

- **Have you identified a sub-question, theme, keyword, or concept to develop through practice?**

Yes, My sub-question is: "To what extent does the audience's interpretation of meme-based brand messages align with the brand's intended meaning?"

The main theme I focus on is: "How is the relationship between internet memes and brand identity constructed and perceived?"

- **Does your practice test variables, how many?**

Yes, For independent variables, one is meme presence – whether the advertisement includes a meme or not, the other is meme-brand fitness – whether the meme style matches the brand's tone.

- **Can you link a variable to other research, practices, influences, experiences, or something you've read?**

Yes, one of my key variables is the perceived fit between a meme and a brand's tone or identity. It is connected to meme theory, as discussed in Shifman's (2014) work on internet memes, where context and audience knowledge affect how memes are received.

My own personal experience also suggests that mismatched memes can cause confusion or even negative feedback, especially on platforms like TikTok or Bilibili.

- **Have you documented how these influences, experiences, or readings have shaped your thinking and evolved your practice?**

Yes, theoretical readings have indeed shaped my thinking, but their influence on practice only began to emerge more clearly this semester. In my earlier research, I mainly used theory as a way to interpret findings. However, since this semester, I've begun to shift my perspective—realising that theory can also guide the design of experiments and structure my creative practice. For instance, when planning how to test meme-brand fit, I started using Keller's brand image framework not just to analyse results, but to design questionnaire dimensions and shape how brand tone is presented.

- **Have you experimented with design, for example, by creating visuals, sounds, or concept art?**

Yes, I have recently begun experimenting with visual design as part of my research

practice. To support my experiment on meme-based advertising, I created a mock-up of a WeChat Moments interface, which simulates a real social media browsing experience for participants.

- **Have you identified what information you are gathering from the audience, how you will gather it, and what you hope to discover?**

Yes, but the implementation process still requires further clarification.

At this stage, the key premise of my data collection is to explore the audience perception of branded memes vs. non-meme content. Based on this, I aim to further understand how the audience interprets the relationship between meme meaning and brand identity, such as degree of meme–brand fit and meme literacy. For data collection, I plan to use questionnaires, presenting different types of content within a controlled design. Participants will also be offered a meme selection task, in which they choose from several meme options the one they believe best fits the brand.

Finally I hope to discover Whether memes enhance brand favourability and attractiveness, especially among Gen Z audiences; Whether there is alignment or dissonance between brand intention and audience interpretation of memes; Whether audience familiarity with meme background influences the effectiveness of the advertisement.