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Branding variation: an industry and consumer examination

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I declare that:

- This thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university;
- To the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, is clearly acknowledged.

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Kellie Newstead

Abstract

Branding elements like colours, logos, typeface and slogans encourage brand recognition and noticing. Yet increasingly variations to existing branding elements can be seen in advertising with little or no knowledge of what the effects are on consumer recognition. It is unknown why these variations occur but it appears that they have; something that has not been previously studied. As such, this thesis investigates branding element variation; its prevalence and typicality. This thesis documents managers behaviours and beliefs regarding such variation and tests managerially acceptable branding element variations on consumers' ability to recognise the brand in advertising.

The role of advertising is to affect buying. To do this, consumers must be able to attribute the advertising to the brand, only then can the advertising refresh/nudge the brand's mental availability so that the propensity for purchase can be increased (Ehrenberg, Barnard et al. 1997, Romaniuk and Sharp 2004, Romaniuk and Sharp 2004). However, getting a brand recognised is difficult amid clutter (Ha 1996, Jonas 1996, Ha and Litman 1997), ad avoidance behaviour (Speck and Elliott 1997, van Meurs 1998, Bellman, Schweda et al. 2010) and given that advertising is typically consumed in a low-involvement state (i.e. passive attention) (Heath 1999). Rather than attempting to change viewing behaviour, marketers can use branding elements in advertising to help facilitate correct and fast brand recognition in advertising.

Consumer memory literature suggests that for branding elements to link to a brand, they need to be continually and consistently repeated to consumers; on shelf and in advertising (Bower 1998, Franzen and Bouwman 2001, Braun-LaTour and LatTour 2004, Buchler, Faunce et al. 2010, Lehnert, Till et al. 2013). The focus of this thesis is on advertising, rather than on shelf branding. However, branding element variations occur, for example Cadbury varied the trademark colour purple to quintessential Australian green and gold during the London Olympics (2012). Some research has suggested that when consumers are exposed to unfamiliar stimuli (i.e. varied branding elements), attention can be increased (Stang 1975, Desimone and Duncan 1995); this offers a potential rationale for branding element variation. Examples from industry suggest that co-branding, sponsorship, media modality requirements, new product variants and new personnel (either agency or brand manager) are also reasons for branding element variation. While there are many industry examples of branding variation, there is little in the way of disciplined research to understand what occurs in practice, what is typical or acceptable branding element variation, and why in an advertising context. Nor is there empirical research on effects on consumer recognition (positive, detrimental or none at all). This thesis aims to fill that gap to provide an examination of industry behaviour and beliefs and to test the consumer effect of branding element variation. The aim being to provide actionable knowledge to marketers if and when considering branding element variation, whilst also updating academic branding literature.

This research comprised three phases: a descriptive content-analysis of branding on Facebook, qualitative interviews, and a quantitative experiment. The descriptive content-analysis compared 80 brands' original branding to the Facebook branding execution to understand the prevalence of variation and classify any variations to colour, logo and typeface elements. Then 22 in-depth interviews were conducted with marketers to determine what, if anything is typical and what is considered acceptable branding element variation, and why. Marketer respondents were asked open-ended questions about branding element variation, then were presented with a structured choice scenario showing branding element variations to colours and logos of six brands (as classified from the descriptive content-analysis). The results provided external validity to Phase 3: consumer effect.

An online experiment involving 1598 consumer subjects tested the acceptable branding element variations (as determined from the qualitative interviews) and correct recognition. Subjects were randomly shown one branding execution (either original, colour variation or logo variation) for three brands, in one of two advertising contexts (billboard or Facebook), once. They were required to find the brand as quickly as possible which provided two recognition dependent variables: correct recognition and reaction time. Brand usage and demographic data was also collected to investigate potential effects.

The key findings of this thesis are:

Key finding 1: Branding element variation occurs in practice, mostly to colours
The descriptive content-analysis showed branding element variations occurring for over 50% of brands examined (i.e. within one brand, not across brand variants/products) and most commonly made to colour elements (>50% of brands) on Facebook. Logo variations were found for 12% of brands studied and typeface variations to 8%; these variations were typically applied to the depth (i.e. 2D to 3D, drop shadow or flare) of a brand. This branding element variation occurred mostly to colours and classified logo variations, which added context and guidance to Phase 2 (qualitative interviews) and 3 (consumer effect) of this thesis.

Key finding 2: Branding element variation occurs, but marketers consider it to be unusual
Marketers considered branding element variation atypical branding behaviour and were predominantly in favour of no variation to branding elements; even when presented with the structured choice scenario. This contrasted with key finding 1 where branding element variation was prevalent on Facebook.

Key finding 3: Branding element change is considered necessary, eventually
Respondents considered rebranding necessary every eight to ten years to "modernise" and to "refresh"the brand. Respondents described these updates as minor or evolutionary rebranding which should not erode valuable and well established branding elements in consumers' minds.

Key finding 4: Colour variation is considered acceptable for strategic reasons, but logo variation is not
Colour variation was considered the most acceptable branding element variation (i.e. more so than logo variation) by marketing practitioners. Pink and green colour variations were considered most acceptable for strategic reasons: co-branding or with new 'green' product variants. For the majority, logo variation was considered unacceptable because it was not seen as "achieving" anything for a brand.

Key finding 5: Brand users are more likely to correctly recognise a brand and were faster, than non users
Users tended to have higher correct recognition and did so quicker than non users. This finding adds to brand usage literature; corroborating that users have higher correct recognition than non users and demonstrating new evidence that they are faster to correctly recognise a brand (Sharp, Beal et al. 2001, Sharp, Beal et al. 2002, Hammer and Riebe 2006). For marketers, this finding suggests that all advertising should aim to be easily recognisable (i.e. well branded), particularly for non users who take longer to recognise a brand overall.

Key finding 6: Colour variation negatively affects consumer recognition
Colour variation negatively affected correct recognition and reaction time for both users and non users. Colour variation resulted in at least half a second longer reaction time for both users and non users compared to original branding. Whilst considered most acceptable by marketers, colour variation was detrimental to consumer recognition and should not be employed as a branding strategy in advertising. This is the key finding of this thesis, and fits with existing knowledge that colours are one of the most important conduits to a brand (Gaillard, Romaniuk et al. 2005, Gaillard 2007, Lindstrom 2008). Future research should test different branding element variations to extend the generalisability of the findings. For industry, this research suggests that colour variation should not be used as a strategy if correct brand recognition is desired (as it should be) in advertising.

Key finding 7: Logo variation speeds up non user brand recognition but has little effect on users
Logo variation showed a trend of increasing correct recognition for users by 2% and shortening reaction time for non users by .4 of a second. This suggested that logo variation could increase correct recognition in advertising. This result

could be attributed to the variation itself because of its unfamiliarity to respondents (Stang 1975, Desimone and Duncan 1995). However, it is also plausible that the result was obtained because the logo variations tested were the only ones evident in the advertising contexts (unlike colour variation where all brands had colours). This research was conducted in an experimental setting where respondents were *required* to find the brand. It is likely that the results in the experiment are kinder to brands than would be expected compared to typical advertising consumption: ad avoidance, low involvement processing and clutter. Despite logo variation yielding positive results for consumer recognition, it was considered unlikely in practice and is not recommended as a branding strategy.

Key finding 8: Variation in colour or logo has its greatest effect on the most valuable consumers: non and light Variation (both colour and logo) had its greatest effect (detrimental and positive, respectively) on d non buyers. Non buyers were, for the vast majority (>84%) category buyers who had likely purchased the brand before. For marketers, if a colour variation strategy were employed, the greatest damage would be done to those who are most able to grow the brand (light and non buyers who could increase brand buying i.e. more so than existing loyal, heavy buyers); the findings suggest that branding elements should not be varied.

For academia, this research extends branding literature by identifying branding element variation. This research also quantifies the consumer effect of colour and logo branding elements whilst adding to brand usage literature. By being steeped in industry practice, this research aims to bridge the gap between academia and industry long called for (Holbrook 1985, Cornelissen and Lock 2002, November 2004, Gabriel, Kottasz et al. 2006, Nyilasy and Reid 2007, de Gregorio and Cheng 2009). This thesis provides actionable knowledge for marketers if and when considering branding element variation in advertising. For industry the key finding is that colour variation is the most detrimental to recognition in advertising. Whilst logo variation has a slightly positive effect on recognition, it is not a recommended strategy given that it is far less prevalent in practice and deemed unlikely and 'detrimental' by marketers.

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Chapter 1 - Thesis overview

Chapter overview

This chapter provides an overview of the sections of this thesis. The topic is introduced, background knowledge and evidence of branding element variation are provided along with the research objectives. The methods used in this research are then outlined. The key findings from the three phases of this research are summarised with implications for industry and academia. The chapter finishes by outlining the structure of this thesis.

Research background, importance and objectives

Branding elements such as colours, logos, slogans, typeface, taste, scent, shapes, characters, celebrities, jingles and sounds (Keller 2001, Gaillard 2007, Keller, Aperia et al. 2008) are employed by marketers to help consumers identify a brand on shelf and in advertising (Gaillard 2007, Zaichkowsky 2010). Branding elements offer additional creative tools alongside the brand name to communicate the brand, particularly within advertising. Visual branding elements colours and logos are particularly important for consumers, to help facilitate correct recognition (Berry 1989, Gaillard 2007, Lindstrom 2008) and have a superior effect on consumer memory than verbal elements (i.e. slogans) (Shepard 1967, Childers and Houston 1984, Childers, Heckler et al. 1986). Over time, branding elements can become highly associated with a brand i.e. the colour green and Sprite in the soft drink category. However, marketers can, and do, at times, temporarily vary well established branding elements in advertising.

The role of advertising is to increase the salience of a brand. For advertising to be effective, consumers need to be able to recognise which brand is advertising. If a consumer can not recognise the brand advertising, then the advertising dollar has been wasted; by either being unattributable to the brand or worse, mistaken for a competitor. Brand recognition within advertising however, is important for all brands. Building brand salience through advertising is a goal of many advertisers so that so that in a purchase situation, particularly for frequently purchased goods and services, a consumers propensity to buy the brand, is increased (Ehrenberg, Barnard et al. 1997, Ehrenberg, Barnard et al. 2002, Romaniuk and Sharp 2004). However getting advertising noticed is tough; ads are typically aired in cluttered environments (i.e. among competing advertisements) (Ha and McCann 2008, Hammer, Riebe et al. 2009), amid advertising avoidance behaviour (i.e. switching channels, muting, talking to others, etc.) (Speck and Elliott 1997, van Meurs 1998), with low-involvement processing (i.e. paying little attention to the ads) (Heath 2000) or a combination or all three.

Consumer memory research suggests that repetition and consistency are necessary to reinforce branding cues, such as branding elements that consumers use when identifying a brand, either on shelf or, as is the focus of this thesis: in advertising (Romaniuk and Sharp 1996, Franzen and Bouwman 2001, Ehrenberg, Barnard et al. 2002, Lehnert, Till et al. 2013). The aim for marketers should be to create easily recognisable advertising (i.e. well branded) so that consumers can correctly and quickly recognise a brand. When branding is varied it is plausible (and logical) that the links between brand name and branding elements would be eroded, thus making advertising more difficult for consumers to correctly and quickly attribute it to the brand. This is not known. However, there is also the possibility that the unfamiliarity of varied branding elements could *attract* attention and hence improve recognition (Stang 1975, Desimone and Duncan 1995).

There are many examples from industry where branding element variation has been applied in advertising to visual branding elements, typically to colours for a variety of reasons. For example, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) Australia varied the original red and white colours to green and gold for the 2013/14 Australian Cricket season. The variation

was designed to support the Australian team by using quintessential national colours (Campaign Brief 2013, Cordero 2013). In 2012 KFC varied the well established red colour to pink while co-branding with the National Breast Cancer foundation (McGrath Foundation 2013). Importantly, these variations were not long term 'rebrands'; they were, and are by definition, temporary (i.e. the brand reverts to original branding post promotion). Industry evidence suggests other potential reasons for branding element variation: event sponsorship, new product variants, to conform to new media, change of personnel (i.e. agencies or brand managers) or to gain attention with different (i.e. unfamiliar) stimuli. There is also the possibility that variations may be made by marketers to branding elements out of boredom.

Despite a deep search within academic literature, no research to date has either documented branding element variation or sought to understand why it happens from a practitioner point of view. Given that these variations have occurred, for whatever reason, and that this topic has not been researched in previous studies, this thesis aims to verify the prevalence of branding element variation. The aim is also to understand what if anything is acceptable branding element variation and to determine what if anything, is the effect on consumers when branding element variation is present in advertising.

Research to date has been conducted into the repetition-variation hypotheses of advertising copy, i.e. elements of an ad, rather than branding elements (Schumann, Petty et al. 1990, Haugtvedt, Schumann et al. 1994, Yoo, Bang et al. 2009). Others have considered the effects of pack colour change on consumers: typically in relation to brand preference and choice (Garber, Burke et al. 2000, Garber, Hyatt et al. 2000, Rex, Wai et al. 2004). However, this research was not based on branding elements within advertising; which is the focus of this thesis. Industry examples provide evidence of branding element variation in practice, but do little more. Of course without research on whether or why branding element variation happens, there can be no research on what is typical or acceptable nor any effects on consumer recognition. This research aims to fill that gap and provide actionable and relevant knowledge to industry and academia. Even if branding element variation is rarely found, this study is the first of its kind to identify and examine the topic. It is therefore expected that this thesis will give some insight into the practice and its effects. Specifically, this research aims to investigate branding element variation from an industry perspective and to test the consumer effect. The outcome being to understand whether acceptable variations to branding elements have any effect on consumer recognition: at all, detrimental or beneficial. This research will provide clarity to marketing practitioners who may consider varying branding elements. This thesis also aims to add to academic knowledge about branding and contextualise branding element variation for academic investigation now and in future.

To address the research objectives, this research employed three phases (and three research questions). First it was necessary to document actual industry practice, this was achieved with a descriptive content analysis of 80 brands on Facebook (Phase 1). Phase 2 aimed to qualitatively understand typicality and acceptability of branding element variation from a marketer's perspective. The third phase was to understand what, if anything is the effect of acceptable branding element variation on consumer recognition. The outcomes seek to provide industry with actionable knowledge when faced with potential branding element variation. The goal here being improved communication between advertisers and agencies (i.e. those who make ads with branding element variations) so that time is not spent creating ads that are unlikely to be approved. For academia, this research extends branding literature and the work of Gaillard (Gaillard, Romaniuk et al. 2005, 2007) about the relative importance of branding elements in advertising to consumers. Also, this research adds to academia by providing an understanding of why branding element variation occurs. Without understanding industry, academia is in a precarious position to provide valuable knowledge to those it seeks to help.

Method and data collection

Phase 1 was an Australian descriptive content analysis of 80 global and local (Australian) brands on Facebook which compared original branding to the brand's Facebook branding execution. This phase documented the prevalence of branding element variation and classified the variations found for colour, logo and typeface branding elements using best available software at the time of research. This phase also aimed to add to academic knowledge on branding element variation and add external validity to the variations presented in Phase 2 and 3 of this thesis.
Phase 2 sourced 22 interviewees using a snowballing approach. Individual in-depth interviews with advertisers and advertising agency (account managers and creative) personnel were conducted from May to July 2013. The interviews used a discussion guide with open-ended questions and a structured choice scenario. The discussion guide included questions about advertising change, typical and acceptable branding element variations and rebranding. Questions intentionally began broadly to gain in-depth knowledge into the previously unexplored issue: branding element variation. A structured choice scenario presented an original branding image (sourced from the brands own website), six colour variations and three logo variations for six brands (BMW, Cadbury, Dove, Mitsubishi, Nike, Target) from five categories (automotive, chocolate, personal care, apparel, retailer). The variations were created by a graphic designer using Adobe Photoshop. The colour variations were based on the HSV (hue, saturation, value) colour system classification: hue was changed at equitable intervals from the original across all brands except Nike where the brightness was changed. To actually see colour change for Nike it was necessary to change the brightness. Logo variations were drawn from Phase 1's descriptive content analysis where shadows, flares and 2D/3D variations were created for each brand.

Respondents were first presented with an image array which included the original branding and colour variations. Respondents firstly had to identify the original execution, then they were asked if any of the variations would be acceptable to air in advertising and why (i.e. under what circumstances). The latter question was then repeated for logo variations, then for the other five test brands. The responses from the structured choice scenario gave insight into the most acceptable branding element variations and reasons why. These results informed the consumer testing in Phase 3.

An online between-groups experiment was conducted in November 2013 with 1598 consumer participants. An experiment afforded maximum control over potentially confounding factors and gave the greatest potential to infer causality (Patzer 1996). Respondents were randomly presented with one of three branding executions (original, colour or logo variation) in one of two advertising contexts (Facebook or billboard), for three brands (Target, Dove and Mitsubishi). Respondents were required to find and select each brand as quickly as possible; reaction time was recorded. This provided two dependent variables: correct recognition (i.e. whether they chose the correct brand) and reaction time (how long it took them to recognise the correct brand). The distinction (and irrelevance) of 'good', 'bad' or 'average' time taken to identify a brand is discussed in detail in Chapter 7. After completing the task, respondents were asked to indicate their brand and category usage so that potential influences of brand usage could be accounted for.

Demographic questions were also asked to investigate any potential influence of age on the reaction time variable, as some evidence suggests that older respondents take longer to complete tasks than younger respondents (Hultsch, MacDonald et al. 2002). To enhance generalisability of the findings, broad geographic and demographic criteria were set (Ehrenberg 1995, Patzer 1996). The three phase approach was the best method to ensure external validity, add to existing academic knowledge while generating new knowledge and providing implementable knowledge to industry.

Summary of key findings and implications

This section briefly details the key findings and highlights the implications of this thesis for academia and industry.

Key finding 1: Branding element variation occurs in practice, mostly to colours

Phase 1 results indicated that branding element variation was present on Facebook with colour, logo and typeface variations found to brands (i.e. within one brand, not across brand variants/products). This finding suggests that branding element variation does occur on Facebook at least. Given that the sample of brands in the content analysis were from a broad array of categories and of varying sizes, the likelihood that branding variation found was assumptive or 'accidental' is highly unlikely. It is more likely that there is inconsistent in branding, most likely by purposeful marketer intervention. It must be noted however that the motivations of the practitioners for each brand could not be collected during this phase of the research. Colour variation was the most prevalent branding element varied (50% of brands) whereas logo and typeface variation were much less prevalent (12% and 6% respectively). Typically, logo and typeface variations were made to the elaborateness-depth; 2D to 3D (or vice versa), a drop shadow or a flare added. By coding the variations to logos and typeface, Phase 1 provided external validity to Phase 2 and 3 of this research by providing actual, rather than speculative branding element variations.

Key finding 2: Branding element variation occurs, but marketers think it unusual

The qualitative interviews uncovered that branding element variation was not considered typical or desirable practice. Most respondents were strongly adverse to the concept of branding element variation because they felt that branding elements helped to define a brand and that consistency was necessary for consumer identification. This finding contrasted with key finding 1 where branding element variation was prevalent, particularly to colours. However, this findings documented industry attitudes rather than actual practice.

Key finding 3: Branding element change is necessary, eventually

Whilst rebranding was not the focus of this research, marketers considered rebranding necessary over time. They felt that branding elements needed to be "tweaked", "refreshed" and "modernised" to "move with the times". Despite the use of these terms, marketers were unwilling and unable to describe what changes were acceptable to them; this suggested that changes to branding elements was subjective and typically at marketer discretion.

Key finding 4: Colour variation can be acceptable for strategic reasons, but logo variation is not

Marketers indicated that colour variation was acceptable (albeit infrequently) for strategic reasons: co-branding or new product variants (particularly 'green' products). The most acceptable colour variations were pink and green. Logo variation was considered unacceptable and unlikely to occur in practice because it did not "achieve anything for a brand"; i.e. there was no strategic rationale. Practitioners considered the most acceptable logo variations were additions of shadows and flares which "changed the brand the least". By identifying which branding element variations were most acceptable to marketers, this finding provided external validity for Phase 3 (consumer effect) in testing realistic branding element variations. Combined with key finding 1, this also highlighted that colour variation was far more likely in practice than logo variation. Key finding 4 presented a paradox with Phase 1 findings and existing industry evidence where branding element variations were found. This paradox is discussed in Chapter 9 of this thesis.

Key finding 5: Brand users were more likely and faster to correctly recognise a brand than non users

The experiment (Phase 3) showed that brand users were more likely to correctly recognise a brand and were faster than non users. This finding supports existing brand usage knowledge; confirming that users had higher correct recognition than non users. This finding is confirmatory to existing research which suggests that human working

memory is linked to attention (Cowan 1995, Cowan 2000). For example, non users would be less likely to quickly recognise a brand they do not use; particularly given the (often) multitude of brands available most categories. This result extends usage literature and suggests that all ads need to be well branded and immediately recognisable as the brand; because valuable non users (who are integral for growth particularly for habitually and frequently purchased categories)(Stern and Ehrenberg 1995, Sharp 2010) took longer to recognise the brand. This finding had implications for the ensuing analysis for branding element variation, whereby users and non users had to be analysed separately.

Key finding 6: Colour variation negatively affects consumer recognition

Colour variation, whilst considered most acceptable by practitioners, was detrimental for consumer recognition. Compared with original branding execution, colour variation resulted in lower correct recognition and slower reaction time of approximately half a second. Lower correct recognition and longer reaction time was expected given how human memory works (consistency and repetition) and suggests that colour branding elements should not be varied, even for strategic reasons because compared to original branding, advertising effectiveness suffers. This supports existing research which suggests colours are major conduits for brand recognition in advertising (Gaillard 2007).

Key finding 7: Logo variation speeds up brand recognition for non users but has little affect on users

Unexpectedly, logo variation showed evidence of improving advertising effectiveness: with 2% higher recognition overall and faster reaction time for non users (by 0.2 of a second). The results suggested that logo variation improved reaction time for non users by attracting attention and quickening reaction time. It could also be that the unfamiliarity of the variations improved consumer recognition or attention by being different from the original. However, it is also plausible that this result was obtained because no other brand in the experimental advertising contexts showed a shadow or flare (the variations tested). For marketers, this finding is not enough to support a logo variation strategy given that logo variation was considered very unacceptable by marketers and unlikely to occur.

Key finding 8: Variation had its greatest effect on the most valuable consumers: non and light

Variation had its greatest effects on non brand users, which has implications for marketers implementing colour variation (the most likely in industry). This finding suggests that variation is damaging for brands: making recognition harder for category buyers (>84% of non buyers) who have the potential to grow the brand. Given that advertising is typically processed in a low-involvement state, ad avoidance and competing stimuli, these results are likely kinder to brands that would be expected in practice, and for smaller brands with less well known colour-brand name links.
This research adds to existing branding literature by finding that original branding colours were integral for correct and faster recognition in advertising. There have long been calls for academia to provide industry relevant research (November 2004, Ottesen and Grønhaug 2004). This thesis answered those calls by identifying, documenting and understanding branding element variation. This thesis also examines the acceptability and consumer effects of branding element variation. Consequently, this research provides a foundation for future inquiry into branding element variation and provides much needed knowledge for practitioners.

Thesis structure

Chapter 1: Thesis Overview

This chapter presented a broad overview of the contents of this thesis. The topic was introduced, the research problem outlined, the method and data collection were described. The key findings were presented and the industry and academic implications were highlighted.

Chapter 2: Background and evidence

This chapter firstly lays the ground work by discussing how advertising works, the role of human memory, how brands grow and relevant buyer behaviour. Branding elements and branding element variation are then defined with the importance of colours and logos highlighted. Evidence of colour and logo variation is presented and potential reasons for branding element variation are discussed; including academic, industry and common sense explanations. The research gap this thesis fills is outlined and the expected academic and industry contributions are summarised.

Chapter 3: Research questions

This chapter first presents the research gap as identified in Chapter 2, then the three research questions are presented. Research question 1 seeks to understand actual branding element variation in practice (i.e. behaviour) including prevalence and classifying variations; this makes up Phase 1 of the research. Phase 2 aims to discover typical and acceptable branding element variation and why it occurs. Research Phase 3 aims to quantify consumer recognition effects of acceptable branding element variation. This chapter reinforces the likely contributions of the research.

Chapter 4: Research Phase 1: Actual practice: method and results

Chapter 3 outlines the descriptive content-analysis (i.e. research Phase 1) of colour, logo and typeface branding element variation on Facebook. The method and results are outlined with academic literature which helps to classify branding element variations, thus providing part of the basis for the variations applied in this thesis.

Chapter 5: Research Phase 2: Typical and acceptable practice: method

This chapter describes the qualitative approaches used to answer research question 2. The discussion guide is detailed. The justification and stimuli for the structured choice scenario to uncover acceptable branding element variation is provided. The data collection, sample frame and recruitment method is outlined. Throughout the chapter data quality, reliability and validity are addressed.

Chapter 6: Research Phase 2: Typical and acceptable practice: results

Chapter 6 reports the typicality and acceptability of branding element variation, and reasons why from an industry perspective. To enhance the readability of Phase 2 results, a discussion is presented concurrently on how the findings fit with existing knowledge and implications for industry. This includes discussion on how these results influence Phase 3's consumer testing.

Chapter 7: Research Phase 3: Consumer effect: method

Chapter 7 justifies the experimental method and describes the online experiment design for Research Phase 3. The dependent variables and creation of the tested branding executions are detailed. The data collection process is presented. The chapter includes a discussion of the controls to ensure generalisability throughout.

Chapter 8: Research Phase 3 Consumer effect: results

The dataset is firstly described then the results address differences between brand users and non users and age groups for the reaction time data. Then the colour variation results are discussed for correct recognition and reaction time

using the original branding execution as a benchmark for comparison. The same structure is repeated to address logo variation. This chapter continually reflects on the research question and discusses key findings.

Chapter 9: Discussion and implications

Chapter 9 concludes this thesis. The key findings are outlined with a discussion of the implications for both industry and branding and advertising researchers. The limitations and future research possibilities are discussed.

Chapter 2 - Background and Evidence

Chapter overview

This chapter starts with a brief background to the topic, then discusses how advertising works and why branding is important; specifically how consumers process advertising and the necessity of correct and fast recognition. These concepts are then related to empirically based consumer behaviour generalisations and what this means for brand growth. The definition of branding elements and their importance is discussed. The term variation is then used to described temporary variations to branding elements. The term branding element variation is drawn from advertising literature, specifically the repetition-variation stream of advertising research and its application in this research is discussed. Whilst there is abundant academic research on rebranding, advertising and packaging variation strategies, there is no literature concerning variations to branding itself in advertising. As such, this chapter also presents evidence from industry that branding element variation can and does happen. The chapter concludes by presenting potential reasons why this practice occurs as evidenced in industry.

Background

Branding elements are important for marketers as they help a consumer identify in advertising, which brand it is that is vying for their attention. If a consumer cannot (quickly and correctly) attribute an ad to the advertising brand, then the advertisers dollar has been, quite simply, wasted. The primary role of advertising is to build salience in the mind of the consumer so that the consumer can recall and quickly recognise the brand in a purchase situation, so the propensity for purchase is increased. The role of advertising is to nudge the brand salience. There is much evidence to suggest that repetition is a precursor for long term memory encoding for consumers (Franzen and Bouwman 2001) which helps with brand identification. So, when brands make temporary changes to branding elements (such as colour, logos, typeface, slogans etc.) there is the possibility that it interferes with the building of salience and hinders the consumers ability to recognise the brand. Knowing the need for repetition, why, then do some marketers make temporary changes to branding elements?

Industry and academia suggest many potential rationales for branding element variation; co-branding, events, sponsorship, paring down to suit new media, new product variants, new managers/personnel, or for no reason at all. While industry practice would suggest that branding element variation is not quintessential branding activity, it does occur. However, what is lacking is qualification of what branding element variation looks like, how prevalent it is and what is typical. It is also unknown what is acceptable branding element variation is in practice (i.e. to marketers) and why it occurs. Moreover, academia does not (yet) know, empirically, if there is any effect on consumer recognition when branding element are varied. This thesis aims to offer marketers solid guidelines by which strategic advertising decisions can be made in regard to branding element variation. This thesis also fills a notable gap in academic knowledge and in particular updates existing branding literature concerning the importance of branding elements and memory/learning literature in relation to advertising.

How advertising works and why branding is important

The role of advertising is to increase the propensity of purchase for consumers; i.e. to increase sales. However, advertising is a weak force; it reminds consumers that a brand is in the category, so that that brand is more likely to be thought of and purchased in a buying situation (Ehrenberg, Barnard et al. 1996, Ehrenberg, Barnard et al. 1998). The good news for advertisers is that advertising *is* sales effective (Jones 1995, Newstead, Taylor et al. 2009); so long as a the advertising can attribute it to the brand. Consequently, advertising should aim to be distinctively *that* brand. For

example, a MasterCard ad need not offer a reason for using the brand (i.e. over Visa) but should look unmistakably like a MasterCard ad. The associative network theory (i.e. how consumer memory works) supports this view of advertising and consumer memory.

The Associative Network Theory (ANT) (Anderson and Bower 1973) posits that human memory works by coding and later retrieving information. To do this, the human brain creates and links pieces of information (or nodes) to one another to, collectively form knowledge and memory. Information can be accessed by associative stimulus (cues, such as branding elements) or by the subject directly. For example, Coca-Cola might be thought of directly (i.e brand name) or by associated cues such as red packaging, typography, summer, bubbles, the shape of the bottle etc.. Branding cues, such as branding elements, play a significant role in brand recall and recognition (Tulving and Pearlstone 1966, Holden 1993, Franzen and Bouwman 2001, Gaillard, Sharp et al. 2006, Gaillard 2007); they can be and often are, used by brands in advertising to signal the brand. Even branding cues that have little to do with the functionality of a product, i.e. colours, logos, characters, jingles etc. can be used to enhance recognition and recall for consumers (Nedungadi and Hutchinson 1985, Alba, Hutchinson et al. 1991). It takes time and consistency for a marketer to build strong cues to the brand, one way to build these branding cues is through advertising and repetition.

Numerous authors advocate repetition of advertising as key for building knowledge in consumers' heads, see for example: Braun La-Tour and La-Tour (2004), Cacioppo and Petty (1989), Pechman and Stewart (1988), Armstrong (2010). Inconsistency is said to interfere with recall and learning, i.e. the association between the brand and branding elements (Festinger 1957, Franzen and Bouwman 2001, Buchler, Faunce et al. 2010). In a buying situation, memory is important for brand choice; a brand must be thought of to be considered for purchase, particularly given that consumers are often forced to recall what they are seeking in the first place and hence must use their memory (Alba, Hutchinson et al. 1991, Franzen and Bouwman 2001). The use of memory is particularly relevant for fmcg (fast moving consumer goods) brands in a choice scenario. Within advertising it is important for a brand to stand out and have easily linkable cues to the brand so that salience is increased. However, advertising is consumed with low-involvement processing (LIP), ad avoidance and amongst clutter. Even with repetition, recognition and recall of a brand can be difficult.

LIP is a state where the brain passively and continuously records information into long term memory, rather than fully processing and actively learning (high-involvement processing (HIP)). Most advertising is consumed in a LIP state (Krugman 1971, Heath 1999, Heath 2000, Heath 2001). LIP is not un or sub-conscious, but rather that it happens with little control (Heath 2000). With LIP, associations can be made either to strengthen existing links or to provide new information. If many new links are created, it becomes increasingly difficult to follow original cues; the more often something is processed, or recorded in a LIP state, the stronger the link. Du Plessis and Hollis (2002) note that if the information is confused, irrelevant or incompatible with existing nodes or cues, it's unlikely to be assimilated, unless repeated over time. For advertisers, LIP means that ads should aim to strengthen mental cues (i.e. branding) for a brand, particularly given the likelihood of ad avoidance.

Ad avoidance occurs across all media (Speck and Elliott 1997) with approximately 60% of viewers passively or actively avoiding ads (Krugman, Cameron et al. 1995, Ingram 2006). Avoidance behaviour includes zapping (changing channel), zipping (fast forwarding ads), talking to others, using other devices, leaving the room, ignoring or not seeing advertisements (i.e. vaguing out) etc.. Even in the online space, only 14% of ads are seen (Loechner 2013). Given that most consumers avoid advertising in some way, marketers need to create ads that are easily and instantly recognisable, even amid ad avoidance and in cluttered advertising contexts.

Consumers are exposed to hundreds, even thousands of branded messages on a daily basis in cluttered environments.

Media itself is cluttered. For example, TV ads are aired in pods, print and social media ads compete with content and one another. Billboards compete with each other and external influences like buses, trams, iPhones, crowds etc.. Cluttered environments can result in overload for consumers because human memory is finite and cannot process all information presented at once (Bogart and Lehman 1983, Krugman 1988, Ha 1996, Green 2003, Hammer, Riebe et al. 2007, Hammer, Riebe et al. 2009). Often the best an advertiser can hope for is mere exposure (Obermiller 1985, Bornstein and D'Agostino 1992, Zajonc 2001).

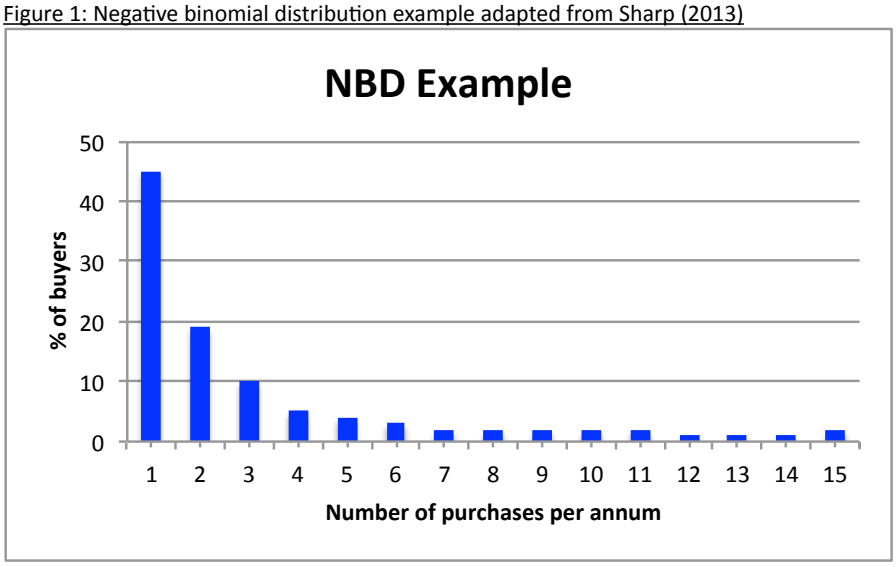
With the understanding of how and why advertising works, advertisers must accept that correct and immediate recognition is not optional; consumers should be able to correctly and quickly recognise which brand is advertising. As such, branding is particularly important in advertising. This is particularly the case for light buyers who offer the most potential for brand growth.

The next section outlines the negative binomial distribution (NBD): an empirical consumer behaviour generalisation and its relevance to this thesis.

How brands grow

The customer base for most brands is predominantly made up of infrequent brand buyers (light buyers). The NBD shows that purchase rates for brands are skewed towards very many light buyers with many fewer heavy buyers (Stern and Ehrenberg 2002, Sharp 2010, Sharp 2013); see Figure 1. Figure 1 does not show however, the many more *non* brand buyers for a given period.

Figure 1: Negative binomial distribution example adapted from Sharp (2013)



Source: Adapted from Sharp (2013): Percentage of Kellogg's Special K buyer buying per annum

Most of a brands buyers are typically light buyers for two reasons. Firstly, many people might buy the category, but most people simply don't buy very often. Second, buyers typically split purchases amongst a repertoire of brands (to whom they are polygamously loyal) (Sharp 2010, Riebe, Wright et al. 2014). Consequently, light and non buyers are valuable to a brand because they offer the greatest growth potential. For example, getting a light buyer to buy the brand once more is easier than getting a heavy buyer to buy the category more.

One challenge for brands however, is that brand *users* are more likely to recognise and recall advertising than non users (Sharp, Beal et al. 2001, Sharp, Beal et al. 2002, Hammer and Riebe 2006, Romaniuk and Wight 2009). For

marketers, this means that being instantly recognisable is important for all consumers. One way to effectively and unmistakably communicate the brand to all potential consumers is by using branding elements in advertising.

What are branding elements?

Branding elements are employed by marketers to help consumers (both users and non users) identify a brand either with or without the presence of the brand name (Keller 2001). Typical branding elements include colours, logos, slogans, names, tag lines and symbols (Dowling 1994). Gaillard (2007) also considered taste, texture, scent, shape, characters, celebrities, music, jingles, sounds and styles of advertising as branding elements that can successfully convey a brand's identity.

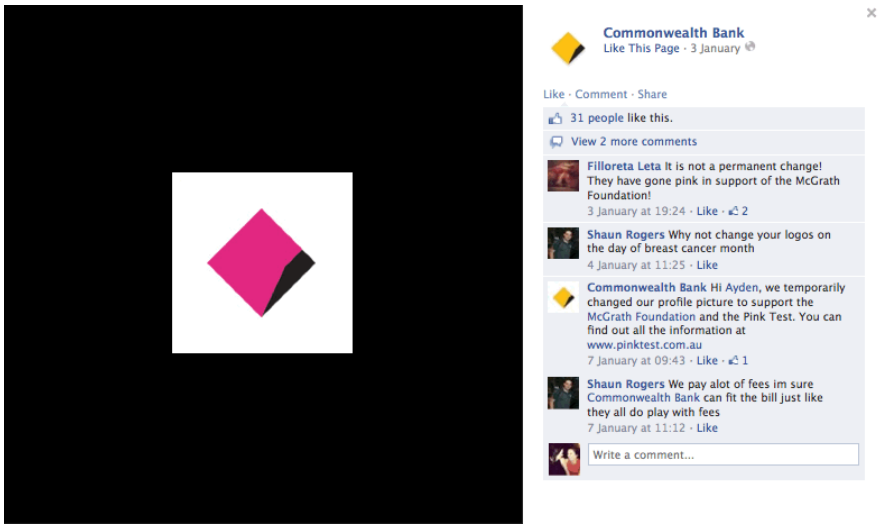
Of course not all branding elements are equal; some branding elements are highly recognised and easily attributed to a brand while others are relative unknowns. A branding element only becomes a distinctive branding asset when it is considered by most consumers (as close to 100% as possible) to be linked uniquely (and correctly) to a brand in the category (Romaniuk and Hartnett 2010). If a brand's colour is to be a distinctive asset, it must essentially own that colour in the category (Hoek and Gendall 2010); for example, Pedigree owns the colour yellow in the pet food category. Brands indeed often trademark their branding elements. For example, Commonwealth Bank trademarked its yellow diamond logo. This means no other brand in the banking/finance category can use the shape; it is owned by Commonwealth Bank. Over time, the yellow diamond has become a distinctive asset for Commonwealth Bank. What cultivates branding elements into distinctive assets is time and consistency through packaging and advertising. Whilst many brand managers may think their branding elements classify as assets, very few actually do (Romaniuk and Hartnett 2010). Most brands operate with elements, that are not distinctive assets. Consequently by investigating branding element, this research profits the majority of brands; it considers variations made to branding elements. Specifically, this research considers two of the most important branding elements: colours and logos.

The importance of colour and logo branding elements

Branding elements can take either a verbal or visual form. Visual branding elements (i.e. colours, logos, symbols, etc) are particularly important because they have a superior effect on recall over verbal elements (i.e. slogans) (Childers and Houston 1984, Mintzer and Snodgrass 1999, Hockley 2008, Hartnett 2011). As such, visual branding elements, specifically colours and logos are the focus of this thesis. Colours and logos are important brand identification tools for consumers in advertising and on shelf (Berry 1988, Gaillard, Romaniuk et al. 2005, Gaillard 2007, Lindstrom 2008, Romaniuk, Nenycz-Thiel et al. working paper) and every brand has them. This does not suggest that branding elements are equally important for all brands in a advertising or in a brand choice context. For example, in FMCG categories, one would expect branding elements to be more important factors in choice than say for a car purchase which is typically a higher involvement purchase. However, branding in advertising is important for all brands; without consumers being able to recognise the brand that is advertising the dollar has been wasted.

Colour is particularly important for consumers as it is the branding element which is most commonly elicited as communicating the brand and advertising distinctiveness (Gaillard, Romaniuk et al. 2005, Gaillard, Sharp et al. 2006, Zaichkowsky 2006, Lindstrom 2008). Colours are most typically used in habitual purchase situations to quickly scan options, identify brands and then make a choice (Garber, Burke et al. 2000). Branding colours are also highly associated with brand names (see Romaniuk and Nenycz-Thiel (2013)). However, brands vary colour elements, even brands with strong colour branding assets. See for example Figure 2 where the Commonwealth Bank Australia varied the well established yellow logo to pink to when sponsoring the McGrath Foundation (Commonwealth Bank 2014).

Figure 2: Commonwealth Bank's 2014 colour variation for breast cancer



Source: https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=722958391050810&set=a.169934063019915.42171.120184674661521&type=1&theater

Like colours, logos act as a cue to communicate the brand to consumers and are often shown in collaboration with a brand name to build association (Buttle and Westoby 2006). Logos are typically aired in advertising, on packaging and can be employed globally; every organisation has a logo. Berry (1988) notes that logos play a role in speeding up recognition time in a product choice context. Aesthetically speaking, logos should be natural, harmonious and elaborate to generate the most positive affect (Henderson and Cote 1998, Henderson, Cote et al. 2003) (this is discussed further in Chapter 4). Despite the necessity of easily and instantly recognisable logos, variation still occurs. The next section discusses the term variation to describe temporary branding element changes.

Using the term variation in branding element variation: the application in this research

In advertising, the term variation relates to the repetition-variation hypotheses (Burnkrant and Unnava 1987, Schumann, Petty et al. 1990, Unnava and Burnkrant 1991, Haugtvedt, Schumann et al. 1994, Yoo, Bang et al. 2009). The repetition-variation stream of research investigates whether variations or repetition of advertising are 'better' or 'worse' (see Schumann, Petty and Clemmons (1990), Unnava and Burnkrant (1991), Haugtvedt, Schumann, Schneier and Warren (1994) and Yoo, Bang and Kim (2009)). Dependent variables include attitudes, persuasion, recall, product linkages and brand linkages. The repetition-variation hypotheses generally applies two types of changes in advertisements: cosmetic (images) and substantive (message, product or brand claims).

Seminal work by Schumann, Petty and Clemmons (1990) first coined the terms cosmetic and substantive to describe variation in advertising. The authors described cosmetic variation as changes to ad elements which included: layout, colour, graphics and fonts. By definition, variation made to cosmetic elements does not include the product itself, but rather some executional devices in the ad. Substantive variation was described as a product claim, attribute or message change. Schumann, Petty and Clemmons (1990) varied cosmetic and substantive elements of ads for two brands at varying levels of repetition. Cosmetic variation was applied to the picture of a product endorser, the print typeface, layout and order of images in a print advertisement. Variation was applied to the advertising, *not* the branding. The dependent variables in the study were product recall, attitude towards the brand and attitude towards the campaign. The authors found that compared with a single ad exposure, exposure to varied ads (at either moderate

or high exposure) for a low relevance product, recall was increased. And, with increased exposure to the varied advertisements, recall decreased. Whilst this research considered some visual elements of advertisements, no branding elements were tested. To date, academic research has focused on variations to elements of advertising, *not* on branding itself.

Some studies have considered packaging changes; of relevance to this thesis, is a study by Garber, Burke and Jones (2000) where the authors varied the colour of a product's packaging and measured the influence on consumer choice consideration in a computer simulated shopping context. The leading brand from each of the raisin, flour, cereal and spaghetti categories was included in the study with variations applied to the pack colour. Consumers used perceptual maps to code the variations made to the original packaging, under the terms: very similar, moderately dissimilar and very dissimilar. The colour variation classification of the flour category is outlined below.

Table 1: Garber, Burke and Jones (2000) pack colour variation classification

Classification	Pack colour variation
Original	White with brown banner
Very similar	White with orange banner, beige, orange
Moderately dissimilar	Pack colour between very similar and very dissimilar: i.e. light blue
Very dissimilar	Black and purple

Garber et al. (2000) found that when the very dissimilar varied packaging was introduced on shelf, some consumers had difficulty finding their preferred brand. The authors suggested the difficulty was caused by confusion; they found that varied packaging was more likely to be considered when it was more similar to the original.

Other studies too have considered the impact of pack variation on consumer choice, see for example Rex, Wai and Lobo (2004) who completed an exploratory study into the impact of colour and packaging as stimuli in the decision making process for low involvement nondurable products. Marshall Stuart and Bell (2006) examined the relationship between product pack colour and product selection in preschoolers. Kauppinen (2001) investigated colours as non-verbal signs on packaging. Whilst much research has been conducted into packaging and cognitive affects of colour (Valdez and Mehrabian 1994, Lavin and Lawless 1998, Derefeldt, Swartling et al. 2004) none to date has identified or considered the effects of varying branding colours or logos in advertising nor any affect on consumer recognition.

The newly coined term 'branding element variation' and the research gap

The term variation is drawn from advertising research and is most appropriate to describe temporary branding element changes, as discussed in prior sections. All work to date on variation has focused on changes within advertising (i.e. to product, messaging etc.) and/or packaging, but not changes to branding elements. Research to date has also assumed that changes made to packaging and advertising was made by purposeful marketer intervention - as is the case in this research. As such this thesis aims to fill a substantial gap in knowledge by applying the term variation to *branding elements*. In particular, this research aims to establish the degree to which branding element variation occurs in industry and its effect on consumer recognition. For this research, the well established branding terms of 'visual' and 'verbal' branding elements (Childers and Houston 1984) are used to describe variation rather than cosmetic or substantive as per Schumann, Petty and Clemmons (1990). This is for consistency and applicability to the branding literature stream. Whilst the gap in research has been outlined, there is abundant evidence from industry practice that suggests branding element variation occurs. This is presented further in the next sections.

Variation: ignored in academia but industry evidence abounds

There is little empirical or academic evidence that branding element variation exists, however industry evidence abounds. Given the little research to date, this section of the thesis provides examples and potential rationales of what appears to be purposeful marketer branding element variation. Table 2 shows four examples of branding element variation based on the newly coined term as adapted from Schumann, Petty and Clemmons (1990) and Garber, Burke and Jones (2000). The variation to each brand is described in the table.

Table 2: Examples of branding variation from industry

Description	Original branding	Variation
Mount Franklin: colour variation		
MTV: colour and logo variation with addition of new elements		
Target: colour variation		
Facebook: logo variation		

It should be noted that the variations were applied to each brand overall rather than across brands (i.e. across product variants). One recent example of branding element variation is KFC's green and gold colour variation in January of 2014 during the Australian cricket season. Figures 3-5 show the variation applied to the branding not only in advertising but on bricks and mortar stores. The branding variation was aired throughout the cricket season nationally both in sponsorship and paid ads.

Figure 3: Original KFC branding on store



Source: http://www.franchise.net.au/news/sales-growth-for-kfc-stores-in-queensland

Figure 4: KFC Green and gold colour variations to store 2014



Source: http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/the-hills/kfc-turns-flagship-stores-green-and-gold-for-australian-ashes-tilt/story-fngr8i1f-1226763382666

Figure 5: KFC Green and gold colour variations on Facebook, 2014



Source: http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/the-hills/kfc-turns-flagship-stores-green-and-gold-for-australian-ashes-tilt/story-fngr8i1f-1226763382666

Despite the evidence demonstrating that branding element variation does occur, most academic literature relating to changing branding elements is focused on rebranding. The next section discusses the difference between rebranding and branding element variation.

Variation is not simply rebranding

There is an important distinction between branding element variation and rebranding; longevity. Rebranding is the systematic change of branding elements with the purpose of permanently repositioning the brand across all points of contact; including message, pack, advertising, uniforms etc. (Keller, Aperia et al. 2008). Comparatively, branding element variation is the *temporary* modification of branding elements (colour, logo, typeface etc.).

The difference between branding variation and rebranding is best explained using two examples: British Petroleum (BP) and Network 10. In the year 2000 BP shed the iconic shield in favour of the 'sunflower' logo in an attempt to reflect a 'greener' brand. Implemented at a time when petrol prices were sky-rocketing, chief executive Sir John Browne of BP stated that the rebrand would be applied to stationery, uniforms and manufacturing plants to "strengthen the sense of identity of the organisation worldwide". This operation cost approximately £136 million to execute over two years (Davies and Paterson 2000). This large-scale and permanent overhaul of all branded material constitutes rebranding.

Table 3: British Petroleum's 2000 rebrand

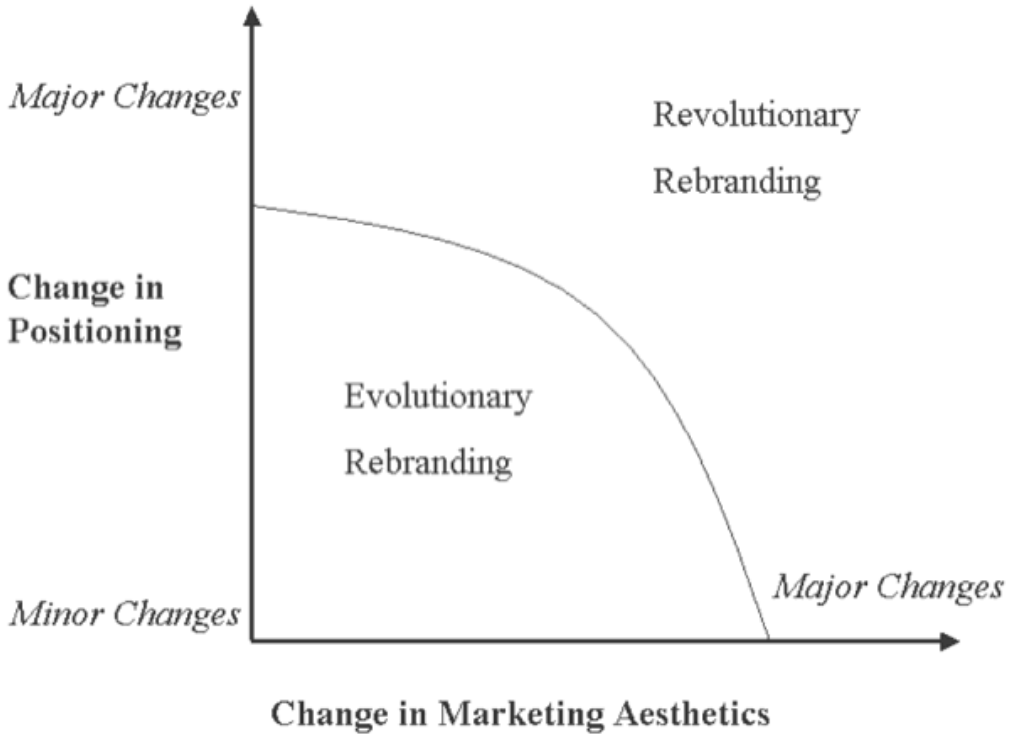
	Original branding	Rebrand
British Petroleum		

Source: http://logos.wikia.com/wiki/BP

Most rebranding research considers verbal changes such as brand names or slogans (Knowles Mathur and Mathurs 1995, Dahlén and Rosengren 2005, Kohli, Leuthesser et al. 2007, Poggi 2012). However, industry evidence suggests that rebranding involves changing visual branding elements too, for example, Phillips rebranded in late 2013 to 'reposition' the brand (Design Week 2013). Rebranding research has typically shied away from investigating visual branding element changes because it can be difficult to classify and objectively measure aesthetic differences (Stuart and Muzellec 2004).

Of relevance to this thesis, Stuart and Muzellec (2004) proposed a model (Figure 6) to describe two dimensions of rebranding: positioning and aesthetics. The model suggests that the more major the aesthetic changes (i.e. visual branding elements), the more revolutionary the change. It has been suggested that evolutionary change to branding elements is natural and necessary over time (Aaker 1996, Muzellec and Lambkin 2006).

Figure 6: Stuart and Muzellec's (2004) evolutionary vs revolutionary rebranding model



Whilst the model attempted to classify changes as minor or major (evolutionary and revolutionary respectively), Stuart and Muzellec (2004) offered no examples of these changes. It could be assumed that the BP rebrand was

revolutionary whereas evolutionary changes are only just noticeable; see for example, Pepsi. Some other rebrands that could be considered evolutionary (from this researchers perspective) are below in Table 4.

Table 4: Minor rebranding examples as per Stuart and Muzellec's (2004) guidelines

	Original branding	Rebrand
Betty Crocker: spoon changed from 2D to 3D		
Pepsi: logo changed		
Starbucks: changed complexity of the logo		
Google: depth changed: shadow removed from text		
Yahoo: typeface changed		

The model from Stuart and Muzellec (2004) attempted semantically and graphically discern minor from major changes, but did not however, consider (temporary) branding element variation.

Network 10 (Australia) provides an example of branding element variation. In late 2011 and early 2012 Network 10 launched a new program 'Young Talent Time' with a different hue of yellow and no blue (see Figure 7 and Table 5).

Figure 7: Network 10's branding element variation for Young Talent Time promotion



Source: http://www.fasterlouder.com.au/features/31970/Musical-crimes-with-the-kids-from-Young-Talent-Time

Network 10 then rebranded from the yellow and blue to silver and lighter blue in 2013, see Table 5.

Table 5: Network 10's 2013 rebrand of colours

	Original branding	Rebrand
Network 10: rebrand of colours		

Then, with rebranded colours, Network 10 aired two varied branding element executions to promote two new programs in 2013: 'The Bachelor' and 'Sleepy Hollow', see Table 6.

Table 6: Network 10's branding variations during program promotions

	Original branding	Variation	Variation
Network 10 branding variations			

Network 10 varied colour and logo elements: to grey, red and to a love heart shape (respectively). This suggests that with new programs, or products, branding element variation occurs. With no academic evidence, it is unclear why branding element variation occurs; the next section presents possible reasons derived from industry evidence.

Potential reasons for branding element variation

This section describes potential rationales for branding element variation from both academic and industry perspectives. Variation rationales include: co-branding, event sponsorship, attracting attention with unfamiliar stimuli, media modality (i.e. paring to suit different platforms), brand strategy (i.e. new products or variants), managerial factors (i.e.new brand manager or new advertising agency) and boredom. These rationales are discussed with examples from industry.

Variation for a co-branding strategy

Co-branding is a potential rationale for branding element variation. Co-branding occurs when two brand names (i.e. separate entities) appear on a product or in an ad together, with the aim of increasing the brand equity of both (Levin, Davis et al. 1996, Leuthesser, Kohli et al. 2003). For example KFC co-branded with the McGrath Foundation on packaging and advertising showing a pink variation to the typically red branding elements (see Table 7). Presumably this variation took place to increase the brand equity for both brands. Evidence from industry suggests that co-branding with charities is a key reason for branding element variation. Table 7 shows other examples of branding element variations with charities.

The industry examples suggest that when brands co-brand with charities, branding elements are varied temporarily then returned to the original branding execution. Importantly, the evidence suggests that co-branding is a reason for varying branding elements however, to date academic research has neglected branding element variation and its effect on consumer recognition. For the most part, co-branding literature is focused on brand equity transference or generation (Saunders and Guoqun 1996, Washburn, Till et al. 2000), 'fit' (Laforet 2008), generating positive affect from consumers (Grossman 1997, Kumar 2005) and co-branding as a strategy (Hillyer and Tikoo 1995, Romaniuk 2013). Grossman (1997) suggested that co-branding should create favourable attitudes towards a product by pairing it with a favourable existing product. Of relevance to this research, Grossman suggested using new images when co-branding; i.e. a brand that has not previously been paired with other brands. Grossman suggested that for co-branding to be effective it needs to be clear to viewers and repeated relatively few times (four to ten). Grossman's suggestions, whilst providing strategic guidance to managers, gives no empirical evidence of any effects of varied branding executions on consumer recognition.

Table 7: Branding element variation for co-branding purposes

	Original branding	Variation
KFC: varied original red branding to pink when co-branding with the McGrath Foundation (breast cancer charity)		
Shazam varied original blue branding to red to support RED (AIDS charity)		
Belvedere Vodka varied packaging colour to red when co-branding with RED		
Diet Coke varied typical packaging to include a red heart when paired with Heart Truth (awareness for women's heart health program)		
Commonwealth Bank Australia varied yellow to pink in support of the McGrath Foundation		

Events, sponsorship and branding element variation

Evidence suggests that branding element variation can coincide with or occur because of, events; with or without direct brand sponsorship. For example, Cadbury varied the packaging of the Cadbury Dairy Milk block during the London 2012 Olympics in Australia to reflect national colours of green and gold. Coca-Cola is another example of a brand where a Christmas packaging was used (in the USA). Bonds varied the logo to include a bow over Christmas and Masterfoods Australia varied the typically red branding element on pack to blue for Australia Day 2013.

Table 8: Events and branding element variations

	Original branding	Variation
Cadbury varied purple to green and gold during the London Olympics in Australia		
Coca-Cola varied the typeface direction on pack and added images during Christmas promotions		
Bonds added a Christmas bow during the 2013 Christmas period		
Masterfoods tomato sauce varied the red packaging to blue for Australia Day in 2013		

Similarly to co-branding literature, much academic investigation of sponsorship is concerned with congruence or 'fit' between a brand and the event (Gwinner 1997, Rifon, Choi et al. 2004, Mazodier, Plewa et al. 2012). There is also a strong focus on leveraging sponsorship to be mutually beneficial for brands, both in attitudes and sales (Leuthesser, Kohli et al. 2003, Ruth and Simonin 2003, Chang 2012) in the literature. To date, no sponsorship literature investigates

branding element variations nor any positive or negative effects during or after (either from sales or consumer attitude perspective) which would be of value to the brand undertaking branding element variation.

Generating attention to varied branding elements

Branding element variation may occur in an attempt to *attract* the attention of consumers with unfamiliar (novel) executions. Consumers direct their vision in a goal oriented fashion and use recognisable images or features as a guide (Serences and Yantis 2007). Visual attention i.e. what is attended to by consumers visually, is typically split into two types of processing: bottom-up and top-down. Bottom-up processing is described as being driven by the environment whereas top-down processing is described as goal oriented and controlled by the individual (rather than the environment) (Mueller Loose and Orquin 2012). The allocation of visual attention by an individual i.e. what people pay attention to, is a topic relevant to this research. According to top-down processing, stimuli presented and its environment is irrelevant as all attention is allocated at the direction of the individual. On the other hand, bottom-up processing is guided by the stimuli presented: in this case, the stimuli is branding element variation. Bottom-up processing presents a strong case for showing novel, different or unfamiliar stimuli (i.e. variations) to attract attention. Attention operates in a competitive environment; because there is lots of stimuli available and seeking attention (advertising, for example) in any environment. Given that consumers are continually bombarded with cluttered environments attention is a process used to filter stimuli (Desimone and Duncan 1995). As such, stimuli that is unusual (i.e. unfamiliar); in this case branding element variation, may increase attention and therefore is an rationale *for* brand element variation.

Stang (1975) suggested that repeated exposure to the same stimuli is accompanied by learning, which initially increases the pleasantness of the stimuli, but once learned, a boring and unpleasant state of satiation is said to occur. Stang suggests using novel, or different stimuli to mitigate these effects over repeated exposures. Fantz (1964) found that less attention (measured as fixation) was paid to familiar images than new or novel images in infants. Furthermore, Desimone and Duncan (1995) suggest that the visual system appears to bias towards new objects or those that have not recently been seen. This research suggests that exposure to novel stimuli may increase visual attention. In advertising research, Young (2009) suggested that attention and memory are the most important requirements for advertising to be effective; i.e. to attract attention and leave a trace of the brand (salience). On a more generalised level, David Ogilvy (1983) wrote: “People quickly get tired of hearing the same commercial. So make several”.

In support of using unfamiliar (i.e. varied or novel) stimuli to increase attention, eye tracking technology has been used in advertising (Pieters and Wedel 2012), brand choice scenarios (Chandon 2002) and in the online context (Dréze and Hussherr 2003, Dreze and Zufryden 2004). This method is insightful into *where* consumers’ eyes fixate, rather than considering the familiarity or unfamiliarity of branding in those environments. In total, some research to date presents an argument *for* branding element variation to increase attention.

New media may facilitate branding element variation

It is possible that brands vary branding elements to suit, or because of, different media platforms or advertising contexts. The up-to-the-minute nature of the digital environment gives advertisers shorter lead times, an immediate gauge of consumer reaction to branding element variation and with the ability to experiment without typical traditional (i.e. mass) media costs. Procter & Gamble’s Pantene is an example of a brand that used the online environment as an experiment ground for branding element variation testing. Marketing Director Kevin Crociata stated: “If one (copy) is working particularly well in the digital space, it’s learning we can apply back to print ads, in-store elements and other place”, and “I love the real-time element of this and being able to work more efficiently

based on what we're learning in digital (media)" (Neff 2012). This evidence suggests that branding element variation on social media at least could be a purposeful testing ground for brands.



Figure 8: Pantene's branding element variation to background colour on Facebook
Source: http://adage.com/article/digital/p-g-finds-orange-ads-work-facebook/232931/

Moreover, the online space *may* seem more appropriate to make variations to branding elements, Facebook particularly, given that these brand communities are made up of predominantly heavy buyers (Nelson-Field, Riebe et al. 2012) who assumedly know the branding well and can identify it easily. With the creative freedom afforded in the online environment comes the temptation to vary or abandon established branding elements in the search for something new, fresh and exciting. In this way, the online space may seem like a perfect testing ground for branding element variation.

When compared with online, broadcast media (i.e. television, radio, print) operate under strict broadcasting regulations and adhere to specific codes of law and ethics; see the Australian Communications and Media Authority, the American Federal Communications Commission and the United Kingdom Office for Communications. Whilst there are some regulations that apply to online advertising, the newness and rapid change in technology in the online space means that advertisers have more freedom in what they can create and air compared to traditional media. Thus the online environment (rightly or wrongly) is one where branding elements can be regularly and easily varied by marketers and suggests reasons why variation may occur; particularly on this media.

Branding element variation to compliment brand strategy

Established brands often create new variants or lines for their range and with it, industry evidence suggests that branding elements are varied between packs. Whilst these differences are not always temporary -i.e. new product variants, they do serve as an example of varied branding elements. One such example was Target in 2012 to 2013: Target launched the Target Essentials range with a green logo variation (from the original red).

Table 9: Target's colour variation for Target Essentials range

	Original branding	Variation
Target: varied red to green for launch of new product range, Target Essentials		

Dove, is one brand that varied logo colour on pack depending on the consumer target: silver for mens products and gold on others, and a rose pink on another, which suggests that brand strategy could be a rationale for branding element variation, particularly on pack.

Table 10: Dove colour variation on pack

	Original branding	Variation	Variation
Dove varies colour elements between products			

Another potential rationale for branding element variation is a brand strategy to emphasise an environmentally friendly or green product to suit shifting consumer attitudes (Benetton 2011, Wheeler 2013). This industry perception is interesting given recent research by Wheeler (2013), which suggested that there is a segment of the market which form a partition of green brand buyers. However they (green brand buyers) are very much the same in terms of behaviour and demographics as consumers who buy other brands (i.e. non green brand buyers).

New personnel can mean change

Industry evidence suggests that when a new brand manager or agency is employed, branding elements are vulnerable to change, either temporarily using one of the above brand strategies or permanently due to a rebrand. Whilst little academic or industry investigation has considered this issue specifically, it is possible to infer the practice from marketing industry press. For example, when St George Bank employed Saatchi and Saatchi, new ad campaigns were immediately created (AdNews 2013). Commonwealth Bank sought a new advertising agency to "make over the brand'" digitally (AdNews 2013) and Optus employed M&C Saatchi in March 2013 with a rebrand in June 2013 (B&T 2013). Whilst these examples are reflective of ad changes and rebranding, not branding element variations, they do show that with new agencies, change should be expected. Intuitively this makes sense; a new agency is unlikely to continue with creative from a competitor, just as a brand is unlikely to change agencies without reason.

Managers making just noticeable branding element variations

Branding variations could occur for a myriad of reasons; personal or organisationally motivated, or because there is little perceived difference from existing branding elements. It is possible that brand managers may see branding element variations as being evolutionary and thusly having little or no effect on consumers. This supposition relates to Weber's law of just noticeable difference (JND). JND suggests that variations can be so small that they are imperceptible or only just noticeable to consumers (Britt and Nelson 1976). The stronger the initial stimulus, the greater the change required for differences to be perceived. For example, Britt and Nelson (1976) suggested that the difference of 10 centimeters to 15 centimeters would be very obvious, but the addition of 10 centimeters to 25 meters would likely be far more difficult to perceive. Britt and Nelson (1976) reported that JND has been applied to product improvements and pack size in the past, but has not (yet) been applied to branding element variation. It is plausible that some managers perceive branding element variations as unnoticeable or just noticeable and of no consequence to consumers, and as such, variations are made.

Branding element variation for no strategic reason

It is plausible that there branding element variation may happen for no strategic or organisationally motivated reason. Variation could occur by accident, particularly on a media that may be internally managed (i.e. digital). It is also possible that brand managers have little concern or knowledge of what branding executions are aired in advertising for a brand they manage. It is also possible that managers may use branding that is 'close enough' to existing and often trademarked branding elements, particularly on social media. This is an assumption. It is the role of the brand manager to *manage* the brand which includes branding elements and branding representation on any media. The assumption that brand mangers would be ill concerned with branding within advertising seems highly improbable, rather than plausible. Branding element variation may also occur because managers are bored with existing branding. Whilst this is unlikely, it is a possibility and as such, should be mentioned as a potential rationale. It could be of value to the management research stream to address specific decision making processes or systems used to determine branding element variation, however decision making structures are outside the scope of this thesis.

The gap this research fills

This chapter establishes that branding element variation occurs in practice. This chapter also identifies the distinct lack of empirical academic investigation of branding element variation. Given what is known about human memory and the importance of consistency in communication for consumers to recognise a brand in advertising, it is of value to understand any effects of branding element variation on consumer recognition. This research adds to an academic field of knowledge by firstly identifying branding element variation and then seeking to understand typical and acceptable branding element variations both attitudinally from marketers and behaviourally by documenting the practice. Whilst some plausible explanations were drawn from industry and academic research there is no research to date to understand the practice. The lack of industry integration and relevance to academic research is widely cited within academic circles (Rossiter 1989, Polonsky 1996, Ottesen and Grønhaug 2004); hence this research ultimately seeks to link industry practice with academia.

Secondly, this research will quantify (any) effects of acceptable branding element variations on consumers. Whilst previous research has focused on advertising repetition-variation hypotheses, packaging variations and the importance branding consistence on shelf and in advertising (Gaillard, Romaniuk et al. 2005), this research is the first to investigate brand element variation. This research updates existing branding literature on branding elements by considering colour and logo branding element variation. For industry, this research is likely to help guide advertising branding

strategy by testing acceptable (i.e. most likely) branding element variations and quantifying any influence on consumers in advertising.

Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the importance of advertising; to solidify branding links in consumers minds so that a brand is more salient in a purchase situation. Over repeated exposures, branding links are encoded in consumer memory through ANT (associative network theory). As such, branding elements, particularly visual elements of colours and logos, are vital conduits for consumers to correctly and quickly recognise a brand, particularly in advertising where attention is fleeting, consumers process information in low-involvement state and ad space is cluttered. Correct and fast recognition is particularly important for non and light buyers to facilitate brand growth; because brand users are more easily able to correctly identify advertising than non users.

The term branding element variation was drawn from advertising research: the repetition-variation hypotheses. Previous research has investigated rebranding to elements of advertising (Schumann, Petty et al. 1990, Yoo, Bang et al. 2009), variations on pack (Garber, Burke et al. 2000) and rebranding (Muzellec and Lambkin 2006, Kohli, Leuthesser et al. 2007), however no research to date considers (temporary) variation to branding elements. Despite the lack of academic research on the topic, this chapter presented evidence of branding element variations from industry whilst drawing rationales for branding element variation. These rationales included: co-branding, event sponsorship, attention to unfamiliar stimuli, pairing branding to suit new media, to suit a brand strategy, new personnel, just noticeable difference or for no strategic reason whatsoever.

Chapter 2 concluded by discussing the likely contributions of this thesis to academia: updating branding literature and introducing the term branding element variation to academia. This thesis uses academic investigation to investigate industry practice so that research can profit those it aims to: marketers. The next chapter presents the research questions of this thesis.

Chapter 3 - Research Questions

Chapter overview

This chapter outlines the research questions for this thesis. The overarching research issue and three phases of this research are detailed: actual practice, acceptable practice and the consumer effect. The research questions are discussed within each phase with the expected contribution of each to this thesis, academia and industry included.

The research objectives

The previous chapter outlined the gap in academic research concerning branding element variation; consequently, this chapter outlines three research phases (and questions) in detail along with the rationale for each for this thesis. It should be noted that this research is conducted in one region, Australia to allow for in-depth investigation into this complex and under-researched phenomenon. The topics addressed in this thesis are posed as questions given that there is little academic evidence to suggest falsifiable hypotheses of what is typical, acceptable branding element variation or why it occurs or any potential consumer effects (as addressed in Chapter 2). Also, a question (rather than hypothesis) format is preferable given that Phase 1 and 2 are exploratory and require description not falsification.

Research Phase 1 - Actual practice

The first phase of research will determine what (if anything at all) are typical variations to three (visual and verbal) branding elements using a descriptive content analysis of branding executions on Facebook. The descriptive content analysis seeks to explore whether variations occur to colour, logo and typeface branding elements on Facebook and how commonly variation occurs. As such:

RQ1.A What (if anything) is the most commonly occurring branding element variation: colour, logo or typeface, on Facebook?

The content analysis considers only colours, logos and typeface branding elements. Previous discussion in Chapter 2 addressed the importance of the visual branding elements colours and logos for consumer recognition and to communicate distinctiveness in advertising and on shelf (Berry 1989, Gaillard 2007, Lindstrom 2008). The inclusion of typeface in this research question is outlined in Chapter 4.

RQ1.A firstly aims to describe branding variation behaviour in one media: Facebook where a) it is possible for marketers to vary branding elements and b) because the media itself is simplistic to examine given that the advertising space is the same for all brands (i.e. all brands have the same dimensions on a Facebook profile picture and page). RQ1.A will provide context as to whether or not variation is common. Whilst it is impossible to ascertain for each of the 80 brands included whether or not a variation was purposeful or accidental, this research would still yield meaningful insight into industry practice. And shed light on whether or not the online environment is one where brands do not vary branding elements. Given the examples provided in Chapter 2 it appears as though branding element variation occurs; however this stage is required to gain an in-depth understanding of variation. This is then extended by RQ1.B which seeks to codify what, if any, variations are made to colours, logos and typeface branding elements. As such:

RQ1.B What, if any type(s) of variations are most typically made to colours, logos and typeface on Facebook?

By classifying any variations made to branding elements in practice, the findings from Phase 1 will yield meaningful descriptive results for academic investigation; both in this thesis and for future research. The findings from RQ1.B will give external validity to understanding acceptable branding element variations (Phase 2) and the testing of acceptable variations as determined by marketers, to branding elements on consumers (Phase 3). The classification of branding element variations is detailed in Chapter 4. Whether or not branding element variation is typical, to visual, verbal or no branding elements, RQ1 will contextualise variation in practice which is of importance to both Phase 2 and Phase 3 of this thesis.

Research Phase 2 - Typical and acceptable practice

In addition to understanding actual practice from Phase 1, it is of value to ask marketers (i.e. those who may enact branding element variation) what *they* consider typical and/or acceptable branding element variation and why. RQ2.A seeks to understand what marketing practitioners consider typical branding element variation, if anything, in advertising. It is expected that variations to visual elements will be considered most typical given that fewer brands have verbal branding elements like slogans compared to visual elements like colours, logos, shapes, typeface. As such:

RQ2.A What (if any) type of branding element variation (verbal/visual) do marketers consider typical in advertising?

If marketers consider branding element variation to be atypical, then the results from Phase 1 will serve as a guide for understanding and testing acceptable branding element variations in RQ2.B and RQ3. The results from RQ2.A will further contextualise branding element variation and give a better understanding of what is (attitudinally at least) considered by marketers to be typical practice in combination with Phase 1 (actual practice).

Whilst RQ2.A seeks to determine any *typical* branding element variations, RQ2.B differs by aiming to determine what, if anything, are managerially *acceptable* branding element variations (as per the marketing practitioner perspective) to two branding elements: colours and logos[1]. So, RQ2.A differs from RQ2.B:

RQ2.B What (if anything) do marketers consider acceptable variations to colour and logo branding elements?

Even if no variations are considered *acceptable* by practitioners, the results of RQ2.B are of descriptive value for academia; by determining that and what branding element variation is unacceptable. In this case, variations tested in Phase 3 will be applied as per the findings from Phase 1. If Phase 1 uncovers no branding element variations on Facebook, then variations would be applied as per the examples and potential rationales outlined in Chapter 2 to ensure external validity.

If RQ2.B finds that some variations are considered acceptable to either colour or logo by practitioners, then RQ2.C will determine why that is the case:

RQ2.C Why, if at all,are branding element variations considered acceptable?

Acceptable branding element variations could be attributed to co-branding, media modality or restrictions, unfamiliar executions to attract attention, new product variants, branding strategy, personnel churn etc. as presented in Chapter 2. Or, marketers may consider branding element variation acceptable for alternative reasons. Overall, understanding

[1] Only colours and logos are used in Phase 2 of the research because they are more simplistic to vary (aesthetically speaking). This point is discussed and justified further in Chapter 5 with inclusion of Phase 1 results.

what is acceptable (RQ2.B) and *why* (RQ2.C) from a practitioner point of view, will offer valuable new knowledge and provides insight for Phase 3: testing consumer effect.

Research Phase 3 - Consumer effect

Phase 3 of this thesis examines (any) consumer recognition effects of *acceptable* colour and logo branding element variation (as per RQ2.B) (i.e. as potentially identified by marketers) As previously discussed, the role of advertising is to nudge sales through salience, inherently, a consumer must know which brand is advertising, for the advertising to be effective. Given that correct and fast recognition are important in advertising, it is beneficial to understand what, if any, effects there are on consumer recognition when acceptable branding element variation is present; this is the aim of RQ3:

RQ3. What, if anything, is the effect on consumer recognition (correct recognition and reaction time) when an acceptable variation is made to either colour or logo branding elements in advertising?

Given knowledge on how consumer memory works: i.e. through consistency and repetition, and the importance for a brand to be immediately and easily recognisable in advertising via branding elements, a negative effect is expected with variation. However, it is possible that the unfamiliar branding element variations may increase recognition and speed up reaction time for respondents (as discussed in Chapter 2). Correct recognition and reaction time are the dependent variables in the controlled experiment to test any effects of branding element variations; see Chapter 7 (Phase 3 method) for a discussion on correct recognition and reaction time as dependent variables.

The results will add to existing branding literature and provide further basis for testing other branding elements and variations. Even if there is no effect on consumer recognition, the results will help marketers to justify decisions about what variations should and should not be made to colour and logo branding elements in advertising. This would aid communication and understanding between brand managers and agencies when creating ads so that time is not wasted making ads that are unlikely to be approved and so that the advertiser does not waste their dollar approving advertising that is unlikely to be attributed to the brand. This research also brings academic investigation to the industry field and seeks to provide actionable and relevant guidelines for marketing practitioners.

Chapter summary

This chapter addressed the research objectives, contexualised the research issue and presented the research questions in three phases: actual practice, acceptable practice and consumer effect. Phase 1, RQ1 is an exploratory question to better understand actual branding element variation using a descriptive content analysis of Facebook. Phase 2 aims to understand typical branding element variation (RQ2.A), acceptable branding element variation (RQ2.B) and why (RQ2.C) from a marketers perspective. RQ3 of Phase 3 seeks to determine what, if anything, is the effect on consumer recognition when acceptable variations are made to colour or logo branding elements in advertising. The outcomes from this research are expected to not only strengthen knowledge within academia of industry practice, but also to benefit marketing practitioners if/when faced with the prospect of branding element variation in advertising. The next chapter presents the method and results of Phase 1.

Chapter 4 - Research Phase 1 Method and Results

Chapter overview

This chapter presents the method and results for RQ1. To begin, the aims of Phase 1 (RQ1) are recapped, then the descriptive content analysis method is presented. The method uses an empirical generalisationalist approach and outlines the coding structure, as adapted from marketing literature used to classify branding element variations. The findings are then presented: RQ1.A then RQ1.B. Throughout the results section, the findings are contexualised in relation to both this thesis and marketing knowledge as a discipline.

Context and objectives for research question 1

RQ1.A seeks to determine the prevalence of branding element variation using social media giant, Facebook. RQ1.B aims to quality what, if any, variations are evident to branding elements colours, logos and typeface. Given the large number of global and local Australian brands included in the study (80), it was impossible to know if changes to branding elements were variations or permanent. However any differences found between original branding were considered variations rather than rebrands (i.e. permanent). This is addressed further in the method section of this chapter.

Chapter 2 addressed the importance of visual branding elements colours and logos for consumer recognition, particularly in communicating a brand in advertising and on shelf. Subsequently, it is of of value to outline the importance of typeface as a branding element and why it is included in this research, before the method is detailed.

Typeface is a universal branding element; all brands use typeface to communicate their name. While there is less evidence linking typeface to brand recall, recognition and brand choice, Childers and Jass (2002) suggested that brand memorability (i.e. recall) was enhanced when visual cues such as typeface and semantic cues were consistent in the mind of the consumer. Some brands have successfully created distinctive and unique typeface that is attributable to only that brand: i.e. Coca-Cola, Walt Disney and Virgin. Previous typeface research has largely focused on consumer associations and impressions from typeface (Brumberger 2003, Henderson, Giese et al. 2004, Mackiewicz and Moeller 2005). For marketers, colours, logos and typeface are all important tools to facilitate recognition in advertising and help consumers identify and choose brands when in a purchase situation. Using three branding elements in this phase of the research provides context about the prevalence of each. Moreover, colours, logos and typeface are applicable to every brand: i.e. every brand has these elements.

Method

The colour, logo and typeface branding elements of 80 brands across 22 categories on Facebook were examined. Brands from FMCG, services and durables were included, with three to five brands per category used. From each of the 22 categories, the biggest brand (by market share), a brand of approximately half the size of the biggest brand and

a brand with the smallest brand share (as per Euromonitor 2012[2]) in each category were used. By using a cross section of brands, categories and brand sizes, the generalisability of the findings were increased.

Facebook was a suitable media to investigate branding element variations given that it easily accessible and increasingly incorporated into media mixes by marketer (Nelson-Field and Klose, 2010). From a research perspective, Facebook is easily accessible and provides equitable advertising dimensions. For example, all brands have identical profile picture, cover picture and layout dimensions available. The consistency afforded from a Facebook page compared to YouTube videos for example, was preferable to generate generalisable research and all branding executions could be collected within a similar time frame.

Original branding executions, i.e. colours, logos and typeface elements were sourced from each brand's website (i.e. www.nike.com). Original branding executions were recorded and archived for each brand. For those brands without a website, Google images and online retail websites were used to find official images of the brand (on product, for example) to ensure the comparison between branding elements on different were as close as humanly possible using technology available. These original branding images were considered the baseline for comparisons to Facebook branding. It must be noted that there is the possibility that technologically speaking, Facebook may display a logo or colour which is 'close enough' to the original. Then the Facebook cover and profile pictures for each brand were recorded from www.facebook.com. Each brand's largest page (by fan base) was used, wherever the term 'official page' was not available. In the case where no Facebook brand page was found, a corporate brand page was used instead. For example, Kellogg's corporate Canada Facebook page was used because none of Kellogg's snack bar brands had their own Facebook page, e.g. Kellogg's Crunchy Nut Bars, K-Time, Special K Bars, LCM's or Nutri-Grain.

For brands which had multiple logos, for example, no change was recorded if one of the two logos was used on the Facebook profile page. The next section describes how variations were coded for colours, logos and typeface.

Classifying branding element variations

To compare original branding executions to Facebook executions, it was necessary to systematically classify variations, which also limited subjectivity. The following sections detail the literature used to code colour, logo and typeface variations.

Classifying colour variations

To codify colour variations, it was first necessary to understand colour terminology and how the human brain interprets colour. The vocabulary used to describe colour varies dependent on the field: science references photons, photoreceptors, light refraction, hue, saturation, value and chroma; the art sector refers to pigments, warmth, coolness, palettes of colour, ariel perspective; whereas technology uses pixels to distinguish between colours. There are two types of colour: surface colour (i.e. the colour of a t-shirt or printed magazine image) and beams of light (i.e. colours produced from a computer screen).

In layman's terms, words like 'purple' or 'yellow' identify colour; these words refer to a colour hue. Sir Issac Newton was the first to name these seven basic hues (colours): red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. These hues are measured as wavelengths of light; each hue corresponds to a unique wavelength (a nanometer) of energy that is discerned by the human eye (Zwimpfer and Force 1988). Colours hues are given numerical values and are known as the visible spectrum. Whilst humans can see differences between hues, i.e. between red and orange, there are also

[2] Euromonitor is a website offering research for consumer markets online. Euromonitor is an international research site offering research on industries, countries, categories and consumers. Euromonitor provides market research and surveys. Ref: http:// www.euromonitor.com/about-us

gradations within the hue i.e. dark red and bright red. The aforementioned model is the HSV (Hue, Saturation, Value) and is applicable to both surface and beamed light. In this content analysis however, only beams of light were recorded given that the media used was Facebook, as such, the Red, Green, Blue (RGB) system was used to codify any changes to colours because of its availability at the time of data collection.

The analysis considered three regions to detail the exact area with colour change, they were: background, logo and typeface colour. Any variation, even if slight, was coded by three coders using two systems: the RGB system via Photoshop and InDesign version CS6 software and the naked human eye (i.e. discernible to a coder). The original branding and Facebook executions were compared on an IMac (2012) and MacBook Pro (2010) (separately) using the RGB eyedropper analysis tool available in each program to code colour variations. The RGB records a red, green and blue 'measure' of a pixel within an image and assigns a numerical value to the red, green and blue pixels. When the original and Facebook branding execution were compared, similar areas were recorded. Given that the RGB system is highly sensitive, it was unlikely that any two images would have the exact same metrics, even when comparing a similar area on each execution. As such, the naked eye approach was also used; where images were eyeballed to discern any differences in colour. To minimise the subjectivity of colour perception, multiple coders were used with inter-coder agreement of 89%. The naked eye results were included to give further validation to the visibility of any change alongside the RGB system.

Classifying logo variations

A classification framework for modifying and selecting logos from Henderson and Cote (1998) was used to code logo variations. Unlike the standardised measure of colour, logo variation was more subjective. A seminal paper by Henderson and Cote (1998) outlined descriptions of logo change for seven broad descriptive categories: naturalness, harmony, elaborateness, parallel, repetition, proportion and roundness. These terms are detailed in Table 11.

Table 11 - Henderson and Cote's (1998) guidelines for selecting and modifying logos: a classification system

Category	Sub-categories	Description
Naturalness	Representative Organic	Degree of realism (opposite is abstract) Naturally occurring shapes, irregular curves, geometric designs that are less natural
Harmony	Balance Symmetric	A centre of suspension between two weights/objects Congruent patterns, arrangement, symmetry
Elaborateness	Complexity Active Depth	Irregularity in element arrangement, number of elements Logos that give the impression of movement or flow Gives the perception of three-dimensional design
Parallel		Multiple lines or elements adjacent to each other
Repetition		Pattern or design that is similar or identical
Proportion		Relationship between the horizontal and vertical sections Certain proportions are more appealing than others i.e. the golden section
Roundness		Curved lines and circular elements

Henderson and Cote (1998) suggested that for high recognition, logos should be highly natural, harmonious and moderately elaborate. Whilst this work was foundational and the authors provided examples, the terms themselves are somewhat subjective, as would be expected with classifying pictorial changes. Subsequently, multiple coders were used to classify logo variations. This also meant that variations were described rather than simply counted. For the remainder of this thesis, this classification system provided guidelines for creating and coding variations. Henderson

and Cote (1998) offered the most comprehensive guide to *classify* logo variations and consequently the terms detailed above were used throughout this research to describe logo variations.

Classifying typeface variations

Henderson, Giese and Cote's (2004) paper on typeface design presented a comprehensive classification system to codify typeface variations and was used throughout this thesis. The classification system included 23 descriptive pairs to codify typeface variation including ornate/plain, depth/flatness, readable/unreadable, slanted/straight, repeated/ no repeated elements, balanced/unbalanced, condensed/extended and some of the logo variation terms listed above. The full list and examples are provided in Appendix A. There was also the possibility that unclassified (i.e. by Henderson, Giese and Cote (2004)) typeface variations could have been found, in that case, they were recorded and discussed. Colour changes to typeface were not coded as typeface variations; they were classified separately under colour variation. These uncoded variations were either descriptive on their own or coded as closely as possibly as per Henderson, Giese and Cote (2004). Given that typeface variations, like logo variation could be highly subjective, the Henderson, Giese and Cote (2004) classification system was the basis for describing typeface variations between the original and Facebook branding executions. Using the classifying systems outlined, the data was collated and the findings are detailed next.

Phase 1 results

Results for RQ1.A: What (if any) is the most commonly occurring branding element variation: colour, logo or typeface, on Facebook?

Colour variation was more prevalent than logo or typeface on Facebook

RQ1.A identified the frequency of variations made to colour, logo and typeface branding elements (not individual brands; this is outlined in Table 13) for the brands included. Table 12 shows the frequencies and compares the colour, logo and typeface variation prevalence for branding elements (not brands).

Table 12: The most commonly occurring branding element variation was made to colour elements on Facebook

Branding element variation	Number of potential branding elements (n)	Number of variations (n)	Proportion of brands with variation (%)
Colour (RGB)	198*	178*	92
Colour (naked eye)	198*	97*	50
Typeface	79	5	6
Logo	67	97*	12

* The number of potential branding elements is higher than the number of brands because the colour variation analysis included three areas of a Facebook page: the profile picture, background picture and typeface colour. The number of potential variations is how many branding elements were present for each brand. i.e. a brand may have had typeface and colour but no logo so only two branding elements could have been varied (typographical logos were not counted - as they were included in the typeface analysis).

The results showed that variations were made to all branding elements examined: colour, logo and typeface on Facebook. Colour variation was most prevalent, both in terms of regions varied (i.e. background/typeface/logo colour) and the number of brands that made variations. A huge 92% of brands varied colour elements according to the RGB

metrics. However, 50% of colour variations were discernible to the human eye (this disparity is accounted for below). Comparatively fewer brands made variations to logos (12%) and even fewer to typeface (6%).

The RGB metrics were higher than those for the naked eye. As previously discussed this could be attributed to the sensitivity of the program in measuring even small pixel differences and these differences being classified as a variation. If variation could not be picked up by the human eye, consumers are unlikely to perceive it as different in an advertising context. The variations documented were in some cases less obvious than others i.e. white to off white. Some showed colours inverted: i.e. original image as red background and black text shown on Facebook as black background and red text, or a different colour in place of the original (i.e. typically blue background varied to black).

These results suggest that branding element variations, particularly to colours, is prevalent on Facebook with more than half the brands examined showing some type variation. Importantly, this finding describes actual practice, intentional or a technical oddity and suggests that colour variation is typical in practice but that logo and typeface variation are likely to occur, on Facebook at least. It must also be noted that coders were actively looking for potential differences in branding execution and as such, there was likely a higher level of processing than a typical consumer who may simply scan a advertisement.

Of relevance for this thesis, RQ1.A results suggest that colour variation is more typical on Facebook than either logo or typeface variation. It is impossible to know whether variations found were purposeful or accidental on management behalf. However given that over half the brands, from a wide range of categories and of varying sizes showed colour variation it is the perspective of this researcher that variation was purposeful. Whilst logo and typeface variations were less prevalent, in this content analysis, the results yield meaningful knowledge for this thesis, for academic literature and for marketers. The results of this phase for colour, logo and typeface variation contextualise variation in practice; i.e. that logo and typeface variation are much less likely than colour variation. Also, this phase guides the variations to be tested in Phase 2 and 3 and contextualises that colour variation is most likely in practice.

Results for RQ1.B What type(s) of variations are made to colours, logos and typeface on Facebook?

Colour variations are most commonly made to background colour

RQ1.B results classified the variations made to colour, logo and typeface branding elements on Facebook by individual brands in the study. These results suggest that colour branding element were most likely to be varied by brands on Facebook. However, in the Facebook context, colour variation could be applied to different areas; to the background, typeface and/or logo colour, or to all three areas. The analysis considered only profile pictures and the elements within. The results are reported in Table 13.

Table 13: Colour variation by region on Facebook page

Colour variation region	Number of brands with variations (n)		Proportion of brands with variation (%)	
	Naked eye	RGB	Naked eye	RGB
Background (n=80)	52	73	64	91
Typeface (n=68)	25	64	37	94
Logo (n=45)	23	41	47	91

The naked eye metrics suggested that more brands varied the background colour of a Facebook profile picture (64%) compared to logo (47%) or typeface (37%) colour. RGB metrics showed that typeface colour varied slightly more, 94% than either background or logo colours (both 91%). However, the number of variations made to background colour was greater for both the naked eye and RGB analysis. These results suggest that in practice, colour variations were near equally applicable to any branding element; hence, this highlights that one area is no more or less favoured for colour variation than another.

Elaborateness-depth logo variations were most prevalent

Each brands cover *and* profile pictures were used to classify logo and typeface variations. Consequently the sample sizes were greater for this analysis compared with the colour analysis (which only considered profile pictures). Table 14 shows that logo variations were evident for eight brands (12%); with one brand making two types of variations. Elaborateness-depth was the most common logo variation and is discussed below.

Table 14: Logo variation evidenced on Facebook

Logo variation (n=67)	Number of variations (n)	Number of brands (n)	Proportion of brands (%)
Elaborateness-depth	7	6	9
Proportion	1	1	1.5
Removal of logo part	1	1	1.5
Total	9	8	12

Branding variations were predominantly made to the elaborateness-depth of the logos. Henderson and Cote (2004) described elaborateness as a three tiered construct: complexity: the irregularity in element arrangement and number of elements, active: the impression of movement or flow, and depth: the perception of three-dimensional design. Brands either added a drop shadow, a light flare which changed the logo dimensions (i.e. from 2D to 3D or vice versa). Table 15 shows the addition of a drop shadow and a flare evidenced as logo variation (on Facebook) compared to the original branding.

Table 15: Mastercard and Oral B Facebook variations: drop shadow and flare added (respectively)

Original branding	Facebook variation
	
	

Two other types of changes were made: to the proportions of a logo and one had part of the logo removed. Whilst there was evidence of logo variation on Facebook, these results suggest that it is much less likely to occur compared with colour variation. When paired with Henderson and Cote's (2004) classification, the drop shadow and flare additions would be considered changes to the elaborateness-depth of a logo. For this thesis, these findings guide logo variations tested in Phase 3 of this research; particularly given that they were evidenced across multiple brands and, were able to be applied to different brands with relative ease.

Typeface variations to elaborateness-depth - but uncommon overall

Five brands showed typeface variation, most commonly to the elaborateness-depth. Using Henderson, Giese and Cote's (2004) typeface classification system, three kinds of typeface variation were coded: elaborateness-depth, letters condensed and a different font used (i.e. changed from the original). Whilst it would have been preferable to include an objective metric to measure typeface and logo variation, such software was unavailable at data collection. Similarly to the logo classifications, the typeface depth classification applied to the dimensionality of the typeface. For example, letters were changed to be 2D or 3D from original branding. Condensed letters were closer together than the original typeface. A font change indicated total abandonment of original font rather than a variation of the original.

Table 16: Typeface variations evidenced on Facebook

Typeface variation (n=67)	Number of variations (n)	Number of brands (n)	Proportion of brands (%)
Elaborateness-depth	3	3	4
Condensed	1	1	1
Font changed	1	1	1
Total	5	5	6

Table 16 shows that elaborateness-depth was the most common typeface variation evident. Size differences were not coded because it was not appropriate to compare typeface size between a self-owned webpage with no size restrictions and a Facebook page where there were. Overall, these results indicate that typeface variation is much less prevalent on Facebook than either colour or logo variation however when it does occur, the elaborateness-depth is varied. For academia, this provides context about typeface branding element variation: i.e. that it is unlikely. For this thesis, the results suggested that colour and logo branding elements, whilst valuable for recognition (Berry 1988, Gaillard, Romaniuk et al. 2005, Gaillard 2007, Lindstrom 2008) were, in practice varied (on Facebook at least) more than typeface.

Phase 1 summary and implications for this thesis

The results from Phase 1 demonstrated that variations were made on Facebook to colour, logo and typeface branding elements on Facebook. Variation to colours was much more prevalent that either logo or typeface given that at least half the brands in the descriptive content analysis showed colour variation (to either background, logo or typeface). It is the perspective of this researcher that the variations found were not accidents by management or subject to technical glitch. The content analysis findings suggest that colour variation is more typical practice on Facebook than logo or typeface. The findings from RQ1.B showed that the most common colour changes were made to background colours. Variations to logos and typeface were most commonly made to the elaborateness-depth by adding drop shadows or flares. Whilst academia has ignored branding element variation, industry evidence presented in Chapter 2 and the results of Phase 1 support the actuality of branding element variation, particularly to colours, and to a much lesser extent, logos and typeface. The findings from the descriptive content analysis guided the variations to be tested

in the latter part of this thesis: Phase 2 (typical and acceptable variations) and Phase 3 (consumer effect). Moreover, the content analysis empirically evidenced industry practice which provides valuable descriptive knowledge for academia to understand branding inconsistencies, on Facebook in particular.

Chapter summary

This chapter described the method and results of Phase 1 (RQ1) of this thesis. The descriptive content analysis investigated the colour, logo and typeface branding elements of 80 brands from 22 categories on the social media platform, Facebook. Original branding was compared to Facebook branding executions for each brand to demonstrate the prevalence of variation and to codify aesthetic variations to logos and typeface. Variations to colour, logo and typeface branding elements were coded by three coders using the RGB system, naked eye, Henderson and Cotes' (1998) logo classification system and Henderson, Giese and Cote's (2004) typeface classification system. Colour variations were most prevalent, in at least half the brands included. Logo variation was present in 12% of brands whilst typeface variation was least common in 6% of brands most commonly made to the elaborateness-depth of each. Phase 1 evidenced that branding element variation occurs in practice. The findings from RQ1 codified types of branding element variations. In particular, RQ1.B objectively coded logo variations, so that logo variations included in Phase 2 and 3 of this research were representative of actual industry practice. The next chapter discusses the method used to address Phase 2 of this thesis which helps determine typical and acceptable branding element variation from a marketers perspective (i.e. attitudinally).

Chapter 5 - Research Phase 2 Method

Chapter overview

This chapter describes qualitative research and why it is most appropriate to address Phase 2 of this thesis. Whilst there are many different ways in which qualitative research can be conducted, this chapter firstly highlights and justifies the philosophical approaches taken in this study to investigate the typicality, acceptability and reasons for branding element variation (i.e. RQ2). Throughout the research, steps were taken to ensure data quality, reliability and validity, these issues are outlined and then discussed throughout the chapter in relation to the data and data collection. The data collection technique (in-depth interviewing) is described along with benefits and limitations. The sampling frame, sample size, and respondent profiles are discussed which, this justifies the inclusion of both advertiser and agency interviewees to generate greater knowledge breadth. The research tools are described; a discussion guide and a structured choice scenario technique along with the colour and logo variation executions tested in the structured choice scenario to determine acceptable branding element variations. The when and where of the data collection are detailed to provide context to the data. The chapter concludes by outlining the thematic analysis used to generate meaningful results for this thesis.

Qualitative research to address the research objectives

To determine the impact of branding variations as evidenced in Phase 1, on a brand, it was also necessary to gain an understanding about typicality and acceptability of branding element variation from marketers themselves: the very people who make the decision to vary branding elements. This meant using an exploratory approach to generate an understanding of branding element variation in practice, which necessitated a qualitative methodology.

Qualitative research is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena (Marshall and Rossman 2011). Qualitative research is used to interpret and gain a better understanding of a subject and its matter (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, Denzin and Lincoln 2000, Rossiter 2009), to discover new ideas, screen alternatives or diagnose a situation (Zikmund, Ward et al. 2007, Rossiter 2009) and to provide guidance for future research (Bonoma 1985). A qualitative research method was most appropriate for addressing Phase 2 because the research questions were descriptive in nature. Gravetter and Forzano (2012) suggested that descriptive qualitative research is a preliminary tool that can be used to understand and detail individual variables before trying to explain an entire relationship. In this instance there is a lack of descriptive research about branding element variation from a practitioner perspective. Quantitative research techniques (i.e. numerical or yes/no questions) alone would be unlikely to yield sufficient information to adequately address RQ2. Comparatively, qualitative data collection techniques will allow for more comprehensive probing on issues of interest as they arise in the data collection. That said, Phase 3 *was* best addressed by using a quantitative method and was shaped by the results of RQ2. Gummesson (2005) suggested that synergy between qualitative and quantitative methodologies, as is used in this thesis, can generate more well-rounded knowledge. The social sciences in particular have embraced both qualitative and quantitative approaches as valid research methodologies (Gabriel 1990); in particular, qualitative research has become more accepted, valued and necessary as a marketing research tool (Patton 1990, Gummesson 2007, Rossiter 2009).

The theoretical approach

There are many possible theoretical and philosophical perspectives that can guide qualitative research; this research employed two: naturalistic (interpretivist inquiry) for RQ2.A and 2.C and a post-positivist approach for RQ2.B. The dual theoretical approach was most suitable in this research as it generated the most appropriate data to address the research objectives.

Naturalistic inquiry and this research

A naturalistic approach, specifically the grounded theory approach, was used in this study to address RQ's 2.A and 2.C. Lincoln and Guba (1985)describe the traits of naturalistic inquiry as; occurring in natural settings (as opposed to laboratories); involving selective and purposive sampling; as an approach that is grounded in theory; and an approach that is characterised by the continual relationship between data collection, analysis and interpretation. For this research, the naturalistic approach helped to describe and understand the little known phenomena, branding element variation, without existing theoretical structures or preconceived notions. The theory was developed during the investigation rather than by testing falsifiable hypotheses or assuming priori outcomes based on previous research and thinking (Corbin and Strauss 1990). For this thesis, that meant branding element variations in advertising were drawn from the data rather than from a preconceived theory, the rationales and examples presented in Chapter 2 and the findings from Phase 1. This approach requires the use of multiple views of reality in order to understand and reconstruct the 'truth'. 'Truth' does not exist in any absolute sense, but is simply defined by the respondents and can be more or less informed or sophisticated (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, Guba and Lincoln 1994). In line with this approach, a semi-structured individual in-depth interviewing tool was used to in the data collection (it is discussed in more detail later in this chapter).

This approach was particularly appropriate given that there is so little academic or anecdotal evidence and understanding of branding element variation. Whilst Phase 1 of this study provides some background to branding element differences on Facebook there is very little known about whether the differences were strategic, technological glitches or unintended from a practitioners point of view. Chapter 2 presented a wealth of examples from industry practice however the lack of theory, and indeed literature on the subject makes the naturalistic approach particularly fitting.

While the grounded theory approach was suitable for the investigation of RQ2.A and 2.C, a different philosophical approach was required to investigate RQ2.B more comprehensively, namely the post-positivism approach.

The post-positivism approach and this research

Post-positivism is by definition an empirical or scientific approach to qualitative research that uses existing knowledge and understanding (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Discovery and description of meanings and purposes of actions by individuals are at the core of the post-positivist paradigm (Guba and Lincoln 1994). A post-positivist approach typically involves the collection of data in natural settings and the inclusion of situational information in the interpretation of data. Data collection also typically involves triangulation with the intention of falsifying (rather than verifying) hypotheses. For example, research is conducted not only to prove something is right, but rather to see if it can be proven wrong. Ontologically speaking, post-positivism seeks to describe a critical reality where 'reality' can only be imperfectly understood and is never fully 'complete' but it's possible to approximate the reality using many perspectives (Guba and Lincoln 1994). Given that qualitative research is often conducted on a small response group (fewer people than survey data), the results are often indicative rather than conclusive. So, in this research the results may not necessarily represent a universal reality, but rather the reality of the individuals interviewed at the time. However, it is this behaviour that needs to be described, explored and understood.

RQ2.B used a structured (contrived) observation technique: a structured choice scenario. This involved, to a certain extent, guiding the respondent towards a response, rather than allowing them to choose any response freely (Gravetter and Forzano 2008). In consumer surveys, asking respondents to provide responses with free recall typically produces less data than if those same respondents were asked to recognise (for instance) brands that they use. In the same vein, prompting practitioners with variations to branding elements in advertising was likely to be more useful in extracting specific, and to some extent dormant information rather than asking them to provide their own responses or examples (i.e. to describe variations themselves). As such, in this research, respondents were provided with a context: they were presented with colour and logo variations for multiple brands and asked about the acceptability of branding element variation in advertising. The variations presented, however, were based on the findings from Phase 1, therefore they were not unfounded or subjective variations. Existing knowledge was, therefore used to help guide this component of the research. Observing branding element variation behaviours in a natural, or less contrived environment may not have allowed for any behaviour to be observed at all. It would certainly not have allowed for control over the variations, which was required to address RQ2.B and to be used in Phase 3 of this research. This approach also allowed for data to be collected in a timely manner. The drawback of this method is that the results may not be entirely indicative of behaviours that respondents would undertake in a natural setting. However, the advantages of this approach outweighed the disadvantages.

Overall, the two approaches; naturalistic inquiry and post-positivism are complimentary and together fostered the collection of appropriate, high quality data. To ensure that the data collected was able to address the research objectives, it was necessary to consider credibility, quality reliability and validity when designing the study. These terms are discussed in the next section.

Ensuring credibility, quality, reliability, validity in this research

A qualitative methodology necessitates the discussion and incorporation of credibility, quality, reliability and validity from philosophical approach to data collection and analysis. These terms are addressed below and were incorporated throughout the data collection for Phase 2 in this thesis:

Credibility and quality are described by Colwell (1990) as insight and depth into the data and results. Whilst credibility and quality are near impossible to measure against a yardstick, Colwell offers a discussion of researcher attributes and actions that help to ensure quality in qualitative research.

Reliability is the capacity to study and yield similar results over time and across situations (i.e. free of random error). This also encompasses the repeatability of research by different researchers and whether or not the same themes can be found in repeated studies completed across time (Zikmund, Ward et al. 2007).

Validity is concerned with measuring and asking the 'right' things to gain insight rather than being overly concerned with replicability. Zikmund et al.(2007) described validity as a process that ensures the researcher measures what they intended to. In a qualitative setting this means asking questions that will lead to the underlying exploration of an issue, revisiting the data during and post collection, using multiple researchers to gain consensus and self-reflexivity as the researcher (Cho and Trent 2006).

In this research, the credibility, quality, reliability and validity of the study are important considerations that were incorporated throughout. This included; understanding and evaluating the role that existing literature and evidence

had to help guide the data collection, research design, data collection and importantly the analysis and reporting of the results.

The next sections of this chapter discuss the tactical methods used to collect the data for Phase 2 and discuss actions taken to ensure data credibility, quality, reliability and validity.

The discussion tools: in-depth interviewing and a structured choice scenario

There are many qualitative research methods: focus groups, in-depth interviewing, case studies, structured observation, choice scenarios and many more (Gravetter and Forzano 2012). In-depth interviews were used to understand typical and acceptable branding elements variations in advertising (RQ2.A and 2.C) and a choice scenario to address RQ2.B.

Using in-depth interviews

Given the exploratory and descriptive nature of RQ2 in-depth interviews were used to collect the data. As opposed to focus groups or group-depth interviews (GDI's), participants were interviewed individually (i.e. with the interviewer). An interviewing technique that encouraged individual perceptions and freedom of opinion and discussion was preferable compared to a group technique. GDI's involve respondent interaction with one another and can have potential drawbacks in terms of group power dynamics. For example, one interviewee may be particularly vocal or opinionated about a topic and could potentially influence or stifle opinions of other respondents (Rossiter 2009). There also can be less interviewer control and irrelevant issues may consume the allotted time with GDI's (Marshall and Rossman 2011).

Given that respondents were peers within the same industry, i.e. advertising agency and advertisers, there was a need for a level of confidentiality for respondents. Previous research into different respondent groups has found significant differences in opinions between practitioner groups (i.e. Paech (2005) and Newstead (2010)). If participants were identifiable to one another it may have influenced their interaction with one another and potentially affected their responses in the research, rather than reflecting on and describing personal actualities. For example, if an advertising agency respondent was to make a comment that a brand manager respondent did not agree with, the professional repercussions could be negative and long lasting. Given the closeness of the industry, securing the confidentiality of the participants' responses, an individual in-depth interviewing technique was preferable. For further details on anonymity and confidentiality refer to the ethics approval in Appendix B.1

Individual in-depth interviews also allowed for greater flexibility during the data collection (Gummesson 2005, Rossiter 2009, Marshall and Rossman 2011). Respondents could draw on their own experiences to highlight their points, and focus could be put on issues that were most relevant to particular respondents. This was particularly valuable given that RQ2 sought to understand the practitioners' perspectives on what type of branding element variations might be made in advertising, and how they would go about making those decisions. The flexibility afforded to the interviewer meant that with any response, further probing for information from a respondent was possible and could occur immediately.

Despite the typical criticism that it restricts the size of the sample, in-depth interviewing allows for comprehensive data to be collected quickly and in large quantities. As the interviews progressed, findings could be immediately integrated into the second phase of the research. This allowed for wide breadth of information across a range of different but related topics to be collected in a single sitting with each respondent using a discussion guide.

The discussion guide

A discussion guide was created to cover a wide range of topics concerning branding element variation. The discussion guide included prompted and unprompted opportunities for respondents to give their perspectives on branding element variation. The evidence discussed in Chapter 2 and Phase 1 results indicated that branding element variation occurs in practice. Whilst these findings helped shape the discussion guide, they did not limit the discussion to preconceived reasons for variation. In this way, any potential reasons for branding element variation were incorporated, however the discussion guide was broad enough to include only items of relevance, and also be open to alternative opinions.

A topical discussion guide with semi-structured, open ended questions was used to address RQ2. A topical approach was suitable for this research question given the breadth of topics to be covered: typical practice, acceptable practice and reasons for acceptable branding element variation. This method was based on the notion that findings evolved as the respondent described them. Integral to this approach was the ability to ask follow-up questions for further elaboration on a topic. Open ended questions were used in the discussion guide to gain respondent perspectives and also to give each respondent the freedom and opportunity to answer as they saw fit: i.e. with lots of words, few words, including a broad scope of topics in one answer etc. (Marshall and Rossman 2011, Gravetter and Forzano 2012). This format was likely to reveal individual thoughts and opinions. If the questions were a predetermined response set format between which respondents were expected to choose, the information gathered would not be as rich; important factors may be missed, therefore excluding them from the results. By giving respondents the freedom to answer with as little or as much information as they chose, the data collected could be partly (or wholly) made up of unexpected answers that could not have been predicted from Chapter 2 evidence or Phase 1 results.

The survey instrument

Qualitative interviewing literature was used to help guide the construction and execution of the discussion guide. The aim was for the questions to naturally build on one another and to provide quality questions to yield quality responses about branding element variation. Table 17 outlines the broad themes and specific questions asked to address the topics.

Table 17: Topics and questions covered in the in-depth interviews survey instrument

Topic	Description
Typical processes and practices in making an advertisement	Can you describe the process when a new ad needs to be made, from beginning to end? What types of changes are typical in new ad content? Do you think the cosmetic (visual) elements of an ad need to be varied? Why/why not? Do you think the message of an ad needs to be varied? Why/why not? Do you think the theme of an ad needs to be varied? Why/why not? Are there 'rules of thumb' that you use to decide when you are going to change advertising? If so, what are they? In you experience, how often are ads changed? In general, how long do managers use one campaign for? Why do you think ads get changed?
Decision makers and decision making in advertising creation	Who typically decides when an ad is updated for a brand? Who decides what a new ad looks like?

Topic	Description
Typical and specific branding variations	Do you think branding elements (i.e. colours, logos, slogans, typeface, characters etc.) in ads need to be changed? Why/why not? In what circumstances? Which ones? Are branding elements in ads typically changed? Why/why not? Which ones? Under what circumstances? Do you think branding elements in ads can be varied? Why/why not? Under what circumstances? Which ones?
Advertising measurement	How do you determine whether or not a campaign has been effective? What, if any, type of metrics do you use? Who are these metrics reported to and how frequently? What roles are these metrics likely to play in the future? Do you pre-test ads? If so, for what media? What do you measure in a pre-test phase when a new ad is created? How does this help in predicting final results? Are there any pitfalls of this method?

Given that a change of an ad does not necessarily include branding element variation, the questions were intentionally left broad to firstly understand if branding element variation may happen in when new ads are made. The questions aimed to uncover if a decision maker or new ad creation (e.g. a specific type of sale or event) may incite branding element variation. Also, the questions started by asking about the practice broadly where respondents had the opportunity to discuss specific brand examples or generally. Whilst not directly relevant to the research questions at hand, the questions in Table 17 helped to set the scene for the topic of branding element variation.

Depending on the responses provided by the respondents, emphasis of any one area was increased or decreased, and further probing occurred to gather a full understanding of each respondent's perspective on branding element variation. For example, if respondents said that branding elements needed to be varied or changed because "they get boring over time", a follow up question was asked to determine what was meant by "boring".

Results were documented and analysed after each interview (before conducting the next), consistent with Nyilasy (2009) and the grounded theory approach. This resulted in some flexibility by adapting questions and terminology (as per different respondents) as the interviews progressed. Three interviews were conducted as a pilot phase which allowed for development of the discussion guide before gathering the remainder of the data to ensure validity (i.e. asking the right questions) and is detailed later in this chapter. This process supported the grounded theory to continually review, reflect and analyse the data throughout the collection phase.

Whilst the discussion guide was focused on understanding the typicalities and reasons for acceptability of branding element variations to practitioners, there were some limits on the choices that were available to respondents. For example, a discussion guide was useful in exploring and gaining an initial understanding of the phenomenon. However, explanations may have been less than comprehensive given the complexity of an issue and the unrealistic nature of the interview format (i.e. irregular intense business practice reflection). Consequently, branding element variation was applied to six brands and was presented in a structured choice scenario to interviewees.

Using a structured choice scenario

A structured choice scenario observation technique presented respondents with two image array's for six brands. Variations were presented separately for two branding elements: colours and logo (i.e. colour variations and then logo variations). There were no colour *and* logo variation combinations. It should be noted that the variations represented

equitable levels of divergence from the original branding. The rationale and justification of the variations is discussed in the branding element variation section of this chapter.

Respondents were asked to think of themselves as a responsible manager of that brand, even if their experience had been based on brands in completely different product or service categories, and regardless of the type of roles with which they had experience (i.e. regardless of whether they worked in brand management or agency-based roles). Respondents were asked to identify the original (current) branding execution. They were asked if any of the variation images were acceptable for even one ad campaign, and if so, which one(s) and why. Respondents were first asked to identify the original branding so that they had an understanding of the variation options (i.e. so they didn't choose the original as a variation). Respondents were free to say none of the variations are acceptable; hypothetically or otherwise. This process allowed for respondents to answer freely in terms of which variations may, or may not be acceptable. Indeed, some respondents considered all variations unacceptable.

Given that the branding executions were not ordered in any way (i.e. by hue) respondents had the freedom to choose whichever image they deemed most acceptable without using a scale (i.e. most or least varied). This was particularly important for colour variation as hue was varied in equitable steps from the original for each brand; it was an objective measure for all brands. Ordering the variations from most to least varied (around the original), would have suggested to respondents that (hue) scale *was* a factor to consider when considering acceptable variation, but this was not the intention of the research. The aim of this research was to understand which variations were acceptable for each brand, determine patterns of acceptability and then to test the most acceptable variation on consumers. Ultimately, the question of why each variation was acceptable (RQ2.C) addressed whether similarity to the original was a factor, or whether strategic factors played more of a role in variation acceptability.

After being presented with colour executions, respondents were presented with logo variations for the same brand. Respondents were then asked about colour and logo variation (sequentially) for the remaining five brands in the study. The brands were presented in no particular order to respondents to ensure that any potential ordering effects would not influence their responses for any particular brand.

The brands tested

Six brands from five categories were included in the structured choice scenario: Dove, Cadbury, Nike, Target, BMW and Mitsubishi, to give insight across FMCG, durable, apparel and retailer categories. These brands were also chosen because of their original branding elements: all brands had solid (i.e. not gradient) colours and differing logo shapes. For example, Mitsubishi was red with sharp angled diamonds whereas BMW was blue, black and white with a round logo. These factors were important to simplify the manipulations applied to colour, and particularly to the logos.

Whilst for some brands brand recognition may play a greater role in prompting purchase for consumers (i.e. for routinely purchased FMCG products more so than branding for automotive purchases), brand recognition in advertising is an important factor for every brand. For example, varying a branding colour could be equally detrimental or beneficial for brand recognition within an ad campaign for a car, service, durable or fmcg brand.

The research was capped at six brands. This was primarily for functionality: to keep the interview to a manageable time frame. Using 20 brands in the structured choice scenario would have been unrealistic given the prefacing open ended, exploratory questions and time requirements. In future, it would be preferable to investigate more brands to broaden, replicate and enhance the generalisability of the research. However, previous research has used few brands to infer generalisability (see Hartnett (2011) (used 4 brand from 4 categories), Nelson-Field, Riebe and Sharp (2012)

(used 4 brands from 2 categories). Also, the inclusion criteria was kept broad and offered a range of conditions (i.e. different brands, colours and logos) (Leone and Schultz 1980, Uncles and Wright 2004). As such, six brands was considered sufficient to draw conclusions for this thesis.

Creating the branding element variations

Colour and logo variations were applied to the original branding execution for each brand by a graphic designer. As with Phase 1, original branding images were sourced from each brand's own website/domain: e.g. www.coke.com.au. Colour variation was applied using the hue, saturation, value (HSV) system; the rationale this system is discussed next. The logo variations applied were based on the evidence from the Phase 1 results and Henderson and Cote's (1998) elaborateness-depth classification. By basing the variations on actual practice (i.e. RQ1), the variations tested for acceptability had external validity and are discussed in the following sections.

Colour variations applied to brands

Chapter 5 described the RGB colour system to measure colours in Phase 1, however to *make* the variations to branding colours, the HSV system was used. Given that the brands used in this phase had different original hues, the HSV model was the most appropriate method to apply equitable colour variations for all brands. The HSV system simplifies colour change by using one metric rather than three colour metrics: red, green and blue (RGB) as was used in Phase 1 descriptive content analysis. The colour variations found from Phase 1 were in no way compared in Phase 2.

Hue is identified by a wave length and is, in layman's terms, the name for a colour. A colour is assigned a numerical value relative to others on the colour wheel between 0 and 360. Variations to hue can be made by increasing or decreasing the numerical value. Saturation is the greying of colours when mixed with their complimentary colour (i.e. the colour that lies directly opposite on the colour wheel). Value is the brightness; the degree of lightness or darkness in a colour. The value can be adjusted in pigment mixtures by adjusting the black and white levels. Compared with HSV, the RGB system would have been much more complex to equitably manipulate across brands. For example, it may have been possible to decrease the green and blue metrics for a brand, but the red metric may have been at 0, so it could not be decreased. Therefore, it would have been impossible to equitably change the metrics for all brands. HSV system accommodated this limitation of the RGB system by providing a single metric to vary across all brands, the hue. By using the HSV system, there was internal validity to the colour variation across the brands as all variations were made in equitable steps. Also the hue change *actually* changes the colour; i.e. not the black or white pigments or the mixture with its opposite (on the colour wheel) colour. The 'original' HSV metrics for each brand are included in Appendix C.4.

BMW, Cadbury, Dove, Mitsubishi and Target had six variations made to their respective hues at intervals of 30%. For each brand three hue increases of 30 and three decreases of 30 hue units were made. Table 18 shows the variations for each brand.

Table 18: Colour, hue variations applied to test brands to determine acceptable branding element variation

+90	+60	+30	Original	-30	-60	-90
						
						
						
						
						

Nike's logo is black, consequently all HSV metrics read 0. For ease of manipulation and to see colour change, the brightness was varied for this logo, again at intervals of 30. Using the HSV system meant that the variations were equitable steps in colour difference from the original as was the case with all other brands. As such, respondents had four images in the choice scenario for Nike: the original and three variations with decreasing brightness.

Table 19: Colour variations applied to Nike's brightness

Original	-30	-60	-90
			

Interviewees were presented with the six variations and the original branding executions for BMW, Cadbury, Dove, Mitsubishi and Target, and four for Nike. Practitioners were shown variations to the hues of brands either via hard copy (a tangible surface) or on a computer screen. This was so that the HSV metrics could be applied to both tangible surfaces and intangible pixels, and to see if there were any differences in responses. The next section justifies and describes the logo variations.

Logo variations applied to brands

van der Laar and van den Berg-Weitzel (2004) described three types of logos: abstract (i.e. the diamonds for Mitsubishi), figurative (i.e. a shell logo for Shell) and typographical (words only, i.e. Bonds). The brands in this thesis were abstract and figurative logos, not typographical (van der Laar and van den Berg-Weitzel 2004). Abstract logos are

most easily recognised and cause the least confusion; they are undefinable shapes in an unfamiliar combination with lower complexity for the brain which simplifies reconstruction and recognisability in a consumers mind. Abstract logos also require fewer 'fixations' to be recognised, this implies that fewer exposures are necessary to achieve recognition (van der Laar and van den Berg-Weitzel 2004). As such, abstract and figurative logos were most appropriate for this research, particularly compared to typographical logos.

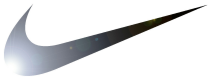
Typographical logos were excluded rom this thesis because varying typeface was complex and too subjective across six brands. Whilst Henderson, Giese and Cote (2004) outlined 23 pairs of design characteristics of typeface (see Appendix A.1), any and all of these could have been applied to a brands typography. Given that the original typeface for each brand differed, equitable variations could not be applied to all brands typeface. Also, Phase 1 found typeface variation least prevalent on Facebook. Whilst typeface is an important branding element and variations to typographical logos could be studied in future, they lay outside the scope of this research.

Unlike a standard colour metric, logo variation was more subjective. For equitable variations across the brands, the logo variations were derived from Phase 1's descriptive content analysis which showed that most logo variations were made to the elaborateness-depth (as per Henderson and Cote's (1998) classification. The aim was to test similar logo variations across *all* brands to be able to infer generalisability across brands. As such, altering the repetitive elements, roundness, proportion, harmony or naturalness as identified by Henderson and Cote (1998) would have entailed much subjectivity. The same could be said for the elaborateness-complexity and elaborateness-active designs however, the elaborateness-depth was a more objective variation.

Three variations to the elaborateness-depth of logos 2D/3D, flares and shadows were applied based on the findings from Phase 1 results; i.e. based on actual industry evidence. As such, respondents were shown three logo variations for each brand and the subjectivity of variations was kept to a minimum. Table 20 shows the logo variations for all brands in this study.

Table 20: Logo variations applied to test brands

Original logo	Classification	2D/3D	Drop shadow	Flare
	Abstract			
	Abstract			
	Figurative			
	Abstract			

Original logo	Classification	2D/3D	Drop shadow	Flare
	Abstract			
	Figurative			

Respondents were shown the variation executions for each brand in the choice scenario in no particular order. They were not shown the original in this array because they had seen it prior in the colour variation choice. Respondents were shown the colour executions first so that there were no priming effects when they were required identify the original branding execution for each brand (Tulving and Schacter 1990, Yi 1993). For example, showing the logo variations first would have negated the initial identification question.

The next section outlines the data collection method.

Data collection

Pilot study

A pilot study of three interviews were held in Adelaide on 28-30 May 2013 to address any issues with the survey. Three practitioners (two creative agency personnel and one brand manager) took part in the pilot phase. These three interviews were sufficient to test the flow, formatting and wording (of industry related terms) in the survey. They also allowed for the timing of the qualitative interview to be tested to ensure that respondents would not be unduly inconvenienced by taking part in the study. And finally, the pilot phase also ensured that no important points were missed i.e. if there was something that should be asked or addressed. This pilot phase resulted in some alterations to the survey instrument to remove repetition and reduced the length of the survey. For example, three questions about advertising decision making were condensed to one; because the response given by practitioners was sufficient to cover the topic. Instead, prompts were included underneath the original question (rather than additional questions.)

The pilot study added to the validity of the data collection. Validity is concerned with asking (or measuring) the 'right' things to gain insight rather than being overly concerned with replicability. Zikmund et al. (2007) described validity as a process to ensure that the research measures what it intends to; the pilot phase allowed for the validity of the survey instrument to be examined. The pilot phase ensured that the data collection explored the issue of branding element variation.

Sampling frame and size

Respondents were Australian brand managers and advertising agency personnel; two practitioner groups directly involved in on-going and day-to-day advertising decisions and creation. The use of two practitioner groups gave a variety of perspectives, allowing the research to document industry practice for both those commissioning branding element variations and those who create it on behalf of a brand.

In order to gather sufficient information on the types of variations to brands that are typical and acceptable to managers, but to do so in a timely manner, it was necessary to limit the scope of the study to only Australia. Whilst this limits the generalisability of the findings to just the Australian context, it was most appropriate for the research and there is no logical reason why responses would differ in another location. There were significant advantages associated with limiting the scope of the study to Australia (i.e. data collection was cost and time efficient). Moreover, there is limited descriptive research of the Australian advertising industry, with most agency research from the United Kingdom or America (Nyilasy and Reid 2009, Nyilasy and Reid 2009). Whilst respondents were all based in Australia, their experiences were often from a global perspective; several of the agency and brand manager respondents had worked for multinational organisations.

For a practitioner to be included in the qualitative data collection they needed to be directly involved in day-to-day advertising decision making. Typical job titles of participants were: brand manager, communications manager, account manager, copywriter and graphic designer. 11 brand managers and 11 advertising agency personnel were interviewed from 17 different companies. To gain a well rounded advertiser perspective, brand managers from various sectors including government, retailers, services, FMCG and durables took part in the research. Both creative and account services ad agency personnel who had worked across a range of categories were included. To comply with confidentiality requirements, the actual industries and brands for which the respondents work for is not identified, nor are specific job titles attached to verbatim responses.

Respondent recruitment

Potential respondents for this phase of the research were recruited from a list of clients from the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science. Then, to source further potential participants, a snowballing technique was used. Respondents were contacted via email and invited to take part in the research: Appendix B.2 contains the interview request email. Of those contacted, 73% agreed to take part.

Snowballing is a non-probability sampling technique popular for gaining access to the insular industry of marketing (see Paech (2005) and Newstead (2010)). For this research, respondents were asked to recommend an industry contact (either client, colleague or supplier) who fit the participant requirements, to request an interview. Most respondents recommended at least one other person and provided either email or phone details. This meant that respondents recommended someone who they believed, or knew to be, directly involved in advertising or branding decision making.

Non-probability sampling is a convenience based and is not necessarily representative of an entire population. For these reasons, it is unlikely that the findings of any study using non-probability recruitment technique can be generalised beyond the sample (Gobo 2004). However, as the aim of this study was to broadly understand the processes and practices of practitioners, and given that the inclusion of 100% of the advertiser or agency population would be unrealistic, it was sensible in this instance to limit the sample. Using a wide variety of practitioners from varying fields helped to strengthen the study. Where there are common themes or responses in a small but varied sample such as this, there can be somewhat more certainty of generalising the findings to a larger population as any differences in the sample do not result in the falsification of results. The generalisability of the study was strengthened in Phase 3 where quantitative data was collected from a large sample of consumer respondents.

Data collection

Th interviews were conducted face-to-face at a time and location convenient to the respondent. Upon agreement to take part in the research, participants were sent a topic list to be covered in the interview and two consent forms. The topic list specified most questions and showed the broad flow of the interview. One consent form outlined the confidentiality of the respondent personally and the other outlined the confidentiality of their employer organisation. Both consent forms needed to be signed and, in the case of the organisation consent form, signed by a line manager or HR personnel. A copy of the topic list and consent forms are provided in Appendix B.4. The confidentiality agreement was reiterated prior to the interview commencement.

All interviews were voice recorded with the permission of the respondent. These recordings helped to ensure that reporting of the results was accurate. During the interviews, notes were taken to help remember key themes. No participant was paid. The average time for an interview was approximately 45 minutes. However, interview times ranged between 30 and 90 minutes. Differences in interview length depended on the depth of answer given by each respondent. All respondents were provided with top line qualitative results upon completion of the analysis via email.

Data analysis during and after collection ensured rigour

Throughout the data collection, time was spent thinking theoretically, rechecking and validating new findings against those already collection and considering how those findings fitted with Phase 1 results. Qualitative research literature suggested that rigour (also known as verification and quality) should be demonstrable during the research process, not just post data collection (Glaser 2002, Morse, Barrett et al. 2002). Actions were taken throughout the data collection

(from philosophical approach to survey and analysis) to ensure rigour, credibility, quality and reliability of the research. The actions taken are detailed below.

Consultations with senior researchers, supervisors and practitioners who were and were not included in the research helped to validate and discuss findings. As a result of one of these conversations, two industry examples were added to give respondents a better idea of branding element variation in practice.

Triangulation was used to ensure intersubjective certifiability. Wright and Kearns (1998) suggest that for intersubjective certifiability to exist, two or more researchers should be able to look at the same data and draw the same conclusions. This increases the quality and the reliability of the results by decreasing the likely influence of subjectivity, error, bias and the dishonesty of a single researcher. Part of rigour in any research is to check the intersubjective certifiability; this was done using a triangulation approach.

Triangulation basically converges methods to provide a more objective and valid results when studying a phenomenon which is particularly relevant to qualitative research given its subjective nature (Jick 1979, Jonsen and Jehn 2009). A different senior researcher listened to one of the respondent interviews voice recordings to identify key themes. Page and Eddy (1999) suggested this method to triangulate and validate findings from one researcher to another. The themes interpreted and outlined by the second researcher were congruent with initial interpretations.

Researcher self-reflection was undertaken during the data collection and analysis. This involved considering personal motivations and small cognitive progressions rather than jumping from one theme to another. A solid body of knowledge was built during the research which transposed to the analysis. This step also helped identify where to finish the interviews; at a point of saturation where the overarching picture was clear (Morse 1995).

Two discussions were held with two interviewees to to reiterate and validate the key themes. If there had been any discrepancies or any points where the interviewees thought the findings had been wrongly interpreted, there was opportunity for this to be addressed. However, the interpretation of findings were validated which adds to the verification of the results reported in this thesis.

For academic insight, the results were presented at a Masters and PhD Research Colloquium at the University of South Australia. The findings were also presented as a seminar to the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute at the University of South Australia. Attendees were from varied business fields including marketing, management, human resources, economics and commerce. This provided valuable feedback about the themes and other possible explanations which added to the analysis, discussion and potential implications.

These actions helped to ensure that the results reported were of a high standard (i.e. accurate and unbiased), adequately addressed the research objectives and reflected the data collection of Phase 2.

Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the relevance of qualitative research to this thesis and how it relates to RQ2. The use of the grounded theory and post-positivist approach were detailed, with both used in this research to gain sufficient knowledge to address Phase 2: typical and acceptable branding element variation. Individual in-depth interviews included both a discussion guide and a structured choice scenario to collect the data. The discussion guide asked about typical and acceptable practice for advertising and branding element variations and reasons why. The structured choice scenario presented six colour and three logo variations for each of the six brands to determine acceptable branding element variation (RQ2.B) and why (RQ2.C). In total, 22 brand manager and advertising agency respondents were recruited using a snowballing technique. Throughout and post the data collection, consultation with senior researchers, researcher self reflexivity, academic presentation, concurrent analysis and triangulation ensured data quality, reliability and validity. The next chapter discusses the results from the qualitative data collection.

Chapter 6 - Research Phase 2 Results

Chapter overview

This chapter discusses the results of RQ2.A: what (if any) type of branding element variation is typical, RQ2.B: what (if anything) do marketing practitioners consider acceptable variations to visual branding elements in advertising, and RQ2.C: why. RQ2.A is discussed first, then RQ2.B and RQ2.C are discussed together. Findings and conclusions are discussed in combination with the theoretical approaches used and with implications for academia, industry and Phase 3 of this research (the consumer effect). Where appropriate, verbatim responses from respondents are used to support the findings.

Context for research question 2

The results from RQ1 provided insight into actual practice of branding element variation (i.e. that it does occur on Facebook).RQ2, by comparison, seeks to deliver insight into any typical and acceptable branding element variations and the reasons behind such beliefs from a marketers perspective. By examining a multitude of brands first to document the presence of branding element variation, it was possible to gain *some* insight into branding element variation in practice. The content analysis of Phase 1 described variations and provides external validity to the branding variations presented to practitioners in Phase 2.

Where appropriate, respondents verbatim responses are included to add depth to the discussion. Verbatim responses are attributed either to the 'Advertiser' or 'Advertising agency' respondent groups to protect respondents' identities. If a practitioner used a specific brand name to articulate their point, that brand has been replaced with 'brand X' to protect the individual and the organisation. Respondents were informed at the time of interview that this would occur.

Results for RQ2.A: What (if any) type of branding element variation (visual/verbal) do marketers consider typical in advertising?

Branding element variation should not happen

To determine what was typical and acceptable branding element variations, respondents were first asked if they thought branding elements should or could be varied. This reflected the grounded theory approach to determine first if branding element variation is typical (i.e. occurs). All respondents initially said that branding elements should remain consistent across advertising because branding elements *"*are the brand". Most respondents remarked that branding elements were important for consumers; either to quickly link to the brand or to simply remain constant. Respondents grouped verbal (i.e. slogans) and visual (i.e. colours, logos, characters, celebrities, shapes) branding elements together and indicated that neither were typically changed and nor should they be.

> *"The brand has to look the same." Advertiser*

"No. Because people have so much to digest, that the more a brand can be consistent, the greater chance we have of reminding people how much they love the brand and bringing it top of mind. Rather than having them do something totally new." Advertising agency

"Changing branding elements would be suicide. The brand has to look the same. There are some things that you absolutely have to keep and that's them. It's fine to change the message and play around with the ad, but there are somethings you can never change: distinctive assets, colours, way your logo is positioned. your calls to action." Advertiser

"I don't think they should be changed because those attributes make the brand easy to recognise. I guess that's what you're trying to build with advertising. If you have something new you have to re-educate. We use our colours in everything; they're the things that make us who we are, if you go and change that a lot, you confuse the consumers." Advertiser

These answers are consistent with academic and marketing psychology literature which suggests that consumers routinely use branding elements and devices (visual branding elements) to identify brands in advertising and purchase situations, and advises that they are kept consistent (Cacioppo and Petty 1989, Franzen and Bouwman 2001, Braun-LaTour and LatTour 2004, Buchler, Faunce et al. 2010, Romaniuk and Hartnett 2010). However, these findings contrast with the examples presented in Chapter 2 and Phase 1 results where branding element variation was found across many brands on Facebook. This finding points demonstrates the paradox between practice (intentional or otherwise) and practitioner beliefs. I.e. branding variations are evident in practice but not considered acceptable by practitioners when asked broadly about the topic.

Branding element variation should not happen... but it could

Whilst the initial response from most practitioners was that branding element variation should not occur, some practitioners felt that variation *could* be made to verbal or visual branding elements. But, these respondents clarified that it was unusual behaviour to make such variations.

"Oh look you can change them but it's pretty unusual." Advertising agency

"No, they're brand assets. But you can introduce new visual elements and new colours for example" Advertiser

"They can be changed but normally that's for big campaigns." Advertiser

These results support the evidence presented in Chapter 2, Phase 1 results and suggest that brand element variation can and does occur, but it is not typical. Furthermore these findings suggest that brand element variation is not typical, but it may be acceptable, sometimes. Whilst the results from Phase 1 suggest that variations to branding were evident to colours and the elaborateness-depth of logos, it is of value to investigate what is acceptable brand element variation, why certain factors are acceptable (while others not) (RQ2.B and 2.C) and importantly any potential effects on the consumer recognition (RQ3). Given that practitioners generally considered permanent rebranding more acceptable than temporary branding variations when first asked to discuss the topic, discussion of rebranding acceptability is included to shed light on the scarcely recognised issue of branding element variations.

Global style-guides make it difficult to vary or change branding elements

Many advertiser, and a few advertising agency respondents, identified the role of corporate or global branding guidelines (style guidelines) in controlling brand element representation (either variation or rebranding). These respondents said that determining what branding elements could (or could not) be changed was dictated by global guidelines and more often than not branding execution was restricted a "few" variants.

> *"Brand X has corporate colours, we have to stick with, it's a global initiative. We have sub brands that might be bigger than the house brand; but we execute our advertising in a particular manner. We're only allowed to use certain colours in our branding but in our ads our products can be different colours". Advertiser*

Some respondents also indicated that the decisions about which branding could be used was typically decided at a regional brand manager or executive strategy group level (i.e. higher up the management chain). These comments indicate that branding elements for multinational owned brands are less likely to be varied in the Australia.

But, branding change is necessary over time

All respondents said that they had, at some stage in their careers, been involved in changing branding elements (for the long term) of a product or service. Whilst branding element variation is the focus of this thesis (not rebranding), respondents considered branding change to be acceptable, even if not typical. The reasons for variation are discussed with RQ2.B results, however it is of value to understand why practitioners believe branding needs to be changed, if only to help inform future research.

Many respondents felt that branding had a shelf life; that branding eventually *needed* to be updated or refreshed. A few respondents thought that branding elements should be changed after a period of time, that is, regularly, even if infrequent.

> *"There's a bit of marketing rule of thumb that a logo only really lasts for like eight to ten years. Then it kind of needs to be refreshed." Advertiser*

> *"Yeah I'd say they last probably like ten years, then the brand starts to look a bit dated and tired and you really need to do a bit of work" Advertising agency*

Usually these changes were described as "tweaks", "refreshments" or "modifications". When probed about what these terms meant, respondents were unable to define specific guidelines about what types of changes were acceptable. However respondents typically used phrases like "to look now" and "to keep being relevant" to describe the changes that were acceptable. This indicated that change is brand and execution specific (i.e. specific to a brand and its elements).

Industry practice appears congruent with these findings. There is much evidence of this "refreshing" or "tweaking" of branding elements over time. These findings link to Muzellec and Lambkin's (2006) graph of revolutionary versus evolutionary changes to branding. This result gives academia increased understanding into branding decision making and the typicality of branding element changes. Importantly, these uncovered managerial beliefs contrast with existing knowledge on how memory works and the importance of consistency, but do point towards potential future areas of investigation. For example, the just noticeable difference theory (see Weber's Law of Just Noticeable Difference as discussed in Chapter 2) has not been used to understand subtle or evolutionary branding changes over time. Future research could investigate these modifications and what effects may occur when they are.

Why are branding elements permanently changed?

Most respondents felt that branding elements were integral to the identification of a brand, but they could be changed when it was the "right circumstance". The right circumstance was difficult for respondents to articulate. Some respondents, particularly advertisers, offered a reason for why branding elements could be changed, often in relation to their own experiences of making permanent changes to branding.

Rebranding for a new look and feel

The vast majority of respondents said that the purpose of a rebrand was to create "a new look and feel" for a brand. Most respondents felt that a brand rebranded when it "changed direction", "needed to refresh the look and feel" or "needed to be updated because it looked tired". When talking about a "new direction", many respondents said that the branding had changed to reflect a new or redefined target market.

> *"Yes. I was involved with a rebrand. And I've made small changes to another brand. We needed to grow and change our demographic. We needed to broaden our target market. Our logo was tired at Brand X; we needed to refresh it. Most research usually says that a logo or brand can probably last about eight to ten years. And our logo when I first came on board had been there from nine to ten years. So we rebranded." Advertiser*

> *"Yes. We did a rebrand with Brand X. They wanted to, and really needed to rebrand. There was a new competitor and really they just looked old and tired. They needed to appeal to a (particular) demographic." Advertising agency*

> *"Yes. We changed our tagline. Brand X has been changed a few times. It was part of the strategy, we needed to move from where we were to put some more trust into people who bought our brand. And to, I guess, appeal to them and reflect them more." Advertiser*

> *"Sometimes you've really got to look for what the brand stands for. It's how the brand should behave generally." Advertising agency*

These results suggest that marketers ascribe high importance to the "look" of a brand and that "modernising" branding is a reason for rebranding. This suggests that practitioners believe branding elements are considered malleable over time. Indeed it suggests that marketers believe that branding *must* change over time (i.e. branding does and can not last for more than a decade). This is often reflected in industry practice whereby brands rebrand but keep some branding elements like colours, shapes and characters, such as Betty Crocker, Pepsi and Coca-Cola. For example, Betty Crocker kept the woman in the red jacket but updated her look with the times.

The digital media space makes it easier to make changes

Some respondents felt that digital media platforms afford them greater flexibility and freedom to change branding elements. One respondent described a scenario of how this was operationalised.

> *"In our digital space the branding didn't quite match what we were doing with all our other comms. And it had already been done on everything else. We wanted it to be more up to date. We wanted it to be more about the look of what was existing. It was different from the existing (branding), but we wanted to*

differentiate what our digital channels were doing. It was different colouring to our other advertising, but it wasn't so different that you couldn't tell it was us." Advertiser

"Yeah I think that in digital you're better off doing any kind of changes here. I mean if your customers are already 'in the shop', they know they're there, so they know your brand. You can make changes." Advertiser

The digital space is one where branding elements can and are changed or varied (either on purpose; as in this case, or by accident). This finding is supported by actual practice documented in Phase 1: where branding element variation was quantified and qualified on the Facebook platform. Industry evidence also suggests that the digital space is a fast and cost effective method for trialling different branding elements (Neff 2012). For marketers, these findings suggest that digital is considered a viable media to make changes to branding elements, either temporarily (variation) or long term (rebranding).

Merging brands means branding changes

Two respondents discussed mergers as necessitating branding element changes and described their personal experiences.

"I was involved with creating a whole new brand when 'brand X' and 'brand Y' merged. That involved a whole new name, a new logo, new positioning. We did a lot of research to make sure that we got it right.' Advertiser

This finding is unsurprising as many brands that merge either assume the name of the dominant brand in an attempt to transfer brand equity, or create a new brand name with the new entity (Muzellec and Lambkin 2006). This practice is common and sensical as a reason for changing branding elements.

Summary RQ2.A

All respondents said that branding element variation was atypical behaviour. However, many respondents indicated that changing branding elements (either by tweaking, refreshing or modifying) was necessary over time; every eight to ten years. These findings shed light on rebranding in practice whilst highlighting a disconnect between Phase 1 findings and practitioner perspectives. This finding suggests that marketers consider branding elements malleable over time, but, that the brand needs to maintain its identity with modifications. A few respondents said that digital media simplified branding changes whilst two respondents mentioned mergers as a major reason for rebranding branding elements.

Results for RQ2.B: what (if anything) do marketers consider acceptable variations to branding elements

and;

Results for RQ2.C: why are branding element variations considered acceptable?

Determining acceptable branding element variations with a choice scenario

The choice scenario used a post-positivism approach by showing practitioners varied brand element executions rather than asking them to describe acceptable colour and logo variations. Respondents were presented with variations to colour and logo branding elements for six brands: BMW, Cadbury, Dove, Nike, Mitsubishi and Target. Respondents were required to firstly identify the existing branding execution and then to identify a branding element variation that would be acceptable to run for one campaign for each of the colour and logo variation executions. When asked to choose a variation, many, but not all respondents, made a choice. When respondents identified an acceptable variation, they explained why that execution was most acceptable. There were no discernible differences between respondent groups (i.e. advertiser and advertising agency respondents).

Three patterns emerged from the choice scenario. Firstly; no variation was *always* preferred to any variation; either colour or logo. Secondly; colour variation was considered far more acceptable than any logo variation. Thirdly; respondents wanted to find and articulate a rationale, strategy or objective for variation and when possible they were much more accepting of branding element variation.

Whilst marketers may have had in-depth knowledge about other or fewer brands (that they worked on, for example), the choice scenario was designed to unearth factors that made branding variation acceptable, if at all. Multiple brands were included in the choice experiment purposefully; to help understand *any* acceptable branding variations. The findings in this chapter are groups brands together to aid readability

The next section discusses the results of identifying original branding executions.

Identifying existing branding executions: most difficult for two brands

All respondents found it difficult to identify the original branding execution for BMW, whilst others found Dove challenging. For BMW, many respondents chose the execution with darker blue than the original branding. Many respondents said that they knew it was blue, but they didn't know which one (see Figure 9). When the correct colour was revealed to respondents, many were surprised. Many also said, "I knew it was one of them, I just wasn't sure which one" or "I know it's blue".

Figure 9: BMW branding executions



If a respondent could not identify the correct branding colour, it was not assumed that variation was acceptable. Respondents were asked if they would be comfortable with the darker hue variation, given that they thought it was the original branding. Most said no, that they would prefer to run the original, they also said that if a variation was to be made, it needed to be "further" from the original.

"For me, running the darker one it wouldn't be enough of an evolution. If BMW wanted a redesign, the blue would be the first thing you want to keep. that's what they're most known for. I wouldn't' change it." Advertising agency

"I think if it's similar then there's no point in straying. The more that you stray from the colours that you own, the more you dilute your ability to own and protect those colours." Advertiser

For Dove, some respondents identified the green or pink dove as the original branding. Some respondents also remarked that they thought Dove varied colour on product. These respondents said that it was difficult to choose the original branding. When the correct branding was identified, many made comments like, "oh yes, that one makes sense" or "I thought it might be that one'.

Figure 10: Mistaken original branding executions for Dove



The majority of respondents correctly identified the existing branding for Cadbury, Nike, Mitsubishi and Target. Often respondents said that they felt Target and Nike had run colour variations of their branding element in the past. However, all respondents identified the original branding with ease as was the case for Cadbury and Mitsubishi too. The original branding identification created a baseline to ask and understand if any variation was acceptable from a practitioner point of view. Without first establishing the original branding colour, it would have been impossible to identify any variations as acceptable or unacceptable.

Even if a respondent did not identify the original branding correctly, they were still hesitant to choose either colour or logo variation. This suggests that marketers think that branding elements should stay consistent, even if the branding elements are weak. These results fit with existing academic knowledge on how consumer memory works: with consistency over time (Franzen and Bouwman 2001). However, this does not fit with the documented industry activity as evidenced in Chapter 2 and Phase 1 results. This may indicate that there are two schools of thought within industry about branding element consistency: one that advocates consistency at all times, and one that accepts variation. It does suggest that more research is needed to understand at what point marketers decide to vary branding elements.

The next section discusses the first pattern in the data: that no variation was preferable to either colour or logo variation.

Any variation is not (very) acceptable

Initially respondents did not want to choose any variation (either colour or logo) as acceptable. Many respondents remarked that they "couldn't see a reason for doing it".

> *"I mean I can't see a reason why they would." Advertiser*

Advertising agency respondents in particular talked about the objectives of a brand or a reason for doing it. They needed to understand the objectives of the brand more so than advertisers to find a reason for making a variation, even for one campaign.

> *"What's the objective? I mean I can't pick a change without knowing the objectives of the campaign. I would want to know why they'd want to do it, otherwise it's just a change for the sake of it. What are you hoping to achieve with this?" Advertising agency*

With each interview it became clear that respondents were consistently adverse to branding element variations. However, as each interview progressed, most respondents appeared to find it easier to make a choice and to articulate a reason why one colour variation was more acceptable than others. The reasons were usually articulated as either co-branding or a "green branding" strategy. These reasons for variation were, as per the choice scenario, related primarily to the brands examined; however respondents did say that the variations could translate to other brands i.e. within the same category. For example, some respondents remarked that 'green' or 'environmental' branding variation could apply to brands outside the automotive category. To help understand reasons for branding variation the qualitative questions were first asked broadly, *then* the choice scenario was discussed. Respondents overwhelmingly felt that colour variation was plausible, even if not preferable, for all brands (some more frequently than others) except Cadbury.

On the whole, respondents were very reluctant to choose any type of colour variation for Cadbury. Most respondents said that there was no reason to vary the colour. All respondents felt that Cadbury owned the colour purple and as such, any variation would erode that ownership. Only three respondents chose a colour variation for Cadbury, this is discussed later in this chapter. This was somewhat expected given that Cadbury legally own the colour purple in the chocolate category (Hoek and Gendall 2010).

For all logo variations, the majority of respondents said that the most acceptable variation was the one that changed the brand the *least*. Some respondents consistently said they did not think any variation was acceptable and refused to choose any variation.

The next section discusses colour variation results for each brand. Some brands are discussed together because the rationale for the variation was similar.

Colour variation can be strategically acceptable

Co-branding with a pink variation was most acceptable for Dove and Target

Most respondents felt that the pink colour variations for Dove and Target were most acceptable. The executions are included below.



Figure 11: Target and Dove pink logo variations

Most respondents said that they would run the pink variation if either brand paired with the National Breast Cancer Council. Many respondents felt that co-branding was a logical rationale to vary colour branding elements to pink.

> *"Yep if you were going to partner up with like breast cancer charities that would make sense." Advertiser*

> *"If I was going to run like a fundraising Dove bottle then yes, I think that would be acceptable." Advertiser*

> *"I think definitely test the pink. People naturally go there." Advertising agency*

> *"I've seen lots of brands run with breast cancer awareness week or something like. It tends to happen a lot around mothers day and the McGrath day at the cricket." Advertiser*

> *"I worked with Brand X and they worked with some charities. We generally don't encourage that. Because we're looking for what might make their brand the strongest. I haven't seen it done well. I think it needs to be done subtly. If they can offer credibility. But the flow of knowledge, money and influence needs to be towards the brand we're working on." Advertising agency*

Many respondents said that they thought the Dove and Target branding had been aired in past advertisements as the pink variation.

> *"Haven't they done this before?" Advertiser*

> *"I feel like this is a bit of a trick. Haven't they done this kind of thing before?" Advertising agency*

A few respondents also said that the Mitsubishi logo could be varied to pink (Figure 12) to co-brand with a breast cancer not-for-profit organisation (i.e. McGrath Foundation). However, this was mentioned far less for Mitsubishi than for Dove or Target.

Figure 12: Mitsubishi pink colour variation



The pink variation could have been considered the most acceptable for Dove, Target and mentioned for Mitsubishi, because a pink variation was presented in the array. However, respondents typically did not carry this rationale over to other brands (i.e. BMW or Cadbury) which showed similar hues. In fact, when first questioned, unprompted, about branding element variation, only one respondent mentioned co-branding. This was a stark contrast to the structured choice scenario where almost all respondents mentioned co-branding as a reason for varying a branding colour (for these brands).

Given that marketers identified the pink for Target and Dove as the most acceptable variation, there was a need to understand what impact this variant might have for a brand's recognisability in advertising; where co-branding is typically aired.

BMW and Mitsubishi: going green for the environment

For Mitsubishi the green colour variation was identified as the most acceptable branding element variation by the majority of respondents, see Figure 13. The rationale for this choice was that the green branding variation would be most "fitting" for a new energy efficient vehicle ad, and consequently, a new product variant.

> *"If you were going to run like an eco car you could do the green for a campaign, the darker green." Advertiser*

> *"If they (Mitsubishi) brought in an electric vehicle then they could go green." Advertising agency*



Figure 13: Mitsubishi's green colour variation

As previously discussed, some respondents also thought that a pink variation was acceptable for Mitsubishi if paired with a breast cancer charity. However, the "green branding strategy" was most prominent, acceptable and considered applicable to this brand and to the car category in general. Given the responses from practitioners, the green Mitsubishi colour variation was tested in Phase 3: consumer effect.

Some practitioners refused to choose an acceptable variation for BMW and many others were reluctant. Others said that the green variation would be the only acceptable variation. Again, this was typically attributed as a green branding strategy in the car industry (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: BMW green colour variation



The green colour variation choice and rationale might be expected given the nature of the automobile industry and the industry shift towards energy efficient vehicles. A few respondents felt that the car industry was moving towards a greener or environmentally friendly image and that the variation would work particularly well in this category.

A few respondents said that the green variant of Dove could be a suitable variation if a new product variant was introduced that was all natural i.e. an aloe vera variant or recyclable packaging.

> *"You could do Dove aloe. So you could go the lighter green." Advertising agency*

Whilst this offers a similar reason for colour variation, the green was chosen far less by respondents than the pink variation as being acceptable for Dove. Consequently, the more acceptable pink variation was tested for Dove in Phase 3 of this thesis. Target had previously run a campaign with a green colour variation, however no respondents identified this specifically; they also did not choose the green variation as an acceptable variation. Consequently, the most acceptable pink variation for Target was tested in RQ3.

Nike: it doesn't matter; any colour I like

For Nike, most respondents said that any colour variation would be acceptable, even if not preferable. Most respondents said that the swoosh logo was "so distinctive" or "strong enough on its own" to compensate for any colour variations. Respondents often commented that they thought Nike had varied colours in the past and that this practice was acceptable. Many respondents also felt that the colour of the Nike swoosh was less important than other brands because it was routinely varied on products. Only one respondent said that they would not vary the black colour in a billboard advertisement.

> *"Yep, I'd put any of them in there. Nike is so strong and so recognisable they can do whatever they want world wide." Advertising agency*

Most respondents chose the branding execution that was lime green/yellow as the most acceptable colour variation for Nike. Many respondents simply said that they liked this colour best, so that colour variation was most acceptable.

Figure 15: Nike acceptable colour variation



These responses support research that managers often use 'gut feel' in organisational decision making (Szabo, Bogomolova et al. 2012). This response indicates that there could be potentially little or no logical reasoning for branding element variation, but that it simply occurs because it can or because managers like it.

Cadbury can not vary colour: the most unacceptable colour variation

Most respondents felt that there was no reason why Cadbury should or would ever vary its colour. Many respondents commented that Cadbury owned the colour purple and they "couldn't see a reason for changing it". This result is expected given that Cadbury legally owns the pantone 268c. The overwhelming majority of respondents did not choose any colour variations as acceptable and that there would never be an acceptable scenario to vary the colour.

> *"I wouldn't be comfortable running anything different because Cadbury purple is the Cadbury purple. I can't see any reason why you would change the purple. You wouldn't have an eco Cadbury bar. It's not realistic. That'd be my gut feeling on it." Advertiser*

> *"No, because well as an advertising agency, suggesting that to Cadbury. Cadbury's own purple. You'd be crazy to change it." Advertising agency*

Three respondents eventually identified a colour varied execution as acceptable; they mostly chose a colour close to the original of pink or slightly brighter purple. One respondent remarked that he liked the turquoise colour also.



Figure 16: Cadbury colour variations

These respondents talked about new product variants or lines, i.e. cherry chocolate, as a rationale for Cadbury's colour variation. This confirmed that respondents *needed* to articulate a reason for branding element variation.

> *"Oh, maybe if you did like a cherry flavour you could probably do the reddish one." Advertiser*

> *"I like the lighter one a bit better. I thought it was that one. Maybe if you did like a 'light' version." Advertising agency*

> *"Um, I mean there's something here for me that looks better. I think the pinky ones are better. There's something nice in the turquoise. If you're a brand who's taken out a trademark on a colour which is pretty hefty, then you're probably not going to what to deviate from that. There's nothing wrong with the purple and it's got such an association, they'll probably never deviate from it." Advertising agency*

This finding indicates that even for strong distinctive assets, some variation may be plausible, but is highly unlikely.

Colour variation summary

When presented with the choice scenario, respondents preferred no variation to either colour or logo variation. The two most typical colour variation rationales were a) for co-branding with a not-for-profit organisation (breast cancer charity); the pink variation was considered most acceptable for Dove and Target; and b) to promote a "green branding strategy" with the green colour variation for Mitsubishi. Whilst marketers thought Nike could vary the branding to any colour, colour variations for Cadbury and BMW were considered unacceptable. Respondents sought to rationalise colour variation choices and when able to articulate or strategically rationalise, they were much more accepting of

Logo variation: less acceptable than colour variation

Respondents typically struggled to choose an acceptable logo variation (drop shadows, flares and 2D to 3D or vice versa). Variations were typically eliminated by how *unsuitable* they were. Some respondents eliminated variations based on how unlikable they were. Almost all respondents used the terms "too far from the brand" when discounting the varied logo executions. Many respondents also remarked that they "couldn't see a reason for changing the logo", or "no, I would never run anything different for brand X, their branding is so distinctive" even for a one campaign.

These findings contrast to acceptable colour variation executions where respondents typically could and did offer strategic reasons for varying colour elements. Typically respondents chose a logo variation execution that was "as close as possible" to the original, or a logo variation that "doesn't detract" from the original. These results and comments support Weber's Law of Just Noticeable Difference (Britt and Nelson 1976): whereby variation is acceptable so long as it doesn't distort the image beyond recognition i.e. it is only just (or not at all) noticeable to consumers. Some respondents refused to choose any logo variation execution as acceptable, even for one campaign.

The results suggest that logo variation is considered, for the most part, unacceptable, which is valuable knowledge for academics. The findings suggest that logo variation is less likely to occur than colour variation and as such, it is more pertinent to industry practice to investigate colour variation effects on consumers. The results support the findings from Phase 1 where logo variation was found to be less common in practice than colour variation. Furthermore, these findings are valuable to help contextualise the results of Phase 3: if any effect is found, this perspective should be applied given the (un)likeliness of logo variation occurring.

2D or 3D variation was least acceptable

Overwhelmingly, respondents identified that dimension variations: 2D to 3D or vice versa were the most unacceptable for all brands. Most remarked that these changes made it "hard to see what the brand is". Most respondents said that the dimensional variations "changed the brand too much", or made it unrecognisable (i.e. warped beyond recognition). Many respondents said for example, "that doesn't even look like Brand X any more" once the dimension was changed

> *Cadbury: "I hate the 3D. I'm never choosing it!" Advertiser*
>
> *Mitsubishi: "No. I think that's too far away from the brand. It doesn't even really look like Mitsubishi anymore." Advertising Agency*

Practitioners thought that the dimension logo variations made the brand too hard to recognise. Respondents also felt that the dimension variation was too different from the original and would consequently be too difficult for consumers to recognise the brand. This was consistent for most practitioners across the 2D/3D logo variations.

> *Mitsubishi: "I think because they rely on the shape more than any of them (other test brands), they would have to be very careful going 3D. It would change the outline of them." Advertiser*

However, a few respondents commented that media choice might make a 3D variation acceptable. A few respondents felt that Target could vary its logo to 3D when using motion media, often they said that this had been done before, but that for no other brand or media 3D would be acceptable. Target had previously run a campaign with the logo varied to 3D throughout (B&T 2010). This was only ever considered acceptable for the Target logo and in motion media (i.e. a TVC). For all other logos respondents felt that any variation to the dimensions would confuse consumers because, "it wouldn't look like them anymore".

Shadows and flares were the most acceptable variations

Respondents overwhelmingly chose drop shadows or flares for the brands included in this study as the most acceptable variations to logos. Like the colour variation executions, logo variations were evaluated on a brand by brand basis. Overall there was little consensus on individual brands. However, Dove and Mitsubishi were by far, the most acceptable brands for logo variation with the drop shadow considered the most acceptable variation. For other brands, the logo variations were either evenly distributed between the flare and drop shadow options or, respondents said that no logo variation was acceptable under any circumstance. This was most commonly because they said that neither variation "hurt" the brand too much.





Figure 17 and 18: Acceptable Mitsubishi and Dove logo variations: drop shadows

Some respondents felt that variations could be acceptable in particular media. For example, some said that the flares might look like a "mistake" in print, but could work in motion media.

> *Mitsubishi: "I wouldn't do that (the flare), I think it would look like a mistake. Like in print it would look like it was printed wrong." Advertiser*

> *BMW: "I reckon you could get away with the flare in a TVC for example, like having it flash across the screen." Advertising agency*

In the event where a practitioner had said two logo (or colour) variations were acceptable, both were considered as potential options for testing on consumers in Phase 3.

> *Dove: "The flares are ok, yeah I would do that one. The shadow is ok too. I wouldn't protest if they wanted to do it." Advertising agency*

Overall, most respondents considered Dove and Mitsubishi the most acceptable brands for variation and rationalised the variation by saying that it was "most similar" to the original branding.

> *"The drop shadow is ok, but it would need to be used appropriately. It would depend on the elements of the whole ad." Advertiser*

> *"The flare looks like it's fading away. Maybe the shadow." Advertiser*

> *"The short answer is no, I wouldn't do it. If they came in and said 'I want to do this'; sometimes clients come in and say they want to 'mix it up'. I'd do the shadow. It's the softer effect. But I can't see a reason for doing it." Advertising agency*

> *"Yeah possibly the shadow is ok. The logo doesn't really change. So, yeah, I'd do that. But the others are a no." Advertising agency*

For Target, the most acceptable variations was a flare or drop shadow. The most acceptable (by a slim margin) was the flare execution. As such, the flare variation was tested in Phase 3.

> *Target: "The flares is also the most acceptable. It most closely resembles the current logo. The consistency of brand, logo and identity is critical." Advertising agency*

> *Target: "The shadow would be the most acceptable because it an enhanced version of the current one and doesn't deviate too far from the original." Advertiser*

> *Target: "The lens flare gives the impression of quality, newness etc. I don't think a drop shadow has a purpose, so no to that one. And the 3D just confuses the logo. That one would be hard to reproduce across media." Advertising agency*

For BMW, most practitioners chose either the drop shadow or the flares as the most acceptable variation. This was because these variations did little to "detract" or "take away" from the brand. Again, variation choices were media dependent.

> *BMW: "I would run the shadow, but I still wouldn't run it, you know out of the choices." Advertiser*

> *BMW: "You could use the flares on TV with movement. The shadow might be OK. I like that. But the 2D is confronting." Advertiser*

> *BMW: "The light treatment is good and probably something they've done. They probably wouldn't do it in a flat print execution (the flare). The shadow is more of an additional. I wouldn't recommend the drop shadow all the time, but I think their logo comes from the way it sits on the car. You can feel the bumps like it's on a car grill. So I wouldn't recommend any of these." Advertising agency*

Whilst some respondents could make a choice for acceptable logo variation, the reasons to support the choice were far less convicted. This was noted by respondents themselves. Often they said that there was no reason for making any variation and that they didn't really want to. This suggests that logo variation is much less acceptable than colour variation.

The choices for BMW were spread mostly across the flares and the shadow. However, many respondents also refused to make a choice for the logo variation saying that they didn't consider any variation acceptable.

> *BMW: "It's a complex logo. There's a lot going on. Yeah no, I wouldn't fiddle with that one." Advertising agency*

The responses for Cadbury were varied; some respondents felt that the flare was the most acceptable variation, whilst others suggested the drop shadow.

> *Cadbury: "I'd only run the drop shadow. I feel comfortable with that. I think the others are too hard to read. It wouldn't have a strong cut through." Advertising agency*

> *Cadbury: "I definitely wouldn't do that (3D) because it's superfluous. If anything it looks like a move production studio. The drop shadow is ugly and it's dated. Flares, yeah I'm not sure about the flares. They're*

a bit out. A flare or a light coming off something can allude to quality or shiny-ness or something. Maybe the flares." Advertising agency

Cadbury: "If I was forced to, I'd go for the shadow." Advertiser

Cadbury: "I'd put the light on the cups, not on the text." Advertiser

Overall respondents did not advocate any variation as likely nor was there a most acceptable variation. Again, respondents could not identify a functional or strategic reason for logo variation so most were less accepting of variations.

For Nike, respondents identified either the shadow or flare variation as the most acceptable logo variation.

Nike: "There's always special circumstances. I guess the reason for doing it would need to outweigh the corruption of the logo. No I wouldn't change it." Advertising agency

Nike: "Maybe a shadow. I think the flare could work in digital and TV. But no to the 3D, I wouldn't do that." Advertiser

Nike: "I think because they rely on the shape more than any other brand, they would have to be very careful. Going 3D would change the outline of them. So no." Advertiser

Again, regardless of the choice of shadow or flare, the decision making was based on what distorted the brand least. These results suggest that media strategy could play a role in logo variation decision making which could influence a logo variation choice.

Logo variation summary

Logo variations were less favoured and less ably rationalised by respondents than colour variation. The reasons for choosing one logo variation over another were largely made by elimination; respondents used phrases like, "that's not horrible", or "it's the closest to the brand, but I don't think it takes anything away from the brand". For these reasons, 2D/3D logo variation was considered the least acceptable. However, some respondents though adding flares or a drop shadow was the most acceptable logo variations; most notably for Dove and Mitsubishi. Media placement also played a role in acceptability and the likely placement of logo variation.

Summary and implications of RQ2.B and 2.C for this thesis

Overall, respondents felt that no branding element variation was preferable to either colour or logo variations. However, when pressed, colour variation was considered much more acceptable than logo variation. This married up with the results from Phase 1 results where colour variations were found more than logo or typeface variations. Typically respondents said that colour variations were acceptable as pink or green because they reflected a strategy for the brand: either a) co-branding with a charity (typically breast cancer), or b) to reflect an "green branding strategy". This was particularly prominent for Dove, Mitsubishi and Target and again, relates back to the examples presented in Chapter 2. Respondents considered colour variation of Cadbury and BMW unacceptable. Comparatively, Nike was the brand that could vary its colour element because the logo was the most recognisable component of the brand.

Respondents typically considered logo variations to have a negative impact on the recognisability of a brand. Rationale for logo variation was much more difficult for respondents; consequently, they used processes of elimination to discount variations. The inability to rationalise a logo variation appeared to negatively impact on the acceptability of logo variation. Adding flares or a drop shadow were considered the most acceptable logo variations whilst 2D/3D variation was the least. From the brands included in the structured choice scenario, logo variations made to Dove and Mitsubishi were considered most acceptable.

Chapter summary

Phase 2 findings revealed that branding element variation was considered atypical branding behaviour. Respondents typically said that branding elements should remain consistent, however changes to branding elements were considered necessary over time to modernise or refresh a brand. When presented with variations in the choice scenario, respondents considered any variation less acceptable than branding consistency. That said, when presented with variations, respondents considered colour variations to be much more acceptable and justifiable than logo variations. A co-branding or “green branding strategy” i.e.new product variant strategy, were the key reasons why the pink and green colour variations were (respectively) most acceptable. Logo variations were considered unacceptable because they “damaged” a brand. Respondents felt that the most acceptable logo variation was the one that deviated least from the original branding: flares and drop shadows. Given the results obtained from Phase 2 of this research, the next chapter discusses the quantitative method used to test the acceptable branding element variations to determine consumer effect.

Chapter 7 - Research Phase 3 Method

Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the controlled experiment used to examine any effects on consumer recognition of acceptable branding element variations made to colours and logos (RQ3). The appropriateness of using an experiment is first addressed, then the experiment design is described along with the stimuli and independent variables, the experimental procedure, the sample and sampling frame. The dependent variables and the data collection are also addressed. This chapter justifies the brands tested and discusses the handling of the data including the analysis performed to address the research objectives.

Context for research question 3

To quantify what (if any) effect acceptable variation to colour and logo branding elements has on consumer recognition in advertising (RQ3), a quantitative method was required. Quantitative research collects numerical data about a specific question and then uses statistics, theories and models to make generalised, unbiased inferences about a phenomenon of the population surveyed. In this research, a quantitative experiment objectively measured effects of branding element variation on consumers. The next section justifies the use of a controlled experiment to address RQ3.

Experimental design: a controlled experiment

Experiments allow for the relationships between two or more variables to be examined while controlling for potential confounding factors. This research used an experiment to address RQ3 because no research to date had examined colour and logo branding variation specifically (see Chapter 2 for relevant research on advertising and pack variations) and because the descriptive content analysis (Phase 1) and qualitative interviews (Phase 2) alone were insufficient to understand the effects of variation on consumer recognition. Experiments can be natural or controlled; for this research, a controlled experiment was used (and is justified in the next paragraphs).

In a natural experiment, data comes from a 'naturally occurring' situation, where the treatment variables are not under direct control of the researcher (Dunning 2005). For example, if two communities live along a river and toxic chemicals are introduced, the downstream community is likely to experience adverse effects compared with the upstream community. In that scenario, a natural experiment would be at hand: two separate groups (a control and treatment group), a dependent variable (symptoms) and an independent variable (the water; with or without toxicity). Ideally control and treatment conditions are equitably (as-if-randomly) distributed amongst participants, however this can be hard to achieve in natural experiments; i.e. the communities could mingle or share water resources. Consequently, natural experiments are more akin to observational studies (Dunning 2005) than controlled experiments. A controlled experiment, by comparison would expose one group to unpolluted water and another to the toxic water to determine effects. In the context of this research, a natural experiment would have required every participant to be equally likely to be exposed to the independent stimuli in its natural context, and to be equitably exposed to other factors that could influence the dependent variables. In this research, that would have required each participant to be equally likely to be exposed to each branding variation and ad in a natural context. This was impractical given budget, timing, the number of respondents required and the dependent variables to be measured, as the results could not be reasonably attributed to the independent variables.

Comparatively, controlled experiments simplify the real-world and allow control for, or eliminations of other factors that could potentially impact on the dependent variables. Such factors can be either removed or distributed randomly to the respondent group which allows for a higher degree of certainty to be given to causality (Patzer 1996). This oversimplification can potentially over exaggerate findings (Farris and Reibestein 1984). However, the underlying benefit is to see the effect of one stimuli in the relationship (i.e. the effect of one variable on another or vice versa) without impact from confounding factors that may skew results. This research is concerned with effects of branding element variations made to branding elements on consumer recognition (correct recognition and reaction time). If a natural experiment were used, there would be a host of other factors that could affect the results which could not be reasonably controlled for. Some of these factors are:

1. Whether respondents saw the original or varied advertisement; if respondents saw a mixture of varied and original branding elements for one brand, it would be difficult to attribute any recognition results directly to the branding element variations made.
2. How many times either original or varied executions were seen. As more exposure increases consumer learning and would likely affect recognition and timing.
3. Category competitor advertising exposure. A natural experiment could not control for competitor advertising whereas a controlled experiment can manage this factor by either elimination or inclusion of competitor advertising so that recognition is not artificially inflated.
4. Brand usage influences; brand users are more likely to recall and recognise advertising than non-users (see Chapter 2 for full discussion). By recording brand usage, this potential influence was controlled.

A controlled experiment could also disguise the test variables which added to the reliability of the findings by lessening respondent bias. For example, respondents may believe that the aim of the research was to determine which advertising context was best, rather than investigate branding element variations. This approach is less intrusive but still gathers direct data on the variables under examination. A controlled experiment was the clear choice to alleviate, eliminate or control potential factors which may have unduly influenced the dependent variables.

The next section details the experiment design.

Experiment design

The experiment had a basic design. A single independent variable (branding element variation to colour or logo) was manipulated to measure effects on the dependent variables. The dependent variables were correct recognition and reaction time (both of which are justified in the dependent variable section of this chapter).

The experiment was conducted online via survey software Qualtrics with acceptable colour and logo branding variation executions used as treatment stimuli. The treatment stimuli were (presented and,) derived from RQ2.B results with three test brands. For each brand, an original branding execution (control) and two branding element variation executions (treatment stimuli) were used. Treatment and control stimuli were embedded into two advertising contexts (billboard and Facebook). Each brand was randomly shown to respondents once. Consequently, each respondent saw *either* a control or treatment execution for each brand in one of the advertising contexts. The advertising context contained either one of the treatment *or* control branding executions with a category competitor branding execution.

Respondents were required to find the test brand and click on the advertisement. This measure constituted the variable for correct recognition; i.e. whether they chose the correct execution or not. The time taken to make the choice was also recorded; this constituted the reaction time dependent variable. Respondents were asked to indicate

their brand and category usage at the end of the survey to account for brand usage and brand awareness correlations; users of a brand are more likely to recall and recognise an advertisement than non-users.

Experiments can use either a within-subjects or between-subjects design; the former was used in this research. A within-subjects design is where a group of respondents are exposed to more than one treatment stimuli. A within-subject design would have meant that respondents were exposed to both treatment (colour or logo variations) and control executions. This would have likely resulted in conditioning respondents to look for the varied execution. Instead, this research opted for a between-subjects design to lessen potential learning effects (Tulving and Schacter 1990). I.e. a respondent was shown each brand once with either a colour variation, logo variation or original branding execution.

The next section details the independent variables (i.e. the control and treatment stimuli) and the use of three brands.

Independent variable stimuli

From the original six brands used in the structured choice scenario of RQ2.B (BMW, Cadbury, Dove, Mitsubishi, Nike and Target), three brands were tested in the experiment: Dove, Mitsubishi and Target. This section firstly addresses the use of three brands instead of six. Then the rationale for using Dove, Mitsubishi and Target as the test brands is provided.

An experiment of three brands

The experiment tested three of the original six brands to provide a large sample size and therefore more statistically reliable analysis. The analysis in this thesis required an ANOVA and a Mann-Whitney test (these tests are described in detail in the data handling section of this chapter). A large sample size was required because the analysis needed to potentially analyse each brand and branding execution separately.

For the analysis, the brands were grouped together to look for effects when variation (colour or logo) was present, rather than examined individually. If no effect was found overall, it would have been necessary to analyse each brand individually. With individual brand analysis, the sample size per treatment would have depleted. To ensure that an ANOVA could be conducted on each brand individually, it was necessary to spread the sample thickly over three brands, rather than thinly over six. For example, it was estimated that 480 respondents would be exposed to Dove. This 480, would be equitably split across the 3 executions: the original branding, colour variation and logo variation execution. So, 160 respondents would see Dove's colour variation execution. The analysis also needed to filter between users and non-users to control for any brand usage effects. When 160 was split across users and non-users, this divided the 160 into 2 groups of 80. An ANOVA requires at least 30 respondents per cell. Consequently, 80 per cell was acceptable for the ANOVA analysis, so three brands from the original six were used to provide larger cell sizes for analysis. In future, it would be advisable to replicate this research with more brands.

If the analysis had considered colour variations without the possibility to drill down into individual brands, then more brands could have been tested (i.e. the full six brands from RQ2.B). However, it was impossible to predict differences or similarities between brands. The experiment needed the *option* to analyse individual brands rather than all colour variations grouped together.

Testing three brands was still suitable to generate generalisable results. Hartnett (2011) used four brands to test manipulated advertisements and inferred generalisability. All four brands from Hartnett's work are from different

categories; as is the case in this research. It is possible to generate generalisable results using a selection of brands as has been done in previous studies (see Hartnett 2011, Nelson-Field, Riebe et al. 2012). Budgetary constraints also influenced the available panel size available for purchase.

Why use Dove, Mitsubishi and Target?

The three brands included in the experiment were based on the results from RQ2.B and RQ2.C. Of the six brands in Phase 1, Dove, Mitsubishi and Target were considered *most* acceptable for variation of both colour and logo branding elements. The reasons for why these brands were considered most acceptable and likely for variations is discussed in detail in the Chapter 8 Results. Original branding executions were used to provide a benchmark measure for (any) dependent variables changes. The most commonly chosen variations to logos was a drop shadow for Dove and Mitsubishi and a flare for Target; they were the treatment stimuli for the experiment (see Table 21).

Table 21: Acceptable branding element variations tested in the choice scenario

Brand	Original branding (control)	Colour variation (treatment)	Logo variation (treatment)
Dove			
Mitsubishi			
Target			

The branding variations in Table 21 show that the variations tested in Phase 3 were realistic in comparison to industry practice. For example, the branding variations applied by Target in 2012 were similar to that tested in this thesis (see Table 9). Whereas the variations applied by KFC in 2014 could be considered more extreme than the variations tested in the experiment (see Figures 3-5 in Chapter 2). Moreover, the logo variations applied were based on Phase 1 results and represent logo variation in practice (see Chapter 5 results).

Each branding execution was individually embedded into two advertising contexts: out-of-home, billboard and social networking, Facebook. As such, each brand had six advertising contexts created: three branding executions (two treatment, one control) embedded into two advertising contexts (billboard and Facebook).

A close category competitor branding execution was also embedded into each advertising context for each brand. The closest category competitor as per Australian market share was chosen. Table 22 shows the category, test and competitor brands with relevant market shares and competitor branding executions.

Table 22: Competitor brand, brand size and branding execution

Brand	Test brand	Competitor brand	Market share (%)		Competitor branding
			Test brand	Competitor brand	
Personal hygiene*	Dove	Nivea	8.4	7.5	
Automotive	Mitsubishi	Ford	5.4	8.3	
Non-grocery retailer	Target	Big W	3.3	3.9	

Market shares for personal hygiene and non-grocery retailer recorded as per 2013 from Euromonitor[3] for Australia only. Source:http://www.portal.euromonitor.com/Portal/Pages/Search/SearchResultsList.aspx
Market share for automotive category as per 2012 for Australia only. Source: http://www.acaresearch.com.au/australian-market-research-blog/bid/320971/Australian-Auto-Market-Research-2013-Trends-in-Passenger-Car-Sales
* Market share based on deodorant category only. Beauty and Personal care category competition market shares available as Dove: 2.2% and Nivea 1.2%

By including a direct category competitor category search effects were limited. And, the advertising contexts were more typical of real-world advertising whereby category and non-category competitors often advertise in the same space (i.e. on Facebook, billboards, TV, radio, magazines etc.).

The next section describes the advertising contexts created for each brand and the controls used to make the experiment as realistic as possible.

Creating the advertising contexts

The two advertising contexts, billboard and Facebook were used to test the branding variations. The use of two advertising contexts heightened the realism of the experiment and also allowed for constant ad representation to consumer respondents (i.e. all executions were static branding images not motion media). Two advertising contexts increased the reliability of the findings, firstly for marketers to replicate actual advertising space, and secondly, so it

[3] [3] Euromonitor is a website offering research for consumer markets online. Euromonitor is an international research site offering research on industries, countries, categories and consumers. Euromonitor provides market research and surveys. Ref: http://www.euromonitor.com/about-us

was realistic for respondents, in that they would likely see these advertising contexts (or something similar) on a day to day basis.

Piccadilly Circus in the United Kingdom was the out-of-home context with the news feed of Facebook also used. The original advertising contexts are shown in Figures 19 and 20. Piccadilly Circus was chosen as an advertising context, rather than an Australian outdoor advertising space, to mitigate any locational familiarity amongst the Australian consumer response group which could have affected brand search time during the experiment. For example, if Kings Cross had been chosen, respondents from New South Wales would have likely had more exposure to the setting than those in Western Australia.

Figure 19: Facebook advertising context in original format



Figure 20: Billboard advertising context in original format



A graphic designer embedded the test and competitor branding executions into the advertising contexts using Abdobe photoshop. Photoshop was the most user friendly and accessible program to both measure and test colours and logos for brands. This software was recommended by the graphic designer used in this research.

When put into the online Qualtrics survey software, the images were resized to fit on one page so that respondents could see the whole image during the survey rather than having to scroll down. This ensured that the competitor image was visible at the same time. The Facebook images were resized to be 399 (high) x 339 (wide) and the billboard image was 399 x 239. The resizing reflected the original dimensions of the advertising context images, i.e. the billboard image was wider than the Facebook image so the resizing reflected this. The advertising context of Dove, Target and Mitsubishi are provided in Appendix C.1.

The branding executions were embedded in a different location for each brand to limit learning effects of respondents. Whilst previous research showed that the placement of advertising in the online environment affected recall and recognition for respondents (Dréze and Hussherr 2003), the potential for respondents to learn and look for the test brand in the same place was high and would have likely unduly affected the dependent variables.

Online survey software Qualtrics was the most accessible and timely method to run the experiment given the experiment design and the number of respondents required (minimum 1500). For example, manipulating Dove's existing advertising campaign in Piccadilly Circus was impossible, but the variations could be realistically presented online and the dependent variables collected. This form of experiment allowed for total control over 'as-if random' factors to improve the reliability and validity of the results.

The next section outlines the controls employed in the experiment.

Controls

The experiment required controls to limit or mitigate potential confounding factors so that the most reliable findings from the dependent variables were generated.

Brand name presence

On all branding executions the brand name was presented in its original state. This meant that the branding was as realistic as it would be in a real advertisement, i.e. the brand name is typically included in billboard and Facebook advertisements. If brand names had been excluded, the ads would be unrepresentative of typical practice.

Branding images were the same size

The branding executions were fitted to the designated space available in each advertising context and every effort was made to keep the branding executions as close as possible in sizing. In doing so, any sizing effects which may have attracted faster recognition than smaller images were limited (see Appendix C.1). All brand name font size was also kept proportionally true to original size. This meant that some brands had larger brand name text size than others. Whilst this may have influenced search time, this was the most realistic representation and gave the greatest external validity to the findings.

No category cues

There were no category cues used other than those existing in original branding executions. For example, Dove showed the image of a bird and Nivea did not. Excluding category cues could be considered unrealistic compared to most advertising, however this was the best way to represent the brand given the sizing constraints on Facebook. This also limited potential category cue effects; some cues are more salient than others (i.e. heavy category users may have found brand recognition easier with a category cue). The presence of category cues, particularly an unfamiliar category could have affected consumer memory; either enhancing attention or distracting respondents. The format without category cues was less representative of industry practice, but was more likely to infer causality by lessening the impacts of category cues.

Controlling for all of these factors gave this experiment the best opportunity to infer causality (Patzer 1996) between the independent and dependent variables.

Experimental procedure

The experiment was conducted in November 2013 with data collected over a period of five days using an online panel. A total of 1598 subjects participated in the study. All participants were members of, and completed the survey through, the Survey Sampling International (SSI) online panel. SSI has 62 panels in 34 countries. When this research was conducted, SSI's Australian panel was made up of 250 000 members. Membership is free and respondents are rewarded for participating in research studies. For more information on SSI see www.surveysampling.com.

All respondents had to be living in Australia and over the age of 18. Demographic criteria (gender, age and location) was kept broad to, as best as possible, ensure respondents were representative of the Australian population; this was assured by SSI the panel provider.

Under the Australian Marketing and Social Research Society (AMSRS) Code of Professional Behaviour, researchers are not to unduly deceive respondents, however, researchers are entitled to mask the true nature of research if this causes no harm to the respondent. In this research, the true purpose of the experiment was withheld from respondents. If respondents had been told the true nature of the experiment, then they would have likely looked for the variations, which was not the purpose of the research.

Survey instructions

Respondents were required to complete two screening questions. Firstly, they were asked to indicate if they currently worked in any of the following jobs: advertising agency, creative design agency, brand manager role or marketing role. Participants who identified themselves as working in the marketing field were thanked for their time and screened out. Excluding marketing professionals in market research is typical practice. Participants were also required to indicate their age bracket; any respondent under the age of 18 was thanked for their time and screened out of the survey to comply with ethics.

All remaining respondents were then presented with instructions for the survey. Respondents were asked to complete a series of 'find-it-tasks' as quickly as possible; timing was emphasised as an important factor. Respondents were instructed to find and select a designated brand in either a billboard or Facebook context as quickly as possible. For the full set of instructions as presented to respondents, see Appendix C.2.

Following the instructions, respondents were given the opportunity to practice a 'find it task', this doubled as an Instructional Manipulation Check (IMC). An IMC requires respondents to perform an irrelevant and often non-sensical or non-related task to ensure they are paying attention to the survey questions; rather than just ticking the first box of every choice set. Oppenheimer, Meyvis and Davidenko (2009) suggested the use of an IMC which is a similar style to the other survey questions. The IMC was designed to give respondents a taste of the survey questions.

To complete the IMC, respondents were required to find and select the region showing a bath in a bathroom picture as quickly as possible. They were then required to press the '>>' (next) button on the bottom right of the screen, as replicated in the survey questions. Respondents were then presented with an image of a bathroom. As the mouse hovered over an area, outlined boxes (regions) appeared. Respondents could continue to hover until they chose a region, which, when selected was highlighted. There were multiple regions, however a respondent could only choose one region to proceed. The respondent was then required to press '>>' to move to the next page. If a respondent selected two regions, they were redirected to the same page and had failed validation; a red message appeared. They were permitted to continue on to the survey as long as they selected only one region. Following the IMC, respondents were briefly reminded of the instructions, then the game began.

Each brand was randomly shown to the respondent in one of the six randomly selected executions: either control (original), or treatment stimuli (colour or logo variation) executions, in one of the advertising contexts: billboard or Facebook. Respondents were required to find and select the designated brand as quickly as possible then press '>>' to move to the next instruction page. Equal viewing quotas were set for each brand and advertising contexts to ensure comparable and sufficient viewing (i.e. data) of each branding execution to suit the analysis.

When respondents had seen each brand (once), they were required to answer brand and category usage questions (discussed in the dependent variables section of this chapter). Following usage questions, respondents were thanked for their time and redirected back through the panel survey provider (SSI) to collect their reward for participation.

Respondents were able to complete the survey in their own home and at their own pace. This provided the most comfortable environment for respondents. Whilst this was not the most natural consumption of advertising, i.e. billboards are outdoors with competing external stimuli, it was the only realistic method to collect the appropriate data (of the dependent variables) in a timely manner.

Sample size and frame

A large sample size (i.e. at least 480 per colour/logo/original treatment was required to maximise the generalisability of this research. Given that there were three branding executions and two advertising contexts tested in this research; the sample size was 1598. At the 95% confidence interval (CI), this put the margin of error at 2.5% (Berenson and Levine 1996). This increased the reliability of the analysis (and therefore results) by allowing any (potentially small) changes of the dependent variables to be examined. A larger sample size would have decreased the margin of error, to observe (more reliably) smaller changes in the dependent variables. However there are diminishing returns when increasing sample size. For example, to decrease the margin of error to 2% (at 95% CI), a sample of 2144 would have been required; and to decrease the margin of error to 1% (at 95% CI) a sample size of 6489 would have been necessary.

A quota sampling approach was employed to provide a representative sample of the Australian population as assured by SSI. Broad inclusion criteria of age, demography and gender limited cohort effects (Wright and Kearns 1998). For example, if only women aged 25-30 in Sydney were surveyed, then the results would have only generalised to this cohort of consumers; one could not reasonably assume that the findings held for males nor females outside the age bracket. By including respondents from various age, gender and geographic regions, the results generalise across the Australian population. The geography in this case was a limitation for generalisability; these results are only generalisable to the Australian population, not to any other. However, this research provides a valuable starting point and framework for future replication research.

The next section justifies the dependent variables.

The dependent variables

To measure any effects of branding element variations on consumers, two dependent variables were used; correct recognition and reaction time. Given the nature of advertising (and thus branding) consumption (see discussion on clutter, low involvement processing and ad avoidance in Chapter 2), whether or not a consumer can correctly identify a brand and how quickly they can do that, are relevant intermediary (i.e. not sales) dependent variables to measure effects of variation on consumers. Outside the experiment conditions, the dependent variables are key measures to determine the effectiveness of advertising, for this reason they were also the most relevant within the tested conditions. The merits of each and relevance to the research question in this experiment are discussed further below.

Brand recognition: memory

Two typical intermediate metrics used to measure effective advertising in terms of memory are recall and recognition (Taylor, Kennedy et al. 2009). Both recall and recognition are memory measures. The superiority of each metric is highly debated within academic literature (du Plessis 1994). The key issue between the two concerned with which is a better intermediary measure for advertising effectiveness. In practice however, both recall and recognition are commonly used by marketers to assess advertising performance.

Recall is a measure used to ascertain whether the brand is linked to the advertising and can be retrieved from memory. Recall can be top of mind awareness (spontaneous) or category (aided) cued whereas recognition is brand prompted (via verbal, visual or auditory cues (Sutherland 1993, Olson 2004). Recall requires more mental processing than recognition because a brand must be thought of without cues (Clark and Gronlund 1996).

Recognition can essentially be described as correct, immediate brand linkage. In this research, recognition was the preferable measurement; to determine if variations had any effect on consumers; as it was necessary to understand

the ability of consumers to immediately recognise a brand in an advertising context. When consuming advertising, correct and immediate brand recognition is vital for brands. Previous advertising research by van Meurs and Aristoff (2009) considered recognition (the combination of correct recognition and reaction time) to be indicative of ad effectiveness metric. Olsen (2004) also notes that without brand recognition any branding activity (including advertising) has little to build on. The use of the recognition variable reflects real world advertising consumption. In an fmcg context (i.e. in a supermarket), if a consumer can not recognise a brand they habitually buy, they are highly unlikely to purchase it (Rossiter and Percy 1987). Whilst it is important for consumers to recall a brand in a purchase situation, it is also important that when presented with advertising or product material, that consumers can quickly and accurately recognise the brand that is advertising. Ultimately, if a consumer can't recognise a brand, then the advertising space has been wasted. Correct brand recognition was recorded by asking respondents to find and select the test brand. This bivariate measure is suitable and simplistic to determine correct recognition and, at the same time, recorded recognition reaction time.

Reaction time: biometric

Given the small amount of attention and time spent by consumers actively consuming advertising material (see Chapter 2) it was important to understand if or how branding element variation (could) influence recognition time (i.e. reaction time). In this experiment, reaction time was measured to the millisecond. Northover (2012) used reaction time in advertising research: he investigated ad pre-testing and biometrics including reaction time. He noted that the length of time taken to make a decision reflected the strength of memory associations and hence a quicker decision time for stronger branding links.

Reaction time has historically been incorporated (typically) in marketing research in relation to brand choice and preference (Tyebjee 1979). More recently, reaction time has been incorporated into advertising research, with other biometric measures, to investigate advertising effectiveness (MacLachian and Myers 1983, Northover 2012). In the context of this research, the reaction time metric (as biometric responses in a more general sense) aimed to increase the objectivity of measuring (any) effects of branding variations. Whilst other measures such as attitudes or likeability could have been used to assess cognitive effects of branding variations (i.e. preference) these were unlikely to yield meaningful behavioural data. For example, asking a respondent if they thought a branding variation would impact their recognition time would be less reliable than measuring actual behaviour.

Some of the earliest work on reaction time was conducted by Donders (1969); he suggested that reaction takes more time dependent on the degree of cognitive effort or processes required. For example, choice takes longer than recognition, which takes longer than simple reaction. Friese et al. (2006) suggested that the faster the response, the stronger the mental connection between two concepts. For this research, using reaction time as a dependent variable essentially tested the links between branding elements and the variations applied to them, on consumer memory. As such, the theory suggests that reaction times would be greater for branding variation executions than for the original branding due to the weaker links with varied images.

Weber et al. (2004) made the point that it is hard to know what is a 'good', 'fast' or 'slow' reaction time when measuring decisional and motor components. The paper examined eye-witnesses who identified a 'guilty' party in a line-up. The authors attempted to link a guilty conviction with faster eye witness identification. The assumption of the paper was that the accused who were convicted in court were undoubtedly guilty and that those who were guilty had been more speedily identified in the line-up. This method is obviously flawed given that not all who are convicted are guilty, just as not all who are acquitted are innocent. To address the issue of 'good', 'fast' or 'slow' time, reaction time was compared to the original branding execution to set a baseline dependent variable for the analysis.

Whilst correct recognition may have been similar for control and treatment branding executions (i.e. a few percentage points different), the time taken to recognise each execution may have differed greatly: from milliseconds upwards. For the purposes of this research, reaction time was a valuable dependent variable to quantify effects (either slower or faster recognition) when branding element variation was present.

Usage questions

The survey required respondents to disclose their brand and category usage for each brand in the experiment. Usage data was collected to account for potential user and non-user differences. Dove and Target usage was determined using purchase frequencies for the past 6 and 12 months respectively to reduce error associated with claimed behaviour (Ludwichowska (2013). Respondents had a pick-any choice set of major brands in each category. For Dove, respondents were asked to indicate their purchasing in the personal-care category (soap, hair care, body lotion, body wash, face care). This was to account for Dove's presence in each; which broadly fell under the personal-care category. For the car category, respondents were required to indicate any car brand they had *ever* bought. Car purchase is high-involvement and low purchase frequency category (compared to personal care or retailer). As such, it was necessary to tailor the usage question to each category.

Data handling

This section details the handling of the data and includes a justification for the timing metic used: page submit. This section justifies why the reaction time analysis only included respondents with correct brand recognition and discusses how outliers were identified and accounted for in the reaction time data.

Data analysis techniques

The analysis compared the original branding and branding element variations (individually) across dependent variables. All brands (i.e. Dove, Target, Mitsubishi) and advertising executions (i.e. billboard and Facebook) were combined for the analysis. However, the analysis split the data between users and non users (because significant differences were found between the two groups)to look for effects of variation. Respondent ages were also investigated to look for any significant differences across the reaction time data; none were found (see Chapter 8 for Phase 3 results).

To analyse correct recognition, a two-tailed, two sample z-test was used to calculate the z-value. This determined if the proportion of respondents who correctly identified the original branding were statistically different (using the p-value) to a variation execution. The equation is included below:

$$\frac{(\bar{p}_1 - \bar{p}_2) - 0}{\sqrt{\bar{p}(1 - \bar{p})\left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}}$$

An ANOVA (Tukey's test) and Mann-Whitney U test were used to test for differences between the reaction time means for original and varied branding executions. A comparison of means is typical for reaction time data (Ratcliff 1993, Northover 2012). The reaction time analysis included only respondents who correctly identified the brand (this point is addressed below). The Mann-Whitney rank ordered all reaction times, ranked each respondent and then computed the average rank for the two groups. The group with the higher average rank score had greater reaction time. The

reaction time data was then cut to represent a normal distribution using the interquartile range with a box and whisker plot method. This was actioned to add another layer to the analysis (which followed identical patterns to the Mann Whitney Test). Another ANOVA was then run on the adjusted (cut) data to determine if the same patterns held. All analyses reported significant values at $p<0.1$, $p<0.05$ and $p<0.01$. P-values greater than $p=0.1$ were reported as not significant (NS).

An ANOVA using Tukey's test was most appropriate to compare the reaction time means in this thesis because the data was approximately normally distributed (see descriptive statistics in Appendix C.5). Despite the leptokurtic (low peakedness) of the data an ANOVA can be used for slightly non-normal data. All brands were combined to enhance the sample size and statistical validity of the results and increase cell sizes. With the brands combined all errors were equitably distributed across the data set, which meant that any likelihood of type 1 error was equitably distributed.

Reaction time analysis only included respondents with correct recognition

The reaction time analysis only included respondents who correctly identified the test brand. There was no interest in investigating respondents who failed correct recognition (i.e. how long it took them to incorrectly identify a brand). This is consistent with Northover's (2012) study which examined only those with correct recognition to investigate compared to sales effective and ineffective ads using a range of biometric responses; of which reaction time was one.

Reaction time data: used the page submit metric

Qualtrics survey software recorded three timing metrics in milliseconds: first click, last click and page submit. The software also recorded a click count. Each of these terms are described below:

> First click: the number of seconds between the page load and when a respondent first clicks on a page.
> Last click: the number of seconds between page load and respondents last click on the page before clicking the next button.
> Page submit: number of seconds between page load and when respondents clicks submit/next button on page.
> Click count: number of times respondents clicked while on page, including page submit.

The first three metrics (first, last click and page submit) record reaction time, however the page submit metric was the only one used in analysis.

Compared with the last click metric, the page submit metric did not include failed validation[4] time. For example, if a respondent failed validation, the last click timing metric did not reset. However, the page submit metric reset itself as the respondent was redirected back to the advertising context to provide a valid response. If a respondent chose a region that was incorrect (i.e. *not* the test brand) the response was validated and was recorded as incorrect recognition. The page submit metric was preferable for analysis as it gave a better indication of the time taken for a respondent to *recognise* a brand (rather than just choose any brand or click multiple times after the selection) therefore, it was the most suitable reaction time variable and was consequently used in the analysis.

Extreme values in reaction time data: identifying outliers

In most reaction time experiments (and data), there is an expected 'long tail' with spurious reaction times hiding within (Ratcliff 1993). This is because there is natural variability in how long respondents take to perform a task and because some respondents may have become distracted during the task, particularly given that the survey was

[4] Validation would be considered 'failed validation' if a respondent either chose no region within an advertising context or if they selected two regions.

completed in their own home. The difficulty was in discerning legitimate reaction times and outlier or extreme values; and, determining a sound way to identify and account for outliers.

To begin, all data was included in the analyses to look for effects of branding element variation. The data was then cut using the interquartile range with the aid of a box and whisker plot. Fewer extreme values, as are likely in reaction time data, can increase the mean, inflate the standard deviation and change the measures of shape. The box and whisker plot method was appropriate for cutting the data to determine upper limits of reaction time to present normally distributed data for analysis (as is desirable when running ANOVA's). When the box plot method was applied and all values outside of the tail were eradicated, the analysis was rerun (and similar patterns emerged).

The box plot used the median as the centre point (rather than the mean which could be affected by extreme reaction time values). The data was then split into quartiles, the points that were above one and a half times the interquartile range (Q1 to Q3) were considered outliers and excluded from the data set. The box and whisker plot gave a 'cut point' for the data, i.e. anything above 7.7 seconds was considered an outlier and was excluded from analysis for each branding execution. This adjusted/cut data was included to strengthen the analysis. The vast majority of The cut point for each brand and execution is provided in Appendix C.6.

Any respondent who took longer than 60 seconds to correctly identify the brand was excluded from the analysis on a case by case basis. For example, a respondent may have taken 61 seconds to identify the Dove brand and 6 seconds to identify Target, so only the Dove time was excluded. This removed only three cases from the analysis. Whilst 60 seconds was an arbitrary cut off point, it was considered that respondents who took longer than 60 seconds to identify a brand were not fully attending to the task at hand (i.e. to find the brand as quickly as possible). This cut off point was more generous than that used by Northover (2012) where reaction times over 10 seconds were excluded for part of the reaction time analysis.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the use of a controlled experiment to address RQ3. While there are certain limitations associated with controlled experiments (i.e. simplification of real-world environments), an online experiment was the best method to understand the effect of branding element variation on consumer recognition: both correct recognition and reaction time. The data used in this thesis was drawn from the online panel provider SSI using an online experiment.

Respondents were exposed to one of three branding executions: original, colour variation or logo variation in one of two advertising contexts: billboard or Facebook for three brands: Dove, Mitsubishi and Target. The branding executions were embedded for the test brands with the closest category competitor based on market share in Australia: Nivea, Ford and Big W respectively. Two dependent variables were collected: correct recognition and reaction time. Broad inclusion criteria were set to provide a sample representative of the Australian population. Controls were placed over the brand size with all branding kept proportionally true to original size, the brand name included for each brand and the exclusion of category cues. Respondents were instructed to complete the 'find and select' task as quickly as possible to determine any effects of branding element variation. At the end of the survey, respondents were required to disclose their branding usage for each brand (and category) included in the study so that any usage influences could be accounted for. The data was analysed using two sample z-test for correct recognition. ANOVA's; one for the full data set and another for the cut data using the box and whisker plot, and a Mann-Whitney test were used to analyse the reaction time data.

The next chapter presents and discusses the results of Phase 3: consumer effects.

Chapter 8 - Research Phase 3 Results

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the results for Phase 3, RQ3: what, if anything, is the effect of colour and logo branding element variation on consumer recognition. This chapter describes the data briefly, then the results are discussed. Analyses were run to discern any differences between respondents' ages and brand usage (users and non users). Given that these variables could have influenced the colour and logo variation analyses; they were conducted and are presented first. Then the results for colour variation are reported: correct recognition and reaction time are analysed and compared to the original branding execution. Finally, the analysis for logo variation and consumer recognition is presented, again with the correct recognition and reaction time dependent variables. Throughout this chapter, the results are related to academia, industry evidence (Chapter 2) and to Phase 1 and 2's results.

Context for research question 3

RQ3 addresses what, if anything, is the effect on consumers of acceptable branding element variations in advertising, as determined by marketers. By testing only acceptable brand element variation executions, research Phase 3 had strong external validity. Before any effects of branding variation were addressed, it was first necessary to investigate brand usage and demographics of the consumer respondents. Analysis was first run to understand if recognition and reaction times were significantly different between users and non users. Analysis was also run across the age groups of respondents to determine if there were any systematic differences across the reaction time dependent variable. These results had implications for the analysis of colour and logo branding variations; i.e. if users and non users showed no difference then they could be analysed together, if not then variation analyses would need to be separated.

Variation analyses were then conducted. This chapter discusses colour variation first, then logo variation. The colour variation results begins with the correct recognition analysis which used significant difference z-tests. This analysis determined whether or not correct brand recognition was affected with colour variation compared to original branding (the benchmark used throughout). Then, reaction time analyses were conducted for colour variation. The reaction time analysis included only respondents who correctly identified the brand. An ANOVA (Tukey's test) and Mann-Whitney U test were used to test for differences between the means for all data, then the box plot cut data as described in Chapter 7. The analyses were then then repeated for logo variation, and are presented in the same sequence.

The results throughout this chapter are discussed in relation to academic knowledge on branding and memory (i.e. related back to Chapter 2). This chapter also offers some rationale for the results, relates back to Phase 2 results (RQ2) and to industry practice (Phase 1, RQ1, results). This thesis does not compare colour and logo variation to one another as the differences between correct recognition and reaction time did not have a benchmark.

Description of the dataset

Table 23 shows the number of respondents who saw each branding execution per brand and in total. This constituted the cell size for correct recognition and reaction time analysis.

Table 23: Cell size for each branding execution

Branding execution	Brands	Number of brands (n)	Proportion of brands (%)
Original	Dove Mitsubishi Target **All**	527 531 529 **1587**	484 510 510 **1504**
Colour variation	Dove Mitsubishi Target **All**	533 531 530 **1594**	504 486 517 **1507**
Logo variation	Dove Mitsubishi Target **All**	533 531 534 **1598**	506 508 511 **1525**

NB: Only respondents who correctly recognised the brand were included in the reaction time data analysis as such the cell size differs between the two groups. Respondents with incorrect recognition were deleted on a case by case basis i.e. only from that brands' analysis.

The shortest reaction time included in the analysis was 0.61 and the longest was 59.61 seconds (s). Reaction time data is typically positively skewed, as was the case in this data, for each execution; see scatter plot Figures 21-23. The scatter plots show that less than 10% of all reaction time data was above 10 seconds: 5% for original branding, 9% for colour variation and 5% for logo variation.

Figure 21: Original branding reaction time scatter plot

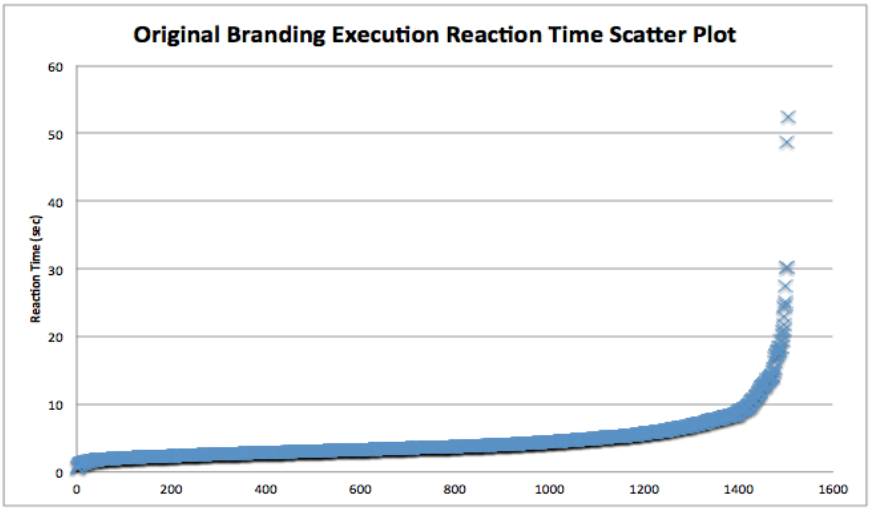
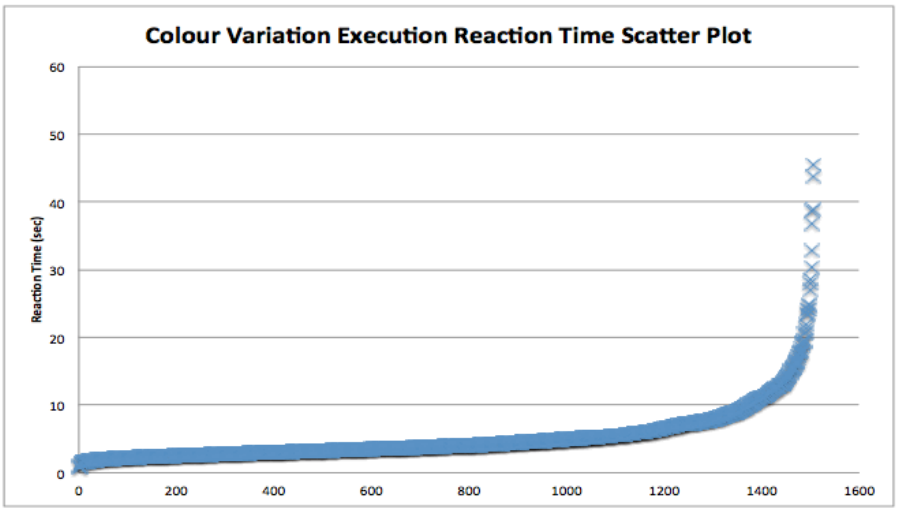


Figure 22: Colour variation reaction time scatter plot



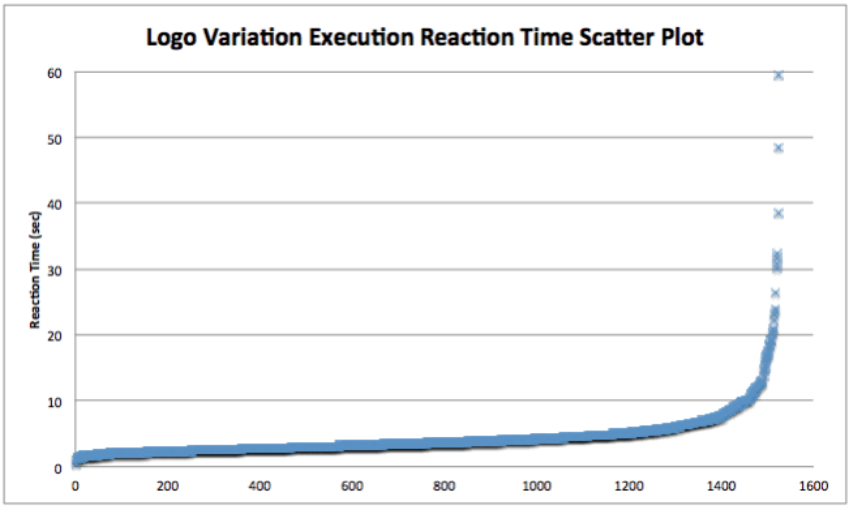


Figure 23: logo variation reaction time scatter plot

The data was then split between brand users and non users. Table 24 shows the proportion of non users who bought from the category either in the last 12 months (for Dove and Target) or ever (for Mitsubishi) for correct recognition analysis. Given that category buyers are typically light brand buyers that buy from a range of brands; the majority of non users were more likely occasional light brand buyers for high purchase frequency and low involvement categories (i.e. Dove in personal care and Target as a retailer). Correct recognition was above 98% for all brands.

Table 24: Cell size for correct recognition analysis based on usage

Brand	Brand users (N)	Brand non users (N)	Non users who were also category users (%)
Dove	648	945	89
Mitsubishi	355	1238	99
Target	1037	554	84

The reaction time analysis also separated users and non users. Table 25 shows the number of users and non users per brand and category usage for brand non users for the reaction time analysis.

Table 25: Cell size for reaction time analysis based on usage

Brand	Brand users (N)	Brand non users (N)	Non users who were also category users (%)
Dove	646	943	89
Mitsubishi	354	1236	99
Target	1036	554	84

Table 26 shows the cell size for each execution (original, colour, logo) divided amongst user and non user respondents for reaction time. The smallest cell size was 642 (user original branding execution) and the largest was 1525 (all respondents for logo variation).

Table 26: Cell size for reaction time analysis based on branding executions

Branding execution	Brand users (N)	Brand non users (N)	All respondents
Original	642	862	1504
Colour variation	664	843	1507
Logo variation	665	860	1525

The next section discusses the analyses for the data that determined systematic differences between users and non users.

Users were different to non users

Correct recognition of users and non users differed

Table 27 shows that correct recognition differed between users and non users. Compared to non users, brand users demonstrated higher correct brand recognition overall. This was statistically significant for original branding; $z=1.7$, $p<0.1$, colour variation; $z=3.6$, $p<0.001$ and logo variation; $z=3.9$, $p<0.0001$. These results show that for any branding execution, users correctly recognised a brand significantly more than non users.

Table 27: Correct recognition two-tailed z-test for users and non users

Branding execution	Proportion with correct recognition (%)		Z-Value	P-Value
	Users	Non users		
Original	96.87	95.2	1.7	0.0954*
Colour variation	97.08	93.07	3.6	0.0004*
Logo variation	98.68	95.08	3.9	<0.0001*

* indicates significance at $p<0.1$

The overarching trend in the data suggests that users were more likely to correctly recognise a brand than non users and this finding was expected. Whilst there was statistical significant difference, it would appear, on surface as though the difference between 97% and 95% has little managerial importance. However, for marketers, the important point should be the pattern. For these large (category) brands it could be expected that small differences are likely. It could also be expected that absolute differences would be greater for smaller brands with less brand recognition overall. High recognition scores (i.e. above 90%) were expected from all respondents given that there was unlimited time to choose the brand, regardless of execution. This finding is important for any manager; it is also of value to understand if users and non users showed different reaction time (i.e. how long it took them to choose the correct branding).

Users were faster than non users to correctly identify a brand

The mean reaction time for users was 4.36s (seconds) and non users, 5.11s across all executions. After running an independent samples t-test, the results showed that non users were, on average, significantly slower to correctly recognise a brand when all executions were combined: $t(4534)=6.534$, $p<0.001$.

Table 28: Reaction time T-test for users and non users

Branding execution	Mean reaction time (s)		Mean difference (s)	T-Value	df	P-Value
	Users	Non users				
Original	4.1947	4.9696	0.7749	4.154	1502	0.000*
Colour variation	4.7729	5.6115	0.83859	3.888	1505	0.000*
Logo variation	4.1040	4.7588	0.65483	3.414	1523	0.001*

*indicates significance at p<0.01

User and non user reaction time was then compared for branding executions separately (original, colour variation and logo variation). The data suggested that users were faster to correctly identify a brand than non users. When considering the absolute time taken in seconds, the difference was less than half a second. However, half a second in a natural advertising environment (i.e. flipping in a magazine, flicking channels on TV, exposure to billboards and Facebook scrolling) may be the difference between being seen and not being seen. Overall, the *trend* is important: users were faster to identify a brand than non users. This result fits with existing knowledge that users of a brand are more likely to recognise the brand. This research extends that literature empirically by demonstrating that users are also faster to recognise the brand.

Knowing that non users take longer to recognise a brand, and how buyer behaviour works (i.e. light buyers are particularly valuable to a brand as they offer the greatest potential for growth), advertisers should concentrate on making it easy for users, but particularly for non users who are category buyers, to recognise their brand in advertising. This is particularly relevant given that non users were predominantly category buyers (>84% for Dove and Target) and more than likely light brand buyers. For marketers, this would mean capitalising on original branding elements to build the associative network in consumers minds. This point is discussed in full in Chapter 9 Implications and Discussion.

The analysis from this point onward was split between users and non users given that correct recognition and reaction times significantly differed between the groups. The next section presents results on the demographic data collected to determine if age impacted on consumer recognition, specifically reaction time.

Age was no barrier for reaction time analysis

An ANOVA was run across the six age brackets (as collected in the data) to determine if there were systematic differences between age groups. The analysis was only run for reaction time data given that the nature of the experiment meant that correct recognition could take as long as a required by each respondent. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that age affects correct recognition, however there is suggestion that reaction times could be influenced by age: i.e. the older a respondent the longer they take to respond or complete tasks (Hultsch, MacDonald et al. 2002). The results from the ANOVA suggested that there were no significant differences in reaction times between age groups: $F(5)=.454$, $p=.810$.

Table 29: ANOVA of age groups: showed no significant differences in reaction time

Age bracket	Cell size (N)	Mean reaction time (s)
18-30	346	5.1034
31-40	301	5.1471
41-50	261	5.2112
51-60	288	5.1845
61-70	147	5.2735
71+	131	5.2165

Whilst the ANOVA results indicated that there was no significant difference, the general trend was that older respondents did show longer reaction times ($R=0.84$). ANOVA's were again run and no age group was found to be significantly different from another within the original branding: $F(5)=1.805$, $p=.110$, colour executions: $F(5)=1.030$, $p=.399$ or logo executions: $F(5)=.540$, $p=.746$. Consequently, the colour and logo variation analyses were run with all age groups combined.

Colour variation negatively affected consumer recognition

The purpose of the correct recognition dependent variable was to understand if brand recognition was affected with colour variation. Correct recognition was a binary measure; i.e. respondents either identified the correct brand or not. Significance tests are reported at $p<0.1$, $p<0.05$ and $p<0.01$.

Colour variation negatively affects correct recognition for non users

A two sample z-test was used to compare the proportion of correct recognition between original and colour variation executions for users and non users (given that they were significantly different from one another). The results showed that for users there was no significant difference in correct recognition between original and colour variation branding executions. However, for non users colour variation resulted in lower correct recognition: there was a significant difference in correct recognition between original and colour variation, where $z=1.9$ and $p<0.1$. This means that non users were less likely to correctly identify a brand with colour variation.

Table 30: Two-tailed, two samples z-test results for colour variation: correct recognition

	Proportion with correct recognition (%)		Z-Value	P-Value
	Original branding	Colour variation		
Users	96.87	97.08	0.2	0.821
Non users	95.2	93.07	1.9	0.053*

*indicates significance at $p<0.1$

Regardless of branding execution, it was expected (as per previous research) that correct recognition would be higher for brand users for the original branding - as was the finding in this test. However, it was unexpected that for users, colour variation would result in slightly higher correct recognition given the importance of branding elements in identifying a brand.

Given knowledge about how human memory works to encode and store information i.e. with the necessity of consistency and repetition communication over time, it was expected that branding variations would make it harder for non users, who were predominantly category buyers, to recognise a brand. These points are discussed in more detail in the Discussion Chapter.

Whilst the difference between 95% and 93% correct recognition might seem small, if advertising efficiencies can be increased by 2% (i.e. recognition increased by 2%) on a large budget campaign by running original branding, the rewards are worth it for marketers. Given that the results showed that colour variation negatively effected consumer recognition for non users, this research suggests that branding colours should not be varied.

Colour variation slowed down recognition reaction time

An ANOVA was used to compare the mean reaction times for the original branding and colour variation. An ANOVA generates an analysis of variance between all data variables selected and generates an F value for reporting. The results indicated that there was significant difference between the original, colour and logo branding images for users $F(2)=7.339$, $p=0.001$ and for non users $F(2)=10.007$, $p=0.000$. However, the ANOVA alone was inadequate to address the research questions at hand which sought to compare effects of original branding to colour and logo variation separately.

By using the mean difference variable generated by the ANOVA, it was possible to compare the reaction time means of the original branding and colour variation for users and non users. Table 31 shows that colour variation significantly slowed down recognition reaction time for both users ($p<0.01$) and non users ($p<0.01$).

Table 31: ANOVA results for colour variation: reaction time

	Original branding mean (s)	Colour variation mean (s)	Mean difference (I-J)	P-Value
Users	4.1947	4.7729	-0.57818	0.007*
Non users	4.9696	5.6115	-0.64186	0.0003*

*indicates significant at $p<0.01$

This finding means that colour variation added over half a second to reaction time for both users and non users (0.58s and 0.64s respectively). These results were expected given that consumers typically use colour to identify a brand(Gaillard, Romaniuk et al. 2005, Gaillard 2007). Whilst half a second may not sound like long, advertising (including branding elements) typically compete with other stimuli for attention and should aim to be immediately and easily recognisable as the brand. Advertisers could speed up recognition reaction time by using original branding executions, instead of the more acceptable colour variation (see Phase 1 and Phase 2 results).

A Mann-Whitney Rank Sum Test was then used to analyse the reaction time data to determine if the same results held as per the original ANOVA. The results from the Mann-Whitney suggested that the reaction time for colour variation branding was significantly higher than that of the original branding for both users and non users. This suggested that colour variation significantly slowed down correct brand recognition reaction time for both users $U(2)=187567$, $Z=-3.754$, $p<0.001$ and non users $U(2)=326402$, $Z=-3.634$, $p<0.001$.

Table 32: Mann-Whitney Test results for colour variation: reaction time

	U-Value	Mean rank by branding execution (s)		Z-Value	P-Value
		Original	Colour variation		
Users	187567	613.66	692.02	-3.754	<0.001*
Non users	326402	510.16	896.81	-3.634	<0.001*

* indicates significance $p<0.001$

In general, a Mann-Whitney test is likely to overestimate the results compared to an ANOVA because it accounts for significant deviations from the normal distribution and seeks to compare data with similar distributions; which was the case in this analysis. The findings show that a similar patter holds i.e. reaction time was increased with colour variation.

The data was then cut to to represent a normal distribution using a box and whisker plot method (as described in Chapter 7). This method was applied to the branding executions and calculated separately for users and non users with the cut points provided in Appendix C.6.

A two-way ANOVA was run and the results showed statistically significant difference between the executions for users $F(2)=15.594$, $p=0.000$ and non users $F(2) =41.774$, $p=0.000$ for all branding executions. As previously discussed, the F values showed difference between the three executions but was insufficient to address difference between original

and colour variation executions. However, the ANOVA results suggested that colour variation significantly slowed down correct recognition for users and non users, p<0.001.

Table 33: ANOVA results for colour variation normally distributed data: reaction time

	Original branding mean (s)	Colour variation mean (s)	Mean difference (I-J)	P-Value
Users	3.5264	3.9037	-0.37732	0.000*
Non users	4.13	4.6166	-0.48657	0.000*

*indicates significance at p<0.001

These results further supported the findings from the previous tests: colour variation slowed down correct recognition reaction time for brand users and non users. Given that the data were generated using an experiment where respondents were *instructed* to search and identify a brand, the results are likely kinder to brands than would be expected in a typical advertising setting, where there are competing external stimuli, clutter, low-involvement processing and ad avoidance. It is likely that the reaction time would be much longer in a natural advertising setting.

Logo variation: some effects evident

Logo variation impacted correct recognition for brand users

A two samples z-test indicates that correct recognition was significantly higher with logo variations. Users had significantly higher correct brand recognition; z=2.3, p<0.05, (98.6% compared to 96.8% respectively) when logo variation was *present*. For non users there was no significant difference between the original and logo variation branding execution: z=0.1, p=0.905, see Table 34 below.

Table 34: Two-tailed, two samples z-test results for logo variation: correct recognition

	Proportion with correct recognition (%)		Z-Value	P-Value
	Users	Non users		
Users	96.87	98.68	2.3	0.023*
Non users	95.2	95.08	0.1	0.905

*indicates significance at p<0.05

Users also had higher correct brand recognition than non users overall. The statistical difference suggests that advertisers could increase recognition by varying logo branding elements by 2% for users. The results suggest there would be little effect on recognition for non users. Whilst logo variation may seem attractive on paper, in practice logo variation is very unlikely to be approved by marketers (as per Phase 2 results).

Logo variation significantly affected reaction time for non users

An ANOVA compared the mean reaction time between original branding, colour and logo variation with the result reported in the colour analysis. The logo variation reaction time was, on average, slightly faster than that of the original branding image for users (4.10s and 4.20s respectively) and non users (4.76s and 4.97s respectively). For both

groups (users and non users), the mean difference reaction time for logo variation was not significantly different to the original branding execution.

Table 35: ANOVA results for logo variation: reaction time

	Original branding mean (s)	Logo variation mean (s)	Mean difference (I-J)	P-Value
Users	4.1947	4.104	0.0907	0.883
Non users	4.9696	4.7588	0.21077	0.534

These results suggest that logo variation did not significantly affect reaction time for users or non users compared to the original branding execution. The trend in the data shows slightly faster reaction time with logo variation (though not significantly so). The differences between the original and logo reaction time were smaller in absolute terms (seconds) for logo variation (0.09s and 0.21s) compared to colour variation (0.58s and 0.64s). A full discussion of this finding is included in the Discussion and Implications chapter of this thesis.

could be attributed to the unfamiliarity of the stimuli (Stang 1975, Desimone and Duncan 1995).
A Mann-Whitney analysis was run to compare the means of the logo variation to the original branding. The results suggest that users and non users took slightly less time to identify a brand with logo variation. The results showed that non users were statistically significantly faster to correctly identify a brand with logo variation compared to the original branding $U(2)=347722.5$, $Z=-2.223$, $p=0.026$. For users however, there was no statistically significant difference between logo and original branding execution reaction times $U(2)=209451.5$, $Z=-0.588$, $p=0.556$.

Table 36: Mann Whitney results for logo variation: reaction time

	U-Value	Mean rank by branding execution (s)		Z-Value	P-Value
		Original	Logo variation		
Users	209451.5	660.25	647.96	-0.588	0.556
Non users	347722.5	888.11	834.83	-2.223	0.026*

* indicates significance p<0.05

Again, the logo variation could indeed attract attention and lessen reaction time because of its variation. This is discussed in full in the Discussion and Implications chapter of this thesis.

The data was then cut to be normally distributed using a box whisker plot (as described in Chapter 7), then an ANOVA was run. The ANOVA showed no significant difference in reaction times for users between original or logo variation branding executions (see Table 37). The results did show that non users were significantly faster to identify the brand with logo variation compared to original branding (p<0.001).

Table 37: ANOVA results for logo variation normally distributed data: reaction time

	Original branding mean (s)	Logo variation mean (s)	Mean difference (I-J)	P-Value
Users	3.5264	3.5098	0.166	0.977
Non users	4.13	3.8109	0.3191	0.001*

* indicates significance p<0.01

When the data was cut to be normally distributed, the difference in the means for non users as slightly higher (0.32s). These results suggest that non users were faster to identify a brand when logo variation was present compared to original branding execution. This finding may support typical rebranding practice where often shadows, flares or “tweaks” are made to branding to modernise the “look and feel”. See for example the Coca-cola and Pepsi rebranding over time; the colours did not change, but the logo evolved.

The findings from RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3 (Phase 1,2 and 3) are discussed in full in the next chapter with implications for academia and industry.

Chapter summary

The two samples z-tests revealed that correct recognition significantly differed between users and non users for all branding executions: original, colour and logo variations. Correct recognition was constantly higher amongst brand users than non users. The analysis also showed that age did not significantly affect reaction time, however there was an overall trend of older respondents taking longer to respond (i.e. longer reaction time) than younger.

When colour variation was present, users and non users correct recognition was significantly lower (than original branding execution). The reaction time required to recognise a brand was significantly longer when colour variation was present for both users and non users. These findings suggested that colour variation negatively affected consumer recognition in advertising. This finding fits with existing knowledge of human memory structures and that consumers use colour as a primary tool to identify a brand (Gaillard 2007, Lindstrom 2008, Romaniuk and Nenycz-Thiel 2013).

Logo variation showed a statistically significant effect on correct brand recognition but not for reaction time for users. For non users logo variation showed little effect on correct brand recognition but reaction time was significantly faster with logo variation. This could be accounted for by the unfamiliarity of the logos or the uniqueness of the variations (compared to other logos) in the advertising contexts.

In summary, users were faster to identify a brand than non users, colour variation adversely affects consumer recognition (both in correctness and in reaction time) and logo variation sped up non user identification with little effect on brand users.

The next chapter discusses the results of Phase 1, 2 and 3 together and includes implications for industry and academia along with the limitations and conclusions of this thesis.

Chapter 9 - Discussion and implications

Chapter overview

This chapter combines and discusses the findings from RQ1, 2 and 3; actual practice, typical and acceptable branding element variation, reasons for acceptability and consumer effects of branding element variations. The key findings are summarised with discussion of the implications for this thesis, industry and academia. The limitations and possible future research avenues are then discussed and finally the conclusions of this thesis are presented.

Key findings and implications

The purpose of this thesis was to gain a well rounded understanding of branding element variation; including actual practice: the prevalence and typicalities of branding element variation on Facebook (Phase 1), typical and acceptable variation (Phase 2) and the consumer effect of acceptable branding element variation in advertising (Phase 3). The key findings and implications for both industry and academia are discussed below.

Key finding 1: Branding element variation occurs in practice, mostly to colours

Phase 1 results suggested that branding element variation is present on Facebook with at least half the brands included in the study (80 across 22 categories), varying colour, logo or typeface elements. Colour variation was the most commonly found variation on Facebook (over 50%), followed by logo (12%) then typeface (6%). This finding is particularly baffling given that consumers use colours as conduits to recognise brands in advertising (Gaillard, Romaniuk et al. 2005, Gaillard 2007). Whilst differences were found between the Facebook branding execution and a brands original branding (i.e. from a brand's own webpage), there was little understanding as to why the variations were present. On this topic, this research can not substantiate why differences occurred: only that they did. This should be a future research topic, particularly on Facebook where it may be easier to change branding executions with internal Facebook brand page management. It is purely speculative to suggest that variations may be simpler on Facebook; however for some brands, the online environment is one where testing branding element variants is easier (than traditional media) and provides immediate feedback compared with traditional testing (Neff, 2012).

Phase 1 codified logo and typeface variations as most frequently occurring to the elaborateness-depth of each. By classifying aesthetic variations to these elements, this research sheds light on the complexity of visual branding element variation (and rebranding). Muzellec and Lambskin (2006) suggested that using visual branding elements in rebranding research was difficult given the subjectivity of classifying aesthetic changes. Phase 1 results suggest to academia that branding element variation is an industry relevant topic that deserves exploration; both in this thesis and in future research. The aim of academic research should be to give practitioners knowledge which they can use when faced with real marketing issues which evidently includes branding element variation. Importantly, the findings from Phase 1 provided guidance for the variations used in Phase 2 and 3.

Key finding 2: Branding element variation occurs, but marketers think it unusual

Branding element variation was considered by marketers to be unusual, mostly because (respondents thought that) branding elements defined a brand and should remain consistent to help facilitate consumer recognition. This finding is in direct contrast to Phase 1 findings where branding element variation was prevalent on Facebook. This finding should be relief for academia given the wealth of evidence that suggests consistency in branding elements to link them to a brand. This finding presents a paradox: marketers think branding variations unusual, however these variations can

be found not only on Facebook but also when co-branding, launching new products, sponsoring events (all documented in Chapter 2).

It is possible that interviewees were expressing more what they should do, in the long run, not what they actually do, campaign to campaign. Nevertheless, these results are valuable to academia and to this research to help contextualise Phase 1 findings. Whilst marketers were not comfortable with the idea of branding element variation, when presented with the branding element variation choice scenario, most could find strategic reasons for colour variations; but not logo variations (key finding 4). This presented an interesting findings paradox for this thesis: marketers say don't do it, but it can be found in industry. And, whilst marketers do not advocate branding element change, it does occur in industry, therefore claimed behaviour and actual practice differ dramatically. Interestingly, respondents were comfortable with rebranding and thought that branding elements *had* to be changed over time.

The contradiction between the qualitative findings and the content analysis is a topic for brief discussion. Given that the topic was not broached with practitioners, it is impossible to say for sure why there is a disconnect between phase 1 and phase 2 findings. However, it is possible that the qualitative findings reflect a marketer's best practice ideals rather than actuality. For example, if a marketer was presented with the option to vary their own branding on Facebook, it may be a more attractive idea than for a brand that they are not intimately involved with on a day to day basis. This is unsubstantiated and only one potential rationale. The paradox should be considered for future research.

Key finding 3: Branding element change is necessary, eventually

Whilst marketers did not think that branding elements needed to be varied between campaigns, they did think that branding needed to change over time (i.e. rebranding). Most respondents indicated that rebranding was acceptable and "normal" behaviour. Rebranding was not the focus of this thesis, however this was a key finding from Phase 2 and supported the notion that branding elements are changed; permanently and temporarily.

Generally, practitioners said that minor (i.e. evolutionary) changes needed to be made to branding elements after eight to ten years. The minor changes were described as "permanent" and "minor", rather than an abandonment of all well established branding elements. Minor changes were described as "tweaks" to "update" a brand to give it a new "modernised" or "refreshed" "look and feel". The notion that branding elements *must* be updated, changed and tweaked over time fits with industry observations: see for example, Betty Crocker, Coca-Cola , Pepsi (Zmuda 2010) and Starbucks evolutionary rebrands (see Chapter 2 and Stuart and Muzellec (2004)). Given that the variations used in this thesis could be considered less extreme than some rebranding activities and indeed some variations (see KFC) the results are potentially able to provide guidance for marketers undertaking minor rebranding of colour and logos. This research sheds light on evolutionary rebranding; how often it occurs and helps to qualify what it means in addition to Stuart and Muzellec's (2004) work.

The industry view that branding elements need to be changed, at the very least updated, over time contrasts with knowledge on how memory works (i.e. consistency and continual reinforcement) (Bower 1998, Franzen and Bouwman 2001, Braun-LaTour and LatTour 2004, Buchler, Faunce et al. 2010, Lehnert, Till et al. 2013) and undervalues the role of branding elements for consumers to recognise a brand in advertising. This suggests that the effects of branding element variation should be widely communicated to industry and further investigated within academia: academia suggests no change is best and it is unclear of any benefits for consumers, but industry does it any way. It is possible that there is the need to "keep up with the times", this is something for future research. Importantly, this finding highlights the need to understand which elements can be changed (or varied) and which ones can not be to do the least damage to consumer recognition.

Key finding 4: Colour variation can be acceptable for strategic reasons, but logo variation is not

Marketers considered colour variation to be much more acceptable than logo variation; largely for strategic reasons. The green and pink colour variations were considered the most acceptable variations for two reasons: firstly if a brand was co-branding with a breast cancer charity then pink would be acceptable variation for one campaign. Secondly, if a new product variant was introduced that was "green" or "eco-friendly" then green variant of the branding element was acceptable.

Chapter 2 offered many potential reasons for branding element variation: new personnel, to attract attention, co-branding, media modality requirements, managerial changes, out of boredom and for a new product or variant. This research finds that co-branding and new products variants, particularly green variants, were the key reasons for branding element variation. This finding fits industry evidence to date, for example many organisations pair with charities and vary branding colours i.e. go pink (see KFC, CBA, Shazam, Belevedere etc.). Also, marketers may believe that an environmentally friendly variant needs to be distinguished from the existing range, possibly to appease consumers shifts towards 'greener' products (Benetton 2011, Wheeler 2013). It is possible that these conclusions were reached because pink and green variations were included in the choice scenario or simply because these strategies were prominent in 2013. However, all colour variations were made in equitable colour steps from the original branding colour. Hence the varied executions presented were, according to the colour spectrum equal, in an attempt to control for this potential bias. Moreover, the pink and green variations were not considered acceptable for all brands, and the theme was reiterated over most interviews.

Logo variation was considered to be largely unacceptable because it did not "achieve" or "add anything" to a brand. This finding is reflective Phase 1 results where 12% of brands in the Facebook study showed logo variation (compared with 50% showing colour variation). In general, marketers struggled to find a strategic rationale for logo variations. They used phrases like "I can't see why you would" and "it's not really achieving anything for the brand". This could be because there were only three logo variations tested (2D/3D, flares and shadows) and none of the presented options were considered acceptable. More likely though, the verbatim responses suggested that variation needs to achieve something for a brand or be strategically relevant to the brand (i.e. co-branding or new product variant) to be acceptable. The most acceptable branding element variations were shadows and flares, both were thought to "change the brand the least".

So far, the findings, suggest a paradox: branding element variation is considered unlikely by marketers but that it can be managerially acceptable. The findings also suggest that branding element variation can be found in Australian practice. Whilst some previous research considered effects of varied packaging (see (Rex, Wai et al. 2004), and varying advertisements (Pechmann and Stewart 1988, Schumann, Petty et al. 1990, Yoo, Bang et al. 2009) no academic literature to date investigates branding variation in advertising. Therefore this thesis offers a starting point for studying branding element variation, particularly the more acceptable colour variation, further. This research fills an academic gap by firstly identifying branding element variation and provides actionable research for marketers; something that has long been called for in industry (November 2004, Ottesen and Grønhaug 2004). Consequently, it is a topic that is of immediate relevance to industry (whether they know it or not). Phase 1 and 2 results contextualise Phase 3 by suggesting that colour variations are more likely to occur; more attention should be paid to the colour variations results as they are of more relevance to industry.

Key finding 5: Brand users were more likely to correctly recognise a brand and were faster, than non users

Brand users were more likely to correctly recognise a brand and were, on average faster than non users, regardless of branding element variation. This was likely because brand users were more familiar with branding elements of a brand they use compared to a non user with or without variation. This finding supports consumer research literature that brand users are more likely to correctly recognise it in advertising and on shelf than non users (Sharp, Beal et al. 2001, Sharp, Beal et al. 2002, Hammer and Riebe 2006, Romaniuk and Wight 2009). This thesis also extends usage research by using reaction times a dependent variable, demonstrating that users are faster to correctly recognise a brand too. For industry, this suggests that advertising must be easily recognisable (i.e. instantly and obviously recognisable as the brand). This is particularly relevant for non users who are predominantly category buyers (>84%) who are vital for brand growth (see key finding 8).

Key finding 6: Colour variation negatively affects consumer recognition

Whilst colour variation was considered the most acceptable variation by practitioners, it was the most detrimental to consumer recognition both for correct recognition and reaction time. Colour variation resulted in lower correct recognition in comparison to original branding for non users and remained similar for brand users (respectively, 93% and 95% for non users and 97% for users). Reaction time was slowed by at least half a second when colour variation was present for users and non users. Whilst half a second sound unsubstantial, in an advertising context amid ad avoidance, clutter and low involvement processing, often split second attention is the best that can be expected (Bornstein and D'Agostino 1992, van Meurs and Aristoff 2009). Given that respondents were required to find the brand, the negative impact of colour variation is likely underplayed, compared to a natural advertising setting where a consumer is not *actively* looking for a brand.

This finding is congruent with existing branding research which suggests that colours are essential branding cues for consumers and are used most to communicate distinctiveness for consumers on shelf and in advertising. This research also supports the Associative Network Theory by highlighting a trend that original branding (i.e. well establish branding cues) result in stronger memory structures and thusly more correct recognition and faster reaction times. The implication is clear for industry: do not vary branding colours, even for the most plausible strategic reasons of co-branding or new product variants.

In practice, this research can help brand managers and agencies justify consistency of branding elements at all times. For example, a partnership with a charity might appear to be attractive on a social marketing level and could yield financial benefits, with PR attention and bigger media budgets, branding elements should be kept consistent. This finding should not discourage co-branding with charities or limit new variants; it should, however, prompt the preservation of branding elements to aid consumer recognition.

Key finding 7: Logo variation speeds up brand recognition for non users but has little affect on users

Logo variation resulted in higher correct brand recognition for a brands users than original branding (99% and 97% respectively). This suggests that logo variation can improve the effectiveness of an advertising campaign by increasing correct recognition for users (only). For a brands' non users, there is no statistically significant difference in correct recognition between original and logo variation branding executions (95.2% and 95.1% respectively). As such, there was no discernible trend for correct recognition with logo variation.

Logo variation had no statistically significant effect on reaction time for brand users (4.19s and 4.10s respectively, p=0.883). For non users, however, logo variation sped up reaction time by 0.211 of a second (on average). This pattern suggested that logo variation can potentially attract attention and therefore speed up recognition (reaction time) compared to original branding. This result was unexpected but could be explained by a number of things. Firstly, it may simply attract faster reaction times (and possibly attention) because it is unfamiliar to consumers (Stang 1975, Desimone and Duncan 1995). Another explanation for the faster reaction time could be that no other logo in the advertising contexts showed a shadow or a flare, i.e. colour variations were shown in a context where every other (non-test) brand had a colour whereas no non-test logos had shadows or flares. Despite the faster reaction time, logo variation is unlikely to occur in practice as suggested from Phase 1 and 2 results. Consequently, there was not enough evidence to suggest logo variation as a branding strategy: it did not attract much more correct recognition than original branding for non users and, it is not considered plausible by practitioners.

Key finding 8: Variation had its greatest effect on the most valuable consumers: non and light

The greatest effect (positive or negative), of variation was on a brand's non users. Most of these non users were category buyers (minimum 84% for all brands) who are likely very light brand buyers. These light buyers are valuable for a brand because they offer the greatest potential for brand growth because of infrequent purchasing (Sharp 2010, Riebe, Wright et al. 2014).

For Dove, Target and other low involvement, high purchase frequency (higher than the car category), repertoire brands and categories, this research suggests that variation affects non buyers or light buyers the most. This adds to academic branding knowledge (Gaillard, Romaniuk et al. 2005, Gaillard 2007, Lindstrom 2008) by identifying that colour branding elements are most important to light buyers to recognise the brand in advertising. Intuitively, this makes sense given that even non or light buyers are likely to use well established cues (i.e. colours) to find a brand quickly in a purchase situation. For example, a light Coke buyer still knows that the red can is the associated colour, so when aired in advertising or in a purchase situation, a consumer looks for the colour red. If the colour were to change (or be absent), the familiar red cue is useless to help recognise the brand. Given that colour variation is the most likely in practice, (as contextualised in Phase 1 and 2) this research suggests that a variation strategy is most *detrimental* for those who are most valuable to a brand and should not be employed in industry.

Limitations and future research

This section highlights some methodological shortcomings of this research and outlines opportunities for future research. This section draws the thesis to a close with a final conclusion.

Geographical limits

Advertisers and advertising agency personnel (both account managers and creatives) were included in this research from Australia only. In future, it would be preferable to include personnel from organisations that specialise in branding to give further insight into how these changes occur within and outside of Australia. It may also be of value to include brand or sponsorship managers from charity organisations to understand the motivations behind colour element variations. It may also be of value to extend this research into other geographical regions to see if similar results hold. However there was congruency amongst Australian marketers and testing Australian consumers.

Branding images sourced and tested

It is possible that the tested branding images may have been incorrect or inconsistent with branding elements on pack. Whilst every effort was made to source and test branding images that were legitimate and correct, it is a possibility that the branding images are inconsistent or that marketers used a 'close enough' version of branding in advertising; particularly Facebook. However the likelihood that Cadbury uses a colour in advertising, on any platform, other than the well established purple seems highly unlikely. Particularly given increasing marketing budgets attributed to Facebook media spend (Nelson-Field and Klose, 2009). And, fierce trademarking laws relating to branding elements generally (Hoek and Gendall 2010).

It is also possible that the branding variations tested throughout Phase 1 could have been technical glitches or mistake on the Facebook platform itself. Whilst this is unlikely and the software used to gather and test the branding images was the best available at the time of this thesis, this should be noted as a potential limitation of this thesis. In future, more testing should be carried out on a greater sample of brands, with human coders and with different technology to further test these findings.

Using a small qualitative sample and a snowballing recruitment method

The sample size of 22 Australian advertiser and agency respondents was a potential limitation of this research study and its findings. Given that the sample was 22 respondents, this could be considered quite small, even for qualitative research. Particularly compared to other industry research which used many more respondents (i.e. Paech (2005)with 71 in-depth interviews conducted). However, similar research by Nyilasy and Ried (2009) used 28 senior level agency practitioners to investigate agency practitioner theories on how advertising works. 22 is a smaller sample size, however the respondents are directly related to the day-to-day decision making that is investigated in this thesis.

The snowballing recruitment approach used could be considered a limitation of the research because there was the potential of sample bias and unrepresentativeness, as respondents were not included at random. Even though a snowball sampling as a recruitment method was used there was a little, but not much variation between response. This could mean that saturation was reached faster because of the inter-personal links between respondents. Bowen (2008) suggests that new participants should be added to the data collection until the data set is complete (i.e. saturation is reached). However, the recruitment method should be considered a minor limitation to this study.

Alternative advertising effectiveness measures

Whilst correct recognition and reaction time are insightful dependent variables to understand the effect of branding element variation, there were other advertising effectiveness metrics that could have been used. For example, intermediary measures such as recall and likeability could be used to test the impact of branding element variation on consumers. A differentiated replication of this study could use existing branding element variations (i.e. Phase 1 results or KFC green and gold variation advertisements) to understand the effects of branding element variation on recall on likeability. Both these variables are relevant to industry and have been linked to behavioural outcomes.

Other biometrics measures such as FMRi, EEG or skin conductance could be used to test the effect of varied branding element executions. These methods would test if different physiological and brain activity occurs with branding element variation. This would require a within-subjects design to use the original as a bench mark again. Another option would have been to use eye tracking to compare the eye fixations and movements between original branding and the variations, i.e. if it went over the same area more than once with branding element variations. This would add value to the reaction time variable by understanding search patterns in this advertising context. Like other biometric

measures, eye tracking technology is costly, typically involves a small sample and was unavailable at the time of this research, so it was not used. Eye tracking could be used in future to extend this research.

Using an experiment instead of real-world advertisements

A key limitation to this thesis was the use of an experiment rather than using real world advertisements. Controlled experiments simplify the real world and can over exaggerate findings (Patzer 1996) whereas the experimental method allowed for controls over variables and causality to be inferred with more certainty. In future, using real world advertisements with branding element variations would extend this research into other media (i.e. TV, print), and using other branding elements (i.e. audio elements). This experiment used only static media, which is uncommon in the marketing climate of integrated marketing campaigns. As such, no audio branding elements were considered in this research. Given that visual branding elements are superior to verbal branding elements (including audio), this should be considered a minor limitation to this thesis. This research also could not consider media budgets of variation campaigns which may be large and attract much PR attention within industry and of consumers. A high reach media strategy would likely impact consumer effect of branding element variation. A natural experiment could use brands and (already) varied advertisements to assess the effect on consumers. In future, it may be possible to use single source data to test the effects before, during and after the variation. This would extend the results into another media (TV) and link the branding execution advertised to purchase behaviour. Whilst ideal, it is unlikely that a brand would commission branding element variations without a variation strategy already in place.

Small number of brands and branding elements tested

Phase 3 used only six brands to discern acceptable branding element variations. This should be considered a moderate limitation to this research. By using six brands and no typographical logos, this research can not be generalised to all brands. Moreover, this research did not consider very small and potentially lesser known brands. The largest brands in well known categories were included. It was assumed that every respondent had seen each of these brands at least once in their life. This research also did not consider brands with a suite of colours used in branding executions (i.e. Telstra). Whilst this limits the generalisability of the findings to all brands, the results are applicable to many brands: with abstract or figurative logos and different branding colours.

The experiment tested three brands from three categories: Dove, Target and Mitsubishi. This sample from the original six (from the choice scenario) were considered the most acceptable for variation and were adequate to address the research objective. However, for more robust generalisation it would be advisable to test more brands, from other categories of varying sizes. This should be considered the chief limitation of this thesis. Future research could also test acceptable (as identified in Phase 2) or more extreme branding element variations in advertising and on pack. This could potentially include other visual branding elements (i.e. shape, characters etc.) and verbal elements (slogans, jingles etc.). This research included branding elements that are employed by all brands: colours and logos, and provides relevant guidelines for marketers wishing to vary branding elements: it should not be done.

Conclusion

This thesis provides valuable insight into branding element variation in (actual) practice, marketer perspectives of typicality and acceptability and consumer effects. The three phases of this research add to existing literature (branding, rebranding, advertising and usage) whilst also producing relevant and actionable research for industry.

This thesis established branding element variation as facet of industry practice. This research found that branding element variation was prevalent on Facebook, either purposefully or by accident, and most typically made to colour elements (and less so to logos or typeface). The *actual* branding element various found in Phase 1 document a previously unidentified and unobserved industry practice for academia. As such, this research updates existing branding literature by identifying and documenting branding element variation.

This thesis explored marketer perspectives on branding element variation and rebranding, identifying that the latter is an expected and necessary part of a brands evolution. This research also highlighted that attitudinally, marketers considered branding element variation atypical and undesirable. However, circumstances where colour branding element variation was considered acceptable for strategic reasons (co-branding and new product variants) were identified. This adds to academic knowledge about when variation occurs, what is acceptable and should help guide future research.

The key finding of this thesis is that branding element variation is detrimental for consumer recognition in advertising. Therefore to maximise the likelihood of correct and fast brand recognition amongst consumers (both users and non users), original branding elements should be used. Correct and fast recognition are important in advertising; so the brand has a chance to increase salience and therefore purchase propensity. Particularly for non buyers who were predominantly category buyers and integral for brand growth. This finding supports and extends usage literature by identifying that users are more likely to correctly recognise a brand in advertising, and do it faster than non users. By testing elements that were present for every brand (colours and logos) and only testing variations that were acceptable to marketers, this research links industry practice with academic research. Ultimately this thesis stresses to industry that the consistent use of well established branding elements in advertising is preferable to any branding element variation. Whilst logo variation showed a slightly positive effect, it is not an acceptable variation nor should it be a strategy employed by brands. The findings from this research overwhelmingly suggest that advertising needs to be well branded with original branding elements to be correctly and quickly identified. This research provides relevant and industry specific documentation to academia, about current practice whilst also offering implementable knowledge to industry practitioners, which has long been called for. Importantly, this research offers a starting point for future researcher to address branding element variation and other relevant industry issues so that academic investigation can serve the very industry it aims to.

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Appendix A

Appendix A provides the typeface variation pairs as outlined by Henderson, Giese and Cote's (2004) seminal paper. The 23 paired classifications were used throughout Phase 1 of this thesis to codify variations to branding typeface on the Facebook platform.

Design Characteristic	High	Low	Characteristics	Design Factor
Ornate/plain		ABCYabcy	Universal	Elaborate
Special use/common use		**ABCYabcy**	Specific	Elaborate
Depth/flatness		ABCYabcy	Universal	Elaborate
Distinctive/not distinctive		ABCYabcy	Universal	Elaborate
Conveys meaning/does not convey meaning		ABCYabcy	Universal	Elaborate
Readable/not readable	**ABCYabcy**		Specific	Elaborate
Balanced/unbalanced	**ABCYabcy**		Universal	Harmony
Smooth/rough		**ABCYabcy**	Universal	Harmony
Symmetrical/asymmetrical	ABCYabcy		Universal	Harmony
Uniform/not uniform	ABCYabcy		Universal	Harmony
Organic/geometric[a]		ABCYabcy	Universal	Natural
Looks typed/looks handwritten	ABCYabcy		Specific	Natural
Active/passive	**ABCYabcy**	ABCYabcy	Universal	Natural
Slanted/straight		**ABCYabcy**	Universal	Natural
Curved/angular			Universal	Natural
Heavy/light	**ABCYabcy**		Specific	Weight
Short and fat/tall and thin		ABCYabcy	Specific	Weight
Repeated/no repeated elements	ABCYabcy	ABCYabcy	Specific	Weight
Serif/sans serif	ABCYabcy	ABCYabcy	Specific	Flourish
Ascenders are pronounced/not pronounced[b]		**ABCYyabcy**	Specific	Flourish
Descenders are pronounced/not pronounced		**ABCYabcy**	Specific	Flourish
Condensed/extended[c]		**ABCYabcy**	Specific	Compressed
x-Height: tall/short[d]			Specific	Compressed

[a]Organic fonts are more irregular, unplanned, or natural, whereas geometric fonts resemble objects that are man-made, planned, or measured.
[b]Ascenders (descenders) are the parts of the letter that go above (below) the main body, such as the top of a lowercase h (the tail of a lowercase y). Pronounced ascenders (descenders) appear to go significantly above (below) the body of the letter or stand out in their influence on the appearance of the letter.
[c]"Condensed" refers to only the width of the letter. Condensed letters are narrow, and extended letters have a wider base.
[d]"x-Height" refers to the height of the lowercase x in the font. Tall letters are letters for which the height of the x almost equals that of the uppercase letter. Short x-height occurs when the x is much shorter than the uppercase letter.
Notes: A more complete set of examples, including examples for the response variables, is available on request.

The terms universal and specific relate the design dimensions of the typeface. The authors suggested that universal characteristics are applicable across different design dimensions i.e. symmetry is also applicable to other branding elements like logos. The authors also suggested that some dimensions are specific to typeface. For example, handwriting is more organic than machine made text. The design factor aimed to classify the design characteristic (i.e. ornate/plain etc.) as per Henderson and Cote's (1998) previous paper relating to modifying and selecting logos.

Appendix B

This appendix includes the ethical approval for Phase 2 and 3 of the thesis, the recruitment email sent to practitioners, the discussion guide used throughout the 22 interviews

Appendix B.1 - Ethics approval: qualitative and quantitative research

The Univeristy of South Australia Human research Ethics Committee was required to approve the qualitative and quantitative research conducted in this thesis. The approval emails are included below.

Phase 2: typical and acceptable branding element variation ethics approval

Dear Applicant

Re: Ethics protocol "Guidelines for subtle branding changes" (Application ID: 0000030848)

Thank you for submitting your ethics protocol for consideration. Your protocol has been considered by the E2 Committee Review Group.

I am pleased to advise that your protocol has been granted ethics approval and meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Please note that the E2 Committee Review Group's decision will be reported to the next meeting of the Human Research Ethics Committee for endorsement.

Please regard this email as formal notification of approval.

Ethics approval is always made on the basis of a number of conditions detailed at http://www.unisa.edu.au/res/forms/docs/humanresearchethics_conditions.doc; it is important that you are familiar with, and abide by, these conditions. It is also essential that you conduct all research according to UniSA guidelines, which can be found at http://www.unisa.edu.au/res/ethics/default.asp

Please note, if your project is a clinical trial you are required to register it in a publicly accessible trials registry prior to enrolment of the first participant (e.g. Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry http://www.anzctr.org.au/Survey/UserQuestion.aspx) as a condition of ethics approval.

Best wishes for your research.

Executive Officer
UniSA's Human Research Ethics Committee
CRICOS provider number 00121B

This is an automated email and cannot be replied to. Please direct your query to ethics@unisa.edu.au.

Phase 3: consumer effect ethics approval

Dear Applicant

Re: Ethics protocol "Testing subtle changes to advertising" (Application ID: 0000030940)

Thank you for submitting your ethics protocol for consideration. Your protocol has been considered by the E1 Committee Review Group.

I am pleased to advise that your protocol has been granted ethics approval and meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Please note that the E1 Committee Review Group's decision will be reported to the next meeting of the Human Research Ethics Committee for endorsement.

Please regard this email as formal notification of approval.

Ethics approval is always made on the basis of a number of conditions detailed at http://www.unisa.edu.au/res/forms/docs/humanresearchethics_conditions.doc; it is important that you are familiar with, and abide by, these conditions. It is also essential that you conduct all research according to UniSA guidelines, which can be found at http://www.unisa.edu.au/res/ethics/default.asp

Please note, if your project is a clinical trial you are required to register it in a publicly accessible trials registry prior to enrolment of the first participant (e.g. Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry http://www.anzctr.org.au/Survey/UserQuestion.aspx) as a condition of ethics approval.

Best wishes for your research.

Executive Officer
UniSA's Human Research Ethics Committee
CRICOS provider number 00121B

This is an automated email and cannot be replied to. Please direct your query to ethics@unisa.edu.au.

Appendix B.2 - Recruitment email

Hi Name,

I hope this email finds you well. I was wondering if you might be able to help me out with something I'm working on?

I'm doing some research about advertising decisions for my Masters at UniSA. I need to speak to agency personnel and brand managers directly involved in advertising decision making. The project is about understanding ad decision making (processes, measurement etc.) and then measuring consumer response to ad changes (ability to identify an ad and speed of recognition).

All interviews are confidential but you, and your organisation would have access to the project result upon completion.

If you're able to help out, and if you know someone else within your organisation who may also be suitable to take part, please let me know.

Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks
Kellie

Appendix B.3 - Phase 2 consent forms

Consent from signed by respondent

Agreement to participate in qualitative research:

I, _____, confirm that I participated in an in-depth interview, about advertising with Kellie Newstead for approximately 30 minutes on _____
I participated in this interview voluntarily. I acknowledge that the primary purpose of this research is to provide data that will be used in Kellie Newstead's Masters Thesis. I understand that the findings of this Masters Thesis may also be used by Kellie Newstead and/or the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for academic publication.

I agree to participate in this research and understand that:

My confidentiality is assured under the AMSRS code of professional guidelines to which the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute subscribes.

This means the interview will be completely confidential. Any notes taken or discussion recorded during the interview will only be used to help the interviewer to remember the themes discussed during the interview when writing up

the research findings.

I will not be named anywhere in the research and none of my comments will ever be attributed to me directly. I may be identified by my role (marketing manager, creative director, etc.), the type of organisation I work for (advertiser, advertising agency, creative/design agency) and organisation size (small, medium, large). Direct quotes may be used in the research when referenced in the following way: "<<quotation>>", Job title, Industry area. For example "I think any change is acceptable in advertising", Marketing Manager, Advertiser.

I agree to participate in this research based on the agreement outlined above.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Industry area (please circle): Advertiser/Advertising Agency/Creative Design company or provider

We will provide all participants with an electronic copy of the top line findings of this research, once the Masters Thesis has been completed.

Consent from signed by respondent's line or HR manager



To Whom it may concern,

This letter is to request participation of one or more staff of _____[organisation name] to participate in an in-depth interview about advertising with Kellie Newstead for approximately 30 minutes. This interview is entirely voluntary and the participant is entitled to leave or refuse at any time. The primary purpose of this research is to provide data that will be used in Kellie Newstead's Masters Thesis. The findings of this Masters Thesis may also be used by Kellie Newstead and/or the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for academic publication.

The terms of agreement to participate in this research are:

Confidentiality is assured under the AMSRS code of professional guidelines to which the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute subscribes.

This means the interview will be completely confidential. Any notes taken or discussion recorded during the interview will only be used to help the interviewer to remember the themes discussed during the interview when writing up the research findings.

Participants and their organisations **will not** be named anywhere in the research and no comments will never be attributed to the participant directly. The participant may be identified by role (marketing manager, creative director, etc.), the type of organisation I work for (advertiser, advertising agency, creative/design agency) and organisation size (small, medium, large). Direct quotes may be used in the research when referenced in the following way: "<<quotation>>", Job title, Industry area. For example "I think any change is acceptable in advertising", Marketing Manager, Advertiser.

This form registers my agreement with the aforementioned employee taking part in the research and that I have authority to sign off on such matters;

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Date: _____

Any questions can be directed to Kellie Newstead via telephone 8 8302 0026; Email: Kellie.Newstead@MarketingScience.info

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au

Appendix B.4 - Materials provided to respondents

Participant information sheet provided prior to interview

Kellie Newstead BMgt (Mkting) and BMgt (HR)
Email: Kellie.Newstead@marketingscience.info
Ph: 08 8302 0026

University of South Australia - Ehrenberg-Bass Institute

Participant information sheet, re: Guidelines for subtle branding changes in advertising material

You (the participant) are invited to take part in an in-depth interview about advertising with Kellie Newstead for approximately 30 minutes. Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary.

The purpose of the study
The primary purpose of this research is to provide data that will be used in Kellie Newstead's Masters Thesis. The findings of this Masters Thesis may also be used by Kellie Newstead and/or the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for academic publication.

What the research involves
Participants will take part in an in-depth interview to be completed via phone or face-to-face for approximately 30 minuets. Participants will be asked a series of questions relating to advertising creation, measurement and decision making. Participants will also be asked to choose acceptable and unacceptable changes (via images) made to ad copy from a battery of images.

Participants may withdraw from the research at any time without affecting existing relationships, position or treatment.

Benefits and risks of participation
There are no risks, other than those typical in every-day life, that are expected with participation in this research. Participants will be sent an electronic (pdf) copy, via email of top line results [i.e. overall take outs] when the research is completed. This research will codify existing practitioner perspective and practice. The dissemination of this knowledge to participants will likely benefit by providing and understanding of other parties' perspectives, practices and assist during the ad and decision making and measurement processes; i.e. during everyday business dealings.

Confidentiality
All information collected as part of the study will be retained for five years. The information will be stored on the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute's secured server. The data will be individually re-identifiable. All records containing personal information will remain confidential and no information which could lead to identification of any individual will be released.

Confidentiality is assured under the AMSRS code of professional guidelines to which the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute subscribes.

This means the interview will be completely confidential. Any notes taken or discussion recorded during the interview will only be used to help the interviewer to remember the themes discussed during the interview when writing up the research findings.

Participants **will not** be named anywhere in the research and no comments will ever be attributed to directly to any participant. Participants may be identified by role (marketing manager, creative director, etc.), the type of organisation (advertiser, advertising agency, creative/design agency) and organisation size (small, medium, large). Direct quotes may be used in the research when referenced in the following way: "<<quotation>>", Job title, Industry area. For example "I think any change is acceptable in advertising", Marketing Manager, Advertiser.

If you have any queries or questions please do not hesitate to contact Kellie Newstead on the details listed above.

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au

Topic list provided to respondents prior to interview

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research for Kellie Newstead's Masters Thesis. The topics to be covered in this interview;

- Details
  - Consent forms + confidentiality
  - Your details

- Creating new advertising
  - What's the process?
  - Who's involved?
  - What types of changes are typically made to ads?
  - Why do ads get changed?
  - How long do ad campaigns last?
- Measuring and assessing advertising
  - How do you determine if a campaign has been effective?
  - Pre-testing
  - Reporting ad results
  - The future of ad effectiveness metrics
- Ad variation in practice
  - Pretend you're the brand manager/creative agency for brand X
  - You'll be presented with some images and asked to choose which image is acceptable and which isn't and why

Contact - Kellie Newstead, Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, University of South Australia
Email: Kellie.Newstead@marketingscience.info
Ph: 8 8302 0026
0430 565 072

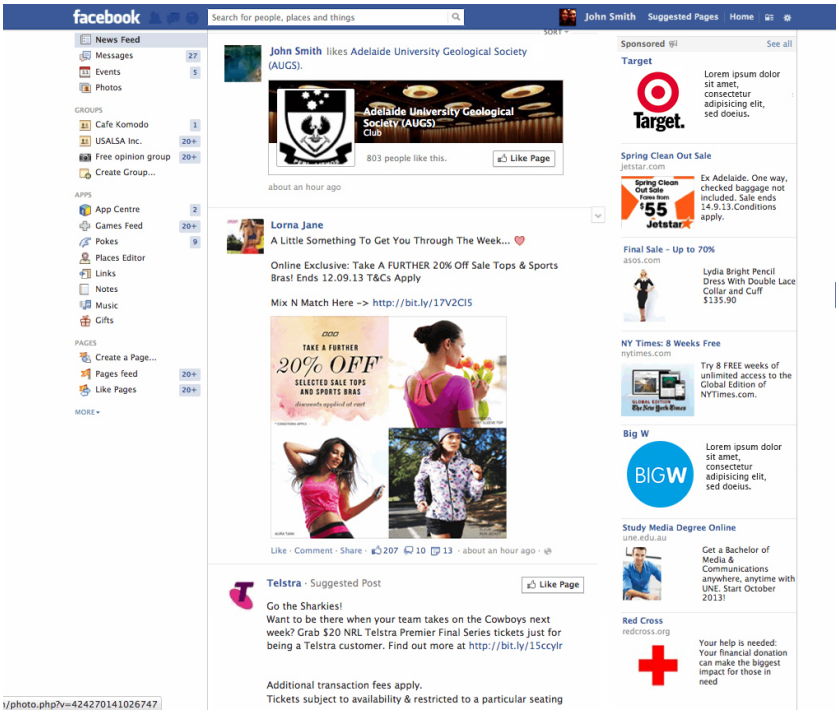
Appendix C

Appendix C.1: Target and Mitsubishi advertising contexts

The images below show the advertising contexts with control and treatment branding executions embedded (original, colour and logo variations) for the test brands Dove, Target and Mitsubishi. The branding executions were embedded into different locations for each brand to mitigate any potential learning effects. One ad context containing either Target, Dove and Mitsubishi was randomly shown to respondents in the experiment to test consumer effect of branding element variation.

Advertising contexts for Target

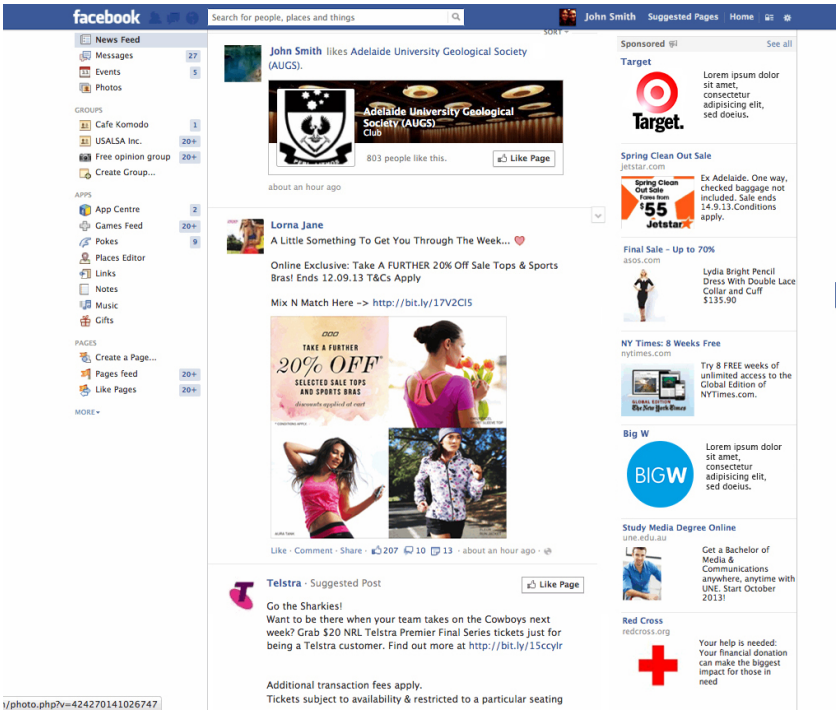
Facebook: Target original branding



Facebook: Target colour variation



Facebook: Target logo variation



Billboard: Target original branding



Billboard: Target colour variation



Billboard: Target logo variation



Advertising contexts for Dove

Facebook: Dove original branding



Facebook: Dove colour variation



Facebook: Dove logo variation



Billboard: Dove original branding



Billboard: Dove colour variation



Billboard: Dove logo variation



Advertising contexts for Mitsubishi

Facebook: Mitsubishi original branding



Facebook: Mitsubishi colour variation



Facebook: Mitsubishi logo variation



Billboard: Mitsubishi original branding



Billboard: Mitsubishi colour variation

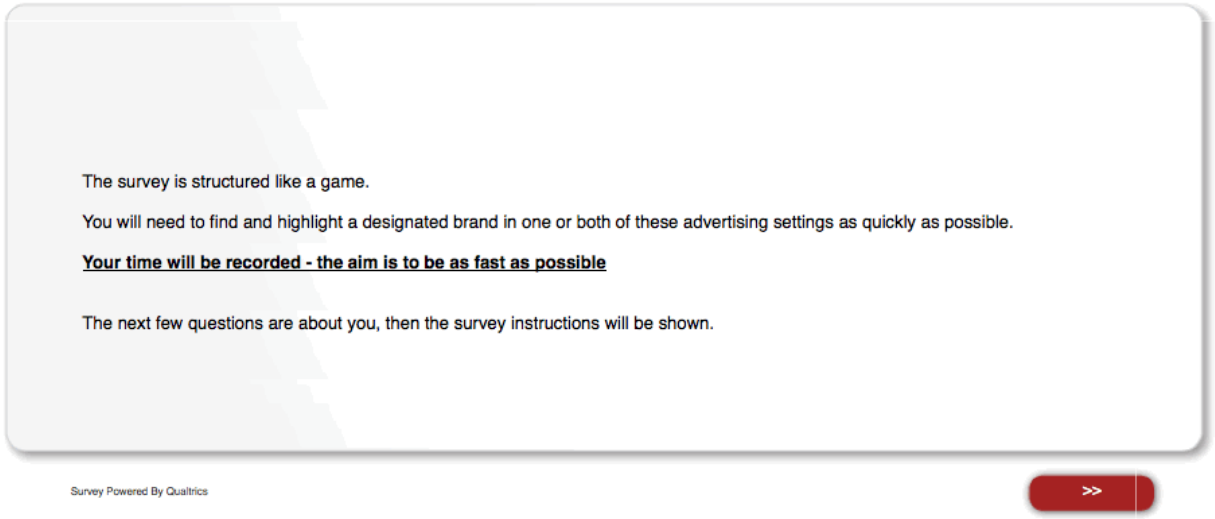


Billboard: Mitsubishi logo variation

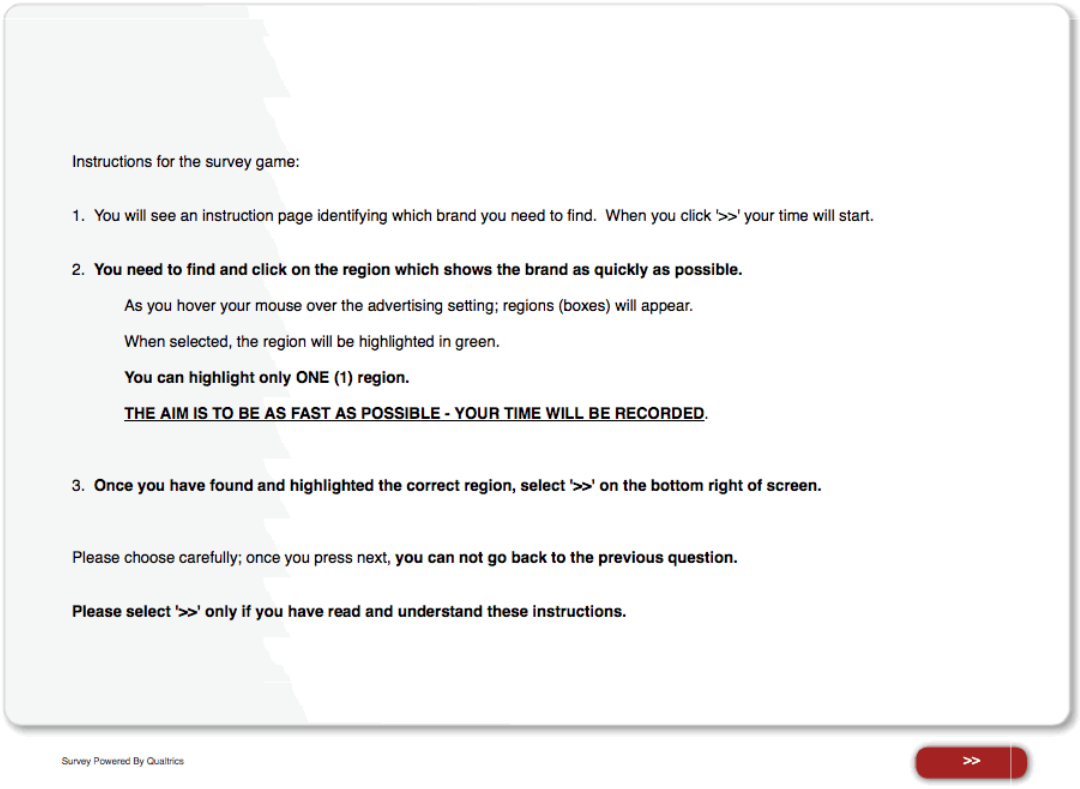


Appendix C.2: Survey instructions provided to respondents

First survey instructions for respondents



Full instructions for respondents



Example of brand instructions for respondents

First instruction

On the next screen, please find and highlight the region that identifies the **Dove** advertisement as quickly as possible.

Then press '>>'.

Choice screen with instruction

Find and highlight: Dove



Appendix C.3: IMC test in survey

Instructions

Let's practice.

You will be presented with an image on the next screen.

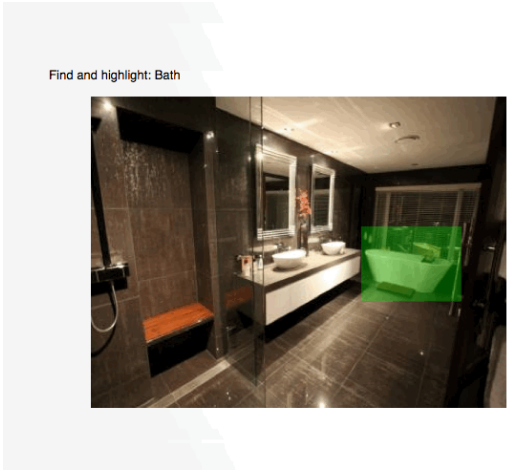
Please find and highlight the region which highlights the **Bath** as quickly as possible.

Then press '>>'.

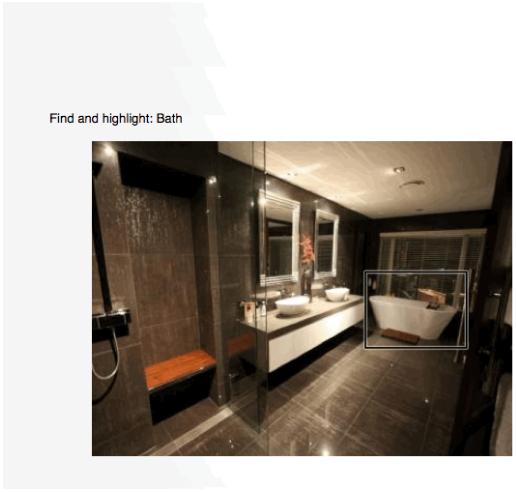
IMC image presented to respondents



IMC with mouse hovering over region



IMC with region selected



Appendix C.4: Original HSV (hue, saturation, value) metrics for test brands

This section shows the original (i.e. starting) hue, saturation and value metrics for each brand included in the study. The colour variations were applied to the hue of all brands except Nike where the saturation was changed so that a colour change was evident.

Brand	Hue (%)	Saturation (%)	Value (%)
BMW	200	70	81
Cadbury	255	67	58
Dove	41	83	90
Mitsubishi	0	99	100
Nike	0	0	0
Target	0	100	100

Appendix C.5: Descriptive statistics for reaction time branding executions

The descriptive statistics presented accompany the scatter plots to describe the reaction time data. The statistics are presented for each branding execution: original, colour variation and logo variation, and overall (as per the reaction time analysis cells), for users and non users. The tables below show the descriptive statistics.

Original branding reaction time data descriptive statistics

Original branding execution	Overall	Users	Non users
N	1504	642	862
Minimum (s)	0.61	0.61	0.64
Maximum (s)	52.37	48.7	52.37
Mean (s)	4.64	4.19	4.97
Median (s)	3.66	3.38	3.88
Std. Deviation (s)	3.6	3.21	3.83
Std. Error of the mean	0.09	0.13	0.13
Skewness	4.99	6.07	4.5
Kurtosis	46.66	64.89	35.32

Colour variation reaction time data descriptive statistics

Colour variation execution	Overall	Users	Non users
N	1507	664	843
Minimum (s)	0.68	0.94	0.68
Maximum (s)	45.56	45.56	43.79
Mean (s)	5.24	4.77	5.61
Median (s)	3.64	3.65	4.13
Std. Deviation (s)	4.18	3.86	4.38
Std. Error of the mean	0.11	0.15	0.15
Skewness	3.91	4.41	3.49
Kurtosis	23.32	33.97	18.4

Logo variation reaction time data descriptive statistics

	Overall	Users	Non users
N	1525	6655	860
Minimum (s)	0.31	0.31	0.11
Maximum (s)	59.51	48.38	59.51
Mean (s)	4.47	4.2	4.76
Median (s)	3.57	3.34	3.75
Std. Deviation (s)	3.73	3.22	4.05
Std. Error of the mean	0.1	0.12	0.14
Skewness	6	6.46	5.7
Kurtosis	58.11	66.67	52.48

Appendix C.6: Reaction time cut off for normally distributed data

The reaction time data was cut to represent a normal distribution using the interquartile range: a box and whisker plot method (as was described in the quantitative method chapter). As per the initial results, users and non users cut off times for each branding execution: original, colour and logo variation were calculated separately and are reported to the millisecond. This was to ensure that brand usage did not artificially inflate (or deflate) the reaction times of each execution given the significant differences between them. The table below shows the user and non user cut off points for each execution.

	Original branding (s)	Colour variation (s)	Logo variation (s)
Users	7.75	8.7	7.5
Non users	9.3	11.3	8.4