



OULUN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY of OULU

OULU BUSINESS SCHOOL

Dennis T. Kelley

CREATING A CRAFT BREWERY BRAND IDENTITY

Master's Thesis

Marketing

May 2019

Unit Marketing			
Author Dennis Kelley		Supervisor Koivumäki, T	
Title Creating a Craft Brewery Brand Identity			
Subject Marketing	Type of the degree Master's	Time of publication 13.5.2019	Number of pages 78
<p>Abstract</p> <p>The craft beer market is a relatively new and recent phenomenon gaining popularity among beer drinkers. As this is a new and quickly expanding consumer product, the amount of research into the branding practices of craft breweries is limited. The purpose of this thesis is to explore how consumers view craft breweries based on six key areas of branding and how craft breweries can utilize these findings to better brand themselves and their beers in an effort to increase profits.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of the thesis focuses on the Brand Identity Prism conceptualized by JN Kapferer (2012) in his book <i>The New Strategic Brand Management: Advanced Insights & Strategic Thinking</i>. With the Brand Identity prism as a starting point, further in depth research is taken to provide additional key elements to each of the six segments in an effort to relate them to craft beer branding and ways that beer brands have in the past succeeded and how craft beer brands can utilize them to reach their consumer targets.</p> <p>Further research areas include a beer community forum dialog as well as interviews with craft beer professionals. Interviews are conducted in an effort to gain further real world examples of how the six outlined segments of the brand identity prism and additional elements are utilized by craft brewers that they follow as well as methods that they themselves employ.</p> <p>The conclusion of the thesis presents finding for craft brewery managers to better create a brand identity moving forward in a competitive market as well as presents limitations of this study and the possibility for further scientific research into this subject.</p>			
Keywords Brand Identity Prism, Brand Identities, Brand Personality, Brand Image, Craft Beer, Beer Brewing, Craft Beer Branding			
Additional information			

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1 INTRODUCTION

The first beer I had ever tried was a Keystone Light fresh from a keg. I had always been told that like coffee, beer was an acquired taste and overtime, I would grow to enjoy it. With that in mind, I gave it a try and hated every sip of it. At this age, I enjoyed coffee, but the beers that I had access to, these mass produced, adjunct ingredient filled, watery macro brews disgusted me. For years I switched over to spirits and mixed drinks so that I could get the sweet flavors I enjoyed when I wanted an indulgent beverage. Then I discovered something new, local breweries making beers with interesting packaging and bottle artwork and featuring new beer styles I had never come across. The first I tried was a coffee porter while I attended college in Hawaii and from that point on I stopped drinking offerings from large scale breweries and focused on the craft beers that were brewed local in whichever location I found myself in. At the time I have written this, I have visited over 200 breweries across 18 different countries, attended more than 20 beer festivals, have sampled over 2,000 unique beers from countries around the world, tried home brewing my own beer and spent a summer pouring beers at an outdoor beer garden for one the most globally renown craft breweries.

The craft beer boom has been a worldwide recognized phenomenon over the past decade as more and more small scale breweries spring up taking away market share from large scale macro breweries. According to a survey released by Alltech and The Brewers Journal in 2017 representing 209 countries and territories, the number of global breweries surpassed 19,000 and of that number 94% or roughly 17,732 of the breweries can be classified as craft breweries (Craft Beer Surge: Top Ten Countries to Get a Beer This St. Patrick's Day, 2017).

In traditional large scale brewing, much of the budget has been spent on not only production but advertising and marketing of the product. Logos and labels are designed to in an effort to make themselves timeless and the brand easily recognizable with advertisements and displays to further convey this message and relate to consumers. Beer branding is visible in all marketable areas including billboards, magazines, television, sporting events, sponsorships, and in store displays. However, due to being smaller than their competitors and using more of

their profits to make a higher quality product, craft beer brands have to be more creative in their marketing tactics as they are unable to afford the scale and reach of marketing that their larger competitors are able to. The purpose of this thesis will be to explore how the brand identity prism and its six segments can assist craft breweries differentiate their brand, reach new customers and keep their existing customer base.

The key concept contained within the brand identity prism is that a brand is made up of segments that as a whole create the brand's identity. Additionally, terminology such as brand personality, brand DNA, brand positioning and platforms all serve as different facets of brand identity, but they all have similar definitions with that being what sets a brand apart from its cohorts and which aspects of the brand create a uniqueness unlike others that give them the ability to distance themselves from the pack and set their own time and place in history (Kapferer, 2012, pp. 149-150).

1.1 Thesis Process

The process for this thesis commenced in conjunction with the Marketing Master's degree program and in association with studies related to marketing and the theoretical concepts that have formed the subject. After undertaking a year of courses, the topic of the thesis was considered and originally was planned to focus on the topics of craft brewery marketing and branding. After discussions with the thesis supervisor at the time of the subject submission, it was decided that it would be best to narrow the focus of the topic from marketing and branding to the current, more defined area of product branding. From there, different theoretical concepts relating to product branding and the six-prong format of the brand identity prism was viewed as best encapsulating the broad spectrum of branding involved in creating a successful craft beer brand and the theoretical framework was formed.

For the creation of the theoretical framework, a review of academic journal articles and other literature related to brand identity and concepts related to brand physique, personality, relationship, culture, reflection, self-image, as well as articles centered on craft beer with relation to these key concepts. These articles and concepts were

then adapted to center around how they pertain to the topic of craft beer branding and applied as such.

Once the topic and theory that would be used to further investigate the research subject had been realized, considerations were then placed the best methods to gain further insight on the topic to gain concluding concepts from the theoretical framework. It was decided that qualitative research methods would be employed to gain insight from industry professionals as well as consumers relating to the areas of the brand identity prism that centered on physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection, and self-image. Qualitative research is a method of research via participant observation, focus groups, and one on one interviews with the intention of gaining answers to specific questions, collect evidence towards a theory, and produce individual non-predetermined responses that can be utilized in the study and further studies (Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest, Namey, 2005).

1.2 Thesis Structure

The structure of the thesis will consist of the following chapters: Chapter 1 Introduction, provides background information and motivation behind the thesis topic as well as explains research gaps found around the topic. Additionally, it introduces the research question as well as explains the process and structure contained within the thesis. Chapter 2 will provide the definition of the different aspects of the term craft brewery and will focus on the theoretical framework in the method of and expansion of Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism and will include subchapters that further examine the six aspects of the identity prism. These subchapters will include: 1 Physique which will further examine brand physique, consumer perceptions of the brand, consumer needs fulfilled by the brand, and touchpoints between the consumer and the brand and will touch on the concept of brand physique in craft brewing; 2 Personality which will further examine the brand traits of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness and will provide examples of beer brands that have exhibited these traits in branding; 3 Culture which will further examine the roles that employees, brand values and customer play in relation the brand identity and provide a case of a craft brewery that has done this aspect well and backlash they faced when they did not; 4 Relationship

which will further examine consumer/brand relationship dimensions, brand reputation and tribalism and reflect the branding concepts to craft beer; 5 Reflection which will further examine the brand traits for flexibility, consistency, and brand pooling and examine their roles in craft brewing; 6 Self Image which will further examine the psychology concept behind self-image in branding and give craft beer related examples; and Chapter 7 Proposed Modification to the Brand Identity Prism that will further explain how the aforementioned elements provide further depth to the Brand Identity Prism. Chapter 3 will focus on the data and research methods utilized to provide justification of the data and further explain the rationale of their utilization. In the case of this thesis, the methodology includes qualitative analysis based on scientific research article review as well as news article review of topics relating to craft beer and craft beer branding. Further analysis of interviews with two craft beer professionals as well as questioning with the craft beer forum r/beer is analyzed with regard to the Brand Identity Prism. Chapter 4 Data Analysis will disclose key quotations from qualitative research and interpret the findings of the research with respect to the theoretical framework. Finally, Chapter 5 will provide a summarization of the results of the study as a whole as well as provide as well as provide the managerial implications of the thesis research and provide the foundation for future studies on related subject matters.

1.3 Thesis Questions and Research Gap

As the amount of craft brewers across the globe have expanded drastically over a short amount of time, the amount of research into the branding methods of these craft breweries is limited. It is mentioned in July, 2017 edition of the International Journal of Hospitality Beverage Management, (Smith, Farrish, McCarroll, and Huseman, 2017) that the research gaps are large and varied as many restaurants and other entities serving beer do not have a classification towards craft beer. Further it is mentioned that due to the fast changes in the beer consumption climate from large scale macro beer consumption to craft beer consumption, there is high knowledge and desire for more craft beers to be in places of consumption and places serving them are not meeting current demand. In addition, much of the branding seen at these locations is mostly that of the large scale brewers due to their higher purchasing power and consumers are moving away from their products in favor of craft. Craft

brewers are at the disadvantage of having less money to use towards promotional activities and due to their lack of branding and advertising dollars and abilities, the research conducted into the methods that they utilize and the means with which they can improve these branding tactics is limited. Additionally, as craft beer is not centrally recognized by all locations where the sale of craft beer could occur, the branding tactics of craft breweries can be improved. Further, as stated the craft beer consumer appears to have more knowledge of the scene and the products than the businesses serving them and thus further studying the consumer behavior angle towards branding would have benefits for businesses looking to sell these products.

In an effort to further close the gap relating to the lack of branding research into craft brewing and introduce the Brand Identity Prism as a means to assist with branding efforts this thesis will focus on the research questions of:

-What are the core elements of each segment of the Brand Identity Prism with relation to craft brewing?

-How the brand identity prism can assist craft breweries differentiate their brand, reach new customers and keep their existing customer base?

Through these research questions an examination of the key concepts of the thesis will take shape. The key concepts being, what make a craft brewery (as defined prior in the introduction), how a craft brewery differs from a macro brewery, what the segments of the Brand Identity Prism are and what are the key elements that make up each segment, how can these key elements be defined in terms of beer branding, and further with the analysis of research interviews: how are the key elements of the Brand Identity Prism utilized in craft beer branding from the consumers perspective, and which elements of the Brand Identity Prism are the most important for craft beer brands to further their message to consumers and gain better relationships with new and dedicated consumers.

2 CRAFT BREWERY BRAND IDENTITY WITH RESPECT TO THE BRAND IDENTITY PRISM IN B2C SETTINGS

The following six chapters and resulting subchapters will introduce the theoretical framework of the brand identity prism which will serve as the basis of brand identity creation for a craft brewery. The chosen framework that has been selected to best illustrate the key concepts in the creation of a craft brewery brand identity is Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism (Figure 1). The framework is based on the two defining terms of brand management; brand identity and brand positioning. Kapferer (2012, p. 149) defines brand identity as the specific areas of the brand that provide a uniqueness and value while brand positioning refers to a specific targeted market during a specific time frame. These two key concepts play a large role in the marketing strategies of craft breweries as their brand identities differ from large scale brewers in that they must market themselves in terms of quality rather than rely on low pricing and additionally need to rely on their brand positioning in terms of current global consumer trends.

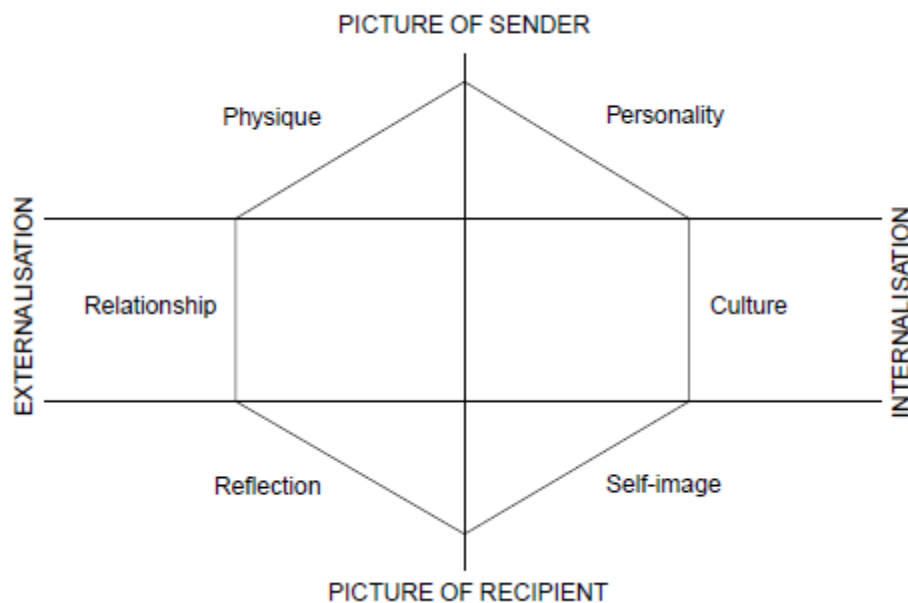


Figure 1: Brand identity prism (Kapferer, 2012, p.158)

As of early December 2018, a craft brewery is defined as being a small, independent, and traditional brewer of beer. The term craft brewery is an umbrella term that

further encompasses brewery segments defined as microbreweries or nanobreweries, brewpubs, contract brewing companies, and regional craft breweries. In terms of size, the annual production of a craft brewery must be 6 million barrels of beer or less. In terms of ownership, a craft brewery must have less than 25 percent owned or controlled by an industry member that is not considered itself a craft brewer. In terms of ingredients, a craft brewery must have the majority of its total beverage alcohol volume in beers created via traditional or innovative brewing ingredients and their fermentation (Beer Glossary, 2018). A microbrewery or nanobrewery is a craft brewery that produces 15,000 barrels (17,600 hectoliters) of beer per year and 75 percent of its brewed beer is sold off site. A microbrewery is allowed to sell to consumers via a three tiered distribution network with a wholesaler as the middle company between brewer and consumer, a two tier system where the brewer acts as a wholesaler to the retailer or consumer or directly to the consumer via customer carry out and/or on site tap room or restaurant sales. A brewpub is defined as being a craft brewery that sells 25 percent or more of its beer on site with the primary intention that the beer is brewed and dispensed directly from the brewery's storage tanks for sale at a restaurant or bar. A contract brewing company is defined as a business or other brewery that hires a brewery to do the packaging and beer brewing while the contract company handles the marketing, sales and distribution of the beer. A regional brewery is defined as being independent with a majority of their beer brewing volume in traditional or innovative beers and an annual production between 15,000 and 6 million barrels (Craft Beer Industry Market Segments, 2018).

As craft breweries are smaller than large scale or macro breweries they need to be more cogniscent and in touch with their customer bases. Kapferer (2012, p.158) would describe craft breweries as being "*passion brands*" or brands that customers engage with. Further, they need to be vigilant in their understanding of market changes that can alter their business and be able to adapt quickly to them. As their market share and budget is smaller than large scale breweries and their products are typically sold on a basis of quality and uniqueness, craft breweries need to be more creative to distance themselves when branding and the six tier approach of the Brand Identity Prism (Kapferer, 2012, p. 158) would benefit them greatly. Currently the Brand Identity Prism is made of the six tiers including 1) Physique, 2) Personality, 3) Culture, 4) Relationship, 5) Reflection and 6) Self-Image. In the following chapters,

the thesis will go further in depth of each tier in an effort to create a broader identity prism that provides additional elements that define which attributes create each tier. With a further understanding of what attributes belong in each tier, the thesis will then serve as a means to assist craft breweries strengthen their brand identities.

2.1 Physique

The top left segment of the brand identity prism refers to the concept of the brand's physique. In this sense, the physique focuses on key product and brand attributes that are made up of a combination of noticeable appearances seen immediately in the product or that develop in time. Branding has traditionally relied on the physical features of a product, and the positioning of the product has typically relied on the answer to branding questions such as "What is the product exactly?", "What is the purpose of the item?", and "What is its appearance?" In this manner, the original or flagship product a company creates becomes representative of the company's qualities and thus becomes the basis for all future products the company distributes (Kapferer, 2012).

The purpose of the brand physique is to create associations and connections between a specific brand and the consumer. These connections can vary from personal associations that an individual may have with a brand, to physical associations such as color, shape, logo, slogan, product features, images, etc., to factual information about the product, or less tangible concepts such as a product's association with environmental elements. Ford (2005) describes these associations with a brand physique as giving consumers a "reason to believe" in the brand, which he refers to as the background associations and perceptions behind the brand. He (Ford, 2005) further goes on to explain that associations consumers have with the brand can be as simple as attributing a brand mascot with the product or more complex attributes such as the "waiting" concept outlined in the marketing campaign for Guinness, where the consumer must wait for the beer to settle, which is a debatable attribute pertaining to physique as they elude to the brand meaning but are less successful with brand recognition as a smaller audience recognizes this concept. Ford (2005) goes on to suggest a framework for a brand's physique based on the physique the brand conveys, the perceptions of the brand from the standpoint of the consumer, the

needs that the brand fulfills based on the standpoint of the consumer and touchpoints that reached between the brand and the consumer (Figure 2).

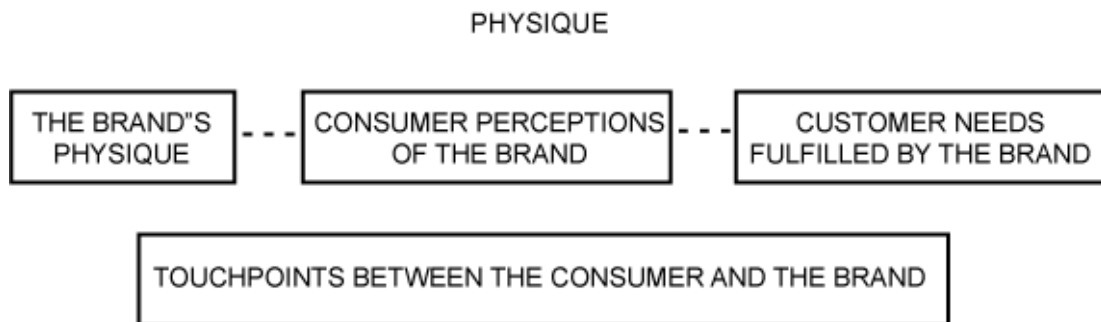


Figure 2: Modified physique profile (Ford, 2005)

2.1.1 The Brand's Physique

As previously stated, the brand's physique is made up of associations that the consumer will acquire on their own. The associations the consumer may have with regard to the brand and its physical appearance can be positive or negative based on the connotations that each individual consumer has toward each attribute of the brand. Some common associations with regard to brand physique that consumers may have towards a craft beer brand can include: senses (color, taste, fragrance), knowledge of the beer such as how long it has been fermented or any barrel aging processes utilized, thoughts or associations they may have towards the beer title, packaging and label, where the beer was brewed, any prior associations or attitudes the consumer may have towards the brand, or the availability of the beer.

2.1.2 Consumer Perceptions of the Brand

The perceptions of the brand are based on a variety of factors relating to each individual consumer. These perceptions towards the brand are unique to each consumer as they relate to how they view the product in terms of overlap between the products physique and the perceptions, or the preconceived ideas that an individual consumer has towards them (Ford, 2005). In this manner, the perceptions that one might gain from the aforementioned physique associations to a craft beer could be that based off the sensory knowledge, the consumer may perceive that the beer

would taste good and be easy for them to drink. They may perceive based off the beer title, packaging and label that the beer is popular amongst people in their demographic and may show them as such as well. They may feel that due to the exclusivity of the beer or the limitedness of the beer batch that drinking the beer elevates their social status or gives them a more authentic experience that others may not be able to achieve.

2.1.3 Consumer Needs Fulfilled by the Brand

The deeper needs that are fulfilled by the brand exhibit a connection to the physique and the perceptions of the brand (Ford, 2005). In the aforementioned sample for craft beer, a need that may be fulfilled by the brand could be a need to fit in amongst one's peers or a need to provide a beer to someone that gives confidence to the buyer that the recipient will enjoy it. This concept would then connect with the perception that the beer is easy to drink and popular and could provide a social elevation. In turn, these traits also connect to the physique of the brand based of sensory information and the availability of the beer.

2.1.4 Touchpoints Between Consumer and the Brand

A brand touchpoint refers to the various contexts where a consumer comes into contact with the brand and further internalizes the methods or circumstances where the brands physique is experienced (Ford, 2005). Touchpoints fall under two categories firsthand experience using the brand and word of mouth relating to the brand. The tangible and intangible elements that make up a brand's physique are utilized to create an image of the brand's physique in the consumer's mind and call back to their needs fulfillment of them in order to be successful. Just as brand physique is viewed across many different areas of touchpoints, to a consumer their needs also are met through a combination of various touchpoints. From the customer standpoint of needs, touchpoints can range in variety from function to relationship focused and can include the consumers' needs towards the product such as their need to feel excited toward the product, their need for status, their need for reliability, their need to feel individuality, and so on. The customer perception attributes can then be viewed in terms of the company perspective in terms of how the product, employees,

brewery environment, and their marketing team interact with the customer and potential customer touchpoints. These attributes will dictate the needs and fulfillment they feel from each of the areas of the own perceptions related to the company perspectives (Ford, 2005).

2.2 Personality

Brand personality is defined as being “a set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997). Similarly in this manner, a brand can be viewed as having human characteristics as it speaks to consumers on behalf of itself as if it were displaying what kind of person it is (Kapferer, 2012, p. 159). Due to these traits being applied from the brand to appear human like, it is commonplace in marketing for brands to choose logos featuring mascots or to feature celebrity endorsements in their advertising and branding to give further humanistic qualities and to associate themselves with a person or humanistic object. By doing so, consumers of the brand will associate the perceived qualities towards the brand (Aaker, 1997). Further, much like human personality traits, brand personality traits can be viewed and measured by consumers via brand scale surveys which give marketers better insight into how their brand is perceived (Kapferer, 2012, p. 159). One such brand personality survey conducted by Aaker (1997) revealed that for every brand there are five similar personality traits that consumers view the brand as showcasing. These five personality traits can be seen below in Figure 3 make up the framework for a brand personality and will further be discussed below in the following subchapters.

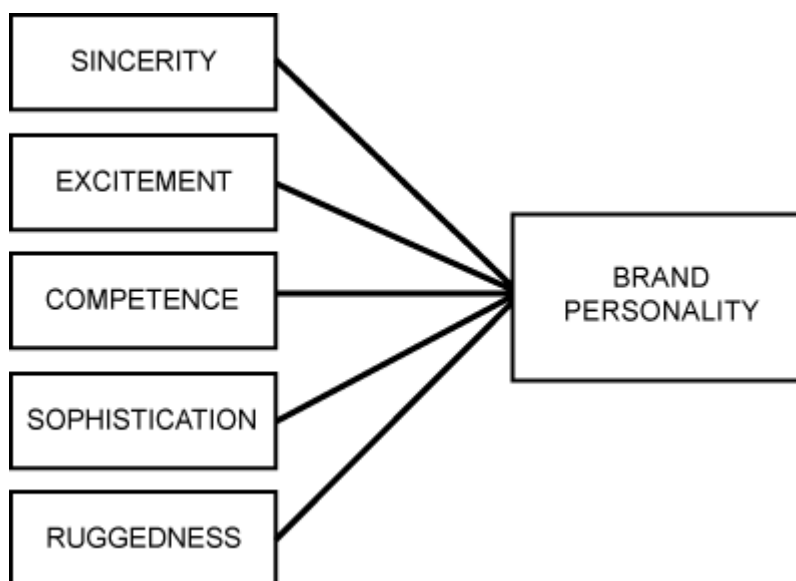


Figure 3: Modified brand personality trait diagram (Aaker, 1997).

2.2.1 Sincerity

Aaker (1997) describes the brand personality of a sincere brand to be one that is viewed to have the attributes of being down to earth, honest, wholesome, and cheerful. Brands that exhibit this trait tend to be brands that have been around for a long period of history and thus give off an appearance that they have been like a family member. The traits of honesty, wholesomeness and being down to earth give the brand an almost family oriented spirit and make the consumer feel as the brand can be trusted. In the craft brewing community, sincerity is a branding term that many breweries would appreciate seeing applied to their beer, however, as craft beer is a more recent phenomenon, it can be difficult to attribute such an ideal. However, there are ways for craft breweries to achieve this personality trait. For example, Joe Stange in an article for Draft magazine (Stange, 2015) mentions that a sincere beer would "say something about its home or its culture" and in this way a craft brewer would be able to provide a more down to earth approach where they present something real and something local or by utilizing local ingredients in their fermentation processes.

2.2.2 Excitement

Aaker (1997) describes the brand personality of an exciting brand to be one that is viewed as having the traits of being daring, spirited, imaginative, and up-to-date. The concept of excitement towards a brand shows that the consumer will have enthusiasm towards it due to the nature of its attributes. A brand that is viewed as being exciting is typically original in their approach, their message and their product. In terms of craft beer branding, an exciting brand needs to be one that is taking a new approach whether that be in their artwork styling, their beer titles, their beer styles, or their newness of concept to their audience. If a craft brewery is new to a specific location, at their start they already have the brand image of excitement, however it can be difficult for them to continue this branding approach if they are unable to continuously surprise their consumers with inventive and consistently well produced products.

2.2.3 Competence

Aaker (1997) describes the brand personality of a competent brand to be one that is viewed as having the traits of being reliable, intelligent, and successful. Competence in branding is important as a consumer can see this as being a brand that they can trust and thus enter into a relationship with. Further, a competent brand will give the consumer the illusion that since they use a brand that is stable, the brand is adding stability to their life. In beer marketing, a competent brand would be one that is viewed as being a step above the lower level brands as to show success while also being a product that is produced to a standard of consistency. An example of beer branding and marketing that has displayed their brand as competent to a mass audience is that of Michelob. Michelob's recent branding has them marketed as a low calorie, low carbohydrate option that has found a niche market among health conscious consumers. Vice President Azania Andrews states that Michelob has found an audience among consumer "who are looking for balance in their lives, the combination of active and social" (Giamoona, 2018). As a result of Michelob's competent branding efforts, they have become the top selling beer brand in the U.S. and have seen an 80% rise in sales since 2014 (Giamoona, 2018).

2.2.4 Sophistication

Aaker (1997) describes the brand personality of a sophisticated brand to be one that is viewed as having the traits of being upper class and charming. The concept of sophisticated branding shows the brand elevating itself in some way above the standard brand. An example of a beer brand that has continuously tried to show themselves as being sophisticated, at least in US marketing has been Stella Artois. Stella Artois which is viewed as a very basic and widely available beer in its birthplace of Belgium has taken on a marketing campaign of being an imported beer brand that is more sophisticated than its American counterparts. Stella has been able to do so by advertising a very precise way a Stella Artois must be poured and it is never poured into a beer glass but a chalice. Additionally, Stella Artois has marketed themselves as a sophisticated brand by including celebrities in their television advertisements in a bid to show that they are indeed a classier brand (Wolinski, 2019). The addition of celebrities to their marketing campaigns, the 9 step pouring method and physical design of their logo, bottle and labeling as well as their origins in Belgium, have allowed for Stella to brand themselves as being a more sophisticated beer compared to competitors within the U.S. market.

2.2.5 Ruggedness

Aaker (1997) describes the brand personality of a rugged brand to be one that is viewed as having the traits of being outdoorsy and tough. Ruggedness in beer branding has historically been an attempt to influence male audiences. One example of rugged based beer branding has been with respect to the beer brand Coors. Vice president of Coors brewing states that "a consistent theme that this is a brand that has weathered the test of time. It's held its own values and gone its own way" (Frost, 2018). With this concept in mind, Coors has commonly shown their beer with depictions of the American West and has had gravelly voice actor Sam Elliott as their long time pitch person. With this as their core brand personality, Coors has been able to successfully hold a large portion of the American beer market.

2.3 Culture

Culture within a branding context is defined as being the ideology that the brand presents to consumers in terms of the vision of their own world and how they fit into it (Kapferer, 2012, p. 159). The idea is that a brand can attain cult like status and is based on its ability to be perceived by its fans as they gather around the ideals of the brand. In their branding methods, the brand must select means to define themselves and build emotional ties with their consumers in an effort to build ties to their consumers and energize their followers (Kapferer, 2012, p. 160). These cultural branding ties must further be able to be seen in all areas of the brand from employees to consumers as well as be able to be viewed in a same or similar light and in the case of global brands where the brand culture needs to be similarly displayed across different global cultures, classes, and genders regardless of the difference of their motivations. In these groups, the brand culture is able to form consumers that become crusaders for the brand meaning that regardless of whether they use the brand or not, they will identify with the message that the brand conveys and they will stand behind it and remain positive about its promotion (Kapferer, 2012, p. 130).

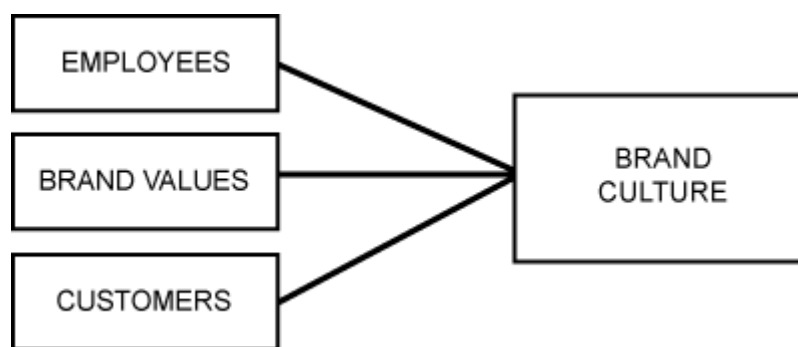


Figure 4: Modified brand culture diagram

2.3.1 Employees

At the forefront of every interaction between a brand and consumers of that brand are the employees that represent them. The employees must serve as an extension of the brand image and display the brands culture in every aspect of their time serving the brand. Kapferer (2012, p. 160) states that a brand must define itself and in essence

that ones who define it are the employees that sell it. Thus it is important for craft beer breweries to treat their employees well so that even when they are in their down time from work, they still speak positively about the brand and the product that the brand sells.

2.3.2 Brand Values

Alongside employees, a brand must also employ a mission that contains the brand values or the stance that the brand takes on issues. Some brands take large stances in terms of politics and environmental issues as well internal stances such as customer and employee satisfaction. These brand values can either resonate with their core customer base or will cause objection to them. Regardless, it is purposeful and shows true standing for a brand to stand up for the values they trust and allow for customers to make up their own choice whether to follow. One such craft brewery that for a time advertised themselves as have good employee relations was Trillium Brewing Company located in Boston, USA. They consistently advertised themselves as a family oriented and operated brewery that respected and took care of their employees. However, there was significant backlash among craft beer fans once it was exposed that these practices were untrue. A post on a craft beer related social media site made by a past employee showed that though Trillium displayed themselves publicly as providing for their employees, they were actually grossly under paying them (Vorel, 2018). This backlash lead to Trillium needing to make a public announcement regarding pay increases to these employees and their practices and original values were called into question as a result. To this day, many Trillium fans still respond negatively to any press releases by Trillium recalling this blemish on their brand values.

2.3.3 Customers

Finally, the most important aspect of brand culture is the customers themselves. The customers are the ones who will determine in the end whether the brand is relevant or not. Kapferer (2012, p. 130), states that consumers will be either attracted to or repelled by the cultural standings that brands make. These cultural standings will either resonate with the consumers causing for them to invest more time and money

into the brand or cause for them to rebel against the brand as previously seen in the case against Trillium where they did not keep up with their stated brand values. From these customers, the ones that the message resonates highest with will champion for the brand and rally behind it whether they consume the brand or not (Kapferer, 2012, p. 161).

2.4 Relationship

Kapferer (2012) defines the role of brand relationship simply by stating that "a brand is a relationship." As brands and their products are the center of a consumer and business exchange, the service of this exchange is described as being a relationship. However, as there are two entities in play in the brand relationship, being the consumer and the brand, the brand relationship relies on a combination of factors from both sides. Figure 5 presents how the formation of a brand relationship via the nine consumer and brand relationship dimensions (Fritz & Lorenz, 2014) along with the aspects of brand reputation and multiple consumers via tribalism (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009) together create a brand relationship.

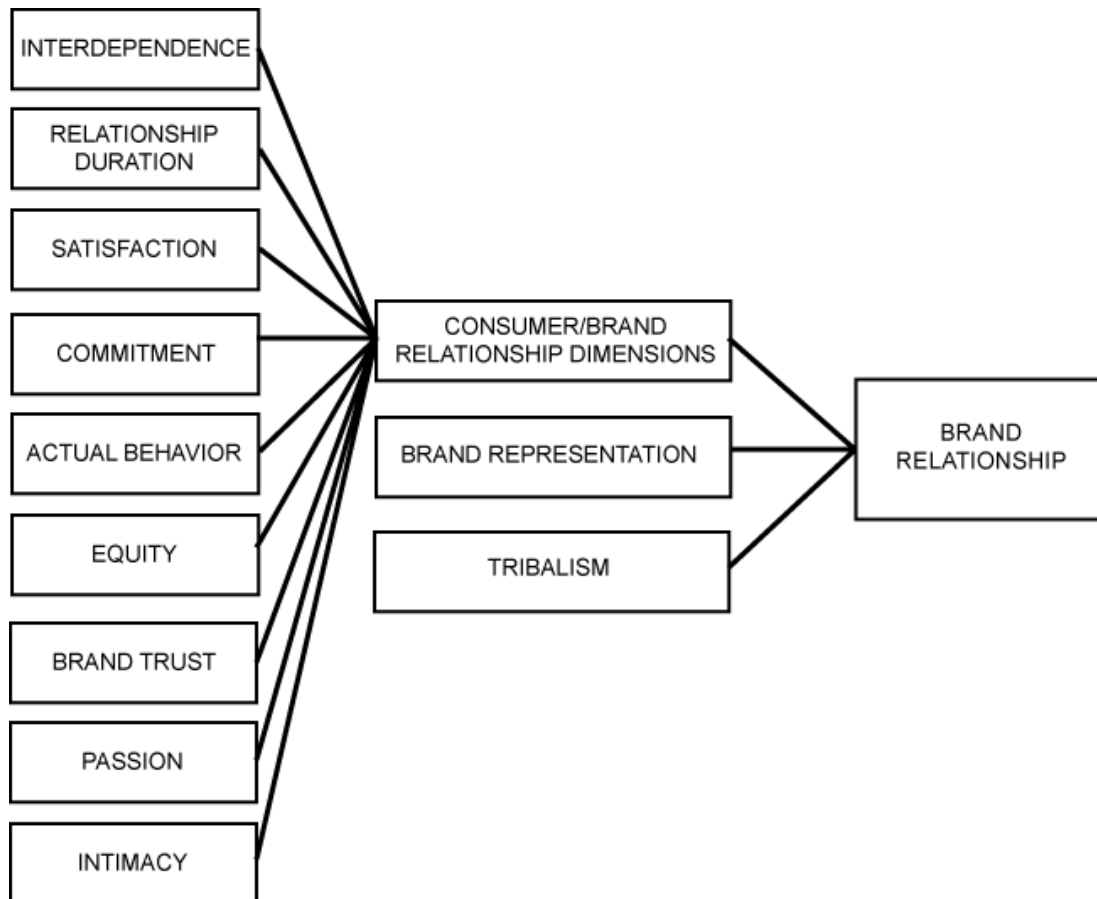


Figure 5: Modified diagram representing Brand Relationship based on a combination of Fritz & Lorenz's (2014) Nine Potential Dimensions of Relationships Between Consumers and Brand and Veloutsou & Moutinho's (2009) Brand relationships through brand tribalism research model.

2.4.1 Consumer/Brand Relationship Dimensions

Fritz and Lorenz (2014) introduced their theory of nine specific dimensions of relationship between a consumer and their brand of choice by utilizing social psychological approaches to interpersonal relationships with regard to social interaction theory approaches. Much like an interpersonal relationship, the chosen dimensions are based on traits exhibited by the consumer and brand over the course of repeated non-accidental exchanges. The nine relationship dimensions consist of: interdependence, relationship duration, satisfaction, brand commitment, actual behavior, equity, brand trust, passion and intimacy.

Interdependence - Interdependence theory states that for an individual, their goals are situated as such that they become a determinant of how they will interact with a given stimuli and further determines what the outcomes of these interactions will be (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). In order for a brand to exist as a partner in a relationship with a consumer the brand and the consumer must consistently affect, define and redefine their relationship and the actions from each side can have a lasting effect on the brand relationship. The interaction between consumer and brand and the extent of the touchpoints between the two will dictate the outcome of a mutually dependent relationship (Fournier, 1998).

Relationship Duration - Huber, et al (2015) describes the act of creating a healthy brand relationship duration as requiring more than just a brand knowing what the customer appreciates but also an understanding what the differences are in the customer's preferences at each stage of their relationship. Fritz, et al (2014) states that there are four stages that pertain to the duration of a relationship characterized as "best friendship," "unemotional purpose based relationship," "loose contact," and "happy partnership." A best friendship brand relationship can be characterized by being close and long lasting with the consumers feeling trust and attachment to the brand however there is a lack of passion between consumer and brand. An unemotional purpose based relationship can be characterized as a more convenient relationship between consumer and brand where the consumer enters the relationship more out of necessity and though the relationship is long lasting, it is lacking passion or emotion. A loose contact relationship can be characterized by potential consumer satisfaction with the brand however the consumer feels no attachment to the brand. Finally, a happy partnership can be characterized by a closeness between the consumer and brand that is also high in passion in intimacy, however this relationship type is the hardest for a brand to achieve based on survey results (Fritz, et al, 2014). It must be noted that during each phase of these relationship types, it becomes more important for the brand to create value for the consumer and align products and communication with consumers in an effort to maintain a strong long term and emotional bond (Huber, et al, 2015).

Satisfaction – The satisfaction of a relationship between a consumer and a brand comes as a result of a comparison between the expected performance of the brand and the actual experience the consumer has with the brand (Fritz, et al, 2014).

Brand Commitment – The brand commitment a consumer makes with a brand goes back to the relationship duration a consumer has with the brand and furthers on the desire that a consumer has to enter into a long term relationship duration and their willingness in making an effort to maintain said relationship (Fritz, et al, 2014).

Actual Behavior – Actual behavior of a customer is determined based on their past buying behavior and relates to the frequency with which the customers purchases the brand as well as the word of mouth behavior of the customer in relation to whether they have discussions with others about the brand and if they have positive or negative feelings towards the brand. Further, actual behavior has relevancy to brand loyalty as brand loyalty dictates the motive and the behavior of the brands buying power to the customer (Fritz, et al, 2014).

Equity – Equity theory can be defined as a perceived balance between cost and benefit relative to each individual consumer (Fritz, et al, 2014). With regard to brands equity level is viewed in the eyes of the consumer based on the fairness of their relationship with the brand. If the consumer feels that there is an imbalance between the perceived benefit towards a brand and the brands cost, the relationship with the consumer can suffer as a result. The most positive equity towards a brand shows the consumer that the benefit they receive from the brand outweighs the cost based factors that differ for each individual.

Brand Trust – The trust that an individual consumer feels towards a brand is weighed by is representative of whether or not the consumer feels that the equity they receive from the brand, or the perceived benefit versus cost has met or not met their expectations. Further preconceived expectations towards a brand can have an effect on the trust that a consumer feels towards a brand. Brand trust can be comprised of four main factors including willingness to resolve problems, benevolence, brand reliability and integrity (Fritz, et al, 2014). The problem many brands and craft brewers face in brand trust is the type of vessel they sell their product in. If the brand

chooses to sell their product in a can, it becomes more difficult for the brewer to show the internal qualities of their product and the same applies to opaque bottles. In order to gain initial brand trust, the brand must do so with other external factors and indicators such as price, quality, and the guarantees of the location where the product is being sold (Kapferer, 2012, pp. 20-21).

Passion – A customer showing passion towards a brand illustrates a high level of brand trust between the customer and brand. When put in the context of a relationship, passion refers to a desire for one another to discover new qualities and details. This is the same in a customer that is passionate about a specific brand. The customer feels an intense desire for the product and do not find any other brand to be acceptable when they are in need of that certain product (Fritz, et al, 2014).

Intimacy – Intimacy between a customer and a brand revolves around the details that a customer is willing to disclose to a brand. If the brand gives back and is supportive of the needs of the customer, then the customer will be more willing to give more back to the brand. The customer in this sense needs to feel taken care of by the brand and that the brand has the customer's best interests in mind (Fritz, et al, 2014). Surveys given by brands and rewards and changes made based off them are a good example of brands performing in an intimate way with their customers.

2.4.2 Brand Representation

Brand representation and its reputation based off it are an increasingly important phenomenon in the ongoing relationship between customer and brand. The development of the brands reputation overtime in the eyes of customer relies on the various methods and techniques that a brand uses to market their products that are in keeping with the values of the individual consumer. Brands that are able to employ methods that keep them in a positive light with their customer base are more likely to attract more customers with similar value structures than brands that consistently change their practices. This is due to the established reputation of the brand. Once the brand has created an established reputation with their customer base, any actions that consumers view as not in keeping with the alignment of the value structure the brand has set in place will cause for them to develop a negative reputation. Once the

brand has established a negative reputation among their usual customer base, the long term relationship is affected and may never be able to be resolved. However, how a brand reacts to this type of predicament can resolve the issues of their damaged reputation if they resolve the issue in a way that is in keeping with the consumers values, or they can further damage their reputation if they do not resolve their actions to fix the relationship in a way in keeping with the customer values (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009).

2.4.3 Tribalism

Brand tribalism speaks to a collective group of consumers that have a relationship with a certain brand to form a brand community. These consumers' tribes are typically made up of individuals that share a common emotional link to a product and represent a common market segment typically made up of a commonality between individual consumers. They are passionate about their brand relationship and because of this many of them become not just product consumers but brand advocates. They view the brand they use not just as a product but as an extension of themselves. Between the groups of consumers, they seek the commonality of these relationship feelings among their co-peers who also are advocates of the brand. These groups differ from market in that the consumer tribe is made up of networks of consumers that are similar in terms of demographics such as age, gender, sex and income and all share similar feelings towards a product. This causes for a precise correlation where a stronger tribalism surrounding a brand creates a stronger brand relationship (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). With the rise of interactive online social media platforms, there is a current trend of rising brand tribalism. In online networks, groups are easier to form as it becomes easier to seek out others with similar situations and brand interests. In the craft beer community, there is a large amount of tribalism present as groups of individuals of similar demographics participate heavily in online discussion and meet other similarly minded individuals when visiting bars and breweries. On social media platforms such as Reddit, Untapp'd, RateBeer and BeerAdvocate, individuals are able to discuss in open forums about their similar tastes in beer and are able to draft trades to send beers they like in exchange for beers they may not be able to purchase where they live.

2.5 Reflection

Kapferer (2012, p. 162) simply states that “a brand is a customer reflection,” meaning that the brand is an extension of how the customer perceives themselves as an extension of using a brand. Reflection of a brand is different than a brand target in that the target is the audience the brand is marketing themselves to while the reflection is who the brand’s audience sees themselves as for using the brand. In this way, customers will use a brand in an effort to form their own identities and in order for brands to create value around reflection, brands need to arrange their core values and brand segments to align with the reflections the customers seek (Kapferer, 2012, pp. 161-162). It is through the determining of a company’s brand reflection that a company can create the basis for their brand strategy and recognize the “possibilities and liabilities” that come with this facet of their branding strategy (Bergström, Landgren & Müntzing, 2010). With these concepts in mind Bergström et. al, (2010) have decided upon three main attributes of flexibility, consistency, and brand pooling in being the most crucial components for determining brand reflection and in order to further build a brand (Figure 6).

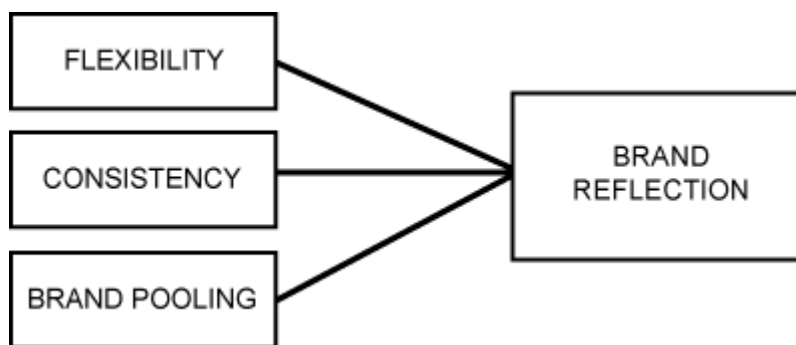


Figure 6: Modified version of Bergström, et al Brand Strategy diagram (Bergström, et al, 2010).

2.5.1 Flexibility

One of the greatest factors towards brand reflection that breweries can follow in order to enhance their marketing capabilities is to remain flexible. By remaining flexible in their branding, a company is then able to take advantage of current events and issues in an effort to further strengthen their brand among their consumer base.

At concept start, the brand should create a branding effort that will be a reflection of their consumers and from this they can then adapt to include further events and issues as they see fit to further their brand reflection (Bergström, et al, 2010). Flexibility in brand reflection is a common branding technique throughout the craft beer community as their consistent output of production allows for them to make specialty beers that raise awareness or money toward an issue they see that their consumers care about or allows them to try different styles based off current market trends. Further, Braune (2000) states that since the early 1990's expensive branding attempts have taken a back seat to more flexible branding opportunities. He states that brand makeovers have become more commonplace in society on the level of logo replacement and the manipulation of brand missions and values to sustain brand appeal and thus making the brand more relevant and appealing to changing consumer audiences. In addition, consumer information via websites, social media and reward clubs provide invaluable feedback from consumers to brands that allows for them to view trends and remaining flexible to adapt to these trends is a paramount (Braune, 2000).

In terms of flexibility in the craft beer community, it has become instrumental for them to remain flexible in terms of keeping up with trends in terms of styles. Each year, craft beer has seen a different style that becomes wildly popular and can cause for new brands to rise if they are able to consistently make these styles well. Additionally, it has become necessary for craft beer brewers to be flexible to these trends and listen to consumers and anticipate what could become the new popular beer style. One example of a brewer that has had success in being flexible is Keith Villa. Villa was the original owner of the originally craft brewery, Blue Moon that was sold to Molson Coors. Attempting to remain flexible and view new market demands, Keith has noticed a current trend with marijuana infused products and has introduced a cannabis infused nonalcoholic Belgian style ale under the title Ceria Brewing Co, which saw great success as it sold out in 4 hours. By noticing these current trends, seeing how Belgian style ales are wildly popular and infusing them with marijuana, Keith has been able to fulfill a consumer need and create another successful product (Guzman, 2019).

2.5.2 Consistency

In order for a brand to retain its branding image and to decrease the chance of confusion towards what they stand for, it is imperative for a brand to practice consistency throughout all their branding efforts (Bergström, et al, 2010). In craft brewing, brand consistency is necessary in order for a brewery to be successful. Park, Milberg & Lawson (1991) states that consumers will see a greater fit between brand and the extensions of the brand when the products share the same concept. In this way, craft brewing brands that are able to create hype surrounding one beer style will be viewed as consistent in this beer style and thus, consumers will view the brewery as having the ability to create other great beers in this style but may shy away from further style extensions until they have proven themselves to additionally be consistent in said new style. In a Good Beer Hunting interview with John Kimmich, the head brewer at The Alchemist, a brewery internationally known for the hazy New England style IPAs, John discusses the originally slow growth that The Alchemist faced initially and how if the consistency of the beer was off there was no one to blame but himself. He goes on to claim that the growth projections he set with his wife allowed for the brewery to consistently perfect this style of beer before attempting other styles or brewery expansion and become a beloved brewer of the New England style IPA (Kiser, 2016).

2.5.3 Brand Pooling

Brand pooling is defined as being a branding opportunity that allows for existing brands to use the strength of another brands equity, celebrity or large sampling size through co-branding, co-opetition, and other associated means in order to increase market and knowledge of the brand. The main concept behind brand pooling is that one brand is able to utilize the strengths of another brand in order to be associated with them and gain new market share through their established branding efforts (Bergström et al, 2010). Bengtsson & Kock (1996) describe the act of co-opetition between brands as being the concept of mutuality between brands that have historically been competitors to cooperate in a relationship that is mutually beneficial for both brands. The method of co-opetition can further be broken down into three defined relationship types including cooperation dominated where the two brands

increase their cooperative measures and decrease competitive measures, equal where the two brands increase both cooperation and competition between and competition dominated where the two brands will compete at a greater rate than cooperate (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000). Brands will co-brand or create co-opetition between one another when market uncertainty for a product may be high and in this way, the two brands are then able to spread the risk between each other while using similar resources to allow for shared risk and cost sharing (Ritala, 2012).

An example of brand pooling that occurs commonly among craft beer brands is co-branding in the form of the creation of collaboration beers. Co-branding occurs when a partnership between two companies forms in an effort to create a product that features shared knowledge, market, risk and reward from both companies. In this way, the companies can learn from each other and gain new market share by branding with a co-company (Erevelles, Stevenson, Srinivasan, Fukawa, 2007). In the February 2016 edition of BeerAdvocate magazine (Cizmar, 2016), the topic of collaboration brewing was discussed with Mike Keilty of Lompoc Brewery in Portland, Oregon that has brewed more than 25 collaboration beers in 2 years alongside Jason Oliver from Devil's Backbone brewing in Virginia and Christopher Leonard from Heavy Sea's brewing in Baltimore, Maryland. The trio discussed a set of seven guidelines they follow when making collaboration beers and the reasoning behind it. First they suggested that the owner of the system or the premise and ownership or the brewing equipment and sales distribution network is the one that makes the rules. This is due to the brewery location being the one that needs to set the guidelines in order to ensure the fermentation process will not exceed timelines they need to make their own beers and also the brewery making it is the one to sell it so they need to be in charge of the product that will be sold. Second the brewers say that in collaboration brewing, the people brewing need to be prepared to be both student and teacher. People coming from different backgrounds to create the beer makes an atmosphere where some might be more knowledgeable than others and can show new brewing tactics to others and varying ingredients profiles that may have not been previously thought of. Third they mention that each member participating in the collaboration beer should show up on time, as the brewery they are setting up at may have a particular schedule to follow. Fourth they mention that when creating a collaboration beer they say it is important for brewers to understand that certain

exotic ingredients can be tough to source and they should find a middle ground between one another and decide on something reasonable they can create and not overexert themselves or their budget. Fifth, they further the fourth sentiment by suggesting not to get too diverse on the chosen hop varieties as they can also be hard to source. However, one of the mentioned benefits of collaboration brewing is that the locations and distribution networks that the brewers participate in vary and so some maybe be able to get ingredients that others can't via their networks or through trading. The sixth point that they mention is the embrace the marketing opportunity including within collaboration brewing. As mentioned earlier via Erevelles, et al (2007), co-branding and collaboration are a great way of getting a company's product into the hands of new consumers and to reach a new niche which can lead to more growth opportunities for both parties. The final guideline given for being successful in collaboration brewing is to not miss the opportunity as there is a lot on the line for both brewers participating and the opportunity to create something new that contributes in large ways to both breweries is high.

2.6 Self-Image

The concept of self-image in branding can be defined as the consumer "target's own internal mirror," as the brand assists the consumer to confirm a mutual attitude (Kapferer, 2012, p. 162). From a psychological standpoint the idea of self-image does not need to reflect reality and can be made up of a variety of influences and factors for each individual. In order to gain a greater picture of the concept of self-image, Kuhn & McPartland (1954) administered a twenty question test to 288 undergraduate students at the State University of Iowa in an effort to notice patterns within student responses to the question "Who am I?" The students were instructed to answer the question with twenty responses and answer as though they were providing the answers to themselves and no one else with the intention of getting the true picture of how the students truly viewed themselves. From the survey results, it was concluded that the answers could be divided into two groupings consisting of social roles or objective and external aspects that one could view themselves as such as husband or student as well as personality traits or internal aspects such as outgoing or happy. Further, the survey concluded that in almost all cases, the students gave

responses that dealt with physical descriptions of themselves, social roles, personal traits or existential statements (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954).

One example of self-image being seen in craft brewing is that of the internal reflection of environmental consciousness. As current global environmental changes persist, many individuals are adapting to incorporate sustainable products into their lives and consistently look for it in the branding methods when shopping. As craft brewers are able to adapt and relate more to their consumer bases, they also instill this same motivation and incorporate sustainable methods into their product manufacturing and incorporate this into their branding. Many examples of this include craft breweries that use sustainable and local products in their beers, grow their own hops, and recycle any waste materials they create whether it be reusing spent grain to make bread or using it to feed local livestock. One such brewery that has tapped into the environmentally conscious self-image demographic via a unique method is TOAST Ale Ltd of the United Kingdom. Founded in 2015 by brewer Tristram Stuart, TOAST Ale is a brewery that utilizes the discarded ends of bread loaves from sandwich factories in their brewing processes. Further, they use renewable energy sources at their breweries, extract ground water, used recycled glass bottles, and give their spent grain the local livestock as feed. Additionally they have pledged their profits to the charity Feedback which supports eliminating food waste on a global scale (TOAST Ale Questions & Answers, 2018). This image that the brewery conveys to the public aligns with a large proportion of consumer's self-image and as such they have gained wide scale recognition and awards.

2.7 Proposed Modifications to the Brand Identity Prism

Now that the discussion regarding the six segment of the brand identity prism has been furthered defined by the essential elements pertaining to each, it is now possible to formulate a modified brand identity prism that will advise craft breweries how they can proceed with creating a better approach to connect with consumers via their branding efforts. The below figure will serve as the theoretical basis moving forward to how a craft brewery can approach their 1) Physique based on the brand's physique, consumer perceptions of the brand, consumer needs fulfilled by the brand, and touchpoints between the consumer and the brewery, 2) Personality based on the

sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness of the brewery, 3) Culture based on the employees, brand values and customers of the brewery, 4) Relationship based on the consumer/brand relationship dimensions, brand reputation and tribalism of the brewery, 5) Reflection based on the flexibility, consistency and brand pooling of the brewery, and the 6) Self-Image of the brand based on a variety of internal and ever evolving set criteria based around self-physical descriptions, social roles, personal traits and existential statements that the consumers and breweries agree upon (figure 7).

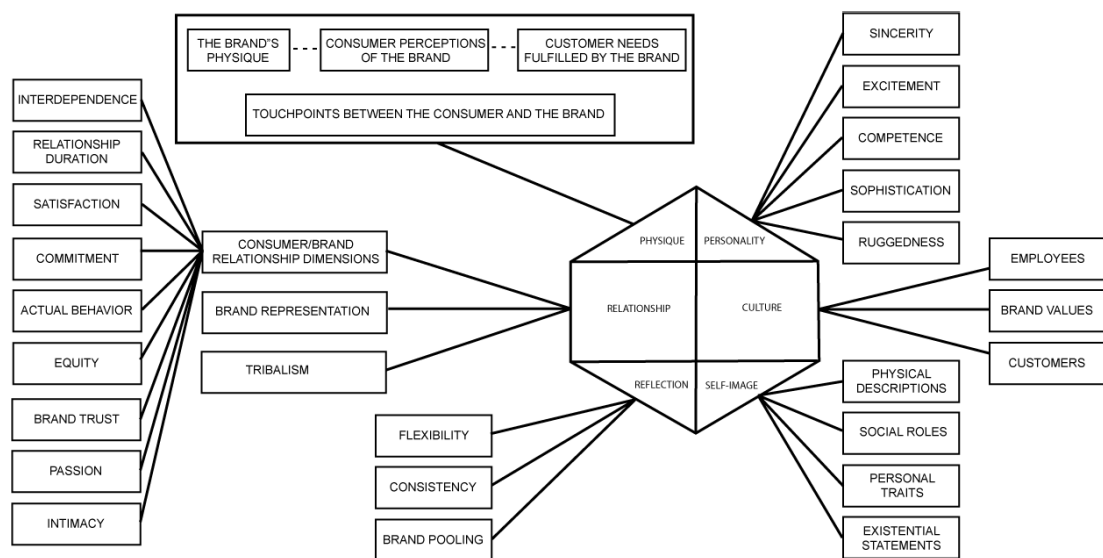


Figure 7: Modification of the Brand Identity Prism

3 DATA AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to provide a description and justification of the research data obtained through qualitative methods including article review, interviews and a question proposed to a craft beer enthusiast group. This section will further develop the aspects that were sought for article review to build the theoretical framework and how they will be utilized in the interview process. Further, the rationale behind each interview subject will be examined and how their unique backgrounds pertain to the topics discussed within the theoretical framework. Additionally, a question proposed to a group of craft beer enthusiasts and their responses to the question will be examined in an effort to further define aspects of the theoretical framework. However, as the theory has been explained in earlier chapters, the focus of this chapter will be to further elaborate on the methods and the rationale behind them and will not further delve into the theoretical concepts but will relate them to the interviews.

3.1 Article Review

The purpose of the review of articles was to discover relevant articles and interpret from them the properties that lend themselves to concepts outlined in the theoretical framework. In the section physique articles were sought based on the key concepts of physical features in branding to determine if such connections between brand and consumer also showed prevalence in the craft beer community. Article review in this subject area was sought in an effort to gain a greater understanding of physical attributes of brands that attract consumers in an effort to gain understanding of this area of the brand identity prism, its relevance to craft brewing and how this concept can be a topic of discussion during the interview process. Further, in the section on personality, article review was centered around the study of articles that focus on how consumers view brands that speak to them almost as if the brands themselves have human characteristics and how these attributes assist with the branding of the craft brewery. These characteristics were further broken down into key characteristics and once again were done so with the concept of exploring the key concepts to gain a better understanding of them so that during interview, the ideas could be discussed to see what role they play in craft beer branding. Additionally, the

section on culture explored how brand culture reaches different facets of the brand and an exploration of how this concept plays to craft brewing was explored. In this manner, the intention was to gain further insight into the roles that employees, brand values and customers play towards creating and brand culture and during interviews to determine the craft brewery perspective of how they create a culture to draw in consumers and also to view from the consumer perspective and see the brand cultures that craft brewers create that they are drawn to and their reasoning. These concepts further delve into the discussed notion of relationship and this concept was further explored through article review and further discussed based on main characteristics of brand relationship. The purpose here was to view the key relationship characteristics to have a greater understanding of them in an effort to question breweries on how they are able to maintain these relationships with consumers based on these facets and which areas of a brand relationship craft beer consumers sought most and what these relationship areas lead to in the purchasing and interactions. The second to last area of brand identity that article review was completed on was that of the concept of reflection. Reflection was recognized as having three main areas that make up the concept and these areas were further researched. Then with the research on this area, key questions were created that could then be brought up in an effort to see how craft brewers view their customers and how they brand themselves to customers in an effort to draw certain customers to their brand. The final key concept where article review was utilized was the brand identity concept of self-image which pertains to the internal concept of the consumer and how they view a brand as an extension of themselves. Through this research analysis, key concepts in self-image were introduced and from them questions surrounding what brand ideals brewers try to portray to attract consumers and what ideals consumers see for themselves that they seek from craft breweries. With article review, the ability to form a solid foundation of knowledge around the key concepts and where they fit in branding was able to be developed and with these key concepts defined the basis for questions centered around how these key concepts apply craft beer branding were able to be created to gain insight from industry professions and craft beer consumers.

3.2 Interview Data Collection

In the interviewing process, industry knowledge as well as the opposing consumer side of the respective segment for the topic of craft beer branding was paramount in selecting subjects for data collection. Having a diverse range of subjects in an effort to gain insight into each segment of the brand identity prism through their respective interviews was the goal.

In addition to data collection being completed via interviews with individuals, data collection in the form of interview questions being offered to craft beer related forum groups was also utilized. One branding concept that has been identified in the framework was that of tribalism and the formation of brand communities. Among craft beer consumers, there exists a variety of communities that center around varying aspects of the craft beer world. There are global communities where members discuss all aspects of craft beer, including distinct breweries, regional craft beer communities, as well as communities of craft beer fans that trade beers that they may not be able to obtain in their local market. These communities exist both in physical meetups as well as in on online based community forums and websites such as Reddit, Beer Advocate, Untapp'd, Rate Beer, Facebook and various other sites and platforms. For the purposes of this theoretical research, the global Reddit forum, r/beer, a forum centered around craft beer fans and various discussions was utilized for a discussion. In the interest of determining areas of the brand identity pyramid that were most prevalent among consumers towards craft beer branding, the question of “Who or what got you interested in the craft beer scene?” was presented to the group for discussion. Further analysis of this discussion will be presented among the Data Analysis portion of this thesis.

3.3 Qualitative Data

The purpose of utilizing qualitative data analysis in a theoretical setting such as this is thesis due to the flexibility such research allows. Qualitative research methods allow for the researcher to explore the phenomena studied by using semi structured methods rather than rigid structures, allowing for more in-depth interviews that can be altered as the responses are given to gain a better understanding of the subject

matter (Mack, et al., 2005). Through the use of open ended questions, researchers can connect answers to the variety of interview methods they employ in an effort to seek variation between responses, gain further explanations, entertain individual experiences, and can better categorize norms based on group sampling (Mack, et al., 2005). The usage of qualitative research methods in this particular thesis were employed as the interviews were conducted with a differing range and experience sample of individuals with interest to craft beer. Industry professionals were given one on one interviews in an effort to seek their thoughts on their own experiences with craft beer and how they market their own brands and consumer study was completed via a focus group type of setting where a forum was proposed a question regarding craft beer and they involved themselves in a discussion over this question. With these methods, it was then possible to view the individual experiences of each interviewee while still being able to relate their answers back to the original theoretical framework.

4 INTERVIEWS AND ANSWER ANALYSIS

The purpose of this section of the thesis is to focus on the real world experiences of consumers and industry professionals that are involved in the craft brewing community and business. First an analysis of a question proposed to the global craft beer community forum on Reddit in an effort to gain a general consumer insight into the segments of physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image is presented followed by interview sessions with Bence Czura, owner and head brewer at the craft beer bar Mallaskellari in an effort to gain further insight into the segments of physique, culture and relationship and Jameson Viens, beer distribution and sales expert for Berkshire Brewing Company and Horizon Beverages and avid craft beer enthusiast and beer trader in an effort to gain further insight into the brand identity segments of physique, culture, relationship, reflection, and self-image. Through the questions proposed to them and the responses they have given, instances where facets of the brand identity prism are prevalent will be discussed to further demonstrate how a craft brewery can benefit from differing elements of the brand identity prism when forming and promoting their brand.

4.1 Reddit r/beer Forum

Reddit is an online community forum where users the ability to share content in the form of stories, links, image and videos. Users can submit their content to a variety of topic based sub forums called subreddits where other users can comment and upvote or down vote the comment allowing for the most interesting upvoted comment to gain more visibility. It is currently the number five most viewed website in the United States and has currently 330 million plus monthly active participants commenting on over 138,000 active subreddit communities (Reddit About, 2019). On Reddit there are several beer and craft beer related subreddit communities but for the purposes of this thesis the subreddit r/beer has been selected as the location to present the question “Who or what got you interested in the craft beer scene?” R/beer is described as being “A subreddit to discuss your favorite beers and breweries, share beer related articles. Quality content encouraged.” (Reddit r/beer, 2019) and contains over 361,000 active subscribers. The subreddit provides subscribers with a new craft beer drinkers guide to craft beer, a guide to survey results containing the forums

favorite beers in 100 different styles, local beer recommendations, a beer release calendar, a link to a map based website that shows the nearest local breweries, craft beer bars and bottle shops as well as tips for cellar aging beer and links to various global and regional subreddits focused on local craft beer (r/Beer, 2019).

With regard to the question “Who or what got you interested in the craft beer scene?” there were 89 individual comments provided and the question received 90% upvotes from users with a final upvote score of 34. In an effort to provide context to the question it was expressed that the findings would be used in a Master’s thesis on the topic of Creating a Craft Brewery Brand Identity and in an effort to start the conversation and give users an idea of what information was being sought, the example that enjoying cooking and the ability to create foods based on own tastes translated to looking for craft beers that also met tastes preferences were a factor in steering original interest towards craft beer (r/Beer, 2019).

4.1.1 Physique

In relating the responses to the brand identity prism segment of physique every original response provided by users related to the criteria defined within the theoretical framework. In terms of physique, a large number of consumers responded that one of the aspects that lead to their craft beer selection was the appearance of the label art work on the bottle. There were multiples responses where the Reddit responders said that they “pretty much went off what packaging I liked best,” “would just buy random bottles based on their packaging,” or “Went in and just picked out some bottles solely on the label alone.” Some responders delved further into their choices by remarking that in addition to the appearance of the packaging, the title of the beer or the brewery name caused them to purchase the brand with comments such as “I went camping and decided a six pack of Goose Island IPA looked good in the gas station,” “My buddy and I picked up a mixed 12 pack from Victory, mostly because Golden Monkey was a pretty funny name, and it changed my world,” and “When I turned 21, I headed over to the party store and picked myself up a six pack of Bells Two Hearted Ale, noting the cool artwork and description on the back of the bottles” (r/Beer, 2019).

Additionally, consumers noted that they purchased the specific beer based on the personal associations and relations they felt based on the beer artwork or title with comments such as “Their branding was so focused around local culture that I immediately connected with it. They have references to local sports and music in their naming of beers and they back it up with events supporting local artists,” “at the packie near my house they had some Flying Dog Raging Bitch right next to the Sam Adams and being a huge Hunter S Thompson fan I recognized the artwork and gave it a shot,” “I really liked the cover on the beer, it had a picture of a rowboat in a lake at that time. It felt like it brought me closer to nature and stuff, I felt a connection to my environment,” and “their tap list included some kind of Game of Thrones Beer (Valar Morghulis or Dohaeris, can't remember) and I'm a huge fan of the series so I ordered it” (r/Beer, 2019).

Further, based on the beer title, certain consumers made assumptions about the contents and taste of the beer based on flavor associations they previously had with comments such as “I saw something called a Coffee Porter in the grocery store one day. I loved coffee so I bought it” and “Never liked beer until my friend who also didn't like beer that much but drinks tons of coffee, bought out a grocery store's supply of 2013 Stone imperial Russian stout with coffee.” In addition to the outside packaging, many consumers made their opinions based on their interests in the brand on how the actual beer looked in appearance as well as the taste with comments such as “I love stouts and wanted to try them all,” “I was 21 I was sick of light beer, and basically bought anything with actual flavor,” “I didn't even know beer came in that color or could taste like something you weren't just choking down to get a buzz,” “It wasn't really about the story or the packaging or anything. It was about the difference in flavor and the variety,” and “The differentiated taste of that beer, it tasted like a juicy pine tree, I'll never forget” (r/Beer, 2019).

Other physical elements where the beer company's logo or information was displayed was also a point that consumers commented on. One commenter wrote “I started talking to my friend at school, who often wore shirts from various breweries, about beer” so they perceived that the friend who would wear craft beer insignia clothes would be knowledgeable about the product. In addition, another commenter wrote “I had the Val-Dieu tripel and the glass displayed the Abbey had been brewing

for 800 years. That really piqued my interest,” which shows that not just the branding of bottles can have an impact to the consumer, but the associated merchandise such as glassware can also have a physical impact towards branding towards craft beer consumers (r/Beer, 2019).

In addition to the physical appearance of the beer brands, the consumer perceptions associated with the brand also showed differences on a per comment basis. As previously stated, many consumers mentioned an interest in European or Belgian based beers off of positive interactions they had with brands that physically branded themselves as such. Additionally, many commenters’ discuss a brand preference for craft beer brands that were the first to introduce them to the craft beer scene. Due to the nostalgia value of these brands, they see them as either an introduction based brand, or one they drank for a period of time as they were still discovering the beers involved in the craft beer scene or as a consistent beer that they have built up a level of trust with that they no feel they can go back to whenever they have lost interest in seeking out new craft beers. Based off comments, it is also clear that brand perception can go further than just individual brand and can be location based. As previously stated, many consumers who were introduced to Belgian wheat beers as their first foray into the craft beer community thus make a connection that Belgian and European beers are superior to others. Additionally, craft beer consumers who are located in areas where craft beer is prominent make connections with local breweries and make the perception that other breweries located in the areas will also be of the quality they seek. These assumptions are made by the consumers simply based off the preconceived thoughts they have had towards the brand based of the physical appearance of the brand and their own internal thoughts (r/Beer, 2019).

4.1.2 Relationship

From the stand point of Interdependence from the angle of brand and customer relationship, comments from consumers that state the touchpoints where they began and continued a relationship with craft beer is of note. With relation to this concept, commenters stated ” In college we would drink Guinness and Blue Moon during happy hours or specials nights,” “a bar near my university had a “drink around the world” program. Introduced me to not only imports but also the burgeoning craft

scene,” “College pub only served craft beer,” and “In college this one bar had \$2 Blue Moons on Thursdays. That is also when I developed a taste for wheat beers.” Comments such as these show that the consumers were interested in trying craft beer based on the availability and in some cases the pricing structure of the beers at their local establishments. From these comments it can be rationalized that the consumers were interested in entering into a relationship with craft beers as a result of the touchpoint locations where they were consuming them. The rationale behind their consumption of craft beer can be viewed as a novice advance and an interest in sampling and can also be seen as having occurred due to the attempts by the bar to promote the products and not the brand products themselves. Further, it can be seen that craft beer drinkers are more likely to enter into a relationship with craft beer as a whole, and are not as partial to sticking with one brand unless there is incentive to. Places of craft beer sale can view this concept as beneficial to them as consumers may be more interested in trying a variety of brands rather than sticking with one particular one unless they come across one they prefer based on a variety of the aforementioned factors (r/Beer, 2019).

As previously mentioned the role of Relationship duration in a craft beer brand and consumer scenario appears to be a potentially uphill battle for breweries as fans of craft beer are swayed by a number of factors including pricing, taste and variety. In order for relationship duration between craft beer brewery and consumer to be extended to the point of a happy partnership, the craft beer brand needs to formulate a combination of the aforementioned factors or rely on a smaller percentage of repeat customers to one specific style. Not to say that this is unachievable, as many commenters do state that there is one particular beer that got them into craft beer that they view now as a “go to” beer when they are purchasing and no other beer stands out to them. One commenter states that the craft beer Heady Topper by the Alchemist Brewing was the beer that got them interested in craft beer but at this time, “Heady Topper isn’t even that high on my list anymore but it’s still good stuff and I still have nostalgia for how it got me started.” This type of relationship shows a more of a best friendship style where the consumer feels close and has a long lasting relationship due to trust and attachment to the brand, however, they still seek out other beers and no longer have the passion they once felt towards the brand. This type of relationship dimension between craft brewery and consumer appears to be

more of a norm as consumers may feel some nostalgia for the beer that got them interested in the scene but no longer feel passionate enough to regularly purchase the specific brand (r/Beer, 2019).

In terms of Satisfaction customers feel with craft brewery brands when they are first beginning to become interested in craft beer, the level of satisfaction they feel appears to be high. As the commenter's on this forum are all continual craft beer drinkers, they view beers produced by companies not considered to be craft at this point in time as less satisfying as before they were introduced to craft beer. As previously mentioned, many craft beer drinkers view their first experiences with trying craft beer to be an enlightening experience. These comments show a high level of satisfaction towards these craft beer brands that they originally tried. However, over time, as the craft beer drinker is exposed to more and more craft beer choices, they may begin to feel less satisfaction towards brands they originally felt high levels of satisfaction towards as they may discover other products that they engage in relationships with (r/Beer, 2019).

Though looking back at relationship duration it was noted that duration between consumers and specific craft beer brands can be a bit fleeting, in terms of Brand commitment, craft beer fans display a willingness to commit to a brand over a long period of time though they may not enter into such an intimate relationship. Brand commitment can be seen in the comments in the form of many consumers that have spoken about a specific beer that got them into the world of craft beers and that they still consume today. Though they may not purchase the beer every time they purchase beer, they still view the beer as being consistent and they gain satisfaction from it and due to this they look fondly upon it as the beer that got them into the scene and that they still can rely on when they are looking for a consistent beer that is still able to satisfy their needs. One commenter to the Reddit beer post mentions that Samuel Smith's Oatmeal Stout was the beer that got them into the craft beer scene. They go on to further state "Now a days I can walk down to my local pizza place and choose from 24 taps and about 150 bottles, all craft. And it's great. But even though I love all the new beers and flavors I can get there, I still get happy when I see Samuel Smith's on the draft list," showing that though they may not always purchase this

particular beer when purchasing, the beer still holds a special place to them and as a result they still feel a commitment to the brand (r/Beer, 2019).

Among craft beer lovers, one aspect of the community that shows itself time and time again is the enjoyment craft beer fans get out of discussing their favorite craft beers and the enjoyment they get from getting others who may not have tried craft beer or who have to try beers that they enjoy. The Actual behavior of the craft beer fans from the beer forum on Reddit showed that many of them enjoy discussion relating to beers they enjoy and comparing what aspects of the beer brand they find most enjoyable. If they have positive feelings towards a craft beer brand, they are quick to express them in an effort to see if others enjoy the same aspects as they do. Additionally, they are united in their dislike of non-craft beer brands and have a sense of community surrounding their lack of enjoyment towards these brands and how making the switch to craft beer has changed their buying habits and how they feel this has positively affected them. Further in the Reddit interviews it was apparent that in many scenarios, an individual that was not knowledgeable about craft beer was introduced to craft beer when they first started working at a bar or liquor store and was introduced to craft beer by positive words from a co-worker or friend (r/Beer, 2019).

In terms of brand Equity in relation to the craft beer consumers of the Reddit beer forum, many do not mention the increased price of craft beer, however, they do mention that happy hour pricing of certain craft beers early on in their brand relationships were instrumental in introducing them to craft beer. To these consumers, prior to beginning a relationship with craft beer, the perceived balance of benefit to cost was not high enough to warrant them spending more to purchase craft beer. However, after sampling craft beers and as many did so at a discounted rate, they decided that the equity towards these beers was balanced enough that they wanted to continue with the purchase of them as the benefit increase in relativity to the cost (r/Beer, 2019).

The concept of Brand Trust as previously stated in craft brewing relies heavily on the first appearance of the brands beer in order to gain the initial trust of the consumer. The appearance of the beer and the all aspects of the offering are of high

consideration when a new consumer to craft beer makes their decision. As stated in the Reddit comments, the consumers rely heavily upon the taste and difference in physical appearance compared to offerings they have encountered in the past. Further it is important for the appearance to match the perceived quality the consumer has determined from it. If a craft beer does not meet the expectations set by the appearance of the beer, it will hurt the brand trust and the consumer may seek other brands in future purchases. Additionally the quality of differing styles of craft beers that the brand puts out can help or hurt the brand trust in the eyes of the consumer (r/Beer, 2019).

Passion towards a specific brand in the context of craft beer would allude to the consumer feeling an intense desire for a specific brand and an urge to seek out additional qualities in the specific brand that make it more desirable to themselves over other brands. In the Reddit comments a level of passion towards craft beer in a general sense has been captured however as the question was asking for specifics of what got each individual consumer into craft beer, the level of passion the consumers feel towards this original brand has faded over time. Many of the commenter's mention that there were specific brands that originally got them interested in craft beer and at that time they felt passionate about the change in taste and style in these brands over former brands they had been drinking. However, as there is much selection in craft brewing brands, they did not remain in relationships with just a single brand and were intrigued to try other brands with similar styles in an effort to seek beers that met their taste standards (r/Beer, 2019).

Much like passion as a branding segment with regards to the Reddit beer post, consumers did not appear to show levels of intimacy with the beer brands that first got them interested in craft beer. As the consumers went on to discover other brands, they may have initially felt intimacy with the brands and this can be found in some comments in the form of the work places and bars that some of the commenters visited during their original craft beer scene discovery. There are mentions of visiting bars or being at workplaces and getting educated about different beer styles and brands. As a consumer becomes intimate with a brand, they become willing to share in a give and take relationship with the brand where each is attempting to learn and discover more about the other in an effort to provide and receive the best experience.

One commenter mentions that they at the bar they worked at, “They educated us on different styles and methods, and it was super interesting.” This type of give and take of information and questioning in an effort to better educate staff shows an intimate relationship between brand and consumer as the restaurant informed their employee about brand and beer styling in an effort for them to better know the beer and in turn the employee could ask questions of the employer in an effort to get a better experience for themselves. This further translates into possible intimate relationships for patrons of the particular bar as the employee is then able to pass along what they have learned to the customer and provide them a better experience at the bar. This chain of intimacy between bars and consumers is beneficial for beer brands as it gives consumers insight into the brand and can provide insight back to the brand via the bars sales. Further, if these customers form intimate relationships with the specific bar and the brewery keeps a contract with the bar, it can translate to intimate relationships with the specific beer brand (r/Beer, 2019).

4.1.3 Self-Image

The segment self-image is readily present in the comments made on Reddit as well. Upon review of the comments it can be seen that many of the consumers discuss how prior to drinking craft beer, they define themselves as being young and naïve. One commenter states, “Shortly after turning 21 in the early aughts, I was trying different beers. I'd order different things at a bar or pick up a random six-pack. Then I happened upon Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, and thus began the Cascade effect” and other commenters join in to this comment stating, “Second SN PA, was one of my break through beers” and “SN Pale was also the beer that really snowballed stuff for me.” In this comment chain, the consumer stating that they experienced a “cascade effect” is stating this as a double entendre in their life, cascade being a hop varietal commonly found in Pale Ales and IPA’s and additionally implying that trying craft beer was “a process whereby something, typically information or knowledge, is passed on” as expressed in the Google dictionary definition (2019). The additional commenters, who demonstrate tribalism as mentioned earlier, further embrace the original posters sentiments and see trying this beer as a breakthrough moment for themselves and further agreeing that the experience of trying this beer set up an enlightening experience for themselves that they feel helped them acquire better

taste. This self-image concept of being naïve prior to discovering craft beer is further displayed by additional consumers. They further go into discussion about a specific style and brand of beer known as Blue Moon Belgian Wheat Ale that is “A *wheat beer* brewed with orange peel for a subtle *sweetness* and bright, citrus aroma (Blue Moon Belgian White, 2019)” Thus the sweetness of the beer makes it an approachable style for younger inexperienced drinkers to craft beer further explaining the young, naïve self-image that discussed. These particular consumers state “When I was like, an older teen (18-19) I hadn't quite acquired a taste for beer yet, so I would drink blue moon to try to acquire a taste for it. Because blue moon is labeled as a "Belgian style wheat beer", when I got to drinking age I figured that would be the kind of beer I would like. So I started to try different wheat beers, different Belgian beer, ext. Overtime I acquired a taste for less sweet beer.” This comment is responded to with the statements “In College this one bar had \$2 Blue Moons on Thursdays. That is also when I developed a taste for wheat beers and started exploring other options. Wheat and Belgian beers are now one of my least favorite styles” and “I still love my wheat beer and Belgian ale, but I can kinda see how you can lose a taste for them. Honestly Blue Moon seems to be a common gateway beer for people to get into craft beer.” This further backs the self-image angle that naivety to the craft beer scene leads to trial of certain beers that are of taste and then once the consumers knowledge base of the style has expanded, they feel that they are open to experience new styles and feel that they have outgrown these styles and are now more knowledgeable and are past the self-image of a young and naïve, thus entering a stage of self-enlightenment (r/Beer, 2019).

4.2 Bence Czura Owner of Mallaskellari

Bence Czura is one of the co-owners of the craft beer bar Mallaskellari that opened in Oulu, Finland in mid-August, 2018. He is also a craft beer aficionado and gypsy brewer, which in craft brewing is defined as a brewer that currently does not have their own physical brewery and travels to other breweries that have brewing premises to collaborate and brew beer. The beer that Bence brews is then sold on tap at the bar Mallaskellari. Prior to opening Mallaskellari, Bence was a food engineering major with a sub degree in brewing in distilling in his home of Budapest, Hungary. He was originally introduced to the craft beer and home brewing scene by his friend in

Budapest, who asked him to work at a local bottle shop and later at a brewery. To date, Bence has brewed collaborations for Mallaskellari that include a New England style IPA, a Smoked Stout and an upcoming Baltic Porter.

The first question proposed to Bence was a continuation of the Reddit post and a continuation of the theme of the thesis, what first got him interested in craft beer. The purpose of asking this question to Bence was to see if as someone who has been worked as a brewer, a craft beer bar owner and for a specialty bottle shop, if his response would differ from the general craft beer community. Bence responded with the following:

“One of my schoolmates came to me and was like hey you want some like you know student job like while you are studying you can just come there’s like this new craft beer shop in the heart of Budapest and I just opened it and like do you want to come and work there with me? And I was like, sure why not, I need a job anyways why not.”

“It was like a home brewers shop and it was a craft beer shop so we were selling raw materials and stuff for home brewing and home cheese making, so like bacteria’s, like cheese cultures and like all the yeasts and hops and malts and whatever, it was a big hit because in the city center there wasn’t any home brewer shop. It was a tiny shop and I started to work there and of course you could get the beer at like purchase price.”

“I remember, he invited us to one of his birthday parties and he was like “hey guys, do you want to try my beer?” and I was like what the what, try my beer?? And it was already bottled and everything.”

“it was his own beer and he won some competitions after that so he also became a brewer like right away and it was actually really awesome that we got to be friends right away actually, he like brought me into this whole thing” (Bence Czura).

Bence’s responses reveals that much like many others in the Reddit forum, a friend brought him into the craft beer community. Bence was already on his way to getting into this community on his own, however, it was a friend who worked at a bottle shop that was the one he credits with getting him first interested into trying craft beers. Further, much like the Reddit forum, the act of someone bringing along a friend into the craft beer community further displays the relationship segment of tribalism. Additionally, by being brought into the touchpoints of the craft beer shop

and introduced to homebrewed beers by his friend, it set Bence into a relationship with craft beer and craft brewing.

The follow-up question to Bence asked him, as a beer consumer himself, when he is buying beer personally and not for sale at the bar what characteristics he looks for. The purpose of this question was to get a better understanding if someone who is a brewer them self and works in selling beers to consumer has any noticeable differences when they select a beer for personal consumption. Bence responded:

“When I go personally, first of all I check what mood I am in. You know like, I like to narrow it down to a style at least. When I go to a shop, I kind of know I’m not in a porter mood, I’m more in a New England DIPA mood, like you know that when you go somewhere and you want to buy a drink it’s about what mood you are in. Thank god we can define this mood already, if you want something sweet, or if you’re in a more a DIPA mood or you want something else or whatever and it’s not difficult here because there aren’t many options but when we were on the road trip last summer on the West Coast (USA) that was a difficult thing because it was always what to pick? Like it was like a really difficult choice. So I remember there, I was in a super IPA mode, it was like 40 degrees, the middle of summer and you know we were going to the beach and I went ok, I definitely want some New England IPA or some West Coast IPA and I found this beer in cans in a six pack called Make America Juicy Again. It was like, this is my choice. That’s what I want. For example I really loved the name of the beer. It brought me like this good feeling and I just checked, I knew the brewery, I don’t remember which one was that, but I knew that they were quite good rated and the description and it was simple and it wasn’t like anything special. But it was catchy as well, the logo on the can. It was this white/orange mixture and that was kind of matching my mood so I chose that one. So I have to be honest, first I narrowed it down to a style, then of course I look at the package. That’s like super important for me. It’s like, the beer has to look like something” (Bence Czura).

From Bence’s response it can be seen that some of the characteristics are similar from the Reddit beer forum responses. Bence also responds that physique plays a large role in his selection of beer. He mentions that the label must mention the beers style as he shops mainly based on that as his main criteria. He further mentions that the label the label, beer title and coloration of the logo and label played an important role in choice selection when he was shopping in a new region he had not previously traveled to during a trip. Additionally it can be deduced that the brewery that created the beer was attempting to give it a personality trait of excitement as they were utilizing current topical humor in the beer title by being daring and up to date with

topical humor. These personality traits along with the colorful label shows that the brand values fun and eludes this image to give their customers a fun vibe which was what Bence mentions he was seeking at the time as he was on vacation and going to the beach. Bence trusted the brand based off these features based on how the brand represented itself and due to his own self-image and the way he mentions that he shops for beer based on his current mood, he made his decision on this particular beer brand. Bence further went onto explain that physical branding is important to him but it is important for the brand to also not be too flashy with their labeling such as mention of multiple awards won as he stated this gives the craft brewer an inauthentic feeling and makes the brand feel like they have a need to compensate for what he would feel is an uninspired product.

The next question proposed to Bence focused on his personal usage of social media to check reviews from others prior to purchasing craft beers for personal consumption and he further elaborates on the topic of doing so when purchasing for his bar. The purpose of this question was to serve as a means to determine if Bence was entering in relationships with beer brands based on social media touchpoints with tribalistic customer reviews to decide which craft beers to purchase. Bence responded:

"I don't really care what about other people's reviews in a detailed way. I check the average rating. If I see it's under 2.5, then yeah that really shows something significant. But if it's between the average of 3.5 and 4, then it cannot be really bad. It can actually be really awesome for me. It can be also bad, but most likely it will be quite an average beer so. In that way, I don't really see the reason to spend so much time on Untapp'd and checking other people on what they wrote about it because many of the beers have quite a nice description by the brewery and I think that's super important because I've seen sometimes here in Finland, breweries don't put the description on the beers and it's kind of annoying like as a bar, when I buy the beer. It would be nice to know like if they just send me a beer and it's a kind of IPA and we don't know what kind of hops or anything about it"

"Us the bar. Like, for example [a brewery] now they send the beers and they send A4 paper with descriptions what the beers they have and what about the beers. Like they write two paragraphs about every beer. I was like man, this is awesome. Like maybe not in paper, but somehow, online or something it should present because people won't know and bars won't know. Like I'm desperate enough to look for these and try to figure it out but not every bar will do that and it's like they can't say anything about the beer" (Bence Czura).

From this response it can be seen that Bence is individualistic as opposed to tribalistic when it comes to deciding on beer for consumption, though he does take into consideration reviews from others if the majority of them appear to be low. Bence reports that craft beer is subjective based off of one's own tastes and reviews from others should not hold such a high bearing as something that tastes good to one person, may not taste good to another. This purports to Bence's own self image as a more individualistic beer consumer and the brand trust he creates is more based on his own research into a beer brand rather than a tribalistic approach. In this same vein, he further states that he prefers a quality description of the beer put out by the brewery themselves, as they are the ones who have created the beer, so they best know what has gone into it and the approach and taste of it. Bence shows the relationship segment of brand trust and puts a lot of weight into the brand reputation and brand consistency in this statement as he believes it is up to the brewery to display this information in a physical location whether it be on the packaging of the physical beer or a readily available location. He states that in Finland, many breweries lack this physical branding and to him it affects the beer as he is unable to decide which beer to purchase based on this information and then will typically have to look for it himself, using time and resources thus giving a negative experience before even sampling the product. As Bence is also deciding on purchase of craft beer consumption at his bar in addition to his own personal consumption, this comment further serves as a statement to the importance of physical branding for craft breweries in order to build brand trust and enter into brand relationships with consumers.

Bence further discusses the importance of physical branding in craft beer by stating:

"I really care if the label is straight or not. I think that's like super important."

"Then once from [a brewery], I got this beer and the labels were like folded on each other and I was like what the. All the bottles. I was like you cannot sell this, at least not at full price. If [another brewery] had some mistake with the cans, they sell it for 1 Euro, the cans. They sell it but at a proper discounted price because that's the thing. It's not a full package anymore because you have the beer and you have the packaging and it has to be like 100% ready and good."

"Like then it's already harmed" (Bence Czura).

From these statements it can be seen that the physical branding of a craft beer label can make a statement about the quality of the beer. It can be viewed that if the package is not correct on the outside, it harms the brand's reputation and reflects poorly in terms of brand consistency, affects the brand's personality as they come off as sloppy, and speaks negatively about the brand's culture as it gives the image that if the craft beer brand's appearance is incorrect on the outside in terms of bottle and packaging appearance, how is it safe for the consumer to know whether or not the contents of the package are also not of desired quality. He further mentions that as a sign of goodwill and to keep from wasting beer, a brewery he has purchased from offered cans that did not meet physical outside standards of the brewery for a discounted price. A move such as this can show that the brewery understands the importance of physical branding of their product and this move helps their brand reputation by showing they are not willing to sell a substandard and inconsistent product at normal pricing and they further this by providing a positive brand experience as customers get a discounted product that may then exceed their expectations.

As the conversation began to turn to discussion on breweries and their branding abilities, the follow-up question asked Bence about his brewing experiences as a gypsy brewer or a brewery that does not have a physical brewing facility and must utilize other breweries premises and his feelings on collaboration beers, where two or more brewers collaborate in order to create a beer to be sold under their respective brewery brands. The question was meant to gather whether Bence saw these collaboration beers as beneficial for branding or potentially harmful to the brands. Bence responded with the following:

"I always thought that collabs are the best things yea like you always get to learn new things. Like that's what I love in brewing that science is something that which you will never say that ok it's done, I've learned everything. No. Just like chemistry, you never are going to say of course I know everything. No, no you don't there's like always new things coming up. There's always something new in the industry and you have to be up to date all the time. Like you cannot just sit back and just think ok I know everything. But when you go for collab, you will always learn something from like the other breweries like the other three beers we made at other breweries it always was fun because we

learned something and for example these equipments, in Hungary, we don't have such equipments like they have here." (Bence Czura).

From Bence's comments it can be seen that in terms of employee brand culture and brand pooling via reflection, collaborations beers are a positive experience for both breweries as they are able to learn new techniques from one another. These collaboration beers allow for smaller brewers to discover new techniques and the ability to work with brewing apparatuses they may have not had access to otherwise. In addition to the positives Bence mentions, collaboration beers can be a positive to consumers on the terms of brand pooling as they may gain access to a brewery that they may have never known about previously. With Bence's beers, they were brewed under the Mallaskellari Brewery name and then were marketed as such in the south of Finland and in Helsinki. This type of brand pooling allows for consumers to see a brewery they were already familiar with and also see the Mallaskellari name associated with it. Thus these consumers are entering into a new relationship with the Mallaskellari brand and if they were to visit Oulu, they would recognize the brand and any future beer releases under the Mallaskellari brand they would then be familiar with and know that they can expect consistency and other characteristics associated with this brand.

As the conversation has moved to the Mallaskellari brand, the focus of the interview now went further into the topic of the Mallaskellari bar in Oulu. The first question asked was to expand upon the Mallaskellari concept, how it began, how the brand has expanded since and how the first customers and clients were sold on the brand. These questions were asked in an effort to gain further insight into the brands personality, culture and relationship. Bence responded:

"Last August we managed to open and the basic idea of the bar was we were selling beers that others don't. That's also our slogan basically. It was like, we were sitting and were thinking, what should be our slogan, I was like, we sell beers others don't. It kind of sounded a bit aggressive or a bit too egotistic but actually customers made it right that they were convincing that yes, you are selling beers which others don't"

"Nothing was really happening [in Oulu] and it seems that now that something's moving and it makes me happy because it means that customers will get more and more exciting beers. That's the most important thing."

”It’s like, it’s something which it’s cool to have here, some beers which are popular in Helsinki, why can’t we have them here in Oulu? It’s quite a big city. That was our main motivation. First customers, well, I remember we created an event and I think we reached almost 800 people on Facebook and that was like super big, I mean you get like such interest for festivals and stuff and concerts not for a bar. So during the first week it was like full all the time” (Bence Czura).

With Bence’s response it can be seen that the personality the bar is trying to achieve is one of unique standard, he mentions that they are trying to distance themselves from other craft beer bars in Oulu and give their bar a set of brand values and a new and ambitious personality that has been echoed by their customer base. This new and exciting approach has further been attached to the self-image of many customers as they view something that a city like Helsinki has can now be found here in Oulu and the popularity of this concept was seen in their first Facebook event page where over 800 customers showed their interest. The bold approach that Mallaskellari has taken shows through their brand reputation and will show based on how their brand relationships with customers fare. Further echoing their focus on brand values, Bence went on to further mention that they are only using breweries and small distribution networks in an effort to not have to serve beers that distributors dictate they must serve and also in an effort to keep the beer as fresh as possible. In addition, they set up various networks and relationships with breweries and distributors to keep their tap lines ever changing with exciting new beers to meet the demands of their customers.

As the previous question was alluding to the beginning concept of the bar and how it began, the next question posed to Bence was asking in regard to what kind of personality he has tried to give to the bar. In this question, the purpose was to get a better insight into if the brand personality dimensions that have been described in the theoretical framework would be associated with Mallaskellari. Bence responded:

”I’m going to quote from a customer. When they come in they feel like they’re stepping into another world where they don’t need to worry about what’s outside. What they expect from outside, they just come here and everything changes. And I was like, that’s actually a perfect description of what I want.”

"It's like you just going for two beers. You know like that's what I loved in the US, when you just wanted to go for two beers, you just go out for two beers in your flip flops and just go home after two beers or not."

"I saw people in their socks sitting here, without their shoes because they were so comfy. I was like that's amazing. That's what I want here. It's not like going out, it's just coming, having some beer, playing some games at home. That's the point. I definitely want them to feel cozy and also feel excited that there's some new beers on tap again and I think that we created a constantly changing tap list" (Bence Czura).

With his response, Bence shows that he wants the Mallaskellari bar brand to be associated with three main personality traits, relaxed, cozy and exciting. He further mentions that he was envisioning craft beer bar aesthetics he saw while traveling the U.S. where patrons can go to a craft beer bar without feeling the need to get dressed up in a sophisticated manner and can just come out, feel relaxed and excited about trying new craft beers on tap. This further shows the brand culture that Bence has attempted to introduce to his bar, the values he holds are the values he creates for his employees and the aesthetics surrounding the bar and its customers.

The approachability angle in the values of the bar is further explored as Bence discusses further that his staff and himself do not want to give the appearance of being professionals. In addition, he further goes on to state what separates Mallaskellari from the other beer bars located in Oulu. He adds:

"We are not professional bar people. Like none of us managed a bar before. This is what the craft beer scene represents to me too. It's like basically there can be professionals. I can say studied this. Like making craft beers, but I don't think of myself as a professional. I just like learned about it and now I try to make it work. But I'm not someone who's like yeah you can open 10 bars. That doesn't attract me."

"We have the same price for all the beers. And I think that was, well in the beginning we came up with the idea because I remember I had this some places in America and also in other places. Like, same price, I don't have to decide because of the price" (Bence Czura).

Bence discusses the relaxed and unprofessional atmosphere he is trying to convey in further detail as he discusses the touchpoints between consumers and employees and the culture surrounding Mallaskellari which he gives a competent, down to earth

personality by further exploring the idea that his employees are just average everyday people looking to further the craft beer scene onto their consumers. He continues on to explain that he is interested in the one beer bar he currently has and is not looking forward onto expansion, he is just trying to make the best bar for the his local clients. He goes on to further mention the promotion of craft beer flights as another way that Mallaskellari has distanced themselves from local competition in terms of promotion as well as their pricing structure which is meant to be simple with two fixed prices for every beer in an effort to not scare away consumers from trying beers based on their pricing.

Furthering on the angle of touchpoints between bar Mallaskellari and consumers as well as the tribalistic nature in terms of relationship, the next question asked of Bence what promotional methods the bar uses to advertise their brand to consumers. In response, Bence said:

“Instagram mostly. Of course Facebook, of course Google. We realized there’s not that many bars using Google.”

“It’s like it’s unbelievable that bars don’t really use Google in Oulu. Like, I think we just got some nice like olut bar or something like it wasn’t taken or anything so many times we are in the top 2” (Bence Czura).

Bence mentions that the digital touchpoint between Mallaskellari is mostly Instagram and other forms of social media and includes that they also market their brand on Google which is something he is surprised to discover has not been done by competitors in the area. In addition, Mallaskellari also was one of the first craft beer bars in Oulu to be a certified beer bar on the craft beer related social media application, Untapp’d and they are consistently updating their rotating draft beer list through it to keep their customers informed and updated. He goes on to further mention that they continue to use Facebook events to sponsor events such as tap take overs where they bring in one specific brewery to serve on multiple taps and explained that for events such as this they like to incorporate the names of the beers they will be selling in an effort at physique branding to have the beer titles get customers interested in the event and eventually draw them in to try them when the day comes.

In addition to our of bar promotion, Mallaskellari also does a great job of inside promotion of their beers as they include custom illustrations hand drawn by local artists for each beer on their rotating draft list that includes the beer brand, title, style, alcohol content, and an associated illustration. These plaques serve as a means of physical branding for the beer brands that gives the customers a sense for what they are ordering and can give a personality to the beer before they even see it being poured.

As the interview drew to a conclusion, a finale series of questions was asked regarding the customers of Mallaskellari and whether the bar is seeing success in all their branding efforts in the form of repeat customers and if they are also getting new customers and new customers being introduced to the craft beer scene via the bar.

"Our customer base is actually starting to get to be the regulars, who I know they are always going to come. Some I even know which days they are going to come."

"A lot of people don't even like beers and they came here because they just heard that it's the new trend to come Mallaskellari and they came here. Like hey, I love this place but I don't like beers, and I was like try this, whoa it's amazing. Yeah, it's beer. It was a nice sour fruity beer and they're like whoa that's amazing" (Bence Czura).

And do you give them samples and like flights of beer?

"Yeah and samples they need because otherwise they won't get convinced. I understand it's a new thing it's like Oulu is not the place where you can always drop the new thing so fast. Oulu always needs time. Unlike the capital, if you go to Helsinki or Budapest and something can start right away because people will buy into it. You will find your audience whenever because there are people for sure who are into that so it's always a bit difficult in this case" (Bence Czura).

From this series of questions, it becomes apparent that Bence being a craft beer fan himself and a brewer, is very knowledgeable about the customer base and location he has and the approach he has taken to bring them in. He mentions that many customers have become regulars to the bar over time and he even knows based on events or particular beers he adds to the draft list when they are likely to come by the bar. This shows that bar Mallaskellari has built up a passionate customer base that

has trust in the brand to provide them a good experience each time they enter the bar. The customers see the Mallaskellari brand and the craft beers they offer as consistent and part of their own self-image. Further, Mallaskellari is initiating new customers in to the craft beer scene by providing a satisfying experience by acting as a touchpoint between the breweries and customers to fulfill their need in the form of samples and imparting craft beer knowledge to them to assist them to find a beer that suites their taste palate. Bence concludes the interview by showing a sincere brand personality and imparting good brand values by showing that he understands that what he is providing is a new concept and he is looking to show his customers these new craft beers that he was introduced to so long ago while treating them to the best experience possible.

4.3 Jameson Viens Craft Beer Sales at Berkshire Brewing and Horizon Beverage

Jameson Viens is a craft beer aficionado who has 8+ years of professional craft beer industry experience in addition to over 9,000 unique craft beers sampled, has homebrewed his own beer and has attended countless festivals, events and breweries across the globe. Additionally, Jameson is an avid craft beer trader and is active in a variety of online and offline craft beer social groups. He got his initial industry level experience working at a Boston based liquor store where he curated the beer portfolio for a 4,000+ customer database and informed them as to upcoming releases via a weekly newsletter. After approximately 4 years there, he moved on to Berkshire Brewing Company, a Boston based craft brewery where he acted as a brand ambassador for approximately a year until he landed his current position at Origin Beverage Company, a division of the Boston alcohol distributor Horizon Beverage. He has now been employed there for over 4 years and develops sales relationships with high end craft beer bars and provides them with a lengthy resume and insight into the craft beer scene.

The first question proposed to Jameson was a continuation of the Reddit post and a continuation of the theme of the thesis, what first got him interested in craft beer. The purpose of asking this question to Jameson was to see if as someone who has been a prominent figure in the craft beer scene via his employment history and the vast

amount of craft beers he has tasted and breweries he has visited, if his response would differ from the general craft beer community. Jameson responded with the following:

“It was the flavor and quality of beer. My first few beers were: Harpoon IPA, Sam Adams, Black Ale, Hoegaarden, Guinness, Avintinus, Weihestephaner. But I didn't really have my eyes open until I tried Hill Farmstead What is Enlightenment? It changed the course of my professional career and made me want to get into beer. It was so good and so revelatory that I had no idea that beer could be so flavorful. It was one of those eye opening experiences that changes you. I was working at a liquor store just as a transition job and was just sort of buying beers based on what the general consensus was in the beer community. This was like before beer hype and when Westvleteren 12 was the best beer in the world. Green Flash West Coast was popular, Leinenkugel Sunset Wheat was coming into the market. I also had a friend who worked at the Publick House who would show me beer he liked. This was before NEIPA changed the game so I was drinking all kinds of styles” (Jameson Viens).

His response to this question shows that like many commenters from Reddit beer forum, he was also intrigued by craft beer based physique branding in terms of the taste and improved quality based on beers brands that other Redditors also mention as their first forays into the craft beer scene. Further, he mentions the first time he tried Hill Farmstead *What Is Enlightenment?* in terms of self-image as being an eye opening experience. As with the Reddit forum, many commented that trying craft beer was an eye opening experience; however Jameson mentions it in terms of smaller batch, locally produced and limited availability craft beer by Hill Farmstead brewing. Additionally, Jameson mentions a tribalistic viewpoint in terms of further purchases of beers by monitoring popularity of craft beers via beer communities and an interest in trying the beers that others are giving positive reviews for. He further mentions that during this time, brand physiques in terms of style in IPA and Belgian Wheat ales in the forms of Green Flash and Leinekugel were gaining in popularity, a point that was further noted as being a first style foray for many via the Reddit beer forum. Then he additionally mentions that the NEIPA (New England IPA) changed the game in terms of physique style, as this style has emerged as a very popular and sought after physique among craft beer drinkers as many are willing to make the purchase just based on the NEIPA branding and hazy, juice like beer appearance.

The next question to Jameson questioned his current status in brand in the craft beer brand pooling scene of beer trading and view his current thoughts in addition to the tribalism involved within the craft beer community in order to get involved with such endeavors. Jameson states:

"Well I don't do much beer trading anymore because it got too expensive and I got burnt out of the rat race trying to catch up with new beers. But when I was into it I was just trying to learn more about high-level craft beer that was starting to emerge and went online to find a beer community. I used BeerAdvocate for several years and met some great people who are willing to trade and share their beer all to help build the community"(Jameson Viens).

From this response it can be seen that as an individual who has been in the craft beer scene for an elongated amount of time, some aspects of the community have grown tiring to Jameson. He mentions that when he was highly into the craft beer community he used the forum site BeerAdvocate where others congregate to discuss and trade beer. This community highlights the tribalistic segment of relationship as a community of fellow craft beer lovers had a location where they could discuss their interest in craft beer and create a brand community to trade sought after beers. This type of interaction further displayed several levels of the consumer brand relationship dimension as the individual consumers would discuss their satisfaction and trust with craft beer brands and would create trades based on these qualities. These qualities show that for consumers further into the craft beer scene, word of mouth branding become very important especially if the brewery is smaller in scale and does not have the budget to advertise their product or distribution network to get their product sold in stores. Further, Jameson's comment also reveals that current marketing methods and the sheer scale of craft breweries in the market are doing harm to the industry. The consistent changeover of craft breweries trying to keep up with one another and outdo one another in terms of variety of styles and extremeness is causing for craft beer scene members to lose interest.

The next question asked to Jameson attempts to further gain insight into the current status of the craft beer scene culture and relate back to his previous statement of burning out towards the scene. The mention of "haze boys" which are known in the craft beer community as individuals that hype up NEIPA releases and travel far in order to stand in line on special brewery can release days in an effort to buy the

maximum amount just so they can brag on social media about how great the beer is and how much effort they put in to acquire it. Additionally the notion of gimmicky beer styles such as strange additives like pancakes to the brewing mix is added to the question in order to gain insight into Jameson's current feeling of burn out towards the community. Jameson states:

"At this point beer has become completely exhausting and has jumped the shark. I don't mind innovation and welcome new products but the fervor and speed with which these beers come out shows that it's a gimmicky trend that companies are trying to create the next best thing and then moving on to something else almost immediately. It becomes like collecting baseball cards. The untapped app has also added to the current culture where you've got to catch them all and it frankly just becomes a financial drain and exhausting. There's very little brand loyalty and development to the point that there are so many beers and breweries out in the market that everything seems to lose value because there's just so much static. This also means that there is a lot of mediocre beer out there because people are willing to try anything" (Jameson Viens).

In his response, Jameson further elaborates on the exhaustion he feels toward the craft beer scene and the rationale behind these feelings. It shows that in terms of culture, the craft beer scene has become more a cult itself rather than just the individual breweries. He mentions that in terms of customer relationships, there is very little in the way of brand loyalty as the sheer vastness of beers in the scene and the output with which they are being created has becoming overwhelming to consumers. He mentions that the tribalistic attitude that once got him interested in the scene has now become a hub of social media posts in the form of apps such as Untapp'd where other consumers brag about their craft beer purchase hauls in an attempt to collect them all and advance their social status by publicly displaying this. These attributes further hurt the personality surrounding the culture as the products no longer viewed in positive personality traits such as exciting but are beginning to take on more negative viewpoints. This concept become interesting as throughout this thesis it has been mention that word of mouth via craft beer customers is instrumental in selling the beer due to lack of marketing and distribution capabilities of craft breweries, however the consumers are now becoming too intimate with the craft beer culture and it is beginning to turn off and push out consumers. Further, the breweries themselves in terms of brand reflection are also harming their brand by having too much brand flexibility and bending to the will of the consumers and what

the consumers are deeming as popular. Jameson mentions that currently craft breweries are trying to keep up with current trends and as a result they are producing more and more beer and in many cases they may not have knowledge of how to properly produce the style and it is leading to mediocre beer.

The purpose of the final question of the interview was to acknowledge Jameson's previous statement regarding the surplus of mediocre craft beer being released and questioning if these brand reflection issues regarding consistency are having an impact in getting bars and liquor stores to purchase the beers or if they too are including themselves in the hype and buzz created by the breweries and attempting to get a rotation of as many new beers as possible in an effort to meet customer demands regardless of quality or consistency. Jameson responded that:

"Both on and off premise locations are really only interested in beers that sell themselves. The market is so saturated that they can just buy something that already has hype built into it charge whatever they want and sell it so they can move onto the next thing. It's a vicious cycle where everybody plays a part from the producer all the way down to the consumer"(Jameson Viens).

From this response it can be seen that the culture of the craft beer market is changing as more and more craft beer brands are competing with one another for sales space. Jameson mentions that due to the hype that certain craft breweries have built up towards themselves and via fans of their beer, they are able to create substandard products and they will not see any consequence in their purchasing power unless craft beer drinkers start to not purchase their output products. However, as it currently stands, certain craft brewers are able to follow style trends and due to the following they have amassed, bars and liquor stores will purchase their beers for distribution and consumers will purchase it due to image hype. Jameson furthered his sentiments relating to the craft beer community by stating that he's *"definitely toned down buying beer and going out"* (Viens, J., phone interview, April 4, 2019) and a result of these challenges and the influx of craft beers pricing.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

News publications as of late have now been reporting that in the United States, beer consumption numbers are on a steady decline; however craft beer sales continue to grow. However, figures further show that millennials and younger generations are beginning to switch to hard spirits when they seek alcoholic beverages (Watson, 2019). As the craft beer scene is a more recent phenomenon in other countries, any decline in beer sales has not yet been seen, however it is likely that over time, the trend that has been seen in the US, will also repeat itself in these countries and the craft beer community. As craft beer brands move forward and develop better brewing methods that match those of countries that have been brewing for longer periods of time, they will begin to perfect certain beers and acquire newer and more currently rare ingredients. However, they must sure to monitor the declining US scene and be aware of the downfalls that are continuing there in an effort to seek consistent profits. Further global issues may also become impactful in the future such as ingredient shortages that are currently being discussed due to the impact of climate change. Craft brewers have an easier ability to be able to adapt as they brew smaller batches than their larger cousins, however, as global ingredient prices rise and brewers with more money are able to take larger stake of smaller ingredient stakes, craft brewers will need to seek new methods for product production.

The purpose of this thesis was to serve as a study into the areas of the brand identity prism that consumers found to be of most importance in branding when seeking a craft beer. Through the interviews and question proposed to the Reddit beer community, it is not possible to summarize the following with respect to each individual entity.

A summary of the Reddit beer community shows that in initial craft beer introduction, the most important aspect is physique with regard to the consumer. The physical aspects of the beers with regard to physical branding, taste, quality and touchpoints where the beer was purchased were instrumental in selling these consumers on specific brands and craft beer as a community. Further, the relationships these consumers made with particular brands were related to a variety of different factors but many of these comments revealed that as the consumers dove

deeper into the craft beer community, they were consistently seeking out new brands to try. However, the comments showed that many of the consumers held a nostalgic viewpoint towards the beers that got them started in craft beer and that they viewed their beers as being a consistent choice that they still remain in a relationship with though the passion may not be at the level it once was when they were first introduced. Finally the concepts of craft beer brands appearing as a more sophisticated alternative to the usual beer brands that had purchased weighed heavy in their minds as they showed that in their own self-image that viewed craft beers and being a step above regular mass produced beers. The community is a tribalistic brand community that has many fans of selected breweries and they consistently discuss which beers are worth trying and this elevates their own self-image as they are able to try as many new breweries and brands as they can, while in many instances, they form long lasting relationships with breweries that maintain consistent and flexible products.

A summary of the interview with Bence reveals that in terms of physique branding, Bence as a consumer himself is very partial to craft beer brands having good artwork on their labels, providing clear style points about the beer and adding descriptions for the beer inside. He also states that it is very important for beer brands to look perfect on the outside so that customers do not question the contents of the beer inside. He includes these same principals in the branding of his own bar as he provides a positive touchpoint that gives customers insight via taste samples of the beer served as well as clear illustrated tap lists and digital tap lists and descriptive events in an effort to draw customers in. In terms of brand personality, Bence's bar Mallaskellari and current brewing efforts are meant to draw up excitement into the guests that try them and the bar is meant to give off a cozy, relaxed and competent feeling that will make customers feel at home in the down to earth setting. The culture of Mallaskellari starts with the employees who make every effort to provide their customers with insight into the beers that are ever changing on the tap list as they maintain their brand value of keeping beers on tap that others don't have. These cultural values are what have kept customers interested in Mallaskellari bar and the beer that they produce. These cultural values have also translated into lasting relationships between the Mallaskellari brand and the customers. They represent their brand well on a variety of mediums and word has gotten around regarding the bar

and passionate regulars who trust the craft beers that are being sold and brewed by the bar are increasing in numbers. In addition the brand is forming new relationships with customers by treating to a new experience they may have no had before. Further, Mallaskellari is participating in tribalistic methods by keeping up with craft beer community standards such as providing consistently updated tap lists on social media and keeping fans happy with events. The Mallaskellari brand has remained consistent on their pricing structure and the quality and value of the beers that they provide their customers thanks to Bence's interests in bringing in smaller distributors in an effort to keep away distributors that dictate what they can put on tap. They have also remained flexible in their beer styles by providing a variety of styles via their brewed beers as well as their tap list and tap take overs. Further, they participate themselves in brand pooling efforts and consistently look to learn from other brewers to make their own brewed beers the best they can while staking claim in new markets outside their own city. Finally, the Mallaskellari brand is a personification of Bence's own self-image as he provides what he states is most important for himself when he is seeking to buy beers. He gives his customers the experience that he has found to be the best via traveling and has built the bar and brewing in his own self-image.

A summary of the interview with Jameson leads to a couple defined statements regarding several areas of the brand identity prism. In terms of physique, Jameson discussed how he got into the craft beer scene based on taste and appearance and how his friends got him into it. Further, the places he worked acted as touchpoints to further him in that direction. Additionally, Jameson discussed the craft beer branding culture and how lately it has changed from when he originally joined the community and now he views it not as just a fun hobby, but more an annoyance as brands try to outdo each other in the name of profits and fellow craft beer fans flock to beers that may be subpar just based on their prestige. In terms of relationship, Jameson did not express any sort of relationship with a specific brand but more with the scene as a whole as he was an experienced trader and was active in communities such as BeerAdvocate and Untapp'd where the goal is to try as many unique beers as possible. With the topic of brand reflection, Jameson states that craft beer brands constant attempts to be flexible to trends and outdo each other in terms of unique beers and branding has led to an influx of inconsistent subpar beer. Finally, Jameson discussed how he is getting more away from beer in terms of trading less due to

expense and is going out for craft beer less also due to expense. From this interview it can be ascertained that it appears a craft beer fan goes through a cycle of trying craft beer, feeling a level of sophistication towards it and excitement and then getting oversaturated by it then lacking the level of excitement that newer drinkers and drinkers who still feel a higher level of attachment to the culture and surrounding need feel for it. In this way, it starts to become monotonous and is viewed as just being something that is a higher expense and detrimental and becomes less of a hobby and more of just an outside interest.

5.1 Managerial Implications

In terms of physique, it can be seen through the Reddit forum responses and conversations with Bence and Jameson that it is important for craft breweries to come up with catchy labeling techniques including eye catching and original artwork, a catchy beer title and full taste profile descriptions of the beer and the style. These physique branding features are the main selling point of craft beer to both novice and experienced consumers. Additionally, providing a positive experience in terms of physique branding can lead consumers who are sampling the craft beer for their first time, will recognize these features and will then be more inclined to purchase the beer again in the future. As seen through the comments included, the craft beer consumer has many options when it comes to beers to purchase and they are very interested in trying everything out on the market. However, by providing a positive initial experience based on physique branding, it is possible the craft beer consumer enter into a relationship with the brewer and will purchase that particular beer again or will seek out other beers produced by that brewery. In terms of importance regarding craft brewery branding, physique is the most important area as it is what sets up expectations for the consumer and will be the deciding factor on whether they make an initial purchase.

In terms of personality, the concept did not show itself as much through the consumer base as they likely are unaware of the personality traits that craft beer brands are trying to express or they are not aware that these traits are connecting with them on a notable level. Though, through interview it is clear, that with personality traits, excitement seems to be one that is important in craft beer branding. For a craft

beer brand to remain exciting to a customer they must be willing to meet current trends and exceed customer expectations.

In terms of brand culture, the strategy does not clearly show itself in comments, however it is ever present and when it goes wrong in the brand it can have a profound impact. As aforementioned, if a brewery maintains a certain brand values and then is found out that they have not been following these core values they have advertised, they can receive a large volume of negative press that will cause a percentage of their consumers in relationships to stop purchasing and cause future customers to follow this lead. Customers are a main area of creating the culture for the brewery and it is important for the brewery to pay attention to their customers and meet their expectations. As evidenced in the interview with Bence, customers have been the ones that have said what they enjoy about the bar and that is now what he states is the culture and vibe of the bar.

With brand relationship, it can be seen that many craft beer fans enter into very short duration relationships with craft breweries. The difficulty comes in trying to elongate these relationships and turn these into intimate relationships. The customer must feel a high level of satisfaction and brand trust towards the craft brewery and this can lead to further sales as long as the brewery is willing to remain flexible and output consistently good beer in a variety of styles so the customer does not get bored. Further, the brand must maintain a good brand reputation as tribalistic beer communities can cause for the breweries to fail if they find fault in something they do wrong.

Brand reflection may be the most important segment outside of physique as a craft brewing brand must remain flexible, consistent and participate in areas such as brand pooling to create new excitement. The brewery must remain flexible in their beer styles and labeling as trends change year to year and consumers require different tastes from their breweries. Further, in these ever changing styles, the brewery must remain consistent or potentially be left out. If they are able to consistently create one specific style, this may only keep their audience in a relationship for a short duration. By remaining flexible and consistent, they provide the best brand experience to their consumer. Lastly, it is good for craft beer brands to practice brand pooling as these

methods will educate them on brand style they might not be used to brewing, or brewing equipment they may not have utilized previously. Additionally, brand pooling will assist to introduce them to new markets and new customers and bring renewed excitement towards the brand.

Lastly, in terms of self-image, craft brewers need to be craft consumers themselves. They need to know what they enjoy what they want in craft beer and try to allude to their own style with the brand. As the craft beer scene has a great community, the self-images that consumers feel towards the scene are consistently on display. Trends and what craft beer consumers want from their craft beer brands can be discovered, however it is up to the craft beer brand to be original and let their originality speak for their brand and this will lead to fans of the brand that see this originality within their own self-image.

5.2 Potential for Future Studies

As this thesis focused on the consumer level and was meant to serve as a guide for creating a craft brewery brand based on the brand identity prism, further studies including multi-level surveys to consumers from differing areas who have and have not been exposed to craft breweries would create new results as well as the utilization of software to categorize these survey results. Additionally, due to the nature of the qualitative data provided in this research, the analysis is limited to the opinions of the persons who were questioned in the interviews as well as the results of the beer forum discussion. The limitations of the study are further based on the amount of participants and their own experiences based on the locations where they have resided and have encountered craft beer as well as the experiences and purchases they have made regarding craft beer. As these opinions are subjective to that of the people interviewed, the research is limited in scope and scale of sample size of the consumers and their experiences. Further, a study based from the business angle could be produced in an effort to see the branding that current breweries are utilizing and seeing how effective their efforts have been with their target audience. Craft brewing is still in its infancy in some locations and as it expands, further studies can also be done on a location from the local city area or based on a country by country basis. In addition, locations where there is an oversaturation of craft

breweries would also be of interest. As craft brewing continues its expansion globally and as it hits a saturation point within the United States, additionally studies will need to be enacted to ensure the future success of craft beer brands within this area of consumer marketing.

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Appendix 1: Bence Czura Interview Questions

1. What got you into craft beer? Like, for me for example, craft beer for example I was very interested in it because I enjoy like cooking and because of that I like things that are like specific tailored tastes, so I like, like, chocolate beers and you know you can't find that with like a macro beer, but what got you interested in craft beer?
2. And when did you start brewing yourself? Just during class or in your spare time?
3. Before that had you been drinking macro beer?
4. So would you say that your friend that brought you into the bottle shop that he kind of brought you into the craft beer scene?
5. So as a beer consumer yourself, what do you look for when you're buying a beer style or brand, anything specific that you look for? You personally, not for the bar.
6. Are you checking Untapp'd or anything to see like what was good?
7. To see other people's reviews?
8. As a home brewer, well not as a home brewer, you're a commercial brewer now, you do like gypsy brewing now, you use other breweries facilities to brew your beer. Do you feel that other breweries and just you in general that it's a benefit, like collaboration beers. Do you think collaboration beers are beneficial for both breweries or they can be like harmful, like they can harm the reputation of one if like it's a substandard product and one brewery is known for doing great beer. Do you think it's beneficial, they're sharing knowledge or do you think it can be harmful?
9. So now I'm going to ask questions about Mallaskellari, so can you tell me like how it started, like how you came up with the idea for it and how it's grown or expanded and how you basically got the first customers and clients to sell their beer.

10. So how do you get those accounts? Do you like go and call them do you do visits to the different breweries?

11. How do you get like the foreign accounts? Like for example Wylam (UK) or To Øl (NOR)?

12. So through distribution?

13. What type of vibe are you trying to give off at the bar? Like, how do you want customers to feel when they come in here? Like do you them to feel sophisticated? Or like a sense of excitement?

14. So you want them to feel cozy?

15. So what is the mission of Mallaskellari and how do differentiate yourself for other bars around here? Like what kind of methods have you used? I know you mentioned, you have the beers that others don't.

16. So you want to be seen as approachable, like, not bar people

17. What about flights? Were you guys the first to do those too?

18. Do you make more on those? Are your profits better because of the Titanic do you think?

19. What promotional methods do you use to promote the bar? Like do you use social media?

20. Do you do sponsored content on Google?

21. Like even now on social media they don't really update it, and you guys are really good at doing event posts. Like tap take overs and things, do you see other bars doing those here? Or you're also the first ones doing those as well?

22. What do you have this weekend? I saw you had something up on your board.
23. Are you going to do a Facebook event for that too?
24. Have you had those beers or you just bought them off the names?
25. Another thing you guys do differently here is the illustrations.
26. The branding and the illustration will definitely raise people's attention. So do you have a lot of repeat customers?
27. Are there any typical qualities you see in a customer? Like when they come here, like you can tell oh they are interested in craft beer, or you can tell they're kind of a novice to the craft beer scene and they're trying to get introduced to it. Basically do you see a lot of people that come here with know-how, like they know what they want?
28. So do you see a lot of people who are new to craft beer?
29. And do you give them samples and like flights of beer?
30. The festival you're going to, are you going there to try new beer to possibly sell here as well or are you just going to enjoy it?
31. And what will you look for there when you try to bring new beers to the bar?

Appendix 2: Jameson Viens Interview Questions

1. What got you first interested in craft beer? Was it a friend, those artsy labels, the unique flavor profiles etc.

2. I know you've been into beer trading, how'd you get into that, were there any social media sites or forums you used or just from setting up friend networks from around?

3. So would you say in the current state of craft beer, you've become a bit burnt out of the culture, I know lately your seem a bit annoyed with haze boys and gimmicky beer styles being put out like pancake beer?

4. If your still working in alcohol and liquor sales, are you seeing these consistency issues having an impact in trying to get bars to purchase or are they riding the hype as well and trying to get as many new beers in their bars as possible to put butts in chairs?