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My-Music My-Self

Luke Greenacre, Lynne Freeman, Jared Filby & Taryn Ostrovsky

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Luke Greenacre has a PhD from the University of Technology Sydney. He is presently undertaking research into human choice behaviour and information exchange through social processes. Luke Greenacre is the corresponding author and can be contacted at Luke.Greenacre@gmail.com.

Lynne Freeman is a Lecturer in Consumer Behaviour within the School of Marketing at the University of Technology Sydney. Her research focuses on qualitative methods for understanding self identity and branding.

Jared Filby and Taryn Ostrovsky are graduates of the Australian Institute of Music majoring in studies of Music Management.

Purpose – The purpose of this article is to use an extended model of self to understand the consumption of music and similar entertainment products.

Methodology – In-depth interviews employing experts within the music field were used to penetrate the private worlds of musical theatre enthusiasts. Multiple qualitative analytic techniques were employed to explore the different aspects of the self underlying music consumption.

Findings – Repeated exposure to musical theatre allowed subjects to refine their consumption of specific performances that reflect the preferred aspect of their extended self. It is found higher order consumption needs are an integral part of the extended self, and form an important basis for consumption decisions. Of particular importance is the reflection of the self that assists others in their consumption choices.

Originality - Present research widely recognises consumers are seeking more than just ‘entertainment’ when they consume an entertainment product, but struggle to characterise what it is consumers are actually seeking. This research provides this insight through an elaboration of the extended self model.

Keywords: extended, self, music, theatre, qualitative, needs

My-Music My-Self

1. Introduction

What is the power of music? Francis (2008) argues that the power lies in its capacity to engage the consumer at multiple levels; “it facilitates communication which goes beyond words, enables meanings to be shared, and promotes the development and maintenance of individual, group, cultural and national identities. It is powerful at the individual level because it can induce multiple responses – physiological, movement, mood, emotional, cognitive and behavioral”. Other researchers have identified the role of music consumption as a determinant of self identity, allowing the ‘self’ to be reflected to both themselves and others (Feuer 1977; Frith 2004). From a research perspective this poses an interesting question with implications for a broad range of entertainment products. We need to explore what purpose, other than entertainment, these products have. Frith (2004) argues that the “question is not why do particular individuals have particular musical tastes or preferences or memories but rather how music works in the experience of sociability itself.” Defining what need is being satisfied by the music is of paramount importance to the industry, as it is necessary in the development any successful marketing strategy. This paper examines self identity and its link to music consumption.

From antiquity to the present day, across all cultures, music and dance have played an important role in expressing the narrative of society. “Music and society have always been intimately related. Music reflects and creates social conditions – including the factors that either facilitate or impede social change” (Francis 2008). In contemporary musical theatre music is combined with dance and drama to communicate not only a narrative but layers of emotional complexity presenting the consumer with an opportunity not only to be entertained

but to engage with their emotions (Dyer 2002). For this reason we have chosen to explore this issue within the context of musical theatre. This context is particularly useful due to the high level of engagement it creates amongst audience members. Such engagement is characteristic of many music genres making it ideal to examine the role of self in music consumption. The popularity of musical theatre as a mode of entertainment for consumers is reflected in the offerings of the West End of London in September 2008; 31% of shows were dramas, 14% comedies and 55% musicals (The Society of London Theatre 2009). Musical theatre, particularly that of Broadway and the West End, is recognised as a major contributor to and leader of culture (Caves 2000; Uzzi and Spiro 2003). Within the literature regarding music and musicals there is a growing interest in examining what drives success for this important cultural phenomenon (Uzzi and Spiro 2003). The research presented in this paper suggests that music satisfies consumers' important need to represent their own self identity, as well as allowing them to gain self knowledge. It also allows consumers to offer new knowledge to others about their own selves.

2. Self Identity and Consumption in the Literature

Considerable work has been done to understand how consumers use products to reflect their self identity to both themselves and others (Ahuvia 2005; Belk 1988; Gould 2010). The concept of self itself has had numerous treatments. One of the more common approaches to examining consumption and self identity, or self concept, is that of congruence (Sirgy 1982). This theoretical approach proposes that consumers seek to enhance their self identity through the consumption of specific goods and services that are positively congruent with their self concept (Grubb and Grathwohl 1967). For example, Brand X may be perceived as luxurious, and as I perceive myself to be a luxurious person I will consume this product to reflect my own luxuriousness. This search for positive congruency, and indeed the reverse of avoiding

negative congruency, provides a general account of how self identity can motivate consumption (Grubb and Grathwohl 1967; Sirgy 1982). One of the challenges with this approach is that self image is often only characterised as generally positive or negative. This is despite numerous findings that self image includes a more complex array of dimensions (Ahuvia 2005; Sirgy 1982; Malhotra 1998).

The concept of the extended self is another approach used to accommodate consumption behaviour into identity. This approach views aspects of the 'core self' as being *parts of one's* physical person, physical processes, thoughts and experiences (Belk 1988; Gould 2010). In contrast to this core self is the 'extended self'. The extended self includes all of the people, places and things to which one has an emotional or other *attachment* (Belk 1988). Critical to this notion of extended self is that it is not part of the core self, the objects of the extended self may reflect the self but are distinct (Belk 1988). In this distinction a consumer is able to seek to augment, and indeed modify, how they represent themselves. One of the advantages of this approach is that it reflects that self image can be multidimensional, with multiple 'selves' possible.

Within the marketing literature products and services are described as vehicles of the extended self. Several examples of research linking products and services to self identity can be found in the literature. Examples include research regarding how consumers seek to represent fantasies and feelings (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982), understanding the role of loved objects in the formation of a narrative of the self (Ahuvia 2005), the links between companion animals and consumption (Hill et al. 2008), among others. Each provides a unique account of how a relevant part or parts of the self impact consumption behaviour in a

particular context. Unfortunately there has been an inadequate application of such theories to entertainment products (Bryant and Zillmann 1994; Germana 2007).

It has been noted more recently that the distinction between the core and extended self may be insufficient to appropriately reconcile the complexities of how a person constructs their identity (Ahuvia 2005; Di Mooij 2011; Gould 2010). Much literature now emphasizes narrative based perspectives to understand how people incorporate products, and other components of the extended self, into their own identity, with some authors even arguing that they may even support multiple independent, and possibly even conflicting, self-identities (Ahuvia 2005; Perez, Castano and Quintanilla 2010; Schembri et al. 2010). It has been found that consumers seek props to support the narrative of their life (Ahuvia 2005). Even so, the use of a core and extended self presents a useful basis to gain understanding into how people's consumption behaviour is compatible with this more elaborate concept of self identity.

One difficulty with this framework, even in the narrative form, is that it does not detail how a person goes through the process of building that identity. It particularly does not account for how consumers go about physically *seeking* objects, people and experiences to construct their extended self. Instead it focuses on how consumers *use* already obtained objects, people and experiences to construct that understanding in their mind. In order to understand how consumers go about *seeking* objects, people and experiences we must have a framework to understand what needs the consumer is seeking to satisfy. As rather poetically suggested by Gergen (1991) a music audience can listen “for messages of the deep interior, insight into self and the mysteries of the cosmos”, among many other things. This will tell us what is of value for music consumers.

3. Expanding the Theoretical Framework

Given the focus of this research it is important that we understand how individuals seek objects to construct self identity and how this process links to the nature of consumer needs and motivations for music consumption. While there are many models available of human needs it is Maslow's classic 'Hierarchy of Needs' model that appears to be most enlightening within this context (Germana 2007). The Hierarchy of Needs originally classified needs into 5 levels ranging from the lower order essential biological and physiological needs to the higher order cognitive needs such as self actualisation (Maslow 1970; Maslow 1946). This model is used as a basis in considerable research although its scientific validity has continued to be debated (Wahba and Bridwell 1976). Even with this debate it is successfully used within many research streams.

A more recent version of this model has seen the number of levels expanded to eight. They are: (1) physiological needs; (2) Safety needs; (3) Belongingness needs; (4) Esteem needs; (5) Cognitive needs; (6) Aesthetic needs; (7) Self actualisation needs; and (8) Transcendence needs (Huitt 2007; Kolt-Rivera 2006). We argue that by using the pursuit of these multiple needs it is possible to understand the process individuals use to seek objects to construct dimensions of their self identity.

Based on the literature we can state that the self is both the representation of a person's current perceptions of themselves, and also a representation of their desired future state (Belk 1988; Firat et al. 1995). It is on this desired future state that we can form a motivational basis for the exploration of the self through consumption. As the core self is unable to be modified easily, any attempted manifestation of the desired future self will likely be through the

objects of the extended self. Thus people will seek objects to manifest this desired future state of self.

Complicating this process is that self identity is multidimensional. There is no single self identity for a person; it is a blend of aspects of the self (Ahuvia 2005). To understand what objects of the extended self will be sought for different aspects of a person's self identity we can use Maslow's need hierarchy. Each level of the hierarchy can be used to define one of the aspects of self identity. For example, a person satisfying a safety 'need' by purchasing a car with additional airbags could be seen to be representing that they are a safe person within their extended self. Using this expansion of the concept of self identity that includes the multiple needs from Maslow's hierarchy as 'aspects' of the self, we can understand the role of the acquisition of specific objects, people and experiences in creating the extended self.

This expanded framework offers us an opportunity to explore the process people use to physically build their self identity. An added benefit is that it may also give us insight into how people can be surprised by the impact of their acquisitions on the self identity. A person may not fully understand how an object may impact their self identity until after its acquisition. Thus by comparing the intentions of an individual during the acquisition process to the final impact of the acquisition, we can begin to understand how these 'surprises' allow an individual to *explore* their identity and *learn* about themselves. Only through unanticipated influence would such learning be possible. Existing frameworks of self identity have not allowed for this type of learning.

4. Research Propositions

Within the consumption of music, particularly musical theatre, it is widely recognised that one of the primary bases for consumption is that of entertainment (Bell 1997; Holbrook et al. 2006). Entertainment appears to be an umbrella term for many concepts; from that of a deep engagement with a feeling of being removed from our present existence, to a simple means of 'passing the time'. As noted by Dyer (2002) "musicals were predominantly conceived of, by producers and audiences alike, as 'pure entertainment' - the idea of entertainment was a prime determinant on them. Yet because entertainment is a common-sense, 'obvious' idea, what is really meant and implied by it never gets discussed." This suggests that although entertainment is an integral dimension to music consumption people also seek something beyond this, some higher order pursuit. Because entertainment can minimally be considered a part of the aesthetic dimension of the self we need only consider the levels of the aesthetic, self actualisation, and transcendence for this context. This is supported by research that finds personal growth can only be achieved through the examination of higher order needs as opposed to base survival needs (Heylighen 1992). The inclusion of lower order needs into the analysis of an entertainment product would not reflect that this product is not required for survival. Research into hygiene reaches similar conclusions regarding the importance of higher order needs, and not lower, when considering personal growth and identity (House and Wigdor 1967). It can thus be concluded that only the higher levels of the needs hierarchy are necessary when attempting to classify the dimensions of the self a musical theatre consumer may be seeking to represent.

The first level or dimension of self identity to be considered is that of the aesthetic (Kolta-Rivera 2006; Maslow 1970). The aesthetic within the needs framework accommodates the appreciation of and search for beauty, balance, and form (Kolta-Rivera 2006; Maslow 1970). Applying this to the pursuit of an object for the extended self it represents a person's

perceptions of their aesthetic qualities, that is, the dimension of themselves that is capable of appreciating beauty, balance and form. With regard to musical theatre this manifested most obviously through attendance at a performance. A person who sees themselves as one who appreciates the aesthetic will use attendance at an aesthetic musical theatre performance to represent that. This provides a necessary base to integrate the levels of the needs hierarchy with the concept of extended self.

Proposition 1: For many consumers of musical theatre, there is a need to reflect the aesthetic self (being one who appreciates the aesthetics of a performance and is entertained) when seeking/choosing a performance to attend.

The second dimension of the self beyond the aesthetic is self actualisation (Kolta-Rivera 2006; Maslow 1970). Turning to the Needs Hierarchy this is described as a person's need to realise their potential, to obtain fulfilment, and grow as a person (Kolta-Rivera 2006). Within a self-identity perspective this actualisation is the pursuit of objects of the extended self that allow the person to realise their emotional potential. It is important to note here that emotional potential does not imply a positive state, simply a reflection of the full emotional range. This reflection of both positive and negative emotions differentiates it from lower order states. In lower order states a person seeks belonging and esteem emotions, which are rooted in the positive.

This seeking of objects to realise a full emotional potential and reflect that realisation through the extended self marks a strong step up from the previous seeking of the pure aesthetic enjoyment typically described in literature. As commented by Zillmann and Bryant (1994) entertainment is an "an activity designed to delight" and also to "enlighten". With this

difference it is possible to examine whether people reflect these differences in the pursuit of objects of the extended self.

Proposition 2: For many consumers of musical theatre, the need to reflect the aesthetic self (being one who appreciates the aesthetics of a performance and is entertained) is of secondary importance when compared to the need to reflect the actualised self (being one seeking their emotional potential) when seeking/choosing a performance to attend.

The Needs Hierarchy suggests another level of the extended self that a consumer may seek to represent. This third level is that of transcendence. Within the needs hierarchy this is described as the desire to help others to achieve self actualisation (Kolta-Rivera 2006; Wahba and Bridwell 1976). This is the highest order need and thus the final level on which a consumer of musical theatre may wish to represent their extended self.

Within self identity transcendence can be described as the pursuit of an object of the extended self that permits the reflection that they are assisting others to self actualise. That is, that they can represent their desire for others to reach their own emotional potential. This would manifest in seeking and choosing performances that not only represent their own emotional self, but would allow others with whom they share their musical passion to represent themselves also.

Proposition 3: For many consumers of musical theatre, the need to reflect actualised self (being one seeking their emotional potential) is of secondary importance when

compared to the need to reflect the transcendent self (being one who assists others to actualise themselves) when seeking/choosing a performance to attend.

Drawing on these research propositions it is possible to examine whether consumers seek objects of that represent the different aspects of themselves in line with the Needs Hierarchy.

5. Method

The demands of this research necessitated a qualitative, phenomenological approach (Carson et al. 2001; Fournier 1998). The exploratory nature of the topic and our need to understand the subjects' culture meant the approach had to generate 'rich data' (Byrne 2004; Fontana and James H 2000). To achieve this we used depth interviews, with only minimal structure (Noakes and Wincup 2004; Silverman 2006). The selection of the interviewers was a major challenge.

All of the interviewers recruited were attending a music focused higher education institution. Thus only interviewers with specialist knowledge of the music industry were used. These four individuals were chosen based on their ability to empathise with the musical theatre participants (Holstein and Gubrium 1997). Their role was that of junior researchers who were encouraged to take an active role in the generation of data. As such they were provided with background on the process to be used, and were then allowed to create their own interview guides. The interview guides were structured around how the informant joined the community, identifying social groups within and the boundaries of the community, communication behaviour between the informant and others within and outside of the community, the motivations for consumption, and the behaviour prior to and during consumption. It is important to note that although they were included as researchers, the input

of the interviewers it just as important as subjects, data generation was viewed as being a collaborative venture (Rapley 2004). Silverman (2006) discusses several problems which can distort informant responses. Amongst these are “the difficulty of penetrating private worlds of experience, the relative status of interviewer and interviewee, and the problem of fleeting commitment”. This methodology addressed all of these issues. It is only in the contrasting between the expectations of the peer interviewer and the musical theatre subject that the unique higher order needs could be identified.

The musical theatre informants were recruited through the peer networks of the interviewers. This was undertaken as the sample of interest is a particularly hard to reach population (Porter et al. 2009). The informants had to have experienced some form of reflection of self in a musical theatre performance for the propositions to be tested. Thus an engaged, as opposed to reluctant, consumer of musical theatre was needed. As noted by Elliot, Watson and Harries (2002) “peer insight can prove to be an invaluable research resource”. Sample selection bias was overcome through this peer expertise. Potential subjects that were not suitably engaged were identified and omitted from the sample. Each interviewer eventually sampled two key subjects during this process that were used for analysis. Two of the four interviewers were tasked with sourcing musically oriented subjects outside of the musical theatre community to provide a basis for comparison to the musical theatre subjects. This comparison is not included in the discussion of the findings but allowed the unique cultural and social elements of the musical theatre community to be identified, supporting our basis for reasonable extrapolation. The remaining two interviewers then sourced two musical theatre informants each from within the musical theatre community. This resulted in the identification of four key musical theatre informants for analysis. Of the four, two had self opted into attending musical theatre, and two had been introduced through attendance by their

family. In all cases the informants had been attending performances since a very young age. Participation in music activities from a young age has been found to increase levels of self knowledge, thus this sampling ensured that each informant had experienced some form of reflection of self as needed for the propositions (Simpkins, Vest and Becnel 2009).

During analysis the interviews were viewed as an act of co-creation between the music industry interviewer and musical theatre consumer. They were conceptualised as having a conversation, not doing an interview. Both parties were active in interpreting and making sense of the process of consuming music (Holstein and Gubrium 1997; Oakley 1981). This enabled the interview to go beyond the usual indirect representations of the subjects' experiences, allowing us to gain real insight and to go "inside someone's [the subject's] head" (Byrne 2004).

6. Interpretation

In line with the analytic predispositions of the authors after the interviews; two contrasting approaches of "editing and immersion" were employed in the analysis and interpretation of the transcripts (Spiggle 1994). Both intra and inter case analysis was carried out allowing for triangulation within each case and also across cases (Stavros and Westberg 2009).

Continuous contrasts were made during the analysis with the responses from non-musical theatre informants. This ensured that the results, obtained for the musical theatre informants, reflects their unique cultural and social behavior. Given the role of the interviewers as co-creators their participation both across and within each transcript was also analysed.

Content analysis 'editing' was used to identify the elements in the musical theatre transcripts that related to the nature and development of the subject's relationship with musical theatre

(Crabtree and Miller 1992). This was achieved using the Leximancer software (Smith and Humphrys 2006). Leximancer computes the frequency of each term/concept used within a text and displays the resulting analysis in a two-dimensional concept map revealing the relative associations of the concepts (Martschinke et al. 2004). After this evaluation, the concepts were edited, and then refined by rotating the maps to optimise the arrangement of concepts. The interpretation followed the protocol explained by Smith and Humphries (2006).

An iterative ‘immersive’ process in keeping with the hermeneutic approach described in Arnold and Fischer (1994) was also employed. As one part of the data was interpreted it was then reinterpreted in relation to the whole, any earlier findings were reconsidered in light of any emergent insights. This started with an immersion in the transcripts leading to a diagrammatic analysis of both the individual transcripts and the whole data set (Hopkinson and Hogg 2006).

7. Findings

The findings paint an interesting picture about how people employ each of the aspects of the self as suggested by the needs hierarchy. The addition of each level appears to occur through time, with increased exposure to musical theatre allowing subjects to refine their consumption of specific performances which reflect their preferred aspect of their extended self. Subjects could easily be divided based on the aspect of their self identity they emphasised through consumption.

7.1 The Aesthetic Self

It was asserted in Proposition 1 that many consumers would need to reflect the aesthetic self when choosing musical theatre performances. This would present as seeking to reflect that they are a person that appreciated the aesthetics of the performance. There is substantial evidence that this reflection of the aesthetic provides a baseline need in all consumers, without which attendance at a performance was highly unlikely. The reflection of the aesthetic self generally revolved around seeing oneself in either the venue or in the performance.

Subjects often commented on how the nature, or feel, of the venue contributed to their sense of self and being. "...it depends entirely on the character of the venue what, that can offer to the show.... the regent theatre, now [a] perfect venue: this aging silence picture palace, incredible architecture, very grand a setting with, you know, you walk in [and] you can **feel the importance of what *you're* doing...**" (Felix). Subjects linked the aesthetic of the venue to the importance of the venue. By extension what they are doing and who they are is also of importance. This provides an intricate link between a venue's aesthetic and the aesthetic self.

The aesthetic of the performance seemed to play a greater role in defining the aesthetic self though. In making the link to the aesthetic self, however, subjects often do not use overt self reflective language. Instead they talk in emotive language about themselves in reference to the aesthetic of the performance. "...I fell with Sunset Boulevard, and it cascaded from there because every diva worth speaking about was in that show at some point..." (Felix). The aesthetic of the performance plays such a central role in consumption that when prompted to discuss their perfect performance it was the aesthetic that drove their response. "[My ideal performance is one]... where you've got the dance that's really integral to moving the story forward that... great singers, wonderful songs, a modern rocky sort of score that's got strings

and has more of an orchestral feel to it as well..” (Fiona). The aesthetic played an important part in establishing a baseline for representing the self, however, most subjects quickly escalated beyond this level.

7.2 The Actualised Self

Proposition 2 asserted that many musical theatre consumers that the need to reflect the aesthetic self would be subordinate to the need to reflect the actualised self. In the framework this is described as reflecting that one is seeking his or her emotional potential. The importance of reflecting the actualised self permeated all responses from the subjects.

In most cases subjects described seeking a ‘moment’ in a performance that escalated their experiences from entertainment to something that offered an emotional ideal. “...there needs to be an incredible performance, or at least an incredible moment. Just one incredible song, the, what I call the [sic], ‘and I’m telling you, I’m not going moment’. It’s like the moment in... Dreamgirls where Jennifer Hudson just rips out into this incredible showstopper and for one minute you’re completely separated from the cr-p that has gone on before and goes on after and you just go ‘wow!’” (Jon). Subjects emphasised their need to be taken beyond a ‘normal’ experience. “...[the] kind of show [that]...makes me focus, makes people kind of *escape from their lives* because they’re so concentrated on one little situation. I love that sort of thing... I don’t really think you can say there’s a perfect musical, apart from a show that, anything that people can relate to, that people find *something in it for them*, that’s a good show” (Jason).

Unlike the aesthetic self, subjects were much quicker to assert that they were reflecting themselves through their focus on actualisation. “Yea, I love music that can speak to me

about something I have experienced personally, or can express an emotion I am having, or a situation I am in, you know, and a composer like Stephen Sondheim, for instance, there is a song in his arsenal for absolutely every single human situation...” (Rob). This type of description can be seen time and again in responses, with subjects continuously returning to it throughout their interviews. “..that is what I love about musical theatre, it takes something, it magnifies it, it puts it on display and explains it to you perfectly, and even if whether its explaining how you feel or someone else feels it still resonates completely with you. That’s why I like musical theatre.” (Rob). This more overt assertion of the need to reflect the actualized self in their consumption suggests that, while the reflection of the aesthetic self provides a necessary baseline, the reflection of the actualized self is a much greater driver of consumption decisions.

7.3 The Transcendent Self

The third proposition asserted that the need to reflect actualised self is of secondary importance to the need to reflect the transcendent self, with the transcendent self being one who assists others to actualise themselves. This proposition has the strongest support in the interviews. Consumers are exceptionally passionate about encouraging others to share the experiences on offer. It is one of the key ways that they define themselves as a true musical theatre enthusiast.

One of the most surprising findings is that most active consumers have a clear methodology for introducing and indoctrinating others into the musical theatre community. They are aware of this methodology and actively employ it whenever possible. Initially they ‘hook’ potential consumers on the entertainment value, highlighting good and bad performances. “Ah, it would be more a case of, you should go see Fame. I really think you’d find it fun”

(Interviewer), “Alright, alright, yeah, yeah; I do not buy that you are going to see Fame and I do not buy that you are going to enjoy it but you know I still want to indoctrinate you anyway you gotta [sic] try” (Rob). And from another subject “I’d say [I’d taken them to] just a musical with songs that they know, like something like Grease, something like Dusty, even Mamma Mia. I know not many theatre enthusiasts respect those shows, but they really do convert people if you give them a chance” (Jon). They may also emphasize different aspects of the performance that the potential consumer may enjoy. “...once you get people involved in the songs, and people liking the lyrics, and people liking the melody and people liking the harmony, then it’s much more open” (Lisa).

This aspect of the findings can also be seen in the Leximancer analysis. The importance of people is paramount as seen in Figure 1. What the subject ‘knows’ about the performances and the community provides the strongest link with the specific ‘people’ that they interact with. These two base construct are central in the organization of ideas in subjects with their own knowledge and the people they share with forming the main bases of the links between all other constructs.

[INSERT FIGURES ABOUT HERE]

The idea of this initial hook is to provide a gateway for the person to then start to experience the ‘full potential’ of what musical theatre offers. The advice they offer to people who have been hooked starts to shift to specific advice about the emotional reality of the performance, and how this should inform choices to attend a performance. “**I** would just be kind of like **T** and **M** are not in love. **I** didn’t buy that for a second, they were brother and sister basically. **A** was fantastic, but they completely screw up all of her musical direction the entire way

through. I felt so sorry for the poor b-tch playing her. Ah, and just the choreography is impeccable but it is entirely soulless, like someone has just, you know, it's like a video has been imprinted onto these dancers and then they go out every night and press play; its soulless slock. Don't bother" (Rob). This is designed to start this new musical consumer on their own journey of gaining emotional experience. "Yeah it happens naturally. People go 'oh, I like that. I'll listen to that, listen to that guy', and then someone might say, you know, 'you know who's really similar to him, try Q from the show', then they go 'okay, guess I'll listen to him', and it can build. It just has to be given to people for them to listen to" (Lisa). This forms an important part of how subject's identified themselves in the community; as a person who helps others get the most out of the consumption experience.

How the subjects chart this course is also visible in the Leximancer results. As the constructs are collapsed a core set of relationships starts to emerge. The discussions demonstrate a strong link between the knowledge and people in terms of the selection of the ideal performance for the initiation of the novice. This also has a temporal aspect, where how long a person has been known and included changes the nature of this knowledge. This can be seen in Figure 2.

8. Implications

This paper has extended the literature regarding the role of self in consumption. Previous models of self identity either did not account for the multidimensional nature of identity, or did not account for how **a person goes through the process of building their identity** (Ahuvia 2005; Sirgy 1982; Malhotra 1998). **In particular, current literature does not provide a thorough account of how consumers seek objects, people and experiences to build their extended self. Through the integration of theory regarding consumption motivation and that**

of the extended self we have gained new insight the relationship between self identity and consumption.

The findings in this research provide considerable support for the framework proposed and the research propositions. There is an inherent structure in how people use the extended self in consumption, particularly within musical theatre. Consumers seek to represent the aesthetic, actualized and transcendent self through their consumption behavior. This paints a rich picture of the role of self identity in consumption decisions.

The role of self in music consumption has major implications for marketing efforts.

Passionate consumers of musical theatre seek to represent various aspects of their own self identity, and marketing messages must reflect the ability of a performance to do this. Failure to accommodate this need in consumers will weaken the competitive position of a particular performance. In an industry where switching behaviour has almost no barriers, this can have serious implications for long term financial success.

A further insight of this research is the role of musical theatre enthusiasts in driving the consumption choices of novices. The pursuit of the transcendent self by enthusiasts drives them to convert novices. Marketers need to enable their enthusiasts to attract new novices, offering an opportunity to expand their market in a way not previously considered.

9. Possibilities for Future Research

This research has found a number of important social dimensions to the behaviour of musical theatre of consumers not previously recognised in the literature. The role of the transcendent self in driving consumers to share their passion for musical theatre with others suggests that

social networks may play a critical role in consumption decisions. Future research should consider consumers networks as a new way to determine or drive the success of a performance. In particular, the likely complex interplay between groups of consumers and non-consumers needs to be examined to understand if the differing goals for self identity representation may help or inhibit consumption at this macro level.

A further area in which this research can be expanded is through the consideration of alternative music or performance genres. While musical theatre was selected here because of its important role in cultural development, other genres of music can also be important in various cultural contexts. Previous research has found that music preference groups often exhibit unique psychological traits, thus it is important to examine whether there are unique aspects of self identity for other music genres (Schwartz and Fouts 2003). This will allow us to better understand the different roles that different types of music may play in helping consumers develop their self identity.

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