



A Comparative Analysis of Promotional Campaigns from Nike and Pepsi

Understanding and applying consumer research and customer behaviour theories, techniques and data to critically evaluate and make recommendations for marketing strategies and plans.

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2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report comparatively analyses two promotional campaigns from Nike and Pepsi applying both consumer research and customer behaviour theories, evaluating and recommending methods to improve marketing strategies.

The report explains how both Pepsi and Nike influence consumers during each stage of the Decision Process Consumer Behaviour Model (Solomon, 2013). (Olshavsky, 1979) suggests that in daily life every not every stage will be followed sequentially and often some stages may be missed out completely (AC Erasmus, 2001). The model applies to rational consumers with both brand campaigns discussed targeting a millennial, rational target audience (Dagevos, 2005).

Applying the Likelihood Elaboration Model (Fill, 2016) Pepsi used celebrity endorsement as opinion leaders to associate itself with values of “unity” using the peripheral route requiring low elaboration (Cacioppo, et al., 1983). The effectiveness of a promotional message depends on how the receiver evaluates it (O'Keefe, 1990) and consumers who elaborated on the commercial found it to be trivialising socio-political movements resulting in the opposite of cognitive dissonance, giving viewers a negative opinion on the brand. Applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs consumers motivations, attitudes and need to purchase from Pepsi seem to fit into belongingness and love category.

Nikes campaign influenced a largely millennial, rational socially aware target audience (Dagevos, 2005). Nikes used a controversial opinion leader at the time to promote a message for social justice and the right to have your own values and beliefs. Due to the nature of the controversial celebrity, Nike found some viewers who peripherally processed the message to be dissatisfied and distancing themselves from the brand (Fill, 2016). However, many viewers including Nikes intended audience of millennials cognitively elaborated on the message understanding the deeper message of the right to have one's own beliefs and the rights for social justice. Such viewers formed a cognitive response giving them a positive opinion and attachment to the brand through classical conditioning (Webb, 1999). Using Maslow's Hierarchy (Mcleod, 2018) consumers motivations, attitudes and need to purchase Nike products seem to stem from feelings of accomplishment.

The report concludes that whilst both brands were targeting a millennial and rational audience, Nike clearly understood its consumers better. Nikes use of a controversial celebrity resulting in a backlash from some members of the public. However, the intended target audience understood the promotional message resulting in cognitive dissonance from millennials who could identify with the brand sharing their own attitudes and values. This

target audience may then identify Nike in their 'initial consideration set,' when they next recognise a need which Nike can fulfil (Prakash, 2016). Recommendations for Nike include collaborations with other clothing brands their target audience have already developed a positive attitude towards, like some of their competitors already do. This is a useful strategy because it can raise brand awareness, increase market share, and help maintain cognitive dissonance in an everchanging fashion industry. On the other hand, Pepsi's campaign shows that in this instance it did not understand its consumers. Recommendations for Pepsi would be to engage in further consumer research and adopt a social media strategy to understand its consumers better. Social media is effective for "giving out, receiving and exchanging information" (Smith & Zook, 2011). The brand failed in its communication efforts with this campaign and utilising social media can help the brand understand its consumers better.

3 INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour is the study of the processes involved when selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of products and services to satisfy needs and desires (Soloman, 2020). It is about how and why people buy and use products, their reactions to prices and promotional tools (East, 1997). Previously the economy was only able to support subsistence level consumption meaning that people only had enough money to provide themselves with the basic necessities to live. Today we have moved beyond this with consumers having disposable income to spend beyond the subsistence level. Consumers do not need to spend beyond their basic means, so it is necessary for brands to understand consumer behaviour and marketing strategies to stimulate purchasing intentions (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2018).

This report will use the traditional five step Decision Process Consumer Behaviour Model (Solomon, 2013) to provide an analysis of the strategies used and the stages consumers go through when deciding on a brand. (Fill, 2016) Elaboration Likelihood Model will provide an analysis of how Nike used the central route to reach and gain a cognitive response from its target audience. Comparing it to Pepsi's mishap with consumers using the central processing route to infer a different message from which Pepsi intended. The report provides an analysis of the motivations, needs and reasons (McLeod, 2018) for brand engagement. Comparatively analysing how each campaign influences purchasing behaviour of consumers and recommending marketing strategies for further improvement.

Nike has produced many “Just do It” promotional campaigns. One campaign which sparked some controversy was celebrity endorsed by Colin Kaepernick (Fig. 1). The video advertisement received more than 80 million views within the first month of its release (Julie Creswell, 2018). Colin Kaepernick is featured giving a motivational speech about trying to be the best version of yourself and believing in something. The commercial ends with the phrase, “Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything.” The same quote is used in the campaign poster. It is a powerful quote when used by Kaepernick because he is well known for sacrificing his career for his beliefs. He is a controversial figure because he kneeled during the national anthem before a sports game (Streeter, 2020). The reason for doing so is that he did not want to show pride in the flag of a country, who in his opinion oppresses black people and people of colour (Wyche, 2016). Following the release of this campaign, people on twitter who had a negative opinion on Kaepernick kneeling at the anthem were sharing the #justburnit and #boycottnike movements (Julie Creswell, 2018). Initially Nike stock prices started to decline after the commercial (Dent, 2018) however Nike achieved a 31% growth in online sales within a week compared to 17% in the same period of the previous year in 2017 (Digital Training Academy, 2019).



Figure 1: Nike promotional campaign poster (Dent, 2018)

Pepsi's "Live for Now", campaign features an interesting commercial with celebrity endorsement from Kendall Jenner (Fig 2). The advertisement features motley groups of

people from various religious, sexual and gender backgrounds. The scene takes place with people of all backgrounds at a protest, with no clear message regarding what the protest is about. Kendall offers a member of the police force a Pepsi can to which the protesters cheer and the tension ends. The message the brand is attempting to portray with this commercial is, love and unity amongst all different groups of people. There was no clear political message from Pepsi, but the advertisement sparked outrage because protests often represent or raise awareness about inequality and human rights. Especially with the recent, 'Black Lives Matter movement', where protests were being held due to ongoing unfair police brutality (Hooton, 2017). A can of soda cannot end ongoing racism, abuse or human rights violation going on around the world. The commercial received scrutiny on social media because it was interpreted Pepsi was trying to use the visual language of resistance movement to sell their product (Wong, 2017). The soundtrack used is Lion by Skip Marley with the chorus, "We are the lions, we are the chosen, we're gonna shine out the dark" (Hooton, 2017) . Pepsi may have chosen this soundtrack to suggest Pepsi can bring people together, regardless of their political views or background. This statement matches Pepsi's apology statement saying the brand was, "trying to project a global message of unity, peace and understanding,". After a public apology from Pepsi, the commercial was removed. A repost on YouTube used by Huffington Post received 2 Million views, 14K dislikes as opposed to the 13K likes (Huffington Post, 2020).



Figure 2: Pepsi video commercial (Hooton, 2017)

4.1 DECISION PROCESS CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR MODEL



Figure 3 (Solomon, 2013)

Many current companies use contemporary consumer behaviour models as the basis of their market research. (Solomon, 2013) has defined a series of steps customers go through when making purchase decisions. Consumer process models are used to simplify, describe, and explain buying behaviour. Customer behaviour models describe each stage customers go through when making purchasing decisions. It applies to all goods and services and is heavily influenced by internal and external factors (AC Erasmus, 2001). It is a sequential model which assumes that consumers behave rationally and think logically basing their purchase decision factors like price and quality. The traditional five step model is widely used however there have been several studies suggesting gaps in the model (Engel, 1968). (Olshavsky, 1979) suggests customers may not always follow the model from start to end in daily life and therefore the consumer decision process is often faster than the stages shown

in the model. The model applies to rational thinking and it is useful for brands such as Nike and Pepsi to be able to analyse, identify and replicate factors which encourage consumers to choose their brand.

The model begins with problem recognition which represents the customer identifying their wants and needs. At this point the customer is unable to get their work done or move forward (T. Milner, 2013). It is at this stage brands need to have built brand awareness to be recognized as the first point of purchase in the consumers mind (Prakash, 2016). The next stage is information search where customers search through the different options available to them. Today consumers heavily use the internet to get information, so it is imperative for brands to be involved in search engine optimisation on the various platform's consumers use such as Google (Stankevich, 2017). Evaluation of solutions is the stage where consumers decide between the brands which best solve their problem and fit their criteria. Brands need to be aware of the needs of customers during the evaluation process (AC Erasmus, 2001). The purchase stage is when the consumer has spent their money and solved their problem. It is important for brands to identify what they performed well with in the process so they can replicate the performance with other customers (Dudovskiy, 2015). The final stage of the model is post purchase evaluation which represents the long-term relationship created with the customer through brand value and loyalty. (Mohamed, 2011)

4.2 TARGET AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION

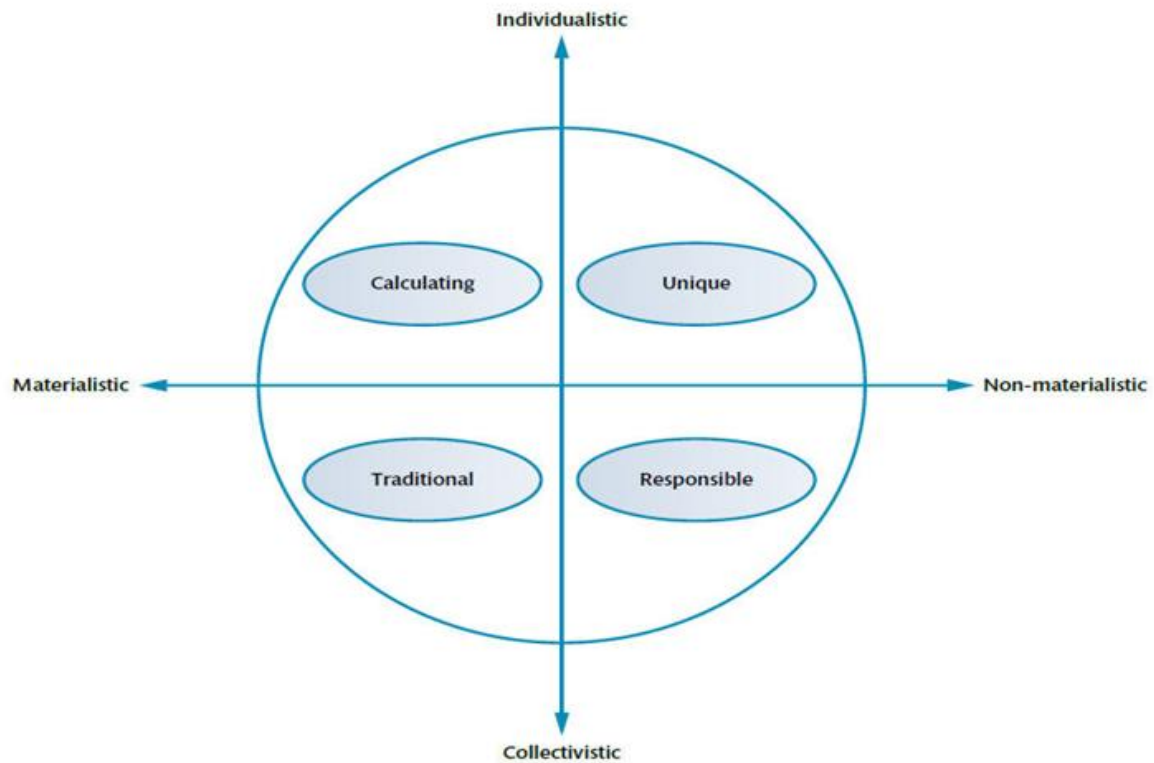


Figure 4 :Four images of the consumer (Dagevos, 2005)

Nikes target audience fall in the 15–45 age range (Oberoi, 2020). Consumers seem to fall under the calculating, unique and possibly responsible category. The calculating consumer is rational and would be happy with a well-known convenient brand. Consumers can be classed as unique because the brand holds a bold and positive reputation for its designs, especially amongst millennials who primarily shop for fashion (Ryan, 2020). Nike is environmentally aware aiming towards a zero-waste future with the, “Move to Zero” sustainability campaign (Nike, n.d.). Therefore, it can be considered consumers fall under the responsible image. Responsible consumers are informed and environmentally aware, as such their views may be in alignment with Nikes sustainability commitments.

The target audience for Pepsi’s Live for Now campaign seems to be 18-35 age range (Hatch, 2012). The brand offers multiple products such as Diet Pepsi and Pepsi Max to cater to different market segments. Pepsi uses social media hashtags and celebrity influence such as Kendall Jenner, to attract a younger audience and establish early brand loyalty

(JACKSON, 2017). Pepsi can appeal to anyone regardless of background. It seems Pepsi's consumer would fall under the responsible class as the product is a well-known and convenient choice. Some of Pepsi's consumers may fit into the unique category. The mission statement says Pepsi is dedicated to, "creating joyful moments through our delicious and nourishing products and unique brand experiences" (PepsiCo, 2020) which would appeal to the unique class of consumer.

4.3 MOTIVATION THEORIES: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

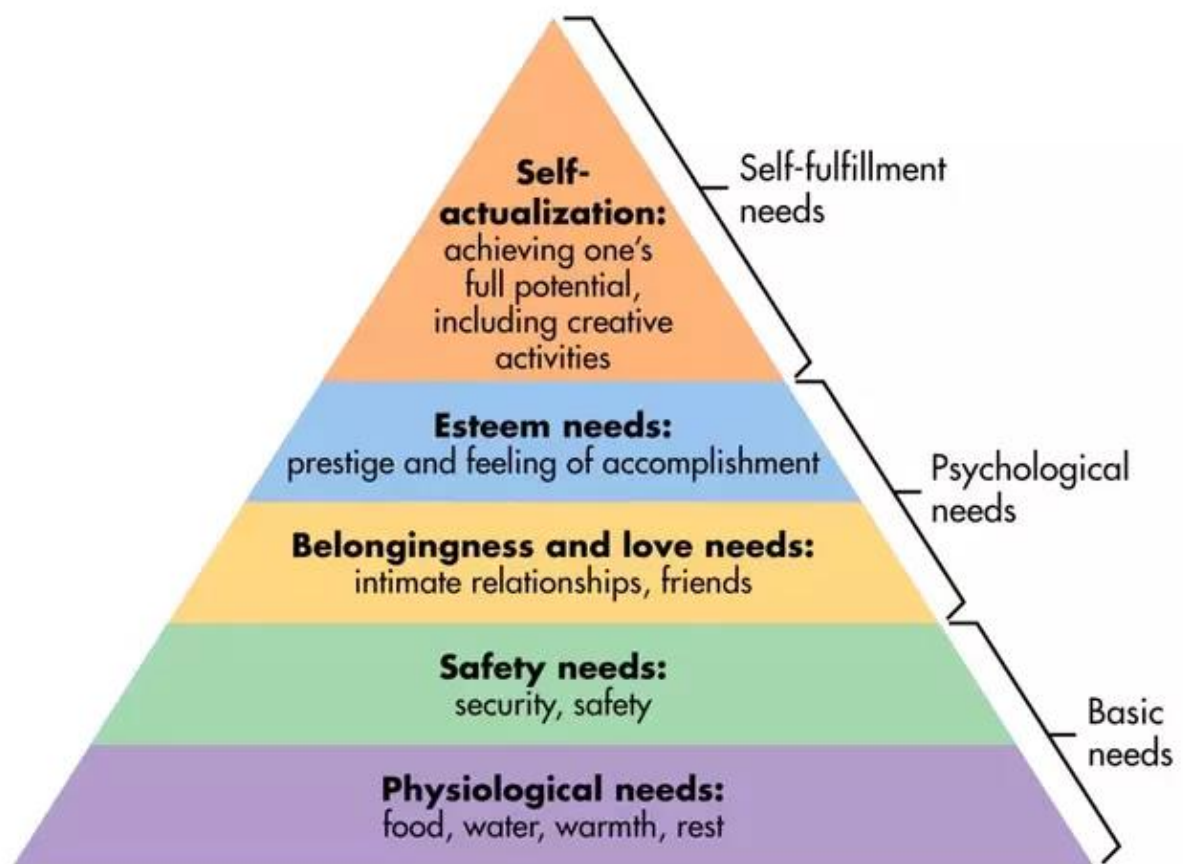


Figure 5: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Mcleod, 2018)

Brands use marketing to achieve their corporate goals through recognising, meeting and exceeding customer needs better than the competition (Jobber, 2016). Needs are one of most important stages of today's consumption processes. Consumers may not be aware of their own emotional and psychological needs which arise from social interactions.

Promotional campaigns act as needs stimuli to trigger and initiate the consumer behaviour model. To understand customer needs, brands need to understand different customer motivations. Motivation is “the process that causes people to behave as they do.”

Consumers may not deem a product necessary or value it if it does not attain them to a desired state post purchase. Consumers have different motivational factors which are represented in the Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. It starts with physiological needs which are the necessities for livelihood like food or water. Followed by safety and protection, love and belonging, the need for esteem which is prestige and status and finally self-actualization which represents self-fulfilment and achieving ones highest potential (Jerome, 2009).

Nikes campaign promotes ambition and achieving your dreams through Kaepernick saying, “Don’t ask if your dreams are crazy, ask if they’re crazy enough.” Together with the motivational “Just do it” slogan, the campaign inspires viewers to be the best they can be and achieve high goals. The campaign meets esteem needs with its focus on feelings of accomplishment. The campaign also targets self-actualisation needs with the focus on achieving one’s full potential in terms of goals and dreams. Although the Pepsi campaign was pulled the company said “Pepsi was trying to project a global a message of unity, peace and understanding” (Hooton, 2017). Although the way the message was portrayed was inappropriate, the campaign was aiming for unity amongst all groups of people fitting into belongingness

4.4 EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

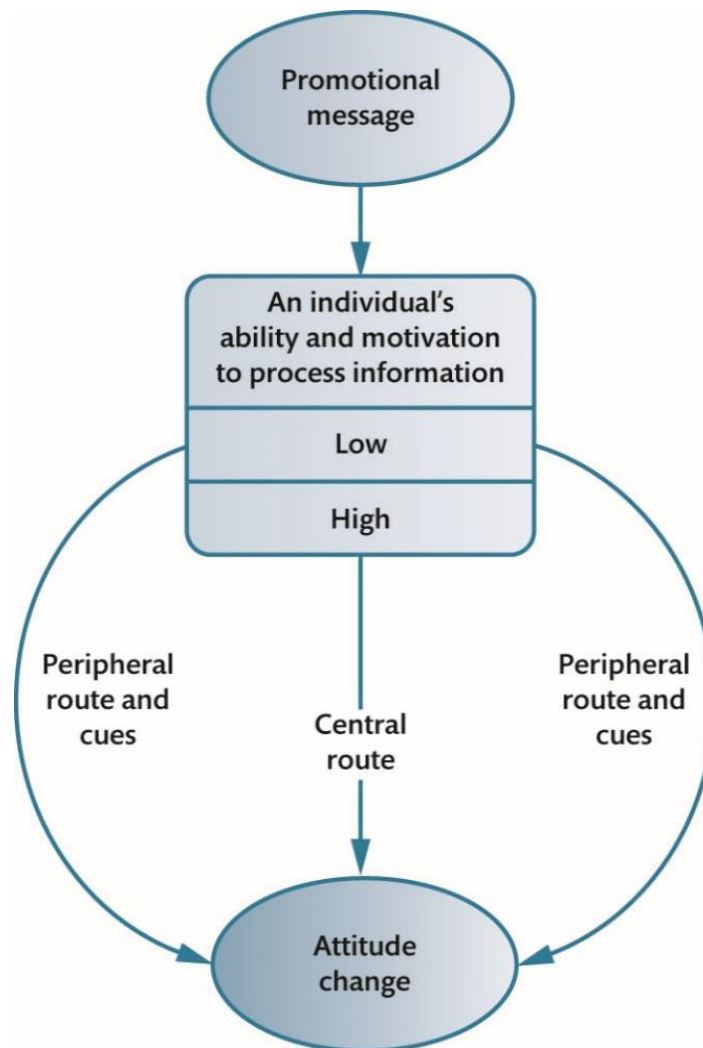


Figure 6: Elaboration Likelihood Model (Fill, 2016)

Brands have a reliance on consumers being able to easily remember their brand names and attributes associated with it. To achieve this, promotional campaigns need to be memorable. They need to be stored in the memory of consumers through the process of behavioural or cognitive learning. Consumer may already have formed an opinion on some brands. Evaluation of alternative solutions is when the consumer evaluates brand options to their own beliefs, attitude and purchasing intentions. This evaluation is influenced by internal (motivation, learning, emotion attitudes) and external (lifestyle, culture, and demographic) factors.

Elaboration likelihood model shows how attitudes are formed and how attitudes change when viewing promotional campaigns. There are two routes to persuasion: central and peripheral. Central is where the viewer elaborates and thinks logically about a concept. The peripheral route requires little elaboration and often pre-existing ideas, and attributes may influence the attitude towards the message.

Nikes promotional campaign influenced viewers through both the central and peripheral route. Viewers who have the motivation to cognitively elaborate on the message being conveyed follow the central route (Perloff, 2003). Such viewers learned to understand the reasoning behind why Kaepernick kneeled during the anthem which was to raise awareness of social injustice (Fig 7). These viewers may associate inspirational feelings from Kaepernick's actions and beliefs resulting in a cognitive response (Fill, 2016) changing their attitudes and perhaps associating the feelings of inspiration with the brand itself through classical conditioning (Webb, 1999). Viewers who followed peripheral route processing have little interest in processing or elaborating on the message Nike was conveying. Their attitude was formed on their pre-existing knowledge requiring little cognitive effort (Cacioppo, et al., 1983). As such they were angered by Nike using Kaepernick, a figure who kneeled during the national anthem as the face of its promotional campaign (Fig 8).



kuz ✓
@kylekuzma

Follow

Boycotting .@Nike because of a man that is trying to make the world a better place shows you where we are as a country still.
#Kaep #MoreThanAnAthlete #justdoit 🙌



9:19 PM - 3 Sep 2018

10,270 Retweets 34,405 Likes



490 10K 34K



SuzyUncensored
@zannadoo330

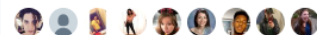
Follow

If you are currently cutting up your clothes in an effort to boycott Nike for throwing support behind a black athlete who wants fairness, equality, and justice for all... you might be a racist.

#NikeBoycott

5:37 AM - 4 Sep 2018

607 Retweets 1,643 Likes



75 607 1.6K



Erik Larsen
@ErikJLarsen

Follow

The counterpoint to #ColinKaepernick isn't "pro-police" --it's "pro-murder of unarmed black people". If you support the murder of unarmed black people--by all means--burn your own clothes which you already paid for and NIKE has already profited from.

7:43 AM - 4 Sep 2018

18 Retweets 102 Likes



4 18 102



KING MYERS ✓
@RealKingMyers

Follow

today I'm gonna go spend \$5,000 at the @Nike outlet because #ImWithKap @Kaepernick7 🙌

8:32 AM - 4 Sep 2018

16 Retweets 88 Likes



10 16 88

Figure 7: Nike Positive Twitter Response (22 Words, 2018)



Figure 8: Nike Negative Twitter Response (22 Words, 2018)

Pepsi tried to use celebrity endorsement and social movements to create the association that its product can bring unity amongst all groups of people. The brand attempted at using the peripheral route requiring low involvement and elaboration (Cacioppo, et al., 1983) where the consumers attitudes would be based on a basic, apparent analysis of the message not representative of its true merits (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007). Instead of considering the implications of using social movements at a time where riots were high and the use of celebrity known for cultural appropriation (Huffington Post, 2020), Pepsi expected viewers to follow the peripheral route forming an attitude change using a superficial analysis of the message (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007) and celebrity endorsement used. Viewers who followed the central process would cognitively elaborate on the message to form their attitude. Many of the viewers who elaborated on the message concluded that it was inappropriate and insensitive for Pepsi to use social movements at a time where police-protester tensions were high (Fig 9).

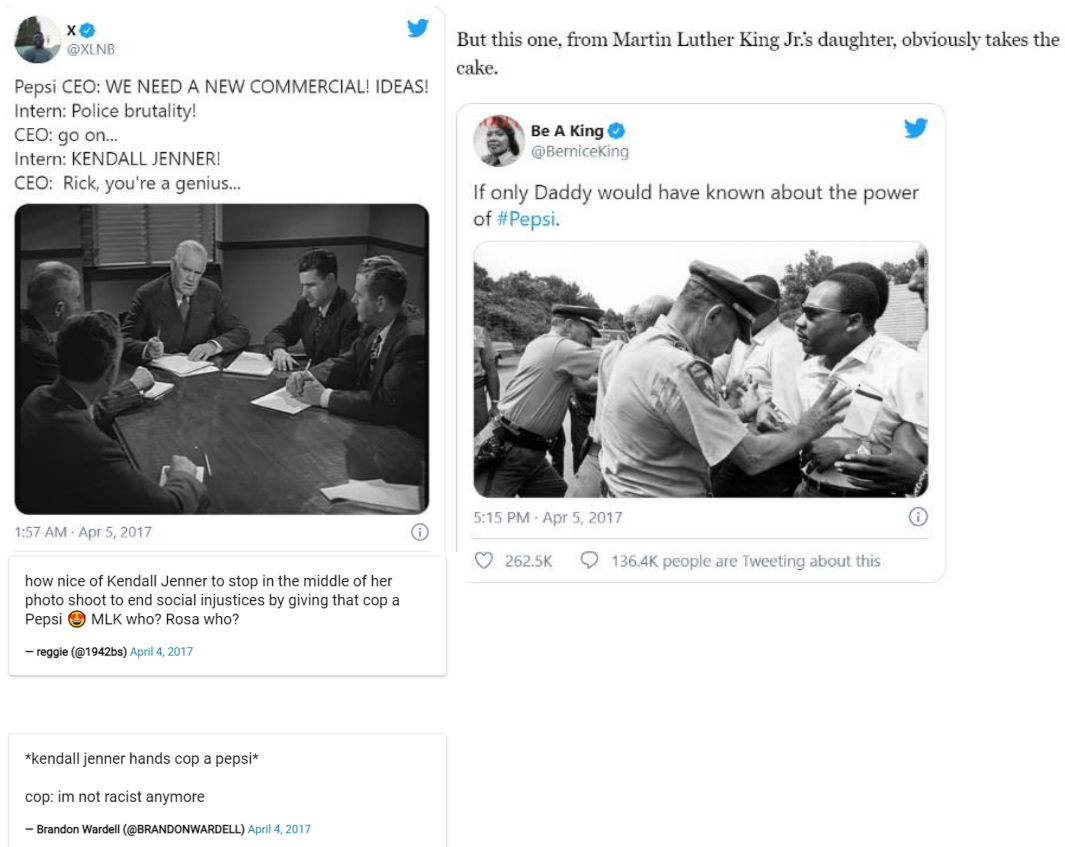


Figure 9: Pepsi Negative Twitter Response (Huffington Post, 2020)

4.5 POST PURCHASE

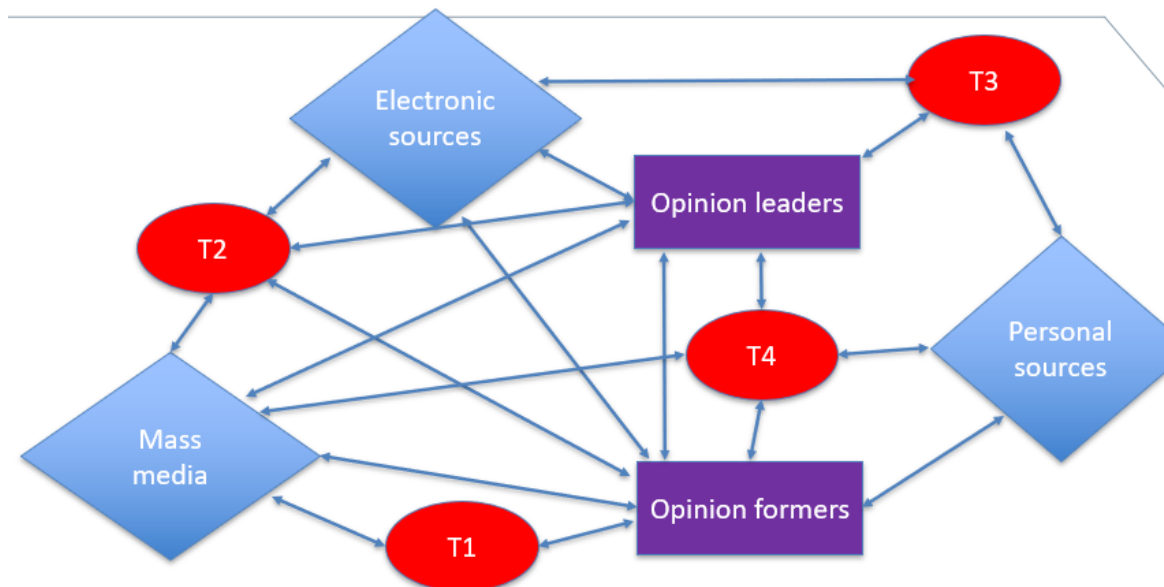


Figure 10: Interactional Communication Model (Fill, 2013)

Post purchase is the final stage of the consumer behaviour model revolving around a customer's feelings and actions after a purchase has been made. It is involved with creating a long-term relationship with customers through providing services and ensuring brand value and loyalty (Mohamed, 2011). The interactional model of communication (Fill, 2013) shows how external sources can influence different target audiences' interpretations of promotional campaigns. (Fill, 2013) displays communication as a two-way process impacted memory experiences, media, opinion formers and opinion leaders.

Nike used celebrity endorsement from Colin Kaepernick as an opinion leader to reinforce their marketing message. Mass media and electronic sources of communicating played an important role in communication because of the controversy surrounding the celebrity at the time the campaign aired. Social media had a large involvement in the communication of this campaign. (Sherif & Hovland, 1964) Social judgement theory explains that the effect of a message depends on how the receiver evaluates the message (O'Keefe, 1990) and different receivers evaluated the message in different ways. Some consumers were sharing video clips on social media destroying their Nike clothing refusing to purchase again (Fig 8), whereas other consumers who agreed with Nikes beliefs and values continue to support the brand, some even sharing their commitment to spend more on Nike products (Fig 7). Consumers who agree with Nikes beliefs post-purchase may find themselves satisfied that the brand shares their own values. This is important because the next time the consumers recognise a need, they can recall their positive perception of Nike at their first point of purchase (Prakash, 2016). This would leave Nike in a stronger position in the consumers mind the next time they go through stages of the consumer behaviour model increasing repeat purchase behaviour.

Pepsi's campaign attempted to use celebrity endorsement as an opinion leader. The nature of the commercial resulted in backlash due to ongoing political protests at the time such as Black Lives Matter. Post-purchase, an increasing number of customers felt dissatisfaction and dissonance. Many celebrities and others on social media users used their platforms (Fig. 9) to share their negative interpretation of the campaign spreading dissatisfaction and dissonance amongst their target audiences. As such these potential repeat customers would no longer highly value Pepsi amongst the brands they consider when they recognise a need (Prakash, 2016).

5 CONCLUSION

Nikes campaign demonstrates its ability to understand and communicate with its target audience. Nikes campaign uses social controversy through Colin Kaepernick to strategically reach its target audience of 19–29-year-olds (Rovell, 2018). Nikes campaign used the central processing route (Fill, 2016) requiring elaboration and research from viewers on why Kaepernick is a controversial figure. This resulted in an emotional cognitive response from viewers who would associate their values for social justice with the brand Nike. Having a positive experience/image of the brand Nike increases the chance of customers considering the brand when they next initiate the consumer behaviour model recognising a need.(Prakash, 2016).

Pepsi also used celebrity endorsement to communicate with its audience that it represents unity amongst all groups of people. The brand attempted to portray the message using the peripheral processing route (Fill, 2016) .This requires low elaboration and involvement (Cacioppo, et al., 1983) however many users who processed the message using the central route derived a different attitude. The effect of a promotional message depends on how the receiver evaluates it (O'Keefe, 1990) and many viewers at the time concluded it was trivialising the important protests and political movements at the time. (Victor, 2017). As a result, Pepsi found itself distancing itself from the younger audience it was trying to appeal to (JACKSON, 2017).

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Pepsi- Consumer Research & Social Media strategy

Pepsi's promotional campaign aims to target millennials however the Kendall Jenner commercial resulted in a decline in millennial purchase consideration and brand perception. (Astute, 2020). The brand failed in its communication methods needs to improve its brand perception to reduce further cognitive dissonance. Social media is effective for "giving out, receiving and exchanging information" (Smith & Zook, 2011). Pepsi can increase its social media engagement to improve brand perception and to get a better understanding of its target market. In doing so. Pepsi is less likely to encounter a costly mistake like this commercial again.

Nike- Brand Collaborations

Nikes campaign shows it understands and can communicate effectively with its target audience. Fashion is an everchanging industry and competing brands like Adidas have previously had collaborations with the likes of high-end designers like Yeezy (Adidas, 2016).

Nike needs to continue to keep up with ongoing trends and therefore collaborations would be a suitable form of marketing which can continue to raise brand awareness and increase market share. (Kotler & Keller, 2009) says attitude and unanticipated factors affect purchasing decisions. Nike can collaborate with brands their target audience have a positive opinion on to maintain their relevance within the industry.

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