p>Following and/or being followed: names posts or people/brands being followed; lists how many she/he is following; explains how following is done; tells why she/he follows another, like people brands; (they post funny things, thought-provoking); identifies she/he is followed by others, calls some of these “randoms”; differentiates social media sites by users e.g. tumblr people have followers, Facebook people have friends; may state followers more valuable than friends. May talk about brand images, says where to find images; describes brand images in detail. Code language for favourite brands. May name other social media sites, justifies use or non-use of these social media brands. Will unfollow if material posted is too “out there”.</p> <p>Friends: talks about friends in context of social media; “follower” appears rarely or never; names numbers of friends of self or others e.g. “they have like 500 friends”; talks about friend requests; talks about using e.g. Facebook to “talk to people”; talks about “real friends”; distinguishes between social media friends, real-life friends. Notices advertising, links own response to friends response; may claim has no favorite brands but talks about brands in other contexts e.g. with friends at school; differentiates between social media sites by brand name not users; muddles brands into social media activity; may claim social media brand ads are “stupid” e.g. Sky ads but can identify recent brand advertising activity.</p> <p>Evaluating: links to Fandom, being interested in these blogs; names and describes specific trends e.g “grunge”; links self to trends and/or person brands with “I am this/that”; classifies social media sites by posts (socially acceptable/unacceptable); classifies users of different sites; mainstream vs weird; links specific brands to either category; looks for interaction; uses stalking, ways to link self to favourite others or person brands; talks about what discusses online; gives opinions about celebrities; applies criteria to people wanting friendship “must have e.g. tumblr”; claims can differentiate between weird people and others from posted profiles.</p> <p>Ignoring: may state “I don’t care” in relation to how others use social media; sees little point in using e.g. Facebook; doesn’t deliberately seek out social media friends; uses social media to catch up on gossip; listens, watches YouTube to get information about new games; offers no evaluative comments; ignores ads on Facebook; clicks on ads “sometimes” but states Facebook ads are terrible; talks about spam on Facebook; says has no interest in brands; doesn’t care, indifferent to brands; denies being influenced by others; says that doing things with friends more fun than social media; notices friends social media activity, looks at brand page if friends “like”, make funny comment.</p>
<p>Going on</p> <p>(platforming)</p>	<p>Leading: using multiple applications & platforms simultaneously; easily switches from one to another; familiar with features & can compare attributes; makes evaluative statements about specific platforms; will abandon a platform easily if it fails on some internal criteria; justifies choice of platforms; discriminates among platforms; not always using what others use; may have a role e.g. admin for pages; set rules of engagement.</p> <p>Supporting: Alternatively, may use limited platforms or only one; focuses on doing one or two things like IM; cautious; may be confused about how platform works.</p>
<p>Blocking</p>	<p>Aware: manages own use & self-monitors who can see own profile; makes decisions & takes actions on who to exclude or who to invite; blocks other users as result of decisions; blocks advertising in reference to own criteria; may report people to social media sites’ admin.</p> <p>Managed: may rely on parents to help manage own profile & activity; may defer to parents & willing to let parents be “friend” on e.g. FB; talks about dangers of clicking on e.g. ads; explicit about potential dangers & has learnt from school information, keeping safe; may claim doesn’t care about parent’s privacy concerns but willing to let parents exert some control over use.</p>

The second code was tested and found to be viable, however it was decided that the code reflected the data at a descriptive level. After rework and subsample comparison, a third iteration was produced, closer to the subsamples. This code was less behaviourally and potentially more latent focused. This is shown in **Table 4.5** on the following page:

Table 4.5 Thematic code development: third iteration

Parent * ²²	Behaving	Influencing	Shaping
Child *	Connecting	Promoting	Identifying
Definitions	always on 24/7; dislikes missing out; uses social media night/day; will sneaky use; may use to “fill up time”. Uses to keep up with others; intensity of time use varies with level of sophistication; e.g. sophisticated user could be using 18 /24.	will “like” others posts or pages; will make posts of self to share with others to promote causes, music, celebrities; can be negative e.g. will share events, causes, celebrities & warn others/make negative comments e.g. Miley Cyrus “Wrecking Ball”; will stick up for self & beliefs, for others; suggests to others who might try to befriend e.g. “do you have Tumblr...and they’ll be like no, I’ll be like go get one...”	names a brand; includes social media site of course!; says something about the brand, positive/negative; describes aspects of the brand; e.g. type of music, uses code words e.g. “grunge” in reference to a celebrity, fashion brand.
	Platforming	Listening	Judging
	uses multiple apps & platforms simultaneously; switches one to the other; talks about features & compares one with other; makes evaluative statements about platforms; abandons platform if fails to meet “internal” criteria; justifies choices of platforms via own interests; discriminates between platforms; won’t always use what others use; may be admin on pages.	reads, responds to others posts/comments in emotional or behavioural way; e.g. “sometimes they (celebrities) post quite thought-provoking things and sometimes it’s just like quite interesting things that you think oh okay...”	makes some kind of evaluative statement about the brand in relation to own criteria or compares to other brands either recent or in own repertoire; may talk about associations this brand helps make; e.g. “...you know I wear headbands because Cara Delevingne wears headbands that’s cool...”
	Blocking	Seeing	Relating
	manages own use & self-monitors who can see own profile; makes decisions & takes actions on who to exclude or who to invite; blocks other users as result of decisions; blocks advertising by using own criteria; may report people to the site’s admin.	notifies others, especially celebrities; can describe what they wear; can identify others especially celebrities &/or friends by style on social media; may notice advertising &/or brands; may be a fan of others & may state this; will follow specific individuals for own reasons (criteria).	justifies choice of brand & why; could be socially-justified; e.g. “keeps you your place in the social pyramid”; may link the brand to self in positive way; says how brand fits into own life; says something about intensity of feeling for the brand e.g. “well I love the Kardashians...”
		Opinioning	Integrating
		evaluates a person, brand, or actions e.g. “she (Miley Cyrus) did this performance at the MPV Music Awards & it was very bad...”; states view about other’s social media behaviour; discusses celebrities; avoids judging what others say. States how friendships work; “a big internet hug”; describes the type of people who are friends e.g. people who use (Tumblr); evaluates sites via freedom e.g. the taboos are less tabooey...” (Tumblr).	says something about how brand fits into own life; declarative statement e.g. might have grown with brand; can plot changes in self & brand & says something that links to congruency self with brand; identifies with brand in the sense that what brand does I do; “...like my Vans, I really, really, wanted them...”
		Sharing	
		a motivating reason to use social media; shared interests with others; may not identify others or self; will follow others if share same interests; looking for things that meet personal tastes; wanting interaction; wanting entertainment.	

Notes: the criterion variable is social media use, and the variable of interest is the nature of children’s consumer brand relationships (Boyatzis 1998). However, in this study the Source Code needs the closest possible relationship with the qualitative data, and the researcher determined that the third iteration of the thematic code (above) contained more descriptive elements, when what is wanted is a code that helps the researcher

²² * Parent and Child codes; used in NVivo analysis and refers to themes and sub-themes.

discern difficult elements and patterns in the data (Boyatzis 1998). The thematic code developed in the table above was tested by the two coders and found to be usable, rates of coder agreement were generally acceptable, but the researcher decided that the code needed still more work to be closer to the raw data. So, a fourth iteration was undertaken, and this meant that the subsamples for the source code were reviewed again, the two groups were compared against each other for differentiators again, and this constant comparison resulted in some elements of the second and third codes being retained, others collapsed, and some elements being deleted. For example, the term “platforming” (in the third iteration, under the behaving column) was not used by any of the children, but used by the researcher to refer to children’s use of multiple social media sites, which is of interest, but is not the main focus of this study. This code was dropped, as were blocking and connecting. Some of the remaining codes in the third iteration have been transformed as a result of the constant comparison work with the subsamples, and these are outlined as follows:

Table 4.6 (a) Code transformations

Third iteration	Final Source Code
Seeing	Noticing
Listening/Judging/Opinioning	Evaluating
Sharing/Promoting	Describing
Identifying	Identifying
Relating	Relating
Not present in third iteration; new code	Watching

The fourth, and final thematic code formed the Source Code, and is presented in the CodeBook after this section, in **Table 4.7**. Parent and Child Code descriptors were generated as part of this analysis and to ensure coding consistency.

Development of a data-derived Source Code represents an uncomfortable level of analysis in this study, because of the increasing level of ambiguity and uncertainty inherent in the analysis (Boyatzis 1998). As previously discussed, the first iteration of the thematic code was focused on the literature, and this was not the goal of the study for development of the thematic code, the goal was to develop a data-derived code

because this provides a closer relationship with the data, and because not much is known about how children interact with brands using social media. So, a data-derived (inductive) code is appropriate when very little is known about the area of interest. The second two iterations of the thematic code were behaviourally-focused, and were good at identifying what children actually did when using social media, and these are behaviours such as following, friending, blocking, and going on to multiple sites (named as “platforming”).

What was wanted however was a code that dug deeper into how the children were using social media to interact with brands, and this meant some kind of sensing-themes code. Developing this kind of code is working at the latent level, and required the researcher to suppress her ideas about what a code “should be”, and instead use the constant comparisons of the subsamples to derive the differentiators that formed each of the two subthemes under one parent theme.

There are positive aspects of developing a code as close as possible to the data, for example, a reliable code represents a step on the way toward theory development, which might later be able to be tested in some way (Sutton and Staw 1995). The other aspect was the researcher’s motivation to try to represent the children’s social and interactive worlds “as they saw it”, which meant the data had to be used as much as possible to develop the code, and not prior theory. What follows next is the coder agreement table, constructed to reflect the work done by the two coders with the fourth iteration of the code.

4.5.2 Coder agreement

Developing a thematic code that is reliable is an important outcome of code development. Reliability of a code means ensuring that coders can achieve consistency of judgement when coding the same material. The researcher’s trained coder, who was aware of the many iterations of the code development, was invited to code three transcripts for the fourth iteration of the code. The agreement rates between the coders are summarised in the table on the following page:

Table 4.6 (b) Coder agreement

Code	KA01 first code	DH20&21 second code	LA5&6 third code
	% agree	% agree	% agree
Identifying	67	100	100
Noticing	89	75	70
Describing	75	100	100
Evaluating	89	100	100
Relating	100	80	100
Watching	33	100	100
Belonging	78	Not used; overlaps with relating	Not used; overlaps with relating

Coding the first script showed that the coders had trouble agreeing on three codes, the first, watching, with a very low level of agreement at 33%, the second, identifying, with a low level of agreement at 67%, and the third, describing, at 75%. Subsequent coding helped resolve the issues with these three codes as indicated in the table. Achieving 100% agreement all the time is probably unrealistic, what is needed is a level of consistency to show that the coders are applying the codes reliably to the materials. The code of noticing, at 70% to 75% may need further discussion and elaboration.

What follows on the next page is the table of the final Source Code, and the CodeBook, which provides detailed descriptors of each of the final thematic codes.

Table 4.7 Source Code and CodeBook

Code	Definition
Social media brand interactions: code the things they do; see definitions. Knowing [about consumer brands]	<p>Identifying: names a brand; this includes social media brand; gives a list of brands she/he is following; says something identifying about the brand e.g. locates where she/he saw brand image; can describe the brand e.g. image; may use imaginative terms e.g. describes the brand in person terms; this is an active code.</p> <p>Noticing: sees things “pop up” e.g. brands, ads; notices what others like and may look if a friend likes; criticises content of brand ads e.g. Sky ads on FB “stupid”; cynical attitude; may deny responding to brand communications or agree they respond “sometimes”; may state that messages are spam; may express annoyance about how social media admin people manage the site; this is a passive code.</p>
Reacting	<p>Evaluating: uses evaluative terms such as good, weird, cool, like, interesting, nasty, disgusting, pretty, bad, in reference to consumer brands; either person brands or product brands, including social media brands; distinguishes among brands using some kind of internal criteria; this is an active code.</p> <p>Describing: talks about activity, e.g. sees things, notices things, may give specific examples of what friends or self do when on social media, e.g. if friend recommends a brand page might go look at it; mentions brand names but makes no evaluation; may list brands and state “everyone knows these because they’re everywhere”; may describe how to do things on the site e.g. make a Vine (short humorous video); may guess at how things work; muddles brands into social media activity; may claim social media brand ads are “stupid” e.g. Sky ads but can identify recent brand advertising activity; avoids evaluations; a passive code.</p>
Deciding	<p>Relating: classifies users of different sites e.g. mainstream versus weird; links specific brands to either category; tracks favourite brands across social media sites e.g. by following, finding, searching, and uses the social media ecosystem to do this; may talk about blogging or posting about favourite brands to others so secondary interaction; this is an active code.</p> <p>Watching: notices advertising and links own response to friends response; listens and watches e.g. YouTube to get information about new e.g. internet games; offers no evaluative comments; ignores ads on Facebook; clicks on ads “sometimes” but states Facebook ads are terrible; identifies person brand she/he might be watching and names this as “watching”; may say that she/he is just looking at things; this is a passive code.</p>
Belonging, integrating: Interacting	<p>Connecting: uses code language for favourite brands; links self to trends and/or person brands with “I am this/that”; looks for interaction; uses following, stalking and other ways to link self to favourite others or person brands; applies brand criteria to people wanting friendship “must have e.g. tumblr”; an active, integrating code. Present or not present.</p>

Descriptors for Parent and Child Codes were generated, and these are set out in **Table 4.8:**

Table 4.8: Descriptors Parent and Child Codes: themes, subthemes; for thematic code

1. **Parent code: Knowing:** extent of the child’s awareness of and knowledge about consumer brand/s as the child uses social media; active or passive words used to communicate knowledge and the distance between the child and the brand; two indicators used:
 - **Identifying:** a ‘closer to me’ code; greater degree of internalised knowledge about the brand; where it appears and some kind of judgement about this in terms of fits the brand image (ok/not ok).
 - **Noticing:** a ‘distance from me’ code; less internalised brand knowledge; gaps in knowledge, guessing, may use terms such as “pops up”, random, not sure, don’t know.

2. **Parent code: Reacting:** the manner in which the child reacts to the brand; two indicators; an **active, evaluative reaction** in reference to themselves (cool, stupid, bad, pretty, the best, my favourite); or a **passive reaction, describing**, distanced from themselves (looks like..., can be seen at shops..., this is how you wear/use it, this is popular).

3. **Parent code: Deciding:** what to do next, now. What action to take with, or about, the brand. Two indicators used:
 - **Relating:** an active, closer to me code; unafraid of relating to the brand; wants a relationship of some kind, willing to share self to get activity, could be following, stalking, “friending”.
 - **Watching:** a passive, away from me code; standing back, may share self but carefully; may still interact but less actively, may take advice from brand, less interactive style.

4. **Parent code: Belonging, interacting:** an integrative sense of relating with a brand not “to” a brand; uses code language to talk about belonging with and interacting with a brand; e.g. personifies brand if a product (“my Vans” – street casual shoes; “we all have a Facebook” almost like a body part); or a fashion identity style (“I’m like a fashion grunge...”). Uses following, finding, searching, stalking, to keep up with and connect with brand, especially person brand. This is an active code, and is present or not present.

The final code entered as Nodes in NVivo:

Figure 4.4 Final codes in NVivo 10 format

Nodes				
Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By
Reacting	0	0	17/10/2014 3:00 p.m.	KATE
reacting evaluating inputs school	3	6	3/12/2014 3:48 p.m.	KATE
reacting evaluating inputs peers	14	79	3/12/2014 3:49 p.m.	KATE
reacting evaluating inputs family	13	34	3/12/2014 3:50 p.m.	KATE
reacting evaluating inputs mass me	10	23	3/12/2014 3:51 p.m.	KATE
Evaluating	14	156	17/10/2014 3:02 p.m.	KATE
Describing	17	218	17/10/2014 3:05 p.m.	KATE
Knowing	1	1	17/10/2014 2:47 p.m.	KATE
Identifying	16	156	17/10/2014 2:56 p.m.	KATE
Noticing	17	113	17/10/2014 2:58 p.m.	KATE
Deciding	0	0	17/10/2014 3:07 p.m.	KATE
Relating	11	70	17/10/2014 3:09 p.m.	KATE
Watching	12	94	17/10/2014 3:11 p.m.	KATE
Interacting	4	46	17/10/2014 3:14 p.m.	KATE
interacting global connect	10	39	3/12/2014 3:45 p.m.	KATE
interacting selective connect	11	42	3/12/2014 3:46 p.m.	KATE
interacting consequences	14	152	3/12/2014 3:46 p.m.	KATE

Once created and tested by the two coders, the Source Code was entered into NVivo as nodes (screenshot above). Coding of the whole dataset was carried out. Two nodes were extended after the dataset was fully coded, to reflect developments in the themes. These were Interacting, with the addition of three subcodes, Global, Selective, and Consequences; and the theme of Reacting, with the addition of four subthemes (subcodes) under Evaluating: inputs from school, peers, family, and mass media. Both these developments of the Source Code are discussed fully in the analysis of the research questions in Chapter Five.

4.5.3 Summary Discussion of Source Code Development

Qualitative research using thematic analysis relies upon the development of initial codes from the raw data (Braun and Clarke 2006), so these codes can be used across the whole dataset to organise the data into meaningful categories. Without this step, the identification and development of themes would be very difficult to achieve from a mass of seemingly random raw data. Coding the data forms one of the first steps in analysis, and even when a thematic code has been developed, change is still possible (e.g. the code can evolve) in response to continuing analysis. In this study, further analysis resulted in the parent code “Interacting” being split into three conditions of interacting, and this work is detailed below in **Table 4.9**:

Table 4.9 Interacting code development

Code	Definition
Social media brand interactions: code the things they do; see definitions.	Global: a more anonymous interaction, preserving aspects of self while willingly connecting to a brand; signified by talk about how the brand knows nothing about “me”; still an active connection, seeking interaction but on the child’s terms.
Interacting [with consumer brands; three states or conditions of interacting]	Selective: a deliberative interaction with carefully selected brand or other people, for personal reasons such as maintaining congruency with self (potentially); signifying to others who one is; taking actions with the brand or person in a relationship sense. Deliberately following, stalking, a selected brand especially person brand.
Global	Interaction consequences: shows an understanding of what following or linking her/himself to a specific brand means; understands that this affects other’s social judgements of the child; expresses comfort with that or says doesn’t care what others think/say; willing to take action if dislikes consequences; unafraid of negotiating with brand or brand owners; bold.
Selective	
Consequences	
This code is present or not present.	

This code is one of the important codes for helping understand the sense of integration some of the children are experiencing with a consumer brand, driven by their more deliberative actions when using social media. When coding the full dataset, instances were noted in 14 children’s responses by both coders of interacting (or, connecting; active and passive), that were more finely grained than the global, all-encompassing, integrative sense of the original single code. For example, some children were interacting with a brand or other people in a global sense, signified by their willingness

to interact on the social media site preserving their anonymity. These instances were coded to “interacting global”. Other children were carefully selective about which brands or people they followed and interacted with; these instances were coded to “interacting selective”. Both these codes have a relationship with how children are using the social media ecosystem; and this aspect is discussed further in Chapter Six.

The final addition to the interacting code signifies an awareness of interaction consequences. That is, some children were interacting with a brand, people who represent a brand (e.g. a celebrity), and of course the social media brand itself, and demonstrate awareness about the consequences for them of such interactions. These instances were coded to “interacting consequences”. An example of this awareness is encapsulated in the following quote:

Whereas on Tumblr, you know, it doesn't matter like whatever like you know things like homosexuality or what religion you are, it's like all good... Cause also some of the things I like in Tumblr might have you know, people post a Facebook ad because you know it's got like maybe some cuss words and people would be like oh that's not okay... [D02].

In this instance, being on tumblr means that linking oneself with a rebel brand of social media is an appropriate thing to do, a symbolic act, a good fit. This will mean that others will think about e.g. this child as a “bit of a rebel”, because of the open way in which she acknowledges her use of the rebellious social media brand. Using such a social media site means that the child will be interacting with potentially rebellious content, especially content posted by person brands. The child would need to be quite comfortable with this consequence because of the ability of others to make social judgments about the child. This scenario works the other way around, too; that is, in order to “be a rebel” which might be an identity goal, it is best to link to a “rebel” brand such as using tumblr as a preferred social media site to express this, because this will give some level of congruence between the self and the brands the child interacts with, and show others “who I am”. Either way, this linking of self to the brand such as tumblr, and the associated people who use tumblr, will have consequences beyond what the child expresses here. The next quote signifies how two children regarded themselves as a result of their gaming activity on a range of sites, some of the sites interactive e.g. Reddit and Twitch; others not so much, e.g. YouTube.

In the following quote the two children indicate their status (committed users/gamers) as a result of their ongoing, persistent use of several social media and other sites in the ecosystem. Their committed status results from their activity and their willingness to put in the time to be able to claim “committed”.

I wouldn't go so far as to say experts...definitely committed...[D&H20&21].

In this instance elaboration from one of the pair revealed the ambivalence about how such commitment has been achieved:

...if I get a good game I will play it for as long as possible. So I have over a hundred hours on a few games. So it's just embarrassing...[D&H20&21].

The thematic code allows for positive or negative interacting consequences; e.g. the following quote shows how interacting with the social media brand tumblr, and with those who use it, culminates in the perception of friendship for this child user:

and like all the people on tumblr are like one giant group of friends and it's just kind of like a nice group hug in a way, a big internet hug. I think that's the best way to explain it...[KA01].

For this particular child, the anonymous people she/he interacts with on the tumblr social media site represent “real friends”; this had been elaborated upon earlier in the interview to show what was meant, and this elaborated passage is included below:

Because like I have more internet friends than I have real life friends, which is kind of a bit weird...but like I do consider them friends because they are like, you can laugh with them, you talk to them, and they are always there when you need them which is pretty much all that a friend is and like if you go onto a site and they'll talk to you and they'll be very kind to you if you're sad and they'll cheer you up and stuff or they'll talk to you and yeah...[KA01].

So in terms of social relationships the perception here is that internet friends offer at least as much or similar to “real life” friends. This aspect of children’s social media use and how such use relates to brand interactions is discussed further in Chapter Six.

So, parts of the thematic code have been developed further as the analysis proceeded. Some literature discussing thematic code development reminds researchers about the cognitive limitations people have when coding data (Boyatzis 1998). That is, the code is meant to be parsimonious without losing the essential characteristics of the data (Boyatzis 1998 , pg.48), because people can only keep a specific number of variables simultaneously in their conscious mind at any one time. Seven variables, plus or minus two is about the limit, according to cognitive research (Boyatzis 1998), and this makes sense when thinking about applying the code developed for this study.

Thus, the final thematic code for this study totals nine codes, and this includes the further development of the “interacting” parent code to represent three subcodes. This final thematic code has been tested as usable by both coders, and is probably at the upper end of the length and complexity of a code that is consciously usable by the coders, without needing to constantly refer to the CodeBook. The other relevant factor to consider in constraining a code in length and complexity in some way, is that a parsimonious code reduces the chances of the coders systematically ignoring items in the text when coding because they cannot remember the code (Boyatzis 1998).

Table 4.10 Summary of Literature Supporting Research Variables

Topic/concept	Summary	Reference and concepts.
Criterion or reference variable.	Children using social media.	Dunne, Lawlor et al (2010); children using Bebo for communicating, friending, identity maintenance, entertainment. Emerson (1976); Lawler (2001); using social media for social exchanges and reward. Christodoulides, Jevons et al., (2012); Williams, Crittenden et al., (2012); using social media for content creation. Oyserman, Elmore et al., (2012); identity formation.
Main research variable of interest.	Children's brand interactions using social media.	Charon (1998); symbolic understanding and symbolic interactionism. Diamond, Sherry et al., (2009); children's interactions with consumer brands e.g. "American Girl" branded dolls, and emotional experience of a brand. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001); people interacting with brand communities to feel a sense of social belonging. Chaplin and John (2005); children using social media to link with consumer brands. Patterson (2011); Facebook's role in facilitating consumer-to-consumer interactions. Rohm, Kaltcheva et al., (2013); the role of social media in user's brand interactions.

The criterion (or reference) variable provided the anchor material for the subsamples; that is, children using social media. As previously discussed, two subsamples were taken to represent this variable, the one subsample comprising three high use, frequent social media users, and the other comprising two lower use, infrequent social media users. The research variable of interest is children's brand interactions on social media.

What follows in the next section is a discussion of the measures taken to establish the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study.

4.6 Trustworthiness and authenticity

This Method Chapter is ending with a final discussion about trustworthiness and authenticity. These two words are used in academic writing in particular, to establish something that the reader can trust. That is, the reader of the work, especially the work generated to provide understanding about phenomena in the world that is of interest, needs to know that the researcher did everything in her ability to make the study authentically reflect how this particular world “is” to those living in it (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). This is really the essence of naturalistic inquiry, so the balance between trustworthiness and authenticity is important. Questions such as “how was trustworthiness established?” and “how do I know (as reader) that this account authentically reflects what the contributors to the research intended to say about their experiences?” Such questions do have answers in the sense that, in the academic tradition, there are procedures that the researcher is advised to adopt to show the reader that they may trust the study (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). These procedures fall into four main domains, and this Chapter has struggled to show the things that were done in the study to achieve clarity in each of the domains. The domains are given below and a short summary provided of how each was achieved.

Credibility is the first domain to consider, and there are many aspects involved here (Guba and Lincoln, 1982; Spiggle 1994). First, the credibility of the study was established by a long engagement at the “site” (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). That is, information from the children was collected over a period of eighteen months, at various times of the year. This was done because of the nature of the study topic; social media is a fast-changing area, and there are differences noticed in children’s talk of how they use these tools and the relevance of this to their lives from, for example, the first set of interviews conducted in September 2012, to the last set conducted in November 2013. Time makes a difference everywhere (Miles and Huberman, 1994), and especially in the social media world. Chapter Three provided critical comments on the importance and relevance of this aspect of social media use in the context of Symbolic Interactionism.

Persistent observation is another aspect of establishing credibility (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). This relates to gaining a fuller understanding of the characteristics of the topic under inquiry. This has been achieved in two ways; first, the longer time (eighteen

months) that the researcher was collecting information enabled an observation of changes in the way social media tools were developing. For example, Facebook subjects itself to constant change both in response to market-place pressures, legislative requirements of differing countries, and user feedback (or backlash)²³ and these changes can fundamentally alter the user experience. The second way persistent observation has been achieved is through the researcher's undergraduate teaching in the area of marketing communications, using social media over the past eighteen months (February 2013 to June 2014). This provided the opportunity to learn how older students use a range of social media applications as part of their coursework. The researcher managed a Facebook Group and Twitter feed set up for undergraduate classes and this provided a good opportunity to see how these were used. This enabled adjustments to the questions the children were asked, and much better understanding of how young people really do use these applications. This also enabled some refutation (Spiggle 1994); a check of negative instances from the undergraduates' perspectives that could be compared with the children's perspectives (for example, unprompted, many undergraduates discussed their younger sibling's uses of Facebook and this enabled a rough comparison with the perspectives provided by the study's children to check for differences or similarities). It is accepted that there are age group differences between undergraduates and children, however the way young people talk about and approach social media tools does share similarities across age groups.

Peer debriefing (Guba and Lincoln, 1982) has been an ongoing process throughout this study. This has given the opportunity to talk about findings, and to have others read the work at different stages. Such debriefing has been an important part of the study, because other researchers' questions have created the conditions for thinking more deeply about what the study is trying to achieve and how this is to be done. Sometimes the questions have created discomfort because they have challenged my ideas about how things are to be done, and what is important to communicate. For example, a lengthy and detailed written argument, setting social constructionism against a positivist epistemology for this study was refocused upon advice from experienced colleagues. Triangulation has been accomplished by expanding the data sources to include viewing

²³ <http://www.siliconbeat.com/2013/09/05/facebook-rule-changes-spark-new-privacy-complaints/>

(with parent's permission) two children's Facebook pages and one child's YouTube channel. Children shared (with parental permission), two of their bedroom wall displays of "cool personal stuff" and other children shared a selection of favourite branded things such as skateboards, longboards, bikes, clothing, a guitar, and mobile phones so they could show what they meant by interview comments. Original handwritten field notes compiled after the interviews have been kept to provide another source of reference materials (this is referential adequacy; Guba and Lincoln, 1982). Typed copies have been made of these notes and these entered into NVivo.

Transferability (Guba and Lincoln, 1982); has been enhanced for this study by the use of purposive sampling, described earlier in this Method Chapter. The second aspect of establishing transferability, "thick description" (pg.248) relates to the Analysis and Results contained in Chapter Five. To support dependability and confirmability, the final two domains establishing trustworthiness (Guba and Lincoln, 1982), the following activities have been undertaken: documenting a clear outline of the research process (described earlier in this Method Chapter), collating and keeping all the data in its various forms (raw field notes; typed field notes; audiotapes; typed transcripts; summaries of transcripts for source code development; and all NVivo coding work saved into the NVivo project). One trained colleague has separately undertaken coding of two transcripts to check the code development, its applicability and the veracity of the researcher's conclusions of the data from the same scripts. Finally, confirmability can include researcher deliberations about her own assumptions and values brought to the research study (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). This discussion has been included as part of Chapter One, Introduction, for the purposes of positioning the researcher in the research, and to say something about the implications of these values for the research and the conclusions.

This completes Method, Chapter Four. What follows next in Chapter Five is a detailed discussion of the analysis of the results. This discussion includes identification of the latent themes, their interpretation in the context of the research question and the four research objectives, and the relationship of these to the theoretical perspective. Chapter Five concludes with a discussion of how the themes provide a preliminary answer to the main research question and objectives.

Chapter Five

5.0 Results

The previous Chapter Four, Method, clarified the philosophical basis for this study. This entailed explaining the research decisions framing the study, such as the social constructionist approach, which lead to the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism. This in turn led to thematic analysis as the methodological choice, and qualitative interviews for data collection and source code development to assist the analysis. The research questions were explained, and data readiness and quality assurance procedures were outlined. A detailed discussion was provided of the Source Code development to enable the thematic analysis of the data. Issues of trustworthiness and authenticity were addressed in Chapter Four, and a discussion of reflexivity (or clarification of the researcher's values) to address this topic was provided early on in Chapter One, Introduction. The task of this Results Chapter is to provide the details of the research context and of the full dataset and explain the data analysis procedure. The data analysis leads to presentation of the results from the thematic analysis which is used to answer the research questions. This Chapter is divided into three parts; the first part explains the Research Context, in the second part the development of the Source Code is explained, and in part three, the analysis of each of the Research Questions is provided. To set the context for this Chapter, the four research objectives (questions) are given next. The central research question guiding this study is "how is social media (e.g. Facebook), both as an information source and a communication medium, influencing children's brand relationships?" The resulting four research objectives to address this question are:

Research objective 1: How are children using social media? and, R 1 (a) to interact with consumer brands?

Research objective 2: How is children's social media use helping them learn about consumer brands?

Research objective 3: How is children's social media use interacting with other sources of brand information?

Research objective 4: How are children's social media interactions shaping their consumer brand relationships?

5.1 The Research Context

This research was conducted within the naturalistic inquiry paradigm (Guba and Lincoln 1982), thus, this research project has some key assumptions buried in it about how the phenomena are to be studied (Gergen 2009). These assumptions have been clarified in Chapter Four, Method, but it is important to reiterate some of this thinking here, because this research has a goal of producing knowledge about certain social media phenomena, and children's relationships with this. The first assumption, then, is that knowledge about these phenomena can be produced, and that this knowledge can be gained in as much of a real-world setting as possible (Guba and Lincoln 1982). The notion of a real-world setting to enable real-world research (Robson 1993) really means that it is possible to produce research that enables a researcher to say something sensible in relation to phenomena emerging in complex, messy, difficult (or impossible) to control field settings (Robson 1993 , pg.xi).

The complex contexts of children's development as consumers, and the role of social media in potentially facilitating this development is broadly what this current study seeks to understand. This means that the richness of the social contexts within which children are interacting with consumer brands is relevant, because in these contexts a process of some kind is happening (Guba and Lincoln 1982), by which children are using social media to learn about, and interact with, consumer brands. The social context in which this current study is situated consists of children, their parents, siblings, extended family and friends living in New Zealand, an advanced Western consumer economy situated in the South Pacific. New Zealand is an open economy and subject to influences from its near neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region, including Australia. New Zealand follows a generally capitalist economic model within a democratic social framework, so for example individual entrepreneurship and competition is encouraged, consumer brands are a part of everyday life, consumption skills and attitudes are taught to children (Cram and Ng 1999), and New Zealand society in general is more supportive of vulnerable members than e.g. a counterpart such as the USA. These societal contexts are reflected in the children's interview information and

provide some context in which to situate the results. The following **Table 5.0** provides information about the child participants; e.g. demographic details, length of interviews, and interview locations.

Table 5.0 Research context: participants

P/ts #; girl/boy	Code	Interview type	Length i/view: hr/m	Parent at i/view	Trans pgs	Age of children	Location
1 girl	K01	single	46 mins	No	26	13 yrs	Orewa
2 girl	D02	single	56 mins	Yes	35	12 yrs	Orewa
3&4 girls	GE3&4	paired	37 mins	No	32	11&13	Kaukapakapa
5&6 girls	LA5&6	paired	42 mins	No	28	14 yrs	Napier
7&8 girls	AB7&8	paired	1 hr/06 m	Yes	48	11&13	Birkenhead
9 boy	A09	single	32 mins	No	17	11 yrs	Takapuna
10 boy	C10	single	28 mins	Yes	24	12 yrs	Kaukapakapa
11 boy	K11	single	17 mins	Yes	14	11 yrs	Albany
12 boy	J12	single	34 mins	No	20	13 yrs	Wainui
13 boy	D13	single	34 mins	Part	21	11 yrs	Wainui
14 boy	J14	single	43 mins	No	35	12 yrs	Waitoki
15 boy	I15	single	40 mins	No	30	12 yrs	Wainui
16 boy	P16	single	43 mins	Part	36	14 yrs	Western Springs
17 boy	T17	single	1 hr/01m	No	42	12 yrs	Wainui
18&19 boys	RL18&19	paired	35 mins	15 m; No	29	11&12	Red Beach
20&21 boys	DH20&21	paired	1 hour	No	38	12&13 yrs	St Heliers
22&23 boys	AJ22&23	paired	34 mins	No	27	11&12 yrs	Sandringham
Totals			12 hours		502 pgs	Ave 12 yrs	

Notes:

All the interview length times are accurate and taken from the Mp3 digitised voice files. The transcriptions are 1.5 line-spaced, single pages, and were typed from the original digital voice files. The location information refers to the larger Auckland city region apart from a paired interview which was conducted in Hawke's Bay. Parents and children were invited to participate from many locations across Auckland in an effort to gain diversity in the sample.

Six mothers elected to be present at their children's interviews, and in two cases these were the youngest children (K11 and D13; both aged 11 years), and the other child was 12 years (D02). Two of these interviews were the shortest interviews (numbers 10 and 11). Of the remaining three interviews, in two the Mothers were in the family room folding laundry and/or making dinner, making the occasional comment but generally not participating. In the remaining interview, the Mother was very keen for her children to participate, reminding the younger of an incident involving interaction with friends

using social media technology that had “gone wrong”, encouraging her child to talk about the experience. This interview was the longest of the set, just over an hour. Three parents provided useful perspectives about their children’s use of, and experiences with social media and the internet in general; these observations served as useful contextual information for the study.

5.1.1 Data quality control and data analysis procedure

Data analysis was conducted in a series of steps, of which the first step involved taking the time to prepare the data (Boyatzis 1998). The data was collected for each interview using a digital voice recorder, and the data was then downloaded into a computer so the researcher could listen to each voice file (interview). This was done before transcription so the researcher could memo some preliminary ideas about the topics. The researcher transcribed the first interview; this was done as a check and to sensitise the researcher to how the children talked on playback. This was an interesting and frustrating experience; this researcher has transcribed short interviews before for other work (e.g. 15 minutes duration) and found these doable. However, long interviews such as those conducted for this study (e.g. one of the first interviews, at 43 minutes long, generated 35 pages of transcript) took the researcher (a non-expert touch typist) over six hours to transcribe accurately, because of the frequent pausing needed to slow down the playback to enable every answer given by the child to be transcribed correctly. Subsequent to this, on advice, the decision was made to hire a professional service to transcribe all other interviews.

Once transcribed interviews were received, transcriptions were checked against the original voice files again and errors corrected where possible. Sometimes the children spoke very fast or indistinctly so there are occasional notations of “unclear” in the transcribed texts. These were rechecked twice again, corrected where possible, apart from e.g. two paired recordings where both children talked at the same time in answer to a question, and in another interview, the two girls got the giggles and couldn’t talk clearly in relation to the question. Overall, the unclear recordings account for 0.04% of the text of 502 transcribed pages. Memos (the researcher’s impressions) of each interview were then matched to the transcriptions for extra information about the context. These steps formed part of the data quality control procedures to ensure quality

coding, to further ensure the development of the source code followed rigorous procedures.

5.1.2 Manifest and latent content analysis

Some of the analysis of the research questions has been conducted at the manifest level (Boyatzis 1998), and this is especially so with the word frequency queries used to explore the data relating to Research Question 2 (R 2). Word frequencies are typically used for content analysis because this technique enables analysis of the visible content of e.g. an interview text (Boyatzis 1998), and enables observations to be found quickly.

However, this study seeks to move beyond the apparent content of the children's texts, to explore underlying processes and this is the latent level of analysis, requiring a more interpretive approach (Boyatzis 1998). Thematic analysis enables the use of manifest and latent content analysis simultaneously (Boyatzis 1998, pg.16), and is also referred to as summative content analysis by some (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). So latent, or summative, analysis of the content of the coded interviews is focused on the underlying processes and meanings that generate the words and phrases the children use. So, for example, a typical and seemingly over-used word the children use in many of their explanations is the word "like". This word dominates children's discussions of social media and their approach to brand interactions, and on the manifest level seems to be a "filler" word or just a conversational device. However, at the latent level, this word is probably being used to signify (symbolic) things, such as the children reflecting (and establishing) youth culture in how they talk. A discussion of the significance of the word "like" in the children's coded interviews is part of the analysis of Research Question 2 in the next section.

Thus, each of the research questions have been explored at both the manifest and latent levels, using tools from NVivo and the researcher's interpretive thinking. What follows next is the analysis of the coded data, in relation to each research question. The analyses conducted to explore the data use techniques enabling manifest and latent analysis.

Research Questions 1 and 3 (R 1 and R 3) are explored using matrix analyses to look at interactions among users and themes. Research Question 2 (R 2) is explored using the word frequency tool (at the manifest level), with the results considered from an

interpretive perspective (latent level analysis). Research Question 4 (R 4) is explored looking at the clusters of themes and subthemes and any implied (or not) relationships amongst these. Each section of analysis is summarised and questions that have arisen as a result of the analysis are discussed further in Chapter Six, Discussion.

5.2 Analysis techniques

What follows next is an interpretive analysis of the children's data and the relationship of the data to the four research questions. Initial analysis of the data was conducted at the coding level using the thematic code, and this step is the first part of the analysis. The code development is explained in the first half of this Chapter. Developing the thematic code and coding the data provided the first "look" at the data in a more conceptual way, via the clusters of themes and subthemes. Coding the data using the thematic code has also enabled some kind of sequence of the interaction processes that children use when using social media, especially when they are interacting (or approaching an interaction) with consumer brands. The coding remains a critical part of the data analysis because without the thematic code, no further interpretation work with the data can be undertaken.

Once coded, the data was first considered at the manifest level using the tools available in NVivo software, and this analysis provided direct comparisons of all the cases with each other in terms of each of the subthemes (subcodes). These are the matrix analyses, and, while looking similar to crosstabulations, focus more on comparing all the themes and subthemes coded to each case with every other case. The benefit of such analysis is that it enables cases to be compared on an individual basis, in groups, and in terms of the whole dataset. The matrix analyses assist the researcher to "see" how cases cluster together on various themes or groups of themes, and to investigate those cases for conditions that might cause such clustering.

Many other queries were conducted using NVivo software, but those of most relevance to answering the research questions were the matrix analyses and one word frequency analysis. The word frequency analysis was conducted for Research Question Two (R Q 2), which asks how children's social media use helps them learn about consumer brands. The role of "like" was examined at the manifest level, using the word frequency

analysis, because the children consistently use this word in all contexts, and it was thought that “like” may be significant for learning brands because of the link with Facebook (e.g. doing “Likes”). That is, when a child “does a Like” on Facebook, she is indicating affinity for something, e.g. posted content, or for someone, and such affinity could represent learning opportunities in brand contexts.

A crucial part of the whole analysis has been the interpretation of the coded data. This has been the most difficult part of the analysis to conduct, and has been undertaken as a line-by-line interpretation of all the coded data, both from the coded nodes in NVivo (themes and subthemes), and from the source documents (children’s transcripts) to ensure the context of their information forms part of the analysis too. Using an interpretive approach for the data analysis meant that the researcher has had to be vigilant about “letting the data tell the story”, and that meant including inconsistencies in the analysis. But this is how social data involving people is really constructed, and interpretive analysis probably can only go so far in interpreting people’s motives for saying or doing particular things, especially at the latent level.

This researcher has found the interpretive analysis the most difficult part of the whole analysis, and has had to resist, for example, the temptation to call the interaction processes that the children use “a model”, even though the processes would “look better” as a model, all arranged in a specific sequence. So, the interpretive analysis has tried to faithfully represent the children’s processes of interaction with brands on social media, to as close as possible to what the data says.

Getting to the latent themes via the thematic code then, and using interpretive analysis to look at the underlying aspects of children’s social media use with regard to their brand interactions, is really the main goal of this section. Without this work, the research questions are not answered, and only a superficial understanding is gained of how children use social media to interact with consumer brands.

What follows next, then, is the Analysis of the Research questions. A matrix analysis was used for the first research question (R Q 1) to explore the relevant themes and subthemes relating to children’s use of social media and their interactions with consumer brands, and then a line-by-line analysis of the data. The second research question (R Q 2) was explored using a word frequency analysis for the term “Like”, and then a line-by-line analysis of the coded data was conducted. The analysis

techniques used for the third research question, (R Q 3), involved another coding step to look at other sources of brand information that children use, and thence a line-by-line analysis.

The fourth research question (R Q 4) has been explored from a more integrative perspective, looking at the interactions among the themes and subthemes, and the effect that such interactions have upon shaping children's brand relationships. This analysis too has required a line-by-line analysis of the data.

5.3 Analysis of Research Questions

5.3.1 Research Question 1 (a) (R Q 1 a) How are children using social media to interact with consumer brands?

Table 5.1 Matrix Query: Exploring the theme Knowing; subthemes Identifying and Noticing

Exploring Knowing	Matrix	Result
All users relationships with identifying, noticing. Facebook users, relationships with identifying, noticing. Parent code = Knowing	Matrix query ²⁴	Overall, children tend to identify brands more than just noticing brands. Children using YouTube identify brands very easily, and this could simply be due to “more images and less words” that help children recognise e.g. brand logos for example, such as the Nike swoosh. Some Facebook users identify brands more than they notice brands; whereas other users notice brands more than they identify. This could be simply due to how the children use Facebook, e.g. some children focus on socialising with friends, whereas others spend more time looking at things.

Children using social media platforms know about consumer brands, and there are two different ways that the dimension of “knowing” is signified by the children. The Knowing dimension consists of two subthemes, Identifying and Noticing, and both are discussed next.

5.3.2 Children who tend to identify brands

Identifying children go to the trouble of saying something identifying about the brand, including locating where the brand appears on social media, and show more knowledge about the implications of knowing about the brand, e.g. such as what people might say about the user being attached to or interested in the brand. Noticing children can sometimes say something about the brand, such as where they noticed the brand, but tend not to provide much evidence of internalised knowledge about the brand, such as what its social meaning might be. The differences between the children’s Knowing orientations are shown in the following illustrative quote, from identifying children responding to brand questions:

²⁴ A matrix query involves showing all or specific themes arising from each case in a comparison table with all other cases. This enables the themes to be explored and compared on a case basis. The query uses the whole dataset, presenting the information in table form enabling identification of patterns in the data. The matrix query enables the researcher to explore the themes in large amounts of text data.

Tumblr is more kind of like, it's not really for your personal life, it's kind of like things that you don't...cause maybe people think it's weird that you are so interested in Dr Who or it's weird that you look at pictures of Cara Delevingne all the time...and on Facebook you have to keep things quite PG whereas on tumblr it's just like a giant shit storm all the

The two brands involved in the quote refer to person brands, one (Cara Delevingne) is real, she is an English fashion model, actress and singer, and the other (Dr Who) is a fictional character from a popular long-running English television show. To be able to identify person brands, and subsequently make a judgement about what others may think of one's interest in the brand, shows that the child understands what such a brand symbolises to others. Symbols in the form of brands carry social meaning to others, particularly symbols that are person brands. So the person brand Cara Delevingne acts as a resource for young girls in terms of how a girl should dress, wear her hair, act, speak, and so forth. Such a symbol for young girls is potent in terms of shaping how a girl will develop socially, especially if she "interacts" in some way with the person brand, and such interactions are possible on a social media site such as tumblr.

Understanding social meaning is referring to the social implications for the child of linking herself to such a brand; for example, if person brand Cara Delevingne is the "right mix" of "good" but (slightly) rebellious, then this might be acceptable in western culture as a role model for young girls, and the social implications of admiring such a brand are positive. However, if the person brand Cara Delevingne was "bad", perhaps more like the late Amy Winehouse (known for her heavy drug and substance abuse), then the social implications for a young girl of using Amy Winehouse as her role model could be very negative. Where children show symbolic understanding then of the social meaning of interacting with the brand, such interactions would be expected to be more active, e.g. evaluative and involving, showing some kind of relational connection between the child and the brand, and this is shown in the subsequent quote by the same user about how the Cara Delevingne brand provides guidance in hairstyle:

...but you know also like you know, I keep using like Cara Delevingne always wearing her hair like this, which is why I always bring my hair down because Cara Delevingne doesn't wear her hair up, you know I wear headbands because Cara Delevingne wears headbands that's cool..[D02].

Children using an identifying mode of Knowing about consumer brands (children who can be called “identifiers”) also show a level of symbolic understanding of the social media brands themselves, and of the consequences to them of using particular platforms. Because tumblr is referred to as being “a giant shit storm all the time” (in the first quote above), using such a social media site probably signifies rebellion against parental or societal norms of polite behaviour. The norms are shown in the comment in the quote about how things on Facebook have to be “kept quite PG”, urban slang for parental guidance used in movie ratings; in this context PG refers to something that is alright for children to watch, while anything goes on tumblr. While showing an understanding of the consequences to them of using specific social media platforms, identifying children take a much more relaxed approach to the platforms and to the content on the platforms, illustrated in the following quote:

Um like I said probably the mainstream popular people would probably be those kinds of people who would spend most of their life on Facebook. Like I only go on Facebook because I am admin on Pages, like on Harry Potter fan pages, like five of them, so I have to like go on and post and keep people interested and...[KA01].

So, identifying children have more sophisticated interactions with brands, e.g. working as an admin on Harry Potter fan pages, (in the quote above), which means that this child is involved in (potentially) brand co-creation activities: “so I have to like go on and post and keep people interested” [KA01]. To sum up, identifying children use social media for much more sophisticated brand interactions, with some of these children taking responsibility for keeping the brand alive for other users, illustrated by the comment above.

5.3.3 Children who tend to Notice brands

Noticing children use social media differently, using Facebook more often or in preference to other social media platforms, and an aspect of their use is that these children do not, or cannot easily identify consumer brands that they may still say they notice when using social media. Such children can say something about why a brand might be advertised, and can locate the brand on the social media site page somewhere, but the extent of their interactions with the brand are limited.

The following quote demonstrates a child's knowledge of "brand advertising" in his response to a question asking him what he notices when he uses Facebook:

There's lots of flashy things, so lots of things sort of saying well hey look at me, look what I'm doing or the latest, there's lots of ads...or sometimes they have like a slideshow sort of thing that comes up...[J12].

The next quote shows two regular Facebook users talking about what they do when they see (notice) something interesting that appears on a friend's Facebook Newsfeed:

Seeing like, like a page on Facebook and then it popping up with really cool things, so then you would go in like to page four, it would come up and you would be able to see it..[LA5&6].

No brand interaction clues are given in the quote; before this statement one of the girls said in response to a question about what she does when a friend "Likes" something on Facebook:

If it's like pictures and stuff that is really cool, then I would stop and like look at them or something, but not always...[LA5&6].

The quote lacks brand interaction clues or any identifying information about any brands. The absence of brand interaction information, and of any interactive intent is typical for noticing children. The children's responses to a direct question about which brands they notice on Facebook resulted in the following:

Um, like there's some things and it's really cheap electronical...[LA5&6].

Even when a brand is known about in a more identifying way, e.g. the children know about such a brand from other sources including the brand's presence on Facebook, noticing children do not always take extra steps into interactivity, shown below:

I suppose I kind of do, like everyone, I suppose over in America now it's winter kind of like fall and they are all kind of into leather pants and stuff at the moment, like the Kardashians and stuff, they are all wearing leather pants and, yeah I suppose...[LA5&6].

So, for noticing children, using social media to interact with a consumer brand is different to how identifying children use social media. Noticing children's approaches to consumer brands on social media are distanced, less interactive, and, although these children will indicate their admiration for a brand, this will not always translate into specific action, such as adopting the same fashion style as the person brand for example. Of the two girls using Facebook regularly, one of the pair indicated her admiration for the Kardashian sisters (person brands) fashion sense:

Well I love the Kardashians. I reckon they're spoilt brats to be honest. I suppose they are spoilt, but I like them. I reckon they have good fashion sense and they are well known and...[LA5&6].

However, the love of the brand and the remainder of the statement still does not provide any interaction clues. The other girl of the pair interrupted the statement to say:

They are just so over the top about everything. So dramatic [LA5&6].

The quotes are typical examples of how noticing children use social media to interact with brands, using a reporting style that is socially distant from the brand.

So, children use social media to interact with consumer brands in two different ways, with some children tending to interact as "identifiers". These children know more symbolic information about consumer brands, including important things such as what the social implications are for them of making visible their connections to particular brands. Such understanding for children who tend to interact in this way includes knowledge about the implications of their use of specific social media platforms compared to others (e.g. using tumblr more than Facebook). Children who tend to identify brands take a more relaxed approach to their social media use, and to the content they interact with, for example, readily interacting with brands for fashion guidance or for brand participating opportunities such as with Dr Who:

Sometimes they are for quite interesting things. Like see cause, like earlier on in the year, like I'm a massive nerd, and I saw an ad on Facebook for a big Dr Who convention and I was like I need to go to that...[KA01].

To sum up, some identifying children take responsibility for a brand in terms of the brand's social media presence, and this is most readily seen when children act as "admins", Facebook page administrators, for brand fan pages. Being an administrator of a brand fan page is by invitation or by application to the page moderator, and is usually reserved for fans who have technical social media skills and can be trusted. Such children are not only interacting with the consumer brand (in the Harry Potter example provided, page 198), but are responsible for co-creation activities and for keeping the brand's presence alive for the fans on social media. Such interactions will act to deepen the connections between these children and the consumer brand, because the interactions will build a sense of responsibility in the children of looking after the brand. In contrast, other children who tend to interact as "noticers" tend to use social media to interact with brands in more socially distant ways. That is, such children do not always identify brands that they notice when using social media, and when they do identify brands, their interactions consist of more observation of the brand, or aspects of it than of active involvement.

These children's information is characterised by the lack of brand interaction clues, and, while they may express admiration for the brand, their social media talk does not include interactive intent, e.g. talking about the Kardashians; (source LA5&6, pg. 200), that "I reckon they have good fashion sense..." does not lead to the next step of interaction, such as indicating an intent to follow or copy their fashion sense. Interactive intent could be inferred from the child's statement, but just saying that a fashion icon has "good fashion sense" does not mean that someone wants to copy that style, it could mean that the fashion icon brand is nice to watch. Of course, an argument can be made that watching a fashion icon brand will eventually translate into influence, but if this were the case with this child's opinion, then she would probably have indicated much more intent in her statements than she did. So, for children who tend to notice brands, there is little sense of the implications to them of using one social media platform over another, suggesting that for these children the social media platform just provides useful

functions, such as keeping up with friends, and of seeing e.g. fashion trends. There is no sense that the social media platform plays a role in these children's identity formation, instead is used as another way of communicating, getting information, and for entertainment. There is little sense that brands play prominent roles in these children's social media use, and when brands do appear, the interactions between them and the children are socially distant. The next section adds to this analysis by exploring the theme Reacting, and the two associated subthemes, Evaluating and Describing.

Table 5.2 Matrix Query: Exploring the theme Reacting; subthemes Evaluating and Describing

Exploring Reacting	Matrix	Result
All users, relationships with evaluating, describing. Facebook users, relationships with evaluating, describing Parent code = Reacting	Matrix query	Children who use more of the social media <u>ecosystem</u> had information that coded to both describe and evaluate brands, suggesting a more active orientation. Children who use Facebook in preference to other platforms had information that coded more to describing brands, suggesting a passive orientation.

Overall, children describe brands, and what they see on social media more easily than they evaluate brands and activities, but there are some differences. So, children using social media react to the presence of consumer brands in two different ways, evaluating or describing, and both ways signify some kind of interacting reaction, however one is a closer, more active reaction than the other, and this is an evaluating response.

5.3.4 Children who tend to Evaluate brands

Children who tend to evaluate brands under the Reacting theme show an active, thoughtful, evaluative way of talking about consumer brands. These are the children who use a wider range of social media platforms, and who are not focused on Facebook only. Evaluating children tend to have opinions on the kinds of interactions that social media platforms encourage, and are unafraid of expressing their opinions about “icon” brands:

Yeah. It's mostly like, like what's the word for, like doing with themselves, like Miley Cyrus has kind of like ruined her career, and we talk about TV shows a lot, like movies and books and things...[KA01].

Evaluating children tend to go a step past evaluative judgements, e.g. using sarcasm to make a point (in the example below) about e.g. a branded game (Grand Theft Auto) that advertises on and off social media:

Yeah they like steal cars and they shoot people and things. It's like a robbery game, which is training kids for a better society...[KA01].

Being able to make such a statement suggests that the child has a bigger view of social media content and what it signifies, and this tends to be the pattern of children who use multiple platforms. Further, this kind of insight suggests a socialised consumer, able to discern useful social media content from problematic content. Evaluating children tend to use multiple social media platforms, have more experience with social media as users, and this seems to encourage a more evaluative approach to consumer brands. These children evaluate as well as describe, and tend to have opinions about the kinds of brand interactions that they can participate in on social media, discerning amongst what they may say are “good” brands to interact with compared to “bad”.

*Int: what do you think about Miley Cyrus?
Response: Well I've just never really been a fan of her, yeah. She kind of embarrassed herself a bit with that performance at the VMAs. It was kind of...No. She did this performance at the MPV Video Music Awards and it was very bad... Yes, it was like don't do that, ever...I haven't seen her on Twitter. I don't really know...[KA01].*

The person brand Miley Cyrus is on the receiving end here of criticism from a tumblr user, the significance of such criticism from a child who tends to evaluate means that she is likely to join in the wider conversation about the negative aspects of the brand in her tumblr community. Miley Cyrus is a heavy user of social media, posting images of herself throughout the ecosystem (e.g. using Instagram) and providing links to her YouTube videos. Such brand conversations represent risks for brands, and evaluating children, because of their social media approach, are more likely to drive this kind of criticism. Children who tend to evaluate take a more discerning approach to what they might do in response to Facebook friends comments or activity, illustrated below:

Ah well like it depends what you define as cool, because I am really um like, I see guys on my Facebook like status, status, status, like photo, photo, photo. I'm like I don't care...[DH20&21].

Children who tend to evaluate use social media more explicitly for their own purposes, such as being more explicit about their identity:

And then Tumblr would be where you would post something more, maybe like to people, maybe to people like, maybe like, maybe people who maybe don't have a Tumblr, more to them socially unacceptable things like you know, oh I shipped these two guys, which is absolutely fine on Tumblr...[D02].

Being able to post content that could be socially unacceptable onto a social media platform, means that the child needs to have thought about the implications to herself of doing such things. This will mean that she needs to understand that doing these things will tell others “who and what” she is. Using urban slang is an identity statement, and children who tend to evaluate are more comfortable with social media talk that is characterised by urban slang, such as “shipped”. The term “shipped” is how tumblr users express their wish that people will get together in a relationship²⁵. So, children who tend to evaluate show less concern about expressing their identities and about using social media and specific brands to do this.

5.3.5 Children who tend to Describe brands

Evaluating children's counterparts, describing children, tend to be newer users, use less social media platforms, identify brands less and notice them slightly more, and show less internalised knowledge about the brand, e.g. in terms of symbolic meaning.

However, some describing children who are more experienced users, e.g. with Facebook, can and do make evaluative judgements about consumer brands and their activities, and do show understanding of e.g. a brand's social meaning. This could be partly due to social learning and practise opportunities, so, new users who are describing children, could be expected to make gains in their consumer brand knowledge as they continue to gain social media experience too.

Overall, though, describing children tend to say less on social media about brands, or guess about new things, stopping short of making evaluative statements. This is a general pattern distinguishing describing children from evaluating children, but does not always mean that describing children do not evaluate consumer brands, such as those children who are practised Facebook users, who can and do make evaluative

²⁵ <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=shipping>

judgements about where or how brands appear on Facebook, such as in advertising placements:

But ads on the side aren't a very good way to get across to people because a lot of people don't look at them. Int: okay, how come? Response: taking it in, like some things that are put on there and it's just like, I have no interest in it...[LA5&6].

Describing children's brand talk is less active, shows less knowledge about how interactions with brands might work, for example children guessing about what to do e.g. describing how to make a Vine (6 second humorous video):

*Yeah, you just get a Smartphone. A Smartphone is easiest. You just record something and then you can go onto Facebook app, I mean Vining website.
On your iphone, if you've got like an iphone or Samsung and you can just um, I think, I've never done it before, I think it's how it works, open up the Vining app...[P16].*

There are four brands present in the quote above, that is, Facebook, iPhone, Samsung, and the Vining website and application; the child went on to say that the app is bought from "the app store" (Apple or Google application store online). The interest here is twofold; first, learning how to use the Vining app requires learning how to use a smartphone, which in turn requires the child to learn which smartphone brands are available that can handle the video application, and this user shows his knowledge that a smartphone is the easiest way to "make a Vine video". The two prominent technology brands, iPhone and Samsung are mentioned, linking these brands to (potentially) fun activity on Facebook via making a Vine video. The illustrative quote also relates at this point to R Q 2 (using social media to learn about consumer brands). That is, the excerpt shows that, first, the child interacts with Facebook information in some way (either through friends on Facebook or noticing the Vine videos application) to find out how to make a Vine, and potentially to interact with the Vine website once/if he makes a vine video. Shown below is the result of a Facebook friend's recommendation resulting in the child's interaction to find out about interacting with the Vines application:

So if someone just likes a page then I probably won't look at it, but if someone like recommends it for me then I'll look at it probably. Interviewer: so can you give me an example? Response: the Vines...[P16].

So, following a friend's recommendation to look at something, or to do something is more a characteristic of describing children.

The interacting theme of reacting includes two elements, describing and evaluating, and essentially provides a way of understanding how children react to the presence of consumer brands on social media. In sum, children describe activity and what they see on social media relating to brands much more easily than they evaluate. Some children, though, take a more evaluative approach to brand interactions and these children tend to be more experienced social media users, using a wider range of platforms. This should not be surprising because these children have had more practise at interacting on social media platforms, and such practise probably translates into greater confidence in making known their opinions about brands. Evaluating children show a more discerning approach to what their friends might suggest they follow on social media, whereas children who tend to describe brands act more readily on their friends recommendations.

The next section explores the third parent theme relevant to R Q 1, Deciding. This theme consists of two subthemes, Relating and Watching, both interaction possibilities, depending on what children decide to do.

Table 5.3 Matrix Query: Exploring the theme Deciding; subthemes Watching and Relating

Exploring Deciding	Matrix	Result
All users, relationships with relating, watching. Facebook users, relationships with relating, watching. Parent code = Deciding	Matrix query	Children who use more of the social media ecosystem use more “relating” to brands, e.g. searching, finding, following, implying an active orientation. Such relating is not always positive. Both relating and watching is used by children who are using Facebook, with children who use just Facebook or YouTube using more “watching”. This is not surprising for YouTube – this is set up for “watching”. But it is surprising for Facebook.

All the children interact with brands on social media by “watching” them, which implies a passive, distant orientation. However, there are some differences within the group, and these are the children who use multiple platforms, including YouTube. These children relate more to brands than watch them, so multiple platform use seems to encourage a more active orientation from children to get closer to brands. But if children use YouTube in preference to other platforms their brand interactions tend to be characterised the most by “watching”, and this is expected for YouTube as the platform lends itself to video watching and commenting; it is a more passive form of social media. Children who use Facebook in preference to other platforms, or children who are new Facebook users, tend to interact with brands more by watching than by relating. This is a surprising trend for Facebook users, and could be because Facebook is dominated by people’s social networks, not brands, so interactions on Facebook are more active and more likely to take place via people’s friends (where “social relating” takes place) instead of with consumer brands.

5.3.6 Children who tend to Watch brands, transforming Watching into Relating

Watching brands does not mean that watching lacks influence, because watching forms the basis of social learning, and may appear to be passive but may in fact just be influence operating at a greater social distance. The illustrative quote shows watching is influential:

Well I get quite some influence from just someone I watch who does video games, and I've gotten some views from him, some point views and yeah so he influences me, yeah, to do...[DH20&21].

These children tend to use YouTube as well as a selection of other platforms (this boy is thinking about who influences him to select his video games), but tend to keep their social distance from interacting with the brand. The quote shows, though, that watching (in this case, a person brand and game developer) does represent influence operating in the child's social network. For those children who interact with brands by watching, learning about the brand is occurring, and such a way of learning can be linked to relating. The following quote shows how watching is closely linked to learning:

Int: do you use YouTube at all guys? Response: all the time. This is how I learn about most stuff for like gaming in particular. Ah I've got channels who just do Indy games which is just...[DH20&21].

So, children who watch brands and are multiple platform users, not new users, show that they use "watching a brand" to interact in a more relational way. These children tend to be more sophisticated users, and for them, watching tends to translate into relating to a brand. This is evident in the quote next showing how the child intends to interact with the two person brands she refers to (Tyler Oakley and Troye Sivan, two young gay guys who have become YouTube sensations for their comedy videos). Relating to person brands on social media is made possible by the tools available, such as the user's ability to follow a brand on Facebook, tumblr, or Twitter, and the way in which a user can indicate their feelings about such brands, e.g. with a Facebook "Like".

My favourites would be my two, of my OTP, my favourite ship, it would be Tyler Oakley and Troy Sivan...It's not like you know, refresh my feed so you get a post. You know, just like you know you can tell if he's in Australia, you can tell, and they'll post, if like their new video is up, it'll be on YouTube, it'll be on tumblr, I'll see that he's got a new video up, I'm like oh cool...[D02].

This child is referring to the person brands (Oakley and Sivan), showing that by watching their social media activity she learns where they are based, what new activity is available from them, where she can find it, and subsequently relates to their activity

with “oh cool”. The next quote illustrates how watching, learning and relating link together:

Um I didn't find them on tumblr first, I found them on YouTube and they make really, really funny videos and I like their videos a lot. And then I found they had tumblr and I'm like great I can stalk them now and blog them on tumblr and Facebook and Twitter and those...[D02].

Watching YouTube videos of her favourite person brands leads to the child learning about their tumblr blog, then using “stalking and talking” to relate to the brand on social media. Such activity will increase her learning about their brand as well as provide opportunities for her to “promote” the brand to others by mentioning them in her own blog. So, for most children, watching brands does comprise much of their interaction activity on social media. For some children though, watching brands translates further into the children relating with the brands, and this seems to occur through learning mechanisms. Such children tend to be multiple platform users, have experience being social media consumers, and are unafraid of relating to, or having an opinion about brands. The next quote illustrates this situation:

Um, it's just weird internet people. It's kind of hard to explain, like you'd be sitting there and like with that Miley Cyrus wrecking ball thing, there would be a picture of a lamp and like some sort of iron man doll sitting on it and it's like a caption I came in like a wrecking ball like with the Miley Cyrus thing. It's really weird, but it's quite funny...[KA01].

Children relating to brands can be in a positive sense such as liking the brand, or stating that the brand is a favourite, or relating can take place in a negative sense such as making fun of the brand, or enjoying other people's parodies about the brand. The quote above illustrates negative relating, and points out the risk to the person brand (Miley Cyrus) on social media. Of course, some celebrity brands could argue that all publicity is positive. In negative cases, the child is more likely to be relating to the brand detractors, while building negative associations about the parodied brand. So, watching-learning-relating are closely linked together, and watching with learning might be required before relating to brands is more easily facilitated. But, the problem with watching being linked to relating is that relating itself seems to be problematic; that is, of the children who relate to consumer brands using social media, these children tend to be more practised users and just as easily relate to brands in negative ways as well as

positive. The following quote illustrates this in the context of a very popular online, competitive social game League of Legends, which has a strong Facebook presence (currently 12 million Likes), with a comment from two YouTube users and social gamers:

And a guy on YouTube who makes parodies of songs relating to League of Legends. His YouTube name is Instalock...[RL18&19].

Here, the two boys show their knowledge of people who provide parodies of a popular online game, suggesting that relating to popular branded games (for example) in negative ways is acceptable. Children using YouTube and social gaming applications and who also follow games on other social media (e.g. such as Facebook), easily highlight negative content about the game, or about the people behind the game. The negative aspect of children watching a brand (in this case, an online game) could potentially foster negative associations about the brand or other things associated with the brand, including where that brand is to be found. For example, the following quote shows a child's response to gaming ads and invitations placed on Facebook:

I do occasionally when they look pretty cool, I'll jump into them. They turn out to be terrible. If they're on Facebook they turn out to be terrible...[DH20&21].

So, the response above illustrates the negative consequence for the game of having a presence on Facebook. The child here shows by his comment that he has learned that gaming ads can "look pretty cool", so this provides the motivation for him to interact by "jumping into them" (clicking on the game ad or invitation), but the consequence of this interaction is "terrible". The learning effect is powerful here, with the child linking gaming ads on Facebook to be consistently terrible, i.e. "if they're on Facebook they turn out to be terrible".

This kind of learning through children's social media use is explored further in the analysis of Research Question Two (R Q 2). What follows next is a summary of Research Question One (R Q 1).

5.4 Summary of Research Question 1 (R Q 1) and 1 (a)

Children use social media to interact with consumer brands in three broad ways, represented by the three core parent themes identified in the data: Knowing, Reacting, and Deciding. Each of the parent themes carries two subthemes with it, and these subthemes provide the details of the interactive processes that the children use. The theme of “Knowing”, and the associated processes of Identifying and Noticing, show that all the children identify consumer brands more than they notice them, but some children are “superior” identifiers compared to others.

The children who tend to identify brands in more thoughtful ways tend to be those who use more of the social media ecosystem, and who show symbolic understanding of the meaning of the brand, including understanding the implications to them of making their connection to the brand visible. Identifying children show more sophisticated interactions with brands, and are less likely to say they follow their friend’s lead in whether to interact with a brand or not. These children tend to show greater confidence in their own judgements, and are unafraid of interacting with anonymous people on social media platforms if such interactions give them access to brand-related information.

Children who are less thoughtful about identifying brands, and tending towards noticing brands, show less interactive intent in their “noticing” information. While these children do identify brands, their interactions are characterised by more observation, less action, and more reliance on following what their friends might recommend they look at or do. These children tend to be heavier Facebook users, and their social media talk contains little sense that brands play the prominent role in their social media experience.

The theme of “Reacting”, and the associated processes of “Evaluating” and “Describing”, show that children describe brands and brand interactions on social media more easily than they evaluate such interactions. However, some children take a more evaluative approach more consistently than other children, and generally these children tend to be those who are more thoughtful about identifying brands (from the parent theme Knowing). Evaluating children are less concerned about making their use of brands for identity purposes explicit, and are more discerning when considering brands

as “candidates” for interactions. These children readily express their opinions in social exchanges, and their social media talk is characterised by a more thoughtful, evaluative approach. Their counterparts, describing children, stop short of making evaluative statements about brands generally, but some children will still show that they can evaluate a brand. Such evaluations are usually on the basis of the implications for them of associating themselves with the brand. Describing children will more readily act on e.g. their Facebook friend’s comments or activity, but show less internalised knowledge of consumer brands.

The theme of “Deciding”, and the associated processes of “Watching” and “Relating” , show that all the children watch brands on social media, but some children watch brands “with more purpose” than others. Children watching brands with purpose tend to transform their “watching” more easily into relating to a brand. Watching consumer brands on social media is influential in itself, and those children who tend to move from watching to relating are the children who use a wider range of social media platforms. But, the focus for this theme is linking watching with learning and thus to relating. So, children watching brands on social media use the social learning opportunity provided by the brand and the brand activity, to translate such learning into relating. Thus, watching with learning might be needed before relating to brands is more easily facilitated. What follows next is the analysis for Research Question Two (R Q 2), which asks how children’s social media use is helping them learn about consumer brands.

5.5 Research Question 2 (R Q 2): How is children's social media use helping them learn about consumer brands?

This question was approached in two analytical ways, firstly, with the use of a word frequency analysis to look at how, or if children learn about brands through the use of specific social media language such as the word "Like", and the actions that accompany this on Facebook, such as making a "like" to another's posted content for example, or "liking" a brand page. Secondly, each subtheme that the children's information codes to represents a way of learning about consumer brands, so to explore the subthemes and the links between these and children's brand learning, a line-by-line analysis of the coded text was conducted.

a. Word frequency text search – exploring the code word "like".

A word frequency search was used to explore a frequently occurring, common code word used by the children, that is, the word "like". The word frequency search was done because the word "like" is part of the social media language for Facebook users and is used frequently by the children in different contexts. Such contexts are things such as children describing their response to others, or contexts such as the children responding to questions about their use of Facebook. Other relevant contexts where the use of "like" is frequent are when the children are reflecting youth culture. So, because the word "like" seems to dominate so much of the children's language in their interviews, the interest here was in establishing if this word was related in some way to how children learn about brands via their use of social media. For example, in the Facebook context, "Like" is a significant term to use and also an action to take, and often involves consumer brands, e.g. if a child "likes" a brand page, such an action involves the child learning about the brand sufficiently to indicate a "like", or, the child "likes" a brand page because of social influences. Finally, the word "like" may be associated with other co-occurring words or phrases, and these might have some relationship with how children learn about brands through their use of social media. Finally, "like" could be primarily used just as a cultural convention.

The word frequency search query in NVivo involves a count of the most frequently occurring words (manifest analysis at this point); in all coded interviews that have been

coded to all the subtheme nodes. The reasons for exploring the interview texts coded to the subtheme nodes is to see if “like” is particularly associated with one subtheme over others, or if the word has just become a ubiquitous part of the children’s language. So, for a meaningful result from exploring the data, all interview text coded to all the subtheme nodes was queried. The word frequency query also provided another coding check and an opportunity to review the subthemes coded to the nodes.

b. Stop words.

For meaningful results, word frequencies rely upon text settings to consistently exclude specific, less significant words from the search, such as conjunctions (connecting words, e.g. and, but, the), and prepositional words such as to, go, in, on, at. One of the issues with setting the text for stop words is that in children’s and young people’s conversational language, some words are used to emphasise different things or as vocal cues in relationship contexts, and these are words that adults do not tend to use in similar contexts. Some of these words seem to have more symbolic meaning than others (Charon 1998) depending on the social contexts at the time (e.g. peer relationships). Linguistics researchers have found that many of these words eventually find their way into the language patterns of the general population, and the word “like” seems to be one of these. As mentioned previously, “like” appears especially in the speech patterns of girls, boys, and young women, sometimes to the extent of dominating the speech. In the Facebook context, the word “like” has become a signifier for something different, such as agreement with a friend’s post for example. But in everyday youth language, the word “like” is thought to be used for emphasis in relational contexts²⁶, and could be a replacer for e.g. “such as”. The following quote from an interview is a good example of this:

*It’s just **like** an example just **like** I saw a photo of that once or **like** typical pictures of **like** teenagers at **like** a party or something and there’s **like** with the smoke, you know, kind of. And if I think of the grunge **like** blogs it always reminds me of tumblr because that’s the way I imagine, if tumblr was **like** a living thing I imagine that’s what tumblr would be...[D02].*

²⁶ <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/28/science/young-women-often-trendsetters-in-vocal-patterns.html?pagewanted=all>

are using Facebook they may “like” or follow something, or click on a link. The following quote shows a child’s friend progressing to commenting from liking something on Facebook:

Yeah but um instead of just him liking it um, he comments me in the video or photo...[P16].

The quote illustrates a social learning example via “liking” on Facebook; that is, the child’s friend goes a step further past liking something he has seen to making a comment to his Facebook friend, and, if the comment is positive or negative and brand-related, then “liking” and the associated commenting activity constitutes social influence.

Word frequency queries conducted for “Like” in all the coded subthemes resulted in a similar pattern of word dominance; that is, “like” appeared as one of the most frequent words in all the queries, and seems to be a well-entrenched way of how the children talk. Other words or phrases associated with “like” in the subtheme queries are associated with the subthemes themselves, reflecting the themes present in the children’s information. Because the patterns of the use of “like” are similar across all subthemes, it is evident that the word is being used by the children as part of how they talk, i.e. youth culture, and also specifically to talk about actions taken on Facebook. Finally, this conclusion is supported with the two screenshots discussed next. It is known that Facebook and “like” are related, this seems an easy link to make in a word frequency search, but a check of text coded to the subthemes shows that the word “like” is not used all the time in the Facebook context, being used as an everyday term as well. This is illustrated by two screenshots on the following page, both drawn from the node Describing. The source for Screenshot Figure 5.2. is AB7&8, and for Screenshot Figure 5.3 DH20&21. Both screenshots show children’s use of “like”, in two different contexts; as an everyday word, and as a Facebook convention, and this pattern is found across all the subthemes.

Figure 5.2 Word Frequency Screenshot

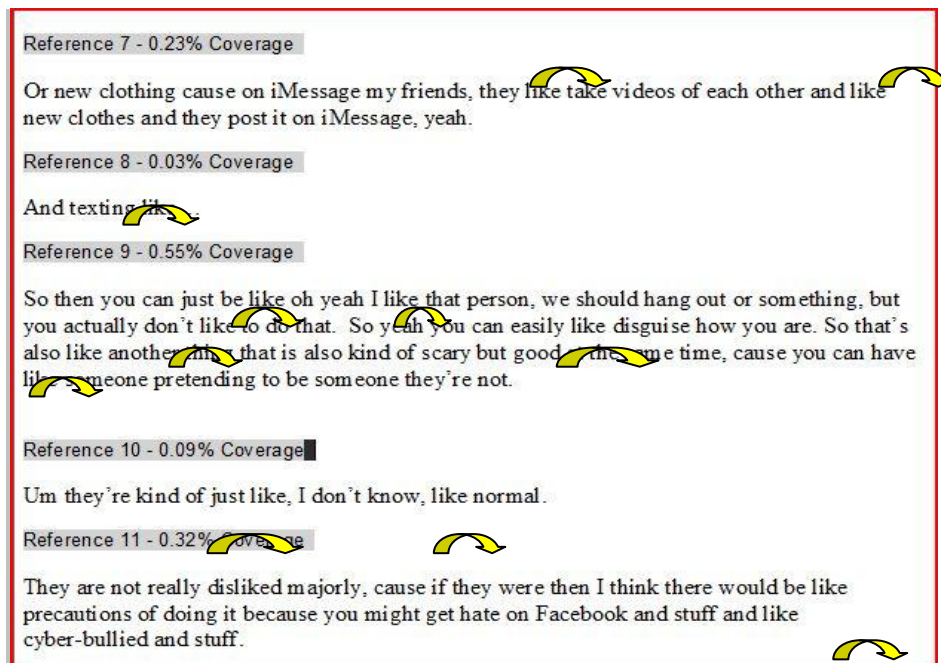
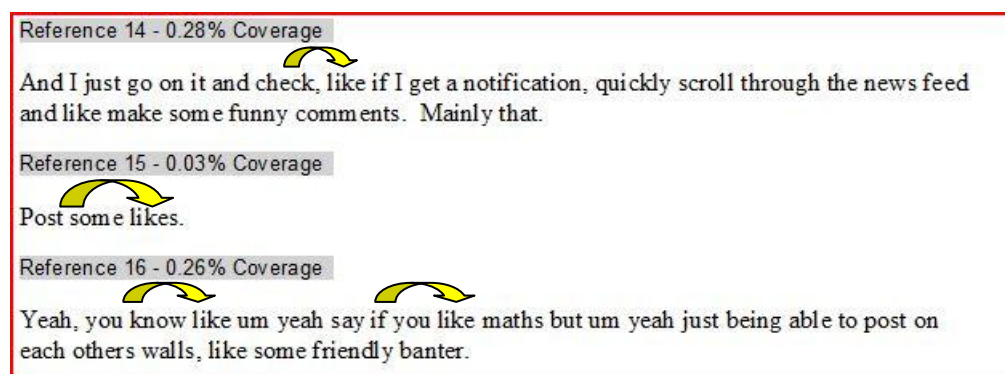


Figure 5.2 shows how the word “like” is used by two children (AB7&8) in an everyday context, as an emphasiser, and to help the explanation flow. The following screenshot Figure 5.3 shows the use of the word “like” by two children (DH20&21) as they talk about how they use Facebook. The children’s talk in Figure 5.3 shows how “like” is used as an everyday word and to talk about how Facebook is used.

Figure 5.3 Word Frequency Screenshot



The screenshot above (Figure 5.3) shows the way in which children use “like”, in terms of describing what happens and what they do, such as using the word in Facebook language, e.g. to “post some likes”, compared to everyday usage “like if I get a notification”. The switching between using “like” as an everyday word to a symbolic action (Charon 1998) that has meaning to others such as posting some likes, and thereby signifying agreement with a friend, is significant for the implications it has for children’s interactive responses on Facebook. For example, using “like” to signify agreement with a friend’s brand choice on Facebook constitutes social influence in the context of children’s social media use, because of children’s need to belong to their social referent group and comply with the group norms. The previous examples are typical of how the children in this study use the word “like” in multiple ways. What follows in the next sections are analyses of each subthemes and their relationships to how children learn about brands through their use of social media.

5.5.1 Learning about brands: Children who Describe

How does an analysis of the frequency of the word “like” in the children’s language relate to how children’s social media use helps them learn about consumer brands? Use of the word “like” in everyday contexts does not in itself mean that children are learning about consumer brands when they use social media, but use of “like” in the Facebook context potentially does. That is, children learn about brands by using social media because of the social relationships they are participating in, and social relationships (or social exchanges) facilitate people’s learning. For children using social media to learn about consumer brands, the act of using the Facebook tool of “like” helps the children think about the content and the context of the relationships on the social media platform they are using. This is shown in the following quote:

I think when I first got Facebook I just liked every single page I came across. I don't know why I did it, it just kind of seemed like what everyone else was liking. It was like it was like so many silly pages, and it keeps coming up in my newsfeed like some weird thing is talking about some weird thing...[LA5&6].

So, using the “like” tool on Facebook is associated with learning, but this depends on how the “like” tool is used, and what the child understands that using this tool signifies. In the excerpt above, if the “like” tool is used indiscriminantly such as how this child used it, the learning may turn to annoyance because the child has not discriminated

among the many things (or pages) she said she “likes”. Such annoyance would easily be directed at brands, because in the Facebook context, liking pages usually refers to liking brand pages or some kind of content that others have shared, and such content usually includes something related to consumption, e.g. fashion, music, celebrities, movies or television shows, or an event.

Most children who use Facebook have used or know about the “like” tool, but their understanding of, and use of this tool is variable. Children who tend to describe can say something about how the Facebook “like” works for e.g. a brand wanting to participate:

Something that captures the eye. I suppose that is a good way on Facebook, to get people’s attention because well if one person likes it then everyone else kind of sees it and then they like it and stuff... [LA5&6].

Getting people’s attention and achieving “likes” suggests that describing children understand that the “like” function on Facebook works to help children learn about things. The quote stops short of indicating more understanding that using the “like” tool suggests social learning about e.g. a brand, and that this has implications for how someone is perceived by others. So, describing children do not show the depth of understanding about learning from social activities that using Facebook represents:

If I have any notifications I click on those and see them...Just like if someone invited you to play um like 20 questions or if they had commented on something you posted. Yeah... Not really, I usually just get things like, no it’s awesome, how could you not like it... [GE3&4].

Here the child is responding to a question about the first things she does when logging in to her Facebook account; learning about new things here is embedded into clicking on notifications sent by friends and looking at friend’s comments on posted content. So, for describing children, their learning contexts on social media tend to be social, responding to friends activities:

Um ... sometimes um things that come up aren’t really appropriate, or some things people are liking, it’s like why would you like that [LA5&6]

The learning picture is different for children who tend to evaluate, and the following section provides the analytical discussion for these children, relating to how they use social media to learn about brands.

5.5.2 Learning about brands: Children who Evaluate

Children who tend to evaluate have learned more about how social media works, and tend to control their learning about brands in more explicit ways, such as by using social media tools that enable them to signify their interest in a brand, such as “follow”.

Following a brand or someone associated with or representing a brand on social media signifies a way for children to learn more about that brand, and has implications for the child of identifying with that brand. Evaluating children tend to discriminate amongst information from people associated with brands more explicitly than do describing children, such as the child using tumblr (quote below).

I usually don't go through all my posts on my dashboard, you know, you get through as much as you can, you read as much as you can and then you have to wait until people post more and the rest of it... Cause if it was like with the Fandom you would like, you would like their post because it's a Fandom you are interested in...[D02].

The child takes time to read through posted content (tumblr blogs) and discriminates amongst posts to make sure she only likes things she is interested in (Fandoms). Such a learning process is quite individual, and cognitive (reading and information processing), and there are few clues to the learning occurring in a social exchange. Once evaluating children have learned about brand-related things, then they are likely to share their interests with others who like similar things, potentially in more explicit (or vigorous) social exchanges:

Yeah. If you are on Tumblr and you share an opinion you pretty much get like firexed down, like you can't really say an opinion on Tumblr without people shouting at you..[KA01].

So it would seem that evaluating children take a more discriminatory and cognitive approach to how and what they learn from their social media use, and show a greater awareness of the intent of the various tools that brands can use to reach them, in the quote below:

Well you click on ...it goes say Minecraft, follow us on Facebook, you click on the link and you go on Facebook and you click follow and then they, it gets all the Minecraft updates on your Facebook account...[I15].

Here, the child shows his knowledge of how the “following” tool works on Facebook, and the way that the use of this tool enables constantly updated content to be delivered to a user’s Facebook account. Constant content updates to a child’s social media account will have the effect of providing a learning experience, provided the child is motivated enough to read the content, and has some trust in the source:

I don’t trust any ads that pop up. I never click on them [I15].

Children who take a more evaluative approach towards brands and brand interactions show more complexity in how they learn about brands, either through reading or by interacting with posted content. This suggests a more cognitive approach to start with, in contrast to children who take a more descriptive approach towards brands and interactions, whereby social exchanges with friends are more prominent in how these children are learning about brands. Because of the differences in approaches, it is likely that once evaluating children have processed brand-related information, they may move more decisively to relating to brands, thus making deeper connections, shown below with the young tumblr user’s connection to wearing the “grunge” fashion style:

I will probably dress grunge, I suppose maybe because it has influenced me, maybe because I saw this one photo and I’m like hey this is cool, look more, now I really, really like it...[D02].

Dressing in “grunge” means following the style of fashion icons such as the New Zealand singer Lorde, and also means following and belonging to a “grunge fandom” (community) on tumblr. The learning process shown in the quote is individual, but does not mean that the child does not interact with people about what she has learned, because, as identified previously, such social exchanges may come later. In comparison, children who tend to use a describing approach to their social media use and brand interactions take a less active approach to posted content, although these children can and do demonstrate some evaluative thinking, but in less relational terms, shown below:

So you do kind of think about, like something that does pop out and like that's quick to read, so you can just keep scrolling, but you are also looking at it. But if it takes forever to read and you go click, click, continue reading, and you've got to continue to read it, it's a waste of time...[LA5&6].

So if evaluative children tend to use a more cognitive style to learn about brands from their social media use, then what role does Watching play in how all the children learn about brands from using social media? The next section, then, provides the analyses for the subtheme Watching, as it relates to learning.

5.5.3 Learning about brands: Watching as social learning, transforming to Relating.

All the children learn about brands by watching them on social media, but children who tend to focus on watching, and who avoid taking further steps to relating or connecting with brands, tend to also describe and notice brands more than they identify and evaluate:

And there's a video game that I watch and his name is PewDiePie. And then he does gaming videos and he does a thing called Fridays with PewDiePie where he talks about stuff that's been going on. Sometimes he makes videos with his girlfriend and um his gaming videos, he makes really funny faces, like when he called a game called Slender Man which is like a horror game... [RL18&19].

Children who tend to watch people or brands have fewer interactive clues in their social media talk, their brand learning is more descriptive, e.g. with easy recall of the brand name (in the quote above the person brand “PewDiePie”), and in describing what the brand is known for which is describing the “product”. There is no real integrative sense for these children (as shown here in the excerpt) of the children linking themselves to the platform or showing how the use of the platform helps with identity tasks. There is no sense of the children relating to or connecting with a brand, or connecting with the social platform (e.g. YouTube in the quote below):

I do but um mainly use it to subscribe, don't really look too much videos on but I do have a couple...[A09].

In contrast, children who tend to evaluate, and who watch people or brands that people are associated with, more easily transform what they learn from watching into relating:

No, but what I did was I made a Reddit account just to post that, and so I posted it on like Artemis Fowl like discussion page and I just posted it on there and I haven't looked at it since or posted anything else on Reddit. I just wanted to get it out there...[DH20&21]...Other response: Oh I only every like finally Reddit account like if I am really annoyed...[DH20&21].

Evaluating children use a range of platforms and learn a range of content and contexts within which they can interact with brands (or avoid them) as part of their social media use. For example, learning how to talk to the author of a favourite character (Artemis Fowl) means learning about posting comments onto a community page on e.g. Reddit, in this case, the Artemis Fowl discussion page. Wanting to “get it out there” involves learning about the context within which talking to brands or their owners takes place. Such learning also applies to talking to or watching e.g. Indie game developers working outside the rules (quote below):

Ah I've got channels who just do Indie games which is just...Ah they're just single people who make games, so not big companies, and they tend to do things quite out there and quite different because they don't have to go on what publishers say...[DH20&21]

So, children who tend to evaluate, use brand-related information on social media differently, exerting more control over what they use. Such control is seen in the contexts in which children learn information, such as unlinking themselves from people or brands they want to avoid:

Even sometimes I'll un-follow the person, and I have in the past because they have decided to post some very expli, what is the word that I want to use? Explicit, that's the one, and I'm like yeah, no thank you, not my tastes...[D02].

So it is fair to say that children who tend to evaluate will act to choose the sources they want to learn content from, suggesting that these children will try to control what and who they learn from. Evaluating children watch people and brands “with more purpose” than describing children, such as learning to use brands for identity maintenance, e.g. using the tumblr social platform because of the type of users it attracts:

The kind of people who use it (tumblr) aren't really the kind of people who really pay attention more to themselves than they do to others...[KA01].

For children to learn about brands by using social media, then, some conditions are relevant. For example, the child's interactive approach with consumer brands on social media is important, such as describing children using their social relationships (social exchanges) more prominently for learning opportunities than evaluating children. Children who tend to evaluate use a more individual and cognitive approach to brand interactions, making more effort to read and process brand-related content. Describing children tend to watch brands and people associated with brands, but may not take further steps to relate to brands. In contrast, evaluating children will watch brands and associated people "with more purpose" and can transform watching to relating to brands, in response to some kind of internalised criteria. Children who tend to evaluate are more selective about the information they want to consume, and will act to choose the sources of brand-related information in more explicit ways than describing children. What follows next, then, in Research Question Three (R Q 3) is an analysis of how children's social media use interacts with other sources of brand information.

5.6 Research Question 3 (R Q 3): How is children's social media use interacting with other sources of brand information?

This question was explored using another coding step, to code the children's interview information from the theme Reacting (subthemes evaluating and describing) to four sources; family, peers/friends, school, and mass media (television). Information provided by all the children was then coded for the four new subcodes. The general result showed that all the children use a range of information sources about brands in conjunction with their social media interactions, but there are some differences in how the information is used, due to the children's interaction style, i.e. evaluating or describing.

5.6.1 Evaluating children and other sources of information

Children who tend to evaluate are less attached, or less explicit about using friends or family as information sources in conjunction with their social media activity. These children tend to use more global, less identifiable sources of brand-related information, such as other people's blogs on tumblr:

I haven't put my name or anything on there. No one knows anything about me. I only know, I only know two people and that's it. I know, I probably like the better part of 200 blogs...[D02].

Because these kinds of information sources are buried in e.g. a user's tumblr account (e.g. liking 200 blogs), it is difficult to know what kinds of brand-related information children might be interacting with. Evaluating children tend to be more implicit about the sources of brand information they use in their social media interactions:

Like other people don't really influence the kind of things that people say on tumblr. Like it's just like people tumblr blogs is like what they're into and they, everybody on tumblr knows that. So if just yeah, people aren't interested in something they are not going to like go on about it and say how amazing it is...[KA01].

Children with a more evaluative interaction style will make evaluative comments about their sources of information, and rely less on direct social media interactions with friends, illustrated by this quote:

...because I don't care if people like me on Facebook. But tumblr I guess because you know I prioritise it more as you know importance and social media or something that the followers on there kind of have more value I suppose. I don't know if that makes sense... [D02].

However, children who tend to evaluate still maintain social relationships with their friends and will use friends as sources of information, but tend to act more decisively about the information:

So if I didn't like K's stream that she was putting out I wouldn't follow her... [D02].

Children who tend to evaluate seem to rely less on social approval from friends, showing more independence:

Yeah, I don't seek them out. Like I don't, if they think I'm a cool guy they can just friend request me..[DH20&21].

Evaluating children tend to identify brands more, use more of the social media ecosystem, and because of their implicit use of other sources of brand information apart from social media, seem to have more internalised knowledge of brands that they bring to their social media interactions. These children tend to use fewer social cues from people close to them, such as friends and family, and are unafraid of using social cues from anonymous others. These children could potentially take cues from brands, if the brands meet their internal criteria. The next section looks at how describing children's social media use typically interacts with other sources of brand information, contrasting their interactions with those of children who typically use a more evaluative style.

5.6.2 Describing children and other sources of information

Children who tend to describe are more dependent on social cues, using information from friends more explicitly in their social media activity. These children are “friends focused” and tend to follow cues from their friends about what to look at on e.g. Facebook, or what to do.

I don't use Facebook that much. I just use it to talk to people... [P16].

Describing children are more cautious in their social media interactions, which will limit the range and diversity of information sources they have access to on social media:

Well for seeing it I think I've got like 350 friends ish. Just in terms of Facebook that's not many. Many, thousand. I only add people that I know, like from school and stuff... [P16].

Describing children tend to make explicit links between noticing brand-related information on social media, e.g. from friends, and then doing something about it:

Int: ...when you are talking to each other on Facebook, you know the kinds of things you talk about... Response: Just like, ah, I got this, and then she would go well really I got this. Cause my best friend got One Direction bed covers, and I want them [GE3&4].

Information sources such as friends tend to be more valuable to describing children, and this is seen in their use of social relationships to direct the kinds of information they more readily respond to. Children who tend to describe rely more upon getting information and checking it with their friends:

I'd go on Google Plus and look up those kind of things and go on line and look up those kind of things and talk to my friends about it..[RL18&19].

Children who tend to describe also rely upon information from watching television (mass media; first quote NitroCircus), and from friends' comments on Facebook (second quote, going to Australia) to help them with their brand interactions (following quotes next page):

Yeah. Like I saw some guy um because I went to see this thing called Nitro Circus. I'd been watching them (NitroCircus) on TV for ages...[A09].

I think it was Jessie my friend, she said she was going to Australia, and sometime, and I was like I want to go there..[GE3&4].

Describing children are more explicit about using friends, family, and mass media as sources of information about brands or about things they want to do, mixing these sources with their social media interactions, such as online social games:

There's fantasy football. That's basically a sports game, it's not really much of a game, it's more you can select players from any with premier league teams and blank your own one. Dad got us into this one... [AJ22&23].

Friends, family, and mass media play a more identifiable role as sources of information for describing children. Sometimes describing children show very directly how they have been influenced by these sources of information in their social media interactions, and the influence translates into some brand-related action such as seen on Facebook “my best friend got One Direction bed covers, and I want them” (source GE3&4). In sum, describing children depend more on social cues and social learning, tend to more explicitly identify their other sources of information, watching their other sources for social cues as to how to interact:

Yeah and my friend, his name was Sam and he said oh you haven't seen Top Gear. No, what is it. He said it's about cars, so he showed me a couple of the episodes and I just got hooked, literally hooked as if the TV just got hands and went you're coming with me...[T17].

So, evaluating children and describing children tend to use other brand information sources differently in their social media interactions. The differences are in the degree to which children explicitly use social cues from close friends and family to take interaction steps with brands. Describing children tend to divulge other sources of information more explicitly, needing more social cues than children who typically use a more evaluative interaction style.

What follows next is an analysis for Research Question Four (R Q 4), which asks how children's social media interactions shape their consumer brand relationships. The analysis for R Q 4 draws together the analyses from the first three research questions.

5.7 Research Question 4 (R Q 4): How are children's social media interactions shaping their consumer brand relationships?

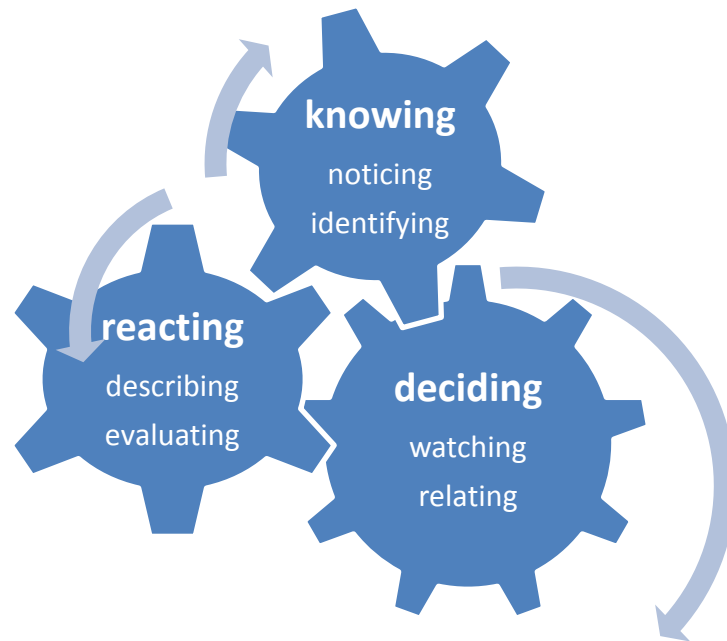
All the children use social media to learn about, and to interact with the information available to them, and these interaction processes that the children use play a part in shaping their brand relationships. So, the first three research questions link together to inform Research Question Four (R Q 4). Children use social media in particular ways to interact with consumer brands (R Q 1); their use of social media in these ways helps them learn about brands (R Q 2); the other sources of brand-related information that children learn from, such as family, friends, and their other contacts mesh with the social media sources (R Q 3); and all these factors taken together combine to form processes of interaction that help to shape children's relationships with brands (R Q 4).

Thus, the elements that characterise the processes of interaction used by the children are the very things that are shaping their brand relationships. Sometimes the processes of interaction seem very simple, consisting of only one or two elements, but these elements are still influential in shaping how children interact with and form some kind of relationship with brands. Such simpler elements (or acts) are those such as “describing”, and this element is part of the larger interaction process of Reacting. The counterpoint to describing, “evaluating”, also part of the process of Reacting, is a more complex response to brands from children. So, all the children can “do describing” of brands more easily than they can “do evaluating” of brands, but some children tend to “do describing” more consistently, while others “do evaluating” more consistently. Both these elements, then, describing and evaluating, are important parts of the processes of Reacting, which explains how children react to a consumer brand on social media. Reacting is one of the three parent themes in the larger processes of children's interactions with brands, and therefore plays a part in shaping children's responses to a brand, depending upon which element of reacting children typically use.

Each of the parent themes identified in the data play a role in shaping children's brand relationships. The three parent themes consists of two “child” themes, or subthemes, and it is the subtheme elements that provide the detailed understanding of how children's social media interactions are contributing to shaping their responses to

brands. The parent themes provide a framework of organising properties to the children's interaction processes, creating a moving sequence through time. The following graphic shows how the three most prominent parent themes interrelate together:

Figure 5.4 Conceptual model: knowing, reacting, and deciding.



The thematic code originally contained a fourth parent theme, “Belonging”, that signified a closer level of belonging to the brand that was envisaged to go further than Deciding-Relating. Initial coding showed that this theme is either present or not present, but further coding of the whole sample showed that “belonging” may be redundant because of consistent overlap with the parent and subtheme cluster of Deciding-Relating. Therefore, the detailed analysis of how children's social media use shapes their relationships with consumer brands has consistently focused on the three most prominent and usable parent themes. In sum, then, the type of relationship that children have with brands depends on the children's interaction tendencies, signified by the parent themes and the subthemes. What follows is a more detailed analysis showing how the children's interaction tendencies (processes) shape the kind of brand relationships they form, and to do this the role of the parent theme “Knowing” is explained first.

5.7.1 Knowing about a brand moves children towards Reacting and Deciding

Knowing about a brand, e.g. being able to identify or able to notice a brand are not sufficient conditions on their own to help children form a relationship with a brand, there must be something else. But both the Knowing conditions are important for motivating children to take other steps towards interacting with a brand. Knowing is linked to both Reacting and to Deciding, sometimes acting as a precursor to both the latter interaction conditions, but sometimes acting simultaneously with Reacting. So, children sometimes show a sequence of knowing-reacting-deciding, but this is not a mandatory sequence, and not all elements have to be present all the time. In a sequenced interaction, Knowing is a necessary factor prompting children to do something about a brand, such as learning what the brand stands for, such as its symbolic meaning, and learning to observe the norms of the brand, e.g. wearing clothing that shows the specific style of the brand, such as “grunge”:

Grunge, I don't know, I guess I like grunge and when I get to my school and stuff I won't dress all preppy you know, I will probably dress grunge...[D02].

Having inside knowledge of how a brand “works” is helpful for children, and is more a characteristic of evaluating children. In the brief excerpt above, the child knows about the fashion brand “grunge” (popularised for young girls by the singer Lorde), and moves quickly to a reacting-evaluative statement of “I like grunge” contrasting this with what she won’t do (will not dress “preppy”), finishing with a deciding-relating decision “probably dress grunge”. The excerpt shows a fashion branding process, with this child showing even more detailed inside knowledge of the fashion “brand grunge”, which she explained after saying she will “dress grunge”:

I'm going to describe it as a person again... Okay, it's going to sound pretty bad...Grunge would be the girl who dies her hair like either like kind of white grey or like lilac grey and she wears like, like designer sunglasses and she puts like, I imagine she would have deep red lipstick but like black eyeliner. And she would, she would wear like, they're not, well they are high heels but they are like, they've got platforms on them as well, and they would be like black. And maybe like torn like you know I mean like 20 denier stockings or something with little patterns, with like lace. And like skirts and there would be like a tank top with really big arm holes with a skull on it, and so you can see her bra as well...[D02].

For a child to interact with the fashion brand grunge, detailed knowing would seem to be essential to enable reacting-evaluating and thence to deciding-relating. Evaluating children show more detailed knowledge of brands than do describing children, and tend to include an evaluative statement in the context of the brand conversation, such as the excerpt below when the child was asked if dressing as “grunge” was acceptable for someone’s Facebook profile:

I think they would look like a bit of a... I have to justify it if I say that. Can a person be like that on Facebook? And yeah you, I imagine you could have a grunge Facebook page, but I wouldn't like that page or friend that person...[D02].

So, the whole context of the brand conversation about “fashion grunge” here provides the sequence for the interaction process of Knowing to Reacting-Deciding. However, this is not a mandatory interaction sequence, and could be used much more for fashion brands and fashion styles than for other branded products. For example, a differently-sequenced interaction about brand advertising on Facebook still includes knowing, but the other elements are ordered differently:

Those stupid Sky ads which are just like oh, if you've got Sky then you'll be fine. I've got Sky, please turn off these ads...Yeah, it's like 4G is coming to Auckland. Like okay, you don't have to do anything to, to make it work, it's like okay so why do you have an ad...[DH20&21].

Knowing in this excerpt is seen with the boys identifying Sky (television) and 4G, the Vodafone network upgrade for mobile phones. Because the boys have inside knowledge

of Sky television and about 4G, they move quickly to reacting-evaluating: “those stupid Sky ads” and for 4G, “so why do you have to have an ad”, both evaluations occurring at different stages in the process. That is, Sky ads are called “stupid”; this is reacting-evaluating occurring simultaneously with knowing-identifying. Deciding-relating is last in this portion of the excerpt, “I’ve got Sky, please turn off these ads”. The second portion of the excerpt shows the boys inside knowledge of 4G “you don’t have to do anything to make it work” with the reacting-evaluating statement occurring last: “so why do you have an ad”. Deciding-relating is buried in the phrase “you don’t have to do anything to make it work”, because in order to make this statement, the boys need a level of detailed knowledge about the brand’s intentions and how the brand owner provides such services (Vodafone, 4G network upgrade), plus a sense of knowing about the brand/Vodafone to the extent that the children talk about it as if it were a person: “why do you have an ad”.

The interactions about Sky and Vodafone’s 4G in this excerpt can be seen as, first: knowing-identifying and reacting-evaluating occurring simultaneously, with deciding-relating appearing last in the excerpt for Sky television; then for Vodafone, knowing-identifying, deciding-relating, and reacting-evaluating at the end of the Vodafone excerpt. The latter sequence with Vodafone could be because of the depth of inside knowledge that the two boys have of Vodafone; that is, they already relate to the brand from previous encounters so feel free to criticise brand efforts without needing to use reacting-evaluating as a trigger for deciding-relating. This fits with previous research showing that an already established level of knowing about a brand, and a formed (positive) relationship with it, means that e.g. advertising contacts with the brand do not really change the nature of the consumer-brand relationship unless the brand does something that is perceived as “catastrophic” or unforgiveable.

Knowing shapes children’s brand interactions on social media because Knowing as a process expresses children’s acquisition of brand knowledge. Additionally, the parent theme-subtheme combination of knowing-identifying relates more to children’s inside knowledge about a brand than does its counterpart, knowing-noticing. Because the knowing-identifying combination is meaningful, it is more likely to move children towards reacting-evaluating than towards reacting-describing. This is because the detailed identifying of a brand provides a trigger for a more considered, evaluative reaction to the brand and interactions with it, compared to the more superficial

“noticing” of a brand on social media. What follows next is an analysis of how children’s interactions of Reacting-Evaluating move them closer towards Relating to brands (from deciding-relating). The following analysis, then, relates to knowing-identifying, because of the way that this interaction combination shapes children’s responses in more evaluative ways towards brands.

5.7.2 Reacting-Evaluating moves children towards Relating to brands

The excerpt below about Taylor Swift (country singer, person brand), shows three parent themes, Knowing, Reacting and Deciding, and four subthemes, identifying, evaluating, describing, and relating.

I love Taylor Swift. I like her music. She’s like really inspirational. I reckon like her songs tell a story and they have a learning behind them kind of thing, like a lot of songs do, but they are just different. I like how she does the whole country thing, quite pitchy...[LA5&6].

The arrangement of the themes in this excerpt shows how the relationship is shaped between the child and the singer Taylor Swift. That is, the child makes an evaluative statement (reacting) of “love Taylor Swift” at the same time as identifying (knowing) “Taylor Swift” as a person brand, able to be “loved” as a celebrity. At this point, knowing and reacting simultaneously interact. A condition of evaluative reacting could be, then, that a specific “type” of knowing must occur; that is, the child in this excerpt needs to know that the “brand Taylor Swift” is capable of being “loved” in an objectified kind of way, the opposite to romantic love. For the child to declare “I love Taylor Swift”, then, she needs to have some internalised knowledge that it is appropriate for girls her age to declare they “love” another girl, a celebrity brand, and that such a declaration will not carry censure from others. So, the type of knowing that enables this kind of internalised criteria to be activated is “identifying”, which is a more specific, detailed “knowing”. If the “brand Taylor Swift” was gay, then it is possible that many girls would not declare “I love Taylor Swift”, because of the implications that such “identifying-knowing” would have for them. So, identifying-knowing is a way of knowing that moves a child closer to or away from a brand, logically leading to, or simultaneously interacting with reacting, in an evaluative way, in this case, “love Taylor

Swift”. The evaluative reaction is so because it is followed by justification of “why I love Taylor Swift”; whereas reacting’s counterpart, describing, is just that, description, stopping short of offering reasons for the reacting.

Interactions among reacting and deciding can also be seen in the excerpt, and relate to the child liking Taylor Swift’s music, an evaluative statement because of the justification: “she’s like really inspirational”, with “inspirational” playing a double role. That is, of inspiring the child to relate (deciding-relating) to the “brand Taylor Swift”, perhaps because young girls are looking for inspiring female role models, and also because of the evaluation of “brand Taylor Swift” as being a person with songs that tell a story and songs that “are just different”. Thus, in this part of the excerpt, the child shows how closely evaluating and relating interact. So, for the child to relate to the singer Taylor Swift, identifying-knowing is accompanied or simultaneously interacts with evaluating-reacting, which tends to precede relating-deciding. So, for relating to occur, evaluating needs to precede it, and needs to interact with the more powerful condition of knowing, identifying-knowing. This further suggests that identifying-knowing, and evaluating-reacting, play a more powerful role in shaping children’s relationships, or their relating to brands, than do their counterparts, noticing-knowing, and describing-reacting.

One of the interaction areas among the themes and subthemes needing explanation is how children who tend to describe brands, and brand interactions, can also relate to brands. The interactions among knowing-noticing, and reacting-describing, and deciding-watching are relevant here. Research Question Two (R Q 2) already established that all the children watch people and brands on social media, but that some children can transform such “watching” into relating. For this to occur, the interaction conditions will logically differ among those children who relate to brands from watching, and for those children who do not do this. The explanation of social learning offered in Research Question Two (R Q 2) to explain the interactive move of some children from watching to relating is insufficient, the interactions are more complex than that. So, the next section considers the interactions that move children towards deciding-watching, and to deciding-watching-relating, to try to explain the underlying processes.

5.7.3 Reacting-Describing moves children towards Watching brands

Research Question One (R Q 1) already established that children describe activity and the things that they see on social media more easily than they evaluate, but that some children tend to favour describing most of the time. These children tend to be newer social media consumers, and use less of the social media ecosystem. The interaction processes for describing children in terms of how their describing reaction prompts them into deciding what to do, whether to relate to, or watch a brand is illustrated by the following:

Um sometimes it's really funny just cause his reactions um and there's another guy that I, oh I watched him play Slender Man, it was funny. His are faces as well, his name's Marker Plyer, yeah...[RL18&19].

No I usually just search (YouTube) for like a music video or something, watch it and then scroll down there's another music video. Then yeah do that. Search for something else...[C10].

Describing as a reaction (Reacting), when not followed by any real evaluative statements tends to move children towards watching brands (Deciding), and away from relating to brands. In the excerpt above (left quote), the child describes his reactions towards a YouTube video maker he described earlier in his interview: “sometimes it’s really funny just cause his reactions” and moves on to identifying: “another guy that I, oh...” The next part of the process consists of watching “I watched him play...”, identifying a brand game “Slender Man...”, to describing “it was funny...His are faces...”, to identifying again “his name’s Marker Plyer...”. Comparably, the child who uses YouTube (right quote) to search for and listen to music videos provides no relating-to-the-musicians cues in his social media activity, and no prior evaluative thinking. Being able to make some kind of evaluation of a brand or brand activity past “it’s really funny” means that the children are processing different types of information about the brand, some of it symbolic (meaning). Research Question One (R Q 1) already established that children who tend to evaluate know more about a brand, including its symbolic meaning, and articulate what the implications are to them of connecting with the brand in visible ways on social media. Children who tend to describe more consistently than they evaluate do not clearly show in their brand interactions that they understand brand symbolism, or, if they do, such understanding is

less explicit. These are the children who “do more watching” of brands, such as in the two examples given above. Because these children’s interactive patterns are further from brands, that is, these are the children who, while they do identify and notice brands about the same as all the other children, more consistently describe brands and brand interactions, and more consistently watch brands without taking other steps. This kind of interactive pattern suggests “distance” from brands. For some children in this group, YouTube is their preferred platform, so the distance between them and a brand is probably expected, because YouTube is designed for “watching” content. But for other children, Facebook is their preferred platform, and such “brand distance” from the child is unexpected. So, for some children who include describing and watching in their interactions, watching increases the distance between the child and the brand, and, for other children, watching decreases the distance between the child and the brand. When the latter is the case, the outcome is of deciding –relating, and this scenario is discussed next.

5.7.4 Watching can move children towards Relating to brands

Describing and watching are still influential interactions that shape some children’s relationships with brands, because the interactions between describing and watching can be an important prompt for relating:

Int: who would you say kind of influences you to maybe do something or buy something? Response: Well I get quite some influence from just someone I watch who does video games, and I’ve gotten some views from him, some point views and yeah so he influences me, yeah, to do...[DH20&21].

The excerpt above illustrates an interaction process with describing and watching: “well I get quite some influence” but, stopping at this point, the descriptive comment contains overtones of evaluation. That is, for a child to determine who he might “get some influence from”, the child needs information that suggests that the influencing person is credible enough for him to watch and to pay attention to, and that the influencing person has the credentials to influence others, including him. Further, the child needs to establish that the influencing person is a credible source to link to in terms of all other available sources, and that such a source will either enhance the child’s own identity, or

at least will not harm his sense of identity. This last point is important in the context of social media because acknowledging sources of influence upon oneself is very visible, and makes the user vulnerable to the criticism of others. So, in the excerpt above, despite the first part of the interaction coded to describing, a better analysis suggests that this is describing-evaluating that are interacting together. So, some children show an interactive pattern of describing-evaluating interacting jointly, and such a pattern is substantively different from those children just showing “describing” as an interaction on its own.

The children using an interactive approach of describing-evaluating that are interacting jointly, and that is closely followed by watching (from deciding), are the children who will move from watching to relating. This is illustrated in the excerpt above, with the passage: “I’ve gotten some views from him...” watching; to: “and yeah so he influences me, yeah, to do...” relating. The reason this last phrase is relating is because the child was responding to a question about who influences him to do or buy something, and relating means a closer, unafraid of relating to the brand, willing to connect with the brand, and “to be influenced” into doing something brand related. So, the joint interactions between describing-evaluating-watching are important because such a pattern of interaction has the capacity to move children to relating, and such a pattern of interactivity shapes the children’s brand relationships in terms of setting the context for the children “being influenced” by the brand.

5.7.5 Interacting relationships: themes, subthemes and children’s brand relationships

The illustrative graphic on page 235 suggests that the three parent themes, knowing, reacting, and deciding, and their associated subthemes, identifying, noticing (from knowing), evaluating, describing (from reacting), and watching, relating (from deciding), interact together in a process that is sometimes sequential, and sometimes simultaneous, to shape children’s brand relationships. The conditions that tend to foster a sequential process of knowing to reacting to deciding tend to be related to the condition of knowing, That is, knowing-identifying provides children with a level of detailed knowledge about a brand, including “inside knowledge”, and this condition

fosters a more evaluative reaction from the children towards the brand and interactions with it. Such evaluative reactions tend to foster deciding conditions towards “relating” to the brand, rather than just “watching” the brand. So, for children who tend to follow this interaction pattern, it all starts with knowing about the brand, at a complex, detailed level. Such “knowing” (at the identifying level) consists of brand knowledge such as what the symbolic meaning is of the brand, an understanding (and acceptance) of the social consequences to the child of linking herself with such a brand (e.g. of linking to Dr. Who), and a willingness to make her connection to the brand visible on social media, despite the social risks this might create (e.g. censure from friends).

So, the knowing-identifying condition sets up the context for children to make a more evaluative reaction to the brand, and this is seen in comments where the children make judgements about the brand in relation to themselves (e.g. “I’m a massive nerd and I saw an ad on Facebook for a big Dr Who convention and I was like I need to go to that...” source KA01). So, this type of interaction pattern can be described as children getting closer to a brand, bringing the brand more prominently into a relationship with these children. This type of interaction pattern is seen in children who use more of the social media ecosystem (that is, a range of platforms), and who take a more independent stance towards their social media activities, relying less on friends and more on anonymous others for brand information and interaction opportunities:

Whereas Tumblr it's like strangers you have never met, like the USA, the UK, Asia, all the rest of it. You don't know their names, you don't know how old they are, you don't know what job they have, you know nothing about them except for the fact that they like the same kinds of things as you...[D02].

Another interaction pathway, with a start point of knowing-noticing, is more likely to progress with children describing and then watching a brand. Such a pathway is more distant from a brand, but does not mean that the relationship that the children have with the brand always lacks influence. For example, watching a brand can help children learn about the brand via social learning opportunities, but for more relational learning whereby children might become influenced by the brand for example, the interaction pathway needs to become more complex, with interactions between describing and evaluating. However, children who tend to notice more than they identify brands do not tend to interact in this more complex way, and so their brand interactions on social media tend to be much more straightforward, and more distant from the brand culminating in their activity of “watching the brand”. These are the children who use YouTube for gaming and who want entertainment, or who use Facebook predominantly for keeping up with their friends:

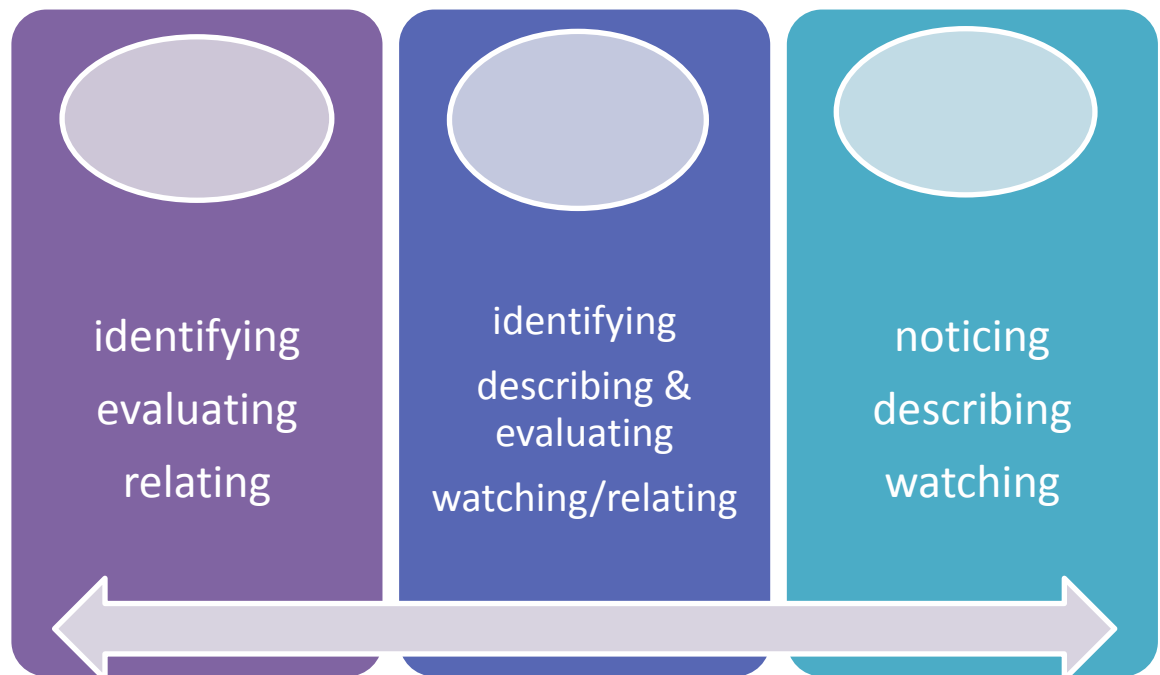
...Seeing what other people are doing...It keeps you up kind of...I suppose after you've gotten a friend on Facebook it's like you do almost have a connection like... I suppose it's almost like you know them, like you see what they've done and stuff, like photos and it's kind of like you do know them... Most of them have a Facebook, like one friend has only recently just got one, but the only reason she did it was so that she could try and get more votes for a competition she was entered in...[LA5&6].

There are complex and simultaneous interactions facilitated from knowing-identifying, such as simultaneous interactions with describing-evaluating. Children who interact with brands in this way tend to watch brands before they relate to brands, and this seems to be achieved because of the simultaneous interaction of describing-evaluating. That is, these children have evaluative overtones to their describing brands, and such evaluative conditions encourage a move past just “watching” a brand, towards more relational interactions with the brand. This type of brand interaction is evident for children who use a range of platforms, but prefer to use YouTube and other social gaming platforms such as Twitch, suggesting that even though these platforms are characterised as more passive content watching and individual gaming, some children use these platforms in quite complex ways to relate to people who may be talking about brands, or who may be brands themselves (e.g. a popular “gamer”):

No, it's basically one person who just is playing a video game and they have like chat which you can, you can talk to them through that, just basically typing it out, but there's like chats coming through like really fast and it just feels a lot more interactive with the people. And so when people are like oh how do I do this, I have no idea, everyone's going to yell at me in comments and then you can just say that in the chat and they'll go like okay thank you now I don't have to have the hate...[DH20&21].

The previous analyses suggest that there are three identifiable modes of interaction that children use for interacting with brands across social media. The interaction processes that children use consist of elements in different combinations, and it is these combinations that act to shape children's relationships with brands. More meaningful combinations of elements in the interaction processes consist of evaluative responses from the children, and such responses and combinations of interactive processes tend to foster more relational interactions with brands. Less evaluative, or descriptive responses from the children tend to foster more distant relationships with the brand, such as encouraging children to "watch" a brand without being prompted into further action. This kind of interaction from children tends to be found on YouTube, and for some children, this is their typical pattern of activity on Facebook. However, for some other children who also tend to have more descriptive interactions with brands, the potential for such describing activity to transform into watching and then relating to the brand is evident. These are the children who interact with brands in a simultaneous describing-evaluating way, and this combination tends to foster more relational activity with the brand. So, in sum, there are three modes of interaction that are more easily observed, and these are characterised by a different mix of interacting conditions. It is likely that the interaction processes differ depending on the product category that the brand represents, for example, fashion or technology. The following graphic outlines the three interaction modes:

Figure 5.5 Three modes of interaction.



The overall picture emerging from the analysis of Research Question Four (R Q 4) is one that integrates the analyses from the previous three research questions. What is depicted is a three mode interaction process that children use when interacting with brands on social media. The combination of the elements within each of the interaction conditions are the things that determine what the interaction mode (or process) looks like, and this in turn determines the shape of the relationship that the child has with the consumer brand. So for example, the interaction mode of identifying-evaluating-relating can be called “more cognitive” because of the focus the child has upon evaluating, and less dependence on social cues as to what to do about interacting with a brand from those people close to the child, such as their family and friends. This mode of interaction, though, still has social characteristics, but these can be envisaged as “distant others” from the child, are sometimes anonymous, and are a more diverse group of people in demographic and lifestyle attributes, such as those people using tumblr. Often the interaction elements occur simultaneously, for example identifying-evaluating, and this suggests that these elements are closely linked.

The next interaction mode in the graphic, that of identifying-describing/evaluating-watching/relating, shows that the interaction between describing-evaluating foster a move via watching to relating to a brand. This mode has both cognitive and social elements, but depends on the evaluating element to foster children's decisions to relate to a brand. This is probably the most complex of the children's patterns of brand interactions. The third mode of interaction, noticing-describing-watching, can be called "more social" than "more cognitive" because the elements within this mode are linked to more reliance on social cues from family and friends. This mode of interaction is the least seen in the children's data, and could be called "passive" because of the watching, or "more dependent on close social others" because of the children's reliance on social cues to help them respond. So, while the three modes of interaction seem as if they should be sequenced, the picture emerges of a much more complex set of elements that occur simultaneously or closely-linked, and that it is the arrangement, or combination of the elements that is the important factor in determining how the children relate to a brand on social media. So, to link the findings together from the four research questions, this Chapter ends with a conclusion, and this follows next.

5.8 Conclusion

Chapter Five, Results, has in the first part provided details of the participants, comments about data quality control and the data analysis procedure. The second part of the Chapter provided an explanation about how the source code was developed for the thematic code, and this included how the four iterations to arrive at the final source code were conducted. This part also discussed manifest and latent analysis, explaining the differences between the two, and the relevance of both to the data analysis for this study. This part also provided details about how the data was coded, including the steps taken to ensure the code was usable and able to be consistently applied by two coders. The final section of this part of Chapter Five provided a discussion of the analytical techniques used for the analysis of the research questions in the third part to the Chapter, clarifying the role of the tools used from NVivo software such as a word frequency analysis, and explaining how the interpretive analysis was undertaken using line-by-line analysis of the coded data. The third part of the Chapter provides the analysis of children's use of social media in relation to the four research questions. Illustrative quotes taken from the children's coded data have been used liberally throughout the analysis because such information provides the evidence to support the researcher's interpretation of the data. Each research question was briefly introduced to remind the reader of the goal of the section.

Research Question One asked how children use social media to interact with consumer brands. Findings showed that children's participation in social media networking is by way of three main processes, each process containing two subprocesses, and these processes provide the conditions by which children interact with brands. The three main processes of knowing, reacting, and deciding, and their associated subprocesses of identifying and noticing (from knowing), evaluating and describing (from reacting), and relating and watching (from deciding), are used by the children in their social media interactions with brands. Research Question Two asked how children's social media use helps them learn about consumer brands, and findings here showed that children use the interaction processes to learn about brands. So, for example, children learn about brands through describing them to friends or through watching brands on social media

platforms, and this constitutes social learning. These children maintain their relationships with friends, using social media to help them with this, and such social media relationships help the children learn about brands. Other children learn about brands using a more evaluative approach, thinking about how the brand “fits” (or not) with their sense of identity for example, and thinking about the social implications of linking themselves to such a brand. This could be styled as a more cognitive and social approach to learning about brands, because the child needs to have certain information about the brand, and the capacity and motivation to understand the brand’s symbolic meaning. Research Question Three asked how children’s social media use interacts with other sources of brand information, and findings here showed that children mesh information from other sources such as family and friends, and from television, with the information they already have from social media. The relative importance of the sources to the children depends partially on which interaction processes the children use with brands on social media, and partly upon the platforms that the children use. For example, children who tend to identify-evaluate-relate tend to use more anonymous sources of information, relying less on family and friends, or, these sources are used more implicitly. These children tend to use a wider range of social platforms. Children who tend to identify-describe-watch rely more on friends as sources of information, and these children tend to use Facebook in preference to other platforms. Children who tend to use YouTube vary more in their use of other sources of information, with some (those who tend to identify-describe-watch) relying on friends, family, and mass media (television) more than those who tend to identify-evaluate-relate, who rely more on global, anonymous sources. Children who tend to identify-describe-watch tend to be more explicit about relying on social cues from friends and family and use these cues to help them with “deciding”. Children who tend to identify-evaluate-relate use more implicit sources, divulging their sources less and needing fewer cues when making decisions.

Research Question Four asked how children’s social media interactions shape their brand relationships, and findings here showed how the elements (themes and subthemes) interact together in three predominant modes, such interactions providing the combination of conditions by which childrens’ relationships with brands are shaped. The three modes of interaction can be characterised by the focus of each on either cognitive, social, or a combination of cognitive and social elements acting together to

provide a process that children use to approach interactions with brands. The analysis of Research Question Four has avoided characterising children's interaction processes as linear, because each of the interaction modes shows that certain elements in the processes occur simultaneously, and some loop back onto each other. This is expected because these are social processes in action, such processes are not usually linear, people and their social lives being more complex than that. Thus, children using social media do interact with consumer brands, and it is possible to understand the shape of these interaction processes, and from this, to start to understand how such processes are shaping the relationships that children form with brands. How these findings link to prior academic marketing knowledge about how children learn about and interact with consumer brands is discussed in Chapter Six, and this follows next.

Chapter Six

6.0 Discussion

This research set out to explore how children's use of social media affects their interactions with consumer brands. The research goals were formulated to find out how children's use of social media helps them to interact with brands, to learn about brands, interacts with other sources of brand information, and how such social media use shapes children's relationships with consumer brands. This topic is interesting because of the fact that social media platforms are showing massive, global growth in the numbers of people of all ages using such platforms to communicate with each other. Such communications include people sharing information with each other, and it is known that people share market-related information such as talking about brands, forming brand preferences, and joining brand communities. Such social exchanges might then offer opportunities for brands to participate.

The purpose of Chapter Six is to consider the research findings of Chapter Five in the light of previous research, showing how the findings add to our academic marketing knowledge of how children do interact with consumer brands. Chapter Six concludes by considering the theoretical, empirical, and managerial contributions of this research. Limitations of the research are discussed, and thoughts are offered about the research implications, and final comments are made on suggested future research directions.

6.1 Overview of the study

The central research objective guiding this study is how social media, such as Facebook, influences children's brand relationships, both as an information source and as a communication medium. Four specific research questions were formulated from the central research objective, with each question seeking to answer different aspects of the central research objective. To achieve the research goals, this study has been set into a social constructionism framework, which holds that people construct their social reality within their social relationships (Gergen 2009). Such a perspective provided guidance for the researcher to treat the children's words with care, as the children's information formed the material from which the research questions were answered. An interpretive

perspective of symbolic interactionism (Charon 1998) and pragmatism provided the theoretical approach, and thematic analysis (Boyatzis 1998) was selected as the analytical approach. Qualitative, semi-structured interviews (Docherty and Sandelowski 1999) were selected as the method of data collection. In order to carry out such a study, ethics permission was obtained for the researcher to invite the parents or caregivers of intermediate or early secondary school age children to agree to their children participating in the study. A parents and caregivers information sheet and consent form was prepared, and a special information sheet and assent form was prepared for the children. Twenty-three children agreed to participate in face-to-face interviews with the researcher, and of these, twelve children elected paired interviews with a friend or close sibling, whilst eleven children opted for single interviews. The interviews were conducted over an 18 month period, which gave the researcher the opportunity to observe some of the changes in the operations of the social media platforms that the children were using. Changes to social media platforms during the 18 months of data collection were observed in the collaboration of platforms, such as the photo-sharing site Instagram, which now enables users to share their photos on their Facebook page.

The children's interviews were recorded and then professionally transcribed, generating a large amount of interview materials for analysis. The researcher undertook quality checks of all the transcripts by listening to the recordings and correcting the transcripts where possible, including transcribing one script as a check. All the transcripts were entered into NVivo, and NVivo provided the organisational structure for the data, enabling the researcher to undertake the work to derive the thematic code. The CodeBook (Appendix 2) contains the source code, and this code was used for the line-by-line analysis of the children's transcribed interview information. The coded data was entered into nodes in NVivo, each node representing each of the code elements. This detailed analysis provided the material for the researcher's interpretive work to answer each of the research questions. Results of the analysis show that children use a process to interact with consumer brands when using social media, and this process consists of three modes of interaction. The modes of interaction can be characterised by the presence of more social, or more cognitive elements, and it is the combination of these elements that provide an overall mode of interaction by which children's relationships with consumer brands are shaped.

6.2 Research Questions

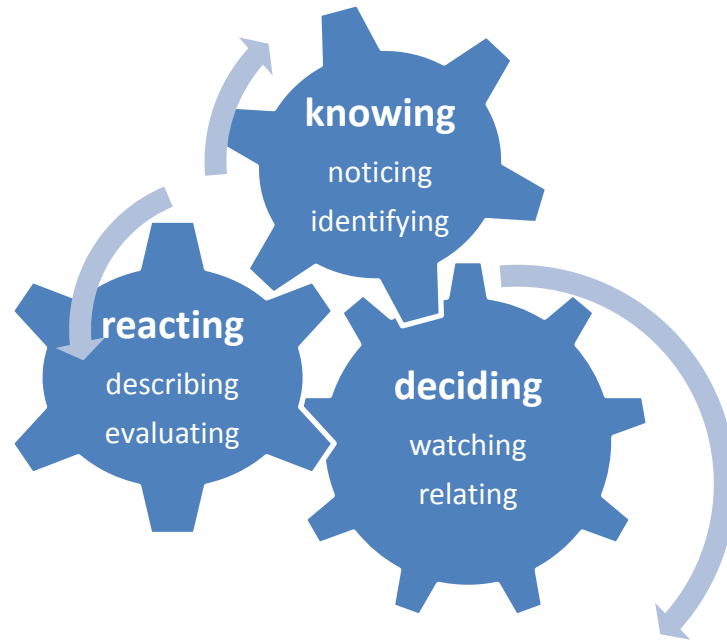
The research questions relate to significant areas of children's consumer socialisation, most specifically to how children's use of social media enables them to learn about, interact with, and form relationships with consumer brands. What follows next, then, is a detailed discussion of the findings.

6.2.1 Findings

Children's use of social media was thought by the researcher to precipitate their interactions with consumer brands, but nothing was known about any interaction processes that children might use. The original intent of the study was not specifically to "find" an interaction process that children might use, instead it was envisaged that children might be undertaking "surface" social media activities, such as using the tools available to them to, for example, indicate "likes" for a brand, to share with others or to make comments. It was thought that such activities would constitute evidence of children's interactions with brands, and that these activities would provide the influencing conditions that ensured children related to consumer brands. However, as the data collection progressed and especially as the thematic coding was underway, the researcher started to see that children were actually using an interaction process, and that this process consisted of particular interaction elements. Some of the elements occur simultaneously, some elements occur before others, and when this occurs, children are prompted into some interactions with brands and not others.

The data analysis in the form of the thematic coding from the line-by-line analysis has shown the researcher that there is some underlying form, or conceptual model as to how children interact with consumer brands on social media. The shape of this form helps us understand how children's social media interactions give shape to their consumer brand relationships. The conceptual model is depicted on the following page, and shows how the interaction elements combine together to provide for different interaction modes:

Figure 6.0: Conceptual model: Knowing, Reacting, & Deciding.



Each of the parent elements, or themes, has a child element (or subtheme) associated with it. The combination of the parent and child elements give rise to the interaction modes used by the children for their brand interactions. Such a conceptual model depicting the interaction processes provides a way of envisaging different modes of interaction that children use for their brand interactions. Such modes take the form of more social, more cognitive, or a complex form consisting of social and cognitive elements, characterised by a “watching with purpose” element which is necessary before children decide to relate to a brand. The conceptual model and the associated modes of interaction are explained in detail as part of the discussion of each of the research questions, following this section.

While working with social data such as that generated from in-depth qualitative interviews is what this researcher is familiar with, it was not initially envisaged then that the data would show a conceptual, interactive process. While the researcher was keen to explore latent themes in the data, the interaction process that has shown itself has been more than expected.

At the end of this project the researcher now understands that techniques drawn from Grounded Theory, such as thematic analysis, are powerful and rigorous enough to help uncover basic processes underlying a phenomenon (Boyatzis 1998), such as children interacting with brands on social media. In one sense, learning that such a process is used by the children helps our understanding of how they interact with brands. But in another sense, learning about such a process increases our respect for the children because of the way that they are using social media to help socialise themselves, thus playing a very active part in their own consumer socialisation.

The extant literature positions children as passive bystanders in their own consumer socialisation (e.g. John 1999), taking the perspective that the psychological-cognitive and social development milestones that are known to occur as part of consumer socialisation just “happen” to children, and can be reported on objectively, without the children playing much of an active role in their own socialisation processes. Such a bystander perspective has probably arisen because of how academic marketing research has been framed by the many experimental studies that treat children as subjects (or objects) of interest, available to the researcher’s disinterested gaze. But, because of the interactive, constantly changing marketing and branding world that children live in (Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), children can now see and do so much more with brands, e.g. by using social media, outside of adult intervention or guidance. This means that children are taking a much more active role in their own consumer socialisation, via interacting with consumer brands as an example, and our academic marketing literature may not be acknowledging this. Given these comments, the interaction processes that the children have shown they use to interact with consumer brands on social media consist of some fundamental elements, and each of the research questions have findings that help to explain how such processes work. The following section discusses these findings.

6.2.1.1 Research Question One (RQ1): How are children using social media to interact with consumer brands?

In this study, findings reveal that children use a process to interact with brands when they use social media, and their interaction process consists of three core elements. Nested within each of the three elements are at least two identifiable sub-elements, or subprocesses. The elements and the sub-elements, or subprocesses, associate together to give different interaction modes, and it is the association of these things that provide for children's interactions with consumer brands when they use social media. The composition of the interaction process that children use consists of social and cognitive elements, and the different arrangements of these elements direct the style of interaction that children use. The three core elements of interaction that children use are knowing, reacting, and deciding. Each of these interaction processes is important, but not all are used all the time, and the processes do not need to occur in a linear fashion. However, one element (or interaction step) does tend to occur before the other steps and this is the "knowing" interaction element. Knowing refers to either children's internalised brand knowledge (labelled as identifying), or to children's tendency to "see" a brand on social media but to then guess who the brand is, or what the brand might mean (this step is labelled as noticing). A key result here, then, for Research Question One is that most children using social media tend to know-identify brands rather than know-notice brands, and this happens before they take other interaction steps towards brands, such as reacting and deciding. Children interacting with brands, then, using the process comprising of knowing-identifying-reacting-deciding, use their symbolic knowledge of brands as cues as to how to behave (Solomon 1983) in social media contexts. This is because the use of symbols, such as knowing how to use e.g. tumblr, and which brand community to belong to, signifies something about oneself. So, knowing-identifying is closely tied to knowing about brand symbols, and draws on children's implicit brand knowledge (Belk, Bahn et al. 1982). Using social media to interact with brands means that children could be expected to identify socially symbolic brands that, when shared with friends on e.g. Facebook, via posted content or a "like" of the brand's page, will help them gain social capital (Lampe and Ellison 2012).

The extant literature provides explanations of how children come to know about brands using a cognitive perspective, and these explanations are derived from cognitive studies framed in psychological cognitive development terms such as theory of mind (McAlister and Cornwell 2010). With a theory of mind, children become able to understand the social implications of their choice of brands (Belk, Bahn et al. 1984), and this knowledge, coupled with children's acquisition of other, general consumer knowledge and direct product experience (McNeal 2007), can explain children's general tendency to use their internalised knowledge to identify brands on social media more than they just "notice" brands. Such internalised knowledge must have been acquired from somewhere in order for the children to actively use it to identify brands in the social media context. Previous research has already established that children acquire such knowledge as a result of their cognitive development (John 1999), social interaction with family and friends (Hayta 2008; Ward and Wackman 1971), interactions with the market-place e.g. going shopping (Cram and Ng 1999), and direct product experience (Belk, Mayer et al. 1984; McNeal 2007). Previous research has also established that children's brand knowledge is acquired from mass media, especially television (Hayta 2008; Wright, Friestad et al. 2005), so this is expected to add weight to children's tendency to identify more than notice brands in social media contexts.

However, the academic literature is silent on the processes that children use to interact with consumer brands, and being cognitive or being social do not explain exactly how children actually interact with brands. The current study, then, shows processes of interaction that children use, identifying key elements in the processes and showing how these elements interact together. The three core elements of children's interaction processes, Knowing, Reacting, and Deciding, represent overarching conditions that each consist of two sub-elements. The three conditions arise as differences in interactions with brands that the children show, with, for example, some children showing tendencies towards more descriptive, socially-cued interactions with brands, whilst others show more thoughtful, evaluative, closer interactions with brands. While all the children can fulfil the condition of "knowing" about brands, children "know" differently, and such different "knowing" tendencies prompt other, different interaction tendencies with brands. Children's most meaningful connections with brands, such as deciding-relating, tend to be prompted by the more evaluative condition of reacting, labelled evaluating. Previous research says nothing on if, or how children evaluate

brands before deciding what form their brand interactions might take, so this current study shows the importance of the evaluating element to children in helping them to decide how they will interact with a brand. The interaction processes that the children use not only provide the conditions within which they will decide how to interact with brands, but also provide ways for children to learn about consumer brands on social media, and this is discussed in the following section.

6.2.1.2 Research Question Two (RQ2): How is children's social media use helping them learn about consumer brands?

The interviews reveal that children learn about consumer brands from their social media participation, especially from using the tools provided by social media platforms such as “like” or “follow,” which enable children to participate more interactively in their social relationships. Such participation enables children to learn a range of content from their friends, and the findings show that some of this content includes brand-related information. However, the main ways in which children use social media to learn about consumer brands are through the interaction processes that they use, particularly at the reacting and deciding points. The two elements that comprise reacting, evaluating, and describing, provide children with interactive ways of learning about brands, but one interactive process is potentially more meaningful in terms of the children learning about the brand for relating purposes than the other, and this is evaluating. Children who tend to use evaluating show a more thoughtful approach, and this enables them to reflect more carefully upon whether it will be productive for them in some way (e.g. for social purposes) to link themselves more closely with a brand by relating to that brand.

Such social purposes can be things such as gaining acceptance to a social referent group, or, as one child put it, linking herself to a specific brand “keeps you your place in the social pyramid” (*Interview DO2*). Previous research has already established that adults use the symbolism of branded products as situational cues to orient their behaviour (Solomon 1983), and this can be used to explain why children link themselves to some brands and not others on social media. Children can use the brand as a cue as to how to behave in social exchanges, e.g. when to share or what to “like” on Facebook. Such social media exchanges may encourage advocacy for a brand (Wallace, Buil et al. 2012) if the brand helps the social media user express something about

themselves. This current research reveals though that children will share a brand with their friends, but might share by “watching” the brand with their friends present, or by talking to their friends about “watching” the brand. The children’s interviews reveal that such sharing behaviour is primarily motivated by entertainment, and tends to be undertaken by children who interact with brands using the more socially-cued mode of interaction.

Children who tend to describe, then, use a more socially-cued approach to learn about brands, and such an approach fits with how some of the social media platforms are constructed, such as Facebook with its social model (Guille, Hacid et al. 2013). Children who are learning about brands in this “more social” way explicitly show their learning process, in contrast to the children who learn using a more evaluative approach. The latter children are more implicit about how they learn about brands, but such learning encourages these children more directly towards relational activities with brands. So, the processes that children use to interact with brands provide them with brand learning opportunities at every step, and some of these steps are more influential than others. Such interaction processes also enable children to construct their brand knowledge as they interact with consumer brands, and such active construction of knowledge about something is related to social and cognitive effort, and occurs primarily within people’s social relationships (Gergen, 2009). Children’s social exchanges on social media provide a learning environment for them, but many of these social exchanges are different from those generally observed in offline contexts. That is, children’s social media participation behaviour such as using “likes” to indicate general agreement with their friends about posted content could reasonably be construed as learning opportunities, but the literature suggests that such learning opportunities are limited (Goggins and Petakovic 2014), because, e.g. in Facebook’s social model, indicating a “like” is really just signifying agreement with friends.

Previous research suggests that children learn about consumer brands as a result of their cognitive development (John 1999), their social development and social interactions with family and friends (Hayta 2008), and from viewing television advertising (Maher, Hu et al. 2006). Because children in advanced consumer economies live in changing marketing and branding environments (Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008), which now include social media platforms, children’s opportunities to learn about and interact with brands

have increased. The level of complexity of such environments shows in how children access brand information from multiple sources, ranging from commercially produced images, texts, and of course branded objects, to all the brand marketing activity that children live with, including the brand discourse that is predominant in consumer economies (Nairn, Griffin et al. 2008). Such a complex environment, that makes so many brands available to children, also means that children must be interacting with brands in some way, and this research shows how such interactions with brands take place on social media. The recent social media literature ignores how teenagers or children might be using social media to learn about brands, although there is some research indicating that young people will consume brand advertising if it is entertaining (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010), and this suggests that children could learn about brands from consuming entertaining content. But, in order for children to use social media to learn about brands by consuming entertaining content, they must be interacting with the brand content in some way for such learning to take place. This current research shows how children's brand interaction processes include steps that facilitate brand learning, such as the reacting and deciding steps, particularly the elements of describing and evaluating (from reacting) and watching (from deciding).

Children who tend to watch brands, such as those watching on YouTube, learn about brands via social learning because much of this "watching" is watching people using or talking about brands, e.g. in the context of video games, and with commentary to viewers about the game and how it was created. Some of this learning is social learning (Bandura 1997), and so is brand watching, so the latter can be expected to translate into implicit brand learning, because of mere exposure effects (Toomey and Francis 2013). Mere exposure to brands by watching them should serve to introduce the brand, thus increasing implicit memory and brand preference (Toomey and Francis 2013).

Children's social relationships, or social exchanges (Emerson, 1976) on social media are places for them to learn about brands too, and because children's friendships become more important than family ties, paying attention to creating and maintaining quality friendships is known to be important (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014). The literature is silent on the role that brands may play in helping children maintain their friendships, but the results show that describing children, for example, are actively responding to friends because of their tendencies to pay attention to social cues when

interacting with brands. Children's interaction processes provide a learning opportunity when aspects of brands are used for identity formation tasks (Chaplin and John 2005), and this holds for children who tend to evaluate or who tend to describe. Both ways of interacting provide children with the opportunity to learn about brands, however evaluating interactions potentially provide for deeper learning opportunities because children tend to process more brand-related information. Such information processing, rather than description, provides the conditions for children to create user-generated content (UGC; Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2012), and previous research shows that this activity is known to increase the user's brand knowledge because of the constant links being established between them and the brand. So, using social media to create UGC and for identity formation purposes is motivating and gratifying (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010), provides learning opportunities for children, and such frequent interactions with brands have already been shown in previous literature to build strong connections (Diamond, Sherry et al. 2009). The scale of such interactions also includes children's access to information about brands from other sources, so the next section discusses how children's social media use interacts with other sources of brand information.

6.2.1.3 Research Question Three (RQ3): How is children's social media use interacting with other sources of brand information?

This research found that children's brand interaction processes direct how explicitly they use sources of information outside of social media. Children who show tendencies towards a more evaluative way of interacting with consumer brands on social media tend to use more implicit sources of information, and because these children use more social media platforms (the social media ecosystem; Hanna, Rohm et al. 2011), their access to other information sources about brands is denser than those children who tend to favour only one or two platforms. The use of the social media ecosystem is important, because these children are able to integrate information from sources that are effectively global and anonymous, such as the blogs that some children follow on tumblr. Children who follow people who blog on a site such as tumblr are following "unknown sources", different from their traditional information providers, and it is suggested that this group of children may be using sources of information that transcend their friends and family. The implication here is that children who are using social media in this way, and who are using these sources of information are actively

constructing their knowledge about brands, and some of this knowledge is likely to be outside of a brand's control. Traditional sources of brand information then for children who tend to use the social media ecosystem, may be subordinated to those people that children interact with on sites such as tumblr. This means that family and friends as information sources may not be as influential for these children, and the study findings suggest that this is the case. Therefore, children who use global, anonymous social media sources combined with more traditional sources potentially exert more control over what brand information they consume, who from, about which topics, and are more discerning in what they are prepared to watch, read, share, or talk about.

In contrast, this research shows that other children, who tend to interact in more describing ways with consumer brands, pay greater attention to information about brands from their family and friends, more readily acknowledging these sources in their social media talk. Such interactions are easy to see in the children's information, and because of their more social interaction style, these children more readily share information with their friends on platforms such as Facebook. Previous research shows that children's social media participation is motivated by creating and maintaining friendships (Antheunis, Schouten et al. 2014), and signalling agreement with friends via a "like", or following friends' recommendations is part of improving the quality of friendships, and this research shows that describing children do participate on social media in these more socially explicit ways than do their evaluating counterparts. For describing children, reward in their social exchanges with brands is much more about sharing with their friends descriptions of brand activity. These children are more responsive to social cues about what content to look for and to respond to, and tend to look for brand interactions that satisfy their social needs, such as being entertained (Dunne, Lawlor et al. 2010). So, because describing children tend to pay more attention to social cues from friends and family, they are likely to be more responsive to social learning opportunities.

Previous research also shows that people sharing information in their social networks with friends usually share things that they already agree on, and that such close ties do not easily admit novel information into their everyday social interactions. Although the previous research is older, the explanations of how people's social ties work still hold, so the question is whether such closely-held ties block new information when children

use social media, and recent literature suggests that this depends on the type of social connections that the social media platforms foster (Guille, Hacid et al. 2013). So, for children who tend to describe, who rely more explicitly upon family and friends (traditional sources) for information, who tend to use only one or two social media platforms that are characterised by social models (e.g. Facebook), this research suggests that it is likely that their interaction processes will constrain their exposure to new information, unless it is shared by their close social contacts. Such relationship situations for these children will mean that consumer brands will find it difficult to encourage these children to share different or new information into their social networks, so brands will need to use more traditional sources of information for these children that they are likely to respond to, such as television. The next section draws this discussion together with the findings for Research Question Four (RQ4), which asked how children's social media interactions shape their consumer brand relationships.

6.2.1.4 Research Question Four (RQ4): How are children's social media interactions shaping their consumer brand relationships?

The three modes of interaction that characterise children's brand interactions on social media represent interaction conditions that shape children's relationships with consumer brands. The three modes range from a simple, socially-cued by others mode of interaction, to a thoughtful, evaluative, more independent of others mode, to a complex mode containing many interaction elements working together.

These three modes of interaction can also be described as pathways of influence, because of the way in which the interaction modes shape, or influence children's relationships with consumer brands. Previous research shows that social media interactions provide for pathways of influence, but such influence depends upon how the social media platform is constructed (Goggins and Petakovic 2014). The modes of interaction that children use for brand interactions do link to the way that the social media platforms are constructed, and how the pathways of influence work on such platforms. For example, Facebook's social model (Guille, Hacid et al. 2013) ensures that interdependencies are fostered amongst people tied together socially, and such ties serve to strengthen interactions amongst people who are "friends", thus helping people

build their social capital (Lampe and Ellison 2012). Such relationships may be strong among people, but weak with e.g. consumer brands, because brand information is filtered through friends in the relationship network on Facebook. So children's mode of interaction that is characterised by the more distant from the brand noticing-describing-watching, may very well be filtering brand information through their friends, so this could account for their tendencies towards a more distant from the brand, but more socially-cued responses to friends. These children do tend to use Facebook or YouTube in preference to other platforms, but this analysis still does not account for how these children's use of YouTube can influence their brand relationships. Such a mode of interaction produces more distant brand relationships that may usefully be characterised as "casual friends/buddies" (Fournier 1998; pg.362), so children's brand relationships here are lower in affect and intimacy, and feature sporadic engagement.

The mode of interaction characterised by identifying-evaluating-relating is more typical of children who use a wide range of platforms, in particular children who tend to use social media platforms that foster asymmetric connections between people, such as Twitter and tumblr. Such platforms enable people to follow and to interact with those who matter to them (Huberman, Romero et al. 2008), but in order for children to follow such people (e.g. person brands), there must be some evaluative judgement from the children so they can determine who matters to them in order to follow such people (or brands). Children who tend to use the more evaluative mode of interaction will be expected to make their own judgements, relying less on friends and social cues and more on anonymous, global others, characteristics of social media platforms that allow users to form many weakly-tied social relationships. Such relationships are known to be more open to novel information and diverse perspectives (Burke, Kraut et al. 2011), and might filter out less brand information whilst simultaneously providing children with a wider range of information. Such social media platforms offer connections to a larger, more diverse group of people, and this should have the effect of increasing the sphere of influences (Hanna, Rohm et al. 2011) that children have access to.

An evaluative mode of interaction such as that explained above has characteristics that meet Fournier's (1998) description of "compartmentalized friendships" (pg.362), offering specialised and confined friendships, that, while lower in intimacy, have high socioemotional rewards and encourage interdependence. Whilst such relationship forms

seem as if they should be long-term, Fournier's (1998) typology shows that such relationships can be easily entered into or exited from. This makes sense from the perspective of how easily children will follow or unfollow e.g. person brands, especially in circumstances where the person brand has disappointed the child in some way.

The complex mode of interaction that includes evaluative elements and is shown by children who tend to move from watching brands to relating is more difficult to explain. However, these are the children who "watch brands with purpose", and the findings show that these children tend to use YouTube. This particular social media site is a content community, so purposeful watching is a core activity that people use YouTube for. Children can follow others on YouTube, and the findings show that some children do this, and mixed among them are those who move from watching to relating with brands. Such purposeful watching facilitating relating matches with Fournier's (1998) "courtships" relationship form. That is, children watching with purpose are embarking on a path to a committed brand relationship, provided the trial period proves satisfactory to the child. Watching with purpose enables the child to test out relationship provisions, and such testing out can be characterised as a form of courtship.

Social influence is seen to be operating in different modes, expressed through children's modes of interaction with consumer brands on social media. Broadly, social influence is the expected outcome of people's interactions on social media platforms, but little is known about how such pathways of influence operate to determine how children might interact with consumer brands. This study has highlighted three modes of interaction used by children when approaching brand interactions, and this is an important topic because of the way in which children have access to a wide range of social media platforms. Thus, such platforms have become influential socialisation agents but the degree to which their use shapes how children relate to brands depends on the mode of interaction that the children typically use. The following section reflects on the significance of this study's findings.

6.3 Significance of the findings

The sum of the findings from the current study tell a story about the process that children use when interacting with consumer brands on social media. The interaction process is really reflecting a process of influence, and children's use of social media has helped make such a process more visible. The interaction-influence process shapes children's relationships with consumer brands, and how such a process works is of interest, because of its potential for explaining how social media use contributes to children's consumer socialisation. The question of how influence works on social media, and how this shapes children's relationships with consumer brands is partially answered, then, by the interaction process that this study has made visible. For some children, their interactions with consumer brands are deliberative, characterised by sophisticated judgements that take into account the usefulness to the child of seeking a closer interaction with the brand. Such interactions are meaningful in the sense that once the children make a decision to interact in this way with a brand on social media, it is likely that such interactions will be longer lasting and potentially reflect greater commitment from the child to the brand. Other interactions with consumer brands that children show tend to be filtered through their social contacts, and because of this filtering, children may be much more easily persuaded by their friends than making their own independent judgements. This interaction mode can be thought of as more traditional and open to social influence, reflecting more established research findings confirming that influencing agents on children's brand interactions tend to be their family and friends (Hayta 2008).

But, this study shows that there are a group of children who are "socialising themselves," taking a much more active role in their own consumer socialisation, and this is a finding that is not repeated from previous research looking at children's socialisation as consumers. So, the inference here is that for some children, the use of social media to interact with consumer brands is a powerful influencing factor in their socialisation, and, because of the way that social media platforms are constructed, their use provides children with much more agency in their own socialisation than before. Such agency will make it more difficult for consumer brands to reach these children, and this might be reflecting the general trend of social media user's empowerment (Fournier and Avery 2011), whereby brands are finding that they are not welcome in

consumer's social media spaces. The advent of Web 2.0 tools such as social media platforms then, and the spread in people's use of these via the internet, is envisaged by academic marketing researchers to be changing how young people become socialised as consumers (Barber 2013), and changing the rules of engagement that brands enjoy with consumers (Schultz and Peltier 2013). Such developments in the consumer-brand relationship are known to be problematic for brands, because of the loss of control over the terms of the relationship, and over the reach of brand messages that brands previously had (Fournier and Avery 2011). This study shows that for some child consumers, the way that they become socialised is changing because of their use of social media. Some scholars suggest that brands will need to completely rethink how they engage with consumers over social media (Fournier and Avery 2011), because of the new democratic space, and symbolic meaning of freedom of expression that social media represents. In this study's context, such comments are a call for researchers in children's markets to position children at the centre of their studies, involving them in the creation of the study's questions, asking what they think should happen to the results, and showing children what the results mean for their socialisation as consumers. This is because this research shows that there are children acting independently to interact with consumer brands on their own terms, and their use of social media has made this activity possible.

6.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis contributes to theoretical, empirical, and managerial academic marketing knowledge, and these contributions are highlighted below.

6.4.1 Theoretical contribution

This research has shown that children of this age (eleven to fourteen years old), use processes when interacting with consumer brands on social media. The processes consist of three big conditions, and these are knowing, reacting, and deciding. Each of these conditions has two smaller, interactive conditions attached to them. Knowing has identifying and noticing; reacting has describing and evaluating; and deciding has watching and relating. The differences between the bigger and smaller conditions are salient, because each condition tells us something about what children are doing on social media in relation to consumer brands. That is, the bigger condition of knowing, with the two smaller interactive conditions of identifying and noticing, refers to the knowledge that children bring to their brand interactions before (or nearly always before) they do something else. That is, all the children identify brands easily, and because the children tend to identify brands more than they notice brands on social media, this suggests that the children are using their prior knowledge of brands in the social media setting. Identifying brands is a much more active thing for the children to do than just “noticing” brands, because to identify a brand on social media the children need to show more internalised, symbolic knowledge of the brand.

The kind of knowledge that the children show are things such as where the brand usually appears (on or off social media), whether the brand is a good identity fit for the children, which activates symbolic knowledge, or if they think it is in the wrong context, and location and market-related knowledge, which refers to things such as where the brand can be purchased, who might be supporting or promoting the brand (e.g. a celebrity). Identifying a brand on social media involves the activation of brand knowledge, and of knowledge that the brand is congruent with the social media context, and with the children. Sometimes children will identify brands and comment on the incongruity of the brand for their friends on social media, and this occurs in the context of comments such as “why are they (friends) liking that?”

Noticing brands on social media is an interaction that some children show as well in the condition of knowing, but tends to occur less frequently than identifying. Children who tend to notice brands on social media find it more difficult to supply information about the brand, they may admire the brand and can describe it but provide less interaction clues. So, the big condition of knowing is characterised by a smaller, important condition of identifying, that occurs more frequently than the other knowing condition of noticing. This tells us that children of this age who use social media already know a lot about consumer brands, and activate this knowledge in the social media context to help them with what to do next. The big condition of knowing usually flows on to reacting, which consists of two smaller conditions, evaluating and describing. Of these two conditions, evaluating is a more active, independent, thoughtful interaction, more difficult for the children to do, but where the children are thinking about the brand in relation to them, or in relation to what will happen to them socially if they interact with such a brand. Identifying a brand from knowing helps children with evaluating, so these two smaller interaction conditions are linked, and similar links are seen with noticing linked to the reacting condition of describing.

The second big condition of reacting provides the children with a “what to do next” prompt; children who tend to evaluate, for example, take a more active stance towards the brand, working out what the brand means for them, e.g. saying if they like the brand, and in the case of fashion, will they wear it, or giving their opinions about the brand, and such opinions will include saying what they think the brand should do. These children are using a mix of cognitive, symbolic and social knowledge about brands, and are the children who acquire knowledge from a much wider range, although more implicit sources than those who react to brands by describing. That is, children who tend to evaluate use the social media ecosystem to get, and spread, brand knowledge, and the sources they use are widely dispersed, often anonymous, and outside of a brand’s direct control. These are the children who will be (or already are) some of the opinion leaders, and who use much more implicit sources of brand knowledge to make their evaluations. Such social media using children will use brands for their own purposes, and are unafraid of direct interactions with a brand, using their own standards to filter out unwanted material, e.g. shown in the kind of comments such as “seeing a nude on tumblr is much less scarring than on Facebook...so no thank you...not my tastes...I just scroll past.”

Children who tend to react to brands by describing are more open about the sources of brand information they use to help them describe, and will talk about how their friends and family “put them on to” the brand, or “got me into it.” These children use more social cues to help them decide what to do about a brand, but describing a brand is not always just limited to that. Some children who tend to describe brands as a reaction, will describe brands using evaluative overtones, talking about what the brand might mean for them and whether or not they like the brand enough to do something more, such as making a decision about using the brand for some purpose. Describing children who are more practised social media users do show evaluative intent towards brands, and will talk about what the brand means socially, but often in the context of what their friends might say. This tells us that these children are using social cues to react to brands on social media much more than the children who tend to react to brands by evaluating them.

The third big condition of deciding is where the children make decisions about how they will relate to a brand on social media. The two smaller interaction conditions associated with deciding, relating and watching, provide the type of relating-to-the-brand that the children will decide to do. All the children “watch brands” on social media and given that so much of social media is visual, this is not surprising. But some children watch brands with more purpose than other children, and these are the children who tend to evaluate brands more than they describe. This tells us that such children have already evaluated that the brand might “be the one for them,” and then take deciding steps such as watching, and following the brand on social media with more purpose in mind than just purely entertainment. We know this is what these children do, because these children tend to be the social media users who are very familiar with social media platforms, use more of the social media ecosystem, are unafraid of interacting with brands, have opinions about what brands should do, will speak up about brands in social groups, will “stalk” a brand through the ecosystem if they have decided to watch with purpose, and will show how they relate to the brand by how they talk: “I love (the brand); I like them (it) a lot; I’ll stalk the brand; (He) influences me.” Not all deciding to watch with purpose is positive; because these children are unafraid of brands, some of the watching enables them to express a view about how an icon brand has messed up, e.g. Miley Cyrus “kind of like ruined her career.”

Thus the big condition – of deciding with the two smaller conditions – represents how the children decide to relate to the brand. Watching seems passive, but the children who watch a brand “with purpose” will move towards relating to the brand, in contrast to those children who just watch for entertainment, or because their friends showed them something to watch. We can say that children who tend to watch brands on social media “with more purpose” tend to be children who react to brands by evaluating; whereas those children who watch brands and “stop,” tend to be those who react to brands by describing. These latter children will share the brand watching with friends, and depending on the conversations they have with each other, may relate to the brand in more active ways. These children though need the social cues in order to decide what to do with the brand, whereas the more evaluative children’s approach to how to interact with the brand at the deciding point, shows us that they will make their own decisions, using their own criteria of, for instance, “cool” to relate to the brand.

Overall, then, the big and small interaction conditions combine together to give three modes of interaction, from a simpler, socially-cued mode of knowing-noticing, reacting-describing, deciding-watching; to a more implicit-activated-knowledge using mode which looks like knowing-identifying, reacting-evaluating, deciding-relating; to a more muddled (complex) mode reflecting much more interaction between all the conditions. This mode looks like: knowing-identifying, reacting-describing-(with evaluative tones)-evaluating, deciding- watching-(with purpose)-relating. The most complex mode shows us that children are activating a range of knowledge about brands and about themselves, from cognitive, symbolic, relevant to identity formation knowledge, to social knowledge. This mode contains simultaneous interactions, and is much less straightforward, but represents a more socialised consumer because of the activations of a range of implicit and explicit knowledge that we know children gain from their interactions with the market-place and other influencing socialising agents.

Children’s social media brand interactions, then, using all three modes, have helped make visible their brand interaction process, so we can say that children take an active role in their brand interactions, a different perspective from the bystander role accorded to children in previous literature.

6.4.2 Empirical contribution

This research finds that children's brand interaction processes direct how explicitly they use sources of information outside of social media. Children who interact with brands in more descriptive, watching ways use more socially-cued information from sources such as their friends and family. These are the children who are more dependent on what their friends (or sometimes, their family) say about brands, and pay more attention to the brands that their friends interact with, for example, Facebook. Children who interact with brands in more evaluative ways, such as considering what the brand might mean for them socially, and who watch brands with more purpose, will use more implicit sources of information that are much more difficult for the outsider to see. Many of these sources come from the children's own prior brand knowledge, and from the social media ecosystem where such sources can be anonymous, outside of a brand's direct control, or, if a brand information source, open to criticism from the children who are not afraid to interact with the brand or advocates. Because these children use such implicit or harder to track information sources, the sources of influence are more dispersed, and more global, and this tells us that these children are subject to a wide range of brand influences that potentially transcend that of their friends and family. This in turn will increase the sophistication of these children's responses to consumer brands, making them more difficult to reach as consumers. Social media, then, for these children is providing them with ways of interacting with brands that consumer brands might not be able to control.

In terms of how children use social media, it is this latter group who potentially offer brands more in terms of influential opinion leaders, likely to share the brand with a wide group of people – but only if the brand meets the children's internal criteria. Such children will blog about a brand, for example on the microblogging platform tumblr, and this kind of activity is serious interaction with a brand. The problems for the brand with children who will undertake this kind of independent interaction activity, is that the brand cannot control what the children are likely to say. From an empowered consumer perspective this is healthy, but from a brand's perspective, such independent consumer activity is risky.

Therefore, consumer brands need to be aware of the social contexts within which they are operating on social media, especially for the group of children who will not hesitate to talk about a brand across a wide range of social platforms, “for good or bad.” This will mean that brands must monitor all social media activity where they are in the conversation, across the whole social media ecosystem, but, going beyond this, brands must learn how to “be social” with all consumer groups, including those who evaluate. It is much easier for brands to “be social” with, for example, children who tend to describe, because these children are less discerning and have simpler needs from a brand on social media, such as entertainment. The problem, though, with brands just offering “entertainment” to children on social media, is that such entertainment can foster watching of the brand, but interaction can stop there. Watching needs to translate into “watching with purpose;” that is, there must be a reason for children to go past just “watching” a brand and take more steps that involve more interaction, such as relating to a brand. One of the issues with YouTube, for example, as a source of brand information and interaction is the problem with “watching;” too much watching of brands gets a brand nowhere in terms of fostering interaction.

This research does show that watching a brand can translate into relating, but there are some preconditions that have to be met for this to happen. The preconditions sit in how children react to a brand, and what is needed are more evaluative reactions. This tells us that children need reasons to think about a brand, usually in relation to themselves, and to think about how the brand will do something for them, but to get the “something” (and this needs to be a valued something), children need to do more than just watch the brand. The “do more “ step takes children into deciding, and this interaction step is where the big decisions about what to do about a brand are made; for example, to watch and then relate, or to quickly relate in closer, more affective ways with the brand.

This research finds that children learn about consumer brands from their use of social media platform tools, things such as using “like” to indicate agreements with friends, or using share or follow, both available on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and tumblr. The range of social media tools that children use provide them with learning opportunities because of the need to establish links with the content that the children are liking, sharing, or following. Social media tools are important because they encourage children to interact with content, and often such content is branded.

We already know that when children interact with branded content that some learning takes place, so being able to interact on social media in such ways helps children learn about brands. This finding tells us that children bring brand knowledge with them into the social media context, and also acquire brand knowledge as a result of using social media, so in effect they are getting a double-dose of brand learning by using social media tools to interact with content. Even if the content does not “look branded” this research shows that children are still interacting with branded content filtered by their conversations with friends, especially if they are children who tend to use the more socially-cued mode of interacting, noticing-describing-watching.

Children who use the more activated knowledge mode of identifying-evaluating-relating, and the very complex mode with simultaneous interaction conditions, also use social media tools, but are more discerning about what they are willing to share, or who they follow. These children will be more difficult to influence via the use of social media tools, because they are interacting as influencers themselves, and have the capability to discern brand activity that might not (in their opinion) be genuine, but instead might be trying to persuade them.

This research talked to children in the eleven to fourteen year age group. Previous research has contributed findings on social media topics of interest to academic marketers, but has only looked at older age groups, especially university-age students and young adults. This research conducted qualitative interviews with children, offering children a friendship pair interview option. Of the children who selected this option, the interview experience showed that while the pairs were more challenging to interview (for example, children often talked over each other), they provided no advantage over that from children who elected to have single interviews. Thus, self-selected friendship pairs or single face-to-face interviews can be used to generate rich data from children’s interviews.

6.4.3 Managerial contribution

This study clarifies the processes by which children use social media to interact with consumer brands. Previous academic marketing research has taken a bystander approach to children's brand interactions, so it was not known how children actually do interact with consumer brands. This research has shown that children use a process to interact with brands, and that such a process consists of interaction elements combining together in three predominant modes of interaction, from a simpler, socially-cued mode, to an activated knowledge mode using children's cognitive, symbolic, and social knowledge, to the most complex mode, which still requires the use of symbolic and prior brand knowledge, but this mode contains more complex interaction processes (more steps) before children decide to relate to a brand. So, each of the interaction modes shapes children's relationships with brands, but some modes shape children's brand relationships more powerfully.

The more cognitive, activated knowledge mode and the complex interaction processes mode have more to do with helping children relate to brands, compared to the simpler, socially-cued mode of interaction. The latter mode is more explicitly directed by children's social interactions with friends and family, and these influences play a bigger role in shaping children's brand relationships on social media than the other two, more complex modes of interaction. Because the more complex modes of interaction have more to do with helping children relate to brands, children will be more interested in what the brand can do for them, what it might mean for them, and how they will look socially if they choose to interact in a relating way with such a brand. At this point, these children are acting as socialised consumers, and such consumers have already decided on some of the very basic attributes that they want from a brand, including how much of themselves they are willing to share with the brand.

Brands wishing to talk with (not to) children that tend to interact with brands on social media in these complex ways will need to ensure that they are able to meet these children's expectations, which will be more than just providing entertainment or asking for "likes". Interacting with children who use complex processes of interaction means that brands must want to genuinely engage with the children, often on the children's terms. It is likely that these children will continue to interact in complex ways with

consumer brands as they grow up, so these kinds of complex brand interactions might be more typical of what we will see from the internet-socialised consumer, represented by this age group of eleven to fourteen year olds. Such interaction processes should have an impact on online shopping for example, so this will mean that brands will need to think about how they enable shoppers to interact, for example, on a brand's social media platform.

Other research contributions have looked at target groups older than the age group in this research, but the contribution here is that children in the age group eleven years to age fourteen represent one of the first groups of young consumers who are growing up in a time shaped by their use of the Internet. Such use includes social media platforms, and this research shows that children's participation in social media to interact with brands is by way of an active interaction process. There should be no assumptions made about young people's social media use; this research shows that some children use social media very actively, whereas others use social media in conjunction with socialising with their friends. The findings make a contribution to educational, social, and brand management perspectives in the understanding of how young consumers are using social platforms to interact in consumer markets. The business perspective enables new understanding of how to reach children in non-traditional media, but such a topic requires a caveat in terms of the public policy interest, and further reflection and research will be required in this area.

6.5 Managerial Implications

Social and educational policy is also the preserve of managers, and this research provides results that will help managers learn about children's consumer activities in an area of emerging media, that of social media. Some academic scholars have a wide view of business managers and their social responsibilities towards children (Crane and Kazmi 2010), and such thinking introduces the notion of corporate responsibility to children. There is no question that business activities have an impact upon children, and, given this, Crane and Kazmi (2010) suggest then that there are specific areas of responsibility that businesses need to be aware of, if they are to foster socially productive and strategic relationships with children and their parents (pg. 567).

Marketing activities are singled out as one of the areas of business activity with the potential for negative (or positive) impacts upon children's welfare (Crane and Kazmi 2010), and consumerism as a phenomena is mentioned for creating some negative impacts (pg. 577). However, generating knowledge about how emerging consumers use new social technologies to interact with consumer brands, does not mean that brands will immediately seek to exploit children. It is of course possible that less scrupulous marketers may seek to use such knowledge to foster children's engagement with particular brands (such as alcohol), but such attempts will more likely be outweighed in most economies by legislation designed to regulate such product categories from reaching children. Providing branded products for children to use in self-enhancing ways, such as helping with their identity formation, or fostering children's friendships could be examples of positive impacts of the use of this new social media marketing knowledge. More educational products, such as those that could be offered by a reputable bank using social media to help children learn how to manage money, might be a very good use to which this research's new marketing knowledge can be put.

6.6 Limitations of the Research

This researcher talked to New Zealand children, in their home settings. New Zealand is an advanced consumer economy, but is not as brand-saturated as the United States of America for example. Nevertheless, New Zealanders have one of the highest rates of social media usage in the developed world, and New Zealand children are known to be early adopters of Internet technologies because of the very high household use of such technology. In a sense, the location of the study could be considered a limitation, because of New Zealand's small population base, and the perception of more regulated children's markets compared to the USA. However, generally social media platforms transcend such regulations, evidenced by the downloading activity young people engage in on torrents sites, although New Zealand has recently taken regulatory action against such "illegal" downloading. Nevertheless, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Twitch and tumblr make functions available to users that are identical worldwide (apart from censored economies such as China), so New Zealand children's use of such social media platforms for brand interactions is not expected to be atypical compared to other children in similar market economies.

Parents were present at six of the children's interviews, in four cases the parents (all mothers) were very interested to hear what their children had to say, and all were supportive of their children in the interviews. It is known that children's paired interviews with friends can offset the inhibiting aspects of an interview, but with a parent present can offer opportunities to explore family contexts, offering insights into what children know and the ways in which they learn (Highet 2003).

In all cases, the mothers encouraged their children to speak about what they wanted and to not be shy about answering questions. All the mothers seemed to have positive relationships with their children, to the extent that the children surprised their mothers with some of their very honest and unexpected answers to the questions. There is some literature suggesting that the presence of others is a constraint upon children's ability to talk freely in an interview, but this was not the experience of this researcher. The original intent of the research design was to enable children to feel comfortable in the interview setting, and this was the reason for asking children if they wanted a friend with them at their interview. In the end, most children did not want a paired interview, but, of those who did, these interviews yielded rich data, although were difficult to transcribe and took more time to conduct as well as to listen and to correct the transcripts.

The literature definitions of what constitutes social media are diverse and this initially created problems for this study. It was originally envisaged that only Facebook users would be asked to participate, but once the researcher started to invite participants, the children themselves extended the definition of social media by talking about all the platforms that they were currently using. It was soon found that most of the children use at least two social media platforms, some use three or more and most have a favourite platform. Thus, the definition of social media for this study is wide, includes platforms that are popular with children and not adults (e.g. Twitch), and this anomaly provides an avenue for further research.

6.7 Implications for Further Research

Over the past several decades many topics investigating children's consumer socialisation have been the subject of research enquiry, but the new topic of social media is essentially wide-open to academic marketing research. Children's socialisation as consumers can be envisaged as one of the larger operations within an advanced consumer society, and investigating the micro-social interactions that children have when using social media, such as interacting with consumer brands, provides a way to connect with macro situations, thus increasing our understanding of the role that social media plays in children's consumer development.

This current study is exploratory research, and has focused on understanding how children use social media to interact with consumer brands. While an interaction process has been outlined, with three modes of interaction, confirmatory research would be useful with a larger group of children. The research has revealed that children using social media are very aware of consumer brands, freely using brands as they wish, and some of this use of brand materials relates to children's identity formation tasks. However, empirical research looking at the role of user-generated content in fostering children's connections with brands is lacking. This will be an area of public policy interest as well as business interest, because of the potential of user-generated content for fostering children's connections with brands, and such uses could translate into public policy programs seeking to undertake "social good" projects. These are projects concerned with healthy eating and body image, or anti-bullying programs or fostering safer behaviour in challenging areas such as drinking alcohol or developing respectful sexual behaviours.

Because today's children are the first group who have grown up with digital devices and unfettered access to the Internet and social media platforms, it is envisaged that such digital freedom will prompt children to continue to relate to consumer brands differently when they are older consumers, compared to current young adults for example. Using the current research findings, then, to understand how today's children expect to interact with brands on social media as they become older consumers, provides another area for further research, and could be undertaken in the form of a social media tracking study.

6.8 Concluding comments

The process that the children use to interact with consumer brands on social media reflects a process of influence. Each of the interaction elements can be thought of as influencing the form of the interactions that the children have with brands. This seems obvious, but when the interaction elements are taken together in the three modes of interaction from simple, socially-cued, to activated knowledge, to simultaneous using activated knowledge, it can be seen that the processes influence how the children actually interact with brands. Children's use of social media may have made these interaction processes more visible in ways not envisaged before, and shown elements of influence that act together to shape children's brand relationships.

Overall, this research set out to investigate how children's use of social media affects their interactions with consumer brands. The research questions asked how children use social media to interact with consumer brands, how such use helps them learn about consumer brands, how children's social media use interacts with other sources of brand information, and how children's social media interactions are shaping their brand relationships. The interest in this area is because of the fact that social media platforms are showing massive, global growth in the numbers of people of all ages using such platforms as preferred ways for communicating with each other. The information sharing that such communications facilitate is known to include market-related information, such as people talking about brands, forming brand preferences, joining brand communities, and generally consisting of all the everyday social exchanges that people have with each other that might offer opportunities for brands to participate.

In spite of some drawbacks to this research, the results show that children do interact with consumer brands, on social media, and that they do this using an interaction process. The research has shown that children's brand interaction process consists of interaction elements, and that the elements combine together in specific combinations that give rise to three interaction modes that shape children's relationships with consumer brands. The thesis, then, has made a very strong contribution to our understanding of an emerging area of children's use of social media for brand interactions.

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Appendix One

List of Documents:

1. Invitation to Schools
2. Advertisement for School Newsletters
3. Participant Information Sheet – Parents/Caregivers
4. Consent Form – Parents/Caregivers
5. FAQ's – Parents/Caregivers
6. Children's Information Sheet
7. Children's Assent Form
8. Safety Protocol for Researcher
9. Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement & Quality Guide
10. AUT Ethics Approval
11. Interview Guide Questions

Principal Name
School address
Auckland.

Date (May 2012)

Dear (Principal),

Brand-Made Children in New Zealand.

Looking at social media - how children's use of Facebook links them with brands.

My name is Kate Jones and I am a doctoral research student in the Marketing School at AUT University, Auckland. I am writing to invite your school to be part of an Auckland doctoral research study looking at intermediate-school age children's access to, and use of, sources of information about consumer brands. Because this is such a new topic for New Zealand (and internationally), there is little material available to guide us about the influence new social media tools like Facebook might play in all of this. I am especially interested in the viewpoint of intermediate-school age children because we know that children in this age group are very aware of consumer brands and can easily identify their "favourites". I am very interested in how children talk about these favourite brands when they are interacting with friends using Facebook. To keep the study safe for children, I plan to ask the children to choose a friend from their class whom they would like to participate in the interviews with. No interviews will be undertaken without a parent or caregiver present.

I would like to be able to offer children from your school and their parents/caregivers the opportunity to participate in the study by placing an invitation in your school newsletter. This invitation will give all the details about the study, e.g. the research purpose, how it will be conducted, how the children will be kept safe, how the details will be kept confidential, and what will happen to the results. I have included a copy of the invitation so you can see these details. I think that the results of my study will be interesting to schools, especially to class teachers and children's parents for helping children think about what it means to be a consumer, or about what consumer brands or Facebook might mean to children of this age group. If you would like to involve your school in this study and would like me to come and talk to you about it, please do contact me on any of these numbers: Kate Jones: (mobile) 027 620 5744 (text or call) or: at AUT University (Auckland) 921-9999 ext.5036; or email me:

katharine.jones@aut.ac.nz.

Best regards,

Kate Jones.

An invitation to be part of a study of Kiwi kids, consumer brands, and Facebook



Hello Parents - are you interested in how your children find out about consumer brands? And how they decide which brands are "cool"?

My name is Kate Jones and I'm a PhD student at AUT University. I'm looking at how New Zealand primary school children find out about consumer brands and the role that Facebook might play in this. I invited your school principal (principal name) to allow your school to be part of the study, and s/he suggested I provide some information and an invitation to you in this newsletter.

I invite you to consider letting your child be involved in my research project. The age group I am especially interested in are children who are 11, 12, or 13 years old at the time of the study (May/June 2012/13). I would like to talk to children who use Facebook, and to children who don't use it. I have prepared lots of information for parents and children to help everyone understand how the study will be done; who will run the interviews (me, Kate); how children will be kept safe; how everyone's details will be kept private; and what will happen to the results.

As a first step, if you are interested to find out more about how the study will work, contact me - I would really like to talk to you about it. You can contact me using any of these details: (mobile ph/text) 027 620 5744; or my office ph: Auckland 921-9999 extension 5036; or my email : Katharine.jones@aut.ac.nz. Thank you!

Kate Jones

Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced:

May 2012

Project Title

My project is titled "Brand-Made Children in New Zealand. Children and brand attachment: measuring the influence of social media as a brand information source: the influence of Facebook".

An Invitation

Hello Parents & Caregivers - my name is Kate Jones and I am a PhD research student in the marketing school at AUT University in Auckland. I invite you to participate in this research study. I am investigating how intermediate-school age children use sources of information about consumer brands. I am especially interested in finding out how children might be using new information sources like Facebook, and what influence these social media tools might have on how children think and talk about consumer brands with their friends. As the age group of the children I want to talk to is intermediate-school age (around 11 to 13 years old), I need to invite parents and/or caregivers to permit their children to participate in the research. Your school has already responded to my initial invitation to them, allowing me to make an approach to you inviting you to consider allowing your child (who meets the intermediate-school age criteria) to take part in the study. I will ask participating children to give their assent to be part of the study too. To help the children think about this, I have prepared a special letter and an information sheet about the study for the children, written in plain language. Copies of these documents are included with this Participant Information Sheet.

I am especially interested in the views of children who go on Facebook, compared to those who do not use Facebook. This means I will need to put participating children into two groups; those who use Facebook, and those who do not. This is an important part of the study as it will allow me to compare the views of both groups of children. I will ask you/your child (if you both agree to participate) to help me put your child into the right group. There might be some parents who are surprised that their children are using Facebook without their approval or permission, e.g. at a friend's house, and this could create some discomfort. It's important for parents to know that this study will not pass on any information to Facebook the entity, is not interested in monitoring children's Facebook use, instead the aims of the research are concerned only with finding out how intermediate-school age

children might be using new sources of information about consumer brands. You need to know that any participation in the study that you consent to on behalf of your child is voluntary, and you and/or your child may withdraw at any stage of the study prior to the completion of data analysis. You also need to know that participation or non-participation in the study has no impact on what happens at school and is not related in any way to children's school activities.

What is the purpose of this research?

The main aim is to explore the influences upon children that help to build their connections to consumer brands. We know a lot about how some of these traditional sources of influence work, such as children watching television advertising and talking with their families and friends about consumer brands. But we don't know much about how this might work when children interact with each other using new communication tools like Facebook. The completed research will result in a PhD qualification for me, and will provide material for research articles and presentations within the university and the wider academic community. It will also provide materials for interested groups like parenting, business and educational organisations.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

I approached your child's school Principal (name) to consider my invitation for your child's school to participate. Principal (name) agreed to let me make an "Invitation to Participate" to the parents of intermediate-school age children via your school newsletter. You have been invited because you may be a parent of an intermediate-school age child and you may be interested in allowing your child to participate in the study. Your child's school was selected as part of a larger junior school sample across Auckland. There will be several schools taking part in the study to keep the study diverse.

What will happen in this research?

The children will be asked some questions by me, in a friendly interview setting, about how they find out about new branded things, like new music, games or clothes. I plan to conduct the interviews at one of the children's homes, or if children and parents prefer, at a comfortable venue at school after the school day has finished. Parents and children will be able to choose their preferred interview times from a schedule. An example of questions the children will be asked are things like "how do you usually find out about new things? Who are some of the people you know who usually decide what's cool to listen to? How do you usually decide what are awesome fashions to wear?" The children who are in the Facebook group will also be asked some questions about what usually happens when they go on Facebook. To help the children feel comfortable about talking about these topics, I will ask them to choose a friend to be with them who can participate in the interview too. Their friend/s will have also agreed beforehand to take part in the study, and will be placed in the same Facebook or non-Facebook group as each other.

All the interviews will be conducted with a parent and/or caregiver present, and in the presence of a second researcher, to help keep everyone safe. I have prepared a special note called "Safety Protocol" about how I will keep everyone safe during the interviews. This is included at the end of this Participant Information Sheet. The interviews will be tape recorded by me, and will later be typed by a transcriber who is part of the research team. This person will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement with the university, will be managed by me, and will not be given any personal information about any of the children participating in the study. Children upon request can have their own copy of their interview tape once all the data has been collected. To make this happen, each participating child in each interview pair will need to give their assent and parents will be asked for their consent before copies of the tapes can be provided to each interview pair. The typed interview data will be securely stored at AUT University for ten years after the completion of data analysis. The reason for this is so I can draw on the data for a range of research publications, like articles for academic journals and conference papers. To keep the children's details confidential and anonymous the interview data will not be named.

What are the discomforts and risks?

The interviews are planned for a minimum of one hour, up to two hours, so some children might find that this is quite taxing. To alleviate this I plan to take ten minute breaks every half hour during the interview time so children can have something to eat and drink, visit the bathroom, or just chill out for a little bit. So the maximum amount of time needed to be set aside for the interviews could be up to two hours. This includes breaks. I expect that the children who participate in the study will talk about their experiences later with other friends, so lots of children at school will eventually hear about the study, and the types of questions that were asked. This is not an issue of concern for this study.

What are the benefits?

I think that the children might find it interesting and fun to talk about their ideas and the things that influence them as young consumers. I think that parents might find the project interesting in helping them understand how their children think about "being a consumer". Schools may be interested in the results especially those who talk to children about being an informed consumer. Business people who are interested in finding out about children's consumer behaviour may be interested in the results.

How will my privacy be protected?

No interview data will use the children's names or identify the school that children attend. All interviews will be number coded to protect the identity of children participants. The electronic interview data will be stored securely for ten years and password protected. No children will be directly contacted and no contact details for the children will be recorded or stored anywhere. The completed Consent Forms will be securely stored at AUT University for ten years after the completion of data analysis. As confidential documents, these will then be shredded for disposal. Parents can find out more about how privacy will be protected by going to: www.aut.ac/business/marstudy/children&socialmediaFAQs. The most important part of

confidentiality and privacy for this study is to assure parents, children, and teachers that no individual child or school will be identified in the final report.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The study will cost participants “time”. The maximum time for the interviews could be up to two hours.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

There are **two weeks** to consider participating in the study after the initial invitation has been issued through the school newsletter. This is so people have time to ask questions, register their interest, and read and sign the documents.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

You can agree by:

First registering interest in participating by emailing, telephoning, or texting the researcher using the contact details below; at this point the **Consent** and **Assent** forms will be provided to interested parents; **Second, by signing the Consent Form** (parents) **and the Assent Form** (children). These signed forms can then be posted to the researcher at AUT University in the prepaid envelope provided.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes. Parents will be able to access a full copy of the findings from the school; a snapshot report of the findings will be available to all participating parents and children in paper form or can be downloaded from AUT’s website using the link provided or if parents prefer the snapshot report can be sent to their email address.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Roger Marshall, email rmarshal@aut.ac.nz; telephone AUT University Auckland 921 9999 ext 5478. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Dr Rosemary Godbold, rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 6902.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details: Contact Kate Jones, email Katharine.jones@aut.ac.nz; or telephone 921 9999 ext 5036; call or text Kate's mobile 027 620 5744.

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Contact Professor Roger Marshall, email rmarshal@aut.ac.nz; or telephone Professor Marshall on 921 9999 ext 5478.

Parent/Caregiver Consent Form



Project title: Brand-Made Children in New Zealand. Children and Brand Attachment: Measuring the influence of social media as a brand information source: The influence of Facebook.

Project Supervisor: Professor Roger Marshall

Researcher: Kate Jones

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated **July 2012**.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw my child/children and/or myself or any information that we have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If my child/children and/or I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to my child/children taking part in this research. The interview date will be:
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Child's name:

.....

Parent/Guardian's

signature:

.....

Parent/Guardian's

name:

.....

Parent/Guardian's Contact Details:

.....

Date:

May - December 2012/13 Website FAQ's


Welcome to the 2012/13 study “Brand-Made Children in New Zealand – Children and brand attachment: Measuring the influence of social media as a brand information source: the influence of Facebook”.

Hello Parents and Caregivers – my name is Kate Jones and I am a PhD research student at AUT University. Thank you for considering my invitation to you to allow your intermediate school-age child to be part of my children, brand information, and social media study. To help you understand a bit more about the study, I have put these Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on the webpage link below. If you have more questions that are not answered here, call or text me on: 027 620 5744; or email me katharine.jones@aut.ac.nz; or call me on 921-9999 ext 5036.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's):

 Why was my child's school chosen?


Several Auckland schools have been chosen to participate, based on their different geographical locations to keep the study population diverse.

 Why is this study focused on Auckland children?


Auckland has a large, diverse and quite young population which makes it economical and interesting for researchers conducting studies seeking children's opinions.

 How many children are you talking to?


I want to talk to 50 children; in pairs; so that means 25 pairs of children.

 What is the reason for talking to pairs of children at the same time?


To help the children feel safe and make it easier to talk about their opinions because they have their friend with them at the interview.

 Does this study have anything to do with how my child does at school?

This study has nothing to do with your child's progress at school.

 Does my child's teacher know about this study and/or think this study is a good idea?

The school principal knows about the study. Your child's teacher may know about and be interested in the study. Only parents and children can decide if the study is a good idea for them and agree to participate.

 What if I want to be at the interview with my child?

The ethical clearance for this study requires a parent and/or caregiver is present at all interviews.

✚ What if I think the questions are too hard or my child can't answer a question?

The questions are designed for children of this age group. Sometimes children might decide they don't know how to answer a question so other questions are asked to help them. Children may not be able to answer all questions and that's ok.

✚ What if my child/or I want to stop the interview?

Just tell the interviewer and the interview will be stopped.

✚ Can I see the interview questions before the interview starts?

There are samples of the questions in the Participant Information Sheet which is available if you/your child would like to be part of the study.

✚ Where will the interviews be held?

At a place of parents and children's choosing but generally at the family home or at school after the school day has finished.

✚ Why are you interested in children and Facebook?

The study is looking at lots of brand information sources that children might use. Not much is known about how children use Facebook or how they and their friends might be talking about consumer brands using this new source.

✚ What if I don't let my child use Facebook and/or a computer?

The researcher needs to talk to both groups of children; those who don't use Facebook and those who do.

✚ How do I get to read the study results?

The school will be provided with a snapshot report of the study findings. This will also be available to download from the AUT University website.

If you have more questions that are not answered here contact Kate on:



(call/text) 027 620 5744; email katharine.jones@aut.ac.nz; or telephone Kate at her office on 921-9999 ext 5036.



May 2012

The Information Sheet for Children

Hello. My name is Kate Jones. I am finding out how intermediate school children get to know and talk about new things, like new music or clothes. I am also finding out how children talk to their friends about their favourite things, or things that they might have just got, like a new mobile phone.

I'm especially interested to find out how some children talk about new or favourite things when they go on Facebook. Not all children go on Facebook to talk to their friends and I'm interested to talk to these children too. So I would like to talk to both groups of children; those who go on Facebook, and those who don't go on Facebook.

This letter tells you what will happen if you want to help me do the study.

I will interview you with a school friend of yours that you choose, at your or your friend's house, with your family there too. I will ask you and your friend to say if you go on Facebook, or if you don't go on Facebook. That way I can make sure that children are in the right groups for the questions. There will be lots of time at the interview to have a break and chill out, so you can get something to eat and drink, or go to the bathroom.

I will ask you to answer some questions about how you usually find out about new things, and how you talk about your favourite things (like music or a new mobile phone) to your friends. I will record your voice on a tape. I will also make some notes.

This information will help me write a report that helps me understand how other children, just like you, find out about and talk about new or favourite things to their friends.

You don't have to do this if you don't want to. If you don't understand anything you can just ask me what I am doing. I won't use your real name when I write my report. If there is something you don't understand or are scared about you can talk to your parents.

You get to keep a copy of this Information Sheet and the Letter That Gives Your Permission.

Thank you for your help.

Kate Jones



May 2012

How intermediate school-age children find out about new things. How intermediate school-age children talk to their friends about their favourite or new things.

The Letter that Gives Your Permission

I have read the information letter for me that Kate gave to my parents/caregiver.

I understand what Kate is asking me to do.

I will talk to Kate, with my friend there, about how I find out about new things and talk about my favourite things with my friends. If I go on Facebook, I will talk to Kate about what usually happens when I go on.

Kate will record my voice on a tape when I talk to her.

Kate has answered all my questions.

Kate won't use my real name when she writes the report.

If I don't want to do this I don't have to.

I can stop doing this if I want to.

I get to keep a copy of the Information Letter and the Letter That Gives Your Permission.

Signature:

Date:

Witness:

Researcher Safety Protocol

Date Safety Protocol Produced:

March 2012

Project Title

My project is titled “Brand-Made Children in New Zealand. Children and brand attachment: measuring the influence of social media as a brand information source: the influence of Facebook”.

Participant Contact

- Parents/caregivers who are interested in allowing their child to participate in the study will make contact with the researcher using the contact details provided in the Participant Information Sheet.
- Researcher-initiated contact will be kept to a minimum and will occur principally to confirm interview times/venue with parents/caregivers.
- The researcher will not contact child participants.
- Participants will only be interviewed once.

Interviews

- The researcher will only interview child participants in the presence of parents/caregivers. This is non-negotiable.
- The researcher will not leave the site of the interview with any of the participants.
- The interviews will not be held in public places.
- The interviews will not exceed two hours – this includes frequent 10-minute breaks for the child participants.
- Interviews will use “self-selected friendship pairs” so the child participants feel a sense of comfort. This means that children select a participating friend from their class to join in the interview with them.

Disclosures

- In the event of sensitive disclosures (e.g. bullying at school) the interview will be stopped by the researcher.
- The child participants will be asked if they want to talk more about the disclosure with someone they trust. Based on the children’s responses to this, the interview may be terminated and will not be reinstated at a later date with those participants.
- Parents/caregivers will have previously been provided with the contact details of a child counsellor available through their school should they wish to take this option in the event of a surprising disclosure.
- Parents/caregivers and children will be offered the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time, up to the point that data analysis starts.

Confidentiality

- The Consent Form, Children’s Assent form, and the Children’s Letter that Gives Your Permission will be mailed or emailed to parents/caregivers upon their request.
- These forms, once signed, will be mailed back to the researcher and will then be held in Professor Roger Marshall’s secure locked cabinet in a secure office at AUT University.

- The Consent Form, Children's Assent form, and the Children's Letter that Gives Your Permission will be valid for this research study only.
- Access to the Consent Form, Children's Assent form, and the Children's Letter that Gives Your Permission will be restricted to the researcher (Kate Jones); the principal supervisor of this study (Professor Roger Marshall), participating children, and their parents/caregivers.
- Individual children and their parents/caregivers will not be identified in the final report.
- Individual schools will not be identified in the final report.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Roger Marshall, email rmarshal@aut.ac.nz; telephone AUT University Auckland 921 9999 ext 5478. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Dr Rosemary Godbold, rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 6902.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

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Project Supervisor Contact Details: Contact Professor Roger Marshall, email rmarshal@aut.ac.nz; or telephone Professor Marshall on 921 9999 ext 5478.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 4th May 2012, AUTEK Reference number 12/60.

Confidentiality Agreement

Transcriber



Project title:

Brand-Made Children in New Zealand. Children and brand attachment: measuring the influence of social media as a brand information source: the influence of Facebook.

Project Supervisor: Professor Roger Marshall

Researcher: Kate Jones

- ☐ I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- ☐ I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☐ I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.

Transcriber's signature:

Transcriber's name:

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details:

Professor Roger Marshall, email rmarshal@aut.ac.nz; or telephone Professor Marshall on 921 9999 ext 5478.

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 4th May 2012
AUTEK Reference number 12/60.**

Quality Guide

Transcriber



Project title:

Brand-Made Children in New Zealand. Children and brand attachment: measuring the influence of social media as a brand information source: the influence of Facebook.

Project Supervisor: Professor Roger Marshall

Researcher: Kate Jones

1. The transcripts of audio-taped data are to be “verbatim”. That is, where present, all contextual elements are to be included in the transcription e.g. pauses, half-uttered words, incomplete sentences, coughs, laughs, children talking over each other, interruptions, and other similar contextual elements.
2. Swear words are to be included.
3. Other family member’s comments are to be included (where audible enough and present).
4. Background noise is to be included (e.g. music playing; other people talking; household noise).
5. Participants’ names need to be disguised as part of the confidentiality protocols for this research; this means that the first names only of research participants are to be included in the original transcriptions. These will later be changed in the final report to protect participant’s identities.
6. Transcribed material is to be continuously backed-up to an external storage device supplied by the researcher.
7. This device must be password protected by the researcher and the transcriber.
8. At the conclusion of a set of transcribed interviews (one pair) the transcribed material will be supplied to the researcher in electronic form and the copy subsequently deleted from the transcriber’s computer.

Transcriber’s

signature:

.....

Transcriber’s

name:

.....

Transcriber’s Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

Date:

Project Supervisor’s Contact Details:

Professor Roger Marshall, email marshal@aut.ac.nz; or telephone Professor Marshall on 921 9999 ext 5478.



MEMORANDUM

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

To: Roger Marshall
From: **Dr Rosemary Godbold** Executive Secretary, AUTEC
Date: 14 May 2012
Subject: Ethics Application Number 12/60 **Brand-made children in New Zealand. Children and Attachment: Measuring the influence of social media as a brand information source: The influence of facebook.**

Dear Roger

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) at their meeting on 26 March 2012 and that on 4 May 2012, I approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTEC's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTEC's meeting on 28 May 2012. Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 4 May 2015.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 4 May 2015;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 4 May 2015 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application. Please note that AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all written and verbal correspondence with us. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact me by email at ethics@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 6902. Alternatively you may contact your AUTC Faculty Representative (a list with contact details may be found in the Ethics Knowledge Base at <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>). On behalf of AUTC and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Dr Rosemary Godbold **Executive Secretary Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee** Cc: Kate Jones katharine.jones@aut.ac.nz

Interview guide prompts.

For both groups – Facebook users/non-users:

1. What kinds of things are kids your age into at the moment?
2. What things are cool? Not cool?
3. If I was (11, 12, 13) how would I know what's cool or not cool?
4. How would I find out about these things?
5. Who would usually tell me about things that are cool or not cool?
6. Have you ever wanted to buy something because you've heard about it from friends?
7. Have you ever been anywhere because you've heard about it from friends?
8. If I was (11, 12, 13) what things would I do to find out what's cool to wear?
9. If I was (11, 12, 13) what things would I do if I wanted a new mobile phone?
10. Is there a special brand (*name, type, look*) of phone I would be into? What things would I do to find out which mobile phone is the coolest?

For Facebook users:

11. What kind of people like Facebook?
12. What usually happens when you go onto your Facebook page?
13. What are some of the things you look at first?
14. What are some of the things you do first?
15. What kinds of things do you usually talk about when you're on Facebook?
16. Are there some things you don't like to say? Can you say what these might be?
17. Have you ever wanted to buy something because you've heard about it or saw it on Facebook?
18. Can you say what kinds of things you would buy that you see on Facebook?
19. Have you ever bought something because you saw it or heard about it on Facebook?
20. Have you ever been anywhere because you heard about it on Facebook?
21. Has anyone on Facebook put you off buying or doing something? Can you say what things these were? Or what you were going to do but didn't?

Appendix Two

List of Documents:

1. Subsamples for Code development
2. CodeBook
3. Interview transcripts saved to USB

Subsamples used for Code Development

Reducing Raw Data for Code Development:

sub-sample Transcript #1; girl; 14; social media user; high use; frequent; FB+ more; individual interview.

What social media using: Twitter, Tumblr, FB, a lot of accounts on a lot of websites; these form the main three used. Uses “quite a lot”(of platforms). Qualifies use; some things not often, Twitter; can’t say why doesn’t use often but links it to when has nothing better to do, so goes on and follows people’s posts and “mindlessly scrolls...reading”. Notes that some of her friends have Twitter. Said she hasn’t seen Cyrus on Twitter so doesn’t know if she has an account or not. Gives usage stats e.g. FB has the most users; Twitter has more than Tumblr; knew that Yahoo had bought Tumblr for \$1.1 mill; thought that was too much money.

High user of Tumblr. Didn’t mention that separately in first part of interview but on prompting said spends most of her life on Tumblr, more than outside; spends endless hours (own words). Explains what Tumblr is and how it works; almost proud of the fact that “weird internet people got hold of it and made it really weird”; says later a lot about the kinds of people who use Tumblr; they are not the kind of people who like shopping “and stuff”; qualifies tumblr users by comparing them to who uses FB and saying that Tumblr users are the opposite; they aren’t the kind of people who pay more attention to themselves than others; Tumblr use is only good for certain types of people and she is one of those types; says for her the experience of using gives her friends who are always there “when you need them”, and Tumblr people are like a giant group of friends where you can have a big “internet hug”. Qualifies (warns) that there still are some “weird people on Tumblr as well” (but not often). Says that (she) can tell the weird people from others because of their profiles. Uses terminology easily, assumes others understand what the terms mean; e.g. profiles, account, admin on pages, posts, scrolling, blocking, report people, tabs open, messaging, online, Google paying Tumblr users for ads on their accounts, users, user name, blogs, Photoshop people. Talks about how wide-open Tumblr is; anyone can follow (you) and you can follow anyone; no rules of engagement like FB; people can follow you anytime. Says she has no problem with this but some others do (because there are some “pretty weird” people on the internet).

Notes that Tumblr has no “formal” advertising but Google will pay people to let them place ads on their blog accounts; did say she had seen one ad coming through on her account and it was “pretty, not advertisementy”. Checks out people who are following her; says doesn’t post personal information or pictures of herself; so remains anonymous; willing to block others if “they seem like a bit weird”. Couldn’t identify where she got this information/skill from; says she assumed it is the right thing to do and so does it. Went to the school social media safety class; she knows so much she

could have taught it herself; logged her internet use at 18 hours a day. Probably credible as has multiple tabs open: three at one time; uses messaging and will be on FB and Tumblr simultaneously.

On Facebook use: says doesn't spend as much time on FB now as it's not so interesting anymore and that people aren't really doing anything on it anymore; repetitive stuff appears; it was the "new big thing" now just "FB oh"; from fad to normal? Qualifies this in context of herself though by saying that most people she knows spend an unnatural amount of time on FB and that it's "disturbing". Explains how if she goes on to FB in the am and sees those people and then comes back in the pm they are still online. Says how boring. Notes that most of the time the ads on FB are for stuff that she's not interested in; so ignores them. Occasional interest like a Dr. Who convention – fits with her identity – "I'm a massive nerd" and noticed the ad on FB and this engendered a response "I need to go to that". Says the most Facebookers are mainstream popular people; they might spend their lives on Facebook; she only goes on as an admin (5 fan pages of Harry Potter to administer); Is FB becoming the standard to measure the other sites by? E.g. the comparative social media norm?? The supernorm, maybe?

On who she follows: re Tumblr; says celebrities but qualifies this so not like singers; names a band (One Direction – not them); qualifies by saying just interesting people. Why are they interesting? Three points: they post - funny; thought provoking things; interesting things. On a current celebrity brand (Miley Cyrus): clear opinion; thought the celeb's performance at music awards was "very bad"; said she embarrassed herself; mentioned VMA's = video music awards. Responded emphatically "it was like don't do that, ever". Tells a story about how Cyrus was mocked on Tumblr; funny. Counter-culture? On what she and her Tumblr associates (friends) discuss: critique celebrities, like Cyrus and how she has "ruined her career"; they talk about tv shows "a lot" and also movies and books; could be "educated" conversation but qualified that by saying that it's funny and also kind of dumb is what it seems like, at the same time. On what girls her age are really into: she qualifies this by restating that she is not "mainstream" and excludes from her brand repertoire some of the popular culture icons e.g. One Direction and Justin Bieber; includes Harry Potter (Rowling) and author John Green; likes the different world created by Rowling and this resonates later with her choice of video games The Legend of Zelda; likes the way Rowling has created friendships with a strong bond and wants a friend like that; didn't want the series to end; I guess perhaps she is into the fantasy world; wants to create video games for a career; likes the word "weird" and uses this in her own context of what music she likes to listen to; others have looked at her and she interprets this as them saying "she's really weird...not into stuff that we are" – not mainstream – qualifies herself and identity by saying that she doesn't judge what to be a fan of by what others are doing; doesn't care what the others say and is used to being judged as "weird". Says doesn't care what others think of her and states that it's not their job to judge what she likes; presents as very independent thinker; has friends that are into the same stuff (in real life as well as internet life);

criteria for people wanting to be friends is “have you got Tumblr...if not go get one”; when in a group – so talking about influence here:

On influence:

- they mostly influence each other; a member might find something and tell the others so the whole group becomes interested, then someone will find something else and that will generate interest and the first things is forgotten.
- Talking about how groups work at school; says that the prettiest one is chosen to represent the group as the face of the group; why? So the representative can make out the group is better than it is. She says she doesn't know how those kinds of girls work and doesn't want to know.
- Has been bullied over an internet messaging site by girls at school but doesn't own it as bullying because she said it is only bullying if it hurts people and she was laughing because of what the bullies wrote – such bad grammar.
- Could be talking about how a network operates here
- Seems to be the same kind of thing operating on e.g. Tumblr; a person finds something interesting and puts it up; the others join in the conversation and it becomes current; then someone finds something else and others become interested in that; the difference here is that people can say anything on their Tumblr blogs and they do; their blogs are showcasing “what they're into” and everyone knows that. Rules of engagement again?
- Seems to be two extremes, as well: obsessed with something = post and converse all the time; hate something = post and converse all the time.

On trend-setting: says that, instead, she and her friends accept who they are and they are not trend followers. Gives an example like reading a book; tells a story about that and is quite sarcastic: “Most of the people who are like very kind of mainstream people won't think that reading is a fun thing, probably because they've never tried it...” qualifies this comment by stating that these people are probably reading the Facebook posts. Disses the girl magazines; used to read them but not now as they say the same thing all the time; like clothes that you should wear as it's in, and general gossip about celebrities missteps.

Makes a pithy comment about the media : “they...often judge women by their appearance and men by their talents”. Qualifies by saying that the media use very pretty people and Photoshop them to make them look even more pretty – links this to altering people's perception of beauty; goes onto link this to how this makes young girls feel – self-conscious and said this is sad. Said that this is a core topic of what she and others talk about on Tumblr.

Has a view about young children using the internet and says that there is a “too young”; compares to her own experience of using from age nine and commented that this is too young as they “get obsessed”. Closing talk about the new cheaper iPhone, the 5C.

Transcript #2; boy; 14; social media user; low use; new user; infrequent;
FB; individual interview (prickly candidate).

Introduction: likes playing sports, and is in teams; said has no sport heroes; said is into sport not watching it; boring to just sit and watch, especially test match cricket for a whole day. Not even interested in watching sport for e.g. an hour, like a Breakers basketball match. Would rather play it than watch. A fan of reading. Likes the author Percy Jackson, Rick Roydon, Harry Potter, Artemis Fowl. Has had to read some classics (Mom is a librarian); e.g. animal Farm and Day of the Triffords, they were liked but to Kill A Mockingbird he thought was one of the most boring books ever read. Not sure about why he likes his favourite books – instead asked a question back: “it’s like if someone asked you what your favourite, why do you like your teacher, you just say you like them”. Was able to qualify a bit, though and said that Artemis Fowl is kind of like Sherlock Holmes; could say that one of the things he does like about it is the fact that you don’t get to see the whole kind of plan until the end. Also was able to say why he liked Animal Farm – because of how it’s like an extended metaphor for Russian thing, communism. Stamped own identity: “just because Dad has played guitar all his life doesn’t mean I have to”. On group of friends influence: said that it doesn’t matter so much what individuals want to do because friends don’t really care. Acknowledges that to some extent it’s true that they follow the trends, but qualified that with if someone wants to do something that’s “just like different” nobody really cares. Gives an example of music: so it’s okay to listen to like the Beatles. Others of his friends are listening to the Beatles. Why? He says because they are kind of popular; another question back in of itself: “why were they popular with any age group back in the 60’s?” What social media using: Facebook. Just uses it to talk to people. Talks about what going to do on the weekend. Knows about SnapChat and Instagram. Doesn’t use either as need a smartphone and he has a dumbphone. SnapChat is a conversation with pictures. Said knows nothing about Instagram or Tumblr. Plays computer games: Call of duty. So do others (friends). Has other games; e.g. Elder Scrolls series (Oblivion, SkyRim). Lists games. Current game Call of Duty, interacts with Mom about “under age”; recommended 15 or 16 (he is 14). Plays it online, interactive, usually with others in New Zealand or Australia. Knows about the games and the culture, describes how it works. Talks about the graphics, and how the characters can “re-spawn” if they get hit. Says it’s fun, however qualifies as for him playing the game with his friends is more fun than the actual game playing. Likes the social aspect, and “killing people” (could be said for shock value).

On Facebook use: Sees the ads pop up on right hand side of home page; doesn’t click on them and says he doesn’t care. Notices if others like a page; or at else “sees it”, but doesn’t say he cares about it. Said that because he has 300 plus FB friends, all of them liking pages, it’s hard to see if one person does. Qualifies this by saying that he will look at specific things on FB if his real friend makes a comment about something funny – it comes up on his newsfeed so he will look. Finds it in his notifications. Might also

look if someone recommends a page for him. Example: the Vines. Just found about Vines (7 to 10 second long videos) supposed to be humorous; make own video on smartphone, upload to Vines website, the ones with the most popularity get linked to FB. Guessed about this works; not worried about “security” or being identified via vines video; agrees people could be identified; says it doesn’t bother him, e.g. photos on FB, Instagram, YouTube. Different view of privacy. Makes a distinction between friends on Facebook and friends in real life. So he knows people who have 1000 FB “friends” but doesn’t include those as “real life friends”.

On who are FB users: teenage girls taking selfies; says that guys are less active, less photos and videos. Reason for girls using FB more actively is because they are fishing for compliments. sometimes they get them, sometimes they don’t. On who he thinks has influence on what he might do or who he follows: people that he knows, like his friends. But his parents are at the low end; still striking out for his own thinking here. Commented that his folks are trying to live their lives through him. Branded goods: has no favourite brands; says that most of his stuff is unbranded. Doesn’t care about brands. Says that these days nobody really cares anymore. The word he used is indifference.

This would be hard to cut through if a brand; indifference. I wonder what has happened to create this? It would depend on the perspective – children create their responses, not have them created by brands. Or at least that’s the perspective I adopt. Youth culture: used the term “hipsters” – explained as people that try to be different have become mainstream. Hipsters (apparently) can be a person or a thing. Ended with no questions and you’re welcome for the interview (and I talked too much).

Transcript #3; girl; 12; social media user; high, frequent use; expert user;
FB; individual interview

Introduction: straight into the interview; talks straight away about what she saw; a photo with typical pictures of teens at a party, with smoke, describing grunge culture.

She is actually describing Tumblr, what this site would be like if it was alive. So the image is of a “grunge” site/blogs, and these are ok to follow. Says that she doesn’t follow any “nasty” kinds of blogs, there are lots of different kinds of blogs on Tumblr that people can follow. Explains what re-blogging is. Says that there are different kinds of people and some kinds would not follow grunge blogs; e.g. people who were “massively religious” because the language might not be appropriate. Hesitant to say what kind of language; so this was unspoken; she decided that some of the words were ok because they were not a threat. Describes how tumblr works and sets her own use into context; maintains her own privacy; says she only knows two people but knows around 200 blogs. Explains about the instrumental parts of Tumblr; e.g. there is a dashboard, this is where posts appear; says that it’s impossible to read all of it and that “you get through as much as you can” and then have to wait for people to post more. Lists a few blogs that are present on Tumblr: grunge, fandom, fashion. Says she follows “a few” and these on the list are the ones she is interested in. In response to a question about how many followers each blog would have, estimates “thousands”. In response to a question about how many blogs on Tumblr, estimates 500,5000. No real way of verifying this. But, trying to show the scale of the site. Clarifies the essential differences between tumblr and Facebook in terms of what you know about “friends” e.g. you know alot about people who are your Facebook friends, whereas on tumblr you don’t know the personal stuff (e.g. religious affiliation).

Clarifies what the differences are between the “share” on Facebook and equivalent on tumblr: is the re-blog. The essential difference here is that what you like (e.g. a post) on tumblr, this doesn’t come up on your “friends” page, but it does on their Facebook page if liked on Facebook. So...tumblr is much more discreet and user managed (I think?). Even the blogger might be unaware that someone liked their post on tumblr – unless they went through and checked their notifications. On using Tumblr and/or Facebook: Says she can easily spend two hours on Tumblr. Agrees its “compelling”. Compares Tumblr with Facebook: the latter is almost diary or social calendar-like, where people will post that they are going to the movies, and who with, but on Tumblr it’s more independent in that people find people using criteria that they like what they have to say, for example, and so like what they’re posting and then follow their posts. This has come up before in Transcript #1. Says that she got into Facebook when she was far too young for it, like age ten, in middle school. Called this “someone’s stream that they were putting out” and if she didn’t like it, then she wouldn’t follow that person. Qualifies this with an example, using Fandom. Says that if you like a Fandom (a particular blog someone puts out), then you would like their post because it’s a Fandom

you are interested in. On the differences in blogs that are about fashion: describes fashion blogs; these contain models, and usually brand images e.g. Chanel. Then there are other blogs, called Grunge: says it's difficult to explain what this is. Contrasts it with "preppy" and this is a particular Americanism; a specific style of dressing for girls. Explains in some detail what the preppy fashion style is; subdued, modest, not attention getting style of dressing, girly, characterises the kind of girl who wears this as "a good girl".

Stakes her own line in the sand and states she is "grunge"; spends quite some time describing what this is; careful to say it's going to sound pretty bad; describes the style in person terms; great detail; high contrast to the other style; rebellious, edgy, red lipstick, dyed hair (white grey or lilac grey!) suddenly it's trendy...designer sunglasses, black eyeliner, tank top, can see the bra, top with a skull design, almost gothic but not labelled that. A different look; a real statement look; not anti-feminine as such but nearly; well away from the "good girl" look. What's this signifying, I wonder? On comparing social media sites: in response to if a person can have a Facebook profile like this: started to say that she thought they would look a bit of a...didn't complete so justified by explaining about Tumblr again and how it works; reminds that you don't post pictures of yourself on Tumblr; it's a totally different social media experience. You don't post pictures of you and your BFF going off to the movies; I guess Facebook is seen as a more social thing while Tumblr is seen as a more identity thing, finding your tribal group, people who like the same things as you do. Says that her Facebook use is "way less" compared to her Tumblr use.

Explains and classifies the type of use by giving example: e.g. Facebook "where I post oh exams are on week six, kill me now or something..." and then Tumblr would be where you would post something more, maybe...socially unacceptable things like oh I shipped these two guys...which is fine on Tumblr. Shipped = see snip:



Contrasts this with if this was said on Facebook, this could mean that you want the guys to be together and that could mean you want them to be gay. So, each site uses different languages. Occurs to me that Tumblr is a lot more symbolic (in language) than Facebook. Compares to her brief use of Instagram and Snapchat, too. Got over these

fast; didn't like the lack of interaction. Instagram took too long, can't reblog anything you might like, which means that you can't "collect" people onto your dashboard; too time consuming, have to use two steps for Instagram before being able to post. Disagrees that she might be an influence on other people. On inhibition: has a lot to say about the essential differences between tumblr and Facebook. Gives another example; this time starts talking about taboos; e.g. says that things are "less tabooey" on tumblr than on Facebook. Notes that on Facebook people don't have followers, they have friends and that makes it more intimate. Tumblr, people have followers, and it doesn't matter if you know things about homosexuality or religions, everything is acceptable. So – tumblr is less inhibited, and because of the anonymity people are less inhibited, too.

Enjoys this because of the freedom tumblr offers compared to facebook. So different stages for different children; depends on their level of sophistication with the social media sites. Agrees that she can "be herself" on tumblr and that's appealing. Gives a clear example of the comparison between the two; Facebook has to be kept "PG" whereas tumblr you can post something like "just sitting on the couch, want to smoke something..." so gives a way of expressing rebellion where parents don't have a presence. Talks about being trusted by her Mom; says that she is not "accumulating a cult ready to like murder the president or something...". Cares about who follows her, but on tumblr not Facebook: talks more about how this works and what it means; that is it's like people liking your blog and the kind of things that you like really mean that it's "kind of like" having friends; but then qualifies this by saying sort of, not really. So friends but not friends. Doesn't care if people like her (or not) on Facebook; prioritises tumblr as more important and qualifies this by saying that to her the followers have more value. People who like the same symbols as you do perhaps? And who think that these things have the same meanings?

Language and rules of engagement: has the language; uses it easily; e.g. PM any of them (PM = private message); Promo UTA = ? Promo means promote (Me) to others. Clearly outlines that Facebook and Tumblr are different; Tumblr is not for your personal life; it's for things (symbols?) that you are totally interested in. Qualifies behaviour on either platform: on Facebook you have to be PG (parental guidance; a way of saying careful, parents might be looking, keep things clean); says Tumblr is just like a "giant shit storm all the time". OTP refers to a tumblr user writing a fan fiction about their favourite people. Speaks about who follows her and refers to some as "randoms". Have heard this before, too. What looks at or sees on Tumblr: mentions seeing a nude and would just scroll past something disgusting; says things on Tumblr are "far less scarring" to see than if they were seen on Facebook; so it's the rebels social media site, then. Facebook sounds very pedestrian in this interview!

Mentions seeing some explicit material on Tumblr; says that if too out there she will unfollow that person. Found out about Tumblr from her friend; she had one first and that motivated this one to make one because "it's cool I suppose". On advertising on the

social media sites: acknowledges the advertising on Facebook; knows where it's situated. Says there's no ads on Tumblr. In response to "are you certain?" she says "oh that's deep". Thinks about this, then recalls that Tumblr on mobile has no ads, but when you go to someone's homepage some people have agreed to show ads on their page – they get paid for this – by Google (this came up in Transcript #1) and this only happens if people have essentially done a deal with Google to show the ads, invite others to click on them and the quid pro quo is "I'll promo you..." promo being "I'll promote you to others". For example, you could be promoted by an ad person to 200,000 followers; this means that (you) the one being promoted, gets exposed to 200,000 (potentially) and also the promoter says things like "this person (you) is cool...". So – huge exposure to **a lot** of people. What a way to share your interests and online identity. Clarifies how the ads on blogs happen – her blog and friends blog won't have ads on them because they haven't said to Tumblr put ads on their blogs and then pay money to (us) for advertising these things. Demonstrates a good understanding of how the commercial aspect of Tumblr works. In response to what she thinks of ads on Tumblr, e.g. a person brand e.g. Kim Kardashian: thinks it's ok to do this as it's "not going to hurt anyone". Easily names other person brands, fave celebs: uses code language: "my favourite ship" Tyler Oakley & Troy Sivan. One of these guys is linked to YouTube – Troy Sivan. She found these two on YouTube; likes them for their funny videos. Found they had a Tumblr and was pleased as could "stalk" them. Clarifies the difference between bad stalking and good stalking. Talks about how these links between sites work: notices new videos from her favourite people on either site; each is linked to the other. It's an ecosystem, really.

On safety: Restates how she keeps herself safe on tumblr by for example not making a play of her name (so people can't guess her identity?) and says that others do this but she hasn't; reminds that people would know what she likes but not who she is. Tells a story about how (she) they are all taught from an early age at school about safety and not to tell someone your age; gives a great example of what could happen if (you) divulged personal information and agreed to meet someone at a mall (for example) – says that at school they were shown really old videos (from the 90's!) and this gave rise to the meet at the mall scenario; could be a guy on the other end "like ha ha" and then...says that (she) was taught this from an early age. Includes parents in this teaching too and gives weight to her example of Dad because he works in IT and tells what not to do. Segways to a longish story about when she was younger (age 8) watching CSI or similar and off to school, task was to write a story so she wrote about a guy who does something wrong and followed the plotline and characterisation of what she had seen the night before. Included all kinds of "bad words". Teacher response "not appropriate" "what are you watching"; says didn't realise it was that bad at the time; didn't realise all the "taboo" surrounding this topic.

Ends by saying she could have got into serious trouble, but the teacher was a "good teacher". Final outcome: had to change a "bad word" to a sanitised version – "idiot". Not sure where to put this but has a brief discussion about God and religion; states her line in the sand really; not as religious as Mom or sister; hasn't listened to Christian

music for months; can stand listening to someone “bashing God” at school (doesn’t agree with it but whatever); tells a really interesting story about a time in the class when they were all supposed to pray to God and if “he doesn’t speak to you then you’re not trying hard enough”; very open interview: “and I’m like this is bull crap, like I was like how is that even supposed to work...”. States that she made up a story about a white light and to be kind to her little sister. Agrees she might be an opinion leader; changes this to reflect that she is opinionated, and has been told she is older than her age (and expresses the wish that hopefully this is true).

On influence: states clearly that her main influences on her opinions come from her social media activities. Backtracks a bit to say that she has learnt most of her taboos (what is taboo and what is not; really interesting word to use for a younger person, I wonder where that comes from?); gives an example like don’t pick your nose; says those things come from school learning. Points out that being openly gay is still “taboo”; qualifies this by saying that she didn’t know what this meant until she got involved with the internet. Sets the scene by placing this into the context of her (previous) school which had a special “Christian” character; compares being openly gay (at this school) to being a terrorist; “bad”. States that parents give guidelines; qualifies this with wouldn’t take fashion advice from her Mom or boy advice from her Dad. Would ask her friends. Says does have friends, or at least people she would call friends, might call them acquaintances; names two friends. One is a Facebook friend and “real life” friend. Points out that the school has a lot of south africans there (white); suggests that these people are very conservative (very christian), and don’t tolerate “even toned down swearing”. Gives the example of her and friends in year 5 saying “shit” frequently; they were using it as an adjective. Mentions that the “intolerance?” extended to if someone said “oh my God” then they were using God’s name in vain; not tolerated. Explains the impact of this on making friends; potential for exclusion; others told not to hang out with that girl “she’s not of God”. What next? Moved schools; now at a school where none of this matters. Has different friends who didn’t “buy into that story” indicated above.

Describes the “girls who’s opinions matter”: these are the people who go out at lunchtime and don’t come back; get their noses pierced, drink in the weekends and parents have split up. They have tough lives but are rebels. Go to the gym to get their bodies in shape (e.g. thigh gap!). They are not scared of consequences; says she is so won’t do some of those things. Says that there is no one to enforce the consequences; names two girls in this group; identifies these two as the most influential. So this is no different from what we have had in times past (opinion leaders, influencers). Wants to be part of this group.

Talks about the things she would do with these girls; excludes some things e.g. taking drugs; might leave school for the day; probably would drink with them. Talks about their language and how they use swear words and derogatory terms – says this rubs off on her. Qualifies this by saying that saying something isn’t as bad as doing something;

then qualifies even more carefully and says that she wouldn't say things to people to hurt them but would make throwaway comments. Describes and defines the kinds of people who would not be allowed to be a part of this group; have to be physically a "type" and have a style; need to be cool in a specific way; so only certain people can be part of the group. Classic in-group out-group I guess. Talks about the rules of engagement with this kind of group. So nothing new there. Decides that these girls are the epitome of cool.

On the social pyramid: leads up to this. Talks about this in the context of hanging out with these girls; the need to have her own opinion respected by them: to maintain her place in the social pyramid but not get arrested. Talks about keeping her "criminal record clean". Has good graphic examples; must come from television watching! Example: "don't want to be taken for possession at 13, not a good look".

On shared interests with friends: says the shared interests with friends is not that important; qualifies this by saying that it's not about that it's about things in common so sees these as different; names fandom as what they have in common. See snip:



On tolerance: says that cool with what people want to wear (fashion, hair). But then to be in with the cool group you need to know what to wear (and what not to wear) as well. There are rules. Notes that social behaviour around this group is very important; to the extent of you cannot walk to PE with the wrong person; it might have a consequence of "not cool" thus your group membership will be jeopardised. Explained how you know what to wear; have to base your own looks on what the cool girls wear; also have to pay attention to person brands names Cara Delevingne. On coolness and fashion: names a range of shops where she buys her clothes; actually names Top Shop which is interesting because it was not in NZ at the time of the interview and nothing was being said about it; I should have asked how do you know about that? Names Vans shoes: they are cool. Why? They just are. Compares to Converse shoes and explains about the sticker; that you are paying for a little sticker. Says that the price tag is worth it (\$200) because it keeps you your place in the social pyramid.

Finish summary.

Transcript #4; two boys; 13; social media users; low use; infrequent; FB;
paired interview; committed gamers, other sites; underground...

Introduction: these two guys love their sports and that provided an excellent hook to get them talking; they both play water polo, mainly water sports; explained how this works in terms of making your legs like an egg beater so you don't sink and it gets you fit, and is great fun, and they reckon they're pretty good. Both also play computer games and "stuff". These two were hilarious in the interview; they played off each other and explained how water polo works, kind of like a tennis match, one said one part, the other finished that sentence then introduced another idea, the other picked it up and ran with it...such fun. On the computer games they play: one plays x-box, he doesn't like to play one game too long because he gets bored, the other plays computer games and he is the opposite, when he finds a game he likes he plays for as long as possible so has more than a hundred hours on a few games. He stated this is embarrassing!

On what makes a good computer game: lots of adjectives; things like fun, able to laugh, keeps us involved, always something to do in the game, not repetitive, can't do the same thing over and over, like some games where you do the same thing again and again but with higher difficulty, (boring), named games – the best let you make some decisions; have an impact on the story; things like "being your captain", not being thrown into a character where can't make any decisions, these guys question the games – ask the game, really, things like why are you doing that, this way would be easier, you probably wouldn't die if you did (it). Criticised the Walking Dead – too many choices, "ridiculous" game, but that was one guy's opinion, the other one loves this game. Very individual. So nothing new there I think.

These two are very aware of the technical side e.g. graphics of games, criticised Oblivion – bad graphics; explains this in terms of the "textures of everywhere", too grainy, not developed. So – sophistication is the key. The guys noted that this game is 8 years old and it shows in the sophistication. They did decide though that this game is still fun; noted that you can get "some mods" to improve the graphics and textures...they decided they were not "experts". They decided though that they are committed. Why? One of them spends "a fair bit of time on it...and I'm pretty good". On coolness: One of the guys describes himself as the funny guy in class, the other is the get down to work guy, unless it's something he reckons he's not good at or doesn't like then he "screws around a lot". One said he does that in English. And social studies. He reckons it's not because he doesn't like it, more that he's in the lower class and it's so easy and there are so many simple people in his class. But they both like maths, because the teacher teaches them with jokes and laughing...so he might be cool. So the coolest people in the class were a bit tricky to work out – so words used like a "few guys...they're all pretty stupid and they're like drinkers as well...they hare around...busily into girls..." the two guys said they didn't care about this, and then gave a few reasons why: when in school you have to get down to it and then later in life...yeah...it's the hassle...

They noted that one of the coolest guys at school has a really old Nokia, and they thought that's alright; they said he's a "pretty good friend" and then decided that again the rich people have the smartphones. They said that those people are annoying. On how these people are cool: they have a general vibe around them...like they own the school, they can just walk around...but the guys noted that they still say "bad things" behind these guys backs, but wouldn't to their faces. They noted that they prefer to interact with them because they're "a bit stupid, they're funny". They went on to explain how the coolness works, like they walk into a class and one guy says like "hi man" and then um yeah, you just tell, you know. This cool factor is pretty important to the guys I have interviewed. The guys noted that even if you were really new "you would be able to tell" who the cool guys were. They went on to say that you would know within a week who you should sit with and who you shouldn't. They qualified this with if you want to work you sit with some other kinds of people, and if you want to screw around you sit with your friend. If you want to be cool?

They elaborated on this at length – deciding then that it depends on what you define as cool, mentions Facebook: in terms of how some guys use it: status (x3) and photo (x3) and then stated "I don't care". So this one talked about being in his zone and being happy, he feels good; made a comment directed at the "cool guys" future: said that whenever they were "being so cool" on e.g. Facebook, he predicts they will be working at McDonalds or similar and then he will laugh at them. He said that he will be made of money (suit made of money) – so he sees a future for himself by working at school and sees less for them. On Facebook: one uses (the older one) the other doesn't use it. The user says he doesn't go on it as much as others, and comments that he sees lots of girls on it all the time (x3). He goes on to check his notifications and scroll through the news feed; he makes funny comments. That is his main activity. He said he posts some likes. On who uses Facebook: named local girls from a local, elite, girls school. He qualified this and talked about how they use, what their typical use is, e.g. "they got 81 likes" they have say 500 friends, he is careful how he works with the friends thing – he doesn't seek them out. He noted that if people think he is a cool guy then they can send him a friend request.

On why the other guy doesn't use Facebook: He has two reasons, the first being never got around to it and the second being doesn't see much point in it. Made a comment about if you are talking with your friends about things all the time when you see them, you can't talk about things that happened in the weekend – this bit didn't quite make sense here. I think he was trying to say that FB can be good for things like what homework did we have, like a messaging system. His mate made a comment about he has a friend who "fills me up with gossip". On finding out about new things that could be cool for them to have (or do): they both decided that this happens by talking to their friends at school; they both decided that this was not a Facebook thing; they said finding out about new things is more about talking to people. One guy had a number of times he would hear about new things before he checks them out; this is if he hears about new

stuff more than 5 conversations (or more than 3 conversations) qualifies this – this counts a thing worth checking out.

On how the two guys check out new things: They Google it. However, one qualified his response by saying that he doesn't care about new stuff, he reckons that all the things he wants to know about he already knows about! On how they are "in the know": after a bit of side talk, they decided that being in the know meant a few things; they talk to each other and one of their brothers; they get information about e.g. watching a trailer for a game from the brother; they go and read online game reviews; they respond to a new x-box game (on x-box when you get it information is supplied about what's coming up); they decided they use YouTube "all the time": On YouTube: this seems a pretty important social site for these two. One guy said this is how he learns about most of his gaming information; he watches channels that do just Indie games; sole operators mainly guys not attached to big corporates; do things that in the boys' words are "out there and different" and they do this because they don't have to do what the big game publishers say. The boys decided that Indie games and their creators do things that could be quite risky.

The boys defined risk in terms of the money that could be lost if people didn't like the Indie games. They criticised the big game publishers, decided that "they" don't go for new ideas (by implication the Indie gamers do?) – kept talking about the innovations the Indie gamers come up with; decided that these are the people who make the money. Explained how the YouTube channels work, then talked about how they know what a good game is. It has to be long (takes more than 5 minutes to complete); it has to have characters, they can't be lifeless.

On Facebook advertising: Cynical. Talked about yes, they do notice the ads on the sidebars, said that they are all the same, in the context of a game said that Facebook ad will talk about how revolutionary the new game is and how everyone's talking about it, but commented that the ads are all along the same lines. Noted that other ads, e.g. 4G is coming to Auckland, cynical response to this ad – if you don't have to do anything then why do you (Vodafone) have an ad? Decided that Sky ads are stupid. Said that sometimes they click on the Facebook ads but made a comment that's appeared before – if the ads (for games) are on Facebook they turn out to be terrible games. "If they're on Facebook they turn out to be terrible".

One of the boys bought a magnet cube off a Facebook ad but noted that the cube is now banned (dangerous if someone swallows two of them!). He said this is the only ad he has clicked on. They reckon that some of the things in Facebook like people sending you messages are spam and funny, they are so stupid. Had a brief argument about the context of a game whereby one thought one of the props was stupid; a lead pipe on an island where the characters had crashed a plane. Where would you get a lead pipe on an island full of leaves and branches?? The argument was between three of them; two brothers and one unrelated. Went back to this after talking about friends (below).

Thought about the remainder of the game and argued about the shelter (hence no need for the pipe). They like problem solving in their computer games, not just entertainment. One of the guys noted that he picks up on little things in these computer games, an eye for detail, likes things to be realistic. Things in a game need to make sense. Doesn't like conflicts with the story. He decided that he is the "voice of reason". And the other two are stuck in their ways. They clearly have a pretty good relationship, the three of them.

On friends: they decided that good friends don't care if you like different things from them. They decided that you want good friends to have different opinions; because this makes it more interactive. This leads to lots of "friendly debates"; these can last a whole day (refer to the lead pipe above). On good books: Artemis Fowl. This guy explained, in great detail, one of the main premises of the story about a time surge. He had calculated the time pattern and used that to tell (me, interviewer) the pattern. Said it was a clever idea but then went and calculated to see if it was right. Decided it was incorrect. On asked if "did write to the author?" "we don't write" (oh email, of course!).

On what they did: made a Reddit account. Explained what Reddit is and how it works; explained how (one of them) posted his thoughts about the problem he identified in Artemis Fowl, and commented that he "just wanted to get it out there" – this is sharing. He only did this once. He did comment that he only does this if he is really annoyed about something – and he wants a "straight answer" – he noted that often people running these pages don't like the pages disturbed, whereas he said he doesn't care about that, he wants an answer, he noted that often the pages people (admin?) try to divert him or others away from what they're trying to get answered and he says he thinks this is really annoying. On who they listen to: (apart from the cool guys) – one says "no one influences me to buy stuff"; skeptical, they said it would break in two days; they reckon they are immune, like "you can't shake me up" they said they're not stupid, they don't really have anyone that influences me...they say they are "my own man" (this is the older one of the pair). The younger one admits to being influenced by someone he watches online who does video games; he says he has listened to his viewpoint and agreed that he is influenced by this guy.

On parental influence: the older one says that if his Mom's views make sense then he will change his point of view but there has to be a reason for him to do this; he says that just because his Mom says something doesn't mean it must be right; compared himself to a sheep and stated he is definitely not a sheep who follows his Mom! The younger one agreed with this view...Both boys reckon that they save their pocket money and use that to buy their own stuff; they said they don't get their parents to buy them things apart from essential stuff like school equipment or food (the stuff that nobody needs)...the older boy stated that he saves up his money and then asks his Mom for her credit card details and transfers the money into her account. He says she is ok with that.

On being independent: the older boy is definite about his independence; he likes having his own responsibility, commented that he doesn't see why people go against responsibility; he noted that if his Mom says to do something and he thinks it's a good idea then he will otherwise no go; reckons he doesn't need his Mom to tell him what to do – states he is in control of his life, knows what the right things to do are and does them. On hipster: this has come up before, it means “you're kind of different”, then a brief dispute: “it means that you like something else, everybody does, (I) follow music like what's in the top charts...or on the radio...” it could mean that you follow one e.g. band – Fallout Boy. On why this band is so good: the boys said these guys are the “ultimate seven” and they play rock and pop. On Justin Bieber: hell no. Emphatic. They said he had a unique voice but now it has changed to a more generic voice. Some big noting, perhaps – they said he was kind of like “I'm a new guy and girls like me...” they said “get over him”. Decided that Lorde has a unique voice. Decided that (sometimes) he and sister (the younger boy) will jam to One Direction or listen going along in the car for example, or if it's on the radio, but wouldn't put onto their iTunes account. One boy has Spotify and one uses YouTube or iTunes.

On smartphones & being mobile: neither has a smartphone (at time of interview). Talked about the cost; decided that they had a different way of thinking about this, thought that if you had a smartphone and it cost \$1200 you could get something much better but less mobile. One boy said that he didn't use his phone as much as he should; they then decided that \$1200 would buy them 12 good video games; one gave an example of a good game that he has played for over a hundred hours and it cost only \$20. Minecraft was mentioned and one boy claimed he had played about 200 hours...on this; said it's quite big at the moment; the other claimed to have played this some years ago but said that he changes his games often.

They decided that the rich guys at school have smartphones. But both still insisted that there are other things they could do with the money; gave an example more practical things and said that most of the apps on the phones you can do on the computer, they then said that the \$1200 could get them a very good computer. They decided that you can do lots more on the computer, the problem is it's not mobile unless you have a laptop. On not having smartphones and mobile technology: they decided they didn't mind not having these things; one said he stays home a lot anyway and he has other things to do; the other one segwayed into talking about rules and how other parents have lots of rules and how people “hate their Moms” because of their rules, but his Mom is better and happy for him to do his own thing – he noted that he can be more independent; as long as he doesn't go on a weed addiction spree.

On clothing & fashion: One said he doesn't care much about this as other people do; he says he's messy; he reckons he wears his “red top and shorts” most of the time and that constitutes his whole wardrobe; unless he has to wear formal clothes when he has a tie and “stuff”. But he qualified this by saying he does like to (sometimes) have some class, style. The other said he doesn't have any special labels he wants to wear, he's happy to

wear trackpants or sometimes PJ days which are fun. Or he wears his robe, really comfortable. This boy likes his comfort. At the end of the interview (like the exit from the Doctors office): the boys talked about other websites they use; said they hardly ever use tumblr, or Instagram, but then introduced Twitch: explained this as where people who play all different kinds of games can livestream them from their computers; they meant that e.g. one person playing a video game and there is live chat – so you, the other gamer, can talk to the other dude via the live chat, they said that lots of chats come through really fast, and it's very interactive (or at least feels interactive). So, it's quite complex, this – so a gamer plays, streaming (his) play from his computer. This stream goes to a server and is then broadcast on the Twitch website – and others can do a live chat – e.g. problem solving, asking questions “how do I do this?”; so those watching (as such) can click on the livestream and watch the gamer and the game unfold. They can all participate using the livechat – the boys compared it to watching live rugby, a couple of seconds delay. They noted that if the gamer asks a “dumb” question, then the watchers and the live chatters can “give hate” as everyone yells at the gamer...that is, everyone yells in the comments. Seems very exposed to me.

On internet safety: one said that his brother teaches him quite a lot about different sites, he reckons his brother thinks “I'm like stupid as”...both decided to keep themselves safe you just “don't be stupid”; this includes not falling for stupid stuff like getting a free iPad from a website by filling out a survey; they reckon that would give you “20 viruses” and “mess up”. They were funny in this part of the interview; back to the tennis match talking; another example of dumbness on the internet: “you are the one millionth visitor...” skeptical; they reckon the chances of that happening are like...duh. They both said you can't be gullible; things like bots crawl around, obviously lots of things are bots...in response to “what are bots?” the boys explained these as: things or people who post the same thing on different videos, and they keep doing this; so if the user goes onto two or three videos there is the bot; they also described trolls and linked these to “hate”; also linked these to how they tell people they can do something awesome (and of course you can't); the younger one got caught by a troll in the context of a game – he was halfway through his game (level) and a troll told him he could do better... by taking xyz action – wrong! They then told a story about the younger one's brother who did something with a game (he was only about 8 years old at the time) and a troll came and gave him wrong information which he followed...disaster. Lost his “stuff” that he had collected in the game; lots of crying. They did feel a bit sorry for him after awhile.

Interesting, the boys said that the brother failed because he didn't think to “wiki” the issue first, he just took action. So, wiki appears. On being disconnected: the younger boy described a time when he had been playing a game for a couple of years, and had invested many hours, but then stopped playing for awhile so the site disconnected his account. He couldn't log in, so he decided he needs to talk to a moderator to find out why. He gave a technical explanation of how this potentially happens; talked about how for storage reasons people's accounts get moved off the servers into backup storage, to make more space. He wants his account moved back over.

Reducing Raw Data for Code Development: sub-sample

Transcript #5; girls; 14; social media user; high use; frequent; FB+ more; paired interview.

What favourite things: being with friends, talking about anything with them, friends fashion make-up and music. Especially dresses. Have to have the what is in at the moment to be in or get the right opinion from people. How do you know what to be into? You look at the big clothes brands and the big shops to see what they bring out, especially the new stuff. Sometimes one person starts a trend – the kind of shops we look at are mainly surf shops; names them e.g Amazon, Billabong. Stated that these are commonly known brands, because everyone has them so it's not hard to know about these really. They also said that you see these brands everywhere, too. Other comments relate to people and how if you were new at school what you would need to do to know what to be into; for example you have to get yourself into the right crowd of people that you feel comfortable with. These people will help you. But you can also see what's around you, too. You can listen to the talk and "pick up stuff". They gave an example of when they were new, they looked at the seniors to see what they were doing and acting and what they listened to and went from there. They said it wasn't easy, but then one said she liked it, exciting, and she found that people did help her fit in quite well.

On current fashion and celebrities: the girls said that at the moment they are supposed to wear dresses and "beachy stuff". Also the vintage look is acceptable. One mentioned the current fashions of the Kardashians, leather pants, this is cool. One loves the Kardashians. She admits they are spoilt but have good fashion sense. The other girl said they are over the top, so dramatic about everything. But the more fashionable of the pair "loves" the Kardashians, even with the thousand dollar dress. She decided that she would be vulnerable too if she had that kind of money to spend; they then decided that one of them loved Taylor Swift, finds her songs inspirational; the other disagreed saying she finds her annoying. They agreed with each other that the Kardashians aren't the greatest role models. The one who loves them though said that she looks up to them for their fashion sense; thought that Taylor Swift is a better role model; the other reiterated that her songs "annoy me a bit". She picked Bieber and Thrift Shop as her kind of music. Brief discussion about Bieber; what changed; his look mostly plus his style of songs; the girls decided he turned beautiful "they supposed". They said they have gotten over One Direction; although admitted some of their songs are good. Another brief disagreement - one then stated she didn't like them, has not been a big fan of theirs, would go to a show if she was given tickets but otherwise, no. So lots of discussion about music brands (person).

On what they talk about with friends: they decided the main topics were about what people were doing, and all their dramas, especially things like boy troubles. Or being grounded for a week, or any of the fights girls might have had (not fists, verbal). They

said that sometimes they talk about where they shop – they reckon not long conversations, more about just pop in comments about (maybe) a cool dress they saw that they might be saving for. One gave a detailed example of how her talk changes depending on what group she is with; e.g. one friend is into fashion so that's what they talk about it; the other is more about what's cool.

The girls gave an explanation of what's cool (fashion). Named brands: Converse shoes, Canterbury pants, that was named in an explanation of not so cool; people without good fashion sense; more comfortable clothes. Linked these kinds of clothes to people's personalities; they then gave a detailed discussion about the kind of groups they have at school; discussed the ranking system; snobby people at the "top"; the girls said that you have to understand how it works. Things they would not talk about with friends – private and personal matters. On getting new things: they said that although their parents might not agree with things they want, if they save up themselves they can buy themselves things (e.g. new phone). One said she really, really, wanted her Vans – because everyone had them. Fashion things. They discussed how this happens – because everyone has them...and said that it works because it's the way that their (friends or others) explain the thing/brand/item; that is they exaggerate, make it sound very appealing, because they are trying to convince themselves as well, why they have spent all the money.

Best things about their use of Facebook: two big things: keeping in contact with old friends and seeing what everyone else is doing. They like seeing what others are doing. They said that this "keeps you up, kind of". They like FB for keeping in contact so you can still talk to people but you wouldn't see each other in the street; you have always got a connection. They decided that once you have a friend on Facebook you do kind of have a connection; they defined this as almost like knowing them because you can see what they have done (e.g. photos) so it is like you (almost) know them. On adding people to FB: they said they don't really add people that they don't know; if they have talked to people (although not met them) then they will add them (probably). The word random crops up again – the girls say they don't add these people because they could be a "creepy old man". They thought (or supposed) doing something like that could be dangerous. They decided that they didn't want to get into anything "dodgy". On who uses FB: they said that all their friends "have a Facebook" even though one friend only recently got one (they talk about FB as an it); they reckon that she only got 'it' because she wanted to get more votes for a competition she entered into so had to get a FB to get the votes. They described how she made this work; she had to keep in contact with everyone she knew and get them to vote "for her band". The girls reiterated that "we all have a Facebook" (like a body part) but then said that not all people they know use it, just occasionally. That was the information for one of the girls. Then the other said that in her group they all have a Facebook and use it often. Commented that it's used on their phones and they "liked" school (FB is blocked at school). How Facebook is used: they decided that a frequent user is someone who is on a few times a day posting statuses and updates. Noted that one of their friends is "quite bad" always on FB, but

you wouldn't know – she just looks at things, doesn't do status posts. They decided that there are people who do "heaps" of statuses and "stuff". One then said she hasn't really written a status.

On advertising on FB: the girls said they do notice advertising on FB but don't really take any notice of it; sometimes they notice and reckon that the ads are usually for cheap electronics. Interestingly one said that she doesn't go on FB on the computer she uses her phone; and the mobile app doesn't get advertisements. Then said she doesn't take notice of ads when using on the computer either. On what they pay attention to on FB newsfeeds: looks at cool pictures "and stuff" that come up on their newsfeeds (this happens as a result of a friend liking something or posting or sharing something); qualified this to say that don't pay attention always; if they see a page on FB and they like it and then it pops up with cool things then they might go in to page four and they could see it in more detail; they reckon that if something like this doesn't come from a friend that's still ok it doesn't mean they will ignore it; depends on what "it" is. On who uses FB: social people; people with a lot of friends; like a very social person who will use it frequently; mostly girls; then qualified this to note that because they are at a girls school then they are more friends with girls and know them more than guys but they reckon that girls go on more than guys. Don't know why; on prompting thought it might be because guys are more outdoorsy and also interested in x-box; suggested that guys have more things to occupy them than girls. Decided that most girls wouldn't go and play a shooting game on e.g. x-box. On what dislike about FB: notice that some things pop up they deem inappropriate, or some things that others are liking and they ask "why are you liking that?" they get annoyed when someone likes a page and then it comes up on their newsfeeds; or when someone adds a new friend and that comes up as well; they said "yeah, don't tell me this"; sometimes some of the language that comes up – "what?". They don't like all the game requests. On when first got FB: one said she liked everything she came across, wasn't sure why, seemed like the thing to do but the problem was then there were so many silly pages they keep coming up on her newsfeed, very annoying. The girls decided that catchy logos and pictures are the way to catch their attention on FB; something that catches the eye. They thought that was a good way to get people's attention and then if one person likes it then others will see and then they like it and...On FB ads: decided that ads on the side are not a good way to get to people; said that a lot of people don't look at them; good explanation here : decided that these ads are like someone telling you to do something over and over again and in the end you just "flick off and don't listen". This one said that in the beginning she looked at all the ads, but because on the computer they are in the same spot so she doesn't look at them anymore; even though the ads are changed. Reckons she is immune to them now.

Decided that the ads need to be for their age group, not really mature, not fancy words either. They want a good picture and a price. That way, they think then that they would be thinking about them (the ads). Commented that something flitting around the page, trying to find them might be interesting (didn't quite make sense). They want something

quick to read, doesn't interrupt scrolling, if too long to read they go click click – don't like ads where you have to continue reading; little blurbs are better. Don't like ads that use "maturely long confusing words"; how would FB know to do this? The girls decided that FB would have to ask people or listen to people's conversations – that is, see how they would talk. Not big fancy words.

CodeBook

Children using social media ecosystem as a consumer brand information source, and how this influences children's developing consumer brand relationships.

Social Media in Use Code: Interacting with brands

Code	Definition
Social media brand interactions: code the things they do; see definitions. Knowing [about consumer brands]	Identifying: names a brand; this includes social media brand; gives a list of brands she/he is following; says something identifying about the brand e.g. locates where she/he saw brand image; can describe the brand e.g. image; may use imaginative terms e.g. describes the brand in person terms; this is an active code. Noticing: sees things "pop up" e.g. brands, ads; notices what others like and may look if a friend likes; criticises content of brand ads e.g. Sky ads on FB "stupid"; cynical attitude; may deny responding to brand communications or agree they respond "sometimes"; may state that messages are spam; may express annoyance about how social media admin people manage the site; this is a passive code.
Reacting	Evaluating: uses evaluative terms such as good, weird, cool, like, interesting, nasty, disgusting, pretty, bad, in reference to consumer brands; either person brands or product brands, including social media brands; distinguishes among brands using some kind of internal criteria; this is an active code. Describing: talks about activity, e.g. sees things, notices things, may give specific examples of what friends or self do when on social media, e.g. if friend recommends a brand page might go look at it; mentions brand names but makes no evaluation; may list brands and state "everyone knows these because they're everywhere"; may describe how to do things on the site e.g. make a Vine (short humorous video); may guess at how things work; muddles brands into social media activity; may claim social media brand ads are "stupid" e.g. Sky ads but can identify recent brand advertising activity; avoids evaluations; a passive code.
Deciding	Relating: classifies users of different sites e.g. mainstream versus weird; links specific brands to either category; tracks favourite brands across social media sites and uses the social media ecosystem to do this; may talk about blogging or posting about favourite brands to others so secondary interaction; this is an active code. Watching: notices advertising and links own response to friends response; listens and watches e.g. YouTube to get information about new e.g. internet games; offers no evaluative comments; ignores ads on Facebook; clicks on ads "sometimes" but states Facebook ads are terrible; identifies person brand she/he might be watching and names this as "watching"; may say that she/he is just looking at things; this is a passive code.
Belonging, integrating: Interacting	Connecting: uses code language for favourite brands; links self to trends and/or person brands with "I am this/that"; looks for interaction; uses stalking and other ways to link self to favourite others or person brands; applies brand criteria to people wanting friendship "must have e.g. tumblr"; an active, integrating code. Present or not present.

Descriptors for Parent and Child Nodes (themes, sub-themes; used for thematic code).

1. **Parent code: Knowing:** extent of the child's awareness of and knowledge about consumer brand/s as the child uses social media; active or passive words used to communicate knowledge and the distance between the child and the brand; two indicators used:
 - **Identifying:** a 'closer to me' code; greater degree of internalised knowledge about the brand; where it appears and some kind of judgement about this in terms of fits the brand image (ok/not ok).
 - **Noticing:** a 'distance from me' code; less internalised brand knowledge; gaps in knowledge, guessing, may use terms such as "pops up", random, not sure, don't know.

1. **Parent code: Reacting:** the manner in which the child reacts to the brand; two indicators; an **active, evaluative reaction** in reference to themselves (cool, stupid, bad, pretty, the best, my favourite); or a **passive reaction, describing**, distanced from themselves (looks like..., can be seen at shops..., this is how you wear/use it, this is popular).

2. **Parent code: Deciding:** what to do next, now. What action to take with, or about, the brand. Two indicators used:
 - **Relating:** an active, closer to me code; unafraid of relating to the brand; wants a relationship of some kind, willing to share self to get activity.
 - **Watching:** a passive, away from me code; standing back, may share self but carefully; may still interact but less actively, may take advice from brand, less interactive style.

3. **Parent code: Belonging, interacting:** an integrative sense of relating with a brand not "to" a brand; uses code language to talk about belonging with and interacting with a brand; e.g. personifies brand if a product ("my Vans" – street casual shoes; "we all have a Facebook" almost like a body part); or a fashion identity style ("I'm like a fashion grunge..."). This is an active code, and is present or not present.
