

**The culture of consumption of
professional social media:**

*A phenomenological study of online personal
branding and womanhood in Australia*

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Abstract

Through professional social media platforms, personal branding phenomena can be an excellent starting point from which employees can build their competitive advantage or jobseekers can obtain employment. Considering social media as an object of consumption and applying acculturation consumption theory, I performed a phenomenological study, by conducting interviews with 15 professional migrant Islamic women who live in Australia, in order to explore the social media engagement strategies they use. This study examines how online personal branding practices impact the formation of bringing in socio-cultural identity. Specifically, I explore the personal branding techniques of impression management, affirmation seeking, and building an aggregate extended-self. Further, personal branding practices of migrant professional women on LinkedIn are framed within the dual, and at times conflicting, contexts of both professional and sociocultural social media contexts. My theoretical framework outlined how the sociocultural context—stereotype threat, surveillance, and privacy—intersects with online personal branding practices to form social networks and identify the self, resulting in a uniquely, personally-branded self. Verity of cultural tensions impact on the processes of social media consumption and contribute to engagement situations. The consumption characteristics of LinkedIn for personal branding are shaped by migrant women's balancing act, as they form a minority culture within Australia's dominant culture.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “**The culture of consumption of professional social media: A phenomenological study of online personal branding and womanhood in Australia**” has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, reference number **5201500528**, on **27/07/2015**.

Aayad Al Eid

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1 Introduction

A 'personal brand' is an identity that consists of someone's skills, personality, and unique characteristics. If a person wishes to be successful, these factors need to be positive, as they help form a clear and powerful image that will appear in other people's minds when they think of that person (Wee & Brooks, 2010). Personal branding was first developed through a range of means, including self-improvement literature, websites, and self-help business courses (Andrusia & Haskins, 2000; Graham, 2002; McNally & Speak, 2002; Peters, 1997; Spillane, 2000), as well as the application of self-marketing theory and the use of professional publicists, such as celebrities and politicians (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Other factors have included self-branding theory (Kaputa, 2003) and the use of 'changemakers' to explore the phenomenon of self-branding, as well as the use of personal perspectives and consumer-brand relationship theory in marketing and consumer research literature. It also contributes to the development of employee value, in line with enterprise culture theory (Chen, 2013; Vallas & Cummins, 2015).

Personal branding differentiates the branded person and assures others of his or her superiority and authenticity (Hearn, 2008). Such branding can be built either offline, or online through social media, depending on the person involved or the purposes of the branding (Chen, 2013). Social media as an online tool encourages everyday people to view personal branding as a crucial marketing task for themselves (Chen, 2013). Social media is defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as 'a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content'

(p. 61). Thus, if individuals do not manage their own personal brand well, it gives others the power to manage their branding for them—and that brand message may differ from what those individuals think of themselves (Shepherd, 2005).

This study examines the phenomenon of personal branding as a cultural consumption pattern across social media platforms. It does so in terms of professional context, and in the context of womanhood. It undertakes a phenomenological examination of the experiences of women in the everyday consumption of the professional social media platform LinkedIn, through which they form online personal brands. The aim of this study is to understand the ways in which women utilise the online personal branding process within professional and sociocultural social media contexts, and the potential for consumption tensions that may affect the formation of an online personal brand.

I will begin by identifying the theoretical framework of online personal branding in terms of the use of social media networks, the formation of a personal brand through the consumption of social media, and the identification of professional online personal branding. In addition, women's gender on social media is renegotiated in terms of the consumption of social media and its specification within a cultural consumption style. The study will focus in particular on the case of migrant Muslim women in Australia.

The study proceeds by means of a discussion of the framework of the online personal branding practices of migrant professional women on LinkedIn. It provides an understanding of the ways in which migrant women consume professional social media for the purposes of forming a personal brand. It also determines and explains the ways in which sociocultural context affects this process, by exploring three main

concepts: stereotyped threat, practices of surveillance and privacy in the impression management of online personal branding practices, and the processes of affirmation-seeking and the construction of an online aggregate extended self. This study potentially contributes to three research fields. First, it informs the consumer research literature that focuses on the cultural consumption of professional social media platforms by migrant women—many of whom must contend with the dominant culture while successfully building an online personal brand. The study also informs gender-based studies that address women on social media, as it explains the tensions that can affect their self-identification with regards to their culture, even as they proceed to build a professional online personal brand. Finally, the study has implications for professional personal branding studies—which constitute a new area of study—as it proposes three main considerations in practicing of formulating the branded self, both online and offline. These include impression management, affirmation-seeking, and the construction of an aggregate extended self. Moreover, the research findings offer clear examples of the consumption of professional social media platforms for the purpose of online personal branding, by undertaking an exploration of the cultural consumption experiences of migrant Muslim women in Australia who use LinkedIn. This directs the scope of the study towards a demonstration and analysis of the social media consumption practices of migrant women within their minority culture, their online engagement in dominant culture, and the process of personal branding within the dominant culture in Australia.

Personal branding has become ubiquitous in social media. Research into this area is new, but it is a subject growing in popularity, especially given the large variety of social media platforms that currently exist. A number of studies have attempted to analyse the effects and benefits of online personal branding (Karaduman, 2013;

Seidman, 2013). Other research has explored the process of online personal branding, while considering social media an object of consumption (Chen, 2013; Harris & Rae, 2011). The literature also considers the importance of personal branding in augmenting one's competitive advantage or value proposition (Morgan, 2011; Vosloban, 2013).

Labrecque et al. (2011) examined how people pursue online personal branding through the consumption of social media, and they define the processes and challenges inherent in such personal branding. One major challenge can be seen in the fact that it is possible for online personal branding efforts to be misdirected or otherwise insufficient. The current study builds on the study of Labrecque et al. (2011) by considering specific subjects and cultures. Specifically, this study explores aspects of the sociocultural context of social media—namely, stereotyped threat, surveillance and privacy practices, and their impact on identity performance—through the production of meanings of empowerment. This study aims to benefit the practice of online personal branding by recognising how these aspects can affect online personal branding processes, from the consumption of professional social media (in this case, LinkedIn), to the formation of a professional online personal brand by women who use professional social media platforms.

Methods of social media consumption differ between genders and from one culture to another (Colley & Maltby, 2008; Keller, 2012; Komito, 2010). It could be that women use social media for online personal branding in novel and unique ways. Because there has not yet been any attempt to study these trends from a cultural perspective, there is a need to understand the ways in which women pursue online personal branding (Labrecque et al., 2011).

In order to address the gap in the research, this study explores online personal branding by determining the cultural factors and the processes that influence the process of online personal branding.

Two key research questions are proposed.

RQ1: How do migrant women use professional social media platforms as an object of consumption in Australia?

This will be answered first by examining the professional social media context, through which are formed the experiences of using a professional platform (LinkedIn) for purposes of online personal branding; these experiences comprise many consumption patterns. The study then provides a theoretical framework that explains LinkedIn's engagement in a specific professional setting the identification of one's professional profile and the formation of professional networks, ending in professional engagement.

Researchers have explained the consumption of social media by examining professional online personal brands. These brands relate to the formation of a professional identity on LinkedIn, which is part of an overarching effort to ensure effective network communication, professional identification, and engagement in a professional social media context (Kietzmann et al., 2011). This reflects the everyday engagement characteristics of personal branding experiences, as part of a woman's cultural identity (Arsel & Thompson, 2011; Barker, 2009; Dijck, 2013; Garber, 2013). In the case of social media consumption, it is believed that professional women experience various forms of tension in everyday engagement, in terms of the cultural aspects that shape their personal branding practices on LinkedIn. Given these forms of

tensions that related to issues of acculturation and identity, a major reason that these professional women brand themselves online is to empower themselves, through consumption, in the community they are immersed within (O'Brien, 2011). Consumer research touching on online personal branding has not yet taken into consideration this kind of online engagement for women, with regard to gender or cultural differences.

The second research question is as follows:

RQ2: How do migrant women use LinkedIn for personal branding?

In order to answer this second question, the study will explore the experiences of migrant women's engagement for personal branding, in the context of LinkedIn. It does so by considering women's online personal branding practices in relation to the social media sociocultural context and three factors. The first of these factors, stereotype threat, entails 'situations that pose a significant threat to self-integrity, the sense of oneself as a coherent and valued entity that is adaptable to the environment' (Schmader, Forbes, & Johns, 2008, p. 337). The second of these, surveillance, is about 'watching others' activities, as a means of monitoring and supervising them' (Lyon, 1998, p. 93). Finally, the third of these, is privacy.

This study will explore the ways in which professional migrant women engage in social media, which may benefit them, especially when the online personal branding practices are contextualised within professional social media features. Here, the research is affected by the framework of Epp and Price (2010) 'network transformations', which refer to 'how the movement of a singularized object in and out of a network of activity inevitably transforms the network. At each juncture in the

singularized biography of an object, the network is jostled and potentially transformed' (p.833). This framework was also followed in some previous studies (Jayasinghe & Ritson, 2013; Lanier et al., 2013; Mesa-Arango & Ukkusuri, 2015).

This study will explain the engagement experiences of personal branding on LinkedIn in these women's cultural context. This might shift consumption characteristics due to the tensions that the women feel when they identify themselves online, sharing their cultural identities and migrant backgrounds, which influence the final stage of online personal branding and might lead them to the re-consumption stage. More specifically, these women could face difficulties in engaging with professional social media, including a lack of information technology (IT) knowledge, limited access and cultural issues. For example, migrant women could be excluded from online conversations because of their cultures (Wheeler, 2007). Additional tensions could arise for migrant women who dress differently in their online visual representations, caused by others who may have feelings of fear, hostility, derision and/or curiosity towards them (Macdonald, 2006).

The two research questions of this study are significant in relation to professional social media consumption and engagement for consumer researchers, since they lead us to study online personal branding in its cultural context, with regard to adopting specific gender and cultural identities. The tensions that appear as a result of the personal experiences of those consumers from another culture who consume an object should also be considered. These questions mark the exact aim which professional women from migrant backgrounds are trying to achieve while practising online personal branding in a dominant culture. In the everyday consumption of social media for personal branding, migrant women need to build their personal brands

through social media. However, they can face difficulties due to cultural differences, especially when we consider ‘personal branding’ as a concept from a dominant culture which may not necessarily mesh with these women’s home cultures (Hargittai, 2008). Because online personal branding is a virtual requirement for finding job opportunities and for building employees’ unique value (Bandinelli & Arvidsson, 2013; Karaduman, 2013), my research will examine the engagement of migrant women with professional social networks for the purpose of such branding.

Moving from this point, I present and clarify the theoretical background concerning online personal branding and women’s cultural identity practices on professional social media to form a foundation for my research analyses.

2 Theoretical Background

The phenomenon of online personal branding has been the subject of many studies looking to understand the essence of social media consumption and how people use it for branding the self in social networks (Bridgen, 2011; Chen, 2013; Harris & Rae, 2011; Karaduman, 2013). The social media sites offer both professional and non-professional users the opportunities to form their online personal brands, considering their skills, time and confidence, allowing professionals to gain new opportunities in their careers and allowing non-professionals to gain a unique online identity. The differences in cultures and backgrounds in consuming social media for personal branding, however, have not been taken into consideration (Labrecque et al., 2011). This theoretical framework will therefore identify the importance of this research by emphasising previous empirical and theoretical studies that have been conducted on online personal branding and womanhood relating to the cultural background practises of migrant women who work in Australia. It will end with a review of studies focusing on migrant Islamic women's use of social media, the particular context of study for this research. The review will match the consumption of social media for personal branding with consumption culture theories.

The importance of online personal branding in media studies is evident on social media sites and personal home pages on the World Wide Web in terms of forming someone's identity and helping them stimulate and supplement their offline communication (Stern, 2004). Other studies on media and society focus on the presence of people online through the variety of social media platforms, in terms of how their appearance can differ depending on the platform (Marwick, 2011). Thus, in attempts to gain benefits from online personal branding, it is vital to study such

branding in consumer research. The following section will present the concept of this type of personal branding.

2.1 Online Personal Branding

With the great opportunities which social media platforms offer consumers, an online personal brand can provide one of the consumption character that appears in order to form someone's online identity, whether it is devised for professional or personal reasons (Karaduman, 2013). Scholars in many different research fields, such as consumer research, media studies and computing studies, have examined the importance of forming an online identity. They have noted the vital role that a branded self can play in benefitting a person's achievements and career (Correa et al., 2010; Harris & Rae, 2011; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Nolan, 2015; Papacharissi, 2009). Two main purposes were discussed in these studies: the professional and the personal. In terms of professional purposes, employees within their everyday jobs conduct personal branding while they use social media for professional engagement and the company's public relations practice, keeping in mind the idea of self-commodification. On the other hand, in terms of personal purposes, personal branding becomes evident with the development of personal brand relationships, supporting the idea of practising online personal branding while explicitly or implicitly using social media platforms and creating communities of online fans (Chen, 2013). I will discuss the current research on online personal branding and social media and then will move on to online personal branding and social media consumption. I will end with a review of studies of professional online personal branding and of LinkedIn as a professional online personal branding tool.

With the increased usage of social media sites, online personal branding is created even if users are not aware of their online branded identity (Correa et al., 2010; Labrecque et al., 2011).

The next section discusses online personal branding studies through the use of social media.

2.1.1 Online Personal Branding using Social Media

Online personal branding has been studied through social media contexts in order to understand the different ways in which people brand themselves. Such studies apply experimental and interpretive methods to identify the efforts, importance, challenges and processes of this branding in many social media network programmes (Bandinelli & Arvidsson, 2013; Chen, 2013; Dogruer et al., 2011; Labrecque et al., 2011). We can find the definition of online personal branding within these studies; it occurs when people care about themselves and build their reputations or promote themselves by understanding what they want from being online and by determining their online performance. For example, in her study of self-performances on Twitter, Papacharissi (2012) showed that participants need to be careful about their writing style and grammar and the way in which they communicate, all of which can affect the perception of the person's identity. Nonetheless, the consumption of professional social media as a tool for personal branding can also benefit employees who take advantage of the new ways that people can communicate and present themselves (Vallas & Cummins, 2015). Furthermore, an organisation can benefit from having branded employees who are well known as experts in their field (Karaduman, 2013). Today, employees can show their quality and exhibit their knowledge by engaging online or by developing an online profile in the social media landscape

(Karaduman, 2013; Vallas & Cummins, 2015). As a result, the effects of social media on personal branding have been studied empirically, from the top executive level of employees, where employees have the opportunity to promote themselves and to build effective personal brands in a fast and inexpensive way (Karaduman, 2013), to the individual person who understands the importance of personal branding (Chen, 2013). However, research in personal branding has yet to examine the cultural and gendered differences and branding experiences in professional social media platform consumption.

Online personal branding can represent one of the consumption patterns of social media platforms. This will be shown in the following section.

2.1.2 Personal branding and social media consumption

Studies have raised different questions about the consumption of social media, such as the motivations and reasons for using social media. These studies include informational usage, entertainment usage, social interaction usage, personal identity and self-presentation usage (Chen, 2015; Livingstone, 2007; Marshall, 2014; Schau & Gilly, 2003). These studies have found that personal branding was one of the main purposes of being online on many platforms; the exception was Facebook, where personal branding was not one of the main reasons for engagement (Brandtzaeg & Heim, 2009; Dogruer et al., 2011). These studies' measurement tools were limited, however, as few studies used Facebook as the context for examining the phenomenon of branding. For example, research studies should take into account the fact that popular musicians and artists may use Facebook for personal branding (Turri et al., 2013; Wei & Yi, 2011).

Hughes et al. (2012) examined the relationship between personality and the use of Twitter and Facebook and applied a five-factor model of personality, which includes neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness. The study examined whether these personality traits are influential in terms of using social media. They were not as influential as was expected; taking into account the differences between Twitter and Facebook, the same person could appear to have a different personality depending on the platform. For this reason, this thesis assumes a belief in the importance of understanding the consumption practices of users of social media, which could shed light on the tensions that lead people with different personality types to utilise social media for different purposes in their everyday usage.

Brandtzaeg and Heim (2009) created a model of personal branding in order to form online personal branding strategies involving all online personal branding issues that currently exist, including brand management, judgement, consistency, presence, value, commitment and personal identity. All of these elements will allow users to know where they are, where they want to be, the paths that they could follow to get there, which way is the best and how they can ensure a safe arrival. This model did not consider the differences between social media tools regarding the purpose of personal branding, however, or who will build the personal brand. However, my research will be conducted in the context of the professional social network LinkedIn. In addition, (Chen, 2015) conducted a study exploring the reasons that motivate women to use social media; she claimed that they use social media because of three motivations: information, engagement and recreation. Chen found these motivations quantitatively online, however, with no consideration of the diversity of women's cultural backgrounds and situations. My study, in contrast, will explore the 'how' of

social media usage by a specific cultural group: migrant women to determine the online personal branding practises within that cultural group.

The following section will discuss the studies of online personal branding professionally in order to specify the direction of the theoretical background of this research into professional online personal branding.

2.1.3 Studies of professional online personal branding

Studies of the professionalising aspects of online personal branding have attempted to discuss online personal branding at both the individual and organisational levels. Such individual-level studies have discussed self-performance on Facebook and LinkedIn, considering self-expression, communication and self-promotion as the purposes of social media engagement by determining the differences between personal and professional personas online (Dijck, 2013). Another study, conducted by (Schau & Gilly, 2003), examined personal branding in personal websites (rather than on social media sites) by investigating the identity construction of consumers, self-presentation and the communication actions on the web in comparison to real life, which result in a new form of possession with the same person offline. Yet, these variations have not considered gender and cultural differences. Hines (2004) also supported the importance of determining the online personal branding tool, as a person has access to a variety of tools that he or she may use depending on the situation. For example, Tom Dickson, the CEO of a small U.S. blender manufacturer, understood the situation and built a strong personal brand using a series of YouTube videos (Dutta, 2010). Most of the studies that have been conducted on personal branding stress the importance of personal branding in social media and its benefits. Despite this wealth of studies on the professionalising aspects,

no studies examine cultural aspects and considerations that is really important in order to explore the most important factors that contribute to identity formation.

Apart from studies of personal branding at the individual level, increasing the benefit of personal branding has also become more important for individuals in the professional arena. Vosloban (2013) provides an analysis of personal branding in terms of benefiting employees. Her study explored those aspects of personal branding that can help build employees' competitive advantages by understanding their roles and their personal development goals and values, as well as by using online activities in order to complement the image that is created in real life. In addition, Reunes (2013) studied the effects of online personal branding of young professionals and the ways in which they differentiate themselves from competitors when they are seeking a job. Through interviews, the study found that personal branding includes one's personality, reputation and his or her impact on others. Reunes (2013) stated that personal branding does not only serve to differentiate people in the job context, but the person's 'self' also will be promoted and distinguished from others by presenting the person's expertise, sharing of knowledge and ability to deal with others. This research study introduced the conflict that could happen between personal and employer brands. Yet, many employees who want to build their online personal branding (and thus be seen as professionals) do not understand the process and do not have a clear image of online personal branding. In particular, they might not appreciate the findings of empirical studies on gender and cultural differences, as those studies have not yet discussed the processes of online personal branding through any cultural aspects.

Scholars of online personal branding, however, have created several empirical projects that can help professionals to build their online personal brand. Although they are few in number, they can still present the matter of online personal branding with respect to many cases, processes and challenges. Chen (2013) explored the consumption process of online personal branding and consumer personal brand relationships in the YouTube context, showing that this process of branding results in consumer empowerment on YouTube. Therefore, according to Chen (2013), the process of personal branding on YouTube is to extract (when the person looks inside him or herself to determine his or her own value and uniqueness), express (when the person determines through the sites what his or her unique identity will be for others to recognise) and exude (when the person starts to attract viewers, making his or her brand more visible to the world). However, no other studies have adopted these processes for other social media tools. Labrecque et al. (2011) explored the ways in which users manage their online personal branding. Their study offered insight into the online personal branding phenomenon; Labrecque and colleagues considered the value that could be provided by social media sites and the potential disappointments if the person's actions do not connect with his or her personal branding strategy. Thus, as suggested in that study, I will study the ways that personal branding occurs by understanding the engagement of migrant women in the LinkedIn context.

In order to identify the research context, the next section will present a professional online personal branding tool, LinkedIn, to explain the consumption style and character of this professional platform and how it can be helpful in having an online branded self.

2.1.4 LinkedIn as a professional online personal branding tool

The online context of this study is the consumption of LinkedIn for the purposes of personal branding. LinkedIn is considered to be the ‘business lunch’ of social networks due to its business focus (Reynolds, 2013). LinkedIn offers job seekers a window where they can present themselves by considering the professional job seeker as the product (Reynolds, 2013). It is a way to collect recommendations that are valuable for employees, among other tools that contribute to this concept of personal branding. Therefore, it is important for employees or people who participate in LinkedIn to build their LinkedIn profile in order to introduce their self-identity to the world. This is because employers might search for prospective employees using LinkedIn. Accordingly, a person’s profile might form their first impression before a face-to-face meeting takes place (Reynolds, 2013). Papacharissi (2009) compared three social media platforms (including LinkedIn), focussing on the architecture of those platforms. Her study developed four themes that highlight the ways that an individual balances his or her private and public selves in social networking sites: ‘publicly private, privately public, styles of self-presentation in spaces privately public and publicly private, cultivation of taste performances as a mode of sociocultural identification and organisation and the formation of tight or loose social settings’ (p.199). These four styles of interactions between users and websites include publicly private, privately public, cultural taste and tight versus loose social settings. First, publicly private social media sites observe different membership criteria to produce platforms that encompass the public. They distinguish between private and public spheres through the availability of member profiles, which might include communication tools, friend displays, personal and professional information and other kinds of data. LinkedIn is a prominent example of a website in this style. First, it is

freely available to everyone, but it is directed to current or potential professionals, such employees and students. Second, the platform provides the user with partial control in determining who might access his or her profile.

The second style of interaction is privately public, which focuses on self-presentation. Private spaces are made public, providing the user with a chance to present different modes of self-presentation. In the case of LinkedIn, managing self-presentation is about displaying accuracy and authenticity online. Next, the third interaction style is cultural taste, meaning individuals can choose how to present themselves and their cultural identities, separating them from others and other cultures and signalling a particular ethos. With LinkedIn, the customisation capacity is limited, decreasing the likelihood of featuring detailed taste illustrations. Last, the fourth interaction style is the formation of tight or loose social settings. In studying current platforms, it is clear that one can convey various formal and informal perspectives online. For example, the professionalism of LinkedIn permeates textual and design elements. Since tools of fluidity and flexibility are not provided, the performance of members is more static and less interactive (Papacharissi, 2009).

Therefore, Papacharissi's study considered LinkedIn a professional network that was consistent with the originality of the site and its members. As a result, the platform provides an opportunity for personal branding for its users. However, there is a need to investigate the actual experiences of users practising all of the above styles across different cultural backgrounds; all aspects of interaction styles contribute to the practices of online personal branding on LinkedIn in sociocultural contexts.

Online personal branding has been previously studied from both individual and professional perspectives, through both experimental and interpretive methods.

The findings of previous research may benefit the present paper when researching online personal branding and its cultural consumption pattern.

2.2 Re-Negotiating Women's Gendered Identity on Social Media Platforms

The consumption of social media is related to gender and can differ depending according to many aspects, such as why, how or when a person chooses to use social media in both personal and professional contexts (Barker, 2009; Bryce & Rutter, 2003; Correa et al., 2010). This paper will consider women's cultural consumption of social media platforms for professional purposes, especially in relation to the tensions that occur when forming an online personal brand in sociocultural contexts. Cultural and religious identities that are present in minority cultures determine aspects of consuming in a dominant culture. Within the context of womanhood, we further consider the specific cultural backgrounds of the women participating in this study, all of whom are professional migrant women living in Australia, and especially migrant women from Islamic backgrounds.

When discussing the identity of migrant Islamic women, this research will capture a wider image of previous research on cultural identity and consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Castles, 2002; Curran et al., 2006; Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Ong, 1996; Pessar, 2003; Üstüner & Holt, 2007). The research to which this paper refers suggests a wider need for exploring women's experiences in online personal branding in terms of cultural identity. Women's cultural identities on social media platforms differ according to their levels of engagement and consumption. Consumer culture theory research explores the sociohistoric patterning of consumption, which regards consumption as influenced by social structures, such as communities, ethnicities and gender practices (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Therefore, the characteristics and behaviours of social media consumption are shaped in terms of how they relate to gender structures and cultural forces (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Guta & Karolak, 2015).

As described in the sections below, when studying these behaviours, researchers have studied the online gendered identity practices of women, including the gendered practices of women when they use and consume social media.

2.2.1 Women's Gendered Identity and Social Media Consumption

A number of studies (Barker, 2009; Chen, 2015; Coffey et al., 2013; Correa et al., 2010; Hargittai, 2008; Peluchette & Karl, 2008; Thompson & Loughheed, 2012) have demonstrated the similarities and differences among the consumption, motivations and reasons for both genders' engagement with social media. These studies present gender as either their main focus or a supplemental aspect of the research. Women frequently use social media (Correa et al., 2010) to form relationships, find new or old friends, share information and experiences (Chen, 2015) or present collective self-esteem (Barker, 2009).

However, depending on their level of intercultural sensitivity, which can be defined as 'the affective facet of intercultural communication competence' (Coffey et al., 2013, p. 606), women's responses may differ across different media channels and over time. This was demonstrated by Coffey et al. (2013) experimental study, which suggested that women pay significant attention to online content and want to empathise with and understand others. A study by Thompson and Loughheed (2012) on gender differences in the use of the social media site Facebook, found that women spent much more time on Facebook in comparison to men and considered social

media a part of their daily routine. In terms of emotions, the study found that women were more likely to experience feelings of stress, anxiety or sadness if they did not access Facebook, as it enabled them to express their feelings more easily and made them more excited and energised than men.

A recent Pew Report (Madden, 2012) found that women use social media more, and the main reason for this is that women use social media to stay in touch with their relatives and friends. The report found that women use social media for this purpose 72% more (Madden, 2012). Since these studies suggest that women are more active on social networking sites, a deeper understanding is therefore required of female engagement with social media (Thompson & Loughheed, 2012).

Understanding women's social media consumption can help form an initial image of both womanhood and social media that may inform the current study. It is important to consider women's online practices through various platforms and shift the focus to women who belong to specific cultural and religious backgrounds as there is a lack of research on women from specific backgrounds. However, women's cultural consumption of social media must first be illustrated in a more general sense in the following section.

2.2.2 Women's Everyday Consumption of Social Media

Triastuti (2014) found that women strongly engage in social media in everyday consumption. This study presents the way that women can be involved in consuming blogs and explains the dichotomous situations of "active" and "passive" users depending on blog types. This calls for an investigation into the presence of women on social media sites in order to provide clearer insights into their tensions

and preferences through a consideration of the impact of platform types on cultural consumption behaviour. In social media, women tend to be more unfriendly than men, and they prefer private settings on their accounts (Madden, 2012). According to (Correa et al., 2010), women with high levels of extraversion and openness tend to use social media more frequently. Another study found that some women even lost sleep, had closer friendships with online friends and became addicted to the Internet (Thompson & Loughheed, 2012).

The above literature identifies key aspects of online personal branding and women's cultural identities in social media; as a result, several theoretical gaps can be presented. First, previous research in personal branding has not examined cultural and gender differences in relation to the consumption experiences of professional social media platforms. Second, an exploration of the way that professional migrant women use professional social media in Australia in relation to the cultural and professional aspects that impact on the practices of online personal branding might also be informative. Third, despite many online personal branding studies, none has identified the tensions that a person may experience with respect to a specific culture or religion, as this study will specifically investigate. To discuss the identity of migrant Islamic women through online personal branding through LinkedIn, this research approach will be influenced by previous research on cultural identity and cultural approaches to examining social media consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Castles, 2002; Curran et al., 2006; Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Ong, 1996; Pessar, 2003; Üstüner & Holt, 2007).

3 Methodology

3.1 The interpretive paradigm within consumer research

This research sits within the interpretive paradigm within consumer research. The interpretive paradigm is explained in many terms: “naturalistic,” “qualitative,” “humanistic” and “postmodern.” An analysis through the interpretive paradigm, known more generally as interpretivism, can show its primary importance by questioning the circumstance of a phenomenon by studying specific behaviours of people in a particular place at a specific time (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Cova & Elliott, 2008; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; Szmigin & Foxall, 2000; Tadajewski, 2006). Owing, in general, to examining the dependency of consumer behaviour in context, this means investigating the level of subjective experiences in the social world (Tadajewski, 2006).

Interpretive consumer research goes well beyond the three steps of consumption—acquisition, usage and disposal (Shankar & Goulding, 2001). That means that understanding consumption requires researchers to focus on consumers’ investigation of products that they bought through use and disposal. This approach focuses more on the experience of consuming a product or service, especially on searching through consumption options for pleasure and enjoyment of the product’s subjective component and hedonic aspects (Cova & Elliott, 2008; Shankar & Goulding, 2001). This understanding was first described by a group of American researchers in their seminal contributions through their studies during what has now become known as the Odyssey of Consumer Behavior (Shankar & Goulding, 2001).

Interpretivism in consumer research studies the ways that the consumer behaviour of individuals makes sense against the background of people’s daily lives,

in which individuals are situated within a consumer culture (Cova & Elliott, 2008). Over the years, many previous researchers have studied many different aspects of consumption (Arnould, 2007; Bajde, 2013; Cova et al., 2013; Kozinets, 2002; Thompson & Hirschman, 1995). This has included the socio-cultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects that characterized the traditions of the research. Those traditions stressed the benefit that can be gained from studying consumer behaviour within consumer culture theory, obtaining knowledge of consumer behaviour by clarifying the processes of socio-culture and structures “related to consumer identity projects; marketplace cultures; the socio-historic patterning of consumption; and mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers’ interpretive strategies” (Cova & Elliott, 2008, p. 126). Arnould and Thompson’s (2005) argued that consumer culture can be explained by considering the social arrangement of the relations among the experienced culture and the resources of society, as well as the suitable ways of life and the resources that are symbolic and material, which mediate through markets. There are three major characteristics of the interpretive approach to studying consumer behaviour: consumer practices are carried out in a naturalistic setting, participants are purposively sampled, and data is collected in emergent fashion. These characteristics are examined in greater detail below.

3.1.1 Naturalistic setting

Interpretive studies in consumer research all conclude that the settings of consumption influence the phenomena under study (Mansvelt, 2005; Sack, 1992; Sherry, 2000; Valentine, 2001). So studying the experiences of women consuming social media for personal branding is done in natural settings, for instance, the actual settings and situations through which women consumer and engage with social media.

This means in real life, as it is, without the environment of the study being manipulated, as it is not experimental study (Belk et al., 1988; Goulding, 1998). Researchers collect the data in the field face to face with participants, unlike experimental studies, which are done in labs. Therefore, consumption behaviour, in interpretive research, is studied in the context of everyday life that includes the interaction between the researchers and people, using interviews as methods of collecting the data for example.

3.1.2 Purposive sampling

In consumer research, the interpretive studies are executed through a purposive sampling design (Coyne, 1997; Guarte & Barrios, 2006). Selecting the research sample in interpretive research is executed till the plenitude of the information and redundancies of the insight (Coyne, 1997; Higginbottom, 2004) as well as the purpose of the research, the research legality and the total time and impact on the research sample (Coyne, 1997; Higginbottom, 2004). Consumer researchers utilize a range of cases in order to ensure reliable research outcomes (Guarte & Barrios, 2006). Inquirers select the research samples based on their experiences sampling other research contexts (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007) .

Focusing on specific consumption behaviour thus, participants' samples vary (Goulding, 1999; Shankar et al., 2001). For example, in phenomenological studies, the selection of samples must include participants who experience the phenomena of interest in what is called a "planned and purposive" sample using one data source which is semi- structured interview. In contrast, the samples in grounded theory methods are driven by the theory being studied and its development, which may require multiple data sources and could be primary or secondary (Goulding, 1999).

There are three sampling design strategies in qualitative research: (1) parallel sampling designs, which is a sampling strategy that offers reliable comparisons between two or more subgroups—such as male or female—elicited from the same study levels; (2) nested sampling designs, which is a strategy that simplifies reasonable comparisons of the group members from the same subgroup, the subsample of which can be represented by one or more members; and (3) multilevel sampling designs, which offer credible comparisons facilitated by sample designs extracts from different levels of the study within two or more of the subgroups, such as students and teachers (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). These kinds of design strategies can offer more sufficient interpretive explanations (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). For studying social media consumption amongst migrant women, the suitable sampling design is the nested sampling design as I am studying migrant Islamic women who are at the same group and subgroup as women, migrant and Muslim.

3.1.3 Emergent design

Emergent design is the term used to refer to crafting or readjusting the interpretive research paradigm continuously (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). This means that in the process of doing the research, rather than a step-by-step process, the researchers move between the stages of the study, namely, the data collection, data analysis, and theoretical development stages (Goulding, 2005). In interpretive research, the researcher cannot separate his- or herself from the research, and is instead considered a research instrument, enhancing the reflexivity practise during the research stages (Szmigin & Foxall, 2000). In order to manage the operations of emerging analysis within the interpretive studies, Spiggle (1994) proposes three steps: process, record, and report the shifts in the study design. In terms of analysing the

data within, emergent design analyses the data during the collection stage with emerging categories and themes, which helps guide subsequent data collection (Alam, 2005).

In terms of this research, studying social media consumption among migrant women is required to apply the operation of emerging analyses for interpretive studies. I processed, recorded and reported within my research. The study benefited from the analyses of emerging design, as during the data collection, I was fine tuning aspects of the research design depending on the findings that were emerging from the early cases sampled.

3.2 Methods within the interpretive paradigm

In consumer research, the interpretive paradigm may be represented through a broad diversity of methodological tactics that vary in what they focus on empirically (Holbrook & O'Shaughnessy, 1988). There are many types of methods can be used in the interpretive paradigm such as grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology and this methods differ depending on what the study aims to research (Higginbottom, 2004). For example, phenomenology interviews study the lived experiences of people, and are oft used in the fields of anthropology, critical theory, discourse analyses, historical analysis and personal introspection (Angen, 2000; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). Determining the best method for a study is aided by setting out the research objectives and questions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Therefore, studying the cultural consumption experience of social media for personal branding required in-depth data regarding those experiences. I was aiming to have high-quality data that reflect the lived experiences so, applied a phenomenological study. This allows me to interpret the experiences within the character of my research sample. I am studying

consumption experiences for a specific purpose, which is personal branding that women from a minority culture practise and experience within the dominant culture.

In consumer research, the phenomenological approach involves the consumer as part of the research phenomena, as part of physical world. The experiences of the consumers are presented as 'being-in-the-world'(Angen, 2000, p. 189) and are described as they emerge. In this approach, the various realities are consciously examined through the experiences of the participants, which helps facilitate unprejudiced inquiry (Gray, 1997).

3.2.1 Phenomenological consumer research

Consumer researchers have developed various interpretive techniques to examine phenomena. To study aspects of consumption consumer researchers have turned to the humanities for theories and methods (Shankar et al., 2001) and have focused on constructing the meaning of structured communication which crosses cultures (Wilson, 2012). Phenomenologists in consumer research study 'the totality of [the] human-being-in-the-world' and seek to describe lived experiences as they appear in the context investigated (Thompson et al., 1989). Thus, discussions of phenomenology focus on the phenomenological interview. Although there are other methods of phenomenological research, 'such as the analysis of written statements', interviews remain the most powerful technique to gain deep understandings of people's experiences (Thompson et al., 1989).

3.2.2 The phenomenological method

The phenomenological method provides an enlightened research method to interpret consumer behaviour. Phenomenology is more than a technique to gather,

analyse and interpret data; it is a philosophy that has ideational foundations which require understanding how to properly implement certain methods. In the context of examining the awareness of things, they are seen as certain knowledge that leads to studying truths as objects of consciousness (Goulding, 1999). Scholars have developed many phenomenological methods, such as the descriptive procedure which examines conscious experiences. Descriptive phenomenology attempts to offer the essential meaning of human behaviour, asking ‘how do we know?’ and aiming to consciously explain the lived structure (Goulding, 1999). According to Goulding (1999) applying phenomenology as a method requires awareness of its three main concepts: (1) intentionality, which makes the conceptual categories of researchers secondary to the experiential ones of participants; (2) emergent dialogue, in which the participant establishes the discussion, instead of being guided through specific questions; and (3) hermeneutic effort, in which the phenomenological analyses is shifted back and forth in an interactive attempt to relate part of the text to the whole. The phenomenological method demands a high level of immersion and involvement to collect descriptive and interpretive data which the researcher translates from the emic point of view and ensures that it matches the etic views of members of the society under study (Cotte & Latour, 2009).

Phenomenology researchers hold interviews to access the lived experiences of interviewees and to capture comprehensive information about the experience investigated. As Gray (1997) believes, phenomenological methods require a number of steps. Within the context of my research into social media consumption, this may mean, for example, investigating consumption experiences for personal branding and migrant women, then understanding the essential relationships between the branding practices and the cultural implications for women in the study, whether negative or

positive. After that, one should observe the modes of appearance regarding a personal brand and its characteristics, suspending belief in women's experiences regarding their culture and tensions from these experiences, then interpreting the meaning of the online personal branding phenomenon. Researchers use these methods to explore the subject of interest by translating recalled experiences into the language of discourse (Polkinghorne, 2005).

The phenomenological interview has two major aspects. First, the format of the interview is in depth. Participants are informed of the purposes of the research and that the interview will be recorded. The respondent sets the course of the dialogue, while the interviewer asks descriptive questions based on the interview dialogue. Second is the environment of the interview which allows participants to freely describe their experiences in depth. Interviewers show that they do not know much about the phenomena studied to avoid appearing more powerful or knowledgeable than interviewees and to give interviewees opportunities to explain and explore their experiences (Thompson et al., 1989).

3.2.3 Interpretation and understanding in phenomenology consumer research

The interpretation of academics in consumer research offers an understanding of the world through a specific research paradigm. In my research, the study of consumption experiences was its purpose, so the axiology of the study can be shown within the value that it offers to consumer research through the ethics of human behaviour. However, regarding the ontology of the study of online personal branding within the Islamic cultural identity of migrant women in Australia, there are realities that cannot be avoided: the religion and the fact of migration for the participants. The social reality in interpretive research is more than one reality composing inter-

subjectivity. Therefore, the knowledge in research gained from participants' experiences reflects multiple realities, as the consumption experiences of social media vary from one woman to other. This is the epistemology of the research. As I research the subjects' lived experiences, the methodology of the research, as stated before, is phenomenology with interview methods having data that are transcribed to reflect the meaning of social media consumption for migrant women.

3.2.4 Moving from the analysis of data to interpretation

In terms of analysing data in consumer research, the researchers tackle the data by 'stating that subcategories, perspectives, themes, or the interpretation that emerged were revealed by the data' (Spiggle, 1994, p. 492). The qualitative data manipulation operations are presented as categorisation, abstraction, comparison, dimensionalisation, integration, iteration and refutation. Researchers do not use these as stages; instead, it depends on the analysis stages and varying needs, as they provide meaning for analysis and interpretation. However, the difference between analysis and interpretation is reflected in the effort for each concerning data, as analysis is manipulating data and interpretation is making sense of the data (Spiggle, 1994). Therefore, the meaning of interpreting data is transferring the meaning through texts, objects or domains. Consumer research studies the meanings people attach to their experiences, the ways that meanings cohere and form and the affirmation and reproducing of symbolic forms, rituals, traditions and culture (Spiggle, 1994). Here is where the reflexivity of the research appears.

3.3 Methods

The research method is a phenomenological semi- structured interview. I conducted the interviews with 15 professional Arab Muslim women living in

Australia. The participants were selected with consideration of their womanhood and cultural background that are from different Arabic nationality due to the similarity of the Islamic Arab culture. There was not any aim for the diversity within the sample regarding the range of occupations or length of time in Australia (Patton, 2015). Each interview lasted approximately 2 hours, and I first explained the main purpose of the study. The interview had two main parts. The first part explored participants' cultural identities and experiences as migrant women in Australia. For example, I asked about their feeling when they migrated to Australia, how they were dealing with everyday life as an migrant women and what was the difficulties that they faced at the beginning. The second part inquired about their social-media consumption experiences of personal branding within their minority culture, taking into consideration dimensions of online personal branding and womanhood. For instance, I asked about their activities on LinkedIn and what were their aims for having LinkedIn accounts, I asked how did they identified their profiles and I asked at the end of each interview to tell short story about their experiences as professional migrant Islamic women in Australia.

3.3.1 Analysing interview transcripts

I analysed the research data following three steps: open, axial and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). First, I analysed data by going through the transcripts of research interview for open coding, word by word, sentence by sentence and then line by line of interpretive prose, obtaining a new, clear meaning by thinking reflexively about the phenomena under study within the data. All the while, I asked generative and comparative questions to lead and reinforce my sensitivity towards the new cases that appear in each research transcript by answering the how, who, where,

what and why questions. This practice helps me avoid bias and subjectivity (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). In this step, I compared events, actions and their interactions to examine the similarities and differences (Spiggle, 1994). Then I categorised them under a number of categories and subcategories. Second, the axial coding of the coding paradigm is built in this stage by realising the relationship between the categories and subcategories within the data, considering the conditions, context, strategy and consequences. I used Glaser's 6Cs tool to do coding for considering the conditions, context, strategy and consequences. Third, the final step is selective coding of the central phenomena identified by the main category and the constructed story around it (Charmaz, 2008). Accordingly, all the categories are pulled together by selective coding to explain the consumption experiences of the professional social medium LinkedIn for personal branding.

Thus, there is a need for looking beyond identity and personal branding at the level of individuals where we can understand the ideology of professional migrant women in Australia. This can be explained by discussing the behaviour of professional migrant women in Australia that highlights many aspects that shape each behaviours.

3.4 Professional migrant women in Australia

In Australia, discussion of the discourse and ideology structuring the behaviour of professional migrant women have been greatly influenced through discussions on the professional role of migrants (Kofman & Raghuram, 2006). Although migrants from Britain accounted for 40% of the Australian population in the early days of Australian migration, non-English-speaking immigrants have recently played a wider role in migration. This has formed the foundation of ethnic diversity,

which these days is one of the characteristics of population in Australia (Manderson & Inglis, 1984; Walsh, 2014).

The sample reflects character of professional migrant women in Australia, who made the switch from working class to multicultural middle class in terms of the intake of skilled immigrants (Colic-Peisker, 2011). The participants represent migrant women in the labour market and the tensions they feel are related to their job experiences as women in the first place and also as migrant women in Australia. Within the condition of working in Australia as migrant women, the research presents evidence that the aspects that shaped the labour market for migrants goes beyond economic considerations to other factors, such as cultural and social factors (Ho, 2006).

A dynamic interconnection exists between national origin, ethnicity, race, class and gender in order to form the experiences of immigrant women in Australia (Ralston, 1998). Migrant women in this study have experienced racism, stereotype threats and discrimination in the labour market when they try to find jobs or after they have become involved in the workplace society, which has affected how they brand themselves on LinkedIn. These offline experiences appear as tensions in their consumption of LinkedIn. Understanding the situation of migrant women in the workplace within their culture background with regard to this research, they have the opportunity to deal with the perceptions of the dominant culture in a way that helps them to form their own identity online. For example, they can deal with the stereotype threat by managing the impression the dominant culture has of them (Kramer & Winter, 2008), through the possibility of surveillance they seek self-affirmation and within the privacy issues they aggregate extend themselves professionally (Belk, 2013).

The work values and societal cultures in Australia are measured in support of Western norms that might negatively affect people from minority cultures. The experiences of professional migrant Islamic women in Australia confirm the requirements of sophistication in cooperation with the complexities displayed by migration, ethnicity, religion and gender. Professional migrant women in the Australian labour market need to be more understood in terms of their ethnic and religious aspects as the success story of skilled migrant women in Australia is not enough due to the evidence that this group faces many problems because of their religion, gender and ethnicity. This type of racism is called Islamophobic and it results in the scarcity of migrant Islamic women in the workplace. This can encompass stereotypes and discrimination at many levels of management that requires more advanced implementation of the practice of diversity in the workplace (Syed & Pio, 2010).

With the above in mind, studying migrant Islamic women within the context of Australian migrant women is vital, as it reflects many aspects about both Australia as a country in relation to migration and the migrants themselves. On one hand, It can show how Australia supports professional migrants in terms of help them by offering better life conditions and accepting them into the society, giving them opportunities to gain unique experience in the workplace. On the other hand, for the professional migrant Muslim women who really want to make the most of working as a professional in a country such as Australia, and with the full understanding of their Islamic culture and what it is required to be accepted in Australia. For instance, in terms of women's clothing styles, the hijab and the religious practises they engage in every day in the work place, such as praying.

Based on this ideology of Professional migrant women in Australia and after studying the cultural consumption of social media for personal branding, it is clear that migrant Islamic women who use social media platforms for professional reasons engage in branding with regard to their cultural background. This can cause a great deal of tension, in terms of how they identify themselves in particular ways that can ensure the benefits of being a professional migrant Muslim woman. They seek to present the best of themselves with regard to their Islamic religion.

4 Findings

4.1 Three Contexts of Online Personal Branding through the Professional Social Media Platform LinkedIn

In this research finding three cultural contexts formed the practices of online personal branding in professional social media platform LinkedIn. These three cultural contexts add to the professionalising online personal branding contexts such as making connections and seeking recommendations. These three cultural contexts speak to the tensions experienced when the women in the study's sample use LinkedIn for professional online personal branding efforts. Pseudonyms are used throughout this section to protect the identity of participants. The first context to be discussed in detail is the concept of "stereotype threat" that is identified in a number of studies (Bailey et al., 2013; Koch et al., 2008; Schmader et al., 2008). So impression management is the practise that migrant women consider when they practicing online personal branding professionally by presenting their identity online through LinkedIn tools. As it reduce their tensions in the way that make them more confident and accepted. The second cultural context is surveillance, through which migrant women practising online personal branding by affirmation themselves by others professionals and friends (Belk, 2013). This happen when they look at others contacts for example and form their perceptions about the personal branding practices, here where thy practicing the positive surveillance. The third cultural context is privacy (Christofides et al., 2012) that present the role of building aggregate extended self within the women's culture identity online (Belk, 2013). Each of these three cultural contexts concerning online personal branding through social media is explored in greater detail below.

4.1.1 The Stereotype Threat Context: The Role of Impression Management

The discussion of the consumption style of women in this study was very subjective, as women really care about what others think about them and how they can present themselves in a way that forms their online identity and personal brand. The important point here in my study is that the self-identification and presentation of women on LinkedIn varies depending on their cultural background. For example, building a personal brand for a woman from the Australian culture is different than for a woman from an Arab culture. The migrant Islamic women in this study first recognised they performed online personal branding practices when they began to use professional social media platforms such as LinkedIn. After studying these women's consumption styles of LinkedIn, I found that women come to social media platforms with mixed feelings that cause various tensions that may benefit or affect their engagement practises online. These mixed feelings provide the women in this study the opportunity to identify those tensions by attempting to manage their impressions to others. This is especially important to those immigrant minorities in Australian society who are susceptible to and feel subjugated by the stereotypes around their cultural identity. The consumption experience of young migrant Arab Muslim professional women in the case of Sarah Mohamed shows how professional online engagement can represent the main identification of the self through her LinkedIn profile especially the profile picture

I have a picture on my LinkedIn, yes and I have very -- like I show where I've worked before, all of the volunteer things that I've done so people would come across my page and know that I am very Muslim community focused and yeah. So, they would know I'm very, you know, Arab and Muslim focused and I think that would maybe be positive or not so positive in some people's eyes, depends on their perceptions. -- So it depends on the type of person that's coming across it. So if they are racist, if they are intolerant to, you know, Muslims and Muslim women in particular they will look at my profile negatively and possibly cross me off as a potential candidate for their company for example. Positively some companies or some professionals are looking for, you know, community focused people and they will see my profile as a very positive about my connection to the community and my abilities to engage with that community. ...So that I can make sure that, you know, people know that I'm, who I am and where I am and what I do so that they know that Muslim women are capable of being professionals, are capable of being, you know, strong independent women without, you know, meeting men or whatever (Interview excerpt, Sarah Mohamed, Friday, September 4, 2015).

In the online personal branding process that migrant Islamic women follow, there is a moment that makes them think and feel tension about identifying their identity online, especially for migrant Islamic women who wear the hijab, because their profile photo will present 'who they are'(Bailey et al., 2013; Köhl & Götzenbrucker, 2014; Schau & Gilly, 2003). Moreover, everything in their profile such as the summary, experience, education and languages could show their Islamic culture or background. Therefore, Sarah's experiences of engaging with LinkedIn were explained through two windows. Her profile photo and her summary considered a personal vita as she regarded her picture first when she discussed her social media consumption experiences as a professional migrant Islamic woman wearing a traditional hijab.

She is aware of the impression that may leave on people when they look at her LinkedIn page, as she stressed on the focus of her profile summary, which is migrant and Islamic, even though it created tension regarding her presence online. She identified all her contributions and experiences with the Islamic community as social activities on LinkedIn. This reinforces one of two existing perceptions, positive or negative, of people about her LinkedIn account. However, Sarah was willing to present her professional self through LinkedIn, showing her achievements and information without thinking what may be missed because of being a woman from a minority culture living in Australia, as well as her acceptance to the negative perceptions that on people mind if they are racist, intolerant to Islamic women and her online identity. She engaged with LinkedIn with the aim of promoting herself and used the impression management practices of self-presentation and self-exposure to have a uniquely personal brand (Vazire & Gosling, 2004) by identify her LinkedIn profile full identification as a migrant Islamic women with profile photo wearing hijab and all her experiences and contributions with Islamic society in Sydney, Australia.

Sarah did her best in order to gain benefits from her consumption of LinkedIn, which I found when she explained her beliefs about the perceptions that she tried to create on her professional page. She mentioned her chances to be rewarded for her migrant and Islamic identity, even for any person who wants to perceive her as community-minded through her qualifications. The data revealed that Sarah carried the responsibility of managing the positive and negative impressions of Islamic women in Australia through her professional page on LinkedIn. In the primary example from Sarah, identifying her professional self and managing the impressions

of others confronted the stereotypical threat within her cultural background, as an migrant Islamic woman, at the professional social media platform LinkedIn.

However, identifying and presenting the professional self online for migrant Islamic women in LinkedIn can also be performed by hiding one's cultural background to gain more opportunities in the dominant culture, trying to fit with their consumption characteristics and engagements on LinkedIn. We see this in the practices of the digital marketing employee, Layla Saleh, who is from Egypt. In 2009, when she migrated to Sydney, Australia, she wore a traditional hijab and took the name Layla. Immediately, she found it difficult to interact with society with the name Layla, so she changed it to Eely, to have an Australian touch to her name. When she started looking for a job, she changed from a traditional hijab to a beanie. When it comes to her consumption experiences on the professional social media platform, particularly the change in her LinkedIn profile picture from her wearing the traditional hijab to wearing a beanie, I found Layla practicing impression management strategies, self-presentation and self-exposure, in different ways:

I didn't show a Muslim woman on my LinkedIn account when I started applying. Oh, when I started applying for jobs I actually changed all my photos across the whole social media with one with a beanie. Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, I changed the whole all three of them. ...I knew that once I started applying for jobs, employers will start sniffing around. I know that they will do that. They might feel okay, she is different she is coming from a different country. Her English won't be the same. Her culture is not the same and she is a Muslim, especially with the current situation, which the Muslims everyday on the news and I don't want that... I was very anxious when I started building my profile on LinkedIn even when I went for my interviews because of the head cover. ...My professional ID now is Eely. My driving license in Australia, my Australian passport is Eely. Of course, I am Eely now. In Australia -- across Australia, I'm Eely. When I go overseas, I'm Eely. I don't travel with my Egyptian passport. With Eely, I'm living a better live with Eely now like I'm little -- a little depressed than before like I was very, very depressed at the beginning. So yeah, I felt more peaceful now (Interview excerpt, Layla Saleh, Saturday, August 29, 2015).

This new experience of professional self-presentation online affects the cultural consumption of the professional social media site LinkedIn. Eely's changing her name and all photos across social media platforms with the same picture is the practice of making the user's persona uniform rather than splitting up the user's online identities (Dijck, 2013), resulting in the positive impression management she aimed for. Changing one's name and way of hijab can be explained through consumer acculturation theory. Practising specific consumption behaviour helps immigrants assimilate to the dominant culture (Luedicke, 2011; Sandıkcı & Jafari, 2013; Visconti et al., 2014).

Eely tried to modify her feeling of being different because of her cultural background and Islamic identity by wearing a Beanie, as she believes not just Islamic

women wear it. She facilitated the modern identity of her religion, as she practised her religion with more self-consciousness, which is considered a process of “objectification.” With this objectification, Eely as a believer answered three questions raised in her mind: “What is my religion? Why is it important to my life? And how do my beliefs guide my behaviour?” (Sandıkcı & Jafari, 2013, p. 413). Moreover, she changed her name to give her self a more Australian identity, as she exhibited a pattern of consumption (Luedicke, 2011). Therefore, her engagement practice is separate from her former identity, which still plays some role in her consumption and the tension that she feels with her profile picture. She changed her name to Eely, but her father’s name and the languages that she speak still show her Arabic identity, which may increase her tension. In the interview, she mentioned that she still fears her visual representation by the beanie, as it causes tension in her everyday life, as well as in her last job interview.

However, these tensions lead to mixed unease and frustration feeling of many participants in this research, which may affect their online engagement and identity effectiveness, resulting in an unbranded self, that leads to re-engagement with a more appropriate identity position. We see this clearly in the practices of the participant, Amany Othman, who is a lead software engineer working at one of the leading Bank in Sydney. I note how the apprehension appears in her identity engagement practices in LinkedIn. These are very subjective practices motivated by a great desire to get a job through LinkedIn. The first time she set up her account with her clear identity, as a migrant Islamic woman, was when she migrated with her husband to Australia, Sydney. This experience of being migrant and identity affected her consumption and the quality of her personal brand. This experience led her to re-engage with other’s

perceptions of her personal and professional information, which can be seen through her LinkedIn profile:

I don't know why I'm always thinking about people looks at me as I'm a different person. In the job, in the train, in the anywhere I'm different. This feeling doesn't leave me even in the LinkedIn. I have no activities in LinkedIn; my activity in LinkedIn was while I'm more searching for a job. But now, it's become very rare to look in just when I received the notification to see or something like that. Because if I was interested in LinkedIn, was the first time I made my profile it was to seek for a job. I was not interested in LinkedIn before I came here. I added, my experience in the different companies that I was working for. I tried to change my title, I was a lead software engineer, but after I came here I wanted to work as a developer or entry level, I don't mind for that. Because people told me, that when you come here no one will hire you as a lead. That's what actually happened, because I don't have Australian experience. And they told me recruiters will not call you because you wrote a lead. And they will not recruit someone who came from overseas for a lead. You have to, change the title. Actually I wanted to join the career here in any title. I didn't mind at all, to change. Also I was – connected to people here in Australia, but not Australian, that working in a same field. I connected to; my husband he is in same field. His friends, people that I met here and in the same field (Interview excerpt, Amany Othman, Tuesday, August 25, 2015).

Here, we can see how Amany used LinkedIn to build her personal brand to obtain a job, portraying herself as a foreign person who just moved to Sydney. Her engagement practices, such as being not active and changing her job title in LinkedIn were an extension of her everyday feeling about her identity, that she is different, and others' perception about her chances of having job in Sydney. As she said, her friend told her that the 'recruiter would not contact her if she identified herself as a lead'. This complexity of feelings and perceptions led to her LinkedIn account being

inactive. It does not give her true qualifications, as a result of the tension that she felt. For example, she did not use her exact career title that she had before she migrated to Australia. Until she had her current job in Sydney, she did not have Australian professionals in her contacts. Her feeling of being different, separate from the engagement, caused tension for her as professional migrant Islamic woman, which explained the “lack of interest that led to lack of integration” (Christiansen, 2004, p. 186) into her new society excepting the integration with recruiters. This is a clear example of hiding one’s identity in order to manage others’ impressions, especially when she was at the stage of transitioning to her life without a job.

As a lead software engineer, Amany needed LinkedIn to reach her goals of self-presentation and self-exposure and to become a well-known professional in her field. This is because of the fear and unconfident aspects embedded within the notion of the stereotyped threat (Schmader et al., 2008), whether placed on her or other migrant friends, which resulted in her consumption practises being emotional and subjective (Christiansen, 2004). She started her account with a hidden career qualification. Later, she obtained this career and added it as a new achievement. Her perception about LinkedIn is very negative; she believes that LinkedIn cannot facilitate a job offer if she is not an Australian, even with her professional status as a migrant Islamic woman in Australia.

She re-identified her profile with her new job title to present a positive self-identity (Chen, 2013). She can do this because she looked inside her-self, digging out key attributes to fully identify herself, so that when she stated her experiences, she created the value of her personal brand that she is a qualified and experienced in her field. Because of this, she dealt with cultural tensions and knew her personality and

uniqueness or “unique value possession” (Morgan, 2011). This led her to gain her desired title in Australia because she promoted herself through her LinkedIn profile (Chen, 2013). After that, she expressed herself through achievements. Her self-expression showed when she went back to her profile, added her new job and edited her title, highlighting her professionalism in Australia (Chen, 2013). She believed in LinkedIn as a self-promotion tool to be used after obtaining a job. Therefore, when she was trying to find a job, she identified herself on LinkedIn, exuding her personal brand by building her contacts. Most of her professional contacts were non-Australians and migrants. Hence, she tried to attract migrants in the same field in an attempt to form a unique personal brand, even though this attempt was within her minority culture in Australia (Chen, 2013).

The process of online personal branding on LinkedIn needs to be presented clearly, honestly and as having value. It forms the self-identity, using self-presentation and self-exposure as strategies for impression management to establish a brand that reflects the uniqueness of the person. For migrant Islamic women, Sarah, Eely and Amany, when they experienced a stereotype threat in their consumption practices on LinkedIn, they attempted to reduce this threat by performing various practices that would lead to better impression management outcomes. Their consumption experiences on LinkedIn led them as professional migrant Islamic women to deal with Australian professionals in ways that ensured their benefits of using that platform. Participants can understand why they are there and what they want to get from this online engagement by forming a personal brand that women associate with in terms of practising impression management, including self-presentation and self-exposure, both of which challenge the threats posed by the stereotypes about professional migrant Islamic women in Australia.

4.1.2 The Surveillance Context: The Role of Affirmation Seeking

Affirmation seeking in consuming professional social media for personal branding is one of the practises that professional migrant Islamic women are trying to fulfil in their engagement experiences with LinkedIn, which others see on their LinkedIn profiles or home pages (Albrechtslund, 2008; Belk, 2013). Within the formation of online personal brands, affirmation seeking was practiced in many different ways to challenge the sociocultural context of surveillance. From focusing on control and disempowerment in its conventional concept of surveillance to develop a more positive meaning in the online social networking context, migrant Islamic women must focus on empowering, practicing subjectivity building and practicing surveillance in its participatory style in a way that reaps benefits through engaging in professional social media platforms such as LinkedIn (Albrechtslund, 2008). Within migrant Islamic women's experiences, they form their online identity, not just from what they think is good or bad, but from others' affirmation of their online practises and activities, which ultimately support the quality of online personal branding identification.

Affirmation seeking in this research includes the way participants gain their best appearance online through what others, friends and contacts think about them and how they respond to the participant's engagement practice to form their identity, despite tensions they may face due to their cultural identity. Therefore, surveillance in the migrant Islamic experience on LinkedIn can be positive when participants strive for the best output in terms of gaining support or the acceptance of being online with their culture identity, which were barriers prior to LinkedIn. Thus, others can support women's perceptions through affirmation. We can examine affirmation practices on

social media by noting the practices of building connections on LinkedIn. In the interview excerpt below, Ghadah Ahmad, who is working as a Senior Solicitor at a Law company in Sydney, details how culturally affirmative practices linked to her network formation with the appearance of her visual representation in her profile picture the wearing of hijab on her and on others' profiles are linked to the accumulation of contacts:

As I started writing I started searching and you see I saw a lot of people and people started connecting with me and I said it is not bad. It is not a bad idea when you look at other people's connection, that had girls who were wearing a scarf and they were fine and I had about 500+ connections and I said maybe it is more accepting, maybe it is normal. So, when I did put a picture up I would think I got far more connections then and more people were coming up to me and more people were engaging and saying "please add me to your LinkedIn and hope your services are applicable to us because we are happy to have your services our services and vice versa." So by then I realized that it is not about you anymore. Being a Muslim girl in a professional environment in Australia is definitely not a barrier (Interview excerpt, Ghadah Ahmad, Friday, August 28, 2015).

Ghadah outlines how she gains affirmation of her Islamic identity online by looking at others' connections. She realised that visual representation in her profile wearing the hijab, which caused her tensions regarding building professional network, is not a problem in professional social media platforms as well as when she had acceptance from other Australians, who commented on her profile photo after she put it online. Therefore, as she mentioned in the interview, this was the moment when she felt, "yes, I am now engaging, more accepted, as a professional woman". Ghadah processed self-formation by shaping her professional self and understanding the complex reality of professional platforms through her day-to-day behaviours, relating

to herself and her contacts, to establish consumption guidelines to live by (Sauter, 2014) through her engagement experience in LinkedIn. By exploring the platform and reforming her professional online identity with a branded self, her self-formation was gained through “participatory surveillance” (Albrechtslund, 2008) and the acceptance that she had from Australian contacts when they commented on and liked her LinkedIn profile, supporting her professionalism and being as potential customers.

This is in contrast to the experiences of the participant Rama Ali, who works part-time lecturing at regional Australian university. Rama’s experiences of affirmation-seeking on LinkedIn are different, as she believes that she can gain affirmation from others through her actions in LinkedIn, which forms her professional character online, resulting in a professional personal brand. In her consumption practices, which are not active, she seeks affirmation from her appearing online relaying what she is doing; she is aware of her tensions from surveillance, and she agreed that re-engagement is a requisite practise for her consumption experiences to deal with tensions. Within the context of a professional migrant Islamic women, she considers how her online actions could benefit her presence on LinkedIn if they fit the character that satisfies her professional academic network:

We have to be careful of our thoughts because our thoughts, they will become our actions and we have to be careful of our actions because our actions, it becomes our character and that's our character, it will represent us as a human being in the society. So, when you have this character from the thoughts and the actions, so, this is you in LinkedIn. So, what do you have to do to represent your character? You have to put your thoughts and to complement your thoughts with your actions. So, I'm not active now but I'm preparing myself to be more active and what I have to do? I have to put some thoughts and I have to complement it with some actions like putting some articles, putting some, probably, ad for some workshop, conferences and all of that and probably just put that in front of the people, if they are interested they can come along and see and watch and share (Interview excerpt, Rama Ali, Thursday, September 3, 2015).

Rama is thus aware of the self-affirmation that can be gained through her network, which cannot happen without surveillance. This can be termed as positive surveillance (Albrechtslund, 2008), as it will support her online activities, helping her to reach her goal of having a unique professional character on LinkedIn. She considers the LinkedIn platform as a “commoditized environment” (p. 107) in which a specific character or personal brand can be seen as a success of online practises formed through unique actions, such as when she mentioned her attendance at conferences and when she have recommendations and endorsement (Bailey et al., 2013).

However, Rama's experiences ensure the importance of re-engagement in order to be more active and influential when beliefs and thoughts are presented within her cultural identity, which in her case is a professional migrant Islamic woman. The very challenging experiences with LinkedIn were met by Ruba Suliman a professional migrant Islamic woman working as an administrator at a leading university in Sydney. In this excerpt Ruba details how she performs the professional practices in LinkedIn

such as updating status, summary, experiences and skills by slowly revealing her religious-linked cultural identity:

As a personal branding practices I wanted to show the world that, in a way, that Muslim women can achieve something ... Look, whether it is intentional or unintentional, it's just there, it is there because I want to show people, especially the people that I know, that this is what I've achieved, especially when I started working at Islamic Relief "it is a charity in Sydney' because I wanted the rest, no one at the University, you know, the majority of the people that I, never knew my religion, you know? Most people thought I was Greek because of the way I write my name, Ruba, which is a Greek name, okay? So no one knew and I had heaps of friends at the University with a Greek background who used to help me. I mean, if I say jump, they will jump just because they assumed that I was Greek. Sometimes if you put your identity, it might backfire on you and it becomes, especially with people who have discrimination issues, it might backfire on you. Like, for Islamic Relief, putting whatever, or me it might be a career lifter, it might be a career killer. Do you know what I mean? I did put my experience with Islamic Relief because I wanted the rest of the world to know I am a Muslim which was interesting because immediately as I posted my change in my position, a couple of my work mates from Uni who left University, one of them is Jewish, he sent me a congrats immediately. The other one is gay and he sent me a congrats an, which was really interesting to see, you know, that changes your perception about specific people because they are happy for you to be whoever you are (Interview excerpt, Ruba Suliman, Saturday, September 5, 2015).

Ruba does not wear a hijab so people will not know that she is an Islamic woman unless she mentions it. However, she is tense about the ideas that Australian society or, as she puts it, 'the world', has about migrant Islamic women. Through her engagement with LinkedIn, she wanted to show her identity and build her brand

through one of her job experiences that shows her Islamic background: “... even if this identity ‘might be a career killer, as she puts it’. The point here is that, through LinkedIn, Ruba gains support regarding her cultural identity from her professional contacts. This aspect of support is one of the benefits of online surveillance in LinkedIn, which challenges the stereotype about Islamic women in Australia society and reshapes their offline identity as well (Guta & Karolak, 2015).

Through seeking affirmation from her professional contacts, Ruba challenged the surveillance aspect by exposing her cultural identity on LinkedIn, showing through her religion the action that she never undertook offline when she put her experience with the Islamic charity in LinkedIn profile. Thus, her LinkedIn consumption via her professional personal brand reshaped her offline professional identity by showing her cultural identity. Ruba’s use of LinkedIn for personal branding was directly related to her desire to express her identity as a female Muslim professional from Lebanon who migrated to Australia 26 years ago. This means that her engagement spreads from personal to religious and cultural affiliation (Garber, 2013). Thus, online personal branding experiences in LinkedIn can be related to a well-identified self (Schau & Gilly, 2003).

This means that if the specific self-identity fails, the next action would involve re-engagement, as seen in Ghadah’s actions. Ghadah engaged in self-formation by adding her photo to her LinkedIn profile after seeking affirmation from her contacts. In contrast, Rama and Ruba were less interested in self-identity than in their actions and career identity, which were consistent with their cultural and religious affiliation. Therefore, surveillance in the social media context benefits professionals on LinkedIn in their affirmation seeking for forming online personal brands. Due to cultural

identity tensions caused by surveillance, migrant Islamic women are encouraged to practise online consumption in a way that shows their awareness of surveillance, committing actions in order to gain affirmation their extended selves, whether from offline to online or otherwise from online to offline (Belk, 2013), which at the end results in forming a professional online personal brand.

4.1.3 The Privacy Context: The Role of Building an Aggregate Extended Self

There is a widespread belief that in professional social media consumption, there is no place for privacy when personal branding is the object (Zheleva & Getoor, 2009). However, it appears that there is an indirect way to accomplish this, especially when people have branded their-self online. For example, this can be found when professional women build up their networks. This is what this study found in the first example of Rasha Khaled who believed, in her experiences in LinkedIn, that with a professional network, there is no space for privacy, as it is necessary to show one's profile to everyone. However, there were still some preferences that she used within LinkedIn for personal branding, as demonstrated in the following comment:

LinkedIn, it's different, I don't think you can put it as private. LinkedIn, once you are there, you are there. Everyone can see your profile photo, everyone can see you, you know, when you talk about yourself, your qualifications, your work experience. I don't have a problem with anyone seeing what I'm doing because I would like people to know about my work, my qualifications, my experience, all the things - I would like people to know about my work and what I have achieved as a woman, to be proud of myself. I care more about the people who have similar jobs to me, like similar qualifications (Interview excerpt, Rasha Khaled, Tuesday, September 1, 2015).

Rasha built her online profile using her qualifications and her job title to communicate with her professional contacts on LinkedIn. This is an example of what Belk (2013) calls the aggregate extended self. In terms of identifying herself with qualifications drawing the attention of other professionals who are in the same field, she is sharing experiences in order to form a coherent aggregate extended self on LinkedIn. So, she extended herself by connecting with professional contacts. Rasha, then, seeks to brand the self in relation to professional contacts in her network. This shows a flexible architecture among humans and technologies (Papacharissi, 2009). It refers to the belief that, on social media platforms, the more you identify yourself the more you will understand your online practises and behaviours. Thus, it is a dialectic process between the person and technology. Because of this, it is valuable to apply the flexible architecture concept within the practises of the aggregate extended self, giving the aggregate practises a sense of awareness about personal branding. That helps to understand how Rasha recognised how she could be benefited from her contacts by engaging with them based on her professional identity and not yet cultural or religious background. Thus, she extended her offline self through her online network to create a unique online personal brand without any tensions related to her minority culture. In addition, her visual representation through her profile picture shows that she not wearing hijab helped her to reach her goal easily of branding her self without referring to any cultural aspect and show her-self as a professional women works in Sydney.

In contrast, Reema Hasan – who is a medical doctor, did not identify her visual representation by uploading her own picture to her LinkedIn profile because she was not allowed to put her picture online; in her country, Saudi Arabia, she wears a burqa. In Australia, however, she wears only the hijab; with the burqa, women cover

their faces and show only their eyes, whereas with the hijab only their hair is covered. Her experiences of consuming LinkedIn in terms of building an aggregate extended self had to do with her identification of herself in Australia, where she included full personal information to show everything her contacts might need to know about her, as clarified in the following comment:

Actually in my LinkedIn my personal information there it's clear, my name, my work, my job, the place I am working, the place I am living, any research, like any research I can build in, so it's clear, it's me there like it's true information that everyone can go through that even my phone number is there contact number and my email so everyone can reach me. Here like this is what I am telling you like the culture is totally different, I never live here for a long time so communicating with people that will be difficult unless in my speciality, especially once you go on LinkedIn you can see a lot of people in my speciality some of them can add you without even knowing you and that's make them like, it's like a habit for most of the people, the professional people like to add people from different place and different Country and different city just to see the experience of that person in the LinkedIn, especially when you put all your true information there. ...as an Arab Muslim woman, they can know exactly once I am putting every single information about myself I am not putting my picture, this is like a sign this is a woman, that I am open minded but I have some restrictions that I cannot cross it and some red lines I cannot cross it related to my religion and related to my culture(Interview excerpt, Reema Hasan , Monday, August 24, 2015).

Reema aggregated herself with her medical speciality she considered her job to be her self. On LinkedIn, her professional online identity started with what she work does. She considered the dominant culture to be a strong point for her engagement, as this allowed her to express herself “verbally, visually and dramatically” (Köhl & Götzenbrucker, 2014) through that culture. She used her job to

extend her professional-self online in an open-minded way without taking the privacy situation into consideration. Thus, instead of adding her photo to her profile, she provided all of her personal and professional information with a picture of the logo of the medical centre where she works in Sydney. Her experiences identified the aggregate practise of self: her self-identity also includes references to her medical speciality, and she shifts the boundaries regarding her self-identity due to her cultural background. However, a re-engagement process will be necessary to effectively maintain her online personal branding within her consumption experiences of LinkedIn. Reema mentioned in the interview that she will not live in Australia forever, so when she returns to her country, she will have to reconstitute her LinkedIn profile to reflect different consumption experiences and a new professional online identity. For example, she will have to cut off some of her personal information such as phone number and home address to put instead her office number and address. As in Saudi Arabia it is not common for ladies to put their phone number for the public.

Another example of online personal branding practices of privacy context that impact on aggregate extended self on professional social media platform LinkedIn As indicated by Yara Omar's experiences with LinkedIn, she could not accept its nature when she first began creating her "self" on the site, as she was very concerned about putting her professional picture and writing her personal details. That is, she was "not used to the public showing" because she believes that the person's career is not personal aspect even though it is private:

It was I liked it, I liked the point of it, that it's for professionals. I don't know if you have checked in. It's a professional place, it's going to help me get a job, put a professional photo there, write your details there, that sort of thing. First of all I was -- what bothered me about it is the privacy and that anyone could see it and you could see whoever saw it. That was little bit. I have to get used to that public showing. I was not comfortable with it in the beginning. Because your career is -- not personal but it's a private thing I think, where you worked, how long you were there and it says a lot about you, your resume because it's basically what it is. LinkedIn is a resume. So it just says a lot about you like why was she in this job for five months and this job for a year and this sort of things so people can analyse your character at work and things like what you are I don't like it. I think it's really exposing you one for identity theft because they can find out everything about you and pretend to be you and to -- just-- I know social media everything has to be private but it really exposes you. Could not leave an element of surprise (Interview excerpt, Yara Omar, Saturday, September 5, 2015).

Because of privacy issues such as put personal details and previous jobs, Yara felt a tension when branding herself professionally online during her consumption experience of LinkedIn. However, she was also aware of all the benefits of identifying herself professionally online. She agreed that the features of LinkedIn would help her to create her aggregate self, including a professional photo, profile and other features. Belonging to a unique company also helps aggregate herself as she claims that professionals do not write the company's name because it can affect their personal brand negatively, even if they have negative experiences with it. Also, she identified a way to aggregate her extended self through the nature of the LinkedIn platform: 'when someone looks at your profile, you are notified and then can go look at his or her profile'. This feature could decrease her discomfort with exposure on LinkedIn by considering what is called "tender technologies of the self" by collecting her

aggregation partly through her individual perspective (Belk, 2013) when she explain her-self through her profile. From These aspects allowed her to move from her individual perspective to a standardised online professional branding site (Belk, 2013). These benefits reduced the tensions she felt about privacy when she first engaged with LinkedIn: her identity ultimately was formed by a vital instrument, LinkedIn (Dijck, 2013).

In the context of privacy, this study explains the consumption experience of professional social media, LinkedIn, for a personal branding. That experiences causes tension, even if not recognised, in Arab Muslim woman. The practises of online personal branding for Rasha, Reema and Yara led them to build an aggregate extended self, taking into consideration the power of their qualifications, contacts, job positions and LinkedIn features. As explained in each example above, developing an aggregate extended self for personal branding with women's cultural identities varies depending on the aspects that they follow or adopt in order to deal with sociocultural contexts of social media and privacy. LinkedIn features and nature as well as one's personal perceptions and beliefs serve to ensure the effectiveness and engagement of self-branding with LinkedIn.

At the end of this section, it is clear that the experiences of consuming social media for personal branding has led to particular practices in the context of professional social media use (LinkedIn) and migrant Islamic women who live in Australia. The practices of personal branding, including impression management, affirmation seeking and the aggregation of the extended self online, were examined as they relate to migrant Islamic women through the sociocultural context, and three aspects in particular were considered: stereotype threat, surveillance and privacy on

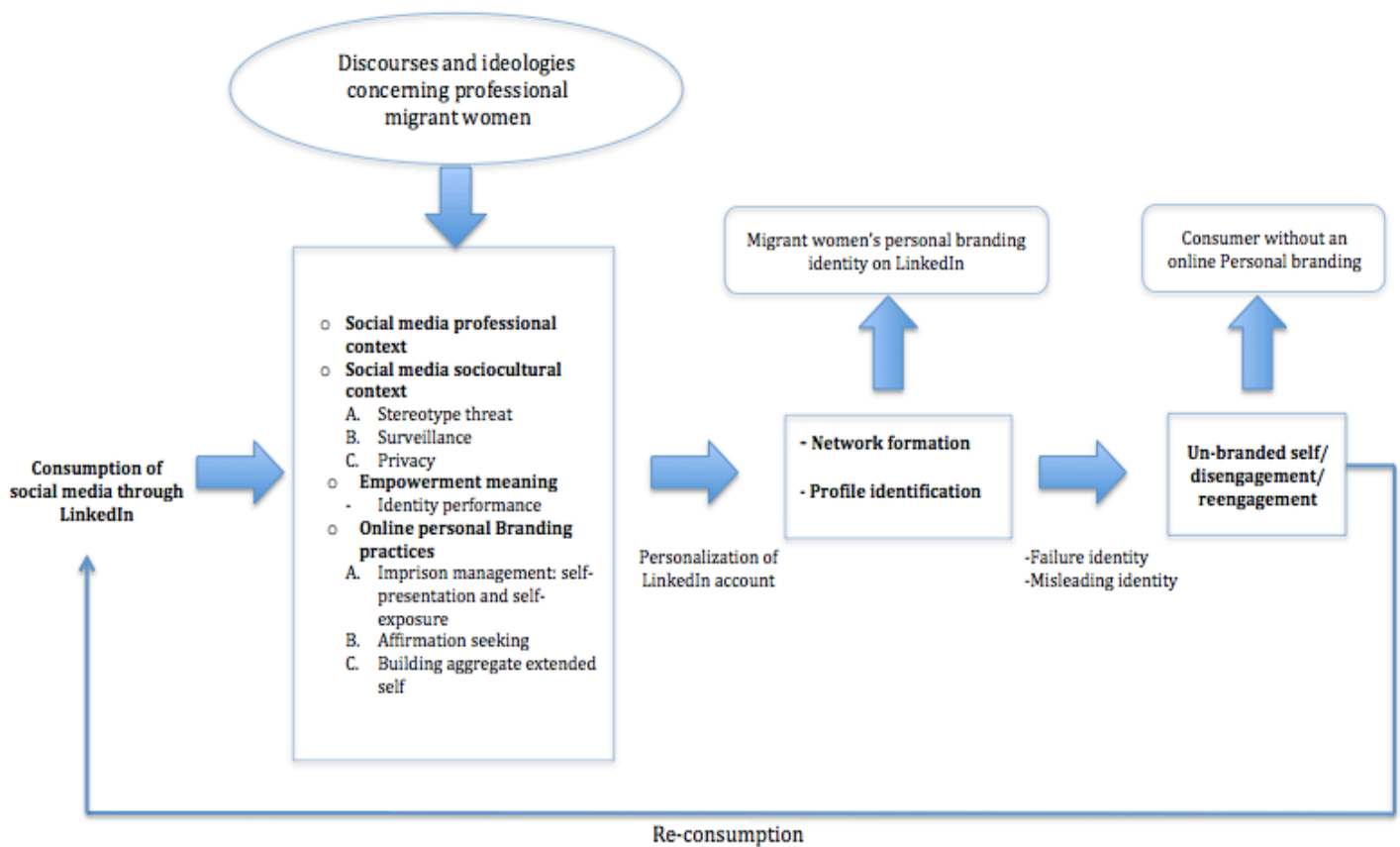
the LinkedIn site within its professional features. All three contexts were applied to the practices, in order to interpret the research findings as they relate to the theoretical background of this research. We can see a clear image of the consumption practices of migrant Islamic women and data related to the tension that they face regarding their cultural background as a minority culture within Australia as a dominant culture. In general, migrant Islamic women direct their efforts to dealing with the cultural differences in ways that ensure they will benefit from their online engagement. The result is a professionally branded presence on LinkedIn.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 The implications of cultural contexts in terms of professional social media consumption

In this research, I analyse the cultural scope and the factors that contribute to explain engagement with professional social media such as LinkedIn. I also evaluate the types of formal social media implemented in these cultural contexts for personal branding purposes. To this end, I will create a conceptual framework for online personal branding in social media, particularly LinkedIn, in order to facilitate a better understanding of the main characteristics of my research analysis relating to social media use. I will also examine the effects of online identity and engagement, as well as user consumption of formal social media. Based on Figure 1, I will highlight the processes and the practices resulting from the following three sociocultural contexts: stereotype threats; surveillance; and privacy with regard to any engagement practices aimed at self-branding online. With specific reference to professional migrant women who wish to build a personal brand online, the proposed framework explains the scenarios that arise through the use of LinkedIn in naturalistic settings.

Figure 1: Personal branding practices of migrant professional women on LinkedIn



The engagement experiences relating to the use of LinkedIn for personal branding are personalised through the regular steps in the online professional identification of consumers and their tensions, and this is in line with the existing network of professional social media contexts for specific identification settings. This process is carried out using normative LinkedIn features such as network formation through collecting professional contacts; profile identification using a profile photo; professional information such as name, summary and skills; recommendations and endorsements; and influencers and groups that shape the customer's cultural identity.

Personal brands are built initially when consumers address their tensions in a way that ensures self-identification and self-presentation, as well by being active in their online engagement on LinkedIn accounts. Profiles can be presented and the

‘self’ can be exposed; this leads to the presence of consumers with branded self, which is essentially the aim of engaging with LinkedIn. However, disengagement can result from the tensions migrant women face regarding their minority culture when it comes to creating professional online personal branding. This is particularly the case for migrant Islamic women, as their identity can be recognised easily from their profile pictures if their Islamic identity is manifested by their clothing style, or through descriptions of their initiatives within the Islamic community such as Sarah Mohamed and Ghadah Ahmad as achievements in their LinkedIn profiles.

All of these scenarios encourage consumers to assess their engagement and online identity, leading them to re-identify themselves through their LinkedIn accounts by practising the re-engagement stage in all personal branding scenarios where they feel that their online identity or engagement is not at a level that can help them to brand themselves perfectly. The consequence of this re-engagement arises when consumers recognise that there is no sense in being worried about ‘who they are’ and ‘what they are doing’ on a professional social media network like LinkedIn after they present themselves, seek affirmation and are included with others in aggregation. Therefore, the re-consumption process is done in a way that makes users more recognised in the LinkedIn network. For instance, women who do not initially use a profile picture on LinkedIn can update their profile to include a picture. This changes all of the engagement characteristics and practices, and creates a new identity and tensions that ultimately result in a personally branded ‘self’.

In addition, even in the case of consumers who have a professional personal brand on LinkedIn, they also practise re-engagement when they take up a new career, change jobs or even upgrade their LinkedIn account from the basic free version to the

premium version. My research examines how particular LinkedIn features can determine the success of the various stages of online personal branding, which are managed by gender and cultural identity as a continuous systemic process change depending on many aspects relating to the consumers themselves. These aspects include culture and engagement perceptions ; professional platform features such as contacts and summary; the social media context LinkedIn; and the dominant culture which is Australian in this research of consumption (Ahadi, 2009; Arsel & Thompson, 2011). This research offers deep insights into the tensions that migrant women experience when they want to personally brand themselves online by explaining the impact of social media on sociocultural context factors in terms of bringing about influential engagement, re-identification and the re-engagement process of professional social media LinkedIn.

As framed in Figure 1, the analyses in my research contain many sociocultural dimensions governing the consumption of social media as seen through the case of migrant women in Australia using LinkedIn. The research also investigates a variety of professional personal brands depending on the number of aspects that consumers respond to or ignore due to branding scenarios. Many of these scenarios arise from consumers' experiences of their own tensions and perceptions within the sociocultural context that they encounter through managing the perceptions of others, seeking affirmation and building an aggregate extended 'self'. These research findings explain how each contextual factor contributes to and interacts with each professional social media consumption stage.

Nonetheless, when women on LinkedIn adopt the branding process themselves professionally, they try to gain as many benefits as possible from their

presence online as migrant women living and working in different country. Generally, they view this professional social media platform as a window that mirrors their existence in the dominant society, and many place considerable emphasis on how they are received by others. There is evidence of their perception of LinkedIn as a two-sided weapon that can benefit or harm them depending on who they are and what profession they are engaged in such as the case of migrant Islamic women in this study when they presenting their contributions to the Islamic community in their summary. This has happened because professional migrant women have chosen to brand themselves in a way that will ensure their professionalism within their minority culture and will present a true example of them in their professional lives.

For these minority groups, online personal branding allows them to elaborate in a positive way on Australian society's perceptions about their culture and religious background, which they believe is formed through the social media. Thus, they carry the responsibility on their shoulders of appearing as professionals on LinkedIn and showing how migrant women can be when it comes to professionalism in social media platform.

5.1.1 Women's professional personal branding practices on LinkedIn

Traditionally, psychologically-oriented consumer research studies on personal branding hold that every person should have the opportunity and the ability to build his or her own brand(Chen, 2013; Karaduman, 2013). However, within the context of professional personal branding on social media it is not easy to use the traditional steps of branding to shape one's personal image (Dijck, 2013; Labrecque et al., 2011; Shepherd, 2005). As a result, a wider investigation is needed to better understand the socially bridging and bonding roles of personal branding experiences on social media.

Of particular importance to this study are migrant women's professionally oriented personal branding practices on the social media platform LinkedIn. The sorts of professional branding practices examined in this research are important because they reflexively impact both gender and cultural identity practices on social media (Back et al., 2010; Barker, 2009; Chen, 2013; Karaduman, 2013; Papacharissi, 2009; Triastuti, 2014).

By studying the practices of professional women who create their own professional brands on LinkedIn, I can explain the engagement experiences of women in professional contexts. In turn, this will provide insight into the tensions that women feel when they consume professional social media and how those tensions impact their gender and cultural identities online. These online branding practices are related to the sociocultural context of social media: stereotype threat, surveillance and privacy. Migrant women who use social media try to identify themselves within the context of their professional identity online can sometimes be misidentified as a result of the concerns that some of these women feel when using LinkedIn, as is seen by the cases of Amany Othman, Ruba Suliman, and Layla Saleh. However, in the re-engagement stage migrant Islamic women recognise that their culture identity can be accepted as a result of their professionalism. Therefore, by practicing online personal branding through LinkedIn, migrant Islamic women who migrated to Australia are given opportunities to find their place within Australian society.

By taking the experiences of migrant women on LinkedIn into consideration, to offer personally branded self they need to know how they deal with their tensions and how much they understand the scenarios consumption for forming an online personal brand (Chen, 2015; Garber, 2013; Harcourt, 2000; Triastuti, 2014). So,

awareness is one of the most important aspects that can determine the success of personal branding process. It is also important for determining whether or not someone has self-branded in a professional context.

Therefore, in this research theoretical framework the consumption-cycle for online personal branding on LinkedIn requires the re-engagement stage, as the women believe that the starting point of personalizing themselves was not easy after they used LinkedIn. This is a result of the tensions that they feel and face in every day consumption. These tensions are negotiated within many aspects of life, including personal, gendered, professional, sociocultural and religious (Byng, 2010; Harris & Rae, 2011; Hines, 2004; Üstüner & Holt, 2007). Migrant women face all of these aspects in order to form a professional online-identity and a professional personal brand. A beneficial element of the social media consumption story is explained as the role of women's professional personal branding experiences and their formation of their own professional identities despite the tensions in LinkedIn.

The challenges of building an online personal brand using social media is discussed in Labrecque et al. (2011) that explain the difficulties that people face when their identity of personal brand changed due to the changing on their life stages that require adjustment for his or her brand positioning to be suitable to the new identity. The present research study begins by explaining the processes, challenges and implications of online personal branding in the context of social media. Considering these processes and challenges, my study shows that women from different cultural identities can build their online personal brands by exploring their experiences with LinkedIn. Specifically, this can be performed through the practices of impression management, affirmation seeking and building an aggregate extended

self. This research provides a vital extension to Labrecque et al.'s theory by illustrating the sociocultural context of professional social media use that manages the practices of online personal branding professionally by monitoring stereotype threat, surveillance and privacy.

Most migrant Islamic women in my study understand the engagement practices they performed when they engaged in self-branding. These practices include for example, how they present themselves to manage the impression of others such as Layla who change her name after she migrated to be Eely and used it in LinkedIn as well as Ghadah who become more confident in identifying herself after the positive comment that she had from her online network professionals about her career improvement. This example, of Ghadah presents one benefit of the surveillance context, practising the self- affirmation through LinkedIn. As Chen (2015) stated in her study, women mostly went online during their leisure-time. This study explains the situations where the professional social media platform can add to the experiences of women when they go online and explores the culture consumption that may cause tensions for migrant women. Conversely, Labrecque et al. (2011) discussed the traditional social media contexts in normative terms as a differences between platforms and attributes and features of the platforms themselves that may cause migration between social media platforms. They required users with awareness of the relation between personal branding and information control that in the case of online personal branding it is required information to be available online. My study, however, takes a more holistic approach studying how the use of those attributes and features on LinkedIn such as contacts, summary, recommendations, endorsements, and profile elements are connected intimately to the social and cultural contexts of

stereotype threat, surveillance and privacy that the consumer in this research context migrant woman is embedded within in practicing online personal branding.

This research concentrated on one kind of platform LinkedIn that is a professional platform and on consumer cultural experiences and perceptions, which refer the branding efforts of the person herself within the context of a specific gender identity and group of people, as they suggested in their discussion of fertile areas of possible future research. Yet studies such as Labrecque et al. (2011) overlook the ways that cultural discourse and ideologies, and social forces, strongly influence the online branding practices of consumers of professional social media site such as LinkedIn – especially consumers such as the migrant women participating in this current research whose lived experiences of cultural and gender identity are intimately intertwined in their social media consumption practices. As I highlighted in this study, the challenges faced by this population can be tensions that arise from cultural background, gender or religious beliefs. These tensions can influence the effectiveness of professional self-identity online and can result in an unbranded self. Thus, the re-engagement stage that is on my research framework can involve fixing or re-identification attempts to adjust professional personal brands on LinkedIn.

5.1.2 Women's online personal branding and professional identity practice

Studying the consumption experiences by users of professional social media platform LinkedIn offers deep insights for researchers into the professional-identity practices of female professionals who use the site and how image branding is manifested through cultural aspects and tensions. Women's professional identity, according to Walkowitz (1990), is how women organise and define their professional status. Applying the meaning to my research, it is the professional social media

context for LinkedIn: personal networking contacts, personal profile, recommendations, endorsements, and other LinkedIn features. Dijck (2013) and Donelan (2015) explained how such social-media platforms could enhance identity formation, particularly LinkedIn's self-promotion value through online personal branding, and how the use of particular tools in social media boost networking opportunities.

Professional-identity practices also can be seen when professionals use self-commodification in branding and reveal personal information online (Bridgen, 2011), as well as build their social-media capital through LinkedIn (Komito, 2010). Professional-identity practices in my study can be seen through professional migrant women's experiences with personal branding on LinkedIn and how they have been affected in regard to how they present themselves in a social and cultural fashion on the platform. Setting up a LinkedIn profile requires that the user present an accurate professional image that normatively represents the person. This created a particular consumption style for my study through the research sample: professional migrant women who live in Australia. Therefore, identification of professional practises required them to think of themselves as foreign in some cases, trying particular engagement styles or not fully identifying themselves through their LinkedIn profiles at the beginning.

All of these practises shaped professional identities through the study framework of online personal branding in LinkedIn. Through this practise of women online personal branding, this study can bring out changes in the professional-identity practises associated with the branding process that impact the quality of social-media consumption, performance, and engagement. This requires me to look at the online

professional personal branding process as an active network that creates better professional personal branding through personal experiences.

The professional social media context is important in terms of online personal branding practices using social media platforms. The online personal branding practices in previous research aimed to reflect the platforms' usage, the person's social capital and engagement situations that control the performances of the branded person's online efforts (Brandtzaeg & Heim, 2009; Chen, 2015; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Conversely, my research proposes to evaluate the success of the online personal branding processes in professional social media platforms, arguing that it can be linked to more normal though a powerful, contextualised personal branding practice: empowerment. My findings explain the way that specific online personal branding practices represent focused sociocultural meaning and associated personal branding practices. Impression management, for instance, enables the personally branded self to articulate the sociocultural tensions, cultural perceptions and multicultural identity linked to professional migrant women's positive situations and meaningful lives.

Empowerment, for example, captures exactly what motivations encourage migrant women to consume professional social media for personal branding purposes. The cultural history of migrant women's empowerment via the Internet contains discussions around "closing the digital divide" and "belonging to a collective cultural identity" (Choudhury, 2009; Kamal, 2011; Mehra et al., 2004; Wray, 2004). Empowerment is adopted via social media consumption, and we can see in Ghadah Ahmad's case, when she affirmed her professional identity through her contacts'

comments. Her practice done in order to oppose the perception of being a migrant woman using LinkedIn.

This personal branding practice is widely espoused by migrant women who feel forced into a mix of personal branding tensions related to ideas about professional identity construction, cultural acceptance, professional interactions and reforming stereotypes. The practise of empowerment, performed through self-identification for online personal branding purposes by migrant women, leads to a variety of tensions and feelings that translate into stressful perceptions about their identities. These experiences make them struggle to introduce their best selves as professional women in society and to uphold their professional migrant women's ideology.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

In this phenomenological study of online personal branding and womanhood, I contextualised my research; I studied migrant Islamic women's experiences, aiming to have a deep understanding for particular consumption characteristics by identifying the tensions that can appear from practising online personal branding processes. Nonetheless, future research should study two groups of women from different backgrounds. This could add more insight to the research outcomes in varying the experiences and the sociocultural contexts. In addition, the study could be done with migrant women and Australian women to find the similarities and differences on womanhood consumption practises. Second, I limited my research analysis in using the interview transcript without analysing the women's LinkedIn accounts and their level of self-presentation and exposure since my research focused on the consumption experiences from one data source, which explained the experiences of personal branding. However, in future research, analysing the homepage of their LinkedIn

accounts and comparing it with the interview script could give a deeper understanding in what the women think they are doing and how they are received from others online. This would explain more tensions and identify more opportunities. Finally, my research sample contained two types of migrant Islamic women: one type who plans to live in Australia forever and the other type who plans to live in Australia for a specific period. These differences can affect the experience characteristics for professional migrant Islamic women since the aims and motivations of personal branding on LinkedIn are different. Therefore, future research could be more specific in the type of sample.

5.3 Conclusion

The cultural consumption of a professional social media platform for personal branding has a particular characteristic in this study. It is formed by examining the process of online personal branding and womanhood in Australia. I explore the processes of building a personal brand for professional migrant Islamic women who live in Australia in order to understand the practises of online personal branding through impression management, affirmation seeking and the aggregated extended online self when they are affected by the sociocultural context of stereotype threat, surveillance and privacy. A variety of tensions result due to cultural differences and the effects of the social media sociocultural context, which manages the processes of personal branding in a way that allows migrant women to find a place in a dominant culture by having an online personal brand as professionals.

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