Acknowledgements

This bachelor thesis has been written during the researcher's last semester on the Marketing program at Linnaeus University in Växjö. The research have investigated what affects brand equity for services online which previously was an unexplored area. This research has been conducted by Pontus Davidsson, Mathias Johansson and Martin Zetterberg.

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Abstract

Title: Brand equity for service brands online

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Background: Companies put a lot of resources on branding strategies in order to build and maintain a strong brand equity. In order to develop a strong brand equity it is important to be aware of the underlying factors affecting brand equity and their outcome. Under recent years there have been an increase in consumption of services online. Previous research has however laid little focus on what affects brand equity for service brands online.

Purpose: The purpose is to explain what factors affect brand equity for SBOs.

Hypothesis: These hypotheses were derived from a literature review.

H1 - Perceived Quality has a positive effect on SBO brand equity

H2 - Brand Association has a positive effect on SBO brand equity

H3 - Brand Awareness has a positive effect on SBO brand equity

Method: The researcher conducted an quantitative research where the empirical data was collected through a questionnaire.

Conclusion: This research show that perceived quality, brand association and brand awareness positively affects SBO brand equity.

Keywords: Service brands online, brand equity, perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association, service brand equity, online brand equity,
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1 Introduction

This chapter presents a background of brand equity for service and online firms. It also includes a problem discussion that highlight the importance of brand equity for service brands online that then leads to the purpose.

1.1 Background

The increasing role of the Internet and the amount of people using it has created new markets and hence moved shopping online (Rafiq, et al., 2013). Online sales have increased and are projected to continue growing in the future (e.g. Emarketer, 2014; Forbes, 2013), at least in the developed economies (USA, Europe & UK). The same goes for the service industry which has had a strong increase during the last 30 years and the economy has gone from product dominated towards a more service dominated economy (Morrar, 2014; Stafford, et al., 2011). A service is an offered activity, benefit or satisfaction that is intangible and does not result in any form of ownership for the customer (Armstrong et al., 2009). Internet is also intangible, meaning it cannot be presented in a physical form (Christodoulides et al., 2006; De Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003). Therefore the brand is an important factor for both service and online firms in order to visualize what the offer might provide for the customer (De Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2003; Kim, et al., 2002). A strong brand occurs when the customers have positive or unique associations towards a specific brand. One way to measure the strength of a brand is to use the concept brand equity (Keller, 1993).

There have been different definitions of brand equity but they are derived from two major perspectives; the financial based and the customer based brand equity. Financial based brand equity refers to the financial value the brand contributes to the firm. Customer based brand equity on the other hand is based on the market’s perception of the brand (Christodoulides & de Chernatony, 2010). In brand equity literature customer based brand equity is the most commonly used perspective (He & Li, 2011). Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) are two of the authors that are often referred to in customer based brand equity literature (e.g. Pinar, et al., 2014; Page & Lepkowska-White, 20002). Aaker (1991) describe customer based brand equity as the brand having assets and liabilities linked to it, which can add or subtract the value for a product or service and in the end value to the firm and its customers.
1.2 Problem Discussion

Internet has changed the way people communicate and made it easier to access information regarding companies and brands (Keller, 2009). Online firms face challenges to attract and retain customers (Mohamed, et al., 2014), therefore it is important to differentiate the brand in order to stay competitive on the market (Kim, et al., 2002). Brand equity is an intangible asset to companies and if successfully leveraged, the company can differentiate their services or products and create superior value in the consumer's mind (Kim, et al., 2002). Berry (2000) states that for a service it is important with a strong brand equity since it can help the customer to better understand what the service might provide and hence reduce the perceived risk. Strong brand equity can also result in higher willingness to pay, customer recommending the brand and create entry barriers for potential competitors (Biedenbach, et al., 2015; Farquhar, 1989).

Companies put a lot of resources on branding strategies in order to build and maintain strong brand equity (Balaji, 2011). In order to develop strong brand equity it is important to be aware of the underlying factors affecting brand equity and their outcome (Balaji, 2011). Knowledge about what affects brand equity can be used to create branding strategies as it offers insight into consumer behavior (Christodoulides, et al., 2006). Extensive research regarding service and online brand equity has previously been conducted (e.g. Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002; Pinar, et al., 2014). There are however different views between service brand equity and online brand equity literature on what factors that affect brand equity (He & Li, 2011; Rios & Riquelme, 2008).

Under recent years there have been an increase in consumption of services online (DIBS, 2014) and the e-commerce trend is expected to increase (Statista 1, 2015; Statista 2, 2015; Statista 3, 2015). However previous research have on the other hand laid little focus on what affects brand equity for service brands online (SBO) (Alwi & Ismail, 2013). In order for SBOs to create strong brand equity, it is essential to understand what the underlying factors affecting brand equity in the customers mind are (Balaji, 2011). This information reveals what is important for the customers and can then be interpreted into suitable branding strategies for SBOs (Christodoulides, et al., 2006). Due to the increase of SBOs and the lack of research on what affects brand
equity for SBOs, the researchers found it relevant to merge online brand equity and service brand equity literature in order to identify what factors affect brand equity for SBOs.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose is to explain what factors affect brand equity for SBOs.

1.4 Definition of SBOs

Because of the lack of definitions on what an SBO is, the researchers have chosen to clarify what the definition for SBOs in this research is. The definition is based on the earlier referred to definition of a service by Armstrong, et al. (2009). That the SBO should only perform pure services and there should not be a final good delivered to the consumer involved in their offer. Service companies that only act online is what in this research were referred to as SBOs. A few examples of online services that fit this definition are: Online betting companies (Bet365, Maria Bingo, Betway, et cetera); online streaming services (Spotify, ViaPlay, Netflix, et cetera); online dating services (Match, eDarling, et cetera), among others.
2 Literature Review

This chapter presents a literature review of service and online brand equity. First it introduced brand equity literature and later the factors that affects service and online brand equity.

2.1 Brand Equity

Many different views of brand equity have been proposed in the literature. Some define brand equity from a financial perspective while others defines it from the customer perspective (Rios & Riquelme, 2010). The focus of this study was however only on the customer based brand equity. Keller (1993) view brand equity from the customer's perspective and define it as the positive differential effect a brand has on a customer response to a product or service. A positive brand equity means that the customer respond more favorably to a product or service from a brand they know of than from an unknown brand (Keller, 1993). Pinar, et al. (2014) says that the main objective with all branding strategies is to build strong brand equity and this is mainly affected by what the customers have experienced, heard and learned about the brand. Christodoulides, et al. (2006) describe brand equity as the customer’s knowledge, perceptions and attitudes towards a brand that allow the company to differentiate themselves and get a competitive advantage towards competitors.

There is a disagreement within the customer based brand equity literature regarding what factors that affect brand equity (Rios & Riquelme, 2010). There have been proposals for several different brand equity models and there is a great variation of what and how many factors that affect brand equity (Rios & Riquelme, 2010).

2.2 Service Brand Equity

Brand equity for services is different than for products (Nath & Bawa, 2011). Berry (2000) goes so far to claim that brand equity is more important for services than for products. The reason behind why service brand equity is different from product brand equity is because of the characteristics of services, mainly the variability and intangibility (He & Li, 2011). He and Li (2011) strengthen this argument by saying that when buying a service the customer’s ability to assess the quality of that service is lower then when assessing the quality of a product. They further say that this could
increase the risk in the customer’s mind when purchasing a service. “However, brand, given its intrinsic value, can help reduce the perceived risks of buying and consuming services.” (He and Li, 2011: p.80). Although most of the research on brand equity claim that there is a difference, it occasionally surface other research that says that this difference do not exist (Heaven & Scotti, 1990; Rafiq & Ahmed, 1995).

Among researchers there are differences as to what the underlying factors to brand equity for service brands are (e.g. Berry, 2000; He & Li, 2011; Nath & Bawa, 2011). Berry (2000) is defining products and services as tangibles and intangibles. The brand is represented by the tangibles, however when it comes to intangibles, the brand is the company. He further created the service brand equity model, where he shows the connection between five factors and their impact on brand equity. These factors are company’s presented brand, external brand communications, customer experience with company, brand awareness and brand meaning (Berry, 2000). The company’s presented brand, Berry (2000) describes as the company's communication of their identity that can be done through controlled channels such as presentation of services, the service center or advertising. External brand communications he further describes as the knowledge assimilated by customers regarding the service and company. This knowledge is information that the company has difficulties controlling, it can be assimilated through channels such as word of mouth and press (Berry, 2000). This factor influences both brand meaning and brand awareness that is the next step of the model. The factor called customer experience with the company Berry (2000) describes as simple as how the customer experience the service provided by the company. This is one powerful factor that can destroy everything the company has worked for, if the service does not live up to the expectations of the customers (Berry, 2000). Brand meaning is how the customer perceives the brand and what the customer associate with it (Berry, 2000). Brand meaning is primarily influenced by customer experience with the brand, the other two underlying factors do also influence brand meaning to some extent. According to Berry (2000) brand meaning in its turn is the factor that primarily affects brand equity. The last factor is brand awareness that is mainly influenced by the presented brand, it is described by Berry (2000) as if the customer is aware of the brand. Hence the external brand communication is another influencing factor, the brand needs to be communicated in order for the customer to be aware of it.
Most research regarding service brand equity use the foundation by Aaker (1991), Berry (2000) or Keller (1993) and their factors when measuring brand equity for services (e.g. Balaji, 2011; Chahal & Bala, 2012; He & Li, 2011; Nath & Bawa, 2011; Pinar, et al., 2014). Balaji (2011) whose research regards building a strong service brand and testing the relationship between the different brand equity factors. He based his research on Aaker's five factors and reached the conclusion that in services only three of them are significant; brand awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty (Balaji, 2011). This conclusion hence excluded the importance of two of Aaker’s five factors; brand association and other proprietary brand assets. There is a similar view regarding service brand equity within the healthcare sector, where perceived service quality and brand loyalty are considered being the factors that positively impact service brand equity (Chahal & Bala, 2012). These researchers (Balaji, 2011; Chahal & Bala, 2012) define brand loyalty the same, as the consumer’s willingness to rebuy a service on a regular basis even if there are cheaper alternatives or other influences from other companies. Perceived quality is defined by Balaji (2011) as how the customer assesses the service in relation to what quality they previously expected it having. However Chahal and Bala (2012) defines perceived service quality as the perception of the service before the service is experienced, in relation to other services. The last factor only used by Balaji (2011), brand awareness, is defined as the part the brand has in the consumer’s mind. Further he states that in order to grab the attention of a customer during purchase decisions, building brand awareness is one of the main concerns a company has.

He and Li (2011) explored the main factors for service brand equity in high-tech business, were they identified two main factors that affect service brand equity. They agree with previous researchers regarding the quality of the service (overall service quality) being an important factor. Which they define as the consumer’s perceptions and expectations of a service after the service has been performed. However they differentiate themselves from other researchers by claiming perceived value being the other factor influencing service brand equity (He & Li, 2011). This factor they explain as the value gap between the received and perceived benefits the customer has. How they value the outcome of the service after it has been executed (He & Li, 2011). Nath and Bawa (2011) conducted a research regarding measurements of brand equity in service firms on the Indian market. They constructed a scale in order to measure the service brand equity, where they had four brand equity factors; brand familiarity,
perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand association. By brand familiarity they mean that the customer know of the brand, their ability to recall its logo and the customer opinion of the brand. When deciding how to measure the perceived quality, Nath and Bawa (2011) did it by asking respondents regarding how they perceive the quality and the reliability of the brand. Brand loyalty is described as how frequently the customer use the service and how long they could wait in case if out of stock but still use the service (Nath & Bawa, 2011). Lastly brand association is described as the customer’s trust and admiration for the brand, also if the brand differentiates itself from other brands (Nath & Bawa, 2011).

Pinar, et al., (2014) has come to the conclusion that four of Aaker’s (1991) factors are important for service brand equity; brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand association. However they added four more factors; organizational association, emotional environment, learning environment and university reputation. These factors are specifically used when conducting university branding and measuring university brand equity. Where organizational association is defined as seeing the brand as an organization, where the whole organization (principles, employees and agenda) is regarded as the brand (Pinar, et al., 2014). Emotional environment is considered as the emotions consumers have towards the brand, what the emotions are is different from person to person (Pinar, et al., 2014). According to Pinar, et al. (2014) the learning environment is seen as how the service is experienced, such as the co-created learning experience. They further define the factor university reputation as that university lives up to what is promised by them, such as for example the education. Pinar, et al. (2014) defines brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand association in accordance with several authors presented earlier definition of the concepts (e.g. Balaji, 2011; Nath & Bawa, 2011 et cetera). The concepts are defined in the same way as previously discussed.

2.3 Online Brand Equity

In online brand equity literature there are different views on what underlying factors that are affecting brand equity for online brands (e.g. Kim, et al., 2002; Rios & Riquelme, 2010; Christodoulides, et al., 2006). Page and Lepkowska-White (2002) and Kim, et al. (2002) tries to develop and adapt Keller's (1993) model towards online companies. Page and Lepkowska-White (2002) define brand equity for online
companies as web equity and this consists of two important parts; web awareness and web image. Web awareness is similar to brand awareness but the difference is that web awareness is the likelihood that the consumer will think of a company’s website (Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002). Web awareness is in accordance with brand awareness built from marketer communication and non-marketer communication (Page & Lepkowska, 2002; Kim, et al, 2002). Online companies can create brand awareness through traditional advertising, both online and offline. The most commonly used market communication online is ads, which has been argued to be an efficient way to increase brand awareness and the number of visitors to the brands website (Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002).

According to Page and Lepkowska-White (2002), the qualities of the product or service are what mainly forms the consumer’s perception of a brand and hence create a strong brand image. But for online firms, web image is built from a combination of consumers perception of quality of the product or service, the website (e.g. easy to use, design), the seller or producer (e.g. customer service, trustworthy) as well as the communication from marketers and non-marketers (Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002).

Kim, et al. (2002) agrees upon the view that brand awareness has a major impact on brand equity for online companies. They claim that in order to build strong brand equity, the consumer must be aware that the company exists. Brand awareness is essential in order to build the second component that affect brand equity for online companies, brand knowledge (Kim, et al., 2002). Kim, et al. (2002) says that brand knowledge is the association and perception the consumer has towards a brand. They state that brand knowledge for online brands is established through the website (e.g. design) and the customers trust to the brand. The trustworthiness for an online brand is essential in order to create a positive brand knowledge since the customers does not have a direct physical contact with them. Therefore the legitimacy of online companies can be questioned by the consumers (Kim, et al., 2002). Overall, Kim, et al. (2002) say that it is sufficient to have positive brand knowledge for online companies in order to establish a strong brand equity.

Christodoulides, et al. (2006) developed a measurement for brand equity online, in the study they included five factors, emotional connection, online experience, responsive service nature, trust, and fulfillment. According to Christodoulides, et al. (2006) the
online experience can change the perception a customer has regarding a brand due to that for the customers online the experience is the brand. Another factor that influence online brand equity is emotional connection, which are when the brand goes beyond pure economic value and gives emotional value for the customer (Christodoulides, et al., 2006). They further argue since the Internet is intangible, trust and fulfillment is important for customers. Trust generates a lower risk for the customers and fulfillment regards keeping the promises made by the company, if this is not kept it can create dissatisfaction from the customers (Christodoulides, et al., 2006). Christodoulides, et al. (2006) describe responsive service nature as the level of customer service provided by the company. Responsive service nature is also a key for differentiation between online brands (Christodoulides, et al., 2006).

In 2008 Rios and Riquelme describe four factors influencing brand equity online. These factors are brand awareness, value association, brand loyalty and trust association. The study found that brand loyalty is the main factor for strong brand equity. According to the study, brand loyalty is indirectly influenced by brand awareness and brand trust. Trust is also highlighted as driver of brand equity due to that online is intangible and therefore trust becomes an important factor (Rios & Riquelme, 2008). In 2010 Rios and Riquelme reduce the model to brand recognition, trust association and loyalty. These assets can be influenced by web functionality, fulfillment and customer support online (Rios & Riquelme, 2010).

2.4 Summary of Factors

Below shows a table (Table 2.1) that summarize the literature reviewed on service and online brand equity. It has been divided into author/s of the publication, year it has been published, which of the two theories reviewed the publication belongs to and lastly the underlying factors affecting brand equity according to the research. The table was done in order to get an overview of the different factors that are considered in the literature to affect brand equity.

Table 2.1 – Summary of factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Berry     | 2000 | Service Brand Equity | - Brand Meaning  
- Brand Awareness  
- Company Presented Brand  
- External Communication  
- Customer Experience with the Company |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balaji</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Service Brand Equity</td>
<td>- Brand Awareness&lt;br&gt;- Perceived Quality&lt;br&gt;- Brand Loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He &amp; Li</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Service Brand Equity</td>
<td>- Overall Service Quality&lt;br&gt;- Perceived Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nath &amp; Bawa</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Service Brand Equity</td>
<td>- Brand Familiarity&lt;br&gt;- Perceived Quality&lt;br&gt;- Brand Loyalty&lt;br&gt;- Brand Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chahal &amp; Bala</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Service Brand Equity</td>
<td>- Perceived Service Quality&lt;br&gt;- Brand Loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinar, et al.</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Service Brand Equity</td>
<td>- Brand Awareness&lt;br&gt;- Perceived Quality&lt;br&gt;- Brand Loyalty&lt;br&gt;- Brand Association&lt;br&gt;- Organizational Association&lt;br&gt;- Emotional Environment&lt;br&gt;- Learning Environment&lt;br&gt;- Brand Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim et al.</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Online Brand Equity</td>
<td>- Brand Awareness&lt;br&gt;- Brand Knowledge&lt;br&gt;- Advertising on the Web&lt;br&gt;- WOM&lt;br&gt;- Search Engines&lt;br&gt;- Cross Promotion&lt;br&gt;- Website&lt;br&gt;- Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page &amp; Lepkowska-White</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Online Brand Equity</td>
<td>- Web (Brand) Awareness&lt;br&gt;- Web (Brand) Image&lt;br&gt;- Non-marketer&lt;br&gt;- Marketer&lt;br&gt;- Product/Service Characteristics&lt;br&gt;- Web Design Features&lt;br&gt;- Vendor Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christodoulides et al.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Online Brand Equity</td>
<td>- Emotional Connections&lt;br&gt;- Online Experience&lt;br&gt;- Response Service Nature&lt;br&gt;- Trust&lt;br&gt;- Fulfillment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rios &amp; Riquelme</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Online Brand Equity</td>
<td>- Brand Awareness&lt;br&gt;- Brand Association Value&lt;br&gt;- Brand Loyalty&lt;br&gt;- Brand Association Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rios &amp; Riquelme</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Online Brand Equity</td>
<td>- Brand Recognition&lt;br&gt;- Brand Loyalty&lt;br&gt;- Trust Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Brand Equity for SBOs

The thesis purpose was to explain what factors that affect brand equity for SBOs. Brand loyalty is a factor frequently used in the brand equity literature (e.g. Balaji, 2011; Chahal & Bala, 2012; Nath & Bawa, 2011; Rios & Riquelme, 2008; 2010). It is however a disagreement regarding the concept in relation to brand equity, if it is an underlying factor that lead to brand equity or if loyalty is the result of brand equity (Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002; Rios & Riquelme, 2008; 2010). With the focus of this research the researchers decided to follow the view that brand loyalty is an outcome of brand equity, hence brand loyalty is excluded from the conceptual model as an underlying factor. Other factors excluded from the research are Pinars, et al. (2014) factors that are related to university branding and the measuring of university brand equity. The four factors are; organizational association, emotional environment, learning environment and university reputation. Perceived quality, brand associations and brand awareness are the underlying factors included in the conceptual model to test their effect on SBO brand equity. These factors have been used since they are referred to in both service brand equity and online brand equity several times (e.g. Balaji, 2011; Kim et al., 2002). Factors from other authors, which were seen as similar to the three underlying factors, were divided into the most suitable underlying factor. These factors will be presented in the text below.

3.1 Perceived Quality

Several researchers within the brand equity literature agree that the perceived quality of the product or service has a significant impact on brand equity (Berry, 2000; Pinar, et al., 2014). Berry (2000) argues that customer experience with the brand is the main factor that influences brand equity for service brands. He states that if the perceived quality of a service differs from the customer’s expectations, no marketer communication will be able to compensate for that. This view is shared by Kim, et al. (2002) who states that the perceived quality is the foundation of brand equity for online companies. They argue that the perceived quality of an online brand often is linked to the perception of the company's website and hence online based companies are dependent on a high quality website since it is the only place they do business. The web usability, design and information architecture are the elements that build a high quality
website (Kim, et al., 2002). Page and Lepkowska-White (2002) also state that the customers experience with an online company's website strongly affect their perception of the brand. They argue that the website features (e.g. easy to navigate, relevant content, personalized information) become important for online companies in order to create a positive online experience for their customers. Rios and Riquelme (2010) agree upon this view as they state that the website functionality is an important element for online business in order to create a positive experience for the customers. A positive web experience create a favorable brand image (Page and Lepkowska-White, 2002)

Balaji (2011) and Pinar, et al. (2014) also claims that the perceived quality is the most important factor on brand equity for service brands. Balaji (2011) defines perceived quality as the customer’s perception of the service performance in relation to their expectations. Rios and Riquelme (2010) have a similar view in an online context as they highlight the importance of delivering and fulfilling the customer expectations of the product, defined as fulfillment. Christodoulides, et al. (2006) further argue that if the delivered product does not meet up to the customer’s expectations, the brand equity will likely be damaged in the consumer's mind no matter how positive the online experience was. He and Li (2011) say that a service is hard to imitate and therefore the quality becomes a significant factor for services in order to differentiate the brand and attract new customers. They argue that service quality is the consumer's perception of the service performance in relation to their expectations. The perceived quality of a service has a significant impact on brand equity for services (He & Li, 2011). It can be deduced that there are a few elements that influence the perceived quality factor. The elements are; web functionality and service quality (e.g. Berry, 2000; Kim, et al., 2002; Page and Lepkowska-White, 2002).

As shown above, there is an agreement among researchers within both service and online brand equity literature that perceived quality has a positive impact on brand equity. Hence the researchers have concluded the hypothesis that it would be the same relationship between perceived quality and SBO brand equity.

*Hypothesis 1:* Perceived quality has a positive effect on SBO brand equity
3.2 Brand Associations

Brand association is the thoughts a consumer have when a brand is recalled (Balaji, 2011). According to Berry (2000) brand associations is what shapes the brand meaning. It is also one of the factors that differentiate the brand in consumer’s minds and give reason for buying the service (Balaji, 2011). Nath and Bawa’s (2011) research supports Balaji’s (2011) view as they state that uniqueness are one of the benefits with brand associations. Brand association reflects the consumer's perception and associations linked to a brand based on their own experience and knowledge (Chahal & Bala, 2012).

Creating an emotional connection to the brand is an important factor for both service brands and online brands (Berry, 2000; Christodoulides, et al., 2006). This should be done through feelings of trust, closeness and affection. The brand should have a connection with the customer’s core values (Berry, 2000; Christodoulides, et al., 2006). Trust is mentioned in online brand equity literature by several authors as a key factor in building positive brand associations for online business (Rios & Riquelme, 2008; Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002; Kim, et al., 2002; Christodoulides, et al., 2006). From Rios and Riquelme’s (2010) research it is argued that trust have a direct impact on brand equity for online brands. Trust is important for online brands due to that the customer wants to feel safe making a purchase on the website (Rios & Riquelme, 2010). The primary concern for customers is often the security and the personal information that the
company receive (Rios & Riquelme, 2008). Online businesses can improve their trust through keeping promises, money-back guarantees and customer support service (Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002; Rios & Riquelme, 2010).

Customer service support does not influence brand equity directly but it affects the associations the customers make with the brand (Rios & Riquelme, 2010). Christodoulides, et al. (2006) say that customer service support is an influential characteristic for online brands and a possibility to differentiate the brand from competitors. This view is also shared by Kim, et al. (2002) who argues that customer service is one of the factors to use when differentiating the online brand. The possibility for customers to contact the online company increase the trust and confidence they feel towards the brand (Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002). From the literature it can be seen that there are some elements that impact customers brand associations. These elements are; trust, customer service and differentiation (e.g. Rios & Riquelme, 2008; Balji, 2011).

The literature review has shown a concurrence among researchers on the subjects. Their view is that brand associations are positively related to brand equity. The hypothesis derived from this is that the same applies for SBO brand equity and brand association.

*Hypothesis 2:* Brand Association has a positive effect on SBO brand equity

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**Figure 3.2 - Brand Association**
3.3 Brand Awareness

Research from Balaji (2011) and Berry (2000) have concluded that brand awareness strongly affect brand equity for service brands. However according to Berry (2000) brand awareness has a less impact on service brand equity in comparison to brand meaning. Pınars, et al. (2014) research come to the same conclusion that brand awareness has less impact on service brand equity than their other measured factors. In online brand equity literature it is recognized that brand awareness is a factor that highly affect brand equity (Kim, et al., 2002; Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002; Rios & Riquelme, 2010). There have however been some research made in specific service industries such as healthcare and high technological ones where brand awareness have not been recognized as a factor that have an impact on service brand equity (He & Li, 2011; Chahal & Bala, 2012). There are three different types of awareness; brand recognition, brand recall and top of mind (Balaji, 2011; Kim, et al., 2002). Brand recognition refers to a customer's ability to recognize a brand (Balaji, 2011). Consumers must be aware of that the company exists in order to consider a purchase (Kim, et al., 2002). According to Page and Lepkowska-White (2002) consumers are more likely to choose brands that they are familiar with. The ability for customers to connect a brand with a certain product or service category is known as brand recall (Balaji, 2011). Page and Lepkowska-White (2002) state that web awareness is the association a brand has to a product category in the consumer's mind. This view is shared by Berry (2000) and (Balaji, 2011) who argue that brand awareness is the consumer's ability to think of a company when a product category is recalled. Kim, et al. (2002) says that it is important for online companies to establish brand awareness and the ultimate goal is to create top of mind awareness. Top of mind is the first brand that comes to the customers mind while thinking of a certain product or service category (Kim, et al., 2002).

Brand awareness is built either by the communication from the company or external communication (Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002). According to Berry (2000) marketer communication is what the company is communicating through for example advertising. The company communication is also visualized through the brand name, logo and symbolic associations (Berry, 2000). According to Page and Lepkowska-White (2002) online companies can build brand awareness by communicating their message through either offline approaches (e.g. advertising in newspapers, billboards,
sponsorships) or online approaches (e.g. banner ads). External communication refers to communication that is not controlled by the company, for example word of mouth (Berry, 2000). What can be seen is that there is a few elements affecting the customer’s brand awareness; communication, recall, recognition and top of mind (e.g. Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002; Berry, 2000).

Brand awareness is concluded within the service and online brand equity literature to have a positive impact on brand equity. For that reason the researchers concluded the hypothesis that the relationship between brand awareness and SBO brand equity is positively related.

*Hypothesis 3*: Brand Awareness has a positive effect on SBO brand equity

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Figure 3.3 - *Brand Awareness*
4 Method

This chapter describes the choice of research methods and the related theories. It also presents the data collection method and the analyses that were conducted.

4.1 Research Purpose

The purpose of a research can have three different orientations, it can either be descriptive, explanatory or exploratory (Malhotra, 2010). The different objectives need not to exclude each other, rather than the research having a greater emphasis on one of these orientations (Saunders, et al., 2009). The research questions leading to the purpose is what decides the orientation of the research. The descriptive research is conducted if the outcome of the study is supposed to answer what, who or when questions (Zikmund, et al., 2010). It means that this orientation is used when the researcher wants to know the how instead of the why (Saunders, et al., 2009). Usually in such research the researcher is well versed in the subject to be investigated (Saunders, et al., 2009). A study of an exploratory nature is done by researchers who want to contribute to an area where no or little research has been done. This in order to create a bigger picture of this area and help attain a better comprehension of the issue (Creswell, 2003).

Studies with an explanatory purpose want to explain the why and hence look for causal relationships. A study of this nature wants to explain and understand these relationships, often by using hypotheses (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, et al., 2009). This research wants to explain what factors affect brand equity for SBOs from the consumers point of view and by gaining the knowledge make assumptions towards a larger population. Since the purpose of the research is to explain what factors affecting brand equity for SBOs, the researchers do not conduct a deep study of the reasons behind each person's specific motive. Hence this research is more of an explanatory and causal nature than exploratory or descriptive.

4.2 Research Approach

There are two different approaches that a research study can take; inductive or deductive (Zikmund, et al., 2010). The deductive research approach starts out at a general level, with a theory, out of the theory the researcher establish an hypothesis (Creswell, 2003). The hypothesis is then tested in order to either confirm or reject said
hypothesis (Zikmund, et al., 2010). A research with this approach present an image of the most average understanding of the connection between reality and theory, hence this approach is most often used in quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The second approach that is inductive, in contrast to deductive research an inductive approach start more specific and work its way towards a more general view or theory (Zikmund, et al., 2010). The inductive approach has its starting-point in information gathering and investigating (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The empirical data is transformed through different research methods with the intention to create theory (Saunders, et al., 2009). The inductive approach is the selected approach when conducting a qualitative research study (Cresswell, 2003).

This research is built on a deductive approach as it is based on the gathered information from a literature review, on that foundation the hypotheses were formulated. Later empirical information was gathered to accept or reject said hypotheses. In specifics, the researchers started out to examine the online brand equity and service brand equity theories. This in order to find out what factors influencing brand equity according to the literature. A conceptual model with associated hypotheses was then created based on the theoretical findings.

4.3 Research Strategy

A distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is something that many researchers find as helpful when conducting research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The prominent dissimilarity between the two is that a qualitative research focuses on contributing with data in form of words, whilst quantitative research contributes with numerical data (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Qualitative data regularly comes in the form of images or words, the methods that are used to gather this data are more in-depth. The methods can be in-depth interviews or focus groups, that means it contains of a few different sources of empirical data however it provides deep information regarding these sources (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Cresswell, 2003; Saunders, et al., 2009). What qualitative research tries to do is to find out and describe the underlying intention during particular situations instead of trying to generalize to a larger population (Cresswell, 2003). Qualitative research is usually of an inductive nature (Zikmund, et al., 2010).
It is previously stated that quantitative research is on contrary more focused on numbers and statistics (Zikmund, et al., 2010). It is a deductive research approach that often is used when testing theories and hypotheses (Creswell, 2003). One of the most common methods when gathering quantitative data is questionnaires (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, et al., 2009). If researchers want their research to be generalized on a larger population, a survey is useful as it can gather a substantial amount of data (Saunders, et al., 2009). Instead of describing why things work as they do, quantitative research tries to explain why things work this way (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The close relation between deductive approach and quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011), are one of the reasons why this research is quantitative. Because of the subject being previously unexplored the researchers wanted to gather substantial amount information. The information gathered in a quantitative method is focused on numbers and statistics (Zikmund, et al., 2010), which facilitates for the researchers to make comparisons between different factors. Since this research wants to answer what factors affect SBO brand equity, this necessitate that the researchers obtain a considerable amount of empirical data. Hence the research is of a quantitative nature instead of a qualitative.

4.4 Data Sources

The data sources where the empirical material is gathered from can either be primary or secondary (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Primary data is empirical data collected for the particular research. It is data collected with the use of methods such as observations, interviews, surveys, focus groups or experiments (Saunders, et al., 2009; Zikmund, et al., 2010). It is collected by the researcher for his specific purpose instead of using already existing data (Creswell, 2003). By collecting primary data the researcher will provide himself with up to date data more appropriate for the research study (Zikmund, et al., 2010). There are however some drawbacks with collecting primary data, that being that the data collection process taking vast amount of time and the overhanging risk of a low-response rate (Saunders, et al., 2009).

The secondary data is on the other hand empirical data that has been collected from a secondary source. The secondary sources can be from for example other researchers and found via the Internet, libraries, various databases and so forth (Saunders, et al., 2009).
The positive aspects of using secondary data is that it is less time consuming and that the researcher do not need to use as many resources, hence it is a lower cost than when collecting primary data (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Zikmund, et al., 2010). As well as there are positive aspects when using secondary data, there are also negative ones. When collecting secondary data it may be complicated to find up to date information that is relevant to the specific research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In order for the researchers to be able to draw a valid conclusion the data collected need to be appropriate and in line with the research purpose (Zikmund, et al., 2010).

Because of this research being of an explanatory nature and investigating an unexplored area the researchers decided to collect primary data for the study, this in order to gather data that was appropriate for the particular research purpose. By the use of questionnaire as a primary data collection tool, the researchers were able to collect appropriate up to date data with connection to the purpose.

4.5 Research Design

Bryman and Bell (2011) has identified five different research designs; experimental design, comparative design, case study design, longitudinal design and cross-sectional/social survey design. The cross-sectional design and social survey design are closely related and almost regarded as synonymous with each other. These designs are used when the researcher want to gather information from multiple cases at one point in time, instead of one single case (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The information gathered is quantitative and hence the method used to gather this information is collected with the use of structured interviews, structured observations or questionnaires. The information is later used in order to draw conclusions regarding relationships between different variables (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Within business research when collecting primary data social surveys is the preferred method (Zikmund, et al., 2010).

Because of the quantitative nature of the study and that the researchers wanted to collect a substantial amount of primary data, the choice of research design were to follow a social survey design. The social survey design made it possible for the researchers to examine and then draw conclusions regarding the relationship between different variables (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This was the researcher's purpose with the research hence the use of a social survey design.
4.6 Data Collection Method

For social survey design there are as mentioned in previous chapter different data collection methods; questionnaires, structured interviews and structured observations (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The researchers choice of data collection method was questionnaires as the method are suitable when conducting an explanatory study (Saunders, et al., 2009). What is beneficial with questionnaires instead of administering interviews is its ease of administration and low cost, especially compared to the expensive and drawn-out method of interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A questionnaire consists of a number of questions or statements that the respondent should answer or take a stand to. Questionnaires could be sent out e-mail, paper mail or via the Internet (Zikmund, et al., 2010).

The authors choose to conduct the questionnaires on the online betting industry since it fits well with the criteria of SBOs. In accordance with the definition of SBOs, online betting brands only acts online, they are providing service for customers to bet on an event or game, they do not offer any type of goods and it does not result in any ownership for the customers (Armstrong, et al., 2009; Statista 4, 2015). The betting industry stand alone with almost a fourth of the whole online gaming market and this market has steadily increased since 2003 (Statista 4, 2015; Statista 5, 2015).

4.6.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed as followed; starting with an introduction text, statements and it was ended with personal questions to the respondents. The questionnaire were based and formulated towards the online betting industry because it is the SBOs that according to the researchers resemble the criteria of the research the most.

The questionnaire was designed in a way so that the respondents could look through all of the questions at the same time. The researches tried to have a simple design and space between the questions in order make it easy for the respondent to go through the questionnaire. By letting the respondent being able to go through the whole questionnaire before responding, the researcher hoped that the respondents would not find it time consuming and therefore respond to it. The researchers tried to maintain an
airy feeling within the questionnaire, this was done by having a clean layout and spacing between the statements. These decisions were done in order to make it easier for the respondents to look through and follow. According to researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, et al., 2009) a questionnaire with these characteristics would have a positive impact on the completion rate. The respondents had to take a stance to all statements within the questionnaire, so that the researchers could get a result from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was written in Swedish because the sample group contained only of Swedish speaking people. The online questionnaire was administered through Google and their service Google Forms. Where the researchers had the possibility to create their own questionnaire and when completed had the ability to share it via a web link. The data collected were then possible to retrieve in an excel document. For the complete questionnaire in Swedish see appendix 2.

4.6.2 Questionnaire Introduction

It was decided by the researchers to follow Bryman and Bell’s (2011) recommendations and present the respondents with an introductory text before they conducted the questionnaire. The text contained information to the respondent regarding the questionnaire, such as why it is conducted, who is behind it, what the respondents role is and so forth (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, et al., 2009). Bryman & Bell (2011) says that an introductory text should further tell the respondents that it is conducted voluntary and that the answers are anonymous. They further state that a way of contacting the researchers should be included in the case that the respondents have any questions regarding the questionnaire. All this was included by the researchers in the introductory text of the questionnaire. It also included the estimated time it would take to fill in the questionnaire. This was done to prepare the respondent as to how long time the questionnaire would take to fill in. For the introductory text in its full context in Swedish and English see appendix 1 and 2.

4.6.3 Question Types

As previously explained the questionnaire started with an introductory text. As the first question in the questionnaire was a control question regarding whether or not they have placed a bet online anytime prior to conducting the questionnaire. So that the researchers could exclude anyone who might have missed that they had to have done so in order to conduct the questionnaire. What followed after that question was a short text named “Before you start…”. Where the respondents were reminded that; below there
will be statements that they should take a position towards; that the scale were from one to seven; that when referring to ‘my betting site’ it meant the one they most frequently play on. They were also told that if they were conducting the questionnaire on their cellphone that it might not show the full scale, but that they just had to scroll sideways to see the rest of the scale.

When conducting a questionnaire there are two main types of questions that can be used, closed and open questions. There are according to Bryman and Bell (2011) some advantages of using closed questions they are; easier processing of answers; increased comparability; more clear for the respondent; easier to complete for the respondent. The authors chose partly to follow the closed question method, however in the form of closed statements, due to that the researchers consider that statements are simpler to take a stand to. The statements where answered on a likert scale, from one to seven, as this is the most frequently used when conducting measures of attitudes (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Zikmund, et al., 2010). The criteria when formulating questions according to Bryman and Bell (2011) are that the questions should not be leading, duplicitous, contain a negation or contain several questions in one. The questions should instead be understandable for the respondent and easy to follow (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

When the researchers constructed the statements, simplicity was kept in mind. They did not want to include any words that could be misinterpreted or not understood. When using words that might not be understood by everyone, the researchers chose to include an explanation of that specific word underneath the statement. The statements where gone through by both the researchers and the tutor (Viktor Magnusson, lecturer at Linnaeus University). The statements were also tested on a few people picked at random to give an assessment. After this process a few statements were altered, but overall it was kept the same. The end of the questionnaire contained background questions such as; age, gender, occupation and betting frequency.

### 4.6.4 Operationalization

An operationalization’s purpose is according to several researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, et al., 2009; Zikmund, et al., 2010) to gain a clear understanding of the concepts that the study intends to investigate. To clarify, how the concepts are measured within the specific study (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Zikmund, et al., 2010). An operationalization help to form a connection between the measured concepts and the answers on the statements from the respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2011).
The researchers operationalized the factors affecting brand equity to be able to construct statements for the questionnaire, this was done so that the effect could later be measured. The statements where influenced by earlier research on the subjects of brand equity for both services and online. However they were adapted so that they would meet the purpose of the research. The factors practiced in this research where brand equity, perceived quality, brand association and brand awareness as discussed above (Chapter 3). It has also previously been described as how the factors are related to each other.

In table 4.1 there is a presented summary of the indicators the authors utilized in the questionnaire. It shows the factors, what elements the statement is connected to, from what author the measure is adapted, the question or statement used in the questionnaire, what type of scale used and the intended measure with the specific question or statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1 – Operationalization</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Inspired by</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>Intended measure</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand Equity (BE)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Christodoulides, et al., 2006; Berry, 2000; He &amp; Li, 2011</td>
<td>BE1: I prefer my betting site compared to other betting sites.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>The respondent’s level of brand equity.</td>
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<td>Rios &amp; Riquelme, 2008; Rios &amp; Riquelme, 2010</td>
<td>BE2: I would recommend my betting site to other people.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>The respondent’s level of brand equity.</td>
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<td>He &amp; Li, 2011</td>
<td>BE3: I would keep on betting on my betting site even if I got the same offer somewhere else.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>The respondent’s level of brand equity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceived Quality (PQ)</strong></td>
<td>Web Functionality</td>
<td>Kim, et al., 2002; Christodoulides, et al., 2006</td>
<td>PQ1: I bet on my betting site because their website has an appealing design.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If the design of the website affected the respondents.</td>
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<td>Kim, et al., 2002; Page &amp; Lepkowska-White, 2002</td>
<td>PQ2: I bet on my betting site because their website is informative</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If the information on the website affected the respondents.</td>
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<td>Factor</td>
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<td>Inspired by</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality (PQ)</td>
<td>Web Functionality</td>
<td>Kim, et al., 2002; Page &amp; Lepkowska-White, 2002</td>
<td>PQ3: I bet on my betting site because their website is easy to navigate.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If the websites functionality affected the respondents.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Service Quality</td>
<td>He &amp; Li, 2011</td>
<td>PQ4: I bet on my betting site because they offer odds on different sports.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If the brands variety of offers affected the respondents.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>He &amp; Li, 2011</td>
<td>PQ5: I bet on my betting site because they offer bets from various countries.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If the brands variety of offers affected the respondents.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rios &amp; Riquelme, 2008</td>
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<td>PQ6: I bet on my betting site because they offer good odds.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If the odds affected the respondents.</td>
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<td>Rios &amp; Riquelme, 2008</td>
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<td>PQ7: I bet on my betting site because they offer bonuses or special offers.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If the offered bonuses affected the respondents.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Christodoulides, et al., 2006; Nath &amp; Bawa, 2011; He &amp; Li, 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td>PQ8: I bet on my betting site because they offer live streaming.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If the offer of live streaming affected the respondents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brand Association (BAs)</td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Rios &amp; Riquelme, 2008; Nath &amp; Bawa, 2011</td>
<td>BAs1: I trust my betting site to keep my personal information safe.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If the perceived security of the website affected the respondents.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rios &amp; Riquelme, 2008</td>
<td>BAs2: I feel confident to make transactions (deposit/withdrawal) on my betting site.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If the perceived security of the website affected the respondents.</td>
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<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>Rios &amp; Riquelme, 2010; Christodoulides, et al., 2006</td>
<td>BAs3: I prefer my betting site because their customer service quickly answer my questions.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If quick responses from the customer service affected the respondents.</td>
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<td>Factor</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brand Association (BAs)</strong></td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>Rios &amp; Riquelme, 2010</td>
<td>BAs4: I prefer my betting site because their customer service is easy to get in contact with.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7</td>
<td>If the ease of contact with the customer service affected the respondents.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rios &amp; Riquelme, 2010</td>
<td>BAs5: I prefer my betting site because their customer service can be contacted in different ways.</td>
<td>(1) Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>(7) Strongly Agree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Differentiation</td>
<td>Balaji, 2011; Berry, 2000</td>
<td>BAs6: I associate my betting site with a front figure.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7</td>
<td>If the respondents associated the brand with a front figure</td>
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<td>(1) Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>(7) Strongly Agree</td>
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<td>Christodoulides, et al., 2006; Nath &amp; Bawa, 2011</td>
<td>BAs7: I bet with my betting site because of its unique characteristics.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7</td>
<td>If a brand's unique characteristics affects the respondents.</td>
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<td>(1) Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>(7) Strongly Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brand Awareness (BAw)</strong></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Page &amp; Lepkowska-White, 2002; Berry, 2000</td>
<td>BAw1: I came in contact with my betting site because I heard of it from one/more people.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7</td>
<td>If word of mouth affected the respondents.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Page &amp; Lepkowska-White, 2002; Berry, 2000</td>
<td>BAw2: I came in contact with my betting site through commercials/ads</td>
<td>(1) Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>(7) Strongly Agree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recall</td>
<td>Balaji, 2011; Pinar, et al., 2014; Berry, 2000</td>
<td>BAw3: I only bet with betting sites I am aware of.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7</td>
<td>If brand familiarity affected the respondents</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Balaji, 2011; Berry, 2000; Nath &amp; Bawa, 2011; Pinar, et al., 2014</td>
<td>BAw4: I know what my betting sites logo looks like</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7</td>
<td>If the respondents could remember the logo of their brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1 – Operationalization continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Inspired by</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>Intended measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand Awareness (BAw)</strong></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Balaji, 2011; Berry, 2000; Nath &amp; Bawa, 2011</td>
<td>BAw5: I am aware of what my betting sites slogan is.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If the respondents could remember the slogan of their brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Top of mind</td>
<td>Balaji, 2011; Kim, et al., 2002; Pinar, et al., 2014</td>
<td>BAw6: The betting site I bet with is the first I think of when thinking of betting.</td>
<td>Likert Scale, 1-7 (1) Strongly Disagree (7) Strongly Agree</td>
<td>If top of mind affected the respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Question</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I have at least once place a bet on an online betting site.</td>
<td>- Yes - No</td>
<td>Asked in order to be able to exclude respondents who had not betted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 18-29 - 30-39 - 40-49 - 50-59 - 60+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Man - Woman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Student - Employed - Unemployed - Retired - Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approximately, how often do you place bets online?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Once a year or less - Once per half a year - Once per month - Once per week - Everyday</td>
<td>The online betting frequency among the respondents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 Sampling

A sample is by Bryman and Bell (2011) explained as a part of the population that has been picked out of the whole. The population is subdivided, the sample selection can be done in various ways, these methods are either of a non-probability or a probability approach (Bryman & Bell, 2011). If conducting a probability approach when selecting the sample, the whole population has an equally large chance of being selected as a part
of the sample. As the sample is completely at random the probability of having a sampling error is minimal. Some probability approach methods are; simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, multi-stage cluster sampling, et cetera (Bryman & Bell, 2011). On contrary a sample of a non-probability approach is a sample selection that has not been randomly selected. That means in this case that certain parts of the population has a larger possibility of being selected. Methods of a non-probability approach are; convenience sample, snowball sample, quota sample, et cetera (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The sample method that the researchers of this study utilized was mainly the convenience sample, but also to some extent the snowball sampling method. A convenience sample is simply explained as a sample that is easily accessible for the researchers at that point in time (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Snowball sampling is when the researchers select respondents that recommend other respondents to the researchers (Zikmund, et al., 2010). Convenience and snowball sampling was also chosen due to that it is time and cost effective. The population of this study has been everyone who has at least once placed a bet via an online betting company. Because of the sample choice the questionnaire was administered in Sweden, within the scope of the researchers social network. In order to single out the Swedish community the researchers chose to create an event page on Facebook and invite Swedish people to this event. Everyone within the researcher's social network that spoke Swedish were invited to the event and further asked to answer the questionnaire. It was 783 people invited to the event on Facebook and asked to answer the questionnaire. The respondents were later asked to invite other people who had placed a bet online. In accordance with Saunders, et al. (2009) suggestions a reminder were published on the Facebook event page. This in order to remind those who had not yet answered the questionnaire and thank those who had already responded. The researchers also chose to conduct the questionnaire offline, this was done with the same criterions as above. The researchers gathered the empirical data offline in Växjö as that was the researcher's town of residence. In total both offline and online the questionnaire had 133 respondents.
4.8 Data Analysis Method

4.8.1 Editing
According to Zikmund, et al. (2010) the raw data collected from fieldwork will contain errors. Hence they say that an editing process should take place in order to adjust these mistakes, this should be done prior to the transfer of data to the analysis software. Since the questionnaire contained of closed questions and the respondents were obliged to answer every question in order to hand in the questionnaire, it did not contain many errors. In total there were only three respondents that had to be withdrawn from the raw data because they had never placed a bet online, however they were caught in the first control question. Editing is basically the inspection of clarity, integrity and compatibility of the gathered data and thus preparing the data for the next step that is coding (Zikmund, et al., 2010).

4.8.2 Coding
Before entering the gathered data into SPSS the questions with nominal scale were given numbers such as male=1 and women=2. The respondents age was coded as followed 18-29=1, 30-39=2, 40-49=3, 50-59=4, 60+=5. Occupation of the respondents were coded as Student=1, Employed=2, Unemployed=3, Retired=4, Other=5. The frequency of betting were coded as Once a year or less=1, Once per half year=2, Once per month=3, Once per week=4, Everyday=5. The questions with likert scale were given the same numbers as the respondent chose. It is necessary to code the data into numbers in order to be able to measure the variables in SPSS (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, et al., 2009).

4.8.3 Data Entries
After the coding and editing of data, the next step is entering the data into SPSS. First the offline questionnaires were submitted into Google Forms by the researchers in order to have all the answers collected. From Google Forms the data was extracted and then entered into SPSS by the researchers.

4.8.4 Hypothesis Testing
A linear regression analysis is used for measuring the linear relationship between a dependent and independent variable (Saunders, et al., 2009). The aim is to show the effect the independent variable has on the dependent variable. A regression analysis is
very often used when testing relational hypotheses and it is a dependence technique, meaning it makes a distinction between a dependent and an independent variable (Zikmund, et al., 2010). Since this research is testing relational hypotheses the researchers found it relevant to conduct three linear regressions in order to examine the relationship between SBO brand equity and the independent variables. The results from the regression analyses were then revealing if the independent variables had a positive relationship to SBO brand equity. The scores from each regression analyses were also compared to each other in order to see which independent variable that affected SBO brand equity the most.

From the regression analysis the researcher chose to focus on four coefficients in order to test the hypotheses; Adjusted R Square, ‘B’, t-value and the significance. The Adjusted R Square demonstrates in percentages how much the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the variation in the independent variable. Hence a high Adjusted R Square score indicates a strong relationship between the variables. ‘B’ is the regression coefficient that explains how much a change in the independent variable will affect the dependent variable. The regression coefficients allow the researchers to assess information of how much each independent variable affects SBO brand equity. The t-value reflects the significance of the correlation as presented in the regression coefficient ‘B’. A high t-value means that the correlation between variables is not equal to zero (Hair. et al., 2010). The significance level estimates if the result from the study can be used to generalize the population where the sample was taken from. It refers to how confident the researcher can be that their research result did not occur by chance (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A research is considered to be statistically significant if the value does not exceed 0.05. A value of 0.05 means that it is 5% chance that the result did occur by chance (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

### 4.8.5 Reliability

Reliability concerns the consistency of the measurements, if the questionnaire would be done again would the results of the second questionnaire be coherent with the first (Zikmund, et al., 2010). There are three influencing factors of reliability, when determining the questionnaires reliability, they are stability, internal reliability and inter-observer consistency (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Stability is defined as the questionnaires stability over time, if the questionnaire would be conducted again the result should not alter, at least not to a large extent (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The internal
reliability of the questionnaire is regarding the questions and the consistency of the results within the questionnaire (Bryman & Bell, 2011). If the different variables affects the ultimate variable the same way. The last factor, inter-observer consistency, regards the subjectivity of the observer (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Hence inter-observer consistency is not of relevance to this study.

Cronbach’s alpha is one of the most commonly used methods when testing the internal reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011) and was therefore applied in this research in order to assess internal reliability. The computed alpha coefficient is a scale from 0 to 1. A score of 0 means that there is no reliability and 1 means perfect reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Zikmund, et al. (2010) the alpha coefficient should generate in a score above 0.6 in order for the internal reliability to be considered as fairly reliable. A score between 0.80 and 0.95 means it is very reliable (Zikmund, et al., 2010). In accordance with Zikmund, et al. (2010) view of internal reliability, an acceptable level of internal reliability in this research was if the alpha coefficient was above 0.6.

4.8.6 Validity

Validity is generally defined as if the test really measures what it is intended to measure (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, et al., 2009). The validity can be expressed as the correlation between the theoretical definition and operational definition (Saunders, et al., 2009). There are three types of validity when assessing the validity of a questionnaire content validity, criterion validity and construct validity (Saunders, et al., 2009). Content validity refers to if the questions in the questionnaire cover the area under investigation, it can be assessed through literature reviews or discussion with others (Saunders, et al., 2009). Similar to content validity is face validity, which is if the questions seem to measure the concept under investigation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The criterion validity measure if the variable correlate with an established criteria. Construct validity refers to if the questionnaire really measures what is supposed to be measuring (Saunders, et al., 2009).

To be able to assess construct validity the researchers had to be assured that the questions were measuring what they were intended to measure and that they were well connected to the theory. This was examined through face validity and content validity. Face validity was achieved by a pre-test on students and the tutor (Viktor Magnusson, lecturer at Linnaeus University) to see if any question could be misinterpreted or if any
feedback could be given. Content validity was achieved by reviewing earlier literature on the subjects of online and service brand equity. When the study was considered to have face validity and content validity, it needs to be checked if the variables are measuring the same thing (Zikmund, et al., 2010). Discriminant validity is to what extent the variables distinguish from each other and this is necessary in order to assess construct validity (Hair, et al., 2010). A correlation analysis was conducted in order to examine the discriminant validity of the research.

A correlation analysis is an index that can be used to measure the relationship between a dependent and one or more independent variables (Zikmund, et al., 2010). It examines the linear relationship between two or more variables (Saunders, et al., 2009). The correlation between variables was measured in Pearson's product moment correlation and the scale is -1.0 to 1.0. If the correlation between the variables is 1 it implies that they are perfectly correlated. This can be an indication that they are measuring the same thing. If the correlation between the variables is -1.0 it indicates that they are exactly negatively correlated. A correlation of 0 between two variables indicates that there is no relationship among them. If two variables have a correlation above 0.75 the discriminant validity can be questioned. (Zikmund, et al., 2010). The significant value of the collected data explains the probability that the correlation between all variables have occurred by chance. If the p-value is under 0.05 the correlation is considered to have a statistical significance. A higher result than 0.05 means that the relationship between the variables is not statistical significant (Saunders, et al., 2009).

4.9 Ethics

Bryman and Bell (2011) describes four mains areas in ethics; have there been any harm to the participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. Harm of the participants refers to if the respondent has been harmed in any way (e.g. physical, stress or self-esteem). The issue of lack of informed consent treats if the respondent has been informed by the researcher that he or she is being observed. Invasion of privacy is similar to lack of consent where the researcher needs have respect for the respondents and their personal values. The last area is deception, which is when the researchers present their study as something other than what it really is (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The research was conducted with the help of a questionnaire on the Internet, which
means that the researchers were never in contact with the respondents. In the beginning of the questionnaire there was information regarding the research and what the respondents could expect to be asked. The respondents have been aware of that they took part in the research due to that they had to click on the link in order to participate in the questionnaire. The respondents was also informed that their answers were anonymous and the researchers had no possibility to know who answered what.
5 Results

The following chapters introduce the result of the research. Firstly descriptive data and average scores are presented. Later the result from the regression analysis, correlation analysis and Cronbach’s alpha is shown.

5.1 Descriptive Data

The questionnaire received 130 respondents from the convenience and snowball sample methods. The only criteria for being allowed to participate in the study were that the respondent had to have placed a bet online at least once prior to conducting the questionnaire. The resulted data from the questionnaires will further be explained in this chapter. The respondents consisted of 8 (≈6%) women and 122 (≈94%) men, what can be seen is that the gender distribution within the questionnaire is skewed. This result was expected by the researchers as it reflects the market, where according to recent studies merely 2% of Swedish women have placed a bet online (Iibring, 2015).

![Gender](image)

Graph 5.1 – Gender (own)

The age distribution among the respondents in the questionnaire are also that skewed, where the younger age group (18-29) stood out and consisted of 114 (≈87%) people within that age span. Respondents between the ages 30 and 39 consisted of 10 (≈8%) people and only 4 (≈3%) respondents were in the ages between 40 and 49. The two oldest age groups (50-59 and 60+) only consisted of one (≈1%) respondent in each group. Statistics on who is gambling the most online in Sweden has shown that people in the ages between 25 and 34 are the ones gambling the most online (SCB, 2012). However these statistics applies to the collective name gambling and not just the online betting industry.
The occupation among the respondents were mainly divided between studying and employed, were 77 (≈59%) of the respondents were studying and 51 (≈39%) were employed. The rest of the respondents were divided between other (≈1%) and retired (≈1%). None of the respondents said they were unemployed. Another study has shown that there is no significant difference between employed, unemployed and studying people in Sweden, when it comes to the relation between occupation and betting (SCB, 2012).

How often the respondents placed bets online is more equally distributed among the respondents. The two extremes on this scale, betting at least once a day and betting once a year or less, are the least common answers with 11 (≈8%) respondents betting every day and 15 (≈12%) respondents place a bet once a year or less. Out of the 130
respondents the third most common answer was that they placed a bet once every six months, with 23 (≈18%) of the respondents answering this.

The second most common statement was that they were betting once a month, with 39 (30%) out of 130 respondents answering this. Most of the respondents were betting at least once a week, with 42 (≈32%) of the respondents played that often. According to the Swedish Gaming Board’s (2015) statistics, most Swedish people either gamble weekly or monthly. The results of this study corresponds somewhat with the statistics from the Swedish Gaming Board (2015). However the gap between monthly and less frequently is larger in the general statistics regarding Swedish people and their gambling frequency (Swedish Gaming Board, 2015).

![Frequency Graph](Graph 5.4 – Frequency (own))

### 5.2 Averages

The following chapter will show what the respondents on average answered to the questions in the questionnaire. The averages are divided between the questions regarding the different measured factors; SBO brand equity, perceived quality, brand awareness and brand association. Everything is based on the 130 responses retrieved from the questionnaires and what can be viewed in the tables are the mean, median and mode of each question and the total. The scale in the tables are from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree.
Table 5.1 – Brand Equity (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Equity</th>
<th>BE1</th>
<th>BE2</th>
<th>BE3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>4.8590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table (Table 5.1) shows how the respondents on average answered the questions regarding the brand equity of their SBO. As can be seen the respondents had on average a relatively high brand equity for their SBO, with a mean of almost 4.9, a median of 5 and a mode of 5.

Table 5.2 – Perceived Quality (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Quality</th>
<th>PQ1</th>
<th>PQ2</th>
<th>PQ3</th>
<th>PQ4</th>
<th>PQ5</th>
<th>PQ6</th>
<th>PQ7</th>
<th>PQ8</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>4.3740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the previous table (Table 5.2) it is shown how the respondents perceived the quality of their SBO. It can be read from the results that according to the respondents the perceived quality of the SBO is important to them. This is shown with a mean of approximately 4.4, a median of 4.5 and a mode of 4.25.

Table 5.3 – Brand Association (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Association</th>
<th>BAS1</th>
<th>BAS2</th>
<th>BAS3</th>
<th>BAS4</th>
<th>BAS5</th>
<th>BAS6</th>
<th>BAS7</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>4.3648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.4286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above (Table 5.3) shows the average response on the questions connected to brand association. Where it shows that the respondents were a little more neutral than to previous questions. As can be seen for the factor brand association the approximate mean was 4.4, the median 4.4 and the mode 4.57.
Table 5.4 – Brand Awareness (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Awareness</th>
<th>BAw3</th>
<th>BAw4</th>
<th>BAw6</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5,97</td>
<td>5,85</td>
<td>4,49</td>
<td>5,4385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>7,00</td>
<td>5,00</td>
<td>5,00</td>
<td>5,6667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table above (Table 5.4) it can be read how the respondents on average answered the questions related to their brand awareness. The results regarding the awareness among the respondents were above neutral. With a mean of 5,4, a median of almost 5,7 and the highest mode among the factors with a 7. In order to increase the reliability of the result from brand awareness question 1, 2 and 5 was excluded, more can be read under the headline ‘5.3.1 Reliability’.

Table 5.5 – Averages (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Equity</td>
<td>4,8590</td>
<td>1,50901</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality</td>
<td>4,3740</td>
<td>1,19181</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>5,4385</td>
<td>1,37282</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Association</td>
<td>4,3648</td>
<td>1,05250</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shown above (Table 5.5) is a summary of the average total mean and standard deviation of each measured factor; brand equity, perceived quality, brand awareness and, brand association. From the standard deviation that is shown in the third column it can be seen how the answers within each factor differentiate from the mean. Within the factor brand equity the standard deviation among the questions are 1,5, within perceived quality almost 1,2, for brand association almost 1,1 and within brand awareness there was a standard deviation of nearly 1,4.

5.3 Reliability and Validity

5.3.1 Reliability

Table 5.6 – Reliability test (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Brand Equity</th>
<th>Perceived Quality</th>
<th>Brand Association</th>
<th>Brand Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronbach’s Aplha</td>
<td>.824</td>
<td>.774</td>
<td>.618</td>
<td>.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order for the study to be considered reliable the Cronbach`s alpha coefficient needed to be higher than 0.6 (Zikmund, et al., 2010). It was only the variable brand awareness that had to be adjusted in order to be considered reliable. When using all of the questions for brand awareness it was given a score of 0.55 which was not acceptable for this research, hence removing question 1, 2 and 5 from the variable it was given a score of 0.618. After adjusting brand awareness all of the three factors was considered reliable.

5.3.2 Validity

Table 5.7 – Correlation (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Brand Equity</th>
<th>Average Perceived Quality</th>
<th>Average Brand Association</th>
<th>Average Brand Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Brand Equity</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>,336</td>
<td>,399</td>
<td>,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Perceived Quality</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>,336</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>,577</td>
<td>,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Brand Association</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>,399</td>
<td>,577</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Brand Awareness</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>,501</td>
<td>,406</td>
<td>,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A correlation analysis was conducted in order see if the study had discriminant validity. In order to assure that the variables did not measure the same thing the Pearson correlation between the variables could be no higher than 0.75 (Zikmund, et al., 2010). As presented in table 5.7 the highest correlation between two variables were 0.577 which mean that all of the variables were accepted as valid. The significance level could not exceed 0.05 in order to be considered as statistically significant. It can be deduced from the table 5.7 that all the variables had significant level of 0.00 that gives all variables a statistical significance.
5.4 Hypothesis Testing

In this chapter the results from the regression analyses is presented. One regression analysis was conducted for each of the three hypotheses.

5.4.1 Hypothesis 1

Table 5.8 – Hypothesis 1 (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>0.426</td>
<td>4.043</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In hypothesis 1 the relationship between the independent variable, perceived quality, and the dependent variable, SBO brand equity, was examined. The result is presented in table 5.8 and it reveals that perceived quality positively affects SBO brand equity. In the first column the Adjusted R Square shows that 10.6% of the variation in SBO brand equity can be explained by the perceived quality. In the second column the score of 0.426 on ‘B’ means that if perceived quality increases by 1, SBO brand equity will increase with 0.426. In the third column the t-value of 4.043 indicates that the relation between perceived quality and SBO brand equity is not equal to zero. The last column shows the significant level of 0.00 which means that the analysis had a statistical significance and hence hypothesis 1 could be accepted.

5.4.2 Hypothesis 2

Table 5.9 – Hypothesis 2 (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Association</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>0.572</td>
<td>4.926</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In hypothesis 2 the relationship between brand association and SBO brand equity was examined. The result is presented in table 5.9 which shows that the brand association positively affects the SBO brand equity. In the first column the Adjusted R Square reveals that 15.3% of the variation in SBO brand equity can be explained by brand association. This indicates that brand associations affects SBO brand equity. In the second column the score of 0.572 on ‘B’ in the model indicates that the if brand association increases by 1, SBO brand equity will increase with 0.572. In the third
column the t-value of 4,296 reveals that there is a relationship between brand association and SBO brand equity. The study is also considered to have statistical significance since the score is 0,00 which means that hypothesis 2 could be accepted.

5.4.3 Hypothesis 3

Table 5.10 – Hypothesis 3 (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>0,245</td>
<td>0,550</td>
<td>6,545</td>
<td>0,00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In hypothesis 3 the relationship between brand awareness and SBO brand equity was examined and this is presented in table 5.10. The result reveals that there is a positive relationship between brand awareness and SBO brand equity. In first column the Adjusted R Square shows that 24,5% of the variation in SBO brand equity can be explained by brand awareness. In the second column the score of 0,55 on ‘B’ indicates that if brand awareness increases by 1, SBO brand equity will increase by 0,55. In the third column the t-value of 6,545 indicates that there is a relation between brand awareness and SBO brand equity. In the last column the significant level was 0,00 which means that hypothesis 3 could be accepted.

5.5 Other Descriptive Data

In this part the result from the regression analysis conducted on occupation and frequency is presented. However there was no regression analysis made on age or gender since the sample had a skewed distribution, hence the researchers found no relevance in conducting a regression analysis regarding these demographics.

5.5.1 Occupation

The respondents had five alternatives to choose from when stating their occupation; student, employed, unemployed, retired, other. However unemployed, retired and other had too few answers in order to be analyzed and hence were excluded from the conducted regression analysis.
Table 5.11 – *Occupation Perceived Quality* (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Quality</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>.533</td>
<td>3.778</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>2.210</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above (Table 5.11) shows the impact of the independent variable, perceived quality, on the dependent variable, SBO brand equity, within the online betting industry between different occupations. In the first column the Adjusted R Squared can be seen and what can be read from this column is how large part of the SBO brand equity that can be explained by the perceived quality. It show that among students who bet online the perceived quality stand for 14.9% of the SBO brand equity. For the employed betting online the perceived quality stand for 7.2% of the SBO brand equity.

The second column named ‘B’ show the degree of how much the dependent variable would increase if the independent variable increases by 1 unit. Hence for students when the perceived quality is increasing by 1 unit the SBO brand equity will increase by 0.533. For employed people however the SBO brand equity will increase by 0.356 when the perceived quality increase by 1 unit. The t-value, which can be seen in the third column, indicates that for both students and employed perceived quality has a relation with SBO brand equity. The significance level can be read in the fourth column of the table and it can be seen that for both students and employed the significance level is below 0.05. For students it is 0.00 and for employed it is 0.032.

Table 5.12 – *Occupation Brand Association* (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Association</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>.244</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>5.051</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.361</td>
<td>1.943</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The previous table (Table 5.12) shows the relationship between the dependent variable, SBO brand equity, and the independent variable, brand association, for different occupations within the online betting industry. The Adjusted R Squared can be seen in the first column, what can be read from this is to what extent the brand association impacts the variation of SBO brand equity. The table show for people who bet online and were students the brand association stand for 24.4% of the SBO brand equity.

The second column shows the relationship between brand association and SBO brand
equity. For students it would be an increase by 0.75 in SBO brand equity if brand association increase by 1 unit. The t-value is presented in the third column and this indicates that for students brand association has a relation with SBO brand equity. The last column shows the significance level within each occupation for brand association. For students the significance is 0.00, which is below the accepted significance level 0.05. However for employed the significance is above the accepted level with 0.058 which means that it cannot be accepted.

Table 5.13 – Occupation Brand Awareness (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Awareness</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>.258</td>
<td>.589</td>
<td>5.591</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>.480</td>
<td>3.363</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.13 shows the connection between brand awareness and SBO brand equity, within the online betting industry for different occupations. The Adjusted R Square can be read in the first column, what it shows is to what magnitude brand awareness affect the variation of SBO brand equity. For students who bet online it can be read that 25.8% of the SBO brand equity can be explained by the brand awareness. For people betting online and were employed the brand awareness stands for 17.1% of the SBO brand equity.

The relationship between brand awareness and SBO brand equity and how it changes between the different occupations is shown in the second column. For students it can be read that an increase by 1 unit in brand awareness would result in an increase by 0.589 in SBO brand equity. For the other occupation, employed, the increase by 1 in brand awareness would mean that the SBO brand equity increases by 0.48 units. In the third column the t-value is shown and this reveals that brand awareness and SBO brand equity has a relation for both students and employed. The significance level for the different occupations can be read in the last column. For employed the significance is 0.002 that means that it is lower than the accepted significance level and hence can be accepted. For students the significance was 0.00 that is also accepted.
### 5.5.2 Frequency

**Table 5.14 – Frequency Perceived Quality (own)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Quality</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a year or less</td>
<td>-0,063</td>
<td>-1,23</td>
<td>-4,15</td>
<td>0,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per half year</td>
<td>0,312</td>
<td>0,734</td>
<td>3,314</td>
<td>0,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per month</td>
<td>0,077</td>
<td>0,470</td>
<td>2,040</td>
<td>0,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per week</td>
<td>0,077</td>
<td>0,285</td>
<td>2,103</td>
<td>0,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday</td>
<td>-0,042</td>
<td>0,443</td>
<td>0,773</td>
<td>0,460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 5.14 the relation between perceived quality and SBO brand equity within the online betting industry is shown divided into frequencies. The Adjusted R Square can be derived from the first column, what can be read is to what degree perceived quality affect the variation of SBO brand equity. For people betting once per half year the perceived quality stands for 31.2% of the SBO brand equity. For both people betting once per month and once per week the perceived quality stood for 7.7% of the SBO brand equity.

The relationship between perceived quality and SBO brand equity and its variation between betting frequencies is shown in the second column. For people betting once per half year the increase would be 0.734 units of the SBO brand equity if the perceived quality increase by 1 unit. For people betting once per month an increase by 1 unit in perceived quality would mean an increase by 0.47 units in the SBO brand equity. If betting once per week an increase in perceived quality by 1 unit will result in a 0.285 unit increase in the SBO brand equity. In the third column the t-score is presented. For people betting once per half year, once per month and once per week it can be seen that perceived quality has a relation towards SBO brand equity.

The significance for the frequencies can be derived from the last column. The significance is too high for two of the frequencies as they are higher than the accepted significance level. These two frequencies are betting everyday and once a year or less, with a significance of 0.46 and 0.685. Hence these two frequencies have not been presented in the text above. This means that they were not statistically significant and hence was rejected from the study. The other frequencies have an accepted significance.
with betting once per half year, 0.003, betting once per month, 0.049, and once per week with 0.042.

Table 5.15 – Frequency Brand Association (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Association</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a year or less</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td>0.382</td>
<td>0.717</td>
<td>0.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per half year</td>
<td>0.191</td>
<td>0.575</td>
<td>2.489</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per month</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.631</td>
<td>2.723</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per week</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>0.384</td>
<td>2.194</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday</td>
<td>0.200</td>
<td>0.893</td>
<td>1.871</td>
<td>0.094</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above table (Table 5.15) the relationship between SBO brand equity and brand association within the online betting industry is shown categorized into different frequencies. What can be seen in the first column is the Adjusted R Square, which is to what degree the brand association affects the variation of SBO brand equity. This effect was strongest with people betting once per half year, with a brand association that stands for 19.1% of the SBO brand equity. For people who bet once per month this effect was less with the brand association standing for 14.4% of the SBO brand equity. The results show that the one with least effect was the ones betting once per week, they had the brand association standing for 8.5% of the SBO brand equity.

The second column demonstrates the relationship between brand association and SBO brand equity and it shows how it changes in relation to the online betting frequency. The result are that for people betting once per half year an increase in brand association by 1 unit would result in a 0.575 unit increase in the SBO brand equity. For people betting online once per month there is an increase in SBO brand equity with 0.631 units if the brand association increase by 1 unit. If the betting frequency were however once per week, an increase by 1 unit in brand association would mean that the SBO brand equity would increase by 0.384.

The t-score is shown in the third column. It reveals that brand association and SBO brand equity has a relation for both people betting once per half year, once per month and once per week. In the last column the significance level for each frequency for brand association can be read. It shows that for three of the frequencies the significance
is accepted. That is for betting once per half year with 0,021, once per month with 0,01 and once per week with 0,034. However for betting once per year or less and betting everyday the significance is too high, hence it cannot be accepted. That is why these two frequencies have not been presented in the text above.

Table 5.16 – Frequency Brand Awareness (own)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Awareness</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a year or less</td>
<td>,021</td>
<td>,226</td>
<td>,845</td>
<td>,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per half year</td>
<td>1,154</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>2,236</td>
<td>,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per month</td>
<td>5,15</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>6,426</td>
<td>,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per week</td>
<td>3,15</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>4,455</td>
<td>,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday</td>
<td>,014</td>
<td>,582</td>
<td>1,069</td>
<td>,313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.16 show the connection between brand awareness and SBO brand equity, for different frequencies within the online betting industry. The Adjusted R Square can be read in the first column and it shows the magnitude of brand awareness affect the variation of SBO brand equity. For people betting online once per half a year it can be read that 15,4% of the SBO brand equity can be explained by the brand awareness. For people betting online once per week the brand awareness stood for 31,5% of the SBO brand equity. The highest Adjusted R Square had people who bet online once per month, where the brand awareness stood for 51,5% of their SBO brand equity.

The relationship between brand awareness and SBO brand equity and its changes between the online betting frequencies is shown in the second column. For people betting once per half year it can be read that an increase by 1 unit in brand awareness would result in an increase by 0,417 units in SBO brand equity. For people betting once per week this relationship is slightly stronger were an increase by 1 unit in brand awareness would result in a 0,536 unit increase in SBO brand equity. The last betting frequency, once per month, is the highest were an increase by 0,779 units in SBO brand equity is equal to a 1 unit increase in brand awareness.

In the third column the t-score is shown. This indicates that for people betting once per half year, once per month and once per week perceived quality has a relation towards SBO brand equity. The significance level for the different frequencies can be read in
the last column. For people betting online once a year and everyday the significance is 0,414 respectively 0,313. This means that it cannot be accepted because the significance exceeds the accepted significance level of 0,05. Hence the results have been excluded in the previous description of results. A significance of 0,034 can be deduced from the table and is connected to people betting once per half year. This is below the accepted significance level, hence it is accepted. For the last two frequencies, once per month and once per week, the significance is 0,00, which means they are accepted as well.
6 Discussion

In this chapter the result from each hypothesis test is discussed and analyzed. Variations and connections between variables is analyzed by using the theory conducted from the literature review.

6.1 Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 was tested through a regression analysis in order to see if perceived quality had a positive effect on SBO brand equity. The result from the analysis demonstrated that 10.6% in variation of SBO brand equity depends on perceived quality. The analysis also resulted in a score of 0.426 for the regression coefficient, which means that if perceived quality increase with 1 unit, SBO brand equity would increase 0.426 units. The analysis was considered reliable since the significance level was 0.00. These results enables the researchers to derive that perceived quality had a positive effect on SBO brand equity and hence hypothesis 1 was accepted. This is in accordance with online and service brand equity literature where it is an agreement that perceived quality affects brand equity (e.g. Berry, 2000; Balji, 2011; Page & Lepkowska, 2002).

Even though perceived quality had a positive effect on SBO brand equity, it received the lowest correlations with SBO brand equity among the independent variables. This shows a clear difference from earlier literature within online and service brand equity were perceived quality is the factor considered having the strongest impact on brand equity (e.g. He & Li, 2011; Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002). For example Kim, et al. (2002) says that perceived quality is the foundation of brand equity for online companies. Further within service brand equity Berry (2000) is pressing on the utter importance of the customer’s perceived quality. He states that if the perceived quality is not lived up, there is no communication that can repair their brand equity.

For perceived quality the answers from the respondents indicated that the service quality was of great importance. The respondents generally valued the service high as the provided odds, different sports and markets received high averages scores. The importance of a high service quality is also highlighted in earlier service brand equity literature (Berry, 2000; Pinar, et al., 2014). He and Li (2011) state that service quality is the most important factor for service brands. Unlike service brand equity, online brand
equity literature describes web functionality as an important part of perceived quality (Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002). Kim, et al. (2002) says that the perceived quality of an online brand is often linked to the perception of their website. But this research indicates that web functionality has no larger impact on perceived quality since the websites design and content was considered as less important. Thus it indicates that for SBOs a high perceived quality is formed by the service quality and not to a great extent the web functionality.

6.2 Hypothesis 2

The result from the regression analysis indicated that brand association had a positive effect on SBO brand equity. Where 15.3% of the variation in SBO brand equity can be explained by brand association. The correlation coefficient was 0.572 that indicate if brand association increase with 1 unit, SBO brand equity increases with 0.572. These results demonstrate that brand associations positively affect SBO brand equity and hence hypothesis 2 was accepted. Further the result is considered as statistically reliable since the significant level was 0.00. Brand association has been mentioned in previous service and online brand equity literature as a factor affecting brand equity (Nath & Bawa, 2011; Rios & Riquelme, 2008). That is also accepted by this study, which shows that brand associations have a positive effect on SBO brand equity.

By analyzing the answers regarding brand association the researchers were able to identify tendencies within the sample. Out of the seven questions asked regarding brand association, there were two questions that were related to trust. The two questions is the ones that received the highest averages with a mean of 5.96 and 6.21, and this indicates that trust is the most important aspects of brand association within SBOs. This is in alignment with Rios and Riquelme’s (2010) research where trust is considered to be important for online companies. This because customers often value that their personal information is kept secure and feeling safe conducting transactions (Rios & Riquelme, 2010). It has also been argued within the online brand equity literature that customer service has a positive impact on the brand associations (Kim, et al., 2002; Rios & Riquelme 2010). Christodoulides, et al. (2006) state that customer service can create positive associations and differentiate the brand in the customers mind. This research indicate however that customer service did not have a major impact on brand associations as the question regarding brand association received low averages scores.
The analysis shows that for SBOs a positive brand association is formed by trust in the brand.

6.3 Hypothesis 3

In the regression analysis for brand awareness the researchers tested if it had a positive effect on SBO brand equity. The result from the analysis showed that there is a positive relationship, thus hypothesis 3 was accepted. Brand awareness can be explained by 24.5% of the variation in SBO brand equity. The correlation coefficient between SBO brand equity and brand awareness is 0.55, which means that if brand awareness increase by 1 unit the SBO brand equity increase by 0.55. These results are considered having statistical relevance as the significance level was 0.00.

Previous research on the subject of service and online brand equity states that brand awareness positively affects brand equity (Berry, 2000; Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002). For example Balaji (2011) who state that brand awareness and service brand equity has a strong connection, this is also agreed within the online brand equity literature (e.g. Rios & Riquelme, 2008). This conforms with the findings of the conducted research, as brand awareness had a positive impact on SBO brand equity. It was also found out from the regression analysis that brand awareness had the highest positive impact on brand equity for SBOs out of the three factors. This result does not however reflect online and service brand equity research, as it is not mentioned as the strongest factor. Berry (2000) and Pinar, et al. (2014) view brand awareness as a factor that has a secondary impact on service brand equity instead of a primary. As indicated by the results from the conducted research brand awareness has the highest impact on SBO brand equity.

The respondents stated that they only bet on a site they are familiar with. This is in accordance with Page and Lepkowska-White’s (2002) research where they concluded that consumers are more likely to choose brands they are familiar with. By analyzing each question and compare the average scores between them the researchers could see that brand recognition and recall was the most influential elements for brand awareness.
6.4 Other data

In this chapter a comparison within the sample was presented in order to see the difference among occupations and frequencies.

6.4.1 Occupation

A comparison between occupations and their effect on SBO brand equity was conducted in order see if there were any significant differences among them. The alternatives unemployed, retired and other that stood for 1.5% of the sample. This meant that the alternatives did not have enough responses to conduct a regression analysis from them, hence they were excluded from the results. Therefore only students and employed was analyzed through a regression analysis.

The results of the comparative regression analysis between occupations demonstrates that there was no greater difference between what affects SBO brand equity and the respondent's occupation. For both students and employees it was shown that perceived quality, brand association and brand awareness had a positive effect on SBO brand equity. This is in accordance with earlier research for both service and online brand equity (Page & Lepkowska-White, 2002; Berry, 2000). It is shown that the students received higher scores than employees when measuring the underlying factors affect on SBO brand equity. The results indicate that the underlying factors are more important for students than for employees when it comes to brand equity for SBOs. This could mean that there are other factors that affect SBO brand equity when it comes to people who are employed.

There was an agreement among students and employees that the three factors influenced SBO brand equity. Perceived quality was considered by both as the factor with the least impact on SBO brand equity. That is the direct opposite as is proposed by for example Berry (2000) and Kim, et al. (2002) in earlier service and online brand equity literature. They see perceived quality as the factor with the strongest influence on brand equity. The second most influential factor of SBO brand equity was according to people studying, brand association. A comparison between the two occupations can however not be done since for employed the significance is too high and therefore above the accepted level. The factor affecting SBO brand equity the most was in contrast to brand equity literature brand awareness for students as well as employed. Pinar, et al. (2014)
and Berry (2000) see brand awareness as an important factor affecting service brand equity, however not as having a primary impact.

The hypothesis tests and the comparison between occupations and how they affect SBO brand equity were shown to be similar. Even though students were shown to have a stronger relation between the three factors and SBO brand equity. Both students and employed were shown to have the same order in which they valued each factor. In accordance with the hypothesis tests perceived quality was the factor having the least impact on SBO brand equity and brand awareness the highest among students and employed.

6.4.2 Frequency
The betting frequency and its effect on the SBO brand equity among the sample was analyzed in order to see if there were any differences between how often they utilized the SBO and the factors impact on the brand equity. A regression analysis resulted in that two of the five alternatives had to be excluded due to exceeding the accepted significance level. It was two of the extremes, once per year or less, and everyday, that had to be excluded. The two excluded alternatives represented 20% of the total sample.

For people betting once per half year the strongest underlying factor were perceived quality. This is the opposite to people with a higher betting frequency as the result reveals that perceived quality is the factor with the least impact on SBO brand equity. Less frequent users are more in line with Berry (2000) and Kim, et al. (2002) who state that perceived quality is the factor with the most impact on brand equity. Brand awareness affected SBO brand equity for people that bet once a half year to some degree but was considered the weakest among the three factors. This is an indication that having a low betting frequency is closer connected to service and online brand equity literature than betting more frequently (Pinar, et al., 2014). The respondents with a betting frequency of once a month and once a week found brand awareness being the factor affecting SBO brand equity the most. These results indicate that for people with a higher betting frequency than once a half year, perceived quality is not as important for SBO brand equity as brand awareness and brand associations. Brand awareness was in accordance with the hypothesis tests considered as the factor affecting SBO brand equity the most.
The comparison between frequencies and how it affects SBO brand equity was shown to have some differences compared to the hypothesis tests. It was shown that betting once a month or more frequently was in line with previous hypothesis tests about what factors affecting SBO brand equity. However when betting once per half a year or less perceived quality was the most influencing factor which is more similar to earlier research on what affects service and online brand equity (Berry, 2000; Kim et al., 2002).
7 Conclusion

In this chapter the major findings of the study is presented.

This research show that perceived quality, brand association and brand awareness positively affects SBO brand equity. It can be concluded that brand awareness is the most influential factor for SBO brand equity. The results showed that 24,5% of the variation in SBO brand equity can be explained by brand awareness. The second strongest impact has brand association where 15,3% of SBO brand equity can be explained by brand association. Perceived quality have 10,6% impact on SBO brand equity hence it is determined that it is the factor with least impact on SBO brand equity. Since the factors showed to have a positive effect on SBO brand equity, all three hypotheses within the research were accepted. It was no difference between occupations regarding what factors affecting SBO brand equity the most and least compared to the hypothesis tests. However the factors was shown to have a higher effect on SBO brand equity for students than for employed. This is an indication that the factors have a higher impact on SBO brand equity for students. The comparison between frequencies revealed that perceived quality is the most important factor for less frequent user within SBO brand equity. While brand awareness is valued as the highest influential factor among more frequent users.

The service quality was considered as the most important aspect for the customer’s perceived quality for SBOs. The result shows that web functionality did not have as high effect on the perception of quality for SBOs. This means that SBOs should focus more on the quality of the delivered service, than on the functionality of the website in order to increase the perceived quality and hence increase the brand equity. Trust was considered as an important part in order to create positive brand association for SBOs. This shows that for SBOs being associated with trust is important and it mainly achieved by the perceived security of the website. Customer service did not affect brand associations of the SBOs to the same extent. Recognition and recall was considered as the most influential drivers for brand awareness. This can be explained with that customers are more inclined to choose a brand they are familiar with. Therefore is recognition and recall important in order to create high brand awareness for SBOs.
8 Research implications

This chapter shows the research’s theoretical and practical contribution. The researchers reflection of the result and suggestions for further research is also presented.

8.1 Theoretical implications

This research has contributed to an understanding of what factors that affects brand equity for SBOs. Earlier research has focused on service and online brand equity separately and not as a joint concept (e.g. Berry, 2000; Rios & Riquelme, 2010). Since no similar study on this subject has been done earlier (Alwi & Ismail, 2013), this study will help form a theoretical foundation on what affects SBO brand equity. By merging the theories regarding service and online brand equity, the researchers identified factors influencing brand equity. It was tested if these factors influencing service and online brand equity would also influence SBO brand equity. It was also examined to what extent each factor affects SBO brand equity. A quantitative research approach was conducted in order to test the merged theories in another context. The result gives an insight into what affects customers SBO brand equity.

8.2 Managerial implications

The result from this research can bring valuable information for SBOs in order to understand what factors that affect brand equity for SBOs. By retaining this knowledge SBOs can understand what is important for the customers and then interpret the information to create a suitable branding strategy. The research can help SBOs increase their brand equity with the knowledge on how to allocate their resources, which can save both money and time for the company. Brand awareness, brand association and perceived quality were considered to have a positive impact on SBO brand equity. Therefore SBOs should strive to increase these factors in order to get a high SBO brand equity. The study also shows that there is no significant difference regarding what affects SBO brand equity between different occupations. Hence the result can be utilized as a foundation of a branding strategy for SBOs no matter the occupation of the target group.
8.3 Reflection

There was low variation among the respondents since they were mainly students and employed, this could be because of the researchers being students themselves and a convenience sample only reaching people in their social circle. The study was conducted on the Swedish market and on a Swedish sample, thus making it difficult to generalize beyond that market and onto other countries. Some of the questions had to be excluded since the factor they were measuring did not reach reliability, this might have been avoided with a larger sample or more questions for each factor. The sample in this research only included people betting online. The result might have been different if conducted on a more general basis and with no connection to a specific market.

8.4 Further Research

This research was conducted on the online betting market with only Swedish respondents. In order to enhance the generalizability of the study it could be conducted on another online service market and in other countries. The sample of the research mostly consisted of males, because the betting market consists mainly of males. If changing to a market with a more equal gender distribution a more general conclusion could be drawn.

The research examined perceived quality, brand association and brand awareness relation towards brand equity based on earlier literature for service and online brand equity. Future research should test other factors possibly affecting SBO brand equity as well. Brand loyalty is one factor that was mentioned in the brand equity literature to have a positive relationship with brand equity. Therefore the researcher thinks that brand loyalty’s relationship to SBO brand equity would be relevant to test. As mentioned earlier, brand equity is derived from two major perspectives: customer based and financial based. This study has focused only on consumer based brand equity. For further research it would also be interesting to investigate SBO financial based brand equity as well.
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Appendix 1
Introduction text in English.

Brand equity for service brands online

Hello!

Thank you for participating in our questionnaire, your participation is appreciated and will be the basis for our study. We are three students at the Linnaeus University in Växjö who is writing a bachelor thesis. The questionnaire deals with questions concerning the choice of brand in the online betting industry. Your answers are anonymous and answering the questionnaire will take about 3 minutes. The questionnaire consists of statements that you will have to take a stance to on a 7-point scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 are consistent completely. You must at some time have placed a bet on a betting site to participate in the questionnaire.

Keep in mind that when conducting the questionnaire have the betting site you play most frequently on in mind.

Do you have any questions regarding the questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact us at: mj222sr@student.lnu.se

Thanks again!

Mathias Johansson, Martin Zetterberg, Pontus Davidsson
Appendix 2

Questionnaire in its full context and as presented to the respondents.

**Brand equity för tjänsteföretag online**

Hej
Tack för att du deltar i vår enkät, din medverkan uppskattas och är grunden till vår studie. Vi är tre studenter på Linnaeusuniversitetet i Växjö som skriver en kandidatuppsats. Enkäten behandlar frågor gällande val av varumärke inom spelbranchnen online. Alla dina svar är anonyma och att besvara enkäten tar cirka 3 minuter. Enkäten består utav påståenden som du sedan ska ta ställning till i en 7-gradig skala, där 1 är stämmer inte alls och 7 är stämmer helt.

Du måste någon gång ha placerat ett bet på en spelsajt för att kunna delta i enkäten.

Tank på att under enkätens gång ha den spelsajt du spelar mest frekvent på i åtanke.

Har du några frågor gällande enkäten tveka inte att kontakta oss på mj222sr@student.lnu.se

Tack ännu en gång!
Mathias Johansson, Martin Zetterberg, Pontus Davidsson

*Obligatorisk

1. Jag har någon gång placerat ett bet på en spelsajt online *

   *Om nej så lackar vi för din medverkan då detta frågeformulär enbart riktar sig mot personer som lagt ett bet på en spelsajt
   Markera alla som gäller.

   □ Ja
   □ Nej*

**Innan du börjar...**

Nedan följer påståenden som du ska ta ställning till i en 7-gradig skala. Glöm inte att ha den spelsajt du använder i åtanke, den kommer att refereras till i påståendena som 'min spelsajt'.

Skalan är genomgående 1-7, men ha i åtanke att det finns en risk att alla alternativ inte syns i mobilen.

2. Jag föredrar min spelsajt framför andra spelsajter *

   *Markera endast en oval.

   □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
   □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

   Stämmer inte alls   Stämmer helt
3. Jag skulle rekommendera min spelsajt till andra *
   *Markera endast en oval.*

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   Stämmer inte alls |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
   Stämmer helt |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

4. Jag skulle fortsätta spela på min nuvarande spelsajt även om jag fick samma
   erbjudande från någon annan spelsajt **
   **Markera endast en oval.

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5. Jag kom i kontakt med min spelsajt för att jag hörde talas om den från en/flera personer
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6. Jag kom i kontakt med min spelsajt via reklam *
   *Markera endast en oval.

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7. Jag spelar bara på spelsajter jag känner till *
   *Markera endast en oval.

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8. Jag vet hur min spelsajts märke/logga ser ut *
   *Markera endast en oval.

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9. Jag är medveten om hur min spelsajts slogan lyder.
   *Markera endast en oval.*

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10. Spelsajten jag spelar på är den första som jag tänker på när jag hör ordet betting.
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11. Jag spelar på min spelsajt därför att de erbjuder...
    *Markera endast en oval per rad.*

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12. Jag spelar på min spelsajt därför att deras hemsida...
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13. Jag föredrar min spelsajt då deras kundservice...
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14. Jag litar på att min spelsajt håller min personliga information säker*  
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15. Jag känner mig säker på att göra transaktioner (Insättning/Uttag) på min spelsajt*  
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16. Jag associerar min spelsajt med en frontfigur**
* Lex. Kändis, Karaktär  
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17. Jag spelar på min spelsajt på grund av dess unika egenskaper**
* Något som urskiljer den från andra spelsajter  
Markera endast en oval.

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18. Kön*

Markera endast en oval.

☐ Man  ☐ Kvinna

19. Ålder*

Markera endast en oval.

☐ 18-29  ☐ 30-39  ☐ 40-49  ☐ 50-59  ☐ 60 eller äldre
20. Sysselsättning *

Markera endast en oval.

☐ Studerande
☐ Arbetsande
☐ Arbetssökande
☐ Pensionär
☐ Annat

21. Uppskattningsvis, hur ofta spelar du online? *

Max ett alternativ
Markera alla som gäller.

☐ Någon gång om året eller mer sällan
☐ Någon gång i halvåret
☐ Någon gång i månaden
☐ Någon gång i veckan
☐ Varje dag