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Corporate Heritage Brands and Co-Creation

A Case Study on The Royal Danish Theatre

by

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ABSTRACT

Title: Corporate Heritage Brands and Co-Creation: A Case Study on The Royal Danish Theatre

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Keywords: The Royal Danish Theatre; heritage brand; co-creation; strategic brand management; arts and cultural branding;

Thesis Purpose: The purpose of this study is to contribute to a further understanding of how managers of heritage brands within the arts and cultural sector can embrace co-creation activities to engage with and attract a broader segment of the market.

Methodology: The Royal Danish Theatre serves as a single-case study. It is drawn on data that was generated using a qualitative research approach. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews, and secondary data was gathered through books, journals and The Royal Danish Theatre's official website.

Theoretical Perspective: The theoretical foundation is based on existing theories of heritage brands, co-creation and branding of arts and cultural institutions.

Empirical Data: The empirical data consists of semi-structured interviews with the Marketing Manager at The Royal Danish Theatre, a Theatre Professor from the University of Copenhagen and eight Danish citizens.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that being a heritage brand does not delimit organisations from embracing innovative and progressive approaches in order to stay relevant to contemporary consumers. We therefore conclude that as a response to demands in the market, corporate heritage brands within the arts and cultural sector are wise to incorporate co-creation activities in order stay relevant to both existing and potential consumers. It was found that co-creation can be a way of embracing an innovative mindset, and we have presented five guidelines that may assist managers of heritage brands within the arts and cultural sector in embracing co-creation activities to attract and engage with wider audiences.

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Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 BACKGROUND	7
1.2 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY	8
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	9
1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE ROYAL DANISH THEATRE	9
1.5 THESIS OUTLINE	10
1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY	10
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 BRANDS AND BRAND MANAGEMENT	10
2.1.1 Brands and Corporate Brands	10
2.1.2 Brand Management	11
2.1.3 Brand Orientation and Market Orientation	11
2.1.4 The Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix	12
2.2 BRANDING OF ARTS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS	14
2.2.1 Defining Branding of Arts and Cultural Institutions	14
2.2.2 Reluctance to Embrace Branding Activities	14
2.2.3. Managing Arts and Cultural Institutions: The Role of the Brand Manager	14
2.3. CORPORATE HERITAGE BRANDS	15
2.3.1. Defining Heritage Brands	15
2.3.2 Heritage as a Valuable Corporate Asset	16
2.3.3 Managing a Corporate Heritage Brand	16
2.3.4 The Heritage Quotient Framework	17
2.3.5 Staying Relevant	19
2.4 CO-CREATION	19
2.4.1 Defining Co-Creation	19
2.4.2 Theoretical Background	20
2.4.3 Co-Creation as a New Paradigm in Branding	21
2.4.4 Types of Co-Creation	22
2.4.5 Managing Co-Creation: The Role of the Brand Manager	23
2.4.6 Co-Creation as a Source of Competitive Advantage	23
2.4.7 Co-Creation: Risks and Criticism	24
2.5 CORPORATE HERITAGE BRANDS AND CO-CREATION	25
2.5.1 Overview of the Paradigms	25
2.5.2 Previous Research on Co-Creation in a Heritage Context	25
2.5.3 The Paradox in the Branding Paradigm	25
2.5.4 Bridging Heritage Brands and Co-Creation	26
2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY	26
3. THE CASE - THE ROYAL DANISH THEATRE	27
3.1. THE ROYAL DANISH THEATRE	27
3.2 THE ROYAL DANISH THEATRE AS A CORPORATE HERITAGE BRAND	28
3.3 PREVIOUS ACADEMIC STUDIES ON THE ROYAL DANISH THEATRE	30
3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY	31
4. METHODOLOGY	31
4.1 RESEARCH APPROACH	32
4.1.1 Research Overview	32
4.1.2 Research Philosophy	32
4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN	32
4.2.1 Case Study	32
4.2.2 Qualitative Research	33
4.2.3 Alternative Methods Considered	33
4.3 DATA COLLECTION METHOD	33
4.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews	33

4.3.2 The Consumer Perspective.....	34
4.3.3 Managerial Perspective - the Marketing Manager at the RDT.....	36
4.3.4 The Expert Perspective	36
4.3.5 The Role of the Researcher	37
4.3.6 The Role of the Interviewee	38
4.4 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA.....	38
4.5 RESEARCH QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS	39
4.5.1 Pilot Interviews	39
4.5.2 Ethical Considerations.....	39
4.5.3 Trustworthiness	40
4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	41
5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS	41
5.1 THEME 1: BRAND - AUDIENCE DISTANCE.....	41
5.2 THEME 2: BRAND - AUDIENCE RELATABILITY	43
5.3 THEME 3: BRAND - AUDIENCE COMMUNICATION	45
5.4 THEME 4: BRAND - AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT.....	46
5.5 THE MANAGERIAL PERSPECTIVE AT THE ROYAL DANISH THEATRE	48
5.6 THE THEATRE PROFESSOR'S PERSPECTIVE	51
5.7 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS	53
5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	55
6. DISCUSSION	55
6.1 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	62
7. CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTIONS	63
7.1 CONCLUSION	63
7.2 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS.....	64
7.3 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS	65
7.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	66
8. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	66
8.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE THESIS	66
8.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	67
8.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	68
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	69
APPENDICES	76
APPENDIX 1 – THE HISTORICAL MAIN BUILDING	76
APPENDIX 2 – INTERVIEW GUIDES	77

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (p. 13)

Figure 2: The Heritage Quotient Framework (p. 18)

Figure 3: The Components of Co-Creation (p. 21)

Figure 4: The Royal Danish Theatre's Logo (p. 28)

Figure 5: Application of the Heritage Quotient Framework (p. 30)

Figure 6: Overview of the Interviewees (p. 36)

Figure 7: Overview of the Themes (p. 42)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The branding landscape has seen significant developments in the past decades. We now live in an attention economy with endless of choices (Kapferer, 2012), and see a media landscape that is of more democratic nature than ever before (Kotler, Armstrong, Wang & Saunders, 2008; Fournier & Avery, 2011). The communication flow between brands and their audience has changed from a monologue where brands projected marketing messages towards the consumers, to a dialogue where brands and consumers can engage on a two-way basis (Kotler et al., 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2012). Today, conversations around products and services are no longer relying on firm initiated communication, but is also created by consumers themselves, and by peer-to-peer communication that is easily shared virtually (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Consumers have transformed from being passive audiences to active participants, and can voice their opinions towards the brands (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000). The also want to be recognised and listened to by the brands, and tell them what they want in terms of products and services (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

In an age where brands and consumers interact on a more equal level, the branding landscape has opened up to be more participatory, which facilitates for *co-creation*. The term *co-creation* is described as a collaborative, creative process between producers and users - brands and consumers - that aims to generate value for the stakeholders involved (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). From the perspective of the brand, value is not created only *for* the consumers, but *along with* the consumers, as they play a more active and engaged role in shaping branded contents and offerings (Roberts, Baker & Walker, 2005). The concept has emerged as a result of the contemporary marketplace that has seen a shift away from firm-centric to consumer-centric focus, and now sees an age of consumer empowerment. The empowered consumer has the skills and tools to collaborate with companies in different stages of the branding process, and is eager to do so (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b). Hence, consumers today have access to an endless supply of choices, but are yet becoming more increasingly demanding, and according to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) co-creation has fundamentally challenged “*the traditional distinction between supply and demand*” (p.12). Comparing the modern marketing and branding landscape with the traditional one, we have seen a power-to-the-people shift (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

Many organisations have realised the opportunities brought by the power shift, by embracing co-creation and inviting consumers into the process of shaping brand offerings (Fournier & Avery, 2011; Singh & Sonnenburg, 2012; King, Racherla & Bush, 2014). One example is the product brand LEGO. The brand offers a platform, LEGO Ideas, where consumers can create and submit their own product suggestions that can be made into real products if they get enough support from other LEGO fans (LEGO Ideas, 2015). This is one successful example of how co-creation can be used for product development, and co-creation is being incorporated into more and more organisations’ strategies (Barwise & Meehan, 2010; Fournier & Avery, 2011; Gensler, Völckner, Lui-Tompkins & Wiertz, 2013).

Nevertheless, certain brands may be more careful when embracing suggestions by consumers in their strategies and offerings, for example heritage brands. A heritage brand is defined as a brand whose positioning and value proposition is based upon its heritage (Urde & Greyser, 2014). Brand heritage is considered a part of a brand's identity based on its "*track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and history important to its identity*" (Urde, Greyser & Balmer, 2007, pp. 4-5). Today, corporate heritage brands within the arts and cultural sector, such as certain museums and theatres, are facing competition from leisure activities and entertainment venues (Baumgarth, 2009; Colbert, 2009; Minkiewicz, Evans & Bridson, 2014). As consumers are turning more demanding and experience seeking in their consumption (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004b), corporate heritage brands might see a need to adapt to more innovative and modern approaches to attract audiences, in order to respond to the market demands. Despite co-creation being increasingly incorporated by brands today, heritage brands might be more hesitant to embrace co-creation activities, as these brands must respect their history and heritage throughout their offerings.

1.2 Relevance of the Study

Considering the new dynamics in the marketplace, a challenge lies in how companies and institutions with a long history and heritage can stay relevant and attractive on the market, while respecting their roots and traditions. Hence, the aim of this thesis is to investigate how corporate heritage brands within the arts and cultural sector can engage in co-creation activities to attract a wider audience and to stay relevant on the market. This, we have identified as an area of limited previous theoretical examination, yet an area that might benefit from more research, as consumers are gaining an increased influence in some aspects of the branding process (Ind et al., 2013). This challenge has been identified by Cooper, Merrilees and Miller (2015), who recognise a tension between corporate brand heritage and innovation. The authors note that brands with a heritage might appear as old rather than innovative.

In the existing literature on co-creation, significant emphasis has been focused on co-creation of value (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, e.g. 2004a & 2004b), of products (Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Vernuccio, 2014), as in the LEGO example above, and of branded content via social media platforms (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Hatch and Schultz (2010) acknowledge that research on co-creation from a brand's perspective indeed has seen limited attention (Hatch & Schultz, 2010). Within previous research on corporate heritage brands, emphasis has mainly been placed on heritage as a competitive advantage (e.g. Keller & Lehmann, 2006; Urde et al., 2007) and as value creation (e.g. Aaker, 2007; Urde et al., 2007).

Combining the paradigms of co-creation and corporate heritage brands, Minkiewicz et al. (2014) have in fact been studying co-creation within the heritage sector by researching how individuals co-create their consumption experiences at a museum. Similarly, Holdgaard and Klastrup (2014) studied digital media and co-creation of Facebook campaigns for a museum. However, these studies took different perspectives than this study, in that they focused only on museums and art galleries, without focusing on either brand heritage or co-creation.

1.3 Problem Statement

Drawing on the limited previous research in the field of joining brand heritage and co-creation, the purpose of this study is to investigate how corporate heritage brands in the arts and cultural sector can involve the empowered consumer in shaping the offerings. Indeed, corporate heritage brands must act with respect to their roots and traditions, but equally adapt to the modern marketplace, a marketplace in which the consumer wants more influence over brand offerings. Based upon the purpose of this study, the research question is the following:

How can corporate heritage brands within the arts and cultural sector embrace co-creation activities to engage with and attract a broader segment of the market?

This thesis builds on a case study of an institution that seeks to illustrate the research problem, namely The Royal Danish Theatre (*hereafter the RDT*). The RDT was first and foremost chosen for the case study as it can be classified as a corporate heritage brand (see *chapter 3*) and therefore is an institution with long traditions to respect in all activities. Furthermore, it struggles with reaching the wider Danish population (see *below*). The purpose of this thesis is hence to investigate how the RDT can incorporate co-creation activities to affect their current status positively, and attract a broader segment. In order to do so, we conducted qualitative interviews with a sample of the Danish population, and also interviewed the Marketing Manager at the RDT and a Theatre Professor at the University of Copenhagen. Based on the findings from the consulted literature and the empirical research, this thesis will conclude with presenting a set of managerial guidelines for how corporate heritage brands within the cultural sector might embrace co-creation activities.

1.4 Overview of The Royal Danish Theatre

The RDT is the national performing arts institution of Denmark. The historical main building (see *appendix 1*) is located in the centre of Copenhagen and is home to the art forms of drama, opera, ballet and concerts under the same management (The Royal Danish Theatre, 2015a). Since 1849, the theatre is mainly funded by the Danish state (The Royal Danish Theatre, 2014), but also has twelve sponsors (The Royal Danish Theatre, 2015b). In the past decades, the theatre has experienced a decrease of audiences, although 2013 saw a slight increase (The Royal Danish Theatre, 2014). According to the theatre's Marketing Manager, common perceptions towards the theatre are that "*the RDT is not for me*" and that the theatre's offerings are "*too expensive*". In an attempt to combat the decreasing support of their audiences, the theatre has implemented a four-year strategy for 2012-2015 entitled "*More for More*". As the title of the strategy indicates, the theatre strives to offer more performances and offerings of varying genres, in order to provide a repertoire that suits a wider spectrum of the Danish population (Communication Strategy, 2012-2015). Nevertheless, the theatre continues to struggle with reaching the wider Danish population. Drawing on this, the RDT illustrates an example applicable to the problem area.

1.5 Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into eight chapters, which are organised in the following way:

This first introductory chapter is followed by *Chapter Two*, the literature review. Here, the relevant literature and theoretical frameworks are reviewed, to serve as base for the empirical investigation and discussion. *Chapter Three* outlines the chosen methodological approach, why the specific methods were chosen and how the data collection was carried out. In *Chapter Four*, we present the case of the RDT in more detail and apply it to the theoretical frameworks consulted in the second chapter. Thereafter, *Chapter Five* presents the empirical findings from our research, followed by *Chapter Six* in which we discuss the empirical findings along with the literature presented in the literature review. In *Chapter Seven*, we conclude our research, by drawing on our discussion. Here, we also present the theoretical contributions and managerial implications from our thesis. In *Chapter Eight*, which is the final chapter, we acknowledge the limitations of this study, and give suggestions for further research.

1.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced our thesis by providing background information of the area of the research. We have justified why we chose to focus on this particular area, and why it might need more research. Moreover, we have outlined the purpose of our thesis, and presented our research question along with a brief overview of our case. Lastly, we have presented an outline for the thesis, and described what each chapter will include.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, we present relevant theoretical perspectives to the object of study. We have grouped the theoretical background into four blocks. The *Brands and Brand Management* section aims to set the scene for the context of the study. It is followed by the sections of *Branding of Arts and Cultural institutions*, *Heritage Branding* and *Co-Creation*, where we present existing literature within these fields that are of relevance for our thesis. The chapter ends with the section *Co-Creation and Heritage Brands* that aims to combine the blocks of Co-Creation and Heritage Brands, where previous literature is limited.

2.1 Brands and Brand Management

2.1.1 Brands and Corporate Brands

Kotler et al. (2008) describes a brand as a combination of attributes, such as a symbol, name or design that distinguishes the producer of goods and services from competitors. Yet, academics have not agreed on a set definition of the term brand, but instead seem to use various ways of explaining it. Essentially, a brand is seen as a strategic asset with emotional associations (Kapferer, 2012), and signals a unique promise of value (Martínez, 2012). According to Kapferer (2012), many scholars tend to focus either on relationship

measurements or financial measurements when defining brands, and he aims to combine the two paradigms by explaining a brand as “...a name with the power to influence” (p. 8).

A common way of distinguishing between a product brand and a corporate brand is by referring to the product brand as “it” and the corporate brand as “we”. “We” implies that the organisation is part of the brand. Another way of making a distinction between a product brand and a corporate brand is that corporate brands tend to have multiple internal and external stakeholders in comparison to product brands (Urde, 2014).

2.1.2 Brand Management

As mentioned in the introduction (see chapter 1), the branding environment has seen major changes in the past decades, which naturally has affected brand management processes. A brand manager’s job is to build the brand and strategically manage activities around it to ensure that consumers’ perception of the brand matches the vision the company has for it (Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Kapferer, 2012). In a conventional perspective, the brand was understood as firm-owned and managed by the organisation alone (Keller, 1993). The brand manager controlled and steered coordinated marketing activities with the aim to shape certain perceptions of the brand in the mind of the consumer. It was assumed that the audience collectively held highly similar brand meanings, based on what was envisioned by the organisation, and that their beliefs matched the organisation’s vision. Consequently, brand identity and brand image were to a high extent aligned (Kotler et al., 2008).

The brand management process is by Temporal (2010) described as “a process that tries to take control over everything a brand does and says, and the way in which it is perceived” (p. 15). It is about gaining power and create value, and to increase recognition and engagement around the brand (Kapferer, 2012). This process, however, sees obstacles today. In the past, the voice of the consumer was not as loud and strong as it is these days, and could be ignored by brand managers. Today, the consumer-dominated media landscape has enabled consumers and brand audiences to raise their voice and create and share brand stories. This has led to changes in the branding landscape, and with brand managers losing control of the brand image. As a result, brand managers cannot ignore the increasingly powerful consumers (Gensler et al., 2013). In light of the new branding paradigm, where control of the brand is reduced, Fournier and Avery (2011) underline that the brand management process today resembles that of public relations, as the role of a brand manager rather is to protect the reputation of the brand. Christodoulides (2009) recognises that the role of brand managers today is not about trying to control the brand, but instead embrace sharing the brand with the consumers and involve them in the brand building process.

2.1.3 Brand Orientation and Market Orientation

An organisation’s approach to managing its brand may, to varying degrees, be either *market-oriented* or *brand-oriented*. The first paradigm, market-orientation, is characterised by an outside-in approach with a focus on brand image. The brand is managed to satisfy the needs and wants of customer and non-customer stakeholders, and hence has the market as its point of departure (Baumgarth, Merrilees & Urde, 2013; Urde & Koch, 2014). The second paradigm, brand orientation, is an inside-out approach that focuses on brand identity. The

brand acts as the hub, around which an organisation’s activities are centred. Therefore, the needs and wants of the market are satisfied within the constraints of the brand’s identity (Gromark & Melin, 2011; Baumgarth, et al., 2013; Urde & Greyser, 2014; Urde & Koch, 2014) An organisation may consider to what degree it should let the market’s demands guide their strategic activities, and to what degree it should be driven by its identity. As opposed to being either market- or brand-oriented, an organisation is, in more realistic terms, likely to be a combination of the two paradigms, referred to as a “*hybrid version*”, and consequently find itself somewhere along the market- and brand-orientation spectrum (Urde & Koch, 2014, p. 25).

2.1.4 The Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix

The Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (*hereafter the CBIRM*) is a framework for identity and reputation management for corporate brands. It has been introduced by Urde and Greyser (2014), and serves as a tool to identify potential matches or mismatches between a corporate brand’s identity and reputation. Hereby, it may be determined to what degree the stakeholders’ perception of the brand is aligned with how the brand would like to be perceived. It can hence assist a management team in identifying areas that need improvement, in order to strengthen the brand’s reputation while staying true to the brand identity. A potential match or mismatch might be general, whereby identity and reputation is considered broadly, or specific, whereby specific identity and reputational elements are considered on their own. Potential mismatches are ultimately for the management team to consider, and decisions and actions related to these will be based on whether an organisation is market- or brand-oriented.

The CBIRM consists of three parts: *the identity, reputation and communication of a corporate brand*. The identity part, which represents the nine boxes of the matrix, encompasses nine parts, with the brand’s promise and core values at the centre. The reputation part of the matrix surrounds the boxes and is made up of eight parts. In between the two, comes the corporate communication (Urde & Greyser, 2014; Urde & Greyser, 2015).

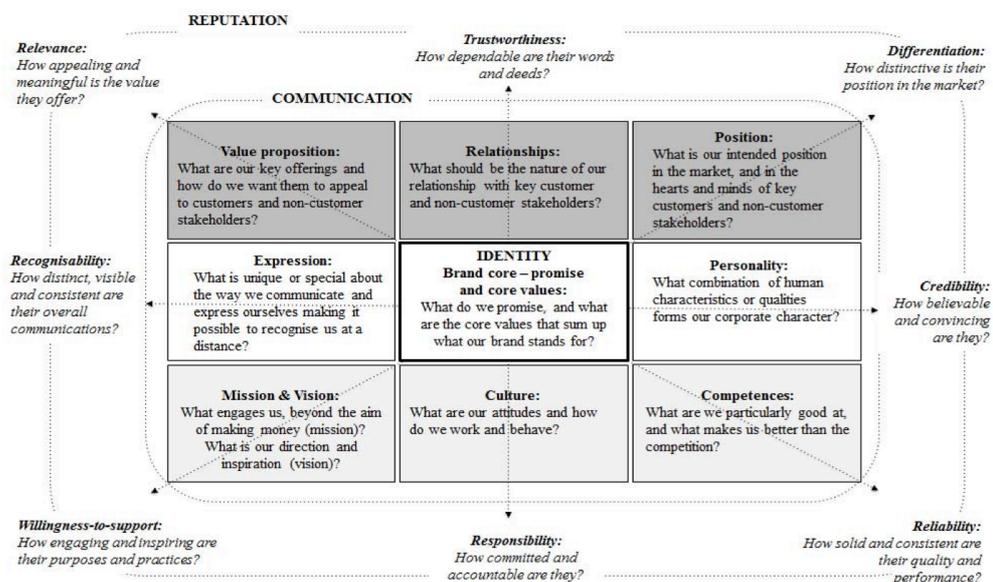


Figure 1: The Corporate Brand Identity and Reputation Matrix (Urde & Greyser, 2014, p. 24)

As is evident from the figure of the CBIRM above, the nine elements that constitute a corporate brand's identity can be divided into three components: the external (receiver), the internal (sender) and the external/internal component. Each of the nine identity elements, aside from the brand core, is connected to a reputation element (Urde & Greyser, 2014; Urde & Greyser (2015). This will be further elaborated in the following.

Identity

The external component consists of an organisation's 'value proposition', 'relationship' and 'position'. The value proposition is related to key offerings, and the way an organisation wishes for them to appeal to the stakeholders. The relationship refers to the nature of the organisation's relationship to stakeholders, and the position revolves around the organisation's intended market position (Urde & Greyser, 2013).

The internal component is made up of its 'mission and vision', 'culture' and 'competences'. An organisation's mission is connected to what motivates and engages it aside from gaining a profit. The vision is related to what inspires an organisation to move forward. An organisation's culture reflects its values, beliefs and attitudes, as well as how it behaves. The competences represent what an organisation is particularly good at, and in which areas they perform better than their competitors (Urde & Greyser, 2014).

The external/internal component encompasses 'personality', 'expression' and finally the 'brand core', which represents the centre of the corporate brand identity. Personality is connected to an organisation's human traits or qualities that make up the corporate character, whereas expression is related to the visual and verbal ways an organisation express themselves, which enables them to be recognised by stakeholders. The brand core reflects an organisation's promise to its stakeholders and the core values that represent what it stands for (Urde, 2013).

Reputation

As mentioned above, each of the elements that comprise an organisation's identity are linked to a reputational element of the matrix. However, this is not the case in regards to the brand core, which represents the centre of the corporate identity. The reputational elements, and the way they link to the corporate identity, will be explained in the following (Urde & Greyser, 2014; Urde & Greyser, 2015).

Relevance represents how meaningful the organisation's value is. In the CBIRM, this reputational element is connected to the organisation's value proposition. *Trustworthiness* is related to how dependable the organisation's words are, and therefore is associated to the organisation's relationship with its stakeholders. *Differentiation* reflects how distinctive an organisation's position is in the market, and therefore is connected to the position (Urde & Greyser, 2014; Urde & Greyser, 2015).

Willingness-to-support is based on how engaging and inspiring an organisation's purposes and practices are. In the CBIRM, this reputational element is connected to the organisation's mission and vision. *Responsibility* is related to how committed and accountable an organisation is, and is linked to the organisation's culture. *Reliability* reflects how solid and

consistent the organisation's performance is and hence is connected to the value proposition (Urde & Greyser, 2014; Urde & Greyser, 2015).

Recognisability suggests how visible, distinct and consistent an organisation's communication is and is related to the identity element expression. *Credibility* reflects how believable an organisation is related to personality (Urde & Greyser, 2014; Urde & Greyser, 2015).

2.2 Branding of Arts and Cultural Institutions

2.2.1 Defining Branding of Arts and Cultural Institutions

Baumgarth and O'Reilly (2014) note that an arts brand might be "*an artefact, an artist or group of artists, an organisation, an event, a venue, a performance, a song, or an exhibition*" (p. 5). In discussing arts and cultural organisations, Colbert (2003) distinguishes between product-oriented enterprises and marketed-oriented enterprises. He notes that a product-oriented enterprise can be an art museum, a dance company or a music ensemble. On the other hand, a market-oriented enterprise might be a more commercial activity such as "*a Hollywood film*" (p. 30).

2.2.2 Reluctance to Embrace Branding Activities

While branding of products, services and organisations in the business sector is highly acknowledged (Massi & Harrison, 2009), branding of the arts and cultural sectors has received limited attention (Ewing & Napoli, 2005; Baumgarth, 2009). Some decades ago, Diggle (1976) discussed that this might be due to the aversion of many organisations in the arts and culture sectors to embrace marketing and the market-orientation paradigm. More recently, Baumgarth and O'Reilly (2014) acknowledge that the brand approach is a recent and relatively neglected concept within these sectors and call for more research on the topic. Similarly, Colbert (2005) suggests that it is a "*new phenomenon*" (p.67).

Raymond and Greyser (1978) noted that arts and cultural institutions have in fact perceived marketing as something suspicious, and even hostile, due to marketing not being considered fully honourable for "*their high calling*" (p. 130). Nevertheless, it is crucial for arts and cultural institutions to acknowledge the importance of branding activities in order to develop and enhance a strong reputation among their stakeholders (Massi & Harrison, 2009). According to Roper and Fill (2012), a positive reputation is indispensable for a brand in becoming profitable and successful. Indeed, a wide range of brands emphasise the importance of the brand concept in the arts and cultural sectors, such as museum brands like Tate or MoMA and opera house brands like Teatro Alla Scala or The Met (Baumgarth & O'Reilly, 2014).

2.2.3. Managing Arts and Cultural Institutions: The Role of the Brand Manager

Today, many cultural institutions are fighting for their *raison d'être*, both economically and culturally (Baumgarth, 2009). They are indeed faced with decreasing visitor numbers, and

increased competition from other cultural and performing arts institutions, as well as multiple leisure activities (Wallace 2006; Baumgarth, 2009; Colbert, 2009). Colbert (2009) notes that the life cycle of the arts and cultural sector has indeed reached maturity, and even speaks of a “*totally saturated*” market (p. 2). This, due to a demand far exceeding supply, which Colbert (2009) argues applies to arts and cultural sectors throughout the world. Therefore, institutions within these sectors need a strong brand image in order to catch the attention of the consumers and stay attractive on the market (Wallace, 2006; Colbert, 2009). Arts and cultural managers are wise to embrace brand management concepts and techniques from the business world (Baumgarth, 2009; Colbert, 2009).

Colbert (2009) has studied brand management of arts and cultural institutions extensively, and is one of the most notable scholars within this field (Baumgarth, 2009). He identifies three areas that managers of contemporary performing arts and cultural institutions must pay attention to in today’s saturated and competitive market; first, the positioning of their brand; second, the quality of their offerings to the consumers; and third, the information technology required by the savvy consumers of today. According to Kapferer (2012), positioning refers to the concept of emphasising distinctive characteristics of a brand that distinguish it from competitors’ and make it appealing to consumers. Hence, with the increased competition we see today, an arts and cultural brand must position itself effectively (Colbert, 2009). In terms of offerings, Colbert (2009) emphasises that because contemporary arts and cultural consumers have countless options to choose from, “*customer service may be the deciding factor in their decision to choose one product over the others*” (pp. 7-8). A warm welcome upon arriving is by Colbert (2009) given as one example among others of a customer service approach that is appreciated by 21st century consumers. In relation to information technology, consumers demand online methods, for example to seek information and buy tickets rapidly and conveniently. Additionally, Colbert (2009) emphasises that none of the above can become reality without a savvy manager who should embody sound judgement, good instincts and a talent for management. Another point raised by Colbert (2009) is that while the quality of an institution’s artistic product is a critical factor, communicating it to consumers is highly essential and is what can increase success.

2.3. Corporate Heritage Brands

2.3.1. Defining Heritage Brands

Within heritage research, definitions of a heritage brand seemingly differ, although some similarities become evident. According to Urde et al. (2007, p. 5), a heritage brand is a brand with a “*positioning and value proposition based upon its heritage*”. Brand heritage is by the authors defined as “*a dimension of a brand’s identity found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and particularly in an organisational belief that its history is important*” (2007, p. 4–5). Moreover, Banerjee (2008) lists a brand’s history, equity, image and expectancy as the foundation of its heritage, while Aaker (1996) argues that a brand infused with heritage stands for trust, credibility and authenticity. Wiedmann, Hennigs, Schmidt and Wuestefeld (2011, p. 205) further note that a heritage brand stands for sustainability and longevity, “*as proof that the core values and performance of the given products are reliable*”.

As is evident from the definitions above, a heritage brand is distinct in that its past is activated in its present and future. Heritage is an emerging concept within the discipline of branding, and Hakala, Lätti and Sandberg (2011, p. 447) address that *“research from the conceptual perspective of brand heritage is still scarce”*. Similarly, Hudson (2011) notes that it is an area of limited previous research. He (2011) has examined the nature and power of the brand heritage concept through a case study of the historic Cunard Line, which is one of the oldest cruise lines in the world. According to Hudson (2011), heritage is of high importance to Cunard’s identity, and more importantly its recent turnaround. The company lately experienced an acquisition, and the new management team has placed great focus on the history of Cunard in their branding activities. This has played a significant role for renewed enthusiasm of its consumers. Moreover, Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2005) have investigated monarchies as corporate brands, whereby they first acknowledged the value of heritage. Their findings suggest that as an institution, a monarchy is similar to a corporate brand, and that managing a monarchy as a brand is to a high extent like managing *“a corporate brand with a heritage”* (p. 158). Later, Urde et al. (2007) examined the heritage of twenty brands, such as Patek Philippe, Volvo and the BBC, through an in-depth multi-case study. Here, the authors found that brand heritage is a part of a corporate brand’s identity *“found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and particularly in an organisational belief that its history is important”* (2007, pp. 4–5).

2.3.2 Heritage as a Valuable Corporate Asset

Not all brands with a heritage utilise their heritage as a valuable corporate asset (Urde et al., 2007; Urde & Greyser, 2015). For some companies, that value is yet to be unveiled. Indeed, discovering and understanding a brand’s heritage may be a way of unlocking its value for the company or organisation. This entails evoking the brand’s past and present with the aim of strengthening its future (Urde et al., 2007; Burghausen & Balmer, 2015). Accordingly, a heritage brand embraces three time frames and is unique in that it is *“about both history and history in the making”* (Urde et al., 2007, p. 7). In a similar vein, Wiedmann et al. (2011) note that heritage can play a role in making a brand relevant to the present and the future. Further, Hudson (2011) argues that brand heritage refers to the past, but is activated in the present.

Aaker (2007) underlines that heritage, and particularly for corporate brands, is a significant driver of value as it can add a sense of differentiation and authenticity to the brands. Moreover, Aaker mentions that a brand’s heritage can help to define the brand, but also to *“add value, especially when [the values] are re-interpreted in a contemporary light”* (p. 7). Hence, drawing on the rich roots and adapt to the present. Similarly, Urde et al. (2007) note how heritage can add value to the customer and hence lead to customer loyalty (Urde et al., 2007).

2.3.3 Managing a Corporate Heritage Brand

A company’s heritage is very difficult to be copied by competitors (Urde et al., 2007; Hakala, Lätti & Sandberg, 2011). Indeed, that can make it a competitive advantage, in that it provides an opportunity to cement the position of the brand in the minds of customer and non-customer stakeholders in a unique way (Urde et al., 2007). Similarly, Keller and Lehmann

(2006) note that brand managers can use heritage as a way of differentiating their brand from competitors' brands. Wiedmann et al. (2011) argue that in fact, brand heritage is seen as a significant driving factor of consumer behaviour, as well as brand perception. From the consumer's perspective, a brand's heritage can be a sign of trustworthiness, if s/he has a positive image of the brand. Heritage can help making a brand more credible and authentic, and can minimise the buying risk for the consumer. It is therefore suggested that brands infused with heritage can have a positive effect on the brand perceptions (Wiedmann et al., 2011).

2.3.4 The Heritage Quotient Framework

As mentioned above, Urde et al. (2007) found that brand heritage is identified by a number of characteristics, also referred to as elements. The more of these that are present, and the more powerful they are, the higher the brand's Heritage Quotient (*HQ*) is considered to be (Urde et al. 2007). When a brand possesses all of the elements, it is seen as having a very high HQ (Urde & Greyser, 2015). The five elements that constitute brand heritage are its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and especially the belief that the brand's history is important to its identity (Urde et al. 2007). By examining a brand based on these elements, its heritage may be uncovered and become a valuable corporate asset for the company, if successfully communicated to its stakeholders (Urde et al. 2007).

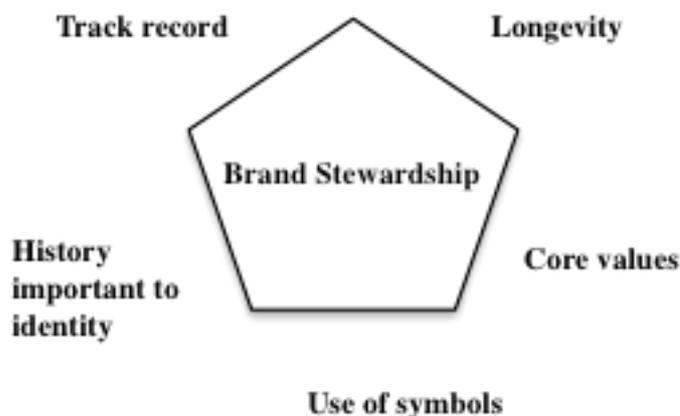


Figure 2: The Heritage Quotient Framework: The Elements of Brand Heritage (Urde, et al., 2007, p. 9)

Track Record:

According to Urde et al. (2007), a company's *track record* is the first thing to examine in uncovering a brand's heritage, as it is the most significant of the five elements. The track record is related to a company's demonstrated performance over time, emerging patterns, continuity and contract. Contract is also referred to as an "*unwritten contract*" or a "promise", and indicates that a brand must deliver value to its customers and non-customer stakeholders consistently (Urde, 2009, p. 620). Furthermore, the track record raises expectations about how a company may act today and in the future (Urde et al., 2007).

Longevity:

According to Oxford Dictionaries, the definition of longevity is “long life” and indicates a long existence or service (Longevity, n.d.). However, Urde et al. (2007) argue that longevity alone does not imply a heritage brand. Although longevity might be a key element of brand heritage, the authors have seen examples of heritage brands that only date back one or two generations (Urde et al., 2007). Longevity should be considered in relation to other elements, “*especially track record and use of history*” (Urde et al., 2007, p. 10).

Core Values:

A company’s core values sum up what the brand stands for (Brown, Kozinets & Sherry, 2003; Urde & Greyser, 2015). Long-held core values lay the foundation of the positioning through a promise in external communication, whereas internally, they act as guidelines for employees’ actions and behaviour. Core values may become *tenets* that the brand strives to achieve. Thus, they become part of the brand’s identity and, over time, the brand’s heritage (Urde et al., 2007).

Use of Symbols:

Companies use graphic symbols as a way of distinguishing their communication, property and products from others’ (Mollerup, 2002). Kapferer (2012) notes that these symbols help people in understanding the brand’s culture and personality. In line with this, Kotler et al. (2008) argue that companies need a visual identity that is easily recognisable by the public. A symbol might be a monarch’s crown, a logo or a design look, such as Burberry’s distinctive tartan pattern (Urde et al., 2007). These may “*achieve an identity of their own*” for brands with a high HQ, and simply come to stand for the brand (Urde et al., 2007, p. 11). Heritage brands often use symbols to reflect and express their past (Urde et al., 2007; Hakala et al., 2011).

History Important to Identity:

As noted by Urde et al. (2007, p. 11), “*for heritage brands, the history influences how they operate today, and also choices for the future.*” For other brands, history might be important to their identity, without it affecting their actions and behaviour (Urde, 2007).

Brand Stewardship:

The centre of the HQ model, *Brand Stewardship*, represents a “*mindset among individuals*” that can also be part of the culture of an organisation. It involves protecting, but also nurturing a brand and its heritage. The four aspects that make up heritage brand stewardship are the following: Having a sense of responsibility for the brand; A long-term continuity on behalf of the brand; Safeguarding trust in the brand, and Adaptability within the organisation, the latter referring to the key to making a brand relevant over time (Urde et al., 2007, p. 9; Urde & Greyser, 2015, p. 21). Burghauser and Balmer (2015) express a similar view, and note that stewardship is a mindset of safeguarding the relevance, credibility and trust of a brand in relation to its customers and non-customer stakeholders by accommodating change and continuity.

2.3.5 Staying Relevant

Urde et al. (2007) further argue that adaptability is a highly significant aspect for the brand to stay relevant over time, and Morley and McMahon (2011) underline that there is no contradiction in heritage brands being innovative. In fact, innovation can be a useful means to meet contemporary needs and desires from consumers, and it is of high value to nurture an organisational culture that sees innovation as something positive, and supports it. Drawing on the need to meet contemporary needs, Balmer (2011) note that corporate heritage brands must manage continuity and change to stay relevant. Yet, a challenge for heritage brands lies in being contemporary without losing authenticity and credibility.

Heritage plays a role in making a brand relevant to the present and potentially the future. A company can use and express its heritage while at the same time appearing up to date, high tech and modern to its stakeholders (Urde et al., 2007). In line with this, Santo (2015) discusses how heritage brands should embrace their past while at the same time not be stuck in it. He suggests how these brands should balance reinventing themselves with each new generation of consumers without becoming unrecognisable to their past brand loyalists. When unsuccessful, heritage brands may be considered out of touch with contemporary consumers and their needs and wants. When successful, however, heritage brands may act as bridges between generations, although each generation is likely to appreciate the brand in a different way (Santo, 2015).

2.4 Co-Creation

2.4.1 Defining Co-Creation

As mentioned in the introduction, the branding landscape has largely transformed from being company-centric to being consumer-centric in the value creation process, and the role of the consumer within the industrial system has changed. Today's consumer is informed, connected and participative, hence empowered (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; Terblanche, 2014). The shift in power balance between brands and consumers, and the emergence of the active consumer, have enabled for co-creation of value and brand meanings as an immediate effect (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a; Roberts et al., 2005, Vargo & Lush, 2008). According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004b), co-creation is in fact an outcome of the changed role of the consumer and the consumer-driven value creation. Going back to the roots of the concept, well-known marketing scholar Kotler, however, started using the notion of 'prosumers' in the mid 1980's, which back then referred to consumers that co-produced products and services they consumed (Terblanche, 2014). Drawing on this, consumers' involvement in producing goods and services is not entirely new. Yet, it has indeed become a bigger reality in recent times, particularly with the emergence of social media, which greatly has enabled and facilitated for the co-creation.

Scholars seemingly agree on what co-creation entails, although the definitions differ slightly. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a), who are the most notable scholars within the area of co-creation, define co-creation as "*an active, creative and social process based on collaboration between producers and users, initiated by the firm to create value for the user*" (p. 26). Ind et

al. (2013) agree on this definition, and that it is a collaborative process between organisations and participants that requires creativity and activity from them both, with benefits and value for the stakeholders involved. Moreover, Witell, Christensson, Gustavsson and Löfgren (2011) equally argue that co-creation “*aims to provide an idea, share knowledge, or participate in the development of a product or service that can be of value for other customers*”, and Nysveen and Pedersen (2014) similarly mention “*a common factor is that co-creation is considered a collaborative or joint activity including both producers and consumers for the purpose of creating value*” (p. 811).

By looking at the above definitions, it is evident that co-creation deals with the notion of an active and collaborative process between stakeholders, that ultimately aims to derive value for multiple actors involved (e.g. Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a). As co-creation engagement should have valuable outcomes for both consumers and brands, it can be distinguished from other, but somewhat similar concepts, such as mass-customisation (e.g. selecting colours for your shoes via NIKEiD) and mass-collaboration (e.g. uploading a video on YouTube) (Ind et al., 2013). Drawing on this, it is clear that today’s consumer plays an active role in creating value for companies, and that value is co-created through social interaction and engagement in the stakeholder ecosystem (Hatch & Schultz, 2010). Apart from co-creation of value between the consumer and the brand, consumers can also co-creation value “*together with other customers within the context of the brand*” (Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014, p. 807).

2.4.2 Theoretical Background

Despite the consensus on what co-creation is and how it has affected branding practises, there is little agreement on the components of co-creation, and few agreed-on frameworks (Minkiewicz et al., 2014). The model below portrays the co-creation space, as a means to obtain a more comprehensive view of the process, and to demonstrate how co-creation takes place at the centre, where the community meets with the organisation.

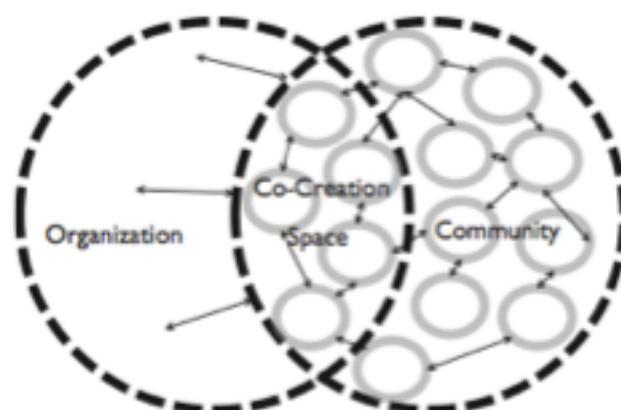


Figure 3: The Components of Co-Creation (Ind et al., 2013, p. 10)

According to Ind et al. (2013), co-creation is underpinned by the following three notions:

1. *Digital Communication*: the ability to build communities and share ideas in the online sphere
2. *The recognition (the organisation) of becoming a part of the customer experience*: making the consumer a collaborator and co-developer of content
3. *Exchange of intangibles*: a shift in focus from the act of purchase to usage - connectivity and collaboration between producer and user

Similarly, Terblanche (2014) points out that co-creation involve three fundamental aspects, namely the organisation, the consumer and the engagement between the organisation and the consumer. This aligns and corresponds with the model above.

The DART System

One of the few recognised co-creation framework to date is the DART system, developed by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (e.g. 2004a & 2008). Central to this framework is that co-creation occurs on the four, interrelated, building blocks of Dialogue, Access, Transparency and Risk. The Dialogue block refers to the mutual engagement and interactivity between the stakeholders, which for example can take place via social media platforms. Access, refers to the blurred boundaries and power distance between consumers and companies, and that companies cannot guarantee opaqueness in regards to for example price information, and hence challenges ownership and openness, which traditionally was controlled by the firms. Risk refers to the risk of harming the consumer, and the issue of intellectual property rights, and loss of governance for the company. Transparency deals with the more symmetric accessibility to knowledge about stakeholders. Higher transparency and information sharing facilitates for collaboration between organisations and consumers, and transparency will increase when the dialogue grows stronger.

Ramaswamy (2008) presents five core areas of how co-creation can add value to organisations; Customer Experience; in that co-creation can enhance consumer communication and improve pre- and post-purchase experiences; Product and Services, in improving current offerings and generate new opportunities for future developments; Markets, by means of establishing a deeper understanding through innovative insights and exploring opportunities, to expand market size and market share; Business Model, by refining or exploring a total change; and lastly, co-creation can add value to the Strategy, by refining or redefining of the entire business approach.

2.4.3 Co-Creation as a New Paradigm in Branding

Co-creation has emerged as a new paradigm in branding, which Christodoulides (2008, p. 292) describes in the following way, “*brands must engage in open conversations with people – they need to reconnect with the audience*”, and which also mirrors the shift towards an increasingly participatory culture (Ind et al., 2013). In this new culture, organisations seek greater consumer insight, and consumers seek an ability to contribute to the brands and create value. Merz, He and Vargo (in Ind et al., 2013) note that the logic of brands and branding has shifted away from brands being fully firm-created, towards a collaborative

activity between organisations and their stakeholders. Moreover, the boundaries between the brands and the consumers are blurred (Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014). Merz and Vargo (in Hatch & Schultz, 2010, p. 591) even highlight co-creation as “*a new brand logic*”. It has contributed to the development of numerous theoretical marketing trends, such as consumer empowerment, prosumption and consumer resistance (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a).

Co-creation is seen as an extension of the notion of user-driven innovation, which has gained increased focus in the marketing and branding disciplines (Hatch & Schultz, 2010). A large proportion of the previous studies takes an emphasis on co-creation of brand offerings through social media and brand communities (e.g. Fournier & Lee, 2009, Merz & Vargo, 2009; Payne, Storbacka, Frow & Knox, 2009; Füller, Miihlbacher, Matzler & Jaweck, 2010; Hatch & Schultz, 2010). However, Hatch and Schultz (2010) have acknowledged that research on how brands are co-created has in fact only just begun.

2.4.4 Types of Co-Creation

Co-creation of value is receiving academic attention, but there are indeed several types and levels of how value can be created. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (in Hatch & Schultz, 2010) even discuss co-creation of lifestyles, which can occur when people for example lease luxury cars and hence co-create a particular lifestyle and self-expression, without full ownership of it. However, Minkiewicz et al. (2014) note that there seems to be a lack of agreement on what actually is co-created, as the literature tends to mention different outcomes. One example being that the concept has been used interchangeably with that of ‘co-production’ (Terblanche, 2014). Payne et al. (2009) use the terms interchangeably, whereas Ballantyne and Varey (in Terblanche, 2014) say that co-creation is merely the dialogical interaction for value creation, whereas co-production involves resources and capabilities to derive value. However, for the purpose of this thesis, we refer to co-creation as a collaborative process that aims to generate value for the stakeholders involved, as agreed on by Prahalad and Ramaswamy, (2004b). Hence, our focus is on co-creation of value, by including experiences and brand offerings.

Experiences

In today’s consumer-centric market, the consumer is active in creating the experience (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b). Nysveen and Pedersen (2014) mention that co-creation activities with the brand influence the brand experience, and that there is a need to make the consumption experience more appealing. The authors further note that “*engaging in co-creation activities with the customers strengthens the brand experience*” (p. 825). Drawing on this, stimulating brand experiences by the use of co-creation activities is a key to competitive advantage, and can generate loyalty and satisfaction, on which Füller et al. (2011) agree. Indeed, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a, p. 12) note that “*the future belongs to those that can successfully co-create unique experiences with customers*”, and that co-creation of experiences is the new practice in the creation of value. Indeed, Payne et al. (2009) underline that consumers today *demand* involvement in unique and personal experiences.

Offerings

Co-creation of brand offerings refers to consumers' active participation in generating ideas throughout the development process of products and services (Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014). This can for example result in the development of new products and services (Ramaswamy, 2008), but also in other types of branded content. The authors note that consumers can be involved, both in improving current brand offerings, but also in the creation of new offerings and more value for the company and for consumers. Roberts et al. (2005) indeed argue that consumers should be involved in the innovation process, which is also agreed on by Ramaswamy (2008). Furthermore, Ind et al. (2013) underline that involving the consumers can lead to new innovations, value creation and increased insights. Among successful examples are LEGO Ideas, as mentioned in the Introduction chapter.

2.4.5 Managing Co-Creation: The Role of the Brand Manager

From a managerial perspective, co-creation requires a leadership approach that is more participative and open, with fewer barriers between the inside of the organisation and its outside (Ind et al., 2013). The managers therefore need to be open-minded towards ideas, solutions and insights from external stakeholders that may benefit the organisation better than what is produced internally. Such an approach results in a decision-making process that is more participatory, where control to a significant degree is released. Less control in the hand of the brand manager implies a larger degree of control that resides outside of the organisation (Xia, 2013). Managers can therefore be wise to adapt a consumer-centric view and accept co-creation, as opposed to staying organisation-centric. Here, a key is thus to carefully nurture the dialogue and interaction with the consumers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004a).

Leavy (2014) discusses potential managerial actions related to how co-creation can be embraced and nurtured by the organisation, and suggests for managers to investigate how their current processes, such as strategy and decision-making, can open up to be more co-creative. It is also underlined that the 'next big thing' within co-creation is that "*co-creative enterprises follow a simple principle: they focus their entire organisation on the engagements with individuals*" (Ramaswamy in Leavy, 2014, p. 11). Moreover, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2014) argue that the future of competition is based on an approach to value creation that centres on the co-creation between the organisation and its consumers.

2.4.6 Co-Creation as a Source of Competitive Advantage

Drawing on the emergence of co-creation as a new paradigm in branding, and the consumers' increasingly important role in the production of value, it is widely recognised that consumers can and should be seen as a source of competence to organisations. On this topic, Ind et al. (2013) mention how "*the most successful organisations co-create products and services with customers, and integrate customers into core processes*" (p. 5). Moreover, Roberts et al. (2005) argue that it is important for companies to involve consumers in the innovation process, as there is much to learn *from* them, and *with* them. According to Ind et al. (2013), organisations that strive to grow should start by thoroughly understanding the needs and desires of their consumers, and gather profound knowledge of them. By

considering their opinions and inputs, current offerings can be modified and new innovations developed, which satisfies needs and wants among the consumers. This aligns with Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2000) idea of consumers and a new source of competence, and the authors also argue that consumers, in fact, truly want to engage in the dialogue with the brands.

Integrating the consumer in the creation of market value is seen as effective and necessary from a strategic and economic point of view, but also a foundation for achieving new innovations and competitive advantage (Eyeka, 2012). Similarly, Meyassed, Burgess and Daniel (2012) agree, by saying that co-creation is "*one of the most powerful, modern-day sources of competitive advantage*" (p.1), on which Nysveen and Pedersen (2014) agree. Among the benefits for organisations that embrace co-creation are for example feedback, insights into consumer preferences, and new ideas for offerings that are wanted by the consumers. From the consumers' perspective, co-creation is a way of getting closer to and being recognised by the brand (Ind et al., 2013), and ultimately, co-creation activities may generate satisfaction and loyalty (Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014). Seemingly, there is an agreement among scholars as to how the contribution and expertise from external stakeholders can lead to advantages for the brands.

2.4.7 Co-Creation: Risks and Criticism

Despite the agreement among scholars that co-creation can have highly positive outcomes for organisation, there are also certain risks identified. The most prominent ones are the lack of control and increased levels of uncertainty (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b; Terblanche, 2014). The circumstances are more unpredictable as a consequence of the consumer-centrism. Bjerke and Ind (in Hatch & Schultz, 2010, p. 591) also highlight a potential issue of brand governance, which comes as an effect of organisations sharing the control of the brand along with other stakeholders. In terms of co-creation used for product development, a challenge is to maintain high quality in what is being produced (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004b).

Zwick, Bosu and Darmondy (2008) present a rather critical perspective towards co-creation that draw on Marxist viewpoints, by saying that it in several ways is exploitation of consumer labour. The authors discuss what they refer to as "*modern corporate power*" (p. 163), where companies harness the consumer's freedom. Their argument is partly based on consumers not being paid for their contributions to the companies, while often paying a price premium for "*the fruits of their own labour*" (p. 180), as co-created products are said to be more expensive than standardised products. Ind et al. (2013) highlight this too, by questioning aspects of intellectual property rights and whether companies capitalise on the co-creators, by not giving them compensation for participating in the creation process.

2.5 Corporate Heritage Brands and Co-Creation

2.5.1 Overview of the Paradigms

So far in the literature review, we have presented relevant theoretical backgrounds and frameworks with focus on Heritage Brands and Co-Creation as separate concepts. In order to connect these concepts, we will now look at them together. The existing theory on co-creation seems to place a dominant emphasis on how brands *must* be innovative and how involving the consumer in the creation of value is a source of competitive advantage (Balmer, 2008). However, brands with a heritage to respect and protect might be less inclined to hand over parts of the influence over the brands to other stakeholders and embrace co-creation activities.

2.5.2 Previous Research on Co-Creation in a Heritage Context

As mentioned, research on co-creation within the heritage sector is indeed scarce. Amongst the few articles identified are two that both focus on co-creation in the context of museums, and from the perspective of the museum visitor. Minkiewicz et al. (2014) in their study acknowledge that heritage organisations are facing significant competition from other entertainment venues and leisure attractions. As a consequence from the competitive environment, such organisations “*are driven to adopt innovative approaches to attract audiences*” (p. 31). The authors distinguish between value co-creation and co-creation of consumption experiences, and acknowledge that within the heritage sector, experiences can vary, depending on how individuals are tailoring their interactions and experiences in art galleries and museums. Facilitating for co-creation of the experience can therefore be a means for differentiation for the museum. However, the study takes the focus on how visitors co-create their consumption experiences based on the pathway they take during their visit, and the people they interact with throughout.

Similarly, Holdgaard and Klasttrup (2014) made a study on the design of a Facebook-campaign for a Danish museum by making use of the creative collective. Apart from involving the museum itself, the process behind the campaign also involved an artist, research students at a university, and the public as co-creators of the content. This case found that it is problematic to achieve successful social media campaigns due to the multiple people involved in the creativity process, with the museum itself having limited resources, yet a strong artistic vision for how the campaign was formulated. Hence, the creative process saw several difficulties to achieve a creative process of co-creation. The authors explain this by saying that the contents of the campaign only was of interest to a small, elitist network of people, and did not reach people outside of this narrow network.

2.5.3 The Paradox in the Branding Paradigm

Cooper, Merrilees and Miller (2015) discuss the tension between brand heritage and innovation, with the purpose of understanding how brand managers can extend a brand’s heritage in an innovative way, while staying true to the brand’s essence. We regard this study as particularly significant to highlight, as it takes a similar focus as our thesis. The

authors have, too, realised the limited attempts made in academia, to shed light on this paradox. In their study, the authors research the tension that can arise in balancing change and consistency, and how corporate heritage brands may be perceived as old with limited embrace of innovation. This, they refer to as “*a core paradox in branding*” (p. 34). Hence, they acknowledge a challenge of staying true to the authentic core of the brand, while being relevant. The study notes that corporate heritage brands must manage continuity and change in order to remain relevant, and that when such brands are managed with a long-term perspective, there is a requirement for balancing “*brand consistency with activities that create relevance*” (Beverland & Luxton in Cooper al, 2015, p. 34).

Based on the findings from their qualitative research involving five corporate heritage brands, the authors present four themes to resolve the realised tension between heritage and innovation; *Remaining true to the Authentic Core of the Corporate Brand, Embracing Change, Maintaining Relevance and Innovation and Design*. The themes aim to not only provide insight, but also to stand as managerial guidance in managing this paradox, and resolving the tension. A main finding from the study showed that is essential for corporate heritage brands to embrace change, which was evident in all corporate heritage brands involved in the study.

2.5.4 Bridging Heritage Brands and Co-Creation

As mentioned above in this chapter, scholars agree that there is no contradiction in heritage brands being adaptive or innovative (Urde et al., 2007; Morley & McMahon, 2011; Balmer, 2011a). In fact, heritage brands may benefit from innovation, as it can be useful in staying relevant over time (Urde et al., 2007; Balmer, 2011a), and meeting the needs and wants of contemporary consumers (Morley & McMahon, 2011). In fact, as noted by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) and Payne et al. (2009), 21st century consumers are indeed interested in being heard and playing a more active role in branded content. A way of accommodating this is for companies to embrace co-creation activities as a means to foster innovation. However, as previously stated, co-creation activities have seemingly not been embraced by heritage brands. As stated in the Introduction (*see Chapter 1.2*) we have identified a paradox for organisations within the arts and cultural sector between embracing co-creation while respecting the brand’s heritage. As noted, Cooper et al. (2015) have presented a similar paradox, by acknowledging the tension between brand heritage and innovation. Research related to this paradox is indeed very limited, and the studies presented above are, to our knowledge, the few that combine the paradigm of brand heritage with that of co-creation as field of study.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the theoretical foundations with relevance to this study. We started by presenting the fundamentals within the paradigm of Branding and Brand Management in order to lay the ground for the coming sections in the Literature Review. Thereafter, we presented the existing literature on Branding of Arts and Cultural Institutions, Corporate Heritage Brands and Co-Creation. In the very last section of the chapter, we

presented the identified paradox of how Heritage Brands might struggle with balancing co-creation and innovation while respecting their heritage.

3. THE CASE - The Royal Danish Theatre

In this chapter, we present the institution of our case study, the Royal Danish Theatre in more depth, by starting with introducing the theatre by providing an overview of its history, offerings and decreasing audience support. We then apply it to the HQ framework and the CBIRM.

3.1. The Royal Danish Theatre



Figure 4: The RDT's logo (The Royal Danish Theatre, 2015a)

History

The RDT was established in 1748 in Copenhagen as a gift to King Fredrik V. Initially, the theatre's ensemble was modest and consisted of only twelve actors and three dancers, but over the next decades, the theatre gradually established itself as a multi-theatre. At this point in time, it first and foremost entertained members of the royal family and the upper class, although the public was allowed access too. In 1949, along with the elimination of the absolute monarchy, the Danish state was assigned ownership of the RDT, and the state required it to widen its target audience considerably and serve the entire nation (The Royal Danish Theatre, 2015a). The theatre is largely funded by the Danish state, hence the taxpayers of Denmark, since 1849. Throughout the past centuries, more art forms have been introduced, and today, the theatre is home to drama, concerts, ballet and opera under the same management. In terms of drama, the theatre offers both traditional and more modern performances. Concerts are performed mostly by the world's oldest orchestra, The Royal Danish Orchestra, established in 1448 and at that time served King Christian I (The Royal Danish Theatre, 2015b). The Ballet Academy, dating back to 1771, is also one of the oldest in the world of its kind (The Royal Danish Theatre, 2015c). Today, the theatre remains state-owned and receives just below 600 million DKK annually in government funding (The Royal Danish Theatre, 2015b).

Decreasing Audience Support

According to the Marketing Manager at the RDT, the current key customer belongs to the 55+ segment, and in the past 25 years, the theatre has experienced a flight of audiences (The Royal Danish theatre, 2015c). The theatre's latest annual reports indicate that 2012 saw the year with the fewest tickets sold ever (Strøyer, 2013). The theatre's current situation, with the decrease in ticket sales and loss of audiences, has as mentioned in the Introduction laid the foundation for a new strategy for 2012-2015, "*More for More*". In addition to the main goal of offering more diverse performances for more people, the RDT strives to "*involve, inspire and include*" and to be "*accessible and up to date*" for the Danes (Communication Strategy, 2012-2015).

In a recent article by Krasnik (2015) in a major Danish newspaper, the RDT's Theatre Director addressed the decreasing support of their audiences. He also revealed elements of the theatre's new strategy, which runs from 2016 until 2019. He noted that they are currently formulating it, but said, "*The new strategy is about being more inviting and reaching out to the entire nation. For a long time, we have been convinced that people would come to us. That is highly dangerous*". When discussing the theatre's aim to be more inviting, he said, "*Without interaction between art and the civil society, art is dead*". He mentioned that the theatre is in need of a new tale that "*can wash their past away*" and presented the new strategy's five points:

1. The theatre should be more inviting throughout the country
2. The theatre experience should be a social event
3. The theatre's performances should be relevant
4. The theatre should insist being excellent
5. The theatre should challenge its organisation

3.2 The Royal Danish Theatre as a Corporate Heritage Brand

In this section, we apply the HQ model (*originally presented in chapter 2*) to the RDT. This is done by examining its identity based on its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols, and especially the belief that the theatre's history is important to its identity.

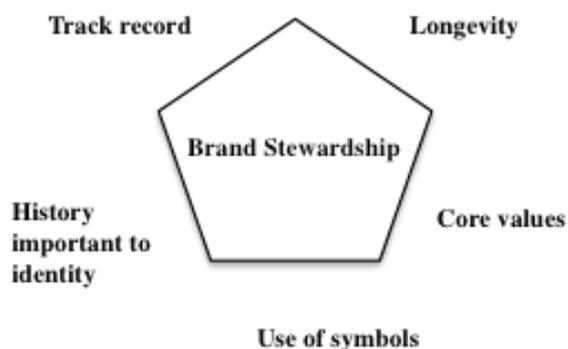


Figure 2: The Heritage Quotient Framework: Elements of heritage (Urde, et al., 2007, p. 9)

Having offered their audiences a wide selection of cultural performances of high quality within drama, ballet, opera and concerts for centuries, the theatre demonstrates an extensive *track record*. The RDT has operated since 1748 and is unique in that it is the first theatre to be founded in Denmark (The Royal Danish Theatre, 2015a). This indicates their *longevity*. The theatre's *core values* 'Excellence', 'Relevance', 'Innovation', 'Invitation' and 'Enhancement' are the promise to the stakeholders, and are guiding their corporate behaviour and activities, as mentioned by the Marketing Manager during the interview. Their *use of symbols* is expressed primarily through their recognisable logo depicting a red crown (see page 28), which is an integral part of the theatre's identity, as well as their marketing and branding activities. The careful preservation of their scenic main building, which is the hub of the brand and its prestigious royal history, as well as the theatre being a "*caretaker of its traditions*", which the Marketing Manager mentioned during the interview, illustrates how *history is important to the identity* of the theatre.

As Urde et al. (2007) suggest, a corporate heritage brand is a brand with a positioning and value proposition based on its heritage. According to the theatre's Marketing Manager, The RDT use their heritage as a strategic tool, as they continually integrate it in their operations, among other things through their positioning and value proposition. To this, he noted: "*We really need to create the best [...] so the trick is to make use of, and use the best things about the heritage [...] that's why we have 'excellent' as a value, we think that we need to be the best in many ways [...] if I just go out and make a marketing campaign for Romeo and Juliet [...] we have to make it with respect for all the traditions*".

As summarised in the table below, we find support that the RDT has a high HQ, and hence we consider it a corporate heritage brand.

Heritage Element	The RDT Heritage Quotient (HQ)
Track Record	The wide selection of cultural performances of high quality within drama, ballet, opera and concerts for centuries; the theatre's schools are the most important prerequisites for its artistic performance: The Royal Danish Orchestra (est. 1448) is the oldest orchestra in the world and has worked with renowned artists such as Stravinsky, Mozart and Strauss; The Ballet School (est. 1771) is the third-oldest in the world of its kind, and is one of the most respected ballet companies in the world; The Opera Academy (est. 1773) is also celebrated as one of the world's best.
Longevity	Since 1748; the first theatre to be built in Denmark; the first theatre in the world to comprise the art forms of both drama, concerts, ballet and opera
Core Values	Excellence, Relevance, Innovation, Invitation and Enhancement.
Use of Symbols	The burgundy logo depicting a crown; the burgundy font; the main building from 1748; 'The Old Stage'; the royal family's private box; the two red lanterns by the theatre's main entrance, indicating whether or not they are sold out for an evening's performance; the New Year's Eve concerts; the portraits of the theatre's founder, Fredrick V, that are displayed around the theatre.
History Important to Identity	Their careful preservation of the theatre's main building from 1748; their repertoire, which to a high extent resembles the repertoires from decades and centuries ago; Fredrick V's handwritten documents stating the theatre's strategic operations.

Figure 5: Application of the Heritage Quotient Framework

In this section, we apply the CBIRM (*originally presented in chapter 2*) to the RDT in order to determine to what extent the theatre's intended position in the market is aligned with how they are actually perceived by the Danes. In determining this, we found that certain elements of the CBIRM are particularly important to assess. These will be presented below.

'Mission' and 'Willingness-to-support'

Mission relates to what motivates the theatre aside from making a profit. The RDT's Mission is "To be all Danes' theatre" (Communication Strategy, 2012-2015). In the CBIRM, the Mission is related to the stakeholders' *Willingness-to-support*. In the case of The RDT, we consider the Willingness-to-support to be poor, as it is present for some, but absent for the vast majority of the Danes. Hence, there is a mismatch between the RDT's Mission and the Danish population's Willingness-to-support.

'Position' and 'Differentiation'

Position refers to the theatre's intended position in the market. According to the Marketing Manager at the RDT, their intended position is to be "the best" in the market by providing excellent art. In the CBIRM, position is related to *Differentiation*, which reflects how distinctive the RDT's actual position is in the market. In the case of the RDT, the Danish population perceives the theatre as, among other things, old-fashioned, outdated, and for the elite and upper class. A mismatch can hence be identified of how the theatre would like to be perceived, and how they are actually perceived.

'Recognisability'

Recognisability reflects how visible, distinct and consistent the RDT's communication is. In the CBIRM, recognisability is related to the theatre's *Expression*. The theatre's overall communication is apparently only visible to limited parts of the Danes. This explains how important communication is, and how it is one of the key factors in explaining the mismatch between how the RDT intends to be perceived and how the theatre is actually perceived.

Relevance

Relevance reflects the degree of meaningfulness the value of the RDT's offerings has to the stakeholders. Considering the broad target group, which includes all Danes, the degree is considered to be low, as only a limited part of the Danes show an interest in the theatre and their offerings. A mismatch is then identified between the theatre's wanted and actual position.

A Mismatch in Perceptions

As illustrated above, the RDT is a clear example of an organisation experiencing a mismatch of their corporate brand identity and corporate brand reputation. According to Roper and Fill (2012), the more coherence there is between an organisation's intended and actual position, the stronger the brand will be. A mismatch like this is hence an important managerial issue to consider for the RDT (Roper & Fill, 2012).

3.3 Previous Academic Studies on the Royal Danish Theatre

Nygård-Jørgensen and Iversen (2013) have researched how the RDT can strengthen the relationship to a younger audience through social media, with a focus on sociology,

relationships within networks and relationship branding. In their Master's thesis, they argue that the theatre must increase the understanding of the younger audiences to reach them, and that having ambassadors, who share favourable communication within their networks, may be an option. The theatre should also be innovative and work strategically with online communication, to alter the perception amongst younger people that the RDT is old-fashioned with little relevance to people in their 20's, and instead make it more attractive. In relation to the focus of this thesis, however, the study by Nygård-Jørgensen and Iversen (2013) does not mention co-creation or brand heritage.

Fagerberg-Jensen and Hauch-Ranten (2014) also conducted a Master's thesis that aimed to investigate how mass interaction can support the concert experience, by letting the audience affect what occurred on the stage using highly digital and visual materials. This was executed by placing several lanterns and other graphics on the stage, which members of the audience could connect to and affect the graphic patterns via small lighting devices. The project aimed to create a "*dialogue between artistic intention and audience experience*" (p. 10), by audience members triggering lights to appear on the screen by using their lighting devices while the orchestra was playing. However, they found that this large-scale interaction faced significant difficulties, and the interaction created some confusion amongst the audience members that could not recognise their lights on the screen. Yet, they conclude with their belief that interactive aspects can beneficially be added to performances.

These two studies might indicate that there is an interest for the theatre to reach younger audiences, but also to try new and experimental ways of engaging with the audience. Therefore, these previous studies are of relevance for this thesis. However, what must be acknowledged is that both studies were conducted within the department of Arts and Humanities, which indicates that focus was placed on creative and artistic aspects, rather than strategic and brand management related aspects. Thus, they take a different research focus compared to that of our thesis.

3.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we have presented the case of the thesis. We have also applied the RDT to theoretical frameworks presented in the Literature Review, namely the HQ and the CBIRM. The case, applied to these frameworks, will be referred to later on in the chapter presenting our Empirical Findings.

4. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, we describe and argue for our methodological approach and how we conducted our empirical study. We start by presenting the research philosophy and thereafter our research design, a case study. Thereafter, we present semi-structured interviews as the chosen data collection method. Moreover, we reflect upon our roles as researchers, and the alternative methods considered. At the end of this chapter, we present how our data analysis was carried out, and finally, research quality considerations.

4.1 Research Approach

4.1.1 Research Overview

To obtain an in-depth understanding of the research area, we collected data from both the managerial, consumer and expert perspective. This was to increase our understanding of the problem area and gain insight from different stakeholders, both internal and external.

4.1.2 Research Philosophy

In order to understand the fundamentals of our research design, it is valuable to be aware of the philosophical roots of social science research, namely ontology and epistemology. These terms lie as groundwork for our theoretical and methodological angles and refer to the theory of reality and knowledge (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Ontology is referred to as the philosophical study of reality, and understanding the existence and nature of being, while epistemology is the study of obtaining knowledge and what valid knowledge really is (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The relationship between ontology, epistemology and methodology is by Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) illustrated by the metaphor of a tree – ontology being the kernel, epistemology the ring outside of the kernel, with methodology and techniques that are used to investigate particular situations as outer layers.

Epistemology and ontology underpin and affect our research process, as we draw on philosophical assumptions in designing and conducting the research, as noted by Easterby-Smith et al. (2012). This study uses a qualitative method that falls under the epistemological paradigm of constructionism; the “how”, “why” and “what”, to elucidate meanings. The contrast to constructionism, positivism, instead reflects a view with focus on quantitative studies, with theory testing, larger amounts of data and more comparable facts (Bryman & Bell, 2007). In this paradigm, facts are viewed as knowledge, hence a weaker understanding of social processes. Constructionism emerged as a contrasting view to positivism, and as a consequence from arguments, which indicated that studying the social world requires an approach that acknowledges the uniqueness of individuals (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). Being underpinned by a constructivism view, our research subsequently sees an inductive construction of knowledge, as opposed to a positivist view and deductive approach, which instead is testing knowledge. We have strived for rich data, and from three different perspectives, with the aim of increasing our understanding of their meanings.

4.2 Research Design

4.2.1 Case Study

A case study is described as a research approach that adapts a micro perspective to examine and understand a specific setting and is typically used to study a particular event, organisation, or even a specific person (Bryman & Bell, 2007). According to Yin (2009), case study research can be defined as an empirical inquiry that “*investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context*” (p. 13). A primary purpose for choosing to conduct a case study is that it facilitates for a deep-dive into this particular setting, and according to

Bryman and Bell (2007), can be a favourable approach to generate an in-depth and detailed analysis. This thesis analyses a specific case, the RDT, which is facing challenges to stay relevant to its target audience. The method is therefore suitable in order to generate data to answer our research question.

4.2.2 Qualitative Research

The thesis takes a qualitative approach in the data collection, with the aim of obtaining in-depth data from three perspectives of the research area; the consumer, managerial and expert perspectives. Qualitative research is a research strategy, which is characterised by the fact that it *“usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data”* (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 27).

For the purpose of our study, qualitative interviews were selected on the basis that they facilitate for obtaining rich verbal data. The approach was most appropriate as we strived for elaborated spoken words and answers from our respondents. This, we would not have obtained from a quantitative research approach, which on the contrary focuses on numbers, quantification and testing hypothesis (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

4.2.3 Alternative Methods Considered

Within qualitative research, another widely used data collection method is focus groups (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, there are several reasons why we chose interviews over focus groups. In a focus group situation, we would act as moderators for a discussion involving several participants, and encourage group interaction to generate data (Roulston, 2010). This method is beneficial to the degree that the participants can challenge each others' ideas and viewpoints, which enables a collective approach to construct meanings (Bryman & Bell, 2007). However, there is also a risk that participants of focus groups are not comfortable with expressing themselves and sharing ideas and viewpoints with others, and some participants might take on a more dominant role in the conversation (Roulston, 2010). In relation to this thesis, it is possible that might have affected the data in that the interviewees were not comfortable or capable of expressing their views. Another potential weakness of focus group interviews is that the data might not be as nuanced as when interviewing people individually. The synergetic effects entail that respondents tend to be inspired by each other's inputs, and as a result might reach consensus as opposed to expressing different points of view (Malterud, 2008). This would have been a disadvantage for this thesis, as we strived to obtain opinions, insights and meaning making from individuals, unaffected by a collective.

4.3 Data Collection Method

4.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Essentially, a qualitative interview is social situation and interaction where the interviewer wants to know what the interviewee is assumed to know (Alvesson, 2011). Thus, the main

objective during an interview is to obtain knowledge, ideas and descriptions from interviewees. According to Alvesson and Svensson (2008), an interview can be seen as a “*conversation with a purpose*” (p. 3), where the researcher strives to acquire an understanding of the worldview of the interviewee (Kvale, 1996). Seeing themes through the eyes of the interviewee, and gain an understanding of his/her perspective is therefore central (Seidman, 2006; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012), which indeed was our aim.

Qualitative interviews cover both semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2007), and for the purpose of this study, we selected semi-structured over unstructured. While an unstructured interview much resembles a loosely directed conversation, the semi-structured interview is characterised by the researcher having a list of open-ended questions on rather specific topics to be covered. This list is often referred to as an interview guide, which we used to ensure we covered all questions (*see appendix 2*). The interview guides differed, as we wanted to explore each of the three stakeholders’ perspectives, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Having interview guides enabled us to stay focused on the interview and its purpose, and address more specific issues, but also for us to remain in control of the process, as suggested by Kvale (1996). Nevertheless, the interviewees had a great deal of freedom in regards to how s/he wanted to reply to these questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When conducting the semi-structured interviews, we initiated the interview with raising a broad question, as suggested by Malterud (2008) and Bryman and Bell (2011). This slightly loose structure enabled the interviewee to lead the direction of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011). As recommended by Brinkmann and Tanggaard (2015), we were free to vary the order of questions during the interview, as well as allowing new ones to arise. Such additional questions turned out to be follow-up questions, further elaborations, and requests for clarifications. Kvale (1996) agrees that this can be valuable in order to not lose data. However, all questions were asked, although the exact formulation differed from interview to interview (Bryman & Bell, 2011). By using semi-structured interviews, the answers were also comparable at a higher level, as the same themes were covered, as opposed to in unstructured interviews. The interviews were therefore more predictable, which simplified the process of coding and making sense of the data (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

4.3.2 The Consumer Perspective

In total, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with Danish citizens. As suggested by Kvale (1996) and Malterud (2008), we collected data until we reached a saturation point and found we had sufficient data. In terms of the sampling process, we used *snowball sampling* (Bryman & Bell, 2011) by utilising our contact network in Denmark to reach out to potential interviewees. An important factor for us was that neither of the researchers was familiar with the interviewees beforehand, and that none of the interviewees had any awareness of the aim of the study. Our contact network enabled us to refer to potential interviewees that we contacted. We wanted to avoid biased results in our research data, and therefore disregarded *convenience sampling*, which is a sample used due to its convenient accessibility to the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In the literature, there seems to be consensus that convenience sampling is not recommended for several reasons (Malterud, 2008; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012; Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2015), potential biased results being one (Malterud, 2008).

As the theatre is supposed to serve the entire Danish nation (Det Kongelige Teater, 2015), it might have been ideal to recruit different people from different parts of the country. However, we have chosen to focus on the capital region of Copenhagen for several reasons. First and foremost, the largest proportion of visitors live in the greater Copenhagen area, as confirmed by the Marketing Manager of the RDT during the interview conducted with him. Moreover, time and limited ability to travel were two additional factors that restricted us from being able to cover the entire country. To reach as wide an audience as possible within this area, however, we reached out to a diverse group of interviewees, for the purpose of covering a broad spectrum of genders, ages and occupations in our research. Below is a presentation of the Danes:

Name	Age	Occupation	Visited the RDT	Date
Lau	18	Biology Student	No	May 4, 2015
Caroline	23	International Business Student	Yes, one time	April 28, 2015
Anders	27	Chef	No	April 27, 2015
Ditthe	31	Engineer	No	May 4, 2015
Trine	35	Project Coordinator	No	April 24, 2015
Henry	49	IT Manager	Yes, three times	April 29, 2015
Grethe	55	Music and Drama Teacher	No	April 29, 2015
Ruth	81	Retired Health Visitor	No	April 29, 2015

Figure 6: Overview of the Interviewees

Conducting the Interviews

The interviews relied on face-to-face communication, and were conducted with only us as researchers and the interviewee being present. It is highly desirable to create an environment that is natural and relaxed, so the interviewees are more inclined to feel comfortable sharing their answers (Sarantakos, 2005). As Kvale (1996) argues, the interview environment must be carefully selected, or it can have a negative effect on the outcome of the interviews. We allowed the interviewees to decide on the location, and suggested either pre booked rooms in the city library in Copenhagen, or an environment of their choice. In six out of eight cases, the interviewees preferred the interviews to take place in their own homes or at their workplace, whereas two interviews were held in the library.

All interviews started with an introduction and a brief overview, as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2007). This suggestion also aligns with Kvale's (1996) tips for how to conduct a successful interview that emphasises that these should be organised and well structured. At the beginning of each interview, we briefly stated that we were conducting a study on the RDT, without providing additional information that might influence the interviewees' answers. Moreover, confidentiality was ensured. We ensured to each interviewee that their name would be changed in the presentation of the findings, to ensure their anonymity. With the prior consent of the interviewees, all interviews were audio-recorded. Audio recordings are recommended by Bryman and Bell (2007) to reduce loss of data and increase the researchers' focus on the interview situation as opposed to note taking. Moreover, we had a

brief informal conversation as warm-up to release possible nervousness the interviewees might have experienced.

The questions were formulated to capture the interviewees' perception, knowledge and understanding of the theatre, their offerings and activities (*see appendix 2*). Additionally, we asked about their current level of involvement with the theatre and potential future involvement. We avoided using the term 'co-creation', as the interviewees were likely to not be familiar with the meaning of the term, and instead formulated questions around 'participation' and 'involvement' in the creation of the theatre's offerings. The interviews lasted between 23 and 31 minutes, and were nicely rounded off with debriefing the experience as recommended by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). For example, we asked whether the interviewees had any questions for us, and ensured their access to the completed thesis.

4.3.3 Managerial Perspective - the Marketing Manager at the RDT

The purpose of interviewing the Marketing Manager was to explore the viewpoints of the theatre, and obtain an internal perspective. The position of the Marketing Manager was desirable, as he has an influential position in terms of strategic decision making, as well as the planning and execution of marketing and branding activities. This way, we were able to gain an insight into the theatre's current strategies. The internal, managerial perspective was of high significance for us in relation to our data collection, and possibility to answer the research question.

The interview took place on April 28th in a meeting room at the Playhouse department of the RDT, and lasted 52 minutes. It took place under similar circumstances as the interviews with the Danes and started with us giving the Marketing Manager a brief overview of our research. Thereafter, we stated the purpose of the interview and explained that it would cover three sections - strategy, heritage and co-creation - with questions formulated accordingly. The interview guide (*see appendix 2*) did not follow the same structure as the one used in interviewing the Danes, as the aims and objectives in the data collection differed. As we strived to gain insights into the managerial perspective related to our research topic, the interview guide hence included questions about the theatre's strategy and how their offerings are influenced by their the heritage. Moreover, we wanted to explore the degree to which co-creation is considered and embraced in a current and future perspective. The interview was audio recorded, just as the interviews with the Danes were.

4.3.4 The Expert Perspective

The purpose of interviewing the Theatre Expert was to get an external perspective of someone with expertise within the research area, and hence we established contact to a Professor of Theatre Science at the University of Copenhagen. His main research field is theatre history of Denmark and Sweden post 1945, and he is frequently appearing in Danish media in discussions about theatre, to contribute with an expert opinion. Interviewing the Theatre Professor and obtaining his professional opinions contributed with a valuable external perspective to our research.

The interview was held on April 17th at his office at the University of Copenhagen, and lasted 47 minutes. The interview took place under similar circumstances as the interviews

conducted with the Danes and the Marketing Manager, and was audio recorded. We started by presenting the research and clarified the purpose of the interview. The questions asked followed the same structure as the ones presented to the Marketing Manager - divided into the blocks of strategy, heritage and co-creation - but with different questions that instead were focused on his view on the theatre's repertoire, offerings and relevance in general. Moreover, the questions revolved around how the RDT can balance renewing their image whilst respecting their history, traditions and heritage. Furthermore, the purpose was to find out what opportunities he sees in making the RDT more attractive to the wider Danish population, and whether he supports the idea of considering the Danes' opinions in regards to the theatre's offerings.

4.3.5 The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher plays a substantial role as s/he is involved in all steps of the research process. As researchers, we thus influence the process and the results (Malterud 2008), and therefore, it is essential that we describe all choices made throughout the process. This is what Hastrup refers to as transparency (Hastrup, 2003). In order to show transparency in our process, we have strived to make it trackable for readers. This includes describing each step of the process carefully, showing how our decisions shaped the outcome of the next steps. Moreover, as pointed out by Gadamer (in Birkler, 2005; Malterud, 2008; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012), a researcher's pre-understanding may influence the research process as well. Pre-understanding refers to the knowledge, experience and insight s/he has of the object of study beforehand; therefore, it is critical that we as researchers explicitly state our pre-understanding of the RDT. Neither of the two researchers had visited the RDT prior to starting this study, and as such has no first-hand experience with it. Linnéa, who is Swedish, had no knowledge of the theatre and its activities, whereas Julie, who is Danish, had walked past it and imagined it to offer performances of high quality within various art forms. Moreover, through some exposure in Danish media, she was aware that the theatre is experiencing a decrease in ticket sales.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, views and values that draw on ontology and epistemology underpin how methodologies are designed, and how research projects are conducted and carried out (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). This is not always something the researcher is aware of (Roulston, 2010; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). However, what Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) acknowledge is that the quality of the research can be enhanced if the researchers are aware of the philosophical foundations that underpin the study. Alvesson and Svensson (2008) and Roulston (2010) agree that the theoretical perspectives of the researchers indeed can influence the interview situation itself, as well as the different stages of the research process, with the choices and decisions we make, and how we analyse data. As stated above, this is oftentimes an unconscious occurrence (Roulston, 2010; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Therefore, we have strived to be conscious of our research process and production of knowledge, throughout the stages. This includes awareness of epistemological foundations underpinning our research approach. Through the semi-structured interviews, we have strived to get an understanding of the interviewees' meanings, as suggested by Easterby-Smith et al. (2012).

4.3.6 The Role of the Interviewee

Method literature tends to focus on how to ‘manage’ interview situations by using efficient interview techniques to incite interviewees to be genuine and to open up (Alvesson, 2011). However, it is not only a matter of the researcher’s tactics, but events during interviews might be unpredictable and impossible for the researcher to control, as the social setting in itself is complex. An interesting point raised by Alvesson (2011) is the difference, from the perspective of the interviewee, between *knowing* and *telling*. S/he may *know*, but being incapable, or even unwilling, to *tell*. There may also be limitations to the interviewee’s ability to verbally articulate and express knowledge. In a contrasting scenario, interviewees can also be skilled in talking to *tell* without actually *knowing*. Moreover, responses can also be hindered by the interview scenario in a wider sense, seeing that not interviewees may be comfortable talking to, and opening up, to us researcher, as we are strangers to them. In order to combat this as much as possible, we strived to create an interview environment where the interviewees felt comfortable speaking freely and expressing their opinions about the topics being covered. As we do not consider the topic to be particularly sensitive, as a contrast to studies on for example identity and emotions, and as the interviewees did not show signs of being uncomfortable in the situation, we did not see that they were *unwilling* to express themselves. If we noticed that interviewees were *incapable* expressing themselves, we tried to be patient and let the interviewees take their time finishing their answers. If they still struggled, we rephrased the question or left it to come back to it at a later stage.

4.4 Analysis of the Data

We fully transcribed the semi-structured interviews after conducting them. The interviewees had the choice of doing the interview in either Danish or English. This was to ensure data was not lost in case they were not comfortable expressing themselves in English. One interviewee, the Theatre Professor, chose to be interviewed in Danish. His interview was therefore first transcribed in Danish, and then translated into English. After transcribing the interviews, we started the process of *coding* and making sense of the data, as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2007) and Bryman (2008). Indeed, the coding procedure is an essential part of the data analysis (Saldana, 2009), which involves creating an overview of the findings. This is made by categorising them and identifying recurring topics in the data, as suggested by Seidman (2006).

For this thesis, the data analysis involved a number of stages, outlined as follows: As recommended by Bryman and Bell (2007) and Bryman (2008), we first read through the transcripts carefully without taking notes or considering interpretation to get a thorough understanding of the data. At the end, we wrote down general notes about what struck us as particularly significant or interesting. Secondly, we repeated the first stage, although this time, we marked and highlighted words and passages in the text, as well as added marginal notes on observations and remarks throughout the transcripts. As advised by both Bryman and Bell (2007) and Bryman (2008), we added as many codes as possible. These codes had the effect of giving us an overview of what each passage was about and represented, and they ultimately led to an extensive index of codes.

According to Bryman and Bell (2007) and Bryman (2008), the third stage entailed a systematic coding of the text. Here, we indicated what paragraphs of text were about as well as reviewed the codes by examining them thoroughly. Among other things, this was to ensure we did not use “*two or more words of phrases for the same phenomenon*” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 586), and in case we did, we eliminated repetition and similar codes, and occasionally renamed the remaining codes slightly. Additionally, as recommended by Bryman and Bell (2007) and Bryman (2008), we considered whether any connections arose between the codes. If we found that some of the codes naturally came together, if for instance some codes were all examples of different ways of phrasing something, we grouped together those. Fourth, we started to interpret and make sense of the data by refining the coding and identifying the most significant key ideas, which is suggested by both Bryman and Bell (2007) and Bryman (2008). Moreover, we looked for connections between codes and finally related the codes to the research question and the literature review, which Bryman (2008) recommends. From the data analysis, four themes emerged (*see chapter 5*), laying the foundation for further analysis and discussion.

4.5 Research Quality Considerations

4.5.1 Pilot Interviews

Scholars such as Kvale (1996) and Straights and Singleton (2011) agree that interviews should be rehearsed in advance, to ensure that the questions are clear and comprehensible. Therefore, we conducted two pilot interviews, in order to test the questions but also as preparation and practice for ourselves. The pilot interviews led us to adding one additional question, and rephrasing two due to ambiguity in them.

Another key learning from conducting the pilot interviews were that we should divide the questions and sections in the interview guides between us researchers before conducting the interviews. By doing so, we had a clear view of which one of us would ask certain questions, and could avoid confusion between us researchers and increase clarity to the interviewees. Yet, both researchers were able to ask follow-up questions.

4.5.2 Ethical Considerations

When conducting the research, certain ethical issues had to be considered by us as researchers. Bryman and Bell (2012) present several principles of research ethics, and by acknowledging these, we strived to ensure full protection of the interviewees. In line with what Bryman and Bell (2012) suggest, we confirmed confidentiality and anonymity to all interviewees before starting the interviews to show respect for their privacy. For the same reason, no personal details about the interviewees were included in the thesis, as the thesis might be made publically available online at Lund University’s website. Therefore, all names were tweaked, the Danes names being replaced, whereas the Marketing Manager and Theatre Professor were referred to with their professional title. Moreover, several conscious actions were made by us in order to ensure informed consent, some of which have been discussed earlier in this chapter. First, we briefly outlined the nature and purpose of the study, although we were very careful to not share too much information that might influence

the interviewees' answers. Moreover, we informed them why we were interested in their contributions to the study. Prior to conducting the interviews, we also asked all interviewees for permission to audio record the interviews, to which all agreed, and guaranteed their access to the finished thesis. As participation in the research was made on voluntary basis, all interviewees could withdraw their participation in the research. They were also able to ask us questions regarding our research, in case of any queries related to their participation and the thesis in broader terms.

In line with the key principles for ethical considerations within qualitative research, presented by Easterby-Smith et al. (2012), we had to ensure that the research was of no harm to any of the participants, in that it involves risks to hurt them or cause stress. As discussed earlier in this chapter, we did not consider the research topic as being of particularly sensitive nature. Nevertheless, we informed the interviewees that they were free to not answer a question if they were not comfortable doing so. However, none of the interviewees chose this option.

4.5.3 Trustworthiness

Within qualitative research, trustworthiness is seen as necessary in order to assess the quality of the research. It consists of *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability* (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Credibility is related to whether research is performed according to “*the canons of good practice*” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 410). We audio-recorded all interviews and transcribed them as suggested by various scholars (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Malterud, 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) to decrease the risk of data loss. Moreover, credibility entails enabling the people on whom you conducted research an opportunity to ensure the accuracy of the empirical findings. For this study, that entailed submitting both transcripts of the interviews as well as the finished thesis to each of the interviewees, in order for them to approve that we transcribed and interpreted their words accurately. This is by Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 411) referred to as “*respondent validation*”. All interviewees approved of both transcripts and empirical findings, which increased the credibility of the research. To further increase credibility, we consulted our supervisor throughout the time of conducting the research, to discuss the stages in our process.

Transferability is occupied with whether empirical findings can be transferred to other contexts (Bryman & Bell, 2007). In order to increase transferability, we provided detailed descriptions of the case that was studied - the RDT - and its context. We also clarified the steps taken prior to and throughout the data collection, including our criteria for the sampling, and presented the interview guides.

Dependability is concerned with ensuring that all phases of the research process are recorded (Bryman & Bell, 2007). To increase dependability, we strived for transparency throughout the process to make it traceable for readers. This entailed describing the steps of the research process carefully and making interview guides and transcripts available. Additionally, we made decisions in terms of the data analysis and interviewee selection explicit.

Confirmability is related to ensuring that the researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith (Bryman & Bell, 2007). This, we strived to achieve by making our transcripts available for external scrutiny by sending them to our supervisor. Furthermore, we acknowledge that objectivity is not achievable (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Malterud, 2008), nor the goal of qualitative research, as the researcher will influence the process (Malterud, 2008), but aimed to stay conscious of our pre-understanding and be constantly aware of how we influenced the research process, to reduce researcher bias.

4.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we have presented and argued for our methodological choices. We have outlined how we conducted our research, with the different steps involved in the process, from the sampling and selection of interviewees, to the data analysis. The empirical findings will be presented in the following chapter.

5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

In this chapter, we present our empirical findings and the themes that arose from our data analysis. The aim of this study was to answer how traditional cultural institutions can use co-creation activities to reach a broader segment of the market. In order to explore the research question, interviews were conducted with eight Danes, the Marketing Manager at the RDT and a Theatre Professor from the University of Copenhagen. The interviews with the eight Danes were coded thematically, whereas the interviews with the Marketing Manager and Theatre Expert were interview-driven, in that the themes emerged naturally from the structure of the interview guide. This was divided into the headings of ‘Strategy’, ‘Heritage’ and ‘Co-creation’. Four themes emerged from the interviews with the Danes, which are presented in the table below and thereafter examined. At the end of this chapter, the empirical findings are summarised for an overview of the findings.

As a note in regards to the presentation of the empirical findings, we refer to the eight Danish interviewees as “the Danes” in order to simplify for the reader to distinguish between the perspectives. We also note that we use “they” and “them” when referring to the RDT, as the RDT is a corporate brand (*see chapter 2*).

THEMES
1. Brand - Audience Distance
2. Brand - Audience Relatability
3. Brand - Audience Communication
4. Brand - Audience Involvement

Figure 7: Overview of the Themes

5.1 Theme 1: Brand - Audience Distance

The first theme identified revolved around seeing the RDT as something inaccessible and distanced to the interviewees. The majority of the interviewees did not see themselves as

being part of the audience. Nevertheless they seemed to have established ideas of the typical RTD visitors. Ditthe expressed her view of the RDT as an “.. *outdated institution. Maybe something for the upper class*”. Similarly, Lau described the theatre as being elite, and for “*the wealthier part of society*”, which Anders agreed on by saying that “*it has always been where the upper class went to see performances*”. He added that he “*cannot imagine that what they play would appeal to [him]*”. Grethe indicated that the theatre’s mentality is the following:

“We cannot have just anyone coming here. They may laugh too loudly, or clap at the wrong moments”.

She was convinced the RDT is “*a place meant for members of the cultural elite*”. In addition, Lau repeatedly mentioned that the RDT is “*a different world*”, and that she thought she would “*have a hard time interpreting many of the things they show*”.

The majority of the interviewees had not visited the theatre, but yet seemed to have a clear perception of what the atmosphere at the theatre is like. For example, Anders said that “*I imagine their premises are very dark [...] And I imagine there are a lot of chandeliers, and that there are marble floors everywhere.*” Lau agreed that the setting is “*dark*” and imagined everything seeming to be from “*a couple of centuries back*”. She was convinced she would have to be quiet, and that “*people around [her] would sip their cocktails*”. Grethe visualised that “*there is gold, and huge balconies [...] it is very grandiose with the red plush seats, and the red curtains, and the golden ceiling.*” All interviewees but one mentioned that they would carefully select their outfit if they were to see a performance at the theatre. For example, Ruth said “*I think you stick to an etiquette – you just do not wear any outfit*”. Lau agreed, and emphasised “*You would have to consider what you wear*”. She referred to jeans as something that would not be appropriate in this context. Anders agreed by saying “*I would probably wear a shirt and a nice blazer*” and would indeed dress more properly than if he was to go to the cinema. Similarly, Trine said she “*would definitely dress nicely if [she] were to go*”.

Several of the interviewees addressed a distance to the theatre, triggered by the ‘royal’ aspect. Henry explained it by saying:

“I think it is because of the name – the Royal Theatre – [...] it seems so traditional, and it is still related to the royal family in the sense that they have their own box”.

In line with this, Trine associated the theatre to “*thick red carpets and a lot of gold – probably because it is called the royal theatre. I think it looks very “royal”.* Moreover, she imagined it to be “*baroque-like.*” Anders specifically had a view of the connection to the royal family, saying “*I just imagine the queen sitting there dressed very nicely with her cigarette holder.*” There seemed to be a consensus among the interviewees that the RTD is outdated, and Anders, Ruth and Lau referred to it as “*old fashioned*”. Ditthe mentioned that:

“They do not think along new lines [...] and I think it is outdated in the sense that they do not rethink the whole theatre experience. It has been the same for centuries”.

She continued to describe the theatre as 'stagnant', saying "*I mean that they get stuck in the past. I cannot imagine they reinvent themselves*".

Another factor that seemed to create a distance to the theatre was the ticket price. This was emphasised by all interviewees as a factor that made them reluctant to consider the theatre's offerings, regardless of whether they had in fact been to the theatre or not. Among others, Caroline said, that "*it is the price that has kept me from visiting the theatre. It really is*". She added that she would never purchase a ticket at the price level they are being sold at. Lau had never considered visiting the theatre and emphasised that his friends "*cannot afford to go to the Royal Theatre either*". Along the same lines, Ruth said the ticket price might be a factor that "*keeps a lot of people from considering going*". Furthermore, Trine linked the price to the theatre's setting by saying:

"I imagine that it is expensive [...] I think that because it is this magnificent place, it is expensive too".

Most interviewees recommended the theatre to offer discounts, which they considered as an incentive to make people more prone to visit the theatre. Ditthe suggested that the RTD may introduce major discounts, only for a short time period, and by doing so, "*people may be more inclined to go, and if they get a good experience, they are probably likely to come back*". Henry agreed and referred to discounted previews and last minute deals as examples.

5.2 Theme 2: Brand - Audience Relatability

Several of the interviewees addressed a need for making the theatre and the offerings more relatable. Henry, who had visited the theatre a couple of times, mentioned he has had difficulties identifying with the characters in most of the plays. He would like to see plays that are more social realistic or revolve around everyday contemporary topics, such as loneliness, and adds that other Danes, too, "*might identify with that*". Along the same lines, Trine agreed that she wants to see something that is relatable, "*compared to what happened in the 18th century*". As a way of humanising the RDT, Trine mentioned she would be interested in getting an insight into the backstage work at the theatre to see a more human side of the theatre, as she is unaware of the activities taking place behind the scenes. She specifically mentioned the set design and "*the whole setting up of a stage*" as something she would like to see. She said that she follows another Danish theatre on Instagram, which is providing its followers a peek into the organisation, and said, that "*if the Royal Theatre made an account like that, [she] would definitely follow it*". Moreover, Anders acknowledged that another way of decreasing the distance to the audience might be that:

"They could invite people to come and visit the theatre, such as a 'behind the scenes' guided tour".

Lau expressed an interest in getting to know the theatre better, and emphasised that he "*would love to see how the ballet dancers practice, for example*". Moreover, he suggested that the RDT produce a documentary that invites the viewers to step into the insides of the theatre. His suggestion was the following:

“They should follow the different staff and have them tell stories of their everyday life at the theatre [...] so you follow a ballet dancer, and the booking clerk and maybe the theatre director”.

He gave an example of a documentary made about a deeply traditional boarding school in Denmark seen as very elite and old-fashioned, which successfully changed the Danes’ perceptions of it. According to Lau, a similar documentary about the RDT *“would definitely change people’s views of the theatre. They would be invited into this world”.*

Grethe was convinced the RDT has *“to offer something that gives [the Danes] the impression that the royal theatre is a lovely place to be”*, and also had a number of suggestions as to what the RDT can do to be more transparent and accessible to the Danes, such as open rehearsals. In addition, another suggestion was *“for the audiences to get a chance to meet the actors after the performances. That might be really interesting”*. A third suggestion was for the theatre to have representatives to help *“crack the code”* behind the performance ahead of its start, for people that struggle with understanding the traditional offerings.

The interviewees acknowledged a, to them, lack of diversity in the repertoire, both in terms of genres, but also in relation to how well-known the offerings are amongst the public. This, they agreed, has made it non-relatable. Ditthe requested *“a more broad-spectrum repertoire”* that is friendlier towards a wider segment, and mentions satire and comedy as genres she would like to see the theatre embrace. She emphasised that would they do so, she *“would be more inclined to go there”*. Subsequently, she recommended the following:

“I think they have to somehow change the Danes’ attitude towards the theatre. They have to convince people that is it not only a place for the upper class or really old people”.

In terms of the repertoire, Caroline addressed a need for *“something that is more well-known”*, while Trine would like to see more *“popular actors and comedians”*. She stated that those *“could be a breath of fresh air”*.

Several of the interviewees acknowledged that their personal networks indeed was a factor that affected their view and perception of the theatre, and that personal recommendations may make the theatre and its offerings more relatable. Caroline underlined how positive experiences from the theatre can spread effectively across circles of friends and family, as the members of the audience *“will tell their network about it”*. She explained how trust increases when reviews come from people you know: *“if someone you know says ‘I went to the Royal Theatre, and it was great’, then you really believe them”*. This was supported by Henry, who said:

“I think word-of-mouth is the best advertising you can get. You are always inclined to try out what people you know recommend”.

Moreover, Caroline and Trine expressed that the average Dane’s opinion affects their view of the theatre. Caroline referred to LEGO that has successfully exchanged products in return for consumers’ reviews, and suggested the RDT embrace a similar strategy by inviting Danes

"from different groups of society" to review a performance free of charge, and consider having these as ambassadors for the RDT. Similarly, Trine mentioned how reviews by people across different social classes, ages and professions may catch her attention, and said that *"it is always great to get the point of view from someone you do not usually get a review from"*, as opposed to reviews by critics.

5.3 Theme 3: Brand - Audience Communication

The interviewees seemingly agreed that the RDT should communicate themselves and their offerings more effectively. Several of them mentioned that they have not come across advertisements for the theatre, Lau saying, *"I have never seen any ads anywhere"*. Anders expressed a similar opinion by saying that

"It is not that I do not want to go and see an opera – it is just that I do not know what is going on at the theatre and what they offer [...] you do not see advertisements for the theatre anywhere. You know their name, and that is it".

He also mentioned that they might benefit from advertising better. In line with this, Lau underlined that the theatre might want to reconsider some aspects in their advertising strategy, as he said that *"maybe they already give us what we want, but they fail to communicate it"*. Henry explained he has once seen an advertisement for the theatre, which depicted a dissolving skeleton, and that it indeed *"did not encourage [him] to seek out their offerings"*.

Various interviewees mentioned social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, as a means to communicate their offerings, as it is an effective tool to reach out to the masses today. Ditthe explained, that *"if the [RDT] wants to reach people today, I think social media is the way to go"*. She suggested they embrace social media, not only to communicate with their audience, but also to *"advertise what they are currently playing"*. Anders agreed, saying that social media as communication tool is *"a good and fast way of reaching people these days"*. Lau supported the idea of the RDT embracing social media and emphasises Facebook as an effective platform for them to engage with their audiences.

In addition to online methods of reaching audiences, more traditional approaches were suggested by several of the interviewees. Anders recommended the theatre to consider having pop-up stalls at multiple locations around Copenhagen, to increase visibility. This would enable them to *"hand out free programmes, provide information on the theatre and answer people's questions"*. Other suggestions included placing ads on places exposed to a large proportion of the Danes in the Greater Copenhagen area. Lau mentioned that ads in the free newspapers distributed on train stations, which he stressed are read by thousands of people *"every day while riding busses and trains"*. He also saw radio as a distribution channel worth considering, as of the wide reach potential.

5.4 Theme 4: Brand - Audience Involvement

There seemed to be consensus among the interviewees in terms of being heard and acknowledged by the theatre, to varying degrees and in different ways. All interviews but two expressed an interest in gaining an influence on the theatre's future offerings. Caroline suggested leaving feedback on performances and offerings as one example, and that *"you should always listen to your audience and their needs"*. Similarly, Henry said, *"It is always a good idea to listen to your audience"*, and Trine was convinced that *"everyone wants to be heard"*. Grethe discussed an example from an open rehearsal she attended at another Danish theatre, where the audience was invited to provide feedback afterwards. She described it as *"such a good experience"* and that the *"theatre should consider that too"*. Ruth mentioned the RDT would be wise to consider the Danes' opinions and thinks the theatre should *"be open to new ideas"* and *"give the Danes a say in decisions in relation to the repertoire"*. This, she said, was because:

"The Danes may have many, many ideas in terms of what the theatre might play. And the theatre could benefit from listening to those".

Apart from supporting the idea of the audiences giving feedback related to existing offerings, Ditthe elaborated and mentioned that people might have the opportunity to also *"add [their] own ideas to new plays and operas for example"*. Indeed, Anders mentioned that having a say in terms of the theatre's offerings *"would make [him] so much more interested"*.

Several of the interviewees expressed that social media might act as a platform for involvement and engagement between the RDT and their audiences. Caroline recommended social media as *"it would make it easier for the consumers to express their opinion"*, and that *"it can create a more personal relation between the theatre and its audience"*. She made references to My Starbucks Idea, which is Starbucks' online community where consumers are invited to share suggestions and ideas in terms of future Starbucks' products, and said, *"maybe the theatre could do something similar – create an online platform and have the Danes come up with all kinds of ideas"*. Moreover, she, Anders and Lau all suggested online based competitions, such as on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, as means to engage audiences. According to Caroline, an option may be to hold a competition about performances to be added to the repertoire, where the idea that gets the most 'likes' will be added. On a similar note, Lau said, *"if you pitch an idea [to the theatre], you get a chance to win tickets"*. Anders, however, suggested the RDT lets the Danes *"choose between different plays the theatre considers playing"*. He said that an incentive for the Danes to contribute to this would be the chance for the people who vote to win tickets to the play that is ultimately added to the repertoire. He noted that the competition *"should be very easy to participate in [...] so that a lot of people might actually be interested in partaking, as everyone seems to be so busy these days"*. Trine, too, supported the idea of an online platform for audience involvement, and suggested launching a *"really nice website"* where ideas can be submitted, discussed and voted for.

In addition to online-based interaction, the interviewees mentioned several other ways the theatre might engage with their audience. For example, surveys were mentioned by four of the interviewees, as means to obtain feedback and suggestions in relation to the RDT's offerings. Henry for instance recommended the theatre to get in contact with randomly

selected people on the streets of Copenhagen, but also to conduct telephone interviews. These activities would be a way for the RDT to get an insight into the public's opinions about the theatre and to find out *"what would make them inclined to visit the theatre"*, and consider their suggestions when planning the repertoire.

Ruth suggested the theatre to organise brainstorming, which was also proposed by Anders, as a way of coming up with new ideas for the theatre's repertoire. She noted, that *"they should gather people that are interested in getting heard, and that have ideas and suggestions"*. Grethe acknowledged that not all Danes might be suitable as contributors to creative ideas for the theatre, as not everyone is *"artistic"* and able to imagine reasonable ideas if they have no knowledge of creative processes. However, she emphasised the following:

"I think the theatre can benefit from considering the opinions of creative people, and people that can think along new lines".

Similarly, Henry recognised that some people would be a better fit than others, and that the theatre may consider to *"get in contact with and collaborate with arts and culture students and have them generate ideas"*. When talking about interacting with the audience, Grethe raised the point about targeting existing theatregoers around the country, via *"explorers"* or representatives from the theatre. In her opinion, these are people who show an interest in theatre, and that might be more willing to get involved in the shaping of the offerings, aside from non-theatregoers. She contemplated that *"if people do not go to the theatre in the towns they live in, they are probably not very inclined to go to the Royal Theatre either"*. She considered whether the Royal Theatre *"should even consider collaborating with the smaller theatres around the country"*.

Two interviewees presented rather specific examples of involving the audience, but in two different ways. Trine referred to an approach initiated by another theatre in Copenhagen, which turned a girl's diary into a play. She emphasised how an idea like that is great and that *"it is something you can relate to so much"*, and that she was thoroughly excited about it. Grethe, on the other hand, had experienced a 'moving performance' at a prison in Denmark, where the audience played an active part in the execution of the play. The audience was guided around the premises and played opposite actors and contributed to the script via provided lines. She referred to this experience by saying that *"it was very intriguing [...] it would be very interesting to see the royal theatre embrace something similar"*.

In discussions about audience involvement in shaping the offerings, some of the interviewees recognised that there is only a certain degree of influence that can be handed over to the public. As mentioned above, Caroline suggested that the theatre could offer the Danes to vote for pre-determined options to become part of the repertoire *"so the theatre is in control but people still have the opportunity to influence the repertoire"*. On this topic, Anders commented that:

"If the Danes get to just brainstorm, that might be too chaotic. And people's ideas might go in all directions and maybe move away from what the theatre stands for".

Moreover, Ditthe said that while “[the RDT] should be open to change” she also acknowledged that the suggestions from the audience would need a certain degree of control and supervision, as “people might come up with some bizarre ideas, and obviously the theatre cannot comply with anything”. This matched Anders’ viewpoint, and he addressed that “there needs to be a certain amount of respect around the Royal Theatre”. He continued by saying that:

“They should definitely renew themselves, but they should probably stick to their traditions too”.

Ruth was of the opinion that the repertoire should ultimately “be for the theatre to decide”. She added, that “they should be open to new ideas” but that “they want to pick ideas they can vouch for”. Anders agreed, saying that “someone from the theatre should be present” at a potential brainstorming session to ensure the Danes’ ideas and suggestions are aligned with the theatre’s strategy.

5.5 The Managerial Perspective at The Royal Danish Theatre

Strategy

According to the Marketing Manager at the RDT, the theatre is currently transitioning between two strategies. As mentioned above, the current strategy, “More for More” runs until the end of 2015. A main difference between the old strategy and the new one, which is currently being formulated, is that the core values (Invitation, Enhancement, Relevance, Excellence, Innovation) will now be used as a framework and guidelines throughout the entire organisation and in all departments. Moreover, the theatre conducts occasional focus groups “to get to know a little bit about [their] audience” but he also acknowledged the following:

“We are still a little bit behind compared to huge consumer brands who are way better than us on business intelligence”.

In regards to the theatre’s audience, the Marketing Manager mentioned that the majority belong to the 55+ segment, tend to be of high income and high education compared to the average Dane, and come from the Copenhagen area. As a way of reaching a wider geographical area in Denmark, the RDT has introduced what is called ‘RDT Cinema’, where large productions, a recent example being Swan Lake, are being shown at local cinemas across the country. The theatre sees this as a way of including the population in their offerings.

The Marketing Manager has identified a threshold in that people seem to have the opinion that the theatre is too expensive and not something they would be interested in, which are barriers the theatre is working on overcoming. To combat this threshold, they have initiated a number of activities with the purpose of making the theatre more inviting. He said:

“We also try to look at the theatre, not only what goes on at the stage, but trying to open the theatre up to make it more transparent”

One initiative being to “*make people relate more to the actors*” by bringing them down from the stage, as opposed to having “*big stars coming on the scene and doing their thing, then wandering back as spirits you cannot relate to*”. They are trying to move away from that distance, as “[*they*] *do not believe that works in 2015*”. Another initiative is to do guided tours around the premises, to give an insight into the behind-the-scenes activities, and what is going on outside of the stage. An aim of making the theatre more transparent and modern is to “*be more legitimate, both in relation to politicians, but also in relation to the audience*.” He acknowledged that because the theatre is publicly funded, “[*they*] *need to give something back*”. He also mentioned the need for the RDT to open up and be more inviting, which they are trying to be, but it may have consequences in terms of the audience. “*There is this anxiety that [the RDT] might be losing some of the audience, because there are so many who are old*.” However, in this respect he also noted, that “*you can lose the old ones, but you can also bring new ones in*”. Looking at the audience’s perception of the RDT, the Marketing Manager said that “*people really love the theatre*”, and contemplated that most people have positive feelings towards them.

Heritage

The Marketing Manager explained that respecting the theatre’s heritage while renewing its image is a balancing act. He explains:

“I think the whole thing about culture and heritage is to really take care so that it evolves all the time, that it is moving. I think if you become too much like a museum, you will become extinct”.

He, however, recognised that the RDT in some respects has made that mistake over the years. In discussing how the theatre uses their heritage strategically, he said, “*The trick is to make use of the best things about the heritage*”. The Marketing Manager mentioned how the theatre’s offerings must be made with respect for the traditions, and simultaneously must be of highest quality. He said:

“That is why we have ‘excellent’ as a core value, we think that we need to be the best in many ways. Otherwise it would not make sense to have a national theatre, if it was just another theatre, just another ballet. We really need to create the best, and we also play all the classics all the time”.

He acknowledged that heritage brands may face struggles as to whether they “*live with the present*” or only “*live on their past*”. In relation to that, he added that if the heritage is not taken care of, “*it may wither out*”. In order to prevent this, and for the brand to stay relevant, he noted, “*you have to nurture it, that is what it is all about. Otherwise I think you will become irrelevant*.” In an attempt to stay relevant, the RDT tries to “*twist the whole thing*”, and the theatre has recently introduced more experimental types of performances, such as musicals, which have not been part of the repertoire previously. In addition, the Marketing Manager mentioned they are in the early stages of planning a performance “*where the audience should be able to interact*” via their smart phone. He noted, however, that this should be done “*in a really unique way*.”

Referring back to the potential perception of actors being alien like characters on the stage, the Marketing Manager mentioned that:

“I think that is a bad part of the heritage that we are trying to disconnect from. It is both an advantage, because everyone knows what the Royal Theatre is, but it is also a disadvantage which we really have to try and work our way around.”

When talking about this, he related to the prejudice of the RDT being perceived as ‘snobbish’ by some people, while they in fact seem unaware as to what is going on at the theatre, and what they actually offer.

What the Marketing Manager acknowledged was that nurturing a heritage brand involves having a great deal of responsibility, and that it is *“both an advantage and a burden”*. Here, he said that the heritage must *“constantly be considered and respected”*, and that the RDT, for example, cannot be provocative as it may cause much confusion to the audience and would not suit the brand. About this, he mentioned the following:

“You have got a responsibility for the brand and its history, and you are in a way a part of it, and a caretaker of its traditions”

Co-creation

In terms of considering the audience’s needs and wants, the Marketing Manager was open to involving the audience in the theatre’s offerings, to a varying extent. He acknowledged that potential co-creation activities might be best suited for the theatre’s more experimental stages. This is due to the long planning process behind many of the larger productions that take place on the main stages and require extensive coordination of performers and orchestras. The Marketing Manager noted that an important aspect is to not compromise with the quality of the offerings and the artistic uniqueness of the theatre’s performances. Hence, a risk in diverting influence of the theatre’s offerings to the public is that the artistic quality might suffer. In line with this, he underlined the importance of high standards in their offerings, by saying the following:

“We are not it for the profit [...] we are in it for making things that are artistically unique and really fantastic”.

Moreover, he emphasised that a requirement for embracing co-creation activities would be to do it with a limited part of the repertoire and on occasional basis. When discussing the most appropriate co-creation method, the Marketing Manager acknowledged that a platform *“online might not be the best for [the theatre]”*, which he explains by saying that the core of the RDT’s value proposition is to offer something that is live, present and *“right here.”* This, he adds, is *“a bit hard to achieve through a mobile.”* Hence, he was more open to an offline platform. He also acknowledged that so far, they have mainly embraced non-digital means in their operations, and that *“[they are] too analogue”*. He explained how they have not quite entered the digital era as quickly as others have, but that *“[they] are trying to.”*

The Marketing Manager identified a perceived slight dilemma in embracing media alternatives, while still conveying the theatrical and artistic experience. While acknowledging that mobile gadgets must not be neglected, the theatre's main offerings are difficult to convey through mobile devices without sacrificing the experience the theatre strives to transmit to people. When discussing this, the Marketing Manager mentioned FOMO - Fear Of Missing Out - and how people today, as a consequence of the intensely digital society, may be fed up with *"always being on"*. Here, he saw a potential for the theatre to tap into the digital media overload, and contemplated that:

"Maybe there is room for us as a brand to say 'Hey, let us turn our backs to all those electronic gadgets, come in here and try to connect with your senses, try to connect with other people'".

He emphasised that they want to encourage people to *"turn off that mobile or whatever thing they are sitting with, and go in and experience things"*. This may be achieved by *"telling the audience [...] that we are an alternative, and we are not digital"*.

5.6 The Theatre Professor's Perspective

Strategy

The Theatre Professor at the University of Copenhagen acknowledged that he is *"not afraid to work with conflicting strategies"*, and that he is not reluctant to try one thing that may differ from another, from a strategic perspective. Contrasting an earlier view, where it seemed important to work with only one strategy, he noted that today's environment *"is so composed and so complex that working with very diverse and, at first, conflicting strategies and messages is not dangerous anymore"*.

The Theatre Professor referred to three types of theatregoers; one type being those that should just be told a time and place to turn up, *"and then they will be there"*. The second type are those that are not sure what theatre is about, and with those, you have to say, *"You should really come."* Then there are those that you have to reach through what is called outreach, and as the Theatre Professor notes, *"It is not enough to display the earth's largest billboard in front of them, because it is pointless to them."* If you want to reach these, other strategies must be considered. The Theatre Professor acknowledged that with these, *"you have to be proactive."*

When discussing how to reach more people, the Theatre professor underlined that *"word-of-mouth is the best marketing"*. However, going with people one is comfortable with, such as friends or colleagues, may make individuals overcome the *"mental hurdle"* that it might be for some. He said, *"[the theatre] is more of a social thing - you almost never see people going to the theatre alone"*. However, he also acknowledged that *"theatre may not be for everyone"*, and that it may be difficult to get people to come that *"who are not interested to come to the theatre"*. Drawing on this, he suggested that inviting a friend for a reduced price to join to the theatre *"could set the scene for people bringing someone to the theatre, at a reduced price"*. He addressed that the RDT *"should strive to provide many opportunities"*, that *"address*

different audiences". In doing so, the theatre should also think outside of the current audiences, and consider audiences that are not already represented.

Heritage

The Danish population tends to "*expect 'something extra' in comparison to an ordinary theatre*" and emphasised that "*we are not exactly sure what that is. It should be better in some way.*" The theatre has a great responsibility, partly due to the large amount of tax money they receive, to show to politicians and taxpayers that they indeed offer something out of the ordinary. In addition, people expect the RDT's performances to be "*both traditional and innovative*". In fact, according to the *Performing Arts Law* of Denmark, the Royal Theatre is instructed to be both traditional and innovative. The Theatre Professor referred to this as a "*dilemma*", and said the following:

"It is also a dilemma that the performances being produced at The Royal Theatre – they want them to be innovative, and that is appreciated by arbiters of taste, theatre reviewers, and so on. And then they should not be too traditional".

He contemplated how the RDT might handle it, but argued that the theatre should be "*aware that they have a communication task in terms of the repertoire being played*". This, he noted, entails the theatre to ensure they transmit the performances in a way that is comprehensible.

In discussing how much importance the theatre should attach to their heritage, the Theatre Professor said that it is a compromise. He argued, "*It should not be the most prominent factor, because that will give the theatre an old-fashioned scent, but it should be visible. The royal crown belongs to the Royal Theatre.*"

Co-creation

The Theatre Professor noted that he "*[does] not think they are very innovative in their way of marketing the Royal Theatre*" and added that the theatre "*could definitely be much more in dialogue with their audience.*" In this respect, he suggested that involving the public "*may be a renewal*" and "*a good option.*" Essentially, he noted the following:

"We are talking about how we want to be more included and "on". You are a performative generation, and interaction means a lot more. Gaining an influence is essential today, compared to 20-30 years ago".

The Theatre Professor referred to the concept of 'Borgerscene', translated literally to 'Citizen Scene', which is a type of theatre, originally from Germany, that invites the public to generate and discuss ideas in relation to a particular theatre's repertoire. He mentioned how two Danish theatres outside of the capital region have successfully introduced the concept. A playwright and other representatives from the theatre have then been present with the aim of writing the participants' play, which they are later to star in themselves. In relation to the RDT, the Theatre Professor acknowledged, that "*it has helped to create innovation*" and that "*[he] could definitely imagine making Citizen Scene for the Royal Theatre.*"

He mentioned that art “*is not democratic [...] but has an obligation to try to reach out*”, and should consequently be multifaceted, as opposed to go in only one direction. Therefore, diversity is essential, and he underlined the high importance for the RDT to try different activities, and that “*it is the death of art if you constantly need to ensure that nobody gets offended*”. Moreover, he made a distinction between being ‘diverse’ and being ‘versatile’, and said that “*[he thinks] it is unfair if one forced theatre to be versatile, but it should be diverse*”.

When speaking about methods for the co-creation, the Theatre Professor vouched for offline methods for the theatre and audience to engage, as “*[he did not] think that the “living” art should be made via the Internet*”. Instead, he suggested the theatre to open up and target sports clubs and societies for all ages to meet and discuss ideas face-to-face.

“I believe we should gather people and have them be in the same room – I think that is really important, particularly when it comes to theatre. Because theatre is where we are facing each other. The attracting part of theatre is that we are in the same room”.

He further underlined that if the theatre want influences from the audience, they must invite the audience in, and that “*they could definitely be much more in dialogue with their audience*”. However, in this respect he also mentioned the importance of being selective in how they involve the audience, and that “*it is important that they do so with some of the repertoire only.*”

5.7 Summary of the Main Findings

As presented in this chapter, four themes emerged from the coding of the interviews with the Danes, namely ‘Brand – Audience Distance’, ‘Brand – Audience Relatability’, ‘Brand – Audience Communication’ and ‘Brand – Audience Involvement’. As the interviews with the Marketing Manager and the Theatre Professor were interview-driven, they were divided and presented according to the blocks of ‘Strategy’, ‘Heritage’ and ‘Co-creation’. These blocks followed the structure of the interview guides used for these two interviews.

The findings show that only six out of eight of the Danes had been visiting the theatre, yet all of them seemed to have a very clear perception of the institution and its offerings. The Danes expressed a distance to the theatre, among other things in relation to factors such as its repertoire, price level, perceived elitism, outdatedness, and that it mainly seem to attract older age groups. The Marketing Manager indeed said that a significant proportion of the visitors belong to the high-income segment, and are above the age of 55. The Marketing Manager acknowledged that the theatre indeed can be perceived as snobbish, but in fact people do not seem to be aware of the wide spectrum of the offerings. Along these lines, most of the Danes expressed that they had never seen any advertisements for the RDT. They all agreed that the theatre should communicate themselves and their offerings more effectively, online as well as offline. Furthermore, the Theatre Professor acknowledged that the theatre do not communicate themselves very innovatively.

The Danes wished for the theatre to appear as more relatable and identifiable, for example by featuring more diverse, well-known and contemporary performances, and by making the

RDT and its activities more transparent. Behind-the-scenes and backstage features were desired, which the Marketing Manager mentioned as something the RDT is currently working on, for the purpose of increasing the ability to relate to the theatre and its offerings.

In relation to engagement and participation, all but two of the Danish representatives expressed an interest in gaining an influence on the theatre's future offerings. Similarly, the Theatre Professor mentioned that consumer influence is essential today, as people want to be included to a higher degree than some decades ago. The Marketing Manager supported the idea of consumer involvement, although to a limited extent. Moreover, what became clear from both the Danes perspective and the managerial perspective was that the theatre should remain in control, and have the ultimate say in terms of the offerings and idea generation. This is to ensure a high quality in the offerings. On this note, both the Theatre Professor and the Marketing Manager acknowledged that a possible co-creation should be limited to certain parts of the repertoire only, and the Marketing Manager suggested that such activities might be most suitable for the theatre's experimental stages. Overall, the artistic quality of the theatre's offerings are of primary focus and cannot be neglected. In terms of how a potential engagement between the theatre and the audience might take place, the Danes seemed to prefer online methods, with emphasis on social media channels. The Marketing Manager and Theatre Professor, however, showed slightly cautious attitudes towards internet-based engagement, as the live experience is of main focus for the theatre. However, gathering audiences and have them brainstorm ideas was supported by both the Marketing Manager and the Theatre Professor, as it correlates to the actual theatrical experience, which invites people are together in the same room.

The theatre's heritage plays a significant part in their identity, activities and offerings. The Marketing Manager explained that the heritage must be constantly considered, respected and nurtured, or the brand will become irrelevant. The Theatre Professor acknowledged that, in terms of the theatre's heritage, they must balance tradition with innovation in their strategy.

Moreover, the Danes and the Theatre Professor agreed on different types of incentives being a means to attract more people, among other things by using competitions, as emphasised by several of the Danes, and by offering audiences to bring a friend or partner at a reduced price, as suggested by the Theatre Professor. Moreover, both him and the Danes acknowledged that going in groups, such as with friends or colleagues, can both make people more inclined to visit the theatre, but also contributes to the theatrical experience.

Expected and Unexpected Findings

Certain findings were of expected character, and aligned with the literature we had consulted prior to designing the interview guides and conducting the interviews. One such finding was that the Danes showed willingness to engage with the theatre, and with organisations in general, and partake in shaping the offerings. All the Danes agreed this on. However, the Marketing Manager and Theatre Professor both acknowledged that the heritage of the brand as well as their roots and traditions must be respected throughout the theatre's offerings, and hence this must be considered in potential co-creation activities.

However, some findings appeared as unexpected. The fact that the heritage can be a burden, as the Marketing Manager mentioned, was one of the more surprising findings as

this is somewhat neglected in the heritage literature. This was mentioned in the context of the great responsibility the heritage entails, and the importance of nurturing it. Both he and the Theatre Professor, however, mentioned the dilemma of balancing innovation and renewal with tradition and heritage.

5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented and summarised the findings from the semi-structured interviews. First, we presented the findings from the interviews with the Danes according to the four themes that derived from the coding. Thereafter, we outlined the findings from the interviews with the Marketing Manager and the Theatre Professor, presented in accordance to the structure of the interview guides. Lastly, we summarised and compared the findings across the three perspectives.

6. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we will highlight our key findings from the interviews with the Danes, the Marketing Manager at the RDT and the Theatre Professor and discuss them in relation to previous studies presented in the Literature Review.

Mismatch Between Perceptions

Through the primary research, it became clear that the interviewees had relatively limited awareness of the RDT and their activities. Six out of the eight Danes had never been to the theatre, but yet seemed to have a clear perception as to how they would experience a visit there, and a clear idea of what the repertoire looks like. The findings that derived from Theme 1 (see chapter 5.1) suggest that the Danes perceive the RDT as old-fashioned and outdated and for the elite and the upper class. One interviewee even stated that she feels as if the theatre is “a different world” with offerings that are hard to interpret. Similarly, the interviewees seemed to agree that the RDT should be open to change and new ideas (see Theme 4, chapter 5.4). Hereby, they seem to demand a more market-oriented approach from the theatre (Wiedmann, 2011; Urde and Koch, 2014). The Marketing Manager acknowledged that the theatre struggles with prejudices amongst the Danish population, as many people seem to consider the theatre and its activities as not appealing to them. His perception hence agree with what arose in the Empirical Findings (see chapter 5), in that the Danes see the theatre as out of their reach. As became evident from the application of the CBIRM to the RDT, there is indeed a gap between the theatre's wanted and actual position in the market. Working towards creating a stronger reputation to align it with the brand's identity is hence essential for the RDT.

Communication

Anders sums up what seems to be the shared opinion among the interviewees, “It is not that I do not want to go and see an opera – it is just that I do not know what is going on at the theatre and what they offer [...] you do not see advertisements for the theatre anywhere. You know their name, and that is it” (see Theme 2). Hence, it might not be a lack of interest in the theatre and its offerings that has kept the Danes from going, but rather a lack of knowledge

hereof. According to Colbert (2009), one of the most critical factors for arts and cultural institutions today is to communicate their artistic work effectively, in order to “[break] through the wall” of competitors’ offerings, which Baumgarth (2009) and Wallace (2006) also acknowledge. However, the Theatre Professor explained that he “[does] not think they are very innovative in their way of marketing the Royal Theatre”. In this respect, he added that they could definitely communicate their offerings more efficiently. One interviewee acknowledged that although he had seen an advertisement for the theatre once, it depicted a dissolving skeleton, which he found distasteful and uninviting and it “did not encourage [him] to seek out their offerings”. Based on the above, the theatre might need to consider its external communication tactics in targeting the Danes. In relation to the RDT’s communication efforts, Colbert (2009) and Baumgarth (2009) agree that managers of institutions like the RDT are wise to embrace techniques and concepts from the business world that many arts and cultural institutions have previously been reluctant to acknowledge. Contemporary cultural institutions should indeed integrate branding and communication activities with the aim of strengthening their reputation among their stakeholders, as Massi and Harrison (2009) suggest.

The Paradox of Balancing Tradition and Innovation

Through our research, we have identified a paradox between heritage and co-creation, and similarly, Cooper et al. (2015) refer to this as a ‘tension’. This paradox derives from the challenge of finding a balance between respecting a brand’s heritage while being perceived as relevant and innovative in the market place. The RDT explicitly states ‘Relevance’ and ‘Innovation’ as their core values. As mentioned in chapter 2, core values sum up what a brand stands for (Brown et al., 2003; Urde & Greyser, 2014; Urde & Greyser, 2015), and staying relevant and being innovative is hence expected to be guiding their behaviour. Simultaneously, the theatre’s heritage must be respected, which the Marketing Manager addressed in the following way, “You have got a responsibility for the brand and its history, and you are in a way a part of it, and a caretaker of its traditions”. Yet, an overall challenge for the RDT and other corporate heritage brands lies in embracing change without disregarding their traditions, which Cooper et al. (2015) also noted.

Interestingly, when talking about balancing the past with the present, the Theatre Professor explicitly referred to it as a “dilemma”, for the theatre to be “both traditional and innovative”. When elaborating, he said that the theatre’s offerings should be innovative in order to attract the Danish public, including arbiters of taste and theatre reviewers. Yet, he acknowledged that the theatre should also be offering traditional performances, as according to the Danish Performing Arts Law, they are under an obligation in terms of the repertoire. Therefore, the RDT is expected to remain traditional to a certain degree. However, he added that traditional performances should not be dominating the repertoire, as that would give the theatre “an old-fashioned scent”. Instead, he suggested that the theatre strives to balance “tradition with innovation”, which resonates with what scholars such as Urde et al. (2007) say. On this topic, the Marketing Manager addressed what he referred to as a problem for many heritage brands, and contemplated, “Do they live on their past or do they live with the present?”.

Similarly, the Marketing Manager underlined that they cannot live in the past, but must indeed “connect with the present”. Referring back to the RDT, the theatre is faced with the challenge of balance their core values of ‘Relevance’ and ‘Innovation’ with their traditions and

their obligation to offer traditional performances. He also noted that ensuring the heritage evolves all the time and stays relevant is critical in preventing it from becoming extinct and resemble a museum. He emphasised how “*you have to nurture it, that is what it is all about*”, and acknowledged that failure to do so might cause that “*you will become irrelevant*” and “*the brand will die*”. In line with this, Urde et al. (2007) note how nurturing heritage is indeed critical in managing a corporate heritage brand. This view is in accordance with that of Wiedmann et al. (2011), which suggests that heritage can be nurtured over decades and centuries, and help making the brand stay relevant in the present and in the future. Similarly, Balmer (2011) notes that in order to stay relevant, corporate heritage brands must manage continuity and change.

Conflicting Opinions of the Theatre

According to Cooper et al. (2015), the tension, or paradox, between heritage and innovation, has presented a challenge for brand managers. This is because corporate heritage brands might be “*perceived as old, rather than innovative*” (p. 34). To a certain extent, the perception of being “old” seem to be the case for the RDT, based on the Danes’ expressions. Several of the interviewees indeed referred to the RDT as “*old fashioned*” and Ditthe even mentioned that “*I think [the theatre] is outdated in the sense that they do not rethink the whole theatre experience. It has been the same for centuries*” (see Theme 1, chapter 5.1). This is in line with the view of Santo (2015) that corporate heritage brands might be considered out of touch with contemporary consumers. Yet, the Marketing Manager expressed that in his view, “*people really love the theatre*”, and that people predominantly have positive feelings towards it. Based on the general opinions the Danes seem to hold towards the theatre, we have identified a mismatch between how the theatre wants to be perceived and how they are actually perceived by the audience, which became evident when applying the RDT to the CBIRM (see chapter 3).

No Contradiction Between Innovation and Heritage

As noted above, the Marketing Manager and Theatre Professor mentioned the significance of finding a balance between respecting the theatre’s heritage and staying relevant. In line with this, Urde et al. (2007) note that a company can use and express its heritage while being perceived as modern and up to date, by their customers and non-customer stakeholders. Furthermore, Morley and McMahon (2011) underline that being innovative does not conflict with being a heritage brand. Instead, they note that being innovative is a way of meeting contemporary needs and desires in the market. In a similar vein, The Marketing Manager expressed the belief that many heritage brands today are facing struggles as to whether they only live on their past, without being “*with the present*”. Urde et al. (2007) and Burghausen and Balmer (2015) note that a distinct feature of heritage brands is that they embrace three time frames, namely the past, present and future. Thus, they should not rely on their past, but instead enable it and make it relevant. Similarly, Hudson (2011) argues that while brand heritage refers to the past, it is indeed activated in the present. A foundation for nurturing heritage is, however, that the organisational culture supports innovation (Cooper et al., 2015). This relates to the adaptability dimension of ‘Stewardship’ (Urde et al., 2007), and adaptability is essential to maintain a brand’s relevance over time. In line with this, part of the RDT’s strategy running from 2016 is for their core values to be adapted throughout the organisation, across departments. ‘Innovation’

being one of their core values, an innovative mindset might be implemented throughout the organisation.

Balancing Staying True to the Brand and Renewing Themselves

With reference to reaching a sense of balance, several of the interviewees acknowledged that the theatre indeed should respect their traditions and history. However, they also requested that the theatre should become more contemporary. Anders noted that they should “*stick to their traditions*”, but at the same time “*should definitely renew themselves*”. In line with this, Ditthe said, “*I think we should preserve these old institutions, but I think they should also renew themselves*” (see Theme 4, chapter 5.4). As mentioned above, Urde et al. (2007) and Morley and McMahon (2011) agree that there is no contradiction in expressing heritage while being perceived as innovative and progressive. In relation to how the theatre operates today, the Danes indeed expressed that they should be more adapting of contemporary needs, than what is visible. In this respect, it can possibly be said that the audience’s view on achieving a balance between traditions and innovation, resonate with what is discussed above. This, in that they are aware of the rooted traditions of the RDT that must be respected.

Drawing on what has been discussed so far, there seems to be a consensus between the existing brand heritage literature (Urde et al., 2007; Cooper et al., 2015) and our findings from the interviews with the Marketing Manager and Theatre Professor. Being a heritage brand, the RDT sees a paradox in embracing innovation as a means to stay relevant to their audience, while doing so with respect to their heritage. However, and as acknowledged, innovation does not contradict the essence of being a heritage brand, as activating the past indeed is a means for a heritage brand to stay relevant today and in the future. We have so far argued for the need for the RDT to embrace innovation, which indeed is something they strive for, and also have as core value. Nevertheless, the Danes seem to desire an even more innovative approach.

So far, we have discussed heritage along with innovation. Co-creation is recognised as a way of generating new innovations and insights (e.g. Ramaswamy, 2008; Ind et al., 2013) and as an extension to user-driven innovation (Hatch & Schultz, 2010). Seemingly, the previous literature that joins the concepts of brand heritage and co-creation is scarce. Thus, we will now discuss whether the RDT can embrace co-creation into their strategy, in order to attract wider audiences and increase their relevance amongst the Danish population.

From Embracing Innovation to Embracing Co-Creation

As stated in the Literature Review, embracing co-creation activities facilitates for added value for the stakeholders involved Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004b), which for the purpose of this research include the RDT and the Danes. Indeed, most of the Danes agreed on showing an interest in influencing the theatre’s offerings and being involved in co-creation activities, as evident in Theme 4 (see chapter 5.4). This aligns with what Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000) refer to as the active, as opposed to passive, consumers we see today, and the more democratic power relationship seen between organisations and consumers (Kotler et al., 2008). Hence, consumers want to be heard and acknowledged by brands, which indeed is a characteristic from today’s participatory culture (Ind et al., 2013). Anders expressed that if the

theatre would listen to his suggestions and ideas, that “*would make [him] so much more interested*” in the theatre and their offerings. Similarly, Grethe referred to an open rehearsal she went to at another theatre where the audience was asked to provide feedback afterwards. She emphasised how the theatre should consider something similar, as it was “*such a good experience*” (see Theme 4). In a similar vein, the literature suggests that feedback is indeed a valuable benefit for organisations that engage in co-creation (Ind et al., 2013; Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014), in that it can enable insight into consumer preferences, as well as ideas for new brand offerings. Caroline further highlighted the feedback aspect, and emphasised that brands should listen to their consumers at all times. This implies a sense of nurturing a dialogue between the RDT and its audience, hence relates to the Dialogue block in the DART system (see chapter 3), presented by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2008). Moreover, the fact that the Marketing Manager noted how they are trying to be more transparent and open correlates to the Transparency block of the system.

By looking at the responses by the Danes, they seemingly agree on that the theatre would be wise to consider their opinions and be open to receive feedback from the public. Indeed, this applies to the dimension of “Products and Services” of the areas Ramaswamy (2008) present in regards to how co-creation can add value to organisations, which say that co-creation can be embraced to improve current offerings.

Co-Creation of Offerings for the RDT

When discussing co-creation activities in relation to the theatre’s product offerings, the Theatre Professor noted that “*gaining an influence is essential today, compared to 20-30 years ago*”, which correlates with what scholars refer to as a result of the participatory culture with empowered consumers (Ind et al., 2013). Nevertheless, he also noted that the question is *how* to execute co-creation. Similarly, the Marketing Manager contemplated that in the event of potential co-creation activities in relation to the theatre’s offerings, “*the trick is how to format it*”. Hence, the Theatre Professor and the Marketing Manager seemed to be open for co-creation of the theatre’s offerings. Although, they did not have an exact idea of how it might be executed. The Theatre Professor, however, noted that if the theatre embraced co-creation similarly to how certain product brands, such as LEGO, the theatre would only get “*culture students and other geeks to participate*”. However, he added that the RDT could benefit from having “*a more inclusive attitude*”.

In terms of potential co-creation activities, the Marketing Manager referred to the “*production reality*”, with the long planning process and extensive coordination of performers and orchestras, as somewhat a possible hindrance. In this respect, he mentioned that co-creation activities might be most suitable for the theatre’s smaller stages where the productions are of limited size, as opposed to the main stages where the productions are comprehensive. He said, “*on the experimental stages you could easily do [co-creation]*”, and mentioned they have done some similar projects, as evident in the thesis by Fagerberg-Jensen and Hauch-Ranten (2014) (see chapter 3). Seemingly, the RDT has indicated some interest in involving the audience in the offerings. Additionally, according to the Marketing Manager, there are plans for some type of “*devising*” activity for the repertoire of 2016, as means to do a live engagement with the audience.

Co-Creation of Experiences for the RDT

Seemingly, the RDT are careful with how they allow diversion of influence of the offerings to the audience, such as the repertoire. Yet the Marketing Manager mentioned that they enable and embrace co-creation of experiences to a certain degree, through hosting workshops and open houses. In these, the audience is able to co-create their experiences by actively engage in dancing, instrument and singing classes that the RDT offer, along with the performers. In this respect, the Marketing Manager noted “*you can come closer [to the audience] in many ways, and that is what we are trying to do*”.

Distinguishing Between the RDT and Commercial Brands

Much of the literature on co-creation seemingly focus on how the concept can be used to make organisations grow financially as a means to gain competitive advantage (Meyassed et al., 2012; Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014), and to increase the monetary success of the organisation (Ind et al., 2013). However, we acknowledge that these factors are not core strategic aims for the RDT, as they are not a commercial brand, which was emphasised by the Marketing Manager. Hence, they do not compete under the same conditions as product brands or commercial theatres do. In this respect, we recognise that emphasis in the co-creation literature seems to be placed on product brands. Thus, by consulting the existing literature and our empirical findings, we have identified that the conditions for how a corporate heritage brand might embrace co-creation may differ compared to a product brand. This is an aspect the Marketing Manager also acknowledged, as he contemplated that product brands, such as LEGO and Starbucks, possibly can place more emphasis on interaction with the consumer, as these brands aim to be highly competitive and increase their profit. This is a difference in focus compared to the RDT, as monetising from co-creation is not the main ambition. On this topic, the Marketing Manager noted that the theatre is “*not in it for the profit*”. Therefore, as he argued, embracing co-creation might instead damage the brand if it is not well executed, and not aligns with their strategy and offerings. He showed an open attitude towards co-creation, but simultaneously acknowledged that their promise to their audience is an experience of high artistic value. Therefore, potential future co-creation activities must be “*really unique*”, as he explained how “*[they] are in it for making things that are artistically unique and really fantastic*”. Hereby, he seemingly reflected the essence of the brand-oriented paradigm (see chapter 2). Colbert (2009) notes that ensuring the artistic quality of the offerings indeed is essential for managers of contemporary arts and cultural institutions, which is hence aligned with the Marketing Manager’s view.

The RDT’s offerings as “Something Extra”

As mentioned above, the Marketing Manager underlined that the key to succeed is to use the best parts of the heritage, and because of their heritage, they cannot act like other commercial theatres, but must be “*the best*”. He highlighted that this indeed is why they have ‘Excellent’ as a core value. Moreover, the Theatre Professor expressed that amongst the population, there are certain expectations in terms of what the RDT should offer, that what they offer must be “*something extra*”. This is because they have a great deal of responsibility towards stakeholders, as they are governmentally owned and financed by the Danish taxpayers. Hence, they must signal that they offer something above the ordinary.

Consequently, there are certain limitations and scopes the RDT must stay within, in terms of what they can and cannot do with respect to their heritage.

Heritage as a “Burden”

When talking about what they cannot do and how the heritage somewhat limits them, the Marketing Manager noted that they, for example, cannot be provocative in their offerings or marketing and branding activities. This, as it *“would not be suitable for The Royal Theatre, because it would create so much confusion”*. Hence, being provocative would not align with the brand’s promise to the audience. Moreover, the Marketing Manager mentioned that a brand’s heritage could be *“both an advantage and a burden”*, in that there are *“things that [the theatre] really cannot do”*. This appeared as a rather unexpected finding as he touched upon the struggles that managing a corporate heritage brand might entail. In line with this, the Theatre Professor noted, too, that there are certain things the theatre should not do with respect to its heritage, referring to more commercial performances as an example. The Marketing Manager explained how the theatre’s heritage must be constantly considered and respected, and how the theatre has got a responsibility in terms of the brand’s history. That way, he sees himself as *“a caretaker of [the theatre’s] traditions”*. This is aligned with the view of Urde et al. (2007) that a company’s track record raises expectations about how its brand may act today and in the future, and that corporate heritage brands are unique in that they are *“about both history and history in the making”* (Urde et al., 2007, p. 7). Consequently, this suggests that the RDT indeed has certain promises regarding consistency in their offerings to their stakeholders. This aspect is indeed mentioned in the brand heritage literature, but focus in the literature seems to be on how corporate heritage brands can act as value creation and a competitive advantage (e.g. Urde et al., 2007; Balmer, 2015). However, there seem to be little focus on the possible disadvantages of corporate heritage brands.

Where and How Co-Creation Might Take Place

The Marketing Manager mentioned that online did not seem like the most suitable platform for potential co-creation activities. The reason for this is that the theatre’s value proposition emphasises the live experience of the theatre, and that the core of their offerings relies on what is present and *“right here”*. Along the same lines, the Theatre Professor argued that *“[he did not] think that the ‘living’ art should be made via the Internet”*, and instead recommended offline methods for the RDT to engage with their audience. He presented a rather specific example of inviting potential co-creators into the theatre, and has them generate ideas together. He said, *“If you want people to influence the theatre, you have to invite them in - one should not think that the Internet is the most attractive medium”*. In this regard, he mentioned that because the essence of theatre is about facing each other, possible co-creation activities should also take place face-to-face. However, The Danes seemingly agreed on an online platform being the most suitable medium for the RDT to engage with their audiences on. In this respect, we noted a conflict in opinions as to how the engagement between the theatre and the audience might take place. The Danes showed consensus in their preference for an online platform, which is very much aligned with the view of Colbert (2009) that contemporary consumers are savvy and expect companies to capitalise on technological methods. Indeed, the co-creation literature largely emphasise online platforms, such as social media networks, to facilitate the co-creation, as such

platforms offer a convenient and simplified communication loop between organisations and their consumers (e.g. Fournier & Lee, 2009; Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Eyeka, 2012). In contrast, the Marketing Manager and the Theatre Professor regarded offline alternatives as more suitable. In fact, Ind et al. (2013) mention that co-creation engagement does not necessarily need to take place online, but can equally take place offline and face-to-face. Worth acknowledging is that the Marketing Manager, however, mentioned that to date, the RDT has been slightly too analogue, but that they are working on embracing digital tools and methods.

The RDT as Ultimate Decision Makers

Most of the Danes acknowledged, however, that the theatre should ultimately make the decisions in regards to the repertoire and thereby remain in control, as agreed on by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a) and Terblanche (2012). Caroline expressed in the following way, *“so the theatre is in control but people still have the opportunity to influence the repertoire”*. Similarly, Ruth argued that they should be open to new ideas, but also *“pick ideas they can vouch for”*. Moreover, Ditthe noted that while *“[the RDT] should be open to change [...] people might come up with some bizarre ideas, and obviously the theatre cannot comply with anything”*. Hereby, she acknowledged a certain degree of control and supervision from the theatre’s side would be needed. This is aligned with the Marketing Manager’s view that they cannot *“take whatever idea that comes up by whoever can pass [the theatre] on the street”* as that would make people question their artistic excellence.

The RDT as a Live Experience

According to the theatre’s Marketing Manager, *“every brand in the world needs to consider how [they are] unique”*. This is aligned with the view of Kapferer (2012) and Colbert (2009) that a distinct positioning in the market is crucial. On the topic of the theatre’s positioning, the Marketing Manager contemplated the following, *“Maybe there is room for us as a brand to say, ‘Hey, let us turn our backs to all those electronic gadgets, come in here and try to connect with your senses [...] we are right here, we are live”*. He said that there might be a revival for that, and further noted that he sees an opportunity in drawing the Danes’ attention to the fact that they are an alternative. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that the theatre is indeed *“too analogue”*, and that compared to other brands, they are still behind in terms of embracing more digital media. To this, he added that *“they are trying”*. Hereby, he possibly indicated that the theatre might consider online methods to engage with their audience.

6.1 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we drew attention to our key findings from the interviews conducted with the Danes, the Marketing Manager at the RDT and the Theatre Professor. Moreover, we discussed them in relation to previous studies that were presented in the Literature Review. Throughout the chapter, we have discussed that within the literature, scholars seemingly agree that corporate heritage brands embrace three time frames: the past, present and the future (Urde et al., 2007; Hudson, 2011; Balmer, 2015). This entails that a brand’s past is activated in order to strengthen the brand in contemporary and future contexts (Urde, et al., 2007; Balmer, 2011). In order to stay relevant to customers and non-customer stakeholders, corporate heritage brands must manage change and continuity (Balmer, 2011), as there is

no contradiction in being innovative and respecting a brand's heritage (Urde et al., 2007). Moreover, scholars such as Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000; 2004a), Roberts et al. (2005) and Ind et al. (2013) agree on consumers being a new source of competence, and that they should be involved in shaping a brand's offerings. Moreover, the contemporary consumer indeed *wants* to be heard and contribute to the brands (Peters et al., 2005). This, we saw evidence of in our interviews with the Danes, as they all expressed a desire for being able to provide feedback and ideas to the RDT. Drawing on this, we argue that embracing co-creation might be a way for the RDT to respond to the needs in the market, and tackle the perception of being "*old*" and "*out-dated*", as some Danes described them. However, as the theatre must respect their heritage, co-creation activities should be carefully considered and fall within the scope of their strategy. Moreover, it is evident that a corporate heritage brand must respect their authentic core, hence stay within certain frames in designing their offerings.

7. CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTIONS

This chapter concludes our thesis by drawing on what has been presented and discussed throughout the previous chapters. Apart from presenting our conclusion, we also outline the theoretical contributions and managerial implications derived from the study.

7.1 Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis, we raised the question of how corporate heritage brands within the arts and cultural sector can embrace co-creation activities to engage and reach wider audiences. To reach our conclusion to the study, we applied a qualitative research approach involving a case study of the Royal Danish Theatre, which we have classified as a corporate heritage brand. The theoretical framework consisted of theories on heritage branding, branding of arts and cultural institutions and co-creation. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews covering three different perspectives; the Danes representing the Danish public, the RDT's Marketing Manager representing the theatre, and a Theatre Professor, providing expert knowledge within the field.

The findings suggest that being a corporate heritage brand does not delimit organisations from embracing innovative and progressive approaches in order to stay relevant to contemporary consumers. Co-creation is indeed a way of embracing an innovative mindset, and the Danes, the Marketing Manager and the Theatre Professor all supported the idea of co-creation activities in relation to the theatre's offerings to varying degrees.

We have concluded that as a response to demands in the market, corporate heritage brands within the cultural sector are wise to incorporate co-creation activities in order stay relevant to both existing and potential consumers.

Based on this study, we conclude that in order to engage and reach wider audiences through co-creation, corporate heritage brands within the arts and cultural sector may follow the following five guidelines. First and foremost, managers should be open to embrace the possibilities that co-creation activities may result in. They should see the value in the

collaborative exchange with the creative collective, and appreciate the access to feedback and insights into consumer preferences. Second, connecting with the audience is essential, and a dialogue should be fostered and nurtured with them to increase the engagement. Third, remaining in control to respect the core of the brand is important, as the quality of the offerings cannot be compromised with. Fourth, a suitable platform for the interaction should be created, which should consider both consumers' preferences, and what the brand is capable of and willing to embrace. Fifth, a creative and innovative mindset across the organisation should be nurtured in order to lay a foundation for members of the organisation to embrace the change.

7.2 Theoretical Contributions

There has been limited academic focus on co-creation within the context of corporate heritage brands in the arts and cultural sector. Our study is hence amongst the few that combine the paradigm of co-creation with being a corporate heritage brand, and our purpose was to shine light on this area that seems to have been somewhat neglected by academia so far.

The paradox we identified is that corporate heritage brands face a challenge in adjusting to the present and the future, and doing so while respecting the past. Among the few previous studies were first of all the one by Cooper et al. (2015), who similarly to us recognised what they refer to as a tension between corporate brand heritage and innovation. Looking outside of the paradox, or tension, Minkiewicz et al. (2013) study co-creation within the heritage sector and how individuals co-create their consumption experiences at a museum. Additionally, Holdgaard and Klastrup (2014) study digital media and co-creation of Facebook campaigns for a museum. Hence, the two latter place no focus on the paradox, but indeed combine the paradigms of co-creation and corporate heritage brands. We believe, as indicated by scholars such as Fournier and Avery (2011) and Gensler et al. (2013), that co-creation will continue to influence branding processes, and that this therefore is an area that is likely to be further examined in the near future. Our research, combining the review of the literature with our empirical findings, resulted in a set of guidelines for how the paradox between co-creation and brand heritage might be simplified and more approachable to embrace for corporate heritage brands. Thus, we have created a set of managerial guidelines for how corporate heritage brands might embrace co-creation activities for the purpose of engaging with and reaching a wider audience to stay relevant in the market. The guidelines are presented below:

The Five Guidelines for Managers of Corporate Heritage Brands Within the Arts and Cultural Sector:

→ Embrace the possibilities of co-creation

- Brand managers should realise the value of the collaborative exchange with the creative collective, and appreciate the access to feedback and insights into consumer preferences

→ **Connect with the audience and foster the engagement**

- Brand managers should foster and nurture a dialogue with the consumers to increase the engagement

→ **Remain in control, to respect the core of the brand**

- Brand managers should remain in ultimate control of their offerings, as the quality of these cannot be compromised with

→ **Create a suitable platform (online or offline)**

- Brand managers should consider both consumers' preferences, and what the brand is capable of and willing to embrace.

→ **Nurture a creative and innovative mindset across the organisation**

- Brand Managers should lay a foundation for members of the organisation to embrace the change

The guidelines are specifically created based on our case study of the Royal Danish Theatre in mind, but we suggest that it might be of use for managers of other cultural institutions, classified as corporate heritage brands, too. As this study was of limited scope and was carried out in a specific context, we do not expect the guidelines to be applicable across sectors, but might serve as indication as to how corporate heritage brands can embrace co-creation as means to stay innovative and relevant while respecting their heritage.

7.3 Managerial implications

This thesis aims to add value for managers of corporate heritage brands within the arts and cultural sector, by providing them with tools to increase their understanding of how to embrace co-creation activities. Being a considerably new concept and one that has affected the planning and execution of branding activities, co-creation might be a concept that is difficult for corporate heritage brands to approach.

Hence, our thesis aims to contribute to corporate heritage branding practices within the arts and cultural sector by providing a set of guidelines for managerial use. The aim is to encourage managers of corporate heritage brands to embrace co-creation, and doing so while respecting their heritage. We have argued that according to academia, involving the consumer in branding activities is key in order to stay relevant on the market, as today's consumers to a high extent demand to partake in branding activities (e.g. Payne et al., 2009). Therefore, embracing tactics to respond to the consumer needs might be seen as important for a brand's future survival.

In line with the literature on brand heritage (e.g. Urde et al, 2007), adaptability and ability to stay relevant over time is indeed a significant factor for corporate heritage brands, and there is no contradiction between brand heritage and innovation, meaning that one does not exclude the other. Consequently, we have concluded that managers of corporate heritage brands indeed can embrace co-creation without losing control of the brand and its essence, by engaging in co-creation activities where the brand remains in control of the process and

the outcome, yet consider the inputs of the consumers. That way, value can be extracted both for the organisation and the audience. Based on the above, we have strived to join brand heritage with co-creation, to ultimately embrace co-creation activities to engage and attract a wider audience.

7.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we have concluded our thesis by presenting the findings that arose from conducting the study. We have aimed to answer the research question, and have also presented what our thesis has contributed with, both in terms of theoretical contributions and managerial implications.

8. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this chapter, we discuss the limitations we see in our research, along with presenting recommendations for further research. The limitations arose both along the way of conducting our study, as well as when we considered it from a more holistic perspective after completing it. The recommendations are based on the gaps we have identified throughout reviewing the literature for this thesis, but also emerged during our empirical findings.

8.1 Limitations of the Thesis

This thesis aims to contribute to an understanding of how corporate heritage brands within the arts and cultural sector can engage in co-creation activities in order to reach wider audiences in the marketplace. However, we recognise that our research has certain limitations to consider.

Limited Samples of Interviewees

To begin with, we acknowledge that the sample of managers at the RDT was limited to one manager, and that having a larger sample, even if just one or two additional perspectives, might have strengthened the managerial perspective of our study. Finding managerial participants were difficult, in that we despite copious effort to reach out to managers at the RDT did not succeed. In this context, it is worth emphasising that we were cautious as to what type of managerial position the interviewees might have, and did not strive to conduct interviews unless their position would resonate with the area of our study. To us, it was important that all interviewees would provide value to our study and towards our findings, hence the relevance of potential interviewees were of higher importance than the quantity of potential interviewees.

For the purpose of our study, one way to overcome this could have been to conduct document studies, as a way of generating more data and strengthen the internal perspective at the theatre. We allocated a significant amount of time and effort on reaching out to potential interviewees at the RDT, which was proven to be unsuccessful. Would we have

realised that it would take so long, we could have prioritised to conduct document studies instead.

In regards to the sample of the Danes, the geographical scope of our research should be considered. The RDT is targeting entire Denmark, while our study focused on interviewees living in the area of Copenhagen only. However, the reason for limiting our study to this area is that the Marketing Manager indeed confirmed that a vast majority of the audience visiting the theatre live in Copenhagen. Also, this being a ten-week project was another hinder for us in extending our sample to cover wider regions. Moreover, we acknowledge that the Danish population consist of five million people, and that our sample of eight interviewees will not be representative for the entire Danish nation. Yet, for this study we decided to stop at eight interviewees, as we reached a saturation point in the data collection. Furthermore, we acknowledge that our sample does not include interviewees in the age group of 40-50. This, as we were not able to reach any interviewees in this age group through the snowball sampling used. We acknowledge that including this age group might have contributed with additional perspectives in the empirical findings.

CBIRM

In terms of our interview with the Marketing Manager, our findings might have benefitted from us presenting the CBIRM and discussing it with him during the interview. This might have been an effective approach to confirm our application of the matrix to the theatre.

The Context of the Study

We recognise that our conclusions draw on a specific context, a corporate heritage brand within the arts and cultural sector. The fact that the institution we researched is governmentally owned and funded, as opposed to competing on the commercial arena, contributes to the limited application of our findings across other contexts, as the conditions and prerequisites for the strategic operations differ. Furthermore, as mentioned in our discussion, we note that there might be significant differences between how product brands and corporate brands operate, and realise that our findings therefore are likely to be limited to an understanding of our particular research context, hence not generalisable across other contexts and sectors.

8.2 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings that corporate heritage brands embracing co-creation has seen limited previous examination in academia, we have identified a number of areas that might be of interest to research.

Heritage as a Burden

What was highlighted in our interview with the Marketing Manager at the RDT was that managing a corporate heritage brand could be “*both an advantage and a burden*”. The burden referred to the scope that the corporate heritage brands must stay within, with the limitations as to what they can do and how they can operate when the heritage must be constantly considered. This is a finding we did not identify as we consulted the literature, but instead through our primary research, and yet consider highly relevant. We therefore suggest for more academic focus to be steered towards the struggles and difficulties of managing a

corporate heritage brand, and how respecting and nurturing the heritage might be a burden for the organisation. In current academia, emphasis has been placed on heritage as value adding factor, and potential generator of competitive advantage, while the heritage as a burden seemingly is neglected.

Product Brands versus Corporate Brands

Drawing on the findings of our study, it became clear that there is a distinction between how corporate heritage brands can embrace co-creation, in comparison to product brands. As we reviewed the existing literature on co-creation, we noted that the predominant focus is placed on co-creation of product brands, such as LEGO (e.g. Hatch and Schultz, 2010). Very limited focus has been placed on co-creation in the context of corporate heritage brands, and we therefore suggest more academic attention to this area. One example might be to extent on our research focus, and research how corporate heritage brands can embrace co-creation with respect to their different types of stakeholders.

Public versus Private Ownership

Similarly, what also might be an interesting research suggestion is to conduct a comparative study on public versus private ownership of corporate heritage brands, to investigate how the organisations strategically operate in relation to their stakeholders. Additionally, being publically owned imply a wide range of stakeholders to respect when shaping the offerings, but also that financial revenue is not equal priority as it might be for a commercial heritage brand. Therefore, it might be interesting to research how the type of ownership enables or disables the brand's approach to co-creation activities.

Co-Creation in the Offline Environment

A vast majority of the research on co-creation seemingly focuses on co-creation taking place online (e.g. Fournier and Avery, 2011; Gensler et al. 2013). As Ind et al. (2013) mention, co-creation is not limited to take place online, yet we do acknowledge, as do the literature (e.g. Fournier & Avery, 2011; Eyeka, 2012), that social media platforms facilitate for convenient stimulation of co-creation activities. Hence, future research may address offline-based co-creation, by for example inviting consumers to co-create offerings face-to-face. The latter was also highlighted by some interviewees during our interviews, which indicates that there is a potential interest for such activities at least within this sector.

8.3 Chapter Summary

In this final chapter, we have discussed the limitations of our study, and presented several suggestions for further research. First, we presented what we considered as limitations for our thesis, by reviewing the process and considering possible adjustment we might have made throughout the process. Then, we acknowledge that our research area has seen limited academic attention, and presented several areas that we suggest for further academic exploration, and hope that future academic attention will be drawn to the research areas we have recognised.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – The Historical Main Building



The Royal Danish Theatre (2015a)

Appendix 2 – Interview Guides

2.1 Interview with Theatre Professor at the University of Copenhagen

Brief: The interview is divided into three sections: the theatre's strategy, its history and involvement with consumers/audiences.

Strategy

We would like to hear a bit about what you think of The Royal Theatre's repertoire?

What do you think the Royal Theatre should offer in 2015?

The theatre's key customers belong to the +55 segment. What are your thoughts on that?

- Can you elaborate?

Looking at the theatre's repertoire across time, what are your views on whether they have adjusted to changes in the market?

- Seen to changing demands by audiences

Heritage

How important is the Royal Theatre's heritage to the theatre's identity?

How should the Royal Theatre balance renewing its image and preserving its traditions?

Co-Creation/involvement and engagement with audiences

What are your thoughts on involving the Danish public in relation to the theatre's offerings?

- Can you elaborate?
 - If positive – Do you have any suggestions as to how consumer involvement might take place in practice?
 - If negative – can you explain why?

How do you think consumer involvement might be received among the Danish population?

- Can you elaborate?

2.2 Interview with the Danes

If I say The Royal Danish Theatre, what comes to your mind?

What 'keywords' would you connect to the theatre? Why?

You say that the theatre is x. Could you develop that further?

Have you visited the theatre in the past?

- *If so* – how was the experience?
- *If not* – why do you think that is?

Would you consider visiting the theatre?

What is your knowledge of the theatre (and their offerings)?

What is your general opinion of the theatre?

- Why do you think that is?

What makes you interested in/not interested in their repertoire and offerings?

- *If interested* – What is it in the current offerings that interests you?
- *If not interested* – What would make you more inclined to visit the theatre?

Do you have any expectations in terms of visiting the theatre?

The theatre would like to reach the wider Danish population. How do you think they can attract people?

- Looking beyond your own interest or in the bigger picture? Can you elaborate?

What are your thoughts on consumer involvement in relation to the theatre's offerings? Can you elaborate?

Do you have any suggestions as to how the Danish population's opinions/ideas/suggestions in relation to the theatre's offerings might be heard?

- Can you elaborate? Be more specific?

Would you be interested in gaining an influence on the future repertoire of the theatre? Why/why not?

2.3 Interview with the Marketing Manager at the Royal Danish Theatre

Brief: The interview is divided into three sections: the theatre's strategy, its history and involvement with consumers/audiences.

1. How long have you been the marketing manager at the theatre?

- What does it entail to be marketing manager here? Your tasks?

Strategy

What are the theatre's core values? And mission and vision (from 2016 and onwards)?

According to your (RDT) strategy, what is your target group?

Looking at the actual audience (current visitors), what is the biggest/most well represented segment?

- Who is the typical visitor? (across the RDT)
- Where do they live?

What strategies do you use to reach the different target audiences?

What (marketing) activities are you currently using to reach out to people?

How do you engage with the audience?

- Medium?

We've looked at your current strategy, which cover 2012-2015.

- Could you explain briefly what it entails?
- How do you look beyond these years in terms of strategic goals?
- When speaking to the secretary of the theatre director, we were told a new communication strategy will be published later this year - How does that differ compared to the old one?

What actions (if any) does the theatre make in order to gain knowledge of the needs and desires of the audience?

History/Heritage

How much do you need to respect your traditions and roots when formulating your strategy?

How much does your heritage influence your advertising and marketing?

How much does your heritage influence the creation of the repertoire?

In your strategy for 2012-2015, you mention that you aim to *"represent the past and present, while making the theatre relevant to the future"*, how does this play out in more visible terms?

How important is the history (heritage) to the theatre's brand identity?

How much has the theatre's history and roots influenced your intended/wanted position in the market and the value proposition?

Co-Creation/involvement and engagement with audiences

More and more organisations, both consumer brands and institutions, have started to actively engage with their consumer/audience, how do you look at this?

- Communicating with them, involving them, “inviting them into the brand”
- Do you see the theatre considering the opinions of the Danes in planning parts of the repertoire?

As it is now (current state), do you involve the Danes (their suggestions/opinions) in shaping your offerings?

Do you see the theatre doing so in the future?

LEGO example + Starbucks Idea: how they’ve succeeded from involving the consumer

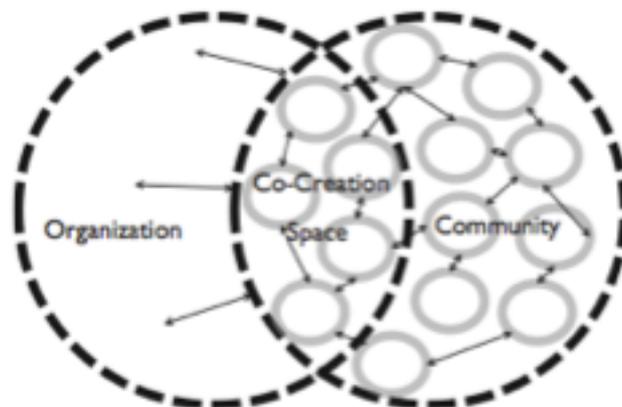
Do you think RDT can benefit from embrace the creativity of the collective?

- If so, how?
- If not, why?

There is a lot of talk about brands producing products and services *with* their consumers, not only *for* them - as marketing manager, how do you view this development?

- Is this something you consider?

Co-creation model: (explain it to him)



Do you engage with the audience? Do you have a dialogue with them? How?