Letting Consumer Communities Take Control
A Case Study of the Reactions to and Implications of Glossier's Sub-brand Glossier Play

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Abstract

As stakeholder power is increasing and consumers are able to shape and co-create brand identities and products, companies are becoming less influential over their own brands as a result. The presence of online brand communities made by consumers furthers the co-creation and shaping of brands' identities, of which they have no control. This thesis aims to find out how consumer communities are able to influence the perception of a brand having released a sub-brand and how the feedback affects the brand loyalty and brand value. Using a qualitative method of analyzing textual constructs of brand perceptions, brand loyalty, and brand value of the parent brand and sub-brand, Fairclough's *Text* Dimension aids in an interpretation of the textual constructs. Applying contemporary theory of the implications of increased stakeholder power and co-creation of brands on online communities in relation to brand perceptions, the study concludes the brand perceptions to be incoherent and consumers to be disloyal due to how they view the value of the sub-brand. Furthermore, the findings conclude that the brand perception of Glossier Play is negatively affected which affects Glossier negatively as well that are now facing the challenges of conforming to the feedback of consumers. Based on the relationship between findings and applied theory, theory regarding brand value could consider brand value beyond the level of product value, and the theory of perceived fit could consider product value as a factor for determining the fit between brands. Moreover, empirical findings of loyalty being shaped by social interaction on communities could consider the case of social interaction revolving around the launch of a sub-brand. The theory applied of the consequences that brand associations have on a brand aided in understanding how consumer communities can affect the perception of a brand.

Chapter 1

Introduction

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1.0 Chapter 1 - Introduction

In the globalized world we live in, managing brands successfully is the key to obtaining advantages over competing brands. The competitive environment between brands goes through constant change, and power distribution and responsibility are shifting as a result (Hatch and Schultz 2008, xvii). Today, stakeholders have an increased power over brands and shaping of their identities, which means they are able to demand more from brands than ever before (ibid, 206). This stakeholder power has appeared due to development and adoption of internet technologies, which has resulted in the concept of co-creation (Ind and Coates 2013). Co-creation is characterized by brand managers incorporating stakeholders into a collaborative process of creating a brand, for instance through participating in online brand communities to obtain insight about how stakeholders perceive a brand (Hatch and Schultz 2008, 208). The developing internet technologies that contributed to increased stakeholder influence resulted in the Web 2.0, which is the present-day internet age of users participating in creating content and continuously modifying it, as opposed to Web 1.0 (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, 60-61). In order to manage a brand within the era of co-creation and expanding stakeholder power, brand managers need to do the very opposite, as letting go of control is part of what creates the foundation for consumer engagement (Fournier and Avery 2011, 194). Consumer engagement, whether encouraged by brands or a product of own interests, is sometimes expressed through online consumer communities[1] (Armstrong and Hagel 1996), also referred to as online brand communities (Muniz and O'guinn 2001; Zheng et al. 2015). The online communities are valuable to companies as they can use the insights from the forums strategically by co-creating ideas with stakeholders (Ind, Iglesias, and Schultz 2013, 7), which can in turn lead to co-creation of brand value (Merz, He, and Vargo 2009, 338). Furthermore, forum members contribute to shape the brand (Gensler et al. 2013, 244; Holt 2002, 244-243) to an extent that affects the brand's identity and brand loyalty greatly because of the increased stakeholder power that exists today (Hatch and Schultz 2008, 206). A company affected by the increased stakeholder power and feedback from consumer communities is American beauty brand Glossier (Glossier n.d.) that recently launched a sub-brand Glossier Play[2] on 3 March, 2019 (Schueneman 2019). Glossier fans on the Glossier Reddit forum (Reddit A n.d.) were quick to share their opinions around the launch of GP, which means that the future of GP lies in the

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[1] The word community is used interchangeably with forum throughout this thesis.
[2] Hereafter referred to as GP

consumers hands with the influence of consumer communities today. Therefore, it is interesting to examine the implications of launching a sub-brand in terms of the perception, brand loyalty, and brand value that may be affected as a result, which leads to the problem statement.

1.1 Problem Statement

How are consumer communities able to influence the perception of a brand as a result of it launching a sub-brand and thereby influence the brand value and brand loyalty of the parent brand and sub-brand?

1.2 Research Questions

RQ1

What is the consumer brand perception of Glossier and Glossier Play and to what extent are these perceptions coherent?

RQ2

How does the feedback of Glossier Play on the Reddit forum affect brand value and brand loyalty towards Glossier Play?

1.3 Background

The beauty blog/website Into The Gloss (ITG) was founded in 2010 by Emily Weiss, which became the antecedent of the American beauty brand Glossier that was founded by Emily Weiss and the team behind the website in 2014. ITG, which is still running, focuses on reviewing products and interviewing women, including celebrities, to talk about *products, career, and what beauty means to women today* (Into the Gloss n.d.). Weiss states that "Glossier is fundamentally about fostering a super deep connection with women in the same way that Into the Gloss has done with women all over the world." (Strugatz 2014). The brand believes that since its employees started out as customers, they have a customer-minded approach and that its so-called ecosystem thrives on the symbiotic relationship it has with all its customers (Glossier n.d.). Their 29 products consist of skin care and makeup (Clark n.d.) and is valued at 1.2 billion dollars (Smith 2019). Glossier is part of the beauty industry, which increased by 6 percent in the US in 2018, where the skin care category grew by 13 percent and the makeup category, which is the largest category within the industry grew by 1 percent (NPD 2019).

Glossier focuses on the individual's approach to beauty and states that an individual's choice is the most important decision and that a brand can never make that decision for the individuals (Glossier n.d.). Furthermore, the brand's approach to its products is that they prepare the skin and bring out the best in one's skin before any make-up application, and thereby make-up becomes an enjoyable part of getting ready as opposed to being a fix, which according to Glossier is how it should be (ibid). Glossier launched its sub-brand Glossier Play on 3 March, 2019 which consists of six products, four makeup products and two makeup tools that are considered more bold and colorful than Glossier's products (Schueneman 2019).

According to the brand, its Glossier-website is a people-powered beauty ecosystem and its products are *inspired by the people who use them, along with people to be inspired by, and for your to inspire* (Glossier n.d.). This attitude towards the individual is also prevalent in what the brand states constitutes Glossier, which is the process of consumers constantly *researching, rechoosing, reviewing and recommending* (ibid) products to other consumers online (ibid). This community-like approach to its brand constitutes a large part of the company, which is why they have a Community Manager to manage this on the website Into The Gloss (La Femme Collective n.d.). Through ITG, they educate their consumers and the blog has become a credible

source overtime. By creating this interaction and allowing consumers to comment on the website's posts, the team behind Glossier are able to use this feedback to understand its consumers and their demands within the beauty market. This feedback was the foundation of the brand as well (Krihely 2018). Glossier uses Slack[3] to connect with its most engaged customers and founder Weiss stays up-to-date on consumer feedback, since she argues that the 'expert' title is not only for beauty brands, but for everyone (Matlin 2017).

Besides the community-focus on ITG, the Reddit forum about Glossier has 3800 members as of 5th April, 2019. The Reddit community exists to discuss Glossier news, product reviews, and the overall brand (Reddit A n.d.). According to the newest moderator of the forum, it was created by a consumer and is not affiliated with Glossier. The creator of the forum abandoned the role as the moderator after a few months, but the moderator role was then taken over by another consumer (app. 4).

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[3] An online collaboration hub for work tasks (Slack n.d.)

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

2.0 Chapter 2 - Theoretical Framework

This section consists of a literature review within the fields of my area of research. The structure of this review is thematic where subheadings cover areas within my research field that are relevant for this thesis. The section begins with a review of general branding theories and aspects, followed by a review of the development of corporate branding, leading onto a review of stakeholders' role in branding today as well as the role of online communities in relation to stakeholders. I include selections and deselections of literature sequentially. Lastly, I sum up my choices of literature in section 2.2, meaning I explain which theories and empirical findings and which aspects of these constitute my theoretical basis.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Branding

Branding is a relevant theoretical field to cover as it is related to my problem statement in terms of finding out the perception of a brand as well as how brand loyalty and brand value are affected when a brand launches a sub-brand. Branding is a wide term, which is why it will be introduced in the following section to be further described in terms of the areas of branding relevant for this thesis.

Branding was initially and merely about marketing products which was controlled by advertising departments with the goal of targeting customers only, and the focus was therefore on the relationship between products and consumer (Hatch and Schultz 2008, 9, 204). Branding has been examined and written about by multiple scholars and theorists such as David Aaker who has written several books within the areas of brand strategies, marketing, and managing brand equity, and is considered an authority when it comes to branding (Prophet n.d.). David Aaker aims to identify what it takes to build a strong brand in which he defines *brand equity* as "*a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/ord that firm's customers*" (Aaker 2002, 8). Within the term, four categories exist which are: *Brand name awareness, Brand loyalty*, *Perceived quality*, and *Brand associations* that all create value both for the customer and brand in different ways (ibid). Hansen and Aaberg (2018)[4] aimed to examine the consumer brand perception from online hotel review sites, in terms of Aaker's categories within brand

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[4] My 7th semester project

equity, of the hotel Marriott and its launched sub-brand Moxy Hotels. Aaker 2016 defines the differences between brand equity and brand value and both Aaker and Raggio and Leone (2007) define brand value similarly as "*the financial worth of the brand*" (Aaker 2016; Raggio and Leone 2007, 392). Additionally, Aaker (2016) states that when brand equity is used strategically it can add long-term value to a company. Furthermore, he stresses the importance of the fact that positive brand value is not automatically equal to positive brand equity, and thereby positive brand loyalty (Aaker 2016). Scholars such as Raggio and Leone (2007) view this differently and concludes that brand value subsumes brand equity, and that it refers to a "*company-based perspective*" and that brand equity refers to a "*consumer-based perspective*" (Raggio and Leone 2007, 392). Kim, Gupta, and Koh however view value as consumer-based and examines value from the product's perspective and defines value as consisting of *functional*, *emotional* and *social value* (2011, 229). In their study they examined social networking community members' purchase decisions of digital items and found emotional and social values to be "*key dimensions of customer value for purchasing digital items*" (ibid, 228, 233). A product's functional value lies within its *attributes*, *reliability*, *durability*, *and price* and is measured on its attributes (ibid). The emotional value relates to the perceived utility based on the product's ability to provoke feelings and or affective states, and is related to the way the product looks (ibid). Lastly, the social value is the consumer's perceived utility of the product in relation to social well-being. Here, a product's value is based on the consumer's judgement of whether the product is coherent with the self-image that the consumer wants to portray.

In terms of RQ2 which is "How does the feedback of Glossier Play on the Reddit forum affect brand value and brand loyalty towards Glossier Play?" I want to examine the consumers' brand value towards GP, therefore, I will not use Raggio and Leone, or Aaker's approach to brand value, but the view of Kim, Gupta, and Koh, since they focus on the consumer in relation to brand value. Since their view is related to the consumer's judgement of the value of products, regarding the functional, emotional, and social value, I will use use their view to examine how consumers value GP's products.

Links between online brand communities and brand value have been found. France, Merrilees, and Miller (2015) have developed a theoretical model, based on their conceptual paper, which shows that brand communities affect brand value. As brand co-creation can affect brand value, brand communities act as a moderator of the three antecedents to co-creation: brand

engagement, brand self-congruity, and category involvement. Thereby, brand communities can affect the creation of brand value as a result of brand co-creation (ibid, 858). The connection between brand communities and brand value is illustrated in their model below:
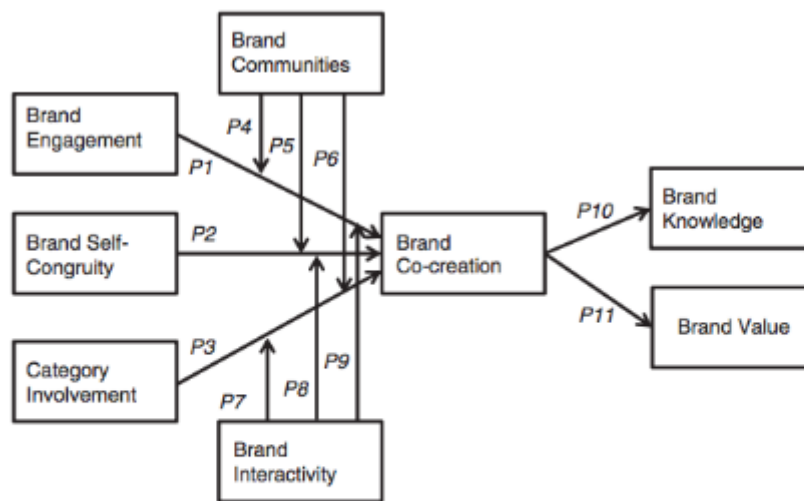
The Customer Brand Co-creation Model (France, Merrilees, and Miller 2015, 858) (Model 1 app. 1).

The study does not aim to understand who the creators of brand value are, but as their model shows brand communities as a moderator of the creation of brand value, it can be assumed that their perspective also entails that brand value is created or at least influenced by brand communities, since consumers are present there. However, they do include in their literature review that brand value is co-created when customers consume or experience a brand (ibid, 850), which furthers the aforementioned assumption.

Scholars Merz, He, and Vargo similarly describe value as co-created by consumers and stakeholders. Their approach to brand value is neither directly consumer-based or company-based, yet it entails that brand value is not only co-created between firms and consumers, but also through "*network relationships and social interactions among the ecosystem of all the stakeholders*" and that brand value is shaped by all stakeholders of a company and refers to the value-in-use (Merz, He, and Vargo 2009, 338). Since their perspective shows that brand value is co-created through social interactions among all stakeholders, this further supports the view of brand value being defined by consumers, as Kim, Gupta, and Koh (2011) state, as well as the model by France, Merrilees, and Miller (2015) shows brand value to be affected by brand communities. Although Kim, Gupta, and Koh do not state that value is created by consumers on online communities, only that the value can be identified there, I will use the viewpoint of

France, Merrilees, and Miller, as well as Merz, He, and Vargo to supply the fact that brand value can be created on online communities.

As previously mentioned, Aaker (2002) considers brand loyalty as part of brand equity. He further states that if a brand does not have loyal customers its only value lies within its ability of gaining a loyal customer base (Aaker 2002, 21). Moreover, Aaker defines the creation of brand loyalty as being created by the company as he states that it is in charge of making customers loyal by offering them value. This value could for instance be through customer club deals where the offered value would be returned with brand loyal customers (ibid, 21-24). In his work from 2002, Aaker ignores the possibility of brand loyalty being created by anyone else but the brand itself.

Scholars Armstrong and Hagel early suggested that the creation of online communities could enable companies to build customer loyalty to a high extent (1996, 135). However this point of view only focuses on the company as the creator of the online community, and does not consider online communities created by consumers. A study by Hajli et al. concluded that social interaction between online brand community members was a factor that led to brand loyalty as well as committed relationships with brands, as opposed to interaction between consumer and brand (2017, 140). The study was carried out by conducting 45 interviews mainly with users from three Iranian online brand communities within consumer electronics (ibid, 139). Similar findings were concluded in a study that found that participating in online brand communities can have numerous benefits for a brand including increased brand loyalty (Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann 2005). The two latter studies show that brand loyalty can also be created by consumers interacting with other consumers on online communities, which contradicts Aaker's theory of brand loyalty creation. As I aim to analyze how online consumer communities can influence the brand loyalty of a brand, I will make use of these studies' findings and viewpoints to examine the interaction between consumers on the Glossier Reddit forum and how these interactions on the community may affect brand loyalty.

As part of Aaker's theory of brand equity which can create brand value, brand associations exist, which he defines as what consumers associate and identify a brand with, and are a product of a brand's identity. More specifically, brand associations can be *attributes*, *benefits*, *users*, *packaging*, *and pricing* (Bridges, Keller, and Sood 2000, 2). Since I aim to find out what the consumer brand perception is of Gossier and GP, I will examine brand associations of both brands, which will be further explained in point 2.1.3.

When a brand extends its line or product, the extended product or line is referred to as a sub-brand (Keller 2003, 577). Czellar (2003) concludes from his integrative model based on various studies of brand extension attitude that consumers are positive about a brand extension, such as a sub-brand, if there seems to be a fit, called *perceived fit*, between the parent brand and the extended brand, the sub-brand (105). Perceived fit is summed up as the perception of a brand including *brand awareness, familiarity*, *association*, *quality value*, and consumer loyalty (Guillet and Tasci, 2010, 145). Other scholars such as Bridges, Keller, and Sood (2000) has described perceived fit as any parent brand association regarding *category*, *brand concept*, *and brand-specific associations* that link the parent brand with the sub-brand (2). However, the focus is not on the type of association but on whether the association is prevalent in the mind of the consumer and important for the context of the sub-brand (ibid). For this thesis, I examine the perceived fit based on the brand associations I find made by consumers and the link between them. Therefore, I examine the perceived fit based on any associations that are prevalent from the data, which correlates with the theory of Bridges, Keller, and Sood that any association can be examined in terms of fit, but that the focus is on the whether the associations are prevalent to the consumer.

When consumers view the parent brand to be in coherence with the sub-brand, the perceived fit is high, and is stated to remain in coherence (ibid). Bridges, Keller, and Sood (2000) found that brand extensions were less successful in the event where the parent brand's dominant brand association was incoherent with the sub-brand's dominant brand association (1). As I want to examine how consumer communities can influence the perception of a brand as a result of launching a sub-brand, I need to examine the perceived fit, from the consumers' viewpoint, in order to analyze how the launch of a sub-brand, GP, affects a brand, in this case Glossier. In relation to the 7th semester project, Hansen and Aaberg (2018) also examined the perceived fit of the parent brand, Marriott and the sub-brand Moxy Hotels.

2.1.2 Development of Corporate Branding

As an extension of branding of products, the term corporate branding naturally occured as organizations were beginning to be considered as brands (Cornelissen 2017, 94). Fournier and Avery (2011) argue that brand control happens outside of a company to a large extent and that the focus for brands today is heavily concerned with protecting the brand's reputation (as cited in Gensler et al. 2013, 253). In terms of social media marketing, this change can also be seen. Hinchcliffe, Kim, and Dachis (2012) classify social media marketing into four categories with

the two earliest approaches consisting of companies drawing in customers by controlling blogs and forums, and using a one-way communication process of the company communicating to the consumers. The last two refers to newer approaches using integrated social media by interacting with consumers and the newest approach consisting of partnering with the world by co-creating a product or brand, and where consumers can be just as engaged in a company's activities to the same extent as its actual employees (ibid, 70-71, 73).

In relation to the latter two approaches to social media marketing explained above, Hatch and Schultz (2008) similarly argue that we are entering a time where stakeholders have increased power and "*make stronger claims on companies than ever before*" (ibid, 206) which also impacts the power relations between a company's stakeholders and results in stakeholders influencing the companies' identities (ibid). Hatch and Schultz describe this era as the *third wave of corporate branding* which changes the identity conversation meaning that multiple voices will contribute to shape brands through social media among other channels (ibid, 206-207). Hatch and Schultz (2010) call this *enterprise branding*, which is when the brand represents both the organization itself and all stakeholders simultaneously, as opposed to only representing the brand itself (592).

In their book, Hatch and Schultz (2008) present the notion of the *Three Waves of Branding* where they describe the development of branding and marketing. The first wave refers to the beginning of branding which began as an effort to manage the relationship between product and consumer. This approach to branding was product-focused and characterized by isolating other non-marketing functions within the company as well as overlooking benefits of drawing in stakeholders (204). The second wave of branding is described as a multifunctional activity where companies began drawing in other corporate functions within firms such as HR, PR, and Investor Relations, as well as communication functions. These changes defined the next era and resulted in increasing companies' value as a result of merging disciplines. However, this led to brand confusion as it became difficult to define each group's branding responsibility within firms and resulted in the creation of jobs revolving around coordinating different brand efforts (205-206).

The aforementioned notion of the third wave of branding is predicted to be further characterized by brand managers being increasingly involved in examining the brand from different stakeholders' perspectives. Furthermore, stakeholders will become more valuable to brand managers as they will include them in the management activities by making use of their

insights. Thereby, interaction between company and stakeholders will be two-way communication which is illustrated in model 2 below (Hatch and Schultz 2008, 207).
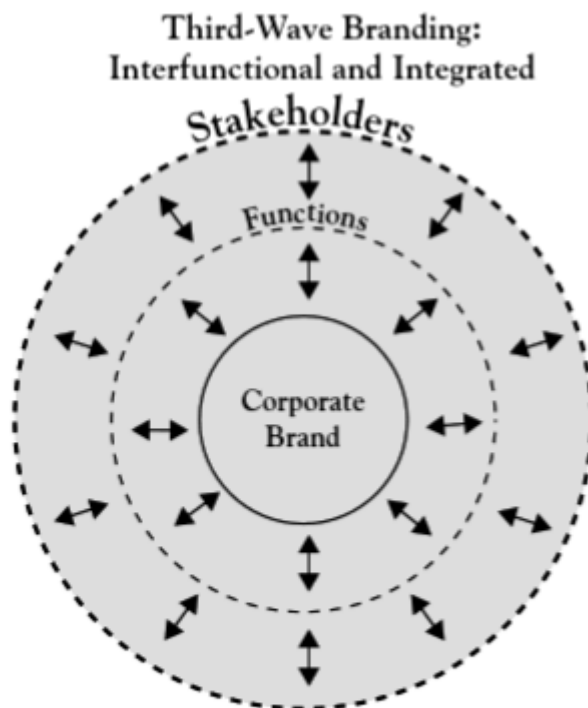
Third-Wave Branding: Interfunctional and Integrated (Hatch and Schultz 2008, 207).
(Model 2 app. 2)

Moreover, brand managers will begin to participate in brand community events to a large extent, which will be beneficial to the brand as they will have the power to create and modify the brand according to how the stakeholders view it (ibid, 207-208). Scholars Merz, He, and Vargo (2009) conclude a similar viewpoint from their conceptual/theoretical paper that a shift in corporate branding has happened with the result of it being a collaborative activity between multiple stakeholders which they call a *new brand logic* (338). This term is coherent with the *third wave of branding* and both also describe branding as a dynamic and social process. The *new brand logic* also views brand value as "value-in-used", which is determined by all stakeholders, instead of the classic perspective of "value-in-exchange" (ibid). Based on Hatch and Schultz, as well as Merz, He, and Vargo I will discuss RQ2 of how the feedback of Glossier and GP affect the brand value and brand loyalty of both Glossier and GP, to provide the analysis with a contemporary outlook. This will contribute to analyzing the extent of effect the feedback from the consumers has on the sub-brand and parent brand. Hansen and Aaberg (2018) did not examine the consumer brand perception in relation to any contemporary outlook.

2.1.3 Role of Stakeholders and Online Communities

In continuation with the previous section, the increasing consumer and overall stakeholder power further reflects itself in the way consumers talk about brands. However, this escalation of stakeholder power means that consumer constructs about brands are more significant than before, which is discussed by Gensler et al. in their framework who state that consumers share what they refer to as *brand stories* with each other, and thereby "*pick up, refine, and further disseminate*" (Gensler et al. 2013, 244) these brand stories. How people make sense of brands and what they ascribe to brands are carried on to brands via these stories as stakeholders shape what brands mean to the rest of the world (Holt 2002, 243-44). Brand stories are not only shared with other stakeholders, but also the brand itself for instance through consumer-brand networks (Gensler et al. 2013, 244). Consumers sharing brand stories with each other has also been described as *open-source branding* which is when consumers act as *creators and disseminators of branded content* (Fournier and Avery 2011, 194). However, other scholars, such as Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004), describe this process as co-creation and argue that "*co-creation is a process of engaging customers in creating value*" (as cited in Hajli et al. 2017) and indicate that co-creation is seen from a corporate perspective as they state co-creation is about engaging customers. Thereby, they ignore the possibility of co-creation happening voluntarily without customers being engaged by anyone beforehand. Co-creation does not only happen through consumers or external stakeholders in general. Co-creation can also happen through internal stakeholders as described by Schmeltz and Kjeldsen (2018) in their empirical case study where they illustrate the importance of considering internal stakeholders, such as employees, and the challenges that comes with managing the internal opinions within an organization.

The process of consumer co-creation often happens on online communities. Online communities give organizations an advantage as they can use these communities strategically and involve their consumers as stakeholders in developing and executing new ideas (Ind, Iglesias, and Schultz 2013, 7). Online communities are sometimes created by the company in which case there needs to be benefits for the participating stakeholder. However, when communities are created on behalf of the consumers' initiative, merely based on interest in a brand, the brand itself is the motivation of participating in the community. Consumers can become attached to a community and brand, which can lead to increased trust in brands (Ind, Iglesias, and Schultz 2013, 8). Based on this, Ind, Iglesias, and Schultz define co-creation as "*an active, creative, and social process based on collaboration between organizations and participants that generates benefits for all and creates value for stakeholders.*" (ibid, 9). Their

model below illustrates the co-creation space and the relationship between organization and community:
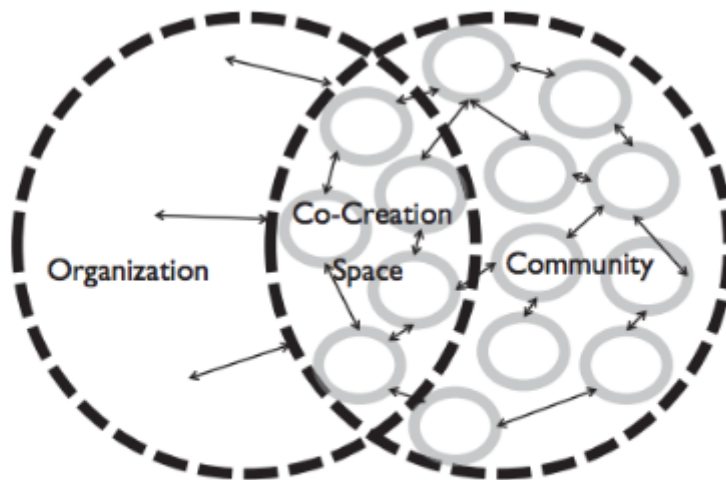
The Co-Creation Space (Ind, Iglesias, and Schultz 2013, 10)

(Model 3 app. 3)

The space between the connected circles is where the co-creation happens. This space is where interaction happens between organization and community, but as the model shows, it is not every individual in the community that interacts with the brand. If the obtained knowledge from the interaction of organization and community is carried on to the organization, it can use the co-creation strategically (ibid, 9-10).

The aspect of brand stories and can be seen in Aaker's description of *brand associations* as mentioned in point 2.1.1, as what a consumer associates with a brand is similar to the process which Gensler et al. defines of stakeholders refining brand stories and disseminating them. Aaker's description of brand associations, which is as previously mentioned what consumers associate and identify a brand with and are a product of a brand's identity, will in this thesis be viewed as a type of brand story told by consumers as I aim to analyze the consumer brand perception of Glossier and GP. I take this viewpoint since Aaker's theory of brand associations (2002) fails to include how consumers' view of the brand's identity may influence the brand and to what extent. However, Holt (2002) states that stakeholders shape what brands mean to the rest of the world, and thereby draws in the importance and power of the stakeholder or consumer. Therefore, I will use Aaker's definition of brand associations, but held in relation to Gensler et al.'s theoretical framework of brand stories as well as Holt's point of view to supply my analysis of brand associations with the power and influence stakeholders have regarding

speaking about brands. Furthermore, I will use the definition of co-creation of Ind, Iglesias, and Schultz (2013) to highlight the importance of co-creation in brand communities, and the role of stakeholders, in my analysis. I view co-creation as a type of brand story in this case as I examine content from a community, and therefore I take the viewpoint that when shaping a brand through brand stories, it is being co-created by stakeholders.

In terms of the 7th semester project by Hansen and Aaberg (2018) it did not include the aspect of co-creation nor communities and to how brand associations can influence the consumer brand perception.

2.2 Theoretical Conclusion

The previous chapter covered a literature review of which I continuously included choices and de-selections of literature relevant for my thesis. This section sums up the previous chapter by providing an overview of the chosen literature and theoretical viewpoints only that act as the framework for my analysis. To provide a manageable outline, the theory is presented consecutively regarding my research questions.

As mentioned in point 2.1.1, I will base my analysis of RQ1 regarding the consumer brand perception of Glossier and GP on Aaker's theory of brand associations, which he states are a product of a brand's identity. Furthermore, I will use Gensler et al.'s framework of brand stories and Holt's viewpoint that brand stories are carried on to brands and that stakeholders are the ones who shape what brands mean to the rest of the world. To supply, I will use the Co-Creation Space model of Ind, Iglesias, and Schultz to discuss how organizations and communities are connected as well as the significance of co-creation. Since it has a community focus, it can contribute to answering my problem statement in terms of to what extent consumer communities are able to influence the perception of a brand.

Based on my analysis of brand associations of Glossier and GP, I will examine the perceived fit between both brands to fully answer RQ1 in terms of to what extent these brand associations of Glossier and GP are coherent with each other. I will base my analysis on Bridges, Keller, and Sood, and therefore examine any associations that are prevalent from the data with the focus being on to what extent associations are predominant to the consumers. Examining the perceived fit will further contribute to answering my problem statement of how the launch of a sub-brand affects the parent brand.

As stated previously, I will use the approach of brand value of functional, emotional, and social value of Kim, Gupta, and Koh as I will examine the brand value determined by consumers on an online community. Furthermore, I will use the outlook of France, Merrilees, and Miller as well as Merz, He, and Vargo since they state that brand value can be created and affected on online communities. These approaches will provide an insight as to how consumers value both Glossier's products and Glossier and GP as brands. Thereby they contribute to answering RQ2 of how the feedback of GP affect the brand value towards Glossier and GP as seen from a consumer perspective.

When analyzing consumers' perspective on brand loyalty, I will use the findings from Hajli et al., and Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann, as they found that interaction between members on online communities leads to increased brand loyalty, and that the creation of brand loyalty can happen on online communities. I will therefore examine the interaction between members on the Reddit forum and how these may affect brand loyalty, which is part of my RQ2.

To provide my analysis of RQ2 with a present-day outlook, I will include Hatch and Schultz's theory of *the third wave of branding*, and Merz, He, and Vargo's theory of *new brand logic* for my RQ2 to discuss how the feedback of GP may affect the brand loyalty and brand value of both Glossier and GP. These scholars all argue that stakeholders have gained an increased power over companies and therefore make stronger claims than before, contributing to shaping brands' identities to a large extent. This outlook can also assist in answering my problem statement, as it can contribute to answering to what extent the feedback of the sub-brand, GP, has on both the sub-brand and parent brand, Glossier.

Chapter 3

Research Design

3.0 Chapter 3 - Research Design

This chapter is divided into two subsections consisting of respectively data collection and data analysis. The chapter begins with an overview of the philosophy of science relevant for this thesis followed by methodology and data collection, where the empirical data will be presented. The chapter ends with subsection of data analysis.

3.1 Philosophy of Science

This section provides an account of the philosophy of science relevant for this thesis, as well as the implications that the philosophy of science has on the findings of my analyses.

Social Constructivism is a philosophy of science which believes that phenomena, that are considered natural, are a created by humans and are a product of human origin (Collin and Køppe 2014, 419). In other words, Social constructivism is "*an idealistic view about the social construction of scientific and [...] empirical facts*" (Detel 2015, 228). Social constructivists believe that things are constructed into truths or facts by humans such as artifacts and some emotions, and sometimes these constructs are not immediately recognized as human-made constructs but instead appear to exist by natural laws (Detel 2015, 228). These truths can for instance be created through language use (Collin and Køppe 2014, 424). An example of the aforementioned social constructs that appear as natural could be the example of gender roles, where we have created the truth of women being weak and more irrational compared to men. This truth is a product of the way we have spoken about women through time as well as the discourses we have drawn on to describe them. According to social constructivists, only when we start speaking of these truths differently, they will change (ibid, 722-723). Kukla (2000) clarifies the differences of natural truths versus social constructs where he argues that humans are a product of both natural biology and the social constructs we have made about ourselves (ibid, 3-4). Furthermore, he claims that social constructs about for example women not only conceptualize women, but lead women to behave in coherence with these social constructs and thereby lead everyone else to believe these constructs. The concept of women is therefore invented and not discovered (ibid, 4). Additionally, he states that truths about our world could have been different if only their agents or creators had made different choices. In relation to science, he argues that if scientist had found other facts than what they have, the subsequent history would be different. Thereby, he clarifies that social constructs can change only when their agents make other choices, such as through language use (ibid, 3).

Since I aim to analyze how written language use on consumer communities can influence brand value and brand loyalty as well as what consumer associate GP and Glossier with, this thesis follows the philosophy of Social Constructivism. More specifically, the consumers' textual constructs online of the brands relates to Social Constructivism as they socially construct truths about the brands, which influence the brands themselves and other customers' perceptions of the brands. The findings of my analyses are therefore a product of Social Constructivism as a basis. As I look for multiple written language statements from an online forum, the social aspect of forums are naturally a part of social constructivism since they entail social constructs about whatever is being discussed.

Additionally, the belief I take as a researcher is that I am able to find out truths about the consumer perception of Glossier and GP through socially constructed language use on the forum, and interpret these findings into how it affects the brand loyalty and brand value.

Regarding interpretation of empirical data, lifeworlds are an important part to consider. According to phenomenologists, lifeworlds are the everyday life that we are familiar with and take for granted, as what we take for granted is based on science and scientific theories accepted as truths to an extent where it is not questioned in the everyday life. Gradually, scientific theories are being assimilated into common practice that constitute lifeworlds, and is an ongoing, dynamic process. As science aims to obtain acknowledgement, it seeks to go beyond the *physical, sensuous,* and *pragmatic* experience, but do not consider how it is a product of the same experience (Collin and Køppe 2014, 206). For this thesis, my interpretation of data is a product of my personal lifeworld, and I am aware that interpretation and analysis of data is naturally influenced by the lifeworld which I am part of.

3.2 Methodology and Data Collection

This section covers the methodology relevant for this thesis as well as the gathering of empirical data. The section begins with an account of the methodology relevant for this thesis, and illustrates how the philosophy of science is connected to data collection and data sampling, followed by a presentation of empirical data and the sampling of it.

3.2.1 Methodology

The methodology of this thesis is qualitative which is closely connected to the philosophy of science for this thesis as well. In broad terms, qualitative research consists of collecting and analyzing data with an emphasis on words, and is *inductivist, ontological*, and *epistemological*, although not always simultaneously (Bryman 2012, 380). An ontological approach to research concerns constructionism which has the position that phenomena are a product of social constructs. An epistemological approach is interpretivist and concerns interpreting the world through its participants to make sense of the social world (ibid). Creswell (2009) explains that qualitative research is interpretive as it is up to the researcher to interpret understanding of the subject matter being seen or heard. Interpretation is always based on the researcher's own *background, history,* and *prior understandings,* which is why interpretation differs between the ones interpreting (173).

As Social Constructivism both involves constructivism and interpretivism (Collin and Køppe 2014, 422-423), it is qualitative. Therefore, Social Constructivism contemplates for a qualitative approach to this thesis. As I look for textual constructs online of which I aim to interpret and understand consumers' perception of brands, my approach to both sampling and analysis is qualitative, and will be explained later within this section.

3.2.1 Presentation of Empirical Data

In order to answer the two research questions, I need information about the consumer brand perception of Glossier and GP, which I can obtain by examining the consumers' brand associations towards both brands. Furthermore, I need statements of brand loyalty and brand value from consumers in order to answer my second research question and thereby find out how the feedback of GP affect consumers' brand loyalty and brand value towards both brands. Moreover, the consumer community focus in the chosen theoretical framework for this thesis requires data from a community in order to analyze it accordingly.

I have chosen to sample posts and comments from a Reddit forum dedicated to Glossier (Reddit A), as it is a community that offers both information of the consumer brand perception, as well as statements of brand value and brand loyalty. The genre of my empirical data falls under the category of virtual documents, and more specifically they are characterized as internet postings, as they appear on the internet (Bryman 2012, 554). Reddit is a website that holds thousands of communities where people share content in the form of *stories*, *images*, *links*, and *videos* (Reddit B n.d.). Participants of a community can make posts, upvote and downvote them as well as write comments and start discussions, which are referred to as threads

(ibid). The forum has been made by and is being run by consumers and consists of 3.800 members as of 5 April, 2019 (Reddit A). The forum has been created by consumers of Glossier and is not affiliated with Glossier (app. 4). During my empirical data research, I had noticed frequent postings and discussions about the brand and its products as well as the launch of GP on this forum. Since the forum itself is not affiliated with Glossier, it can be assumed that the posts and comments stem from genuine interest in the brand. However, I cannot be sure that all members are not affiliated with Glossier in any way, which provokes the possibility of a different intention with some posts or comments, and my sampling and results could therefore be biased, if this is the case. Yet, choosing a consumer-created community to sample from can offer more credibility than social media channels. Since the community posts can be said to be created directly from what is on the consumer's mind, the consumer sets the agenda and decides which topics are relevant to discuss or state. However, with social media posts, the brand creates the posts themselves and consumers are only able to comment on the posts, and do not get to set the agenda of what they think is relevant to discuss. Thereby, a forum can offer more data to sample from as well, as the posts already express the consumers' attitude and perception of brands, in contrary to social media posts. As I need information about the consumer brand perception of Glossier and GP, as well as brand value and brand loyalty, I have chosen a consumer-created community since the Glossier Reddit community expresses the consumers' attitudes and thoughts towards the brand. Furthermore, as the community has been created by consumers, they can be said to hold more credible information about the brand, as it can be assumed that people who participate in a brand forum must have an interest in and knowledge about the particular brand. Prior to choosing to sample posts and comments from the Reddit forum, I have observed that members have shared their opinions about the launch of GP as well as discussing them with other members, which is why this empirical data is relevant for the answering of my problem statement. Therefore, my empirical data consists of posts and comments related to GP.

As mentioned previously, it can be assumed that consumers who participate in an online brand community have a great interest in the brand as well as knowledge about the brand. Therefore, interviewing some of the community members or making a questionnaire could possibly have resulted in obtaining the same kind of information as what is possible from sampling, of course depending on the specific questions. However, being dependant on community members' willingness to participate is challenging, as I cannot know beforehand whether or not any of these members are willing to participate. In relation to the chosen theoretical framework,

interviews could not be analyzed using the chosen theories, since they focus on communities specifically. Therefore, collecting data through interviews would require a different theoretical framework, as well as the purpose of the study would have differed.

3.2.2 Sampling

The sampling of data is qualitative as I look for linguistic expressions of brand associations, brand value and brand loyalty of relevance to my research questions. The sampling further falls under non-probability sampling where only some units of the sampling frame have a chance of being selected (Bryman 2012, 201). The reason for this is that I only look for posts related to the launch of GP. One of the core approaches to qualitative sampling is purposeful sampling where the researcher selects information rich cases to study in depth (Patton 2002, 272-73). As opposed to probability-based random sampling, the strength of purposeful sampling lies within the ability to analyze information-rich samples in depth, which is the main concern of this method. Therefore, the aim is not to make empirical generalizations as it is with quantitative sampling (ibid, 273). Patton describes the focus of purposeful sampling as follows: *Purposeful sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study* (Patton 2002, 273). Purposeful sampling is relevant for my thesis as I aim to study the feedback of the launch of Glossier's sub-brand, GP to examine how this feedback influences the perception of both brands as well as the brand loyalty and brand value of the parent brand. Therefore, the type of data this question requires is information-rich data or cases where information about brand loyalty, brand value, and any brand associations may be prevalent when studied in depth. Therefore, the design of the study is a single case study which can be described as "*the basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case*" (Bryman 2012, 66). Additionally, as a result of my research questions, the sampling of data contemplates for a purposeful approach, as I reveal that I want to examine perceptions of both brands as well as examine feedback from an online forum. Therefore, the sampling method supports the purpose of this study. I explain in point 3.2.4 how I select these cases.

3.2.3 Sampling Criteria

I sample both posts and comments as studies have found that social interaction within online brand communities lead to brand loyalty, mentioned in section 2.1.1, which is why I do not want to omit sampling comments to the Reddit posts. Similar findings were concluded, also in section 2.1.1, regarding brand value, which is why I sample comments to posts concerning

brand value as well. For brand associations I examine posts as well as comments, as both can contain information of associations to the brands.

As Glossier launched its sub-brand GP on 3 March, 2019, I sample GP-related posts that were made around the date of the launch. Reddit does not offer dates of posts and comments, but only state how old a post or comment is by referring to how many months ago it was posted. Therefore, I start the sampling based off of content, which are GP-related posts. Each post has comments that belong to the post, which together are called a thread. Prior to sampling, I had noticed that the posts about GP started on the 3 March. Due to time limits, I am only able to sample and analyze an extract of the GP related posts from around the launch date, and therefore the analysis consists of part of the reactions to GP from the forum. Yet, validity within the qualitative method lies within information rich cases and the researcher's analytical capabilities (Patton 2002, 245). As I want to examine the consumer brand perception of GP as well as consumers' brand value and brand loyalty towards Glossier and GP, I sample both posts and comments about GP. To offer cogency, I sample through the theoretical categories within the same posts.

The sampling begins from the beginning of incident of the launching date, 3 March. This can be considered a critical incident, which is characterized by *collecting direct observations of human behavior* in order to answer problems (Flanagan 1954, 327). Furthermore, the technique describes procedures for sampling significant occurrences and meets *systematically defined criteria* (ibid). The technique is sometimes referred to as Critical Incident Method, and is also defined by being a methodological tool to categorize communicative behavior (Simmons 2017, 2) However, this aspect of categorizing is not coherent with the methodology of my data sampling as I make these codes beforehand, which has been presented in the preceding section 3.2.2.

As I have already observed on the Reddit forum, there are different attitudes towards the launch of the sub-brand, GP. I will not make any restrictions to what types of attitudes or associations the poster or commenter has or makes, as I aim to find out how consumer communities can influence the perception of a brand, as well as the brand loyalty and brand value, and it is not relevant to only sample for instance positive or negative feedback.

The sampling is chronological, as I begin sampling from the very first post concerning the launch of GP, since I want to avoid the reaction to GP being altered due to it being affected

by preceding discussions on the forum or maybe being affected by co-creation in the case that Glossier decides to make changes of GP due to the feedback.

3.2.4 Content Analysis as Data Collection

Krippendorff defines content analysis as "*a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use*" (Krippendorff 2004, 18). Generally, sampling through content analysis provides the researcher with a manageable set of units that are representable for an entire population. However, ensuring a representative unit of samples from texts is complicated as texts can be read and understood in multiple ways. It further depends on the researcher's area of interest when sampling texts (ibid, 84). Content analysis enables the analyst to go further into the phenomena of interest, such as implicit messages within texts that would not otherwise be present without using content analysis (ibid, 32). The sampled data is a result of the specific approach to content analysis the researcher has used to answer the research questions. Therefore, data is made and not found, and according to Krippendorff researchers must state how their data has been made (ibid, 81). Krippendorff ignores to clarify the link between sampling using content analysis, based on research questions, and conducting the sampling based on theoretical categories. When using research questions as the approach to sampling data, these research questions are likely to have risen from theoretical point of views. Since my research questions are based on theoretical aspects, I am automatically motivated by research questions when sampling my data, although my data sampling is directly related to theoretical categories.

I use content analysis to sample textual data from the Reddit community, based on theoretical aspects prevalent in my research questions, and my approach is therefore deductive as I am guided by my research questions. This approach enables me to read the data purposefully and interpret the data which will result in the answers to my research questions (Krippendorff 2004, 31-32). The theoretical categories consist of: brand associations which relates to research question 1, and brand loyalty, and brand value which relate to research question 2.

Although qualitative researchers argue that each text needs to be processed and interpreted according to its individual and unique nature, Krippendorff defines general proponents of qualitative approach to content analysis. These consist of sampling texts relevant for the study area, unitize texts in order to identify linguistic elements, and lastly contextualizing texts in relation to the researcher's knowledge of relevant occurrences revolving around the text, while

keeping research questions in mind (Krippendorff 2004, 87). When sampling my data using a qualitative approach to content analysis, it follows the proponents as mentioned above, however the sampling in my case is a product of predefined categories from theory that I use to sample with. Moreover, it is likely that the qualitative approach I take is characterized by the hermeneutic circle where I may continue to recontextualize and reinterpret my data as I analyze it (ibid, 87-88). As Krippendorff states *all reading of texts is qualitative* (Krippendorff 2004, 16), which means that when sampling, the process will be qualitative as I read and interpret the comments to select the ones which entail statements of value, loyalty, and any brand associations. It would not be possible to sample the comments without interpreting them as part of the process. The posts are not sampled according to the categories, since the criteria for the posts is sampling the ones that entail the launch of GP.

As mentioned in 3.2.3, I sampled through the theoretical categories within the same posts. I started by going through the posts and comments and sample those that entailed brand associations, which relates to RQ1, and those that entailed statements of loyalty and value which relates to RQ2, although the majority of the posts showed showed to include all three categories. After finishing the sampling, I started the analysis of brand associations, followed by the analysis of brand loyalty and brand value. Some of the comments I had sampled for the analysis of brand associations also included statements of brand loyalty and brand value. When I began the analysis of brand loyalty and value, part of the comments were already analyzed in terms of brand associations and part were comments I had not yet analyzed. In order for the analysis to be cogent, I decided to analyze the same comments from the analysis of brand associations for the analysis of brand loyalty and value, in order to relate the findings of brand associations with the findings of brand loyalty and value. As I went through the same comments again, but with the aim of analyzing statements of loyalty and value this time, I found through the reinterpretation of the texts that multiple comments did have statements of loyalty and value. Therefore, the sampling process is characterized by the hermeneutic circle, as explained earlier, as I reinterpreted my data after sampling it. Although I did find multiple statements of loyalty and value that I did not originally interpret as present, few comments lack either the aspect of loyalty and value, which acts as a bias within the sampling.

As my sampling is carried out using premade theoretical categories, I automatically leave out other linguistic material that could have been included if I chose to conduct a content analysis after sampling the data. If I had chosen the other approach to carry out the content analysis it

would have been based merely on the empirical data, which I then would have coded into categories to make sense of it. By taking that approach, it is possible that I would have included aspects that could be relevant for this thesis' area of research that go beyond brand value and brand loyalty. However, as I want to examine brand value and brand loyalty in particular, it would not be directly relevant to include other aspects than those in order to answer my problem statement. My approach to sampling using content analysis can be biased in the way that I cannot be sure to sample all relevant posts/comments from the Reddit forum, and my own judgement may affect the selection of data, which is likely to happen with non-probability sampling (Bryman 2012, 188). As stated previously, Krippendorff argues that data is made and not found and that the sampled data is a result of the approach to content analysis (Krippendorff 2004, 81). My data is a result of my specific approach to content analysis, as it is based on my understanding of the theoretical terms I use to sample with, and therefore my data is made from my own judgement when sampling. It can be argued that other researchers replicating this study would generate different sample units, as a result of their judgement.

In terms of generalization of findings, I can only generalize something from the units that I have sampled from the Glossier Reddit forum. Furthermore, the generalization is influenced by locality and time (Bryman 2012, 205), which means that since I sample units from the Glossier Reddit forum, I am only able to generalize something about the consumers' perception from that forum, and not from any other localities, such as Facebook and Instagram for instance. Regarding time, I cannot generalize these findings of opinions as forever legitimate, since Glossier consumers of the Reddit forum may change their opinions and associations of the brands in the future.

3.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

Data analysis is about reducing the collected data by grouping it so that the researcher can make sense of it through analysis. Without this step, an interpretation of data is inaccessible (Bryman 2012, 13). As mentioned before, this thesis' approach is qualitative. Patton states *qualitative analysis transforms data into findings* (Patton 2002, 275). The interpretation of my data already starts at the point of sampling, as I have to look for posts and comments that contain any of the elements I want to examine. Therefore, I have already grouped my data before analyzing it, which is why the structure of my analysis will follow the categories of brand associations,

brand loyalty, and brand value. In order to transform my data into findings, I need to explore the sampled texts in depth to discover what they entail.

I choose to analyze the chosen data qualitatively by using a systematic approach to fully explore the texts and their meanings. I have chosen to analyze the texts using Discourse Analysis (DA) (Fairclough 1992). DA acts as a guide as it entails a systematic approach, and it can therefore aid in analyzing implicit information that may otherwise not be visible without DA as a guide. Furthermore, DA allows me to explore the sampled textual data in depth by not only examining the actual words, but their context, and way of being represented (Krippendorff 2004, 16).

DA aims to contribute to discourse theory, or the discourse paradigm itself unlike the Critical Discourse Analysis which aims to provoke change in society when it comes to social problems e.g. inequality and power relations and further aims to understand social problems (Van Dijk 1993, 252). This means that the analysis of text and discourses are further examined in a social context, or political context, with the aim of understanding problems and provoking change in society (ibid), which is referred to as the *Social Practice* (Fairclough 2010, 94). Since this thesis does not aim to provide an understanding of social issues, provoke societal changes and illuminate inequality for instance, I have chosen to use DA as the aim of this thesis is to understand brand associations and consumers' perception of brand value and brand loyalty of Glossier and GP through language use. DA is closely intertwined with Social Constructivism, since social constructivists argue that truths about our world are man-made which is similar to DA as it reveals how humans make sense of the world and continue to shape its truths or *discourses* according to discourse analysts (Jørgenson and Phillips 2002, 4-5). Using DA as my analytic approach is therefore coherent with my philosophy of science. Even though Fairclough's method of Critical Discourse Analysis does not fit the aim of this thesis, it does offer a clear framework of text analysis, unlike DA which mainly aims to produce theory development (ibid, 24). Therefore, I choose to base my methodological approach to DA according to Fairclough's dimension of *Text* from the three-dimensional framework. Although I base my analysis on his framework, I omit the aspect of *Social Practice* as explained above. Furthermore, I omit the dimension of *Discursive Practice*, which entails the *production, consumption*, and *distribution* of texts (Fairclough 1992, 78). When defining discourses, the aim is to understand how a text is produced in specific social contexts, such as a newspaper article which authors transform e.g. press agency reports into the article. The consumption of text varies according to the social contexts, such as a text can be read differently whether it be a recipe or academic article (ibid, 78-79). Lastly, Distribution concerns the distribution of texts

such as a political speech being distributed to a television programme, where the viewers receive an altered version of the speech as a result of the distribution (ibid).

I have omitted this aspect since the focus for this thesis lies within the perception of Glossier and GP and what associations consumers make of the brands, as well as how it influences brand loyalty and brand value, and not how the texts on the forum are consumed and distributed throughout the posts.

As mentioned previously, I carry out my analyses using the dimension of *Text* which concerns a linguistic analysis wherein discourses are prevalent (ibid, 71). In Fairclough's framework, *Text* is therefore a precursor to *Discursive Practice. Text* involves a close, linguistic analysis and deals with examining four main categories *vocabulary, grammar, cohesion,* and *text structure* (ibid, 72, 75). Regarding these categories, I have deselected parts of it that do not aid in obtaining insight in brand associations, and statements of brand loyalty and brand value, which I explain in the following section.

I have omitted analyzing *text structure*, which deals with the genre of the texts being analyzed, whether they are newspaper articles or interviews, since I only focus on Reddit threads and thereby only one type of text, which has been presented in section 3.2.1. Furthermore, I have deselected analyzing *vocabulary*, as it deals wording political and ideological issues and how they are re-worded, as well as word meanings which are concerned with how the relationship between words and their meanings are an expression of hegemony. Furthermore, it concerns metaphors and their impact on political and ideological meanings (Fairclough 1992, 77). This aspect of *vocabulary* has been omitted due to the fact that this thesis does not aim to analyze or discuss political matters.

Agency has been omitted from the systematic analysis as well which deals with the agent in a sentence, the one doing something, and the actions of the agent, which can be expressed through active and passive sentences. The focus is therefore on the relationship between noun and verb (ibid, 76). It has been omitted since whether agent is present or not in doing an action is not relevant in terms of identifying brand associations and opinions of brand loyalty and value. Instead, as explained above, I will use subjective and objective modality to examine who brand associations and statements of loyalty and value are made by.

The aspect of *cohesion* has been de-selected as part of the systematic approach to my analysis. It is concerned with how a text is structured for instance if it is a description or explanation and then followed by a question, as well as the use of words that signal such as "furthermore" or "however" (ibid, 77, 177). Cohesion is not relevant to examine in my case as

I do not aim to understand how Glossier consumers make sense of brand associations, brand loyalty and brand value by structuring sentences into larger text structures.

Politeness concerns spoken language, which has been omitted due to the fact that my empirical data only consists of written language.

Ethos has been de-selected as well since it involves body language and spoken language, which is not something I can examine based on my empirical data.

Lastly, *transitivity* is not part of the systematic approach to my analysis, as it is concerned with analyzing participants in a text, as to what participants are favored and prominent and to what extent some are accentuated more than others. As I analyze posts and comments from a forum from various different consumers, there are naturally no favored participants since each piece of text is written by different persons.

3.3.1 Fairclough's Dimension of Text

This section consists of an account and explanation of selections of Fairclough's *Text* dimension, which I base my systematic approach to my analyses on. I present an outline of the systematic approach to my analyses which can be viewed in section 3.3.2 and 3.3.3.

The concept of modality is used to ascribe affinity to a given statement. Fairclough defines five types of modality in a text. The first type of modality is modal verbs which are 'can', 'may', 'must', 'shall', 'will', and 'ought to', and when used they express different types of affinity to an utterance (Fairclough 1992 158-59). Modality can be categorical which is when assertions are present in statements such as 'the earth is flat' where the tense, which is present tense in this example, realizes categorical modality. This type of modality constructs statements as facts (ibid, 160-161).

Relevant for this thesis as well is the concept of subjective and objective modality. Subjective modality is used in a sentence where the text producer wants to express high affinity to a statement, whereas objective modality is used when a person is not clear about whose opinion or perspective is represented in a statement, and this type of modality can sometimes be an expression of power (ibid, 159). Modality is sometimes expressed through modal adverbs such as 'possibly', 'definitely', or 'obviously' that describe an adjective. Lastly, modality can be expressed through hedges which are words such as 'sort of, 'a bit', and 'or something' (ibid, 159).

In terms of analyzing the consumer brand perception of Glossier and GP, brand associations made by members of the Glossier forum are relevant to analyze in terms of

modality to find out, not only what they associate the brands with, but how they relate to their own utterances. Modality can therefore help obtain a deeper understanding of members' brand associations.

Intertextuality happens when texts and spoken utterances are shaped by other texts prior to the creation of them, as a way of responding to already existing texts or spoken utterances. Fairclough states "each utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication" (Fairclough 1992, 102). When creating a text, it is always a product of elements from previous utterances such as *words, awareness, and detachment* (ibid).

For this thesis it is relevant to examine intertextuality within the threads on the Glossier forum, as the posts determine the agenda of subjects to discuss in the comments, and the comments are thereby a product of what is stated in the posts. Furthermore, the comments within a thread are a product of each other, and it can be assumed that when a member of the forum expresses a brand association, or utterance about brand loyalty and brand value that it has been affected by previous comments and affects subsequent comments. Regarding the findings of my analysis, brand associations and expressions of brand loyalty and value are affected by members' statements and therefore the findings of these may be altered. If I had chosen to interview consumers about brand associations, brand loyalty and value, it would be likely that the presence of intertextuality would differ, as a result of the consumers not being able to read other consumers' statements before stating their own opinion. Because of my empirical data, I am able to visibly see the intertextuality evolve and progress in the case when someone comments on a post or another comment.

As mentioned in section 2.2, I base my theoretical foundation regarding brand loyalty on the findings that social interaction on online brand communities can lead to increased loyalty. As I want to find out how the feedback on the forum affects brand loyalty, it is essential to examine intertextuality such as when consumers respond to other consumers in a thread, to find out how the interaction may lead to increased brand loyalty.

Presuppositions are statements that are taken for granted by the text producer and expressed in a way where the statement is constructed as an already established fact. Fairclough gives the example of "the Soviet threat" which is a statement that entails a presupposition that there actually is or was a threat (Fairclough 1992, 102). Presuppositions are relevant to examine in this thesis as they can potentially hold brand associations or expectations towards the launch of GP as well as expressions of brand loyalty and value. Additionally, it is pertinent to examine

how the presuppositions are communicated, as they are sometimes constructed from what has been stated earlier, and thereby are a result of intertextuality (ibid), which can be the case in the comments to a post. Presuppositions can sometimes be used manipulative as well (ibid), which makes them interesting to examine in the case of members on the forum attempting to convince other members, in relation to brand associations, loyalty and value, by making manipulative presuppositions.

In relation to intertextuality, negations are expressed through incorporating an already existing text or parts of it into a new one with the intent to reject or contest them (ibid, 122). Negations could potentially be used within the threads of the forum when members comment or respond to each others' comments in order to prove something or persuade others about a certain belief of brand associations, loyalty and value about Glossier and GP. Therefore, I will examine negations when analyzing post and comments.

Lastly, theme is described as "the text producer's point of departure in a clause" (Fairclough 1992, 183). Themes reveal commonsense assumptions that exist in texts and thereby what the text producer finds relevant to state in a specific context (ibid). I have chosen to analyze themes within the text to obtain an insight in how consumers relate to the theme of a post in the comment section, and what consumers find relevant to discuss both in the form of what is written in the posts on the forum, but also regarding the extent to which other consumers pick up on the theme.

3.3.2 Systematic Approach of Analyses

This section covers an explanation of the structure of the analyses, followed by an outline of the systematic approach to my analyses based on Fairclough's *Text* dimension.

The analysis consists of two parts that respectively aim to answer RQ1 and RQ2. As RQ1 concerns the consumer brand perception of Glossier and GP, I analyze brand associations in the first analysis in section 4.1. Thereafter, I analyze statements of brand loyalty and brand value to answer RQ2 in section 4.2. The posts and comments analyzed for each analysis are the same, but are analyzed differently according to the research questions. The two analyses are equally important for the thesis, and the relation between the two create the foundation for the answer to the problem statement,which is why a discussion of analyses is provided in

section 4.3 and includes the last part of answering both research questions and thereby the problem statement.

3.3.2.1 Systematic Approach to Analysis 4.1

When examining the posts and comments, I look for brand associations, which is the main focus of Analysis 4.1 of consumer brand perceptions. After identifying brand associations, I analyze grammatical instances, in accordance with Fairclough's aspect of *Text,* within the texts to obtain a deeper understanding of the associations that may be implicit at times, and to find out how commenters relate to the brand associations they make. If any post or comment does not entail one or more of the four linguistic aspects, I will not mention it in the analysis of the post or comment in question. The systematic approach is as follows:

- Modality: modal verbs, categorical modality, modal adverbs, hedges, and subjective/objective modality
- Intertextuality and negations
- Presuppositions
- Themes - coherence level of themes between post and comment, and between comments.

After analyzing a thread, which consists of a post and its comments, I make a summary of the brand associations towards Glossier and GP.

3.3.2.2 Systematic Approach to Analysis 4.2

The analysis of brand loyalty and brand value will be carried out with the same approach as analysis 4.1, which is why this section does not offer an outline of linguistic aspects to examine, as they were presented in the preceding section. However, since I analyze the same posts and comments in both analyses, though with different focal points, I do not go through an analysis of the same linguistic aspects, unless they entail something new in relation to brand loyalty and brand value. For each post in analysis 4.2, I analyze statements of brand loyalty first followed by statements of brand value that relate to functional, emotional and social value. Like analysis 4.1, I begin by identifying statements of brand loyalty and brand value and then analyze them through the systematic approach.

Unlike the aspect of intertextuality in analysis 4.1, intertextuality plays an additional role in the analysis of brand loyalty, as I take the theoretical viewpoint, explained in section

2.2, that social interaction on online communities can lead to loyalty. Therefore, to identify the social interaction in the comments, intertextuality can aid in analyzing how the social interaction takes place in statements of loyalty.

After analyzing a thread, I make a summary of the findings from the utterances made of brand loyalty and brand value.

Chapter 4

# Analysis

4.0 Chapter 4 - Analysis

This chapter provides an analysis of my research questions, which provide the foundation of answering my problem statement. The analysis consists of two sub-sections related to the research questions. The first subsection includes an analysis of research question 1, and seeks to explore and examine brand associations made by consumers on the Glossier forum regarding GP. The second subsection includes an analysis of research question 2, and consists of an analysis of the feedback of GP on the Reddit forum regarding brand value and brand loyalty towards Glossier and GP.

4.1 Consumer Brand Perception of Glossier and Glossier Play

This analysis seeks to answer RQ1 which is "What is the consumer brand perception of Glossier and Glossier Play and to what extent are these perceptions coherent?". The focus of this analysis is concerned with brand associations made by consumers about Glossier and GP, and the question of coherence level between perceptions of both brands will be analyzed in point 4.3. Within this section, I analyze brand associations present in posts and comments made by members of the Glossier community.

I approach the analysis by starting with a sampled post from the forum in chronological order from when the discussion about GP started, which was on the launch date 1 March, 2019. Each introduction and/or analysis of a post and each analysis of a comment begins with a screenshot of the comment from the Glossier forum followed by the specific analysis to that post or comment. After introducing a post, I analyze the sampled comments, also in chronological order, to the post in particular followed by a summary of brand associations that have been identified in the thread. After a thread, which consists of a post with comments, has been analyzed I sum up the findings. An explanation of the systematic approach to this analysis can be viewed in section 3.3.2.

Post 1 (app. 5)
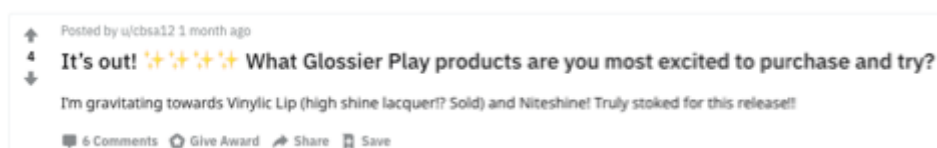
The first post about the launch of GP is made by cbsa12 who states that GP has been launched, and asks in the headline what products the other members are most excited to try from GP. This

contemplates for members to share their positive comments about the products they would like to try, which resulted in six comments. Line 2 shows the poster's attitude towards GP which is positive as the commenter is "truly stoked" about the release. This further contemplates that the commenters commenting should include a positive opinion. The commenter does not include any brand associations.

Comment 1.1 (app. 6)
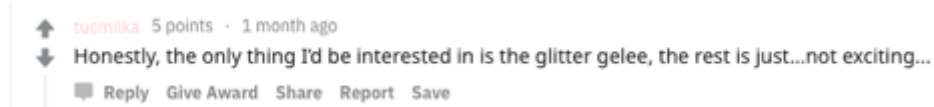
The first commenter, tucmilka, expresses a brand association in the comment

"...the rest is just… not exciting…"

Here, the commenter associates GP's products with being unexciting. The use of the modal adverb "just" describes the verb "exciting" and in this context the adverb increases the association in the sense that the commenter expresses, in other words, that the products are simply not exciting, and that lack of excitement is all there is to the products.

The use of "not exciting" may refer to the commenter's own perception of how interesting the products are, and not how interesting the products are as a whole, since "the only thing I'd be interested in" in the beginning of the sentence shows tucmilka's personal opinion of the products, due to subjective modality in the personal pronoun "I". However, the construction of "the rest is just not exciting" contains categorical modality by using "is" and therefore it is constructed as a truth. This negative association shows that the tucmilka may be disappointed by Glossier as the commenter does not find the sub-brand interesting, but the comment does not describe whether Glossier is coherent with GP.

Due to the commenter's response to the post, the intertextuality in the comment is based on what other members are excited to try, which as previously mentioned contemplates for positive responses. Therefore, if the commenter were to express this opinion elsewhere, related to a post that did not contemplate for members to share their excitement, it could be expressed in a way where tucmilka would not refer to any interest or excitement regarding GP's products. The use of the modal verb "would" in the sentence

"the only thing I'd be interested in is the glitter gelee"

entails the commenter's possibility of being interested in the products, which is positive, and therefore does not state that the commenter is actually interested in the products as of present. This way of expressing the opinion may be a result of the theme in the post, which is about sharing excitement towards trying GP's products, and the commenter may therefore feel as if including a statement about possible interest is essential although the comment does not hold any excitement. Therefore, this is a form of intertextuality as the commenter responds to the post. Furthermore, tucmilka uses a negation as the excitement and interest in GP's products are doubted in the comment as they are associated with something being "not exciting". The comment is therefore not coherent with the theme of sharing excitement of purchasing GP's products, since the commenter does not state an interest in any of the products as of present. However, the theme in the comment is still concerned with interest and excitement.

Summary of Thread to Post 1

As seen in the screenshot of Post 1, only six comments have been made where one comment, comment 1.1 included brand associations, which may be due to the theme of the post which does not contemplate for consumers to include brand associations or opinions of the launch of GP. The associations for this comment includes presenting GP as unexciting, and is a form of intertextuality as it is a response to the post.

Post 2 (app. 7)

The next sampled post states "First look at Glossier Play (via The Cut)" by magiclizard2000 who has posted a link to an article about the new GP products. The post has 17 comments. Unlike the preceding post, it is not a question to other members, but simply links to the article presumably with the intention of sharing with the other members what GP's product are about and what they look like. Therefore, it does not linguistically set the stage for other members to discuss their opinions about it. Based on the post, I assume that the commenters to the post have clicked on the link provided and have read the article or looked at GP's products through the link, prior to making any brand associations.

Comment 2.1 (app. 8)

harrietbeucker 30 points · 1 month ago

This just doesn't get me excited. I don't see anything new. Like there's nothing that sets them apart from the rest of the beauty brands who have similar products. Also the packaging just doesn't do it for me. I might be the only one but I feel like they completely missed the mark. As a big glossier fan I'll be skipping on this. I was really rooting for a self-care/self-love brand that would be a bit like lush/milk makeup.

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The first sampled comment related to the post is made by harrietbeucker. Since this is a comment to the post above, it can be assumed that the commenter has clicked on the link and read it before making the comment, and that the comment is based on the commenter's first look at the products. The commenter states as the first sentence

"This just doesn't get me excited." (ll. 1)

which instantly shows that this commenter has a negative perception of GP. The following sentence

"I don't see anything new. Like there's nothing that sets them apart from the rest of the beauty brands who have similar products." (ll. 1-2).

reveals that the commenter thinks that GP as a brand should have been something new and different from other brands, because of the negative perception shown in the first sentence in line 1. The subjective modality in the personal pronoun "I" and verb "don't" shows that it is the commenter's opinion that there is nothing new. The rest of the sentence

"Like there's nothing that sets them apart from the rest of the beauty brands who have similar products." (ll. 1-2)

uses categorical modality seen in "there's", which is an abbreviation of "there is" and is therefore presented as a truth. However, given the personal opinion in "I don't see anything new" (ll. 2) the last part of the sentence is probably the commenter's opinion as well, but only presented as a truth. Since the consumer is disappointed and thinks that GP should have been a brand that was distinguished from other brands, the consumer may not view Glossier as being coherent with GP. The expectation of GP being differentiated may stem from the consumer's perception of Glossier, and therefore expects something similar in Glossier's sub-brand.

Furthermore, it is stated that the commenter expected GP to be a brand similar to the beauty brands Lush and Milk Makeup in line 4

"I was really rooting for a self-care/self-love brand that would be a bit like lush/milk makeup." (ll. 3-4),

which supposedly is something different compared to other beauty brands, since the commenter is not interested in a brand similar to others already available. However, as previously analyzed, the commenter does not think that there is anything that sets GP apart from other brands, but at the same time had been "rooting" that GP would be more like the brands lush and milk makeup in line 4. It is stated that "the packaging just doesn't do it for me" (ll. 2) which shows that packaging is important to the commenter, although not stated why or how the packaging is not favored.

Harrietbeucker further comments

"I feel like they completely missed the mark." (ll. 3)

which is a presupposition as it is impossible for the commenter to be aware beforehand what GP was supposed to be, as Glossier did not speak about GP before the actual date of launch. Therefore, this presupposition is based entirely on the commenter's own opinion of what GP should be like, followed by the sentence "I was really rooting for a self-care/self-love brand…" (ll. 3-4), which shows that Glossier "missed the mark" because it was not what this consumer was hoping that the brand would be. The statement about missing the mark, shows that the brands are not coherent according to this consumer. Intertextuality is naturally present, as the comment is a response to the post, but since the post does not set the stage for interaction between consumers, the comment is not a response to any content within the post. The theme in the comment is based on associations of GP and overall perception of the brand and is coherent with the post in the sense that the posts provides a link to a website that shows GP's products.

Comment 2.2 (app. 9)
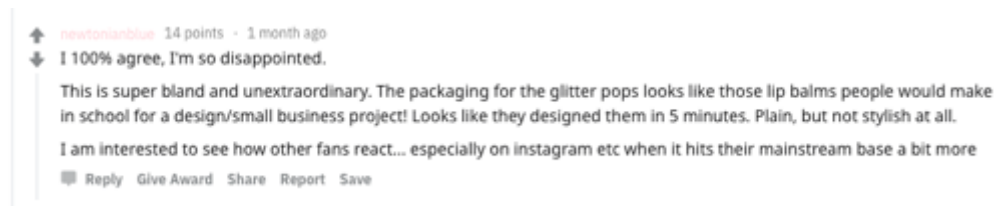
A commenter, newtonianblue, has made a comment to the comment analyzed above, which is demonstrated in the two lines to the left of the screenshotted image. The commenter states "I 100% agree. I'm so disappointed." in line 1, and associates GP with being "super bland and unextraordinary" in line 2, which is similar to the comment above stating that GP is nothing new and that there is nothing setting GP apart from other beauty brands. Moreover, the commenter associates the packaging with

> "those lip balms people would make in school for a design/small business product" (ll. 2-3),
> "looks like they designed them in 5 minutes" (ll. 3),
> and "Plain, but not stylish at all." (ll. 3),

which are all negative associations. The reference to a school project and to being designed in 5 minutes in the first two associations stated above is a reference to GP looking unprofessional.

Characteristic for this comment by newtonianblue is the use of objective modality, which is seen in the way that the commenter does not use personal pronoun "I" when making brand associations, and uses present tense when describing brand associations such as

> "This is super bland and unextraordinary" (ll. 2),

which is categorical modality, due to present tense of the verb "is", that creates power and establishes truth, and is maybe used here to influence other people reading the comment, trying to convince others that this person is speaking the truth. The lack of using personal pronouns when making associations furthers the established truth as legitimate, as it implies that what is stated is the actual truth and not just a personal opinion. However, when using categorical modality, the truth established is taken for granted by the commenter, which is the case here as the commenter does not refer to these associations as deriving from personal opinions.
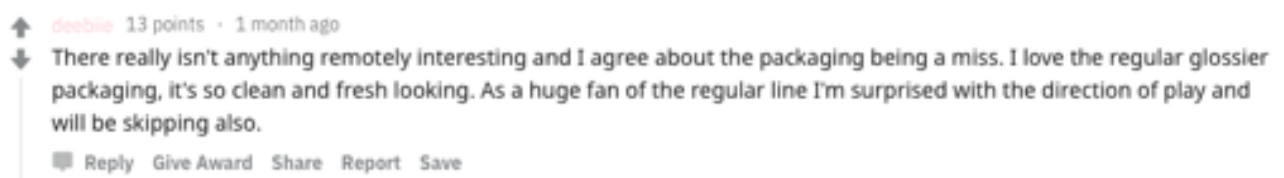
Intertextuality can be seen as the commenter picks up on the reference to packaging by the previous commenter, harrietbeucker, in comment 2.1, but the way that the commenter refers to the packaging here is that it looks unprofessional and is an expression of how GP has chosen to brand its product regarding packaging. It can therefore be assumed that packaging is important to this consumer, as two out of four lines are used to describe the packaging.

The last sentence, although not a brand association, is remarkable as

"I am interested to see how other fans react… especially on Instagram etc when it hits their mainstream base a bit more" (ll. 4)

reveals that this commenter views the Glossier forum members as a more extraordinary audience, or at least an audience that does not belong to the mainstream one. As newtonianblue expresses the interest of seeing how other consumers react on Instagram and calls it Glossier's mainstream base, the commenter indicates that there are presumably other opinions of either GP itself or the packaging according to the mainstream audience on Instagram. The theme of this comment is also coherent with the theme of the post as the comment entails the consumer's attitude towards the brand. However, the comment in line 4 about the audience, is incoherent with the theme of the post, as the post is about GP's products.

Comment 2.3 (app. 10)

▲ deebiie 13 points · 1 month ago
▼ There really isn't anything remotely interesting and I agree about the packaging being a miss. I love the regular glossier packaging, it's so clean and fresh looking. As a huge fan of the regular line I'm surprised with the direction of play and will be skipping also.
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The negative associations are continued in this comment by deebbiie who states

"There really isn't anything remotely interesting (ll. 1).

This statement picks up on the established truth about GP being uninteresting made in the previous examined comment, as the comment does not include personal opinion due to the lack of personal pronouns, and the use of present tense "is" provides categorical modality. Modal adverb "really" intensifies the truth that there really is not anything interesting about GP. Furthermore, the statement of GP not entailing anything that is remotely interesting can be related to "bland and unextraordinary" as stated in the previous comment, comment 2.2, as a

truth, as these wordings are semantically similar. Therefore, this is a case of intertextuality, as the comment draws on an established truth previously stated, and the comment is coherent with the previous one. The rest of the comment

> "... and I agree about the packaging being a miss. I love the regular Glossier packaging, it's so clean and fresh-looking. As a huge fan of the regular line I'm surprised with the direction of play and will be skipping also" (ll. 1.3)

includes personal pronouns, with exception of the sentence "It's so clean and fresh looking" (ll. 2) when referring to Glossier's packaging, which also creates an established truth of Glossier being clean and fresh looking, as "is" entails categorical modality. In the sentence where the commenter expresses being surprised with the direction of play, it indicates that the commenter does not view Glossier and GP as coherent with each other.

The sentence "and will be skipping also" (ll. 2-3) refers to the first sampled comment to the post in question, comment 2.1, where the commenter stated "I'll be skipping on this", and shows that the commenter, deebiie, agrees with Glossier consumer in post 2.1, harriettbeucker, which is an instance of intertextuality as deebbiie responds to the previous statement shown in the word "also" in the sentence "and I will be skipping also" (ll. 2-3). Both statements in comment 2.1, and the one in question, 2.3, can be seen as an expression of the consequences, that they want to avoid GP, of the negative brand associations they both have towards GP. Moreover, intertextuality can be seen in the reference to packaging in line 1-3 in the example given above, as packaging has been discussed in the preceding comments 2.1 and 2.2. Supposedly, packaging is important to this consumer, and there is even an emotional expression regarding it as the commenter uses the verb "love" about the Glossier packaging. However, deebbiie presumably did not find it relevant to include a reason of GP's packaging being a miss. The theme of the post is again coherent with the theme of this comment as the commenter includes brand associations and perception of GP.

Comment 2.4 (app. 11)

↑ Rex_Begonia 6 points · 1 month ago
↓ I really hate the creamy white color they used for the packaging. It reminds me of finding dirty old makeup in my mom's purse or something. and that sharpener is so ugly!!!
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Rex_Begonia makes an association to the GP packaging in the sentence

"It reminds me of finding dirty old makeup in my mom's purse or something" (ll. 1-2)

and states that the sharpener is "so ugly" (ll. 2). This refers to the look of the products, particularly the packaging as the statement refers to the first sentence

"I really hate the creamy white color they used for the packaging" (ll. 1)

Adjectives "dirty old" are negative that shows the consumer's attitude towards the GP packaging. The subjective modality expressed in the pronoun "me" clarifies that this is the commenter's own opinion, and contradicts Glossier being described as "clean and fresh looking" by the commenter in comment 2.3. This distinction may influence other members and people in general when establishing an opinion of Glossier and GP.

In the sentence

"and that sharpener is so ugly!!!" (ll. 2)

no personal pronoun is used and the commenter uses categorical modality which shows high affinity to the statement, and establishes a truth of GP's product looking bad. The use of three exclamation marks at the end of the sentence reinforces the statement and thereby the truth.

Intertextuality is seen in the way that the theme of the comment is how the packaging looks, which has been referred to in all comments to the post in question so far which are comment 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3. The commenter Rex_Begona picks up on the issue of packaging, but unlike the preceding comment 2.1 and 2.3, actually states why the packaging is not favored. It can be assumed that packaging and the way products look are important to this consumer due to the choice of including this based on the post. Furthermore, the theme in the comment can be caused by reading previous comments about packaging and feeling a need to include this further, and not emphasize the commenter's opinion regarding other aspects of the GP launch, as a result of reading the article linked in the post.

Comment 2.5 (app. 12)

> ⬆ donnysolder 44 points · 1 month ago · *edited 1 month ago*
> ⬇ Honestly... I'm a little underwhelmed. They look pretty boring, and even a little cheap? Colour eyeliners remind me of drugstore makeup I bought when I was 13, and the glitter pots look annoying to use. The vinyl lipstick could be a sticky nightmare. The highlighter is definitely what interests me most, but a bit skeptical about the application and colours - but I guess we'll see.
>
> All in all the packaging is really boring too! And doesn't hit the mark for either being minimalist aesthetic or really groovy funky - which they had so much opportunity to play with.
>
> The formulations better be groundbreaking, otherwise I'll pass.
>
> 💬 Reply Give Award Share Report Save

Commenter donnysoIder furthers the negative associations as GP's products are associated with looking "pretty boring" and "a little cheap" (ll. 1), where "pretty boring" furthers the previous association that state that the products look uninteresting which is shown in comment 2.3, 2.2, and 2.1. The commenter also states that the packaging is boring (ll. 5). The sentence "and even a little cheap?" (ll. 1) uses hedges which is seen in the adjectives "even" and "little". This creates a low affinity to the statement instead of stating "They look cheap". Furthermore, the question mark at the end indicates that the commenter may be unsure of this association or is trying to ask other members to comment whether they agree.

The association in

"Colour eyeliners remind me of drugstore makeup I bought when I was 13" (ll. 2)

is not negative on its own. However, it becomes negative in the context of other utterances such as when the commenter states "I'm a little underwhelmed" (ll. 1), as well as stating that the products look boring and cheap, and that a product looks annoying to use (ll. 2), which are all negative opinions and associations. The reference to color eyeliners is a specific product that GP carries in their line, but the concept of a colored eyeliner is not new, which is why this negative association to color eyeliners does not only have something to do with GP in this case. However, the commenter does not state this dislike of color eyeliners as general, but refers to it regarding GP which contributes to creating an association of GP being a brand suited for young teenagers.
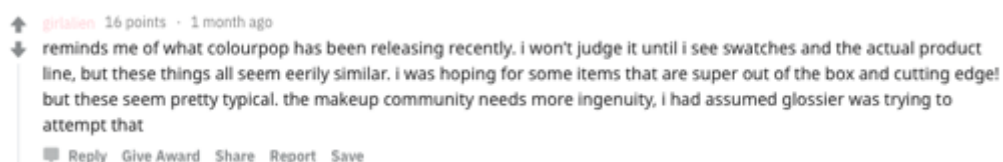
In line 5, it is stated

"doesn't hit the mark for either being minimalist aesthetics or really groovy funky" (ll. 5)

about the packaging, which indicates that the commenter expects the packaging to be either or in order to "hit the mark" or be successful. From a consumer perspective, a sub-brand must seem coherent to its parent-brand in order to be viewed as successful, which may not be the case here due to the comment of the packaging not hitting the mark. The comment entails presuppositions because the commenter does not believe that GP's packaging has either of the aspects in the sentence above and therefore does not hit the mark. DonnysoIder's negative opinion of the packaging is thereby influenced by the person's own expectations that were not met. Moreover, this is a form of intertextuality, as the commenter picks up on the reference made to packaging in all previous examined comments regarding the post in question. It is also seen in the last sentence "otherwise I'll pass" (ll. 7) where similar comments were made in comment 2.1 and 2.3 to whether the commenters want to buy or avoid the products. The theme of the comment is coherent with the theme in the post, as it involves the commenter's opinions and associations of GP. However, the content of this comment draws on intertextuality from previous comments regarding packaging and whether the commenter wants to buy GP's products, which shows that this comment may be influenced more by what has already been commented within the thread than the post itself.

Comment 2.6 (app. 13)

↑ girlalien 16 points · 1 month ago
↓ reminds me of what colourpop has been releasing recently. i won't judge it until i see swatches and the actual product line, but these things all seem eerily similar. i was hoping for some items that are super out of the box and cutting edge! but these seem pretty typical. the makeup community needs more ingenuity, i had assumed glossier was trying to attempt that
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The next comment is made by girlalien, who associates GP with Colourpop (ll. 1), a makeup brand, stating that GP's products "seem eerily similar " (ll. 2). Additionally, it is stated in line 3 "these seem pretty typical", when referring to GP's products and comparing them with Colourpop's products. These associations refer to GP as a typical brand with products similar to other makeup brands. The use of the verb "seem" in both examples shows low affinity to both statements, as the verb refers to an assumption or something and not whether something is a fact. If the commenter were to use "is" instead, the associations would be presented as facts. The modal adverb "eerily" in

"but these things all seem eerily similar" (ll. 2)

indicates that the commenter views the products as very similar, maybe also identical to Colourpop's products. The modal adverb "pretty" in

"but these seem pretty typical" (ll. 3)

expresses that GP's products seem a little typical, and is also a hedge the commenter makes to the statement which shows that the commenter only associates GP with being similar to other brands to a smaller extent.

The commenter does not make any negative associations towards GP, but states

"I was hoping for some items that are super out of the box and cutting edge" (ll. 2)

which indicates that girlalien is disappointed to some extent. Wording the sentence as "I was hoping" is positive, as to hope is an optimistic mindset towards an unknown situation and centers the focus around the commenter hoping. If the commenter had instead stated "I am disappointed that some items are typical and bland" the sentence would be characterized by a negative tone as being disappointed is a negative feeling that relates to being let down by something or someone.

The commenter also expresses

"the makeup community needs more ingenuity" (ll. 3),

which reveals the commenter's personal opinion based on the previous examples showing disappointment towards GP as being like other brands, and that the commenter was expecting something else. However, that statement grammatically speaks on behalf of a community, which can be seen in the noun "the makeup community", and the verb "needs" but based on the disappointment it indicates that this is only the commenter's opinion formulated on behalf of others. Yet, the use of categorical modality seen in "needs" is a presupposition and presents it as a truth. The truth of the makeup community needing more ingenuity is, in this comment, not fulfilled by GP, which therefore creates the association of GP being more on the uninventive side. The last part in the comment after the comma

"the makeup community needs more ingenuity, I had assumed glossier was trying to attempt that" (ll. 3)

implies that girlalien associates Glossier with being inventive, as that is the perception this consumer has had so far, but is confused with this perception regarding GP. This means that in the mind of this consumer, Glossier is an inventive brand whereas GP is less inventive.

In terms of intertextuality, the commenter mentions that GP seems typical and similar to other brands which is also stated in comment 2.1. The theme is coherent with the post as it includes girlalien's opinions and associations towards GP, and only has one case of intertextuality which means that the comment is not based on the comments above to a larger extent than being based on the post.

Comment 2.7 (app. 14)

The association with the brand Colourpop is also expressed in a comment made by theselumpz stating that a GP product looks similar to a Colourpop product called "gliterally obsessed", which furthers the association of GP being related to another brand and not seen as in relation to the parent brand, Glossier. The comment entails objective modality, as there are no personal pronouns and thereby no personal opinion expressed. Furthermore, categorical modality can be seen in the verb "looks" which is present tense, as well as there are no personal pronouns used. This constructs the association as a truth. The comment includes intertextuality as it is a response to comment 2.6 about Colourpop, and the theme can therefore be said to be based on comment 2.6, however, it is still coherent with the post as the commenter cannot make this association without clicking on the article in the post to view the products.

Comment 2.8 (app. 15)

A comment made by -lina-chan- states that

> "original glossier packaging is so much cuter to me" (ll. 1)

when comparing it with the GP packaging, which means that the commenter views the original Glossier packaging more positively than GP's packaging, seen in the personal pronoun "me" that reveals it is the commenter's own perception. The commenter also states

"this play packaging does not stand out at all" (ll. 2),

which means that GP is associated with something unextraordinary and something that has been done before, which is stated stated in comment 2.1, 2.3, and 2.5. The noun "packaging" and verb "does" imply that the packaging itself does not stand out and since there are no personal pronouns it is not expressed as the commenter's personal opinion Thereby, it is constructed as a fact, which may have been influenced by previous comments about the GP packaging, as other parts of -lina-chan-'s comment are influenced by the preceding comments. This can be seen in the sentence

"but I have to agree that I am underwhelmed :(" (ll. 1)

which shows intertextuality as the commenter responses to the preceding comments by agreeing with something that has already been stated by other commenters in comment 2.2, where the commenters states that he/she is disappointed, and in comment 2.5, where the commenter expresses a feeling of being underwhelmed as well. Intertextuality can also be seen in the fact that the commenter chooses to include negative opinions about packaging which has also been done in comments 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5. The reason for including opinions about packaging may be due to the fact that is has been commented by others, and -lina-chan- may feel it is relevant to do the same. Additionally, it is likely that packaging is important to this consumer since it is included in the comment. The comment is coherent with the theme of the post as this comment like the others contains opinions and associations about GP. Because of the intertextuality of packaging and being underwhelmed, the theme is coherent with some preceding posts as well.

Comment 2.9 (app. 16)

I expected them to start off with powder based products, maybe even eye shadows as their next beauty brand. I know Glossier is meant for the everyday woman, and Glossier Play has set out to be this "play with make up brand" but I was expecting more from this launch. I feel like they jumped from one extreme to another. I'm only interested in the liquid highlighter so far.

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In addition to the previous comment 2.8, Glossier is compared with GP again in a comment by girlindiorglasses who states that the brands feel like two extremes in the sentence

"I feel like they jumped from one extreme to another" (ll. 3),

which means that the commenter personally does not view the brands as coherent with each other and can be seen in the subjective modality in the personal pronoun "I". It is also stated that

"I know Glossier is meant for the everyday woman" (ll. 1-2),

which the consumer states as a fact using categorical modality seen in "is" and personal pronoun "I" and verb "know" and thereby creates a truth of Glossier being associated with being for the everyday woman. For GP however, it is stated

"Glossier Play has set out to be this "play with makeup brand" but I was expecting more from this launch." (ll. 2-3)

This indicates that the commenter was expecting more from GP and therefore describes it as a brand that was "set out to be" and not stating it as a fact that it is a "play with makeup brand", because the commenter does not believe so as it shows in "I was expecting more from this launch" (ll. 3) that the commenter is disappointed. However, given the fact the commenter is disappointed, girlindiorglasses still associates GP as being a playful makeup brand.

Comment 2.10 (app. 17)

A different kind of response to the launch of GP is seen in a comment by turtleyay who states

"I think it looks kind of fun" (ll. 1)

when referring to GP. This is a positive association towards GP which is the first comment so far with positive brand associations. The subjective modality in the personal pronoun "I" shows

that it is the consumer's own perception that the brand, or its products, look fun. Intertextuality can be seen in

"Probably an unpopular opinion given the comments thus far" (ll. 1),

which reveals that the commenter has read the previous comments and is aware that this positive comment stands out from the other reactions. Knowing that turtleyay has read the preceding comments, the commenter has not chosen to include anything about the packaging with regards to association or whether the consumer favors it or not, which may mean that this commenter does not find packaging significant.

Summary of Thread to Post 2

The comments to post 2 first of all indicate that packaging is important to the consumers, as it is mentioned in comment 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.8, however all these commenters express negative associations regarding packaging. Other associations include viewing GP as ordinary which is expressed in comments 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, and 2.8, and GP is associated with other brands that the members believe are similar to GP, such as the brand Colourpop, in comment 2.1, 2.6, and 2.7. Furthermore, GP is described as looking unprofessional, dirty, boring, cheap and teenage-like in comments 2.2, 2.4, and 2.5. On the other hand, Glossier is described as clean and fresh-looking, inventive, cute, and being for everyday women in comments 2.3, 2.6, and 2.9, which contradicts the description of GP seen in words such as boring versus inventive, clean and fresh versus dirty, and teenage-like versus everyday women. Some commenters believe that GP is not coherent with Glossier as a brand, which is expressed in comments 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, and 2.9. Lastly, only one comment, comment 2.10, expresses a positive brand association which is that the products look fun. The reason for the negative comments may be because the post itself does not contemplate for either positive or negative opinions, and as some comments are based on previous ones, the comments rather than the post seem to set the stage more for what is relevant to discuss in this thread. In this case, the comments are mostly negative.

Post 3 (app. 18)
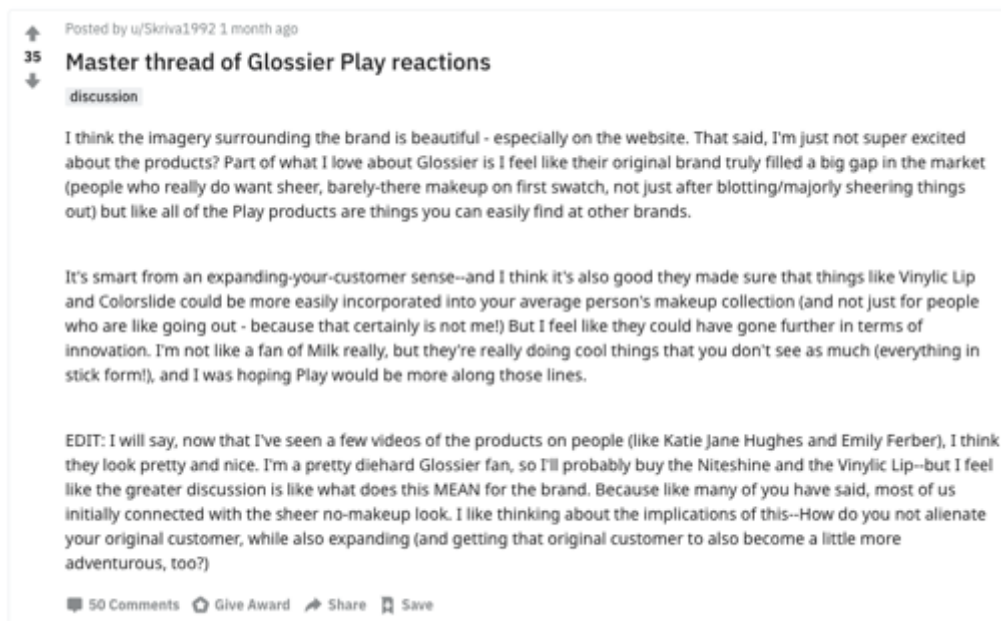
The next post is by Skriva1992 who has created a discussion thread called "Master thread of Glossier Play reactions" which contemplates for members to include all kinds of reactions and opinions towards the launch of the brand. The post has 50 comments. As the poster includes personal reaction and brand associations in the post it will be analyzed like the previous comments.

The first brand associations can be seen in the statement

> "Part of what I love about Glossier is I feel like their original brand truly filled a big gap in the market" (ll. 2)

which shows that the poster sees Glossier as being differentiated from other brands available at the market. The use of adjective "truly" strengthens the association of Glossier filling a gap. However, associations about GP are described rather differently later in the same sentence which states

> "but like all of the Play products are things you can easily find at other brands" (ll. 4)

and indicates that Skriva1992 views the two brands as the complete opposite. In these two associations, it is clear that the poster views the brand as incoherent with each other as Glossier is described as being original and filling a gap in the market whereas GP is described as being

ordinary. Subjective modality can be seen in the personal pronoun "I" which clarifies that the comment is a personal opinion. As the sentence about GP occurs in the same sentence, the comment about GP is also a personal opinion of the commenter. The use of adjective "easily" in the sentence about GP emphasizes the extent to which the poster ascribes the characteristic of GP being ordinary.

The poster expresses a hope of GP being something else in the sentence

"I'm not like a fan of Milk really, but they're really doing cool things that you don't see as much (everything in stick form!), and I was hoping Play would be more along those lines" (ll. 8-9).

which shows that the poster is disappointed to some extent and was hoping for GP to be more original, as it is stated that the poster would prefer if GP was similar to another brand that distinguishes itself from other brands. However, Skriva1992 modifies his/her opinion after seeing videos showcasing the products on people

"I will say, now that I've seen a few videos of the products on people (like Katie Jane Hughes and Emily Ferber), I think they look pretty and nice" (ll. 5-6 from the bottom)

Now, the poster associates GP products with "pretty" and "nice" which are positive adjectives. However, these associations do not mean that the poster does not view GP as ordinary anymore, and the adjectives are not convincing that the consumer likes GP or is interested in the products. If the poster had described them as "amazing" and "fantastic" it would have indicated a more positive change in opinion.

As this comment by Skriva1992 acts as a post, intertextuality cannot be detected. The theme of the post is as stated earlier about reactions to GP, but the commenter also implicitly asks

"but I feel like the greater discussion is like what does this MEAN for the brand" (ll. 4-5 from the bottom)

and therefore also acts as a theme of what the future of Glossier will be like.

Comment 3.1 (app. 19)

> ▲ skincarejunk1e 51 points · 1 month ago
> ▼ I'm beyond disappointed tbh,
>
> First when the announced and rumors were speculating I was hoping it wasn't color cosmetics as expected. I love glossier for their aesthetic. I love their cosmetics because it makes me feel like myself and natural etc. if I wanted a colored eyeshadow palette, eyeliner, or fun lipgloss I'll go to Mac, colourpop, Anastasia, etc.
>
> Their branding really set them apart and created a niche market and now I feel like their kinda losing that conforming to every other cosmetic company.
>
> Not to be a downer on things just my opinion :)
>
> 💬 Reply Give Award Share Report Save

The commenter skincarejunk1e associates Glossier's products with providing a feeling of being natural in the sentence

> "I love Glossier for their aesthetic. I love their cosmetics because it makes me feel like myself and natural etc." (ll. 2-3)

which means that the commenter views Glossier's cosmetics as something that looks natural in the sentence "I love their cosmetics because it makes me feel like myself and natural." This is the commenter's own opinion seen in the subjective modality in personal pronoun "I" which reveals that it is the commenter who loves. However, for GP it is stated

> "If I wanted a coloured eyeshadow palette, eyeliner, or fun lipgloss I'll go to Mac, colourpop, Anastasia, etc." (ll. 3-4)

It is clear that the commenter associates GP with something that is already available in other the other brands stated, and states that if the commenter wants to buy a colored eyeshadow palette there are other brands that the consumer would turn to. The reference to "coloured eyeshadow palette" in the sentence can be seen as the opposite of natural makeup that the commenter describes Glossier as. Colorful makeup is not natural-looking as it refers to colors that are not naturally present in the skin such as natural colors, and thereby GP is associated with being colorful cosmetics as the opposite of Glossier. This association is also constructed as the commenter's personal opinion which can be seen in the use of personal pronouns in "If I wanted" and "I'll go to". Modality can be seen in the expression "I'll go to" which is a reference to the future, meaning that, according to the sentence above, the commenter will choose another brand in the future, that is not GP, when buying color cosmetics

In terms of intertextuality, the commenter picks up on statements from post 3 in the sentence

"Their branding really set them apart and created a niche market and now I feel like they're kinda losing that conforming to every other cosmetic company" (ll. 5-6)

which is similar to the statement in post 3 that the parent brand Glossier fills a big gap in the market. The comment by skincarejunk1e states that Glossier created a niche market, while post 3 implies that the gap was already there, however, the commenter still views Glossier as being distinguished from other brands on the market. The comment also holds a presupposition that the commenter thinks Glossier will lose its niche market as a result of launching GP.

As stated earlier, the commenter views GP as products that can be purchased from multiple other brands, which is coherent with the statement in post 3 where Skriva1992 states that if the person wants color makeup there are other brands the person will seek out. The theme of the comment is therefore coherent with the post as it entails reactions and associations towards GP. The statement above about conforming to other cosmetic companies indicates that this is the commenter's thoughts about the future of Glossier, which is therefore coherent with the theme of the post in question about future implications for the brand.

Comment 3.2 (app. 20)

The next comment within the thread is a response to comment 3.1. The commenter Succubarbie agrees with the commenter in comment 3.1, and states that

"Every other brand has this stuff, it's disappointing that they seem to be going in the same direction as all the other brands." (ll. 1-2)

The noun "Every other brand" and the verb "has" where "has" is in the present tense means it is categorical modality, and the lack of personal pronouns emphasizes that the statement is not a personal opinion. It is therefore constructed as a truth that every other brand carries the same products. Intertextuality is present as this comment is a response to the previous one where the commenter agrees with the previous statement and includes a personal opinion.

A presupposition exists in the sentence where the commenter expresses disappointment

"it's disappointing that they seem to be going in the same direction as all the other brands" (ll. 1-2),

since the commenter assumes that they are going in the same direction as everybody else. According to the theme of the post in question, the commenter asked implicitly about what members thought the launch of GP meant for the future of Glossier. Therefore, the use of "they" in the comment above may mean that the commenter Succubarbie is referring to Glossier when using that word. As analyzed in comment 3.1, the commenter states that Glossier feels like it is losing its niche market and conforming to other brands, and since the commenter of comment 3.2 agrees, it must mean that Succubarbie holds a presupposition that Glossier is going in the same direction as other brands and thereby changing as a brand. The theme of the comment is therefore coherent with the post as it refers to the future of Glossier as a brand.

Comment 3.3 (app. 21)

> ⬆ ajlearth 34 points · 1 month ago
> ⬇ I was hoping for things more innovative. The glitter jelly is so overdone and glossier's is overpriced. The only thing different is the tube of lip lacquer which has a spongy top instead of a wand.
>   💬 Reply Give Award Share Report Save

The commenter ajlearth associates the "glitter jelly", which refers to the GP product "Glitter Gelée", with being an overdone product and that Glossier is overpriced in the sentence

"The glitter jelly is so overdone and glossier's overpriced" (ll. 1).

The association is based on the commenter's own opinion which is seen in the beginning of the sentence in the statement "I was hoping for things more innovative" (ll.1). The personal pronoun "I" shows subjective modality which clearly shows that it is the commenter's personal opinion. However, the rest of the sentence "The glitter jelly is so overdone and glossier's is overpriced" is presented as a truth since it uses categorical modality seen in "The glitter jelly is" and "glossier's is overpriced" which constructs the statement as a fact. The last part of the sentence

"The only thing different is the tube of lip lacquer which has a spongy top instead of a wand." (ll. 1-2)

shows that the commenter does not think that GP is different, and that the only thing different about the brand is the applicator of a lip product which has a spongy top. Therefore, the commenter agrees with the previous comments and post in question which are comment 3, 3.1, and 3.2 that GP is unextraordinary and similar to brands that are already on the market. This can be a form of intertextuality as the commenter responds to previous statements by including this opinion. Despite the preceding comments 3, 3.1, and 3.2 about the future of Glossier, ajlearth does not include any utterances about the future of Glossier. The theme from the post about the future implications for Glossier can therefore not be seen in this post, but it is still coherent with the theme in the post concerning opinions of the launch of GP.

Summary of Thread to Post 3

GP is associated with being a brand similar to other brands within the market and with products that are substitutes to other similar brands in comments 3, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. Furthermore, GP is associated with colorful cosmetics whereas Glossier is associated with a natural look in comment 3.1, which are two opposites. Glossier is also associated with filling a gap in the market and being distinguished from other brands in comment 3 and 3.1, which is the opposite of what members associate GP with. Therefore, commenters to post 3 do generally not see the brands as coherent with each other. Furthermore, some commenters express a belief of Glossier conforming to other beauty brands as a result of launching GP in comment 3.1 and 3.2, which shows intertextuality as it deals with implications for the future of Glossier, which was present as a theme in comment 3.

4.1.1 Sub-conclusion of Analysis 4.1

The brand associations mainly concern GP which is expected as the analyzed threads revolve around the launch of GP. Generally, consumers on the forum view the brands very differently, almost as contrasts. Glossier is presented as a unique brand that fills a gap within a market with inventive products as well as a clean and fresh-looking packaging. GP is presented as an uninventive, play with makeup-brand with very similar products to every other makeup brand, which is the opposite of Glossier being described as filling a gap. Furthermore, GP is described as consisting of colorful makeup, which is the opposite of Glossier being described as natural-looking makeup. Additionally, GP is associated with cheap, dirty, and unprofessional-looking packaging, which is the opposite of the description of Glossier being described as fresh and clean-looking. Furthermore, consumers associate GP with a brand for young teenagers, whereas Glossier is presented as a brand that fits the everyday woman who wants a natural

makeup look. The most common association found from the posts and comments is that GP is ordinary and that it seems like every other brand within the market of cosmetics. It is prevalent from the posts and comments that packaging is important to the consumers, which is seen in the thread to post 2. For post 2, packaging is likely to be commented on due to intertextuality from the first comment. Packaging is not mentioned in the thread to post 3, maybe due to the poster in post 3 including personal opinions and setting the agenda for discussion in the comments concerning future implications for GP. Instead, future implications are discussed in the comments. It can therefore be concluded that theme of the post is not always what creates the topics of discussion, as it is sometimes created in the comment-section as in the thread to post 2.

The table below provides a manageable overview of the brand associations regarding Glossier and GP.

Types of Association	Glossier Play	Glossier
Packaging	Dirty-looking	Clean/fresh
	Unprofessional	Cute
	Cheap-looking	
Product	Teenage-like products	Everyday woman
	Colorful makeup	Natural makeup
	Products similar to other brands on the market	
Overall	Uninventive	Inventive
	Uninteresting	Everyday woman
	Ordinary makeup brand	Unique brand (fills a gap in the market)
	Play with makeup-brand	

Overview of Brand Associations towards Glossier and Glossier Play
(Table 1 app. 22)

4.2 Brand Value and Brand Loyalty

This analysis seeks to answer RQ2 which is "How does the feedback of Glossier Play on the Reddit forum affect brand value and brand loyalty towards Glossier and Glossier Play?". Section 2.2 provides an overview of the theory I use to base this analysis on. The posts and comments analyzed in section 4.1 will be analyzed upon again in this section, but in regards to brand loyalty and brand value. An explanation of the methodological approach of this analysis is present in section 3.4.2.

Post 1 (app. 5)
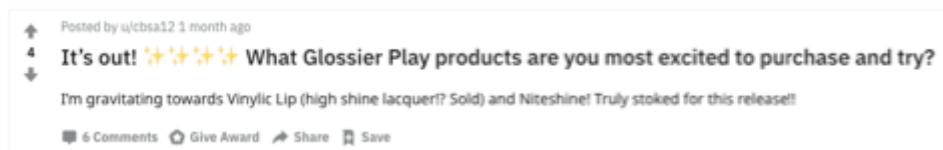
This post by cbsa12 contemplates for other members to include their opinions about what products they are excited to try and thereby sets the stage for comments about loyalty in the sentence

"What Glossier Play products are you most excited to purchase and try?" (ll. 1).

The sentence entails a presupposition and ascribes other members to feel excitement and wanting to purchase and try the products, and thereby a presupposition of the members being loyal towards newly launched GP. It can be assumed that when a consumer is excited about a specific brand and products and wants to purchase them that the consumer is loyal to the given brand. The presupposition can be seen in the adjective "excited", but the use of the comparison "most" indicates that all members are already excited, and the poster therefore wants to know what products that bring the other members most excitement. The use of "most" furthers the presupposition of loyalty. Moreover, modality is not present in the sentence, which is why it is not analyzed. As previously mentioned, the post sets the stage for other members to include what they are excited to purchase and try, which makes it the theme of the post.

Cbsa12 includes a personal opinion in line 2 where the poster seems to include a comment to his/her own post in the sentence

"I'm gravitating towards Vinylic Lip (high shine lacquer? Sold) and Niteshine! Truly stoked for this release!!" (ll. 2).

The sentence is an expression of loyalty towards GP as the poster expresses interest in buying the products in the verb "gravitating" as well as excitement in the sentence "Truly stoked for this release!!". Subjective modality seen in the personal pronoun "I"shows that it is the person's own opinion which defines the statement of loyalty as belonging to the poster. Modality can be seen in the modal adverb "truly" in the sentence "Truly stoked for this release!!" which indicates that the commenter is, in other words, very excited about the launch of GP. In this sentence, the poster also refers to emotional value, as feeling stoked relates to the products' ability to provoke feelings. Furthermore, the poster relates to functional value in the sentence

"(high shine lacquer? Sold)" (ll. 2)

where "high shine" is the functional attribute of the product "Vinylic Lip" mentioned in the same sentence. The statement shows that because the product has the attribute of being a high shine lacquer the person wants to buy it, seen in the expression "Sold", which means that the person's loyalty depends on functional value.

Comment 1.1 (app. 6)

tucmilka 5 points · 1 month ago
Honestly, the only thing I'd be interested in is the glitter gelee, the rest is just...not exciting...
Reply Give Award Share Report Save

The two vertical lines on the left of the screenshot means that the comment is a direct response to the post. In this comment by tucmilka it is expressed that the person is disloyal towards GP in the sentence

"the only thing I'd be interested in is the glitter gelee".

As mentioned in analysis 4.1 in comment 1.1, the commenter uses subjective modality seen in the personal pronoun "I", which means that this statement about loyalty is an expression of the commenter's opinion only. The modal verb "would" shows that the commenter is not actually interested or loyal to the brand when the comment was written, as the verb states something about a possibility in the future. It is not clear why the commenter finds a small interest in the "glitter gelee" as the commenter does not ascribe value to GP's products. The comment

"The rest is just… not exciting…"

shows that the commenter does not like the products, and it can be deduced that the commenter is not loyal to GP as a result. The poster in post 1 showed loyalty towards GP, which was expressed through excitement, however this commenter responds in a way where it is clear that the person is not excited and loyal. This form of intertextuality regarding loyalty is not commented on in a positive way, therefore the social interaction in comment 1.1 as a response to post 1 does not lead to brand loyalty for this consumer. The theme in the comment however is coherent with the theme in the post, as it deals with excitement about GP, but the presupposition that the poster implies is rejected here, as the commenter is not excited.

Summary of Thread to Post 1

The poster in post 1 contemplates for others to include their interest and thereby loyalty of products. The poster includes a personal opinion where loyalty towards GP is expressed, but is determined by functional value, although positive emotional value is also ascribed the brand. Comment 1.1 expresses disloyalty, and it can therefore be concluded that social interaction with the post does not lead to loyalty in this case. Comment 1.1 does not ascribe any kind of brand value towards GP, and does not provide a reason for being disloyal.

Post 2 (app. 7)

As mentioned previously in analysis 4.1 post 2 the poster magiclizard2000 provides a link to the first look at the GP products. I assume that the commenters have read the article or looked at the visuals before making any statements about brand loyalty and brand value. Brand loyalty can be created through social interaction on communities, but this post does not set the stage for other members to interact with the poster about loyalty, since magiclizard2000 does not make any statements about loyalty. In addition, the poster does not express any form of personal opinion regarding brand value, which neither sets the stage for commenters to comment on value, leaving the thread open for discussion.

Post 2.1 (app. 8)

harrietbeucker   30 points · 1 month ago

This just doesn't get me excited. I don't see anything new. Like there's nothing that sets them apart from the rest of the beauty brands who have similar products. Also the packaging just doesn't do it for me. I might be the only one but I feel like they completely missed the mark. As a big glossier fan I'll be skipping on this. I was really rooting for a self-care/self-love brand that would be a bit like lush/milk makeup.

Reply Give Award Share Report Save

The commenter harrietbeucker states

"As a big glossier fan I'll be skipping on this" (ll. 3)

which shows that the commenter is disloyal towards GP, although the consumers is a "big fan" of Glossier. The personal pronoun "I" shows subjective modality, which means that it is the person's own expression of loyalty. The fact that the consumers chooses to state "as a big glossier fan" before declaring "I'll be skipping on this" shows that even though the consumer is loyal to Glossier, GP is not something the consumer wants to support. The modal verb "will" in the sentence "I'll be skipping on this" shows low affinity to the statement and indicates a prediction that the consumer will not buy any GP products. Therefore, if the consumer had stated "I am skipping on this" it would be a statement of high affinity and indicate that the consumer had already made up his/her mind without predicting anything. Loyalty is further expressed in the comment

"Like there's nothing that sets them apart from the rest of the beauty brands who have similar products." (ll. 1-2)

where it is clear that the commenter does not have a reason for being loyal towards GP as a brand, as there are multiple other brands that already have the same products. However, as the commenter states there are many brands that have the same products the consumer could then choose to be loyal towards GP instead of similar brands, but as mentioned before it is stated that the commenter wants to skip on GP. The reason for this may be due to the brand value that the commenter senses from GP seen in the utterance

"Also the packaging just doesn't do it for me" (ll. 2).

The fact that the commenter includes something about the statement may mean that the consumer values packaging. The use of "me" shows subjective modality and it is clear that it

is only the commenter's opinion. The utterance is an expression of emotional value as it relates to how a product looks, and as the commenter is not pleased with the look it could be the reason for the commenter not wanting to be loyal towards GP. It may not only be the look of the packaging that is crucial for loyalty in this case as the commenter further expresses

"I was really rooting for a self-care/self-love brand that would be a bit like lush/milk makeup." (ll. 3-4).

which shows that the commenter was hoping for a brand that would be more like the brands Lush and Milk Makeup. The hedge "a bit" shows that the commenter would like for GP to be similar to other brands to a small extent, and the adjectives "self-care" and "self-love" indicate attributes about the products that are not related to packaging as the word "self-care brand" relates to functional attributes. Therefore, it can be seen that the commenter was hoping that the brand value GP would offer would be different in terms of functional value. It can therefore be deduced that emotional value and functional value is important to the consumer and is not met with the launch op GP.

Presuppositions about brand loyalty and brand value are not present in the comment and intertextuality is not visible either, since the commenter is not able to respond to what is written in post 2.

Comment 2.2 (app. 9)
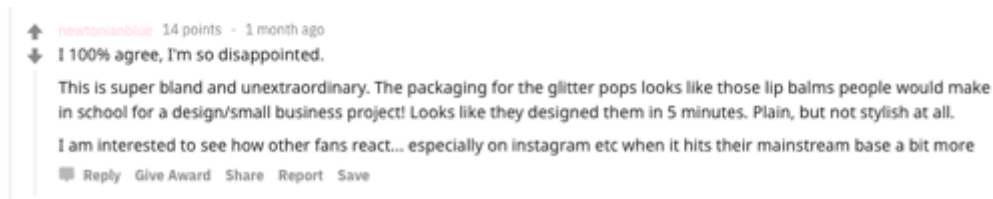
This comment is a response to the above comment 2.1. The comment is made by newtonianblue. In terms of loyalty, the commenter states

"I 100% agree. I'm so disappointed." (ll. 1).

which means that the commenter is disloyal towards GP, as the previous commenter did not show loyalty towards GP. Therefore, the social interaction seen in this comment as a response to comment 2.1 cannot be said to increase loyalty. The hedge "so" in the sentence implies that

the consumer is very disappointed about GP as a brand, which indicates that the consumer does not want to be loyal towards the brand. The sentence

"This is super bland and unextraordinary" (ll. 1)

presumably refers to GP as a brand and not necessarily the packaging, which neither expresses loyalty towards the brand, as it can be assumed that when a consumer thinks a brand is unextraordinary that consumer does not have a reason to be loyal to that specific brand.

Regarding brand value, the commenter relates to emotional value as most of the comment is concerned with how the packaging looks. This can be seen in the utterance

"The packaging for the glitter pops looks like those lip balms people would make in school for a design/small business project! Looks like they designed them in 5 minutes. Plain, but not stylish at all". (ll. 2-3)

The negative utterance about packaging means that the commenter ascribes negative emotional value to GP, and that the value is concerned with the packaging and the emotions it provokes. Intertextuality can be seen as the utterance picks up on the reference to packaging made in the previous comment. If the previous commenter had not stated anything about the packaging, it may not have been part of newtonianblue's comment.

Comment 2.3 (app. 10)
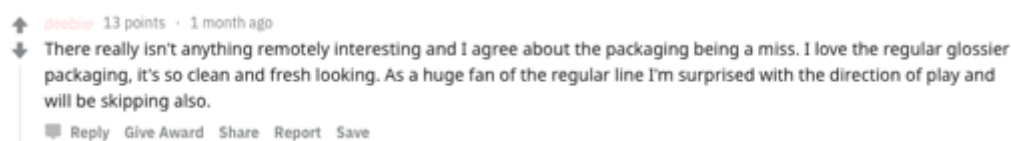
Like the previous examined posts and comments, commenter deebbiie shows disloyalty towards GP. The sentence

"There really isn't anything remotely interesting" (ll. 1)

shows that the consumer is disloyal as it can be assumed that if a consumer do not think of a beauty brand as interesting, the consumer will not be loyal towards the brand. The modal adverb "remotely" indicates the degree to which the consumer does not find the brand interesting. The commenter expresses surprise towards the direction of GP and claims to be a loyal Glossier fan in line 2 and states

"I'm surprised with the direction of play and will be skipping also" (ll. 2-3)

as if the reason for not wanting to purchase the products is due to the direction, which is a surprise to the consumer. The direction of GP is a disappointment, which can be seen from line 1 stated above where deebbiie states that GP is uninteresting. Therefore, the commenter will not be loyal towards GP as a result of the disappointing direction. In the same line, the commenter states "and will be skipping also" which directly shows that the commenter does not want to be loyal to GP.

Additionally, the sentence shows intertextuality seen in the word "also", which indicates that it is a response to the comments 2.1 and 2.2 as those commenters also express disloyalty towards GP. It further indicates an attempt to relate to the other commenters by joining the other members' statements. Therefore, the social interaction between this comment by deebbiie and comments 2.1 and 2.2 does not lead to increased loyalty. On the contrary, it may be that the commenter expresses these statements of disloyalty as a result of reading the previous comments within the thread. Deebbiie may have become aware of personal opinions through reading about others' opinions, and it cannot be guaranteed that the comment would be the same if deebiie was the first member to comment on the post. The result of the interaction may therefore decrease loyalty if it is the case that the commenter becomes aware of own negative opinions through reading those of others.

Emotional brand value is expressed in the statement

"I agree about the packaging being a miss" (ll. 1)

where the commenter signifies importance to packaging by mentioning it and stating a dislike of it. The fact that the commenter chooses to include a dislike about the packaging suggests that GP's value as a brand lies within its packaging, and not its actual products as those are not commented on. The verb "agree" shows intertextuality as it is a response to comment 2.1 and 2.2 that also dislikes the packaging. Again, the verb is an attempt to relate to the other members of the forum.

Comment 2.4 (app. 11)

> ⬆ Rex_Begonia 6 points · 1 month ago
> ⬇ I really hate the creamy white color they used for the packaging. It reminds me of finding dirty old makeup in my mom's
>   purse or something. and that sharpener is so ugly!!!
>   💬 Reply Give Award Share Report Save

As this comment by Rex_Begonia is centered around dislike of packaging, I will begin by commenting on the brand value first before moving on to brand loyalty, as in this particular case the brand loyalty seems to be affected by the commenter's view of brand value.

The commenter relates to emotional value when stating

"I really hate the creamy white color they used for the packaging" (ll. 1)

which expresses a strong dislike of packaging due to the adjective "hate". Furthermore, it is specified that the packaging reminds the commenter of dirty, old makeup, and that the sharpener is ugly. As mentioned in analysis 4.1 comment 2.4 subjective modality is present in the statement, which in this case may be an attempt to influence other members to take the statements for granted as truths.

The packaging looking dirty and old and the sharpener being ugly are references to emotional value. It can be seen that the emotions the commenter experiences from being exposed to the launch of GP are negative towards the value of GP. Additionally, views about functional or social value are not included, and it can therefore be deduced that Rex_Begonia views the emotional value as crucial for the loyalty of GP.

Since the previous three comments suggest a dislike of the packaging, intertextuality can be detected here as Rex_Begonia picks up on this negative reference. The implications of the commenter only including statements about the strong dislike of packaging indicates that the commenter is disloyal towards GP. However, the commenter's opinion towards the function of the products could potentially be positive, but since it is not stated in the comment, it can be deduced that the commenter is disloyal to the sub-brand. The social interaction with the previous posts does not lead to increased brand loyalty, but may lead to decreased brand loyalty as a result of disloyalty and negativity regarding brand value in the thread so far. This may influence both members and other non-members to be disloyal to GP, as they are being met with negative comments influencing their opinion-shaping.

Regarding theme, it is coherent with the post's theme as statements of brand loyalty and brand value can be expected after being exposed to a sub-brand which parent brand the

commenter is loyal to. However, the post includes a link to an article where GP's products can be viewed, but the commenter chooses to only focus on emotional value by including statements about packaging and ignores the function of any of the products.

Comment 2.5 (app. 12)
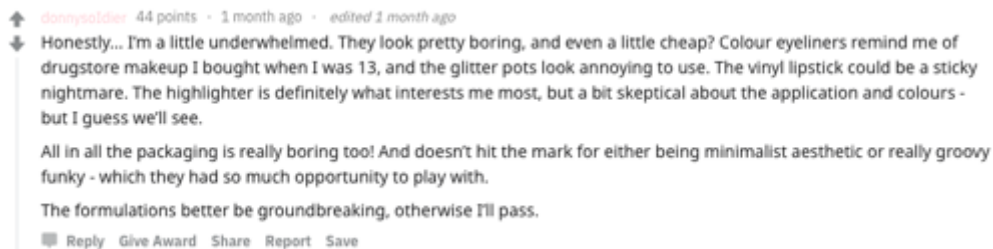
This commenter, donnysoIdier, expresses disloyalty towards GP in the sentence

"I'm a little underwhelmed. They look pretty boring, and even a little cheap?" (ll. 1)

as feeling underwhelmed by something indicates a prediction that was not met, and since feeling underwhelmed is a negative emotion, the consumer is likely disappointed by the launch of GP. If a brand is disappointing, it can be argued that a consumer does not want to be loyal to it. However, it is not clear that the commenter is completely disloyal, as the hedge "little" used about being underwhelmed suggests disappointment to a smaller degree. Since the adjectives "boring" and "cheap" are used about the way the products look, it can be deduced that some of the disloyalty the commenter experiences is related to packaging as the commenter is disappointed by it.

Additionally, possible disloyalty is expressed in the last statement

"The formulations better be groundbreaking, otherwise I'll pass." (ll. 1 from the bottom).

The possibility of disloyalty lies within what appears to be a threat that if the formulations of the products do not live up to the commenter's expectations, disloyalty will be the consequence. Therefore, the utterance reveals that the commenter's loyalty towards GP is based on the functional aspect of the products which leads to how the commenter values the brand. When referring to formulations of makeup products in this case, it is concerned with functional value, but more specifically attributes of a product. DonnysoIder also expresses negative functional brand value in the following statements

"glitter pots look annoying to use" (ll. 2) and

"The vinyl lipstick could be a sticky nightmare" (ll. 2-3)

where the first comment refers to predicted irritation towards the usage of the product "glitter pots" and the second is a reference to the usage as well, where the commenter predicts the lipstick to be sticky-feeling. The commenter also refers to value in the utterance

"Color eyeliners remind me of drugstore makeup I bought when I was 13" (ll. 1-2).

The statement on its own is not necessarily negative, but because the previous utterances stated above are negative, it is likely that the commenter refers to value in a negative way. The value can be classified as social value, as the commenter thinks negatively about the makeup the person bought at age 13 and therefore the value refers to social well-being, as the commenter would probably not like to buy and wear makeup that provided those associations.

Intertextuality can be detected in the reference to packaging in line 3 from the bottom where the commenter states that it does not "hit the mark", which is an expression previously used in comment 2.1, but packaging has also been mentioned in all preceding comments in the thread to post 2. Intertextuality can also be seen in the way that it is mentioned that the commenter will pass, which is something that has been commented on in comment 2.1 and 2.3. It is likely that donnysoIder finds it necessary to comment on packaging and loyalty, as it has been stated in previous comments. This intertextuality is a social interaction between community members, but in this case is does not lead to loyalty. The theme is coherent with the theme of the post, as it concerns the commenter's opinions after looking at the products which can be seen in lines 1-4, that concerns functional and social value. The last three lines of the comment concerning packaging and loyalty, which as mentioned is a form of intertextuality, appears to be more of a result of the theme in the preceding comments, rather than the post in particular.

Comment 2.6 (app. 13)

↑ girlaisen 16 points · 1 month ago
↓ reminds me of what colourpop has been releasing recently. i won't judge it until i see swatches and the actual product
line, but these things all seem eerily similar. i was hoping for some items that are super out of the box and cutting edge!
but these seem pretty typical. the makeup community needs more ingenuity, i had assumed glossier was trying to
attempt that

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In the comment by girlalien, it is clear that the commenter feels disappointment towards the launch of GP seen in the utterance

> "I was hoping for some items that are super out of the box and cutting edge! but these seem pretty typical." (ll. 2-3)

where the commenter expresses a hope for products to be cutting edge, but finds them typical instead. This indicates that the commenter may be disloyal towards GP, as a result of the disappointment. Yet, the commenter states
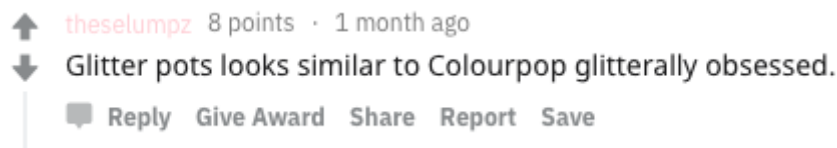
> "I won't judge it until i see swatches and the actual product line, but these things seem eerily similar." (ll. 1-2)

which means that girlalien has not yet formed an opinion on whether the GP products are very similar to those of Colourpop's due to the wording of "I won't judge until". It can be expected that when the commenter does see the swatches of GP's products, which is when a makeup sample is applied to one's skin to demonstrate color and finish (Oxford Dictionaries n.d.), and they turn out to be very similar, girlalien will not have a reason to buy GP's products and is therefore likely to be disloyal. The commenter's loyalty can therefore be seen to dependant of functional value as the commenter refers to swatches of the product, which is how they look and perform on the skin. Additionally, as a result of social interaction in the preceding comments, they cannot be said to increase brand loyalty, but since all comments so far show disloyalty, it may affect how other consumers make sense of their own opinions towards loyalty, which could be the case here.

When the commenter refers to functional value it is presumably intertextuality, as functional value has been referred to earlier in comment 2.1 and 2.5. The theme of functionality of products is coherent with the post's theme as it includes the commenter's own opinion of GP, but despite previous commenters, girlalien is careful to conclude something, as the link in the post does not offer swatches, and therefore the commenter is not able to form an opinion of the products' functionality.
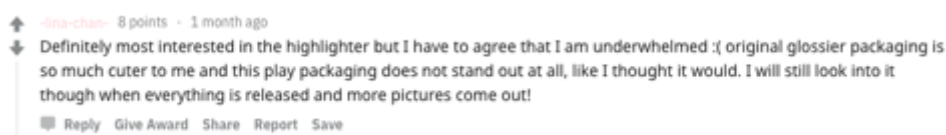
Comment 2.7 (app. 14)

▲ theselumpz 8 points · 1 month ago
▼ Glitter pots looks similar to Colourpop glitterally obsessed.

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This comment by theselumpz does not refer to whether the person is loyal or disloyal towards GP, but only states that the product "Glitter pots" look similar to another product by Colourpop. Arguably, when a consumer experiences similarities between brands as in this case, the consumer does not have a reason to be loyal to a specific brand. Therefore, the social interaction in the thread so far does not lead to increased loyalty for this commenter. It is likely that theselumpz's comment is inspired by comment 2.6 that also mentions the same product as similar to the brand Colourpop's product, and the commenter may have only become aware of this similarity because of the previous comment. Therefore, the comment can be a form of intertextuality, if it is the case that it is based on what is stated in comment 2.6. The commenter does not ascribe any kind of value to GP, which is why it will not be commented further on.

Comment 2.8 (app. 15)

▲ -lina-chan- 8 points · 1 month ago
▼ Definitely most interested in the highlighter but I have to agree that I am underwhelmed :(original glossier packaging is so much cuter to me and this play packaging does not stand out at all, like I thought it would. I will still look into it though when everything is released and more pictures come out!

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-lina-chan- states disappointment towards the launch of GP in the sentence

"I have to agree that I am underwhelmed" (ll. 1)

which presumably is a reason why the commenter wants to be disloyal to the sub-brand. The commenter expresses subjective modality in the statement by using personal pronoun "I" two times in the sentence, which clarifies that it is the commenter's own opinion. The verb "agree" entails intertextuality as agreeing with someone is a way of responding to someone's statement. The social interaction does not increase loyalty in this case, rather it is likely to decrease as a result of interacting with previous comments about being underwhelmed.

Although the commenter is disappointed, it is still stated that

"I will still look into it though when everything is released and more pictures come out" (ll. 2-3)

which like the comment 2.6 shows that -lina-chan- has not yet formed an opinion of the product, but will form an opinion of being loyal when more picture have come out. The social interaction between commenters does therefore not increase loyalty, but loyalty stays neutral for this consumer so far.

It is not clear what if commenter wants to base the decision of loyalty in terms of value, as it is not stated that the commenter wants to see how the products function or more picture of what they look like. Therefore, brand value is not clear from the utterance above. The commenter refers to the look of the packaging, which indicates emotional brand value, since it is concerned with the way products look and how they affect consumers emotionally. This statement is as follows

"Original glossier packaging is so much cuter to me and this play packaging does not stand out at all, like I thought it would" (ll. 1-2)

and shows that the packaging is also a disappointment to the commenter, as it was not like the commenter had hoped. Since the commenter chooses to include opinion on how the packaging looks, emotional brand value is ascribed to GP, but in a negative way. This indicates that the look of the packaging is important to this consumer and may be part of the reason why the commenter feels underwhelmed after looking at GP's products through the link. The reference to emotional brand value, of how the products look, shows intertextuality as negative emotional brand value has also been ascribed GP in comments 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5. The objective modality used in the sentence, mentioned in analysis 4.1 comment 2.8, constructs the statement as a fact, which may be an attempt to sum up various commenters expressing that the packaging does not hit the mark.

Comment 2.9 (app. 16)
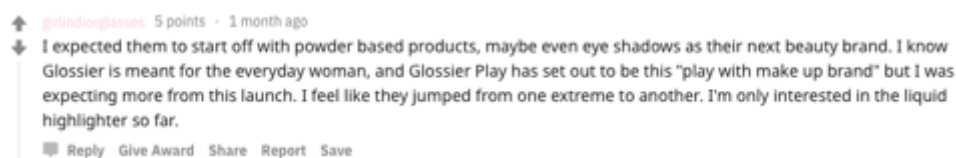
This comment by girlindiorglasses expresses neutral loyalty in the sentences

"I was expecting more from this launch" (ll. 2) and

"I'm only interested in the liquid highlighter so far" (ll. 3-4)

where the first sentence expresses disappointment, as expectations were not met. It can be argued that when a consumer is disappointed by a brand the consumer will not want to be loyal. In the second comment the commenter expresses potential loyalty, as it is stated that girlindiorglasses is interested in a product. It is not clear why the commenter finds interest in the liquid highlighter. Furthermore, the commenter does not relate to any kind of brand value in the utterance. The social interaction in the thread does not lead to loyalty towards GP in this case, but stays neutral. Intertextuality can be seen in the fact that the commenter expresses to only be interested in the highlighter, as this was also mentioned in comment 2.8. It can also be seen in the way that the commenter may believe it is necessary to comment on the degree of interest in the products, as this has been done in comment 2.1, 2.3, and 2.5. Unlike previous comments, this commenter does not include anything about packaging, which may mean that it is not important to the commenter when making a purchase decision.

Comment 2.10 (app. 17)

turtleyay · 4 points · 1 month ago
Probably an unpopular opinion given the comments thus far, but I think it looks kind of fun! I love the editorial looks that are often featured on Into the Gloss, but I don't really want to invest in the (often super high end) makeup they use to create them. Being able to try an eye pencil, lipstick, highlighter, and glitter whatever for $60 seems reasonable to me. Won't be ordering until the reviews come in though.

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The last comment from the thread to post 2 is by turtleyay who expresses loyalty in the sentences

> "Probably and unpopular opinion given the comments thus far, but I think it looks kind of fun!" (ll. 1) and
> "Won't be ordering until the reviews come in though" (ll. 4).

The first sentence is positive towards GP, as it is stated that the commenter thinks it looks fun. Since the commenter views GP this way it is likely that the person is more inclined to be loyal towards the brand. The second comment states that the commenter actually wants to be loyal, since the premise of ordering is the product reviews that the commenter believes will come. It is a presupposition that the commenter takes the reviews for granted. The premise is therefore not about whether the reviews will come, but is concerned with time as the commenter believes they will come in the future. The social interaction in the previous comments cannot be said to

increase loyalty as they are negative, which means that this commenter's loyalty may not be affected by previous statements.

The commenter relates to functional value in the utterance

"I love the editorial looks that are often featured on Into the Gloss, but I don't really want to invest in the (often super high end) makeup they use to create them. Being able to try an eye pencil, lipstick, highlighter, and glitter whatever for $60 seems reasonable to me." (ll. 1-3)

where the commenter first states a love for the editorial looks on the blog, Into the Gloss, and thereafter that the price is reasonable for the products available to create those kind of editorial makeup looks. Functional value can therefore be seen as the commenter is interested in GP's makeup as it can be used to create editorial makeup looks that the commenter in interested in.

Intertextuality can be seen in the post, as the commenter expresses an opinion of interest in the products, which also has been included in comment 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.8, and 2.9. The theme is coherent with the post's theme as it includes the commenter's opinion of the products. Yet, the theme of the comment is related to previous comments, as the commenter states in the beginning "probably an unpopular opinion given the comments thus far".

Summary of Thread to Post 2

From the comments to post 2 it can be concluded that six commenters are disloyal towards GP which are comment 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6. Only one comment 2.10 expresses loyalty and comment 2.8 and 2.9 express neutral loyalty. Three commenters in comment 2.1, 2.5, 2.6, ascribe negative functional value to GP as the determinant for loyalty. Functional value also acts as a determinant for loyalty and neutral loyalty in comments 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10. Emotional value also acts as a reason of disloyalty seen in comments 2.1, 2.2, and 2.4. Additionally, negative emotional value is ascribed in comment 2.3 without it affecting the commenter's loyalty. In comment 2.8 emotional value is the determinant for being loyal. Only one commenter in comment 2.5 states social value as a determinant for loyalty. Therefore, it can be deduced that functional value is the main determinant for loyalty towards GP. As the theme in the post does not contemplate for any specific comments, it seems as if the degree of interest presented in the first comment, comment 2.1, is followed up in comments 2.3, 2.5, 2.9, and 2.10 as a form of intertextuality. Therefore, it can be deduced that intertextuality shapes the way consumers relate to the brand on the forum, which in this case shapes the members to

comment on packaging and degree of interest. Aside from the types of values already mentioned, comment 2.1 and 2.3 both state disappointment due to GP's brand as a whole, which may influence the loyalty those commenters experience.

Post 3 (app. 18)
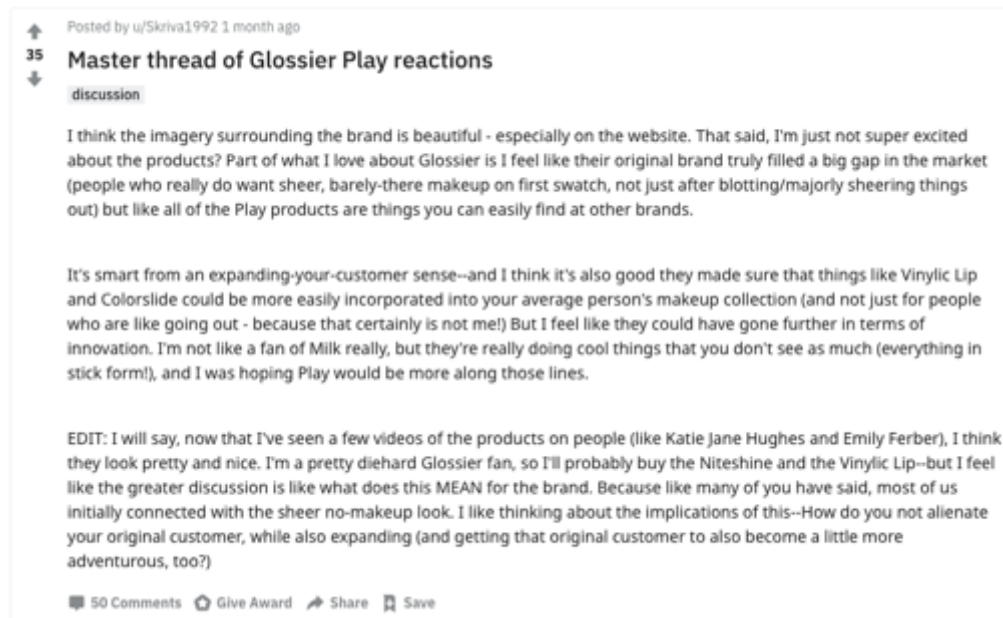
Skriva1992 expresses disloyalty in the statement

"but like all of the Play products are things you can easily find at other brands" (ll. 4)

as it can be assumed that a brand that can be substituted by others does not provide a consumer with a reason to be loyal. Furthermore, the commenter mentions in line 1-2 that he/she is not excited about the products either, which reinforces the reason to be disloyal. The commenter also expresses disloyalty in the sentence

"and I was hoping Play would be more along those lines." (ll. 8-9)

which expresses disappointment, as expectations were not met. It is not clear why the commenter does not want to be loyal towards GP, but the statement above about believing that GP products can be found at other brands indicates that it is because of functional value. Additionally, the commenter does not mention packaging, which does not seem to have influence on the brand value ascribed.

The last section of the comment begins with "EDIT" and shows that the commenter has edited the comment. In the last section, the commenter expresses loyalty in the sentence

"now that i've seen a few videos of the products on people [...], I think they look pretty and nice. I'm a pretty diehard Glossier fan, so I'll probably buy the Niteshine and Vinylic lip" (ll. 5-6 from the bottom)

which means that Skriva1992 is now interested in the products and therefore loyal towards GP. It is unknown where the commenter saw the videos, but the change of opinion may be due to social interaction on a social media channel where comments were more positive than those on Reddit forum thus far. Nevertheless, the fact that the commenter had to see the products on people before deciding whether to be loyal indicates that functional value is important to the commenter.

The theme of the comment relates to the headline "Master thread of Glossier Play reactions" which contemplates for members to share any kind of reactions. However, the commenter asks in line 5-6 what the launch of GP means for Glossier as a brand, which creates a theme of implications for Glossier.

Comment 3.1 (app. 19)

The commenter skincarejunkie shows disloyalty towards GP in the statement

"If I wanted a colored eyeshadow palette, eyeliner, or fun lipgloss I'll go to Mac, colourpop, Anastasia, etc." (ll. 3-4)

where the modal verb "will" indicates that the person will turn to the other brands mentioned, in the future. If the commenter had used the modal verb "would" it would have indicated a potential for loyalty. This comparison with other brands may affect disloyalty of other members reading it, as they could become aware of the similarities when reading the comment, which

could give them the same reason to be disloyal as well. The comment can therefore be said to decrease loyalty. Additionally, the social interaction between the commenter does not seem to increase loyalty, as the previous commenter showed loyalty and skincarejunkie shows disloyalty. The commenter is disappointed, expressed in line 1, which furthers the reason for not wanting to be loyal, as it is unlikely that a consumer wants to be loyal to a disappointing brand.

The commenter ascribes negative functional value towards GP in the sentence

"I was hoping it wasn't color cosmetics as expected" (ll. 2)

where "color" refers to an a functional attribute of the product. The functional value is important to the commenter, and the reason for not wanting to be loyal. As mentioned in analysis 4.1 comment 3.1, the commenter favors Glossier's products over GP's products, and almost view their products as opposites, which shows that the reason for being loyal to Glossier is because of its products' functionality. Intertextuality can be seen regarding loyalty, as the previous commenter stated that the GP products are available at other brands, which is similar to the commenter in question who names other brands that make similar products.

Comment 3.2 (app. 20)

Succubarbie has made a response to comment 3.1 stating agreement in the word "Exactly" in line 1. It can therefore be deduced that the commenter completely agrees with the commenter in comment 3.1 as no cautions are stated as to what extent Succubarbie agrees with comment 3.1. It is expressed in line 1 that the commenter is disappointed, which is also stated in post 3 and comment 3.1. This is a form of intertextuality, as the commenter presumably finds it necessary to comment on whether GP is disappointing. The social interaction with the comment above can be deduced to decrease brand loyalty for this commenter as Succubarbie becomes aware of being disloyal based on the comment above.

In relation to value, the commenter expresses functional value by declaring the following

"Every other brand has this stuff" (ll. 1)

where "stuff" presumably refers to products. The statement ascribes negative functional value to GP's products, and is also intertextuality as the same statement is mentioned in post 3 and 3.1.

Comment 3.3 (app. 21)

> ▲ ajlearth 34 points · 1 month ago
> ▼ I was hoping for things more innovative. The glitter jelly is so overdone and glossier's is overpriced. The only thing different is the tube of lip lacquer which has a spongy top instead of a wand.
>   💬 Reply Give Award Share Report Save

The intertextuality of disappointment can also be seen in the comment by ajlearth who states

> "I was hoping for things more innovative." (ll. 1).

However, in this comment it is unclear if the disappointment leads to disloyalty, which has been seen in previous comments. It can therefore not be seen if the disloyalty is a result of intertextuality consisting of social interaction about being disappointed. The use of categorical modality seen in the present tense and lack of personal pronouns in the sentences

> "The glitter jelly is so overdone and glossier's overpriced. The only thing different is the tube of lip lacquer which has a spongy top instead of a wand" (ll. 1-2)

does not express that it is the commenter's own opinion that glitter jelly as a product is overdone. It is a reference to functional value which can also be seen in the second sentence above stating that the only things different is the spongy top of the lip lacquer. The commenter states "I was hoping for things more innovative" (ll. 1) which together with the rest of the comment stated above shows that the commenter wants innovation in terms of product function. The use of subjective modality seen in the personal pronoun "I" shows that innovation is important to the commenter and that it has to do with the person's loyalty. Therefore, it can be deduced that the commenter ascribes importance to functional value in order to be loyal.

Summary of Thread to Post 3

In the thread to Post 3, three commenters were found to be disloyal towards GP, which were 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. The commenter in post 3 had edited the comment, and was disloyal at first but changed to being loyal due to functional value of the products. The relation between loyalty

and value can also be seen in the other comments where comment 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 showed disloyalty because of functional value. Comment 3.2 showed decreased loyalty due to the fact that it expressed agreement to comment 3.1 that also showed disloyalty. It can be concluded that functional value is the essential factor to determining loyalty, whether it is in terms of deciding to be loyal or disloyal. Unlike the thread to comment 2, commenters do not mention packaging or refers to how products look, which means that the emotional brand value is less important when deciding to be loyal.

4.2.1 Sub-conclusion of Analysis 4.2

The overall feedback of GP on the sampled posts and comments from the forum are negative in terms of loyalty, and the majority of commenters relate to functional value in their comments about GP. Additionally, it can be concluded that value often acts as a determinant for loyalty, where functional value is the main determinant for commenters' decision of being loyal, followed by emotional value. Two commenters in the thread to post 2 state that they are disappointed with the sub-brand as a whole which indicates that the overall brand of GP influence their degree of loyalty. Additionally, social interaction does not increase loyalty in the case of the sampled comments, but some commenters' loyalty seem to be decreased due to social interaction of previous comments. Moreover, post 2 did not contemplate for specific reactions, which resulted in intertextuality playing a great role in what was stated in the comments to post 2, which mainly revolved around packaging and degree of interest. It can therefore be concluded, that intertextuality shapes the brand associations and thereby the brand stories presented on the forum, and that the construction of brand stories in the comments are influenced by each other.

4.3 The Consumer Brand Perception's effect on Brand Loyalty and Brand Value

In this section I discuss the findings from analysis 4.1 and 4.2 to fully answer RQ1 and RQ2, which leads to the answer of my problem statement. I start with analysis 4.1 where I discuss the coherence level of brand associations for both brands in terms of perceived fit. Thereafter, I discuss the findings from both analyses, and lastly, answer the problem statement.

As analysis 4.1 found, consumers' perception of Glossier and GP are very distinguished from each other, and it can therefore be deduced that consumers on the forum do not view a fit between the brands. The associations towards the kind of products both brands carry, the packaging of the products, and even the target audience of the brands are described as opposites, although both brands carry makeup products, but the difference being in Glossier carrying skin care products as well. Therefore, the perceived fit is low. This affects the successfulness of GP negatively and may affect Glossier as a brand as well, due to negativity ascribed to a brand that belongs to Glossier. The negative associations and overall disappointment of GP is related to how commenters express their loyalty. The majority of commenters within the sampled posts are disloyal which can be expected as they also make negative associations of GP.

The analyzed brand associations from the forum can be characterized as brand stories as well, and since GP is being described as uninventive, ordinary, and unprofessional-looking, it contributes to shape the way consumers make sense of the brand. Since the Reddit forum is open for everyone to read, these brand stories can affect multiple stakeholders, and not only the stakeholders who are active on the forum. The brand stories therefore affect everyone reading the posts and comments on the forum related to GP. Although the focal point of discussion of the analyzed threads concern GP, forum members also form brand stories of Glossier through brand associations. Since these are mostly opposite of associations of GP, the difference in brand associations contributes to reinforce the differences between both brands, and affects the successfulness of Glossier negatively, as a result of low perceived fit. This may further result in distinguished brand stories in the minds of consumers and stakeholders in general reading the threads.

Throughout the threads, forum members share brand stories with each other in the comments, which means associations and themes are being picked up continuously and further

disseminated in comments. This can be seen in how commenters responds to each others' comments through intertextuality. As seen in the thread to post 2, which did not contemplate for any specific reactions, packaging and functional value were important to comment on for the members. This was commented on negatively in the comments which contributes to creating a brand story of GP being associated with looking uninteresting, cheap, and unprofessional. Furthermore, in the thread to post 3, the poster contemplated for commenters to include something about the implications for Glossier in the future as a result of launching GP. This resulted in an emphasis in the comments where commenters expressed disappointment towards a belief that Glossier was trying to conform to more ordinary makeup brands by launching GP.

These two instances of intertextuality in the thread to post 2 and 3 contribute to the brand stories being told as the brand stories merely depend on what is being discussed on the forum. It can therefore be deduced that when brand stories are being told and shared, Glossier and GP are being co-created. In relation to the Co-creation Space model, the co-creation happens when community interacts with organization. As Glossier is not affiliated with the forum, it is not prominent from the threads whether there is an interaction between the two. However, Emily Weiss, the manager of Glossier stated the following in an interview before the launch of GP:

> "We've been scanning Reddit threads and some of the guesses included athleisure, sex toys, a streaming service for music, an actual theatrical play about Glossier," says Weiss, with a laugh." (Segran 2019).

The utterance is a proof that Glossier reads Reddit threads about its products, which is likely to be the Glossier forum that has been sampled in this thesis. In relation to the *the third wave of branding* it can be argued that as managers are increasingly examining their brands from different stakeholders' perspective, this insight of feedback will be taken into account by the brand. However, it should be considered that the analyzed brand stories from the forum are only an extract of what consumers think and is being influenced by intertextuality and cannot be guaranteed to offer the whole truth about how GP is perceived. Furthermore, in terms of *the third wave of branding*, it is likely that Glossier will make use of the feedback from the forum, especially of packaging and function, to make the two brands appear more cohesive and increase the perceived fit, and thereby increase the successfulness of GP and Glossier as a brand.

As touched upon previously, the overall negative brand stories of GP affect consumers' loyalty towards both brands negatively. In terms of value, it is also being co-created through brand stories, where the overall functional and emotional value ascribed is also based on intertextuality. In relation to the theoretical concept of *New Brand Logic*, brand value can be seen to be co-created by members of the forum each time they ascribe functional and emotional value to GP's products, as it contributes to shaping the value. However, as this is mostly negative, the value is not increased as a result. The negative statements of value influence the loyalty negatively, as commenters related negative functional and emotional value as the reason for being disloyal.

In relation to the theory of Kim, Gupta, and Koh (2011), brand value is identified on the forum through commenters relating to different forms of product value when associating brands and creating brand stories. Some commenters expressed disappointment with GP as a brand and not because of negative product value ascribed. This may be due to the fact that many brand associations centered around GP being just another ordinary makeup brand, and the commenters' lack of interest may already be affected at that association, and the overall value of a brand can be seen to be more important than product value, in terms of being loyal.

Because of the theoretical concept of the three forms of product value, I was not able to analyze the brand value of statements that did not ascribe product value, but it can be discussed that consumers expressing disappointment towards a brand as a whole affects the brand value of the given brand. Furthermore, some commenters believed that Glossier as a brand was conforming to other ordinary makeup brands by creating GP. This can be seen to affect the value of not only GP, but Glossier as well, because commenters expressed that they thought creating GP had negative implications for Glossier as a brand. The brand stories leading to the consumer brand perception of Glossier on the forum can therefore be seen to be negatively influenced due to the negative reactions to GP. This may further affect the loyalty towards both brands negatively. Therefore, the launch of GP may act as an impediment for Glossier in the future. However, as managers are increasingly becoming involved in brand communities, as a result of the increased stakeholder influence, Glossier may be obliged to conform to the stakeholders' feedback on the forum in order for GP to be successful. Glossier could then use the feedback of how consumers value functional and emotional aspect in order to gain loyalty, and more positive brand associations.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.0 Chapter 5 - Discussion

This chapter covers a theoretical discussion between findings and the applied theoretical framework.

Based on the analyses it is clear that forum members view both Glossier and GP very differently, through the associations and brand stories told on the forum, which results in a low perceived fit. The negative brand stories affect the brand loyalty negatively, as the majority of consumers showed disloyalty. For brand value however, it cannot be concluded how brand stories affect brand value within a spectrum of positive and negative as in the case of brand associations and brand loyalty. Instead, brand stories relate to brand value in a way where consumers express value through functional and emotional value. Therefore, the importance lies within the kind of value ascribed, as this is an indicator of what type of value is important to the consumers. In the findings of analysis 4.2, brand value seems to be expressed through how consumers ascribe value towards GP as a brand. Therefore, the viewpoint of France, Merrilees, and Miller (2015) that indicate that brand value can be created affected by online communities cannot be seen directly in analysis 4.2, as the creation of value itself is not prominent, but is instead created through the identification of value. Scholars Kim, Gupta, and Koh (2011) state that brand value can be identified on online communities, which is why my findings of brand value are coherent with the theory, since analysis 4.2 identified functional and emotional value.

It can be argued however, that when value is identifiable on the forum through brand stories, it is also being created or co-created. According to the theoretical concept of *New Brand Logic* by Merz, He, and Vargo (2009), value is shaped and co-created through a network of all stakeholders, and therefore also created between the stakeholders active on an online brand community. However, the theory does not state specifically how value is created or whether the focus lies within products, brand as a whole, or both. Using the theory of functional, emotional, and social value towards products can only identify the value being ascribed, but together with the *New Brand Logic*, it opens up for the value identifications being co-created as well whenever they are ascribed to the brands. Using the viewpoint of *New Brand Logic*, it contributes to answering how the value ascribed affects a brand when launching a sub-brand. Together, the two theoretical concepts can aid in an understanding of how feedback of a sub-brand regarding value contributes to shape a brand and its product value, but not how the brand value is affected due to launching a sub-brand.

As I found that some commenters were disappointed with GP as a whole, this can be said to affect the brand value of GP and Glossier as well, but in this case the value is concerned with the brand as a whole and not the products of the sub-brand. The theory of the three theoretical concepts of value can therefore not be used to identify value beyond the product level. Therefore, the theoretical concept of value of Kim, Gupta, and Koh (2011) could consider identifying value on a brand level that exceeds the product level.

In terms of how the brand value is affected due to launching GP, I found that brand value is connected to brand stories, as each brand story or association entailed a type of product value, which reinforces the theory that brand value is co-created and shaped on online communities, at least when it comes to product value.

I found that the consumer brand perception, expressed through brand associations and brand stories, influenced consumers' brand loyalty as a result, which is seen in the social interaction within the threads. This can be seen in the thread to post 2 in analysis 4.2 where social interaction of loyalty was expressed through intertextuality, as multiple commenters commented on whether they wanted to buy GP's products. However, the empirical findings of Hajli et al. (2017) and Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann (2005) showed that social interaction on brand communities lead to loyalty. For this thesis, the majority of the analyzed reactions of launching GP were negative and expressed their disloyalty in the comments. Therefore, the social interaction in this case did not lead to the creation of loyalty or increased loyalty. Instead, it leads to disloyalty, and in a few cases decreased loyalty for Glossier as well. The two studies do not consider the case of a parent brand launching a sub-brand, and the reactions it could have on the online brand forum, and how that could lead to disloyalty or decreased loyalty. However, they do show that loyalty can be created and affected on online communities, which the findings of this thesis showed as well.

Findings of analysis 4.2 showed that expressions of loyalty often depended on the value consumers ascribed to GP. Most commenters were disloyal due to the reasons of the overall negative brand associations that were related to functional and emotional value although functional value showed to be the main determinant for loyalty. The reason for this relation between brand value being a determinant for brand loyalty may first of all be due to the case of a parent-brand launching a sub-brand. Since the commenters on the forum are already presumably loyal towards Glossier, since they are members of the forum, they are being met with the decision-making of loyalty when the parent brand they are loyal to launches a sub-

brand. When facing this decision-making, the commenters were offered a link, on the forum, to view and read about the GP's products. Therefore, the reactions were likely to concern the product value they thought it entailed, which then resulted in the ascribed functional and emotional value. Although mostly negative reactions, functionality and emotional value are presumably important to the Glossier consumers.

The theoretical framework used for this thesis did not provide such relation between brand loyalty and brand value, but it can be concluded, for the case of Glossier launching GP, that product value is crucial for consumers of the forum in the decision of loyalty towards GP. These findings of the relation between brand loyalty and brand value could therefore be considered along with the theory of perceived fit. As functional and emotional value is the determiner for loyalty and thereby success, loyalty can function as an indicator of a brand's success, the perceived fit between brands may not only depend on brand associations, but the product value as well.

Using Aaker's theory of brand associations is useful in its simplicity of defining the perception of a brand, which is a product of the brands identity. Since I aimed to found out how consumer communities are able to influence this perception, supplying the theory with brand stories (Gensler et al.; Holt) and the Three Waves of Corporate Branding (Hatch and Schultz) provided a present-day outlook on the analysis and how brand stories affect companies to a larger extent today than ever before. Aaker's theory of brand associations could not have provided the same result as it does not focus on the extent these brand associations influence a company. This may be due to the time the theory was published, which was in 2002, whereas the Three Waves of Corporate Branding was published in 2008. It is likely that Aaker's theory of brand associations was published at the time of the second wave of branding, since Aaker's theory does not consider the consumers as influential on a brand's identity, as it is characterized by branding through multiple communication functions, but did not draw in stakeholders to obtain insights as in the third wave era (Hatch and Schultz 2008, 204-5). Therefore, it would not be possible to find out how consumer communities influence the perception of a brand by only using Aaker's theory of brand associations.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.0 Chapter 6 - Conclusion

In terms of research question one I can conclude that the consumer brand perception of Glossier and GP are very distinguished from each other. Overall, associations of GP were negative and included describing the brand as uninventive, ordinary, and like any other makeup brand available. For Glossier, commenters on the forum made positive associations describing it as an inventive brand that fills a gap within the market. Intertextuality in the comment section showed that packaging is important to consumers, as well as an emphasis on discussing the implications of GP due to the theme being introduced in the post. It can further be concluded that the theme in the post is not always what ends up being discussed in the comments, as seen in the thread to post 2. The perceived fit between the brands is low, which affects the successfulness of GP negatively. The brand stories prevalent from analysis 4.1 are affected by intertextuality, as in the thread to post 2, commenters picked up on packaging in the comment section, which showed that it was important. This means that whenever multiple commenters choose to pick up on a theme, it appears to be important. As a result, the brand stories contribute to co-create the brands, and it is likely that the Glossier management will use the feedback strategically, especially concerning packaging and function, to increase the perceived fit.

In relation to research question two, I can conclude that in the brand associations about GP related to brand value, functional and emotional value were the most significant as part of the brand associations. Intertextuality also influenced the comments analyzed regarding value in analysis 4.2, as the same type of value was commented on in a negative way. Due to the negative product value ascribed, I can conclude that the majority of commenters expressed disloyalty towards GP, which was also expressed directly in the comments as there was a tendency for commenters to state whether or not they wanted to buy the products, which also appeared to be affected by intertextuality. Furthermore, a minority of commenters expressed disappointment towards GP as a brand, but without ascribing negative brand value as the reason for disappointment and thereby disloyalty. It can therefore be concluded that the majority of commenters wanted to be disloyal because of product value, functional and emotional value, and a minority expressed disloyalty with the reason being disappointment beyond product level.

Based on the analyses of research question one and two, it can be concluded that the negative brand stories affect the product value negatively as it is closely related with each other. The majority of brand associations that entailed product value ascriptions lead to disloyalty towards

GP, as both associations and the value ascribed were negative. Some led to decreased loyalty towards Glossier as a brand as well, which means that the perception of GP affected the brand loyalty negatively towards both brands, but mostly GP. The response of GP affects Glossier negatively, in the case of the analyzed posts and comments, and is likely to be challenging for Glossier as it will have to utilize the feedback of its sub-brand from the forum, mainly concerning product function and packaging, in order to be successful in the mind of the consumers.

In terms of the applied theoretical framework I can conclude that the theory used regarding brand value did not aid in answering how the brand value of Glossier and GP was affected, but in how commenters ascribed product value to GP, and how that affected GP and Glossier. As some commenters expressed disappointment towards GP as a brand, it can be said to affect the value of GP, which is why the theory could consider brand value beyond the product level. In relation to the theories used for brand loyalty, the social interaction on the forum did not lead to the creation of loyalty or increased loyalty, but instead lead to disloyalty. However, the theory used did not consider loyalty affected by a parent brand launching a sub-brand, but my findings still showed that loyalty was affected through social interaction, but in a negative way.

Since I found that product value acts as a determiner for loyalty, and since loyalty can indicate a brand's level of success, the theory of perceived fit could include the aspect of product value as part of the coherence level between brands.

Lastly, the Three Waves of Corporate Branding by Hatch and Schultz, and brand stories by Gensler et al. and Holt provided the analysis of brand associations with the implications that brand associations and brand stories have today in the era of the third wave of branding. Thereby it aids in an understanding of how consumer communities can influence the perception of a brand, which the Aaker's theory of brand associations does not contain.

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