

## I need you too!



It is no secret that brands are dependent on consumers for their survival. In order for a brand to enjoy longevity, it needs consumers to purchase the product or service on sale. However in recent years, the field of marketing has witnessed a shift in the consumer-brand relationship school of thought. According to recent research, consumers are just as dependent on a brand as much as the brand is dependent on them. Consumers have a need to define who they are and communicate that self-concept to other consumers. Being able to define their self-concept enables consumers to navigate the world around them and influences how other consumers act towards them. Because of their ability to act as a symbol, brands are often purchased and used as an instrument to signal consumers' self-concepts.

Guided by the conceptual consideration of the self-verification theory, a study was conducted by Cucu Mabunda, a [Master's student](#) in the [Department of Marketing Management](#). The study examined the relationship between brand trust, self-brand connection and status consumption. Data was collected from a non-probability sample of 319 Facebook users using a self-administered online questionnaire.

The findings of this study revealed a strong positive relationship between brand trust and self-brand connection, self-brand connection and status consumption as well as brand trust and status consumption. The findings further revealed that when considering the combined effects of brand trust and self-brand connection on status consumption, self-brand connection appeared to have a greater influence on status consumption.

The findings suggest that status brand managers should sculpt brands that are reflective of their consumers' self-concepts. In this way, brand managers will be able to

establish stronger relationships between their brands and their consumers' which will ultimately translate to higher profit margins.

*This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2017 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Cucu Mabunda under the supervision of [Dr Liezl-Marié Kruger](#).*