The Relationship Between Brand Related UGC and CBBE – An Internet Meme Experiment

Authors: Joseph Hallgren 940525 – jh223ai@student.lnu.se
Kristján Sigurbjörnsson 940206 – ks222ux@student.lnu.se
Tommy Black Jr. 930523 – tb222iv@student.lnu.se

Group: E2
Course Code: 2FE21E
Tutor: Dan Halvarsson
Examiner: Setayesh Sattari
Date: 2018-05-24
Abstract

Background: The modern day era of the Internet gave birth to the growing phenomenon of Internet memes (IM), a type of online user generated content (UGC) (Gangadharbatla, 2008). Now marketers have begun researching the relationship between UGC and consumer based brand equity (CBBE) (Christodoulides et.al, 2012; Rachna and Khajuria, 2017). The problem discussion presents the issue of the diminishing control of brand equity due to the rise of UGC and lack of research on how to manage its influence (Morrison et al., 2013). Leading to the purpose of this thesis, which is to determine the impact Internet memes have on consumer based brand equity.

Literature: The review presents two leading contributors to the field, Aaker’s (1991) framework on the different dimensions of CBBE and Keller’s (1993) definition of the concept. In addition recent studies on UGC and brand equity provided the basis for hypothesis development.

Method: This thesis assumed a deductive research approach, developing the hypothesis from current literature in the field. A quantitative study, that utilized an explanatory research approach, because it best suited the experimental design. As for the data collection method, surveys were considered (Saunders et al., 2016), which the authors designed as a self-completion questionnaire and pre-tested (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Convenience sampling was chosen to select participants (Hernon, 2004). Construct and content validity was used along with homogeneity and stability to control reliability and measure the quality of research instruments (Bryman and Bell, 2015). SPSS version 25 was used to conduct all statistical analyses.

Results: Four hypotheses were developed, to measure the effect of the independent variable IM on each of the four CBBE dimensions. To summarize, three of the hypothesis (H1, H3 and H4) were rejected as the difference in the means are not significant enough and can be explained by chance. The effect on brand association (H2) was however found to be significant therefore H2 was accepted.
Acknowledgements

Foremost, we would like to thank the professors of the Marketing Programme, many of whom have given direct advice and support throughout our writing process. Dan Halvarsson, as our tutor, offered great support and challenged us to think outside of the box in our approach to this study. Viktor Magnusson and Michaela Sandell, who aided in the testing of our questionnaire and willingly provided support beyond our initial request. Setayesh Sattari for her support in understanding and utilizing the data we have collected. We also wish to thank Åsa Devine for her support and generosity. We thank our opposition groups, which helped us with their constructive and critical comments. Lastly, we are indebted to all our respondents for taking the time to complete our questionnaire and give us a sufficient amount of data to make a legitimate study.

__________________________  ____________________________  ____________________________
Joseph Hallgren               Kristján Már Sigurbjörnsson        Tommy Black Jr.
Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 4
   1.1 BACKGROUND ................................................................................................................. 4
   1.2 PROBLEM DISCUSSION ................................................................................................... 5
   1.3 PURPOSE ......................................................................................................................... 6

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ......................................................................................................... 7
   2.1 CONSUMER BASED BRAND EQUITY .............................................................................. 7
   2.2 AAKER’S BRAND EQUITY MODEL ................................................................................. 8
       2.2.1 Brand Awareness ...................................................................................................... 8
       2.2.2 Brand Associations .................................................................................................. 9
       2.2.3 Perceived Quality .................................................................................................. 10
       2.2.4 Brand Loyalty ....................................................................................................... 10
   2.3 PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ...................................................................... 11

3. METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................................ 12
   3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH .................................................................................................. 12
   3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN ....................................................................................................... 13
   3.3 DATA COLLECTION ....................................................................................................... 13
   3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS ............................................................................... 14
       3.4.1 Operationalization ................................................................................................. 15
       3.4.2 Questionnaire Design ............................................................................................ 17
       3.4.3 Pre-testing ............................................................................................................... 18
   3.5 SAMPLING ..................................................................................................................... 18
   3.6 ANALYSIS METHOD ..................................................................................................... 19
   3.7 QUALITY CRITERIA ....................................................................................................... 20
       3.7.1 Validity ..................................................................................................................... 20
       3.7.2 Reliability ............................................................................................................... 20
   3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ......................................................................................... 21

4. RESULTS ............................................................................................................................... 22
   4.1 DESCRIPTIVES .............................................................................................................. 22
   4.2 QUALITY CRITERIA ....................................................................................................... 23
       4.2.1 Validity ..................................................................................................................... 23
       4.2.2 Reliability ............................................................................................................... 23
   4.3 HYPOTHESIS TESTING ................................................................................................. 24
   4.4 ADDITIONAL FINDINGS ............................................................................................... 25

5. DISCUSSION ........................................................................................................................ 26

6. CONCLUSION ...................................................................................................................... 28
   6.1 LIMITATIONS ............................................................................................................... 28

REFERENCES .......................................................................................................................... 30
1. Introduction

The following chapter introduces the focus of this thesis. Firstly, a background of the field relevant to the object of study is presented, where prior and current literature clarifies and provides a basis for further reading. Secondly, the object of interest is problematized in relation to both practical and theoretical challenges. Thirdly, the aforementioned problematization leads to the purpose of this thesis.

1.1 Background

Web 2.0 has given rise to increased methods of communication, allowing for far greater reach and circulation of messages (Kozinets et al., 2010; Moran and Muzellec, 2014). Through the channels which Web 2.0 provides, users within the general public have a much larger reach available to them for the content they create and share (Moran and Muzellec, 2014; Plevriti, 2014). User generated content (UGC), as it is called, is content that is created, spread and consumed by the general public on Web 2.0 (Kim and Johnson 2016). The amount of user generated content created and consumed has continuously grown with the empowerment of individuals on the social web (Gangadharbatla, 2008). UGC can appear in a variety of forms, such as blogs, videos, photos, reviews, and so forth. Similarly, UGC can cover a variety of topics, from politics to pop culture and brand related news (Östman, 2012; Smith et.al, 2012).

As evidence suggests, a considerable portion of UGC is brand related; “70 percent of brand-related searches on social-networking sites such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter relate to UGC, and only 30 percent of searches are for marketer-created content” (Christodoulides et.al, 2012, p. 1), and more recently; “Brand-related UGC on Twitter includes diverse topics, such as product, service, promotions, competitors, news, and location. About half of the topics are product based and one-third of the topics relate to either service or promotion” (Liu et. al, 2017, p. 245). As popularity grows, UGC has the potential to influence Internet users’ perception of brands. The receivers are those that come across UGC, either by searching for it, being involved in social networks that display it, or finding it by happenstance as they surf the web. As branded content continues to be the subject matter, marketers and researchers alike have begun looking into how UGC influences brand equity amongst consumers (Christodoulides et.al, 2012; Rachna and Khajuria, 2017).
To date, the research field on brand equity has focused on the concept from two different standpoints (Keller, 1993). Firstly, brand equity has been considered as the financial value of a brand to a firm (Simon and Sullivan, 1993). Secondly, brand equity has been researched in terms of the consumer’s perspective of the brand (Keller, 1993; Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Aaker, 1991). Despite the lack of consensus in regards of a singular definition for brand equity (Pappu et al., 2005) the importance of it has been greatly stressed in the literature (Christodoulides, 2010; Lassar et al., 1995). Keller (1993) had a noticeable contribution to the field when defining consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) as a cognitive response to marketing efforts. The meaning is that CBBE focuses on the consumer brand awareness and brand perception (Keller, 1993) and later brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1996).

Also notable for this thesis, Aaker (1991) presents the most widely accepted framework on CBBE (Lassar et al., 1995; Aaker, 1996; Pappu et al., 2005; Christodoulides, 2010). Here Aaker defines brand equity as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and / or to that firm’s customers” (Aaker, 1991, p. 31). As pointed out by Yoo and Donthu (2001), only four of Aaker’s five dimensions apply to CBBE, those being brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty. These four dimensions of a brand are something companies work hard to build and maintain, but are struggling to control due to the rise of UGC (Morrison et al., 2013).

1.2 Problem Discussion

Communications between consumers have increased dramatically with the rise of Web 2.0 (Plevriti, 2014), and understanding UGC and the effects it has on a brand has become increasingly relevant (Christodoulides et.al, 2012). Furthermore, Schivinski and Dabrowski (2014) believe that researchers and brand managers do not yet fully understand the effects of social media communication on users perception of brands. Christodoulides et.al (2012) similarly claims that managers have an insufficient understanding of the phenomenon. This can be seen through studies conducted around UGC and CBBE, such as online product reviews (Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold, 2011) or the effects of UGC on CBBE based upon different Web 2.0 platforms (Rachna and Khajuria, 2017; Bruhn et al., 2012). Most recently, Rachna and Khajuria (2017) applied Aaker’s (1991) CBBE model in their research on UGC and brand equity. As is brought forth in the previous statements, the current literature includes research on various types of UGC and its relationship with brand equity. However, to the authors’
best knowledge, there is yet to be done any research on the specific type of UGC that Internet Memes are.

Internet Meme (IM), is a problematic concept that is not easily given singular definition, with little literature surrounding the topic (Diaz, 2013). The concept of meme was coined by Richard Dawkins (1976) who defines it as “self-replicating units of culture” (Dawkins, 1999). He does so in relation to genetics and biology, however, he stresses that it can be applied to other areas, namely culture. Milner (2013) defines memes as “multimodal symbolic artifacts created, circulated, and transferred by countless mediated cultural participants” (p. 2369). To further clarify what is considered a meme in this research, an IM is dynamic, meaning that it can vary in its appearance, purpose and spread. It can take various forms, as it can appear as a hyperlink, phrase, image or video (Diaz, 2013).

“Additionally, memes are rapidly created and distributed, reaching an extended audience without being limited by geographic boundaries” (Plevriti, 2014, p. 4).

The importance of understanding the various aspects of UGC is increasingly relevant to both researchers and marketers (Christodoulides et al., 2012). They also express that businesses have found that their control of their brand has diminished through the rise of UGC, calling for a need of greater understanding as to how it functions and what type of impacts it has on their brand (Morrison et al., 2013). The popularity of IM online is apparent, as this form of UGC is prevalent on many platforms and even has communities based upon its creation and proliferation (Plevriti, 2014; Diaz, 2013). Brands are not immune to this type of UGC either, as can be seen with 2017’s “Tide Pod Challenge” IM (Forbes.com, 2018). As a popular form of UGC, understanding what impacts IM can have on a brand has become increasingly relevant for marketers, as IM continue to become entrenched in Internet culture. With the practical relevance of the need to further understand IM and the apparent lack of research on IM (Diaz, 2013; Plevriti, 2014), in addition to lack of a complete understanding of the UGC phenomena and its influence on CBBE (Christodoulides et al., 2012; Kim and Johnson, 2016), the need for research becomes clear.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the impact Internet memes have on consumer based brand equity.
2. Literature review

The following chapter presents the literature relevant for this research. This literature review is based on Aaker’s model for brand equity and infused with current literature in the field. This, along with literature from recent studies on brand equity and user-generated content, serves as a foundation for the following hypothesis development.

2.1 Consumer Based Brand Equity

Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) is used to differentiate brands, gain competitive advantage and assess brand performance in the market (Çifci et al., 2016). Keller (1993) believed that strong brand equity is achieved when consumers recognize brands, identify with them, and display loyalty towards them. He defines CBBE as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller, 1993, p.1). He also suggested that there are two general reasons for studying brand equity. Either the company wants to evaluate the brand as an asset to liquidate for financial purposes, or the company is investigating their consumer’s perception of the brand (Keller, 1993). This is the strategy-based reason, which is to be considered for the study; it is used to help marketers improve productivity by understanding the image being created in the mind of the consumers regarding their brand (Keller, 1993). The brand equity models introduced by both Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) are widely acknowledged for their contributions (Çifci et al., 2016). A review of the literature on brand equity confirms their models as the prominent measurements of a brand’s value to both business and consumers (Keller, 1993; Simon and Sullivan, 1993; Lassar et al., 1995; Aaker, 1996; Pappu et al., 2005; Christodoulides, 2010; Çifci et al., 2016).

Keller’s (1993) greatest contributions to CBBE can be found in his definition of the concept. In it he mentions three core concepts, which are the following: differential effect, brand knowledge and consumer response to marketing. Differential effect can be calculated when making a comparison of consumer response to marketing of a real ‘branded’ product and one substitute that is fictitious (Keller, 1993). Brand knowledge is determined by examining two aspects of a brand that Aaker (1991) considers valuable, awareness and image. Consumer response to marketing is a mixture of consumer perception, preference, and behaviour resulted from a marketing mix (Aaker, 1991). Keller (1993) makes use of Aaker’s (1991) four dimensions of brand equity as he includes them in his own model.
2.2 Aaker's Brand Equity Model

Aaker defined brand equity as “...a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service” (Aaker, 1991, p. 31). Aaker (1991) wrote a book called ‘Managing Brand Equity’, where he outlines each dimension of brand equity; brand loyalty, perceived brand quality, brand associations, brand awareness and other proprietary brand assets such as patents and trademarks. Only the four first dimensions will be used in this research, as they revolve around the consumer’s subjective perception of a brand, whilst the last dimension covers the objective valuables of a brand (Rachna and Khajuria, 2017). Each dimension acts as measurement, and in order to grasp the full scope of brand equity, those four dimensions need to be included in order to establish value (Aaker, 1991). These four dimensions have been ordered in a hierarchy where brand awareness and brand association precede perceived quality, which precedes brand loyalty (Yoo and Donthu, 2001). Aaker (1991) furthermore states, that awareness, association and perceived quality all affect brand loyalty. Also, that brand loyalty differs from the other three in the way that it requires experience with the brand, whilst the other three do not.

2.2.1 Brand Awareness

Aaker (1991) defines awareness as “the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall a member of a certain product category” (p.78-79). Furthermore, brand awareness refers to the salience of a brand in the consumer's mind, how easily it can be recognized when a cue such as a logo or packaging is given, or how easily it can be recalled when a product category or a specific feature of a product is mentioned (Keller, 1993; Aaker, 1996). Brand awareness is created by ongoing visibility, enhancing familiarity and powerful associations with related offerings and buying experiences (Keller, 1998). Brand communication has shown to increase the likelihood of a brand being in a consumer's consideration set, which may lead to a shorter decision making process and potentially lead to a habitual purchase (Yoo and Donthu, 2001). Hutter et al., (2013) found that consumer’s engagement with a brand’s fan page on Facebook had a strong correlation with their perception of brand awareness. Similarly, Bruhn et al., (2012) claims that an individual's perception of a brand is impacted by communication in the context of social media. Brand awareness has been found to be significantly affected by UGC on Facebook (Rachna and Khajuria, 2017). Also, brand awareness is
affected by branded social media communication on Facebook (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015). Therefore, we assume that brand related IM, as a specific type of UGC, will affect brand awareness.

**H1:** Brand related IM has an effect on consumers’ brand awareness.

2.2.2 Brand Associations

Aaker (1991) describes brand association as being “anything “linked” in memory to a brand” (p.131). That is, anything that reminds the consumer of the brand, rather than the reason they purchase. To be more specific, it is the degree to which the brand is recognised within its market (Keller, 1993). A common misconception is that brand association includes product benefits (Aaker, 1991). Aaker (1996) instead claims that brand association is closely related to the actual benefit of the brand itself, such as it being a status symbol, stamp of quality or that the consumer finds the brand to be credible. He also suggested that the correlation between brand equity and association lies within the differentiation that it brings among brands. Aaker (1991) meant that differentiation is the basis for why brands are used, without it consumers have difficulty distinguishing among competitors and supporting a price premium. Keller (1993) also implied that brand associations is a key factor that influences price premium, and in return price premium is needed to measure brand equity. Yoo and Donthu (2001) stated that positive brand associations such as being durable, marketable, and desirable lead to higher brand loyalty. They also mentioned that if consumers possess a strong brand association then the brand has managed to satisfy their needs, thus the positive impression. Severi and Ling (2013) agree that positive brand associations are a sign of quality and commitment. In his research on brand equity in relation to UGC on Facebook, Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015) found that UGC communication on Facebook has an effect on brand association. Likewise, Rachna and Kahjuria’s (2017) findings showed that UGC on Facebook has a significant impact on brand association. Therefore, we assume that brand related IM, as a specific type of UGC, will affect the consumers brand association.

**H2:** Brand related IM has an effect on consumers’ brand association.
2.2.3 Perceived Quality

Perceived quality has been defined as “the customer’s perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives” (Aaker, 1991, p.104). Aaker stresses that it is from the consumer’s subjective perception of the brand or product, not the objective truth of the brand or product’s quality, and holds that it is vital in establishing CBBE. The level of quality the consumer perceives is largely dependent upon the consumer’s previous experience with the brand or product, so long as that experience exists (Dean and Biswas, 2001). Perceived quality has been shown to have a positive relationship with brand image, as consumers utilize the immediate imagery as a quick reference to the brand’s quality (Rao and Monroe, 1989). Severi and Ling’s (2013) findings showed that perceived quality acted as the mediator between brand image and brand equity. Pappu et al., (2005) holds that perceived quality is closely related with the other aspects of brand equity. He claims that when consumers have high brand awareness, high brand loyalty, or high brand association, it is likely to reflect well in perceived quality and vice versa. Schivinski and Dabrowksi (2015) claim that branded UGC on Facebook has an effect on perceived brand quality. Furthermore, Rachna and Khajuria (2017) found that UGC on Facebook has significant impact on perceived quality of brands. Therefore, we assume that brand related IM, as a specific type of UGC, will affect the consumers’ perceived quality of a brand.

**H3:** Brand related IM has an effect on consumers’ perceived quality.

2.2.4 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty was defined by Aaker (1991) as “a measure of the attachment that a customer has to a brand” (p.55). Having a high level of brand loyalty among consumers gives companies a competitive advantage by lowering marketing costs thanks to word of mouth (Moisescu, 2006). Aaker (1996) mentions price premium and satisfaction/loyalty as the core measurements of brand loyalty. Willingness to pay on the consumers’ behalf is what is meant by price premium, and is therefore used as a measurement of brand loyalty because it represents the value assigned to a brand by its consumers. Whereas satisfaction/loyalty reflects how likely a customer is to switch to a competitor (Aaker, 1996). Brand loyalty has been considered as the core of brand value because of the switching cost that rests in consumers minds, creating a competitive advantage (Yoo and Donthu, 2001). As user-generated content is perceived as credible and trustworthy, due to it being created by peers with no obvious gain, it will increase the brands attractiveness (Christodoulides, 2012).
Furthermore, UGC on Facebook has been shown to have a significant impact on brand equity (Rachna and Khajuria, 2017). Also, Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015) finds that UGC on Facebook has an effect on Brand loyalty. Therefore, we assume that brand related IM, as a specific type of UGC, will affect the consumers brand loyalty.

**H4:** Brand related IM has an effect on consumers’ brand loyalty.

2.3 Proposed Conceptual Framework

![Proposed Conceptual Framework](image)

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework
3. Methodology

The following chapter illustrates the methodological approaches chosen for this research. Firstly, the research type and justification is presented, followed by the introduction of the research design and method for data collection. Secondly, the sample and its justification is presented, followed by presentation of analysis methods. Finally, the quality criteria of validity and reliability are presented followed by ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Approach

This thesis assumes a deductive research approach, where hypotheses have been developed from current literature in the field. The concepts that make up the hypothesis have been made into researchable units, which can therefore be investigated with the use of empirical data (Bryman et al., 2011). As is also mentioned by Bryman et al., (2011), the operationalization of the hypothesized concepts makes them measurable, allowing for data gathering. Also, this thesis is a quantitative study, made for observing the measurable and objective relations between the dependent variable (CBBE) and independent variable (IM) (Bryman and Bell, 2015). A quantitative method was chosen for this particular research, as it allows for reach to a greater number of responses, which further allows for generalization, than that which could be achieved with a qualitative method. A greater number of responses is required as the aim is to investigate the causality between two variables, rather than gathering detailed answers to questions regarding the connection between the two.

This thesis furthermore utilizes an explanatory research approach. Explanatory research seeks to formulate the causal relations among variables (Saunders et al., 2016). Within this research design, Saunders et al., stress the importance of asking the questions of “why” or “how”. Explanatory studies are undertaken to examine a situation or problem in an effort to explain the relationship between the variables (Saunders et al., 2016). This is achieved through utilizing existing theory and research to examine a current, less researched subject or problem where the existing theory and research is applicable (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Through such a process, the theories used can be further enhanced with greater understanding as the problem or situation is explained. The current study makes use of explanatory research due to the research gap the authors discovered while reviewing current literature. As has been mentioned in earlier chapters, UGC is still a topic of great interest among researchers, especially looking into how it affects CBBE (Rachna and Khajuria, 2017). Due
to explanatory research emphasizing the use of existing theory to explain a new problem or situation, it is a suitable compliment to researching the effects of the trendy form of UGC that IM is and its potential impact on CBBE.

3.2 Research Design

The research design acts as a guideline ensuring that the data obtained allows you to sufficiently address the research question, methodically, logically and as clear as possible (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

This explanatory quantitative research fits well with an experimental design, as it allows for a systematic study where the cause and effect relationship between the objects of interest can be quantitatively measured and statistically analyzed. An experimental approach is highly applicable to this research, firstly because of the nature of the independent variable (IM). That is, there is no short concrete definition of the concept, as a result of its dynamic nature. Due to the said nature of IM (Diaz, 2013; Plevriti, 2014), it has the potential to lead respondents to create their own definition of the concept. The presentation of an example of an IM will provide the respondents with a common ground, as their interpretations of a IM will be specific to that example, rather than a dynamic IM definition. Secondly, an experimental approach allows for the development of a base for the respondents’ CBBE (control group), which the effect IM has on CBBE (experiment group) can be measured with. Experimental research can make use of a classical experiment or quasi-experiment (Saunders et al., 2016). This study used a classical experiment, meaning that those selected for the various groups were selected randomly from the chosen sample (Saunders et al., 2016). These groups are further explained in chapter 3.4.2.

3.3 Data Collection

There are several methods for data collection, such as interviews, focus groups, observations, secondary data collection and surveys (Saunders et al., 2016). Whilst both interviews and focus groups allow for data to be gathered and compared, they are primarily qualitative methods and do not fit well with the generalization of explanatory studies, and were therefore excluded (Bryman et al., 2011). Observations as a data collection technique, function well within experimental studies (Saunders et al., 2016), but were excluded due to limitations (see 6.1). Secondary data collection, if
quantitative, could provide the relevant data needed to produce results. Yet elements of this thesis, such as the variable IM, seem to lack enough research surrounding them, let alone data, for it to be a suitable method. This left surveys as the most viable data collection method.

When conducting research with a deductive approach, surveys are typically considered to be the optimal choice (Saunders et al., 2016). Saunders et al., also states that “...survey strategy is perceived as authoritative by people in general, and is comparatively easy both to explain and to understand” (p.181). Furthermore, the quantitative data collected through surveys allows for relationships to be analyzed between the data collected on the different variables present within the survey. However survey data does present an issue of lacking as wide a range of data as other techniques, and even more importantly, the data can be greatly harmed if the survey is conducted poorly (Saunders et al., 2016). The survey strategy functions well within the scope of this research. As a quantitative study, it has enabled the researchers to collect large enough samples to compare the effects of the experiments independent variable, the IM, on the dependent variable, CBBE. With the narrow focus of this thesis, the lack of a wide range of data that survey strategy suffers from did not present an issue in the research process. The justification for survey strategy usage is further enhanced by the selected data instrument, the questionnaire, presented in the next chapter.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

A questionnaire has been chosen as the instrument for this research, more accurately a self-completion questionnaire (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Questionnaires are a common instrument when conducting an explanatory or descriptive study, including experimental studies such as this thesis (Saunders et al., 2016). As a research instrument, questionnaire holds certain advantages, such as cheap and fast administration, no risk of interviewer effects or variability and they are convenient for respondents, as they can complete the questionnaire on their own pace (Bryman et al., 2011). The downside of a questionnaire is that a question can not be further clarified once it has been sent out, there is no possibility of probing questions, the researcher does not know who answers and can not collect further data on the same respondents (Saunders et al., 2016). Finally there is a risk of missing data or ending up with unfinished questionnaires (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Given the aforementioned disadvantages of questionnaires, it becomes vital for the whole research that the questionnaire is well formulated and that it sets out to measure what it is intended to
measure, as has been claimed by Bryman and Bell (2015). Due to the nature of this experimental research and the need for holding all things constant whilst measuring the effects between the independent variable and the dependant variable, a self-completion questionnaire has been applied. A questionnaire allows for the gathering of data in a standardized way, allowing for greater control as well as the ability to collect large enough samples (Saunders et al., 2016).

3.4.1 Operationalization

The objective of the operationalization is to derive measurable factors from the concepts presented within the literature (Saunders et al., 2016). This is done so that the variables of the study can be measured quantitatively as empirical data. Three questions in each dimension were garnered from previous literature, namely Yoo and Donthu (2001). The statements presented by Yoo and Donthu are further supported by Washburn and Plank (2002), who further tested them with an alternate study design. Several other studies similarly make use of Yoo and Donthu’s proposed statements (Atilgan et al., 2005; Pappu et al., 2005; Rachna and Khajuria, 2017). Two more statements for each dimension were developed from Aaker’s (1991) theory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand Awareness</strong></td>
<td>“The ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall a member of a certain product category” (Aaker, 1991, p.78-79).</td>
<td>“I am aware of the brand Zara.”&lt;br&gt;“I can recognize the brand Zara among other competing brands.”&lt;br&gt;“I know what the brand Zara looks like.”&lt;br&gt;“I immediately recognize Zara advertisements.”&lt;br&gt;“Zara comes to mind when thinking about the product category clothing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand Association</strong></td>
<td>“Anything “linked” in memory to a brand” (Aaker, 1991, p.131).</td>
<td>“Some characteristics of the brand Zara come quickly to my mind.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality</td>
<td>“The customer’s perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives” (Aaker, 1991, p.104).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Zara.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I have difficulty in imagining the brand Zara in my mind.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I can quickly recall the benefits of Zara.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I know what values Zara stands for.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>“[A]measure of the attachment that a customer has to a brand” (Aaker, 1991, p.55).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I consider myself to be loyal to Zara.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Zara would be my first choice.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I will not buy other brands if Zara is available.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I would refer Zara to others.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I am satisfied with the experience I have had with Zara.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4.2 Questionnaire Design

As seen within the operationalization, the chosen brand is Zara, a Spanish clothing brand. The purpose of this research dictated that the selected brand was not altogether significant. It was desired to have a common brand in order to establish a baseline CBBE with the control group. The original selection, IKEA, proved to be a poor selection after pre-testing. While the specific brand was of little importance to the focus of the study, it was found that IKEA primarily received the maximum value on the scales from the respondents, who were predominantly Swedish. An assumption was made that strong pride and national sentiment for the brand would have caused the Likert Scale questions to be unable to show if there was any significant difference between control and experiment groups. Zara was therefore selected, as it provided a more neutral opinion when pre-tested. At one point, it was also considered to create a fake brand for the questionnaire. However, the purpose of this study was to identify whether or not IM had an impact upon CBBE. Had a fake brand been created for the purpose of the study, all respondents would have had no prior knowledge of the company, which deviates from the purpose of measuring a change in CBBE, which has dimensions that rely upon some knowledge of the brand. This would deviate from the practical application of the study, as the results would only be applicable to entirely new brands.

The questionnaire consists of two groups. Each group contains the same statements and questions, with only the independent variable being added to one group. Each of the groups will receive an introduction to the survey, explaining their anonymity and structure of the questionnaire. The experimental group will be instructed to consider an IM example, which will also be presented on the introduction page, before proceeding to complete the questionnaire. The chosen example is an image form of IM. The researchers selected a single meme containing a reference to Zara (see Appendix 1). The researchers selected the meme after reviewing several available for the chosen brand. IM, as both Diaz (2013) and Plevriti (2014) claim, tend to be satirical by nature, therefore the selected IM is assumed to be a negative representation of the brand.

The statements will be answered on a seven point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with the middle representing a neutral stance. Several studies have made use of a five point scale (Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Rachna and Khajuria, 2017; Severi and Ling, 2013), whilst an eleven point scale and a ten point scale were used by Pappu et al., (2005) and Atilgan et al., (2005) respectively. For this research a seven point Likert scale has been chosen, as was done by Schivinski
and Dabrowski (2015). The seven point scale was chosen for its ability to show minor shifts and due to the nature of the statements in this particular questionnaire (Saunders et al., 2016). The need for a more precise measurement is due to not knowing the extent to which IM impacts CBBE. There is a total of 20 statements in the first section, followed by the second section consisting of six control questions, five nominal and one ordinal.

### 3.4.3 Pre-testing

Hernon (2004) describes pre-tests as a rehearsal for research that utilizes surveys as a method of data collection. In general, a pre-test sample is comprised of a small group who takes part in an evaluation that mirrors the data collection strategy (Hernon, 2004). He argues that a ‘pilot test’ is an essential tool which assists researchers with the discovery of any implications with their questionnaire’s components or structure. Bryman and Bell (2015) would agree that all surveys need to be tested with a trial run, especially questionnaires that make use of data instruments such as computers, as a small flaw can have large consequences. It is imperative that no costly mistakes are made that may skew the data, thus it is advised having at least three researchers present during the pre-test (Hernon, 2004).

This questionnaire was pre-tested in three ways. First, the established questions were garnered from past literature in which the questions had been tested, namely Yoo and Donthu (2001). Later the operationalization was reviewed by university professors to receive feedback on its relevance in answering what is intended. Lastly, the questionnaire was handed out to a pre-test sample to establish the internal reliability and validity of the questions.

### 3.5 Sampling

Hernon (2004) explains the concept of sampling in quantitative studies, as the selection of subjects from a population that is being researched in order to fairly represent them. The sampling selection criteria chosen by the authors was restricted to millennials (1981-1997) who either studied or worked in Sweden. The sampling criterion was based on the groups’ abundance in numbers, generational relevance and geographical convenience. Following Bryman and Bell’s (2015) sampling frame criteria, the data collection was conducted in a systematic fashion, where all participants remained anonymous, and their responses were only assigned a numerical identifier to avoid accidentally mixing them. However, the questionnaire requested information regarding age, gender, and occupation. The data collection method required that the researchers approached students on
Linnaeus University’s campus, informed them of the study and requested they filled out the questionnaire by hand. The questionnaires were collected approximately 5 minutes later, assigned a numerical label, and stored for later analysis.

According to various online sources, memes are extremely popular amongst the millennial generation, more so than any other because they are digital natives (Medium, 2018; The Odyssey Online, 2018; Repositories.tdl.org, 2018). There were a total of 205 respondents, however, this was reduced to 191 after removing outliers. Among the remaining 191 respondents, 89 were male and 102 were female. Regarding the age: 115/191 (60.2%) respondents were aged between 20-24 years old; 56/191 (29.3%) of respondents were aged between 25-29 years old; 13/191 (6.8%) of respondents were aged between 30-34 years old; 7/191 (3.7%) of respondents were aged between 35-37 years old.

Due to the survey being a self-completion questionnaire the researchers needed a sample within their proximity, and decided upon a non-probability design for this reason. The design known as convenience sampling was chosen as it allowed for the researchers to reach millennials accessible to them (Hernon, 2004; Bryman and Bell, 2015). However the challenge with non-probability samples is difficulty to generalize data. On the other hand, Bryman and Bell (2015) states that convenience sampling should be allowed when an opportunity presents itself that is either too good to ignore or if researchers are in need of a reliable response rate. Both cases were applicable to this study. Although the data collected may not present definitive answers due to the lack of generalisation, Bryman and Bell (2015) would still justify its use as the aim of this research has in fact been to provide a basis for further research and connect the data with previous finding in the field.

3.6 Analysis Method

SPSS version 25 was used to conduct all statistical analyses. Before beginning the analyses, the data was cleaned and searched for outliers. Descriptive analyses were conducted for the means, skewness and kurtosis for each dimension of the two conditions. Pearson's correlation was used to measure validity between the four scales. Reliability tests were conducted on the item level for each scale, where Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient measured the internal reliability. One-way ANOVA was used for hypothesis testing, where the mean of each scale within both the experimental and control group were compared.
3.7 Quality Criteria

Validity and reliability are the two main types of criteria that measure the quality of research instruments (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

3.7.1 Validity

In the case of this study, validity represents the extent in which the instrument (questionnaire) accurately measures dependent variables (dimensions of brand equity) in conjunction to the change in the independent variable (IM) (Saunders et al., 2016). Saunders et al., further mention three variations of validity which are construct, criterion and content validity. The first validity test undertaken was content, also known as face, validity. Content validity looks at whether the questions presented actually measure what they meant to measure (Saunders et al., 2016). This is primarily tested through pre-testing the questionnaire, as was done in this study (see 3.4.3) (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Reviewing the elements, in this case the questions, with professionals on the subject improves the validity of the questionnaire (Saunders et al., 2016). In addition to this, content validity for this study was further enhanced by previous studies establishing the appropriate measurements for questionnaires, namely Yoo and Donthu (2001). The second validity test undertaken in this study was construct validity. Construct validity is whether or not the constructs, in this study, the four dimensions, accurately measure the concept, CBBE. It is founded through theory, and the developed hypothesis must show that they are derived from the theory (see 2.2)(Saunders et al., 2016). Lastly is criterion validity, which is how well the operationalization performs in relation to other variables. The criterion validity of this study can be measured through a Pearson’s Correlation test (see 4.2.1).

3.7.2 Reliability

Saunders et al., (2016) refer to reliability as measuring the consistency of a study. This is further explained as the importance of the respondents consistently interpreting the questions, that their understanding of what the question asks is in accordance with what the researchers seek to measure. Reliability is established in two ways in this study. By adopting questions from previous studies, thus allowing this study to be compared to previous studies, it enhances the reliability of this study (Saunders et al., 2016). Saunders et al., also forewarns the numerous poor questionnaires in circulation, however the threat of this is limited due to the widely accepted questions produced by...
Yoo and Donthu (2001), which are present in numerous studies. Secondly, reliability was tested using the Cronbach’s Alpha. Saunders et al., present this as “[Cronbach’s Alpha] statistic is usually used to measure the consistency of responses to a set of questions (scale items) that are combined as a scale to measure a particular concept,” (p 451). When this measurement shows that the combined scales are above .7, they are deemed to measure the same thing. The questionnaire was deemed reliable (see 4.2.2).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The questionnaire was constructed in a way that individuals were not aware what the actual purpose of the study was about. Therefore, when handing out the questionnaire, the researchers were not honest towards the purpose of the study, refraining from mentioning to participants that they took part in an experiment testing the effect of Internet Memes. This follows the transgressional ethics school of thought (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Explaining the purpose of the research could have easily influenced the results, and was therefore left out in order to get the most accurate results. It was also presumed that the experiment would have an inconsequential impact, if any, on the respondents themselves. There was the potential to cause harm to the chosen brand. As has been stated, IM are satirical, thus the research further propagated the negative reflection of the brand to a greater number of individuals.
4. Results

This chapter presents the research results. First, descriptives such as kurtosis and skewness are presented. Second, validity and reliability tests are presented. Third, hypothesis testing, where the results from the one-way ANOVA are presented. Lastly, additional findings are presented.

4.1 Descriptives

The collected data was moderately skewed (1/-1) on all scales for the two conditions, except for the brand awareness scale in the experimental condition, where the data was negatively skewed at -1.536. Furthermore, the skewness was negative in all cases, in exception for the brand loyalty in the two conditions. In regards of kurtosis, most cases were relatively close to a normal distribution (0). The most extreme deviation from a normal distribution was the brand awareness scale for the experimental condition, where the peakedness can be described as 5.151. Another notable deviation from the normal distribution was on the brand association scale for the experimental condition, where the kurtosis was 1.150. This data, in addition to the means of each scale, are presented in the table below.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales by group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness CG</td>
<td>5.3278</td>
<td>-.825</td>
<td>-.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness ExG</td>
<td>5.6022</td>
<td>-1.536</td>
<td>5.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Association CG</td>
<td>4.3732</td>
<td>-.450</td>
<td>-.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Association ExG</td>
<td>4.7247</td>
<td>-.871</td>
<td>1.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality CG</td>
<td>4.7485</td>
<td>-.396</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality ExG</td>
<td>4.7462</td>
<td>-.191</td>
<td>-.521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty CG</td>
<td>3.5423</td>
<td>.325</td>
<td>-.505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty ExG</td>
<td>3.5591</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>-.398</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Quality Criteria

4.2.1 Validity
The following table displays Pearson’s Correlation, which measures the criterion validity between the scales.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pearson’s Correlation</th>
<th>Brand Awareness</th>
<th>Brand Association</th>
<th>Perceived Quality</th>
<th>Brand Loyalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.778**</td>
<td>.326**</td>
<td>.365**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Association</td>
<td>.778**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.303**</td>
<td>.445**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality</td>
<td>.326**</td>
<td>.303**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.504**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>.365**</td>
<td>.445**</td>
<td>.504**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 Tailed).

As shown in the table, the criterion validity of each scale is valid, ranging between .326-.778. Furthermore, the correlation is significant at the .01 level for all of the scales. This reflects previous research, which has pointed out the strong relationship between the dimensions (Washburn and Plank, 2002; Yoo and Donthu, 2001).

4.2.2 Reliability

A Cronbach-alpha test was conducted to measure the internal reliability of each scale within the questionnaire. The reliability of each scale is represented in the table below.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Cronbach-alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Association</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.856</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the table shows, each scale passed the reliability test, resting between .759-.856, and where therefore used for analysis purposes. Additionally, the researchers measured the internal reliability of each scale separated between the control and experiment groups, which similarly showed good reliability.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

In order to measure the hypothesized effect of the independent variable (IM) on the dependent variables (CBBE dimensions), a comparison of the scale’s means within the two groups was conducted through a one-way ANOVA. Firstly, considering H1: There was not a significant effect of brand-related Internet Memes on Brand Awareness at the p<.05 level for the two conditions [F(1, 188) = 2.999, p = 0.085], H1 is therefore rejected. Second, considering H2: There was a significant effect of brand-related Internet Memes on Brand Association at the p<.05 level for the two conditions [F(1, 188) = 4.280, p = 0.040], H2 is therefore accepted. Third, considering H3: There was not a significant effect of brand-related Internet Memes on Perceived Quality at the p<.05 level for the two conditions [F(1, 188) = .000, p = 0.988], H3 is therefore rejected. Lastly, considering H4: There was not a significant effect of brand-related Internet Memes on Brand Loyalty at the p<.05 level for the two conditions [F(1, 188) = .009, p = 0.924], H4 is therefore rejected. This is presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>sig.</th>
<th>Accepted/Rejected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>2.999</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>4.280</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.988</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarize, three of the hypothesis (H1, H3 and H4) are rejected as the difference in the two groups’ means are not significant and can rather be explained by chance. Meaning that the independent variable (IM) does not have any significant impact on three of the four dimensions of CBBE. IM was shown to have a significant impact on brand association, confirming H2.
4.4 Additional findings

Additional statistical analysis were run on all control variables; Gender, Age, Occupation and questions about the participants experience with Zara; “Have you ever been to Zara”, “have you ever purchased a Zara product” and “have you ever used a Zara product”. Two significant results were found; firstly, those who had never purchased a Zara product but had used one, showed a significant difference on the association scale at P<.05 level of the two conditions, secondly, participants aged 35-37 were found two have a significant difference on the awareness scale at P<.05 level of the two conditions. However those results are highly questionable since they are derived from a very low number of respondents, only 9 (3 from ExG and 6 from CG) and 7 respondents (2 from ExG and 5 from CG) respectively.
5. Discussion

The results of this research indicate that exposure to a single unit of brand-related UGC in the form of IM had no significant impact on three of the four dimensions of CBBE. This contradicts the findings of Rachna and Khajuria (2017) and Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015) as they found UGC to have a significant effect on all dimensions of CBBE. Hypothesis 2 was confirmed, which shows that the IM did influence the brand association to a significant degree. This is interesting, as when comparing the means of brand association between the control and experimental groups, it was found that the mean of the experimental group was higher. The IM was considered by the researchers to be a negative representation of the brand (see appendix X). Thus, the researchers believe that any increase in the respondent’s perception of brand association is misguided. This is due to only the brands name appearing in the selected IM, in graffiti form, while the rest of the imagery does not represent Zara’s actual products, stores or logos. This relates back to the practicality of understanding the effects of UGC on Brands, as this result has indicated, a single exposure to IM can affect brand association.

When considering the rejection of H1, H3 and H4 it is important to bear in mind the difference in research methods between this thesis and the aforementioned researches. As this particular research implemented an experimental design, whilst a cross-sectional design was used by both Rachna and Khajuria (2017) and Schivinski and Dabrowski (2015). It is also notable that this research considers a very specific type of UGC, which is more often than not, used in different context than UGC such as reviews, ratings and comments. Therefore it can be questioned if IM should be treated differently than other UGC, if its nature demands that other factors or context are taken into consideration when looking into the potential effects it can have on brands. Also it would be important, with the prolific and viral nature of IM in mind (Diaz, 2013; Plevriti 2014), to examine the effect of continuous exposure to brand-related IM, rather than a singular exposure as has been done in this thesis. Along the same line, the nature of IM might require different measurements than have been applied in previous research (Rachna and Khajuria, 2017; Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015). Perhaps factors such as attitude, brand image or brand perception is better suited for this particular UGC. Additionally, a potential influential factor to consider is the platform on which individuals are exposed to IM, as the researchers of this thesis have learned through the process, IM is more often present on certain platforms. That would ensure to a greater extent that respondents are familiar with the IM concept, therefore allowing for a cross-sectional design where questions regarding the
independent variable (IM) can be asked rather than exposing it in a experimental design. On that same note, it is the researchers’ opinion that specific industries, hence specific target groups, are more likely to be exposed to IM. Therefore industries such as gaming, film and TV, which IM often contain content directly and indirectly related to, could be researched specifically. Additionally, as mentioned early on in the text, IM itself has various forms. This study utilized the picture with overlaid text; however, further study into the variation of IM may show difference in impact.
6. Conclusion

This thesis set out to determine the impact IM has on consumer based brand equity. Because of the scarce literature on Internet memes and consumer based brand equity, literature on UGC and CBBE was applied. This was further supported with highly established measurements on CBBE from the literature (Yoo and Donthu, 2001). An experimental design was implemented and conducted through a self-completion questionnaire. After statistical analysis of the data, only the effect on brand association was found to be significant, the other three dimensions were not impacted by a single exposure of IM.

As previously mentioned, this contradicts results of recent researches where UGC was found to have a significant impact on all four CBBE dimensions. Therefore it is concluded that a further understanding of IM in relation to brands is needed, especially in the light of the findings on brand association on this research. There are various aspects of IM and brands that require further inquiry, from the nature of IM and its difference to UGC to the factors and context that might affect how IM relates to and effects brands. As the results of this thesis highlight, the practical relevance still stands. With IM still continuously being used as a form of communication in relation to brands, the importance of understanding its effects prevails. This becomes apparent when considering earlier statements regarding lack of knowledge in this field (Christodoulides et.al, 2012; Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2014).

6.1 Limitations

The researchers faced several limitations during this study. First and foremost was the apparent underdeveloped research behind IM. Few studies have been conducted surrounding them and those that have, such as Plevriti (2014), deal with their political impact. This presents a large gap in the research, presenting many options for route of study in which one had to be selected. The study had to be limited to conduct proper research, however there are numerous questions to be asked. The researchers were also limited by their sample, being that the sample came from a restricted geographic region within Sweden. While results could potentially be generalized for millennials within the geographic confines of Sweden, they cannot go beyond that. Additionally, both time and resources proved to be significant limiting factors. The researchers believed a longitudinal study on IM, which could then take into account their unique form of virality through numerous reiterations,
could have yielded better results and understanding of the true impact of IM. Resources available to
the researchers similarly prevented this route of study. Funding proved difficult in producing the
questionnaire. It was decided to take the traditional route of handing out the questionnaire in person,
as the researchers have had experience with low response rates with online surveys. This did indeed
yield quick and numerous results of completed surveys, however cost of printing limited the extent to
which questionnaires could be produced.
References


Diaz, C. (2013). Defining and Characterizing the Concept of Internet Meme. *CES Psicol, 6*(2), pp.82-104


Appendix 1

SEEMS LEGIT
Appendix 2

This questionnaire is a part of a Bachelor Thesis in the Marketing program at LNU. The answers to the following questions will be used solely for the purpose of this research and cannot be traced back to individual respondents.

Part one includes statements regarding Zara in terms of Consumer Based Brand Equity. Please respond to these statements on the scale provided, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Do so by choosing **one** option that is most applicable.

Part two includes filtering questions. Please respond to these questions by choosing **one** of the options provided.

### Part One

1. I am aware of the brand Zara.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I can recognize the brand Zara among other competing brands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. I know what the brand Zara looks like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I immediately recognize Zara advertisements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Zara comes to mind when thinking about the product category home furnishing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Some characteristics of the brand Zara come quickly to my mind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Zara.

8. I have difficulty imagining the brand Zara in my mind.

9. I can quickly recall the benefits of Zara.

10. I know what values Zara stands for.

11. Zara is of high quality.

12. Zara is likely to be reliable.

13. I expect Zara to be of high quality.

14. I expect Zara to be of high functionality.

15. I expect Zara to be price worthy.

16. I consider myself to be loyal to Zara.
17. Zara would be my first choice.

18. I will not buy other brands if Zara is available.

19. I would refer Zara to others.

20. I am satisfied with the experience I have had with Zara.

Part Two

21. Gender
   - Male
   - Female
   - Other

22. Age
   - < 20
   - 20-24
   - 25-29
   - 30-34
   - 35-37
   - > 37

23. Occupation
24. Have you ever been to Zara?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

25. Have you ever purchased a product or service from Zara?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

26. Have you ever used a product from Zara?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

PRE-TEST QUESTIONS

Please take the time to answer the following questions:

1. The survey instructions were clear.
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

2. Which question(s), if any, were unclear? (Write the #)

3. Which question(s), if any, made you feel uncomfortable? (Write the #)

4. Do you feel as though a major topic was omitted?
   ○ No
   ○ Yes
If yes, which:

5. Was the layout of the survey clear?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

6. Additional Comments?