Consumer-Based Brand Equity in the Smartphone Era:

Consumer Attitudes towards Push Notifications

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Abstract

Background: New technologies have created a growing audience for mobile electronic communication and promotions that companies can utilize. From this, the phenomenon of mobile marketing has evolved, along with methods such as push notifications. Consumers attitudes towards this marketing strategy and its effect on the equity of brands is however debated in the literature, increasing the relevance of examining this subject in relation to consumer-based brand equity and its dimensions. Based on the importance of CBBE in highly competitive markets and the suggestion of examining the concept on different product categories, the context of fashion and the differentiation between fast fashion and bridge brands were chosen.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing, namely push notifications, and the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity towards fast fashion and bridge brands.

Research Questions: What is the relationship between consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing strategies (push notifications) of fast fashion brands and bridge brands on the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity?

How strongly do consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing strategies (push notifications) differ in their influence on the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity for fast fashion brands and bridge brands?

Methodology: This research takes on a quantitative approach with an exploratory research design. The chosen data collection method is performed through two independent surveys.

Conclusion: Push notifications as a mobile marketing strategy have a direct relationship (and effect) on the brand equity of fashion brands. Overall, the influence of consumer attitudes is far stronger for bridge brands across the dimensions of loyalty and awareness whereas the opposite is true for the dimension of brand associations.

Keywords: Mobile Marketing, Push Notifications, Consumer Attitudes, Consumer-Based Brand Equity, Fashion Brands
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This chapter presents a broad background regarding mobile marketing, attitudes, brand equity and fashion brands. It is followed by a problematization of the subjects, the purpose of this study, the research questions and the research delimitations. It ends with a paragraph describing the structure of the following research.

During the last decades society has faced rapid changes in technology. This digital revolution has resulted in a blurred line between the offline and online worlds (Ramaswamy 2013; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson 2014) leading to new ways of conducting business as firms increase their presence within the online environment (Ngai and Gunasekaran 2007). This new online presence has been enhanced by the increased usage of different handheld electronic communication devices (Shankar et al. 2010). Today there are approximately 6.8 billion mobile phone users around the world, which represents 96 percent of the total world population (Danaher et al. 2015). Due to this there has been a rise in services connected to mobile devices, further indicating that there is a growing audience for mobile electronic communication and promotions that companies can utilize (Shankar 2010; Danaher et al. 2015).

In connection to this, a fairly new phenomenon has evolved as a subset to online marketing (or e-marketing), namely mobile marketing (Öztas 2015; Bart et al. 2014; Park et al. 2008). Mobile marketing is defined as “an interactive marketing tool used in the promotion activities of goods/services or ideas through mobile phones (smartphones) in a manner that benefits the business and all of its stakeholders” (Öztas 2015 p. 1068). In their increasing reach through mobile networks across the globe, mobile devices prove to have great potential in different forms of communication (Watson et al. 2013). Watson et al. (2013) explain that through cheap and effective mediums, mobile marketing can support one-to-one, one-to-many, and mass interactions between marketers and consumers at unprecedented levels. Building consumer engagement with brands by utilizing mobile marketing can be achieved through a number of means such as text messaging, mobile advertising, permission based marketing, and user-generated content to name a few (Watson et al. 2013). Other practices include e-mails, mobile coupons, mobile website creation and maintenance.
Mobile marketing in its entirety refers to all mobile mediums and devices such as mobile phones, tablets, digital music players and other handheld Internet access devices (Shankar et al. 2010). Although, this particular research focuses solely on smartphones since this is the device that is mostly used as a mediator between marketers and consumers. Smartphones are highly personal devices for individuals and can be seen as cultural objects that are part of people’s everyday lives through which they communicate with others, share information and socialize on a daily basis (Shankar et al. 2010). With mobile marketing, companies can therefore get access to consumers anytime and anywhere through their smartphones, features that are superior to traditional marketing which is more dependent on the location of the consumers (Shankar et al. 2010; Öztas 2015; Park et al. 2008). Mobile promotions therefore serve as highly effective competitive means by enabling firms to be present anywhere the customers are and create direct connections with them (Fong et al. 2015; Danaher et al. 2015; Park et al. 2008). Compared to traditional media channels, mobile marketing also reduces costs and allows for higher customization and personalization of the marketing communications (Danaher et al. 2015; Shankar et al. 2010). Due to these unique features of mobile marketing, it enables firms to employ proactive marketing (Zhang et al. 2013). This has paved the way for both push and pull marketing methods through this platform (Wilken and Sinclair 2009). Wilken and Sinclair (2009 p. 431) state that “the difference between the two strategies is quite straightforward: the two terms differentiate between a ‘subscription-based’ campaign where recipients are sent mass messages over an ongoing period (push), and information or services sent instantly as the result of a specific, often personalized request (pull).” This research will focus on push marketing, which is regarded as one of the most popular marketing tools due to its adaptability to all types of mobile devices (Drossos et al. 2013). A sort of push marketing found within mobile devices in particular is the use of so-called push notifications. In its simplest form, push notifications are the delivery of information or alert signals from a software application to a handheld device (Ticklye 2014), which reaches the attention of the user immediately (Taylor 2014; Rigollet and Kumlin 2015). Examples of push notifications are badges on the smartphone screen, text messages and emails (Nations 2015). This method transmits messages to the user, or consumer, in the most direct and targeted way possible (Kannan 2013; Taylor 2014) providing great
beneficial implications for companies in their marketing strategies (Wilken and Sinclair 2009).

Mobile marketing presents numerous advantages to marketers and firms wishing to engage with its customers but there are certain issues regarding this method (Watson et al. 2013). Consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing, and in particular this form of push notification advertising, is considered to be largely dependent on consumers’ consent in receiving marketing related material (Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2015; Watson et al. 2013; Wells et al. 2012). This has prompted several researchers to suggest the adoption of permission based marketing (Watson et al. 2013; Watson et al. 2002). Attitudes towards marketing strategies are also said to be determinants of brand attitudes (Jin and Lutz 2013). Examining the effect of mobile marketing on brands and consumer attitude towards this form of marketing strategy therefore has increasing relevance since the most valuable asset a company possesses is found in the actual brand itself (Lieven and Hildebrand 2016). A firm with a strong brand benefits from higher margins, brand extension opportunities, powerful and effective communications, and higher consumer purchase intentions (Khan et al. 2009). The strength of a brand is connected to the concept of brand equity. Brand equity is one of the most popular research topics within marketing but also in practice. Its popularity in praxis is attributed to the benefits resulting from strong brand equity which generally results in several marketing advantages and increases the competitiveness of a firm (Srinivasan et al. 2005). Despite its popularity in academics, it is seen as an intangible concept (Veloutsou et al. 2013; Aaker 1991; Keller 1993) that has no definite definition, although it has been defined by some researchers as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers” (Aaker 1991 p. 15). Brand equity is commonly divided into firm-based brand equity (FBBE) and consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) (De Oliveira et al. 2015; Veloutsou et al. 2013; Washburn and Plank 2002). This research will take its stance in the consumer-based brand equity which, depending on the conceptualization, can be divided into five dimensions (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993; Yoo and Donthu 2001; Christodoulides et al. 2015). These dimensions are: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty and other proprietary brand assets (Aaker 1991; Atilgan et al. 2005; Zaichkowsky et al. 2010; Christodoulides et al. 2015).
Since CBBE serves as a strong competitive means, it is especially important in industries with high competitive climates (Dopico and Porral 2012). A particular industry that has faced a rapid growth with intensified competition is the fashion industry (Kim 2013), which also is considered to be the industry with the highest magnitude of equity compared to other product categories (Kim 2012). Fashion brands can in turn be divided into different categories ranging from fast fashion (low-cost) to high-end luxury (high-cost) brands (Ki and Kim 2016), which argues for different levels of CBBE depending on their categorization (Buil et al. 2013; Pappu and Quester 2008). Fast fashion brands aim at keeping up with ongoing trends and release new products at low prices on a weekly basis to satisfy the mass market. In contrast to this, luxury brands do not strive to keep up with the current trends but instead adapt traditions and produce products that will create a heritage to the future (Ki and Kim 2016). Luxury brands traditionally target the well-off elite clientele (Kastanakis and Balabanis 2012) but with the increasing amount of consumers and changes in the market, a new category has emerged, namely bridge brands (Solomon and Rabolt 2007). Bridge brands can either be a secondary line from a luxury brand that is less expensive than the ordinary lines (i.e. an extension) but it can also be a single brand with high quality products that places their price level below the luxury, high-end fashion brands and above the low-cost fast fashion brands (Solomon and Rabolt 2007).

To conclude there is no doubt that a paradigm shift within marketing practices has taken place (Öztas 2015; Shankar et al. 2010; Smutkupt et al. 2011). Due to new Internet technologies and electronic marketing tools, the classical marketing strategies have developed into customer-focused approaches concentrating on creating satisfaction and loyalty among consumers (Öztas 2015). This shift has had a great impact on the marketing processes of fashion brands and these firms need to closely follow new technologies, such as mobile marketing, and implement these new changes in order to ensure continued competitive advantages (Kim 2012). The developments made in mobile communication technology have led the way for the rapid growth of mobile marketing and adds a new dimension to the purchasing habits of customers (Öztas 2015; Shankar et al. 2010). The attitude of consumers with regards to mobile marketing practices on highly personal devices such as smartphones may have an effect on firms brand equity and their success in future endeavours. Furthermore, brand equity may be affected dissimilarly between product types or categories. It is therefore paramount that
firms acknowledge the importance of implementing and managing mobile marketing strategies that provide both financial benefits and increase the effectiveness of intangible assets such as consumer-based brand equity dimensions. As the reach, ubiquity, and technological advances of mobile devices increases, the knowledge of the effects, whether positive or negative, and the advantages or disadvantages of utilizing mobile marketing strategies, such as push notifications, is crucial for firms continued success. To date, little knowledge is known about the managerial benefits that can be bought about these practices which, in accordance with the expanding popularity of smartphones, increases the validity of exploring the relationship between these elements.

1.2 Problem discussion

The importance of mobile marketing is emphasized through its superiority to e-marketing activities and research has therefore argued that there is no reason for firms to not use mobile marketing over traditional marketing methods (Öztas 2015). The ubiquity generated by mobile devices allows for the direct targeting and accessibility to a large population of consumers without constraints generally applicable to e-marketing, and more traditional marketing strategies, such as consumer geographical location. Despite this, digital marketers often face some fundamental hindrances and issues related to the employment of effective mobile marketing strategies. Examples of such issues range from the design of smartphones (i.e. small screens), the traditional shopping culture dynamic, delays in delivery of marketing activities, the lack of internal knowledge and proper mobile marketing mix for firms to use (Öztas 2015; Shankar et al. 2010). The effectiveness of mobile marketing has also been questioned in literature (Park et al. 2008). Furthermore, it has been stated that the diffusion of mobile marketing in combination with intensified global competition have resulted in problems related to maintaining customer relationships. This in turn has led to difficulties for firms to differentiate their mobile marketing from competitors, raising new questions and challenges due to its unique features (Wang and Li 2012).

Multiple factors exist that can hinder customers use of mobile marketing, such as technology acceptance, economic barriers, lack of knowledge regarding mobile devices, and perceived risk (Shankar et al. 2010; Bauer et al. 2005). One of the main risks that consumers associate with mobile marketing concerns data security and the protection of
their privacy (Bauer et al. 2005; Park et al. 2008). The time and location advantages that mobile marketing, and especially push notifications, provide can therefore also lead to negative attitudes towards the brand among those consumers who feel that their privacy is being violated (Bauer et al. 2005). These issues are, according to literature, supposed to reduce the effectiveness of mobile marketing (Smutkupt et al. 2011) and are especially prominent within push-based mobile marketing. Customers can easily feel that their consent in receiving mass marketing through their smartphones is being overused, creating a notable barrier for consumer acceptance of this strategy (Smutkupt et al. 2011; Bauer et al. 2005). According to Shankar et al. (2010) firms therefore face the problem of having to convince their consumers about the potential benefits connected to receiving mobile marketing offers. This need is especially prominent when making use of push notifications as they are generally perceived as intrusive and annoying and can risk creating negative attitudes towards the brand (Taylor, 2014; Sluis, 2014). Ultimately, the type of approach used by firms in their marketing strategy, such as push notifications, can also have an effect on brand equity (Buil et al. 2013). Research made by Buil et al. (2013) shows that consumers attitudes towards a certain advertisement highly influences dimensions such as brand awareness and brand associations found within the consumer-based brand equity concept. Negative attitudes towards advertising can lead to decreasing CBBE in the form of low consumer preferences, lower purchase intentions, and less effective marketing communication between the firm and its customers (Atilgan et al. 2005; Pappu et al. 2005; Su and Tong 2015).

Despite its established relevance as a topic within both marketing research and in praxis (Srinivasan et al. 2005), the concept of CBBE is hard to measure due to its intangibility (Washburn and Plank 2002; Christodoulides and de Chernatony 2010; Yoo and Donthu 2001) and lack of consistent theoretical definitions (Christodoulides et al. 2015; Pappu et al. 2005; Veloutsou et al. 2013). The prevalent lack of consistency amongst researchers when it comes to the exact composition of consumer-based brand equity, definitions of its dimensions, and scale measurements (Christodoulides et al. 2015; Washburn and Plank 2002; Pappu et al. 2005; Veloutsou et al. 2013), further complicates the attempts to find a suitable measurement for the concept. These limitations make it hard for researchers to theoretically ground studies on one particular definition, model or scale measurement (Pousttchi et al. 2015). Furthermore, the
concept’s applicability to real-life scenarios and usage in practice proves to be a hard task as no concrete parameters for its utilization are readily available to firms and digital marketers (Pousttchi et al. 2015). As such, in spite of the rapid growth of mobile marketing, the academic field regarding the subject is in need of establishing a strong theoretical foundation (Pousttchi et al. 2015; Bart et al. 2014). There are a limited number of researches specifically exploring mobile marketing in relation to CBBE, despite great interest for both concepts and the implied significant linkage between them (Wang and Li 2012; Smutkupt et al. 2011). Research has also stated that the effectiveness of CBBE is dependent on the specific product and market characteristics, meaning that previous studies on brand equity in traditional markets have little relevance to the development of brand equity within the realm of mobile marketing practices (Wang and Li 2012). Furthermore, after extensive review of existent marketing literature, the authors of this study are not aware of any other research concerning the relationships and effects of push notifications as a mobile marketing strategy and the dimensions of CBBE of fashion brands.

Buil et al. (2013) state that additional aspects related to individuals attitude towards different marketing strategies are areas for further research on consumer-based brand equity creation, adding strength to the relevance of studying attitudes towards push notifications and its relationship with CBBE. It has also been suggested by previous authors that the dimensions of CBBE need to be further researched in a context of different product categories and different brands (Buil et al. 2013; Pappu and Quester 2008) further indicating the relevance of researching the potential differences in consumer-based brand equity between bridge and fast fashion brands.

1.3 Purpose
The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between consumers attitudes towards mobile marketing, namely push notifications, and the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity towards fast fashion and bridge brands.

1.4 Research Questions
What is the relationship between consumers attitudes towards mobile marketing strategies (push notifications) of fast fashion brands and bridge brands on the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity?
How strongly do consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing strategies (push notifications) differ in their influence on the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity for fast fashion brands and bridge brands?

1.5 Delimitations

This research faces seven different delimitations. The first delimitation regards brand equity, which is argued by researchers to consist of the five dimensions proposed by, amongst others, Aaker (1991): brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty, perceived quality and other proprietary brand assets (Aaker 1991; Atilgan et al. 2005). This research is unable to approach all five dimensions and therefore focuses solely on brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations. After careful consideration it was deemed that the fifth dimension (other proprietary assets) was not applicable to this study due to its lack of a clear definition and diffused content (Atilgan et al. 2005). Furthermore, its exclusion from numerous studies and the absence of a clear conceptualization of scales makes it hard to measure and base in this research. In addition, perceived quality was also excluded from this study since the dimension refers to the quality or overall excellence of a certain product (Atilgan et al. 2005) and, according to Aaker (1991), regards customer’s perception of a product or brand. Furthermore, Aaker (1991) states that perceived quality cannot be objectively determined, in part because it is the perception of a consumer, and thus falls out of the core scope of this research in which survey respondents objective reflection and interpretation of a fashion brand of their own choosing is crucial. If this research focused on a single company, or even a single specific product, perceived quality could have been easily applied. However, when respondents are asked to think in either an objective or general manner, it is hard to determine how the quality and possibly biased interpretations affect responses.

The second delimitation concerns mobile marketing, which in its entirety is a very broad concept that contains several different marketing methods (Watson et al. 2013). This research focuses on push notifications as a subset of mobile marketing strategies. By not applying a delimitation to the type of mobile marketing tool investigated, an increase in the risk of response bias becomes apparent. Under these circumstances,
participants would be free to ground their responses on any form of marketing tool thus making it harder to differentiate in the research.

The third delimitation relates to user consent in receiving push notifications on their smartphones which was not taken into consideration in this study. Wilken and Sinclair (2009) state that obtaining consumer consent is considered vital in the use of mobile advertising. Furthermore, EU law stipulates that obtaining user consent must be obtained prior to sending marketing related material to smartphone users (Wilken and Sinclair 2009; Park et al. 2008). This research, however, does not define whether or not participants consider the usage of push notifications as invasive or not as the research is built around participant’s hypothetical attitude towards receiving push notifications. Including the factor of invasiveness could possibly reduce the sample size substantially as studies have shown that consumers strongly object to receiving unsolicited marketing material (Watson et al. 2013) and thereby would also diminish the generalizability of the research findings.

The fourth delimitation relates to the choice of industry. The researchers of this study felt that there was a need to delimit the research topic into one specific industry since it would be hard to come to any sort of conclusion if participants were allowed to think about any kind of brand or product category. The absence of this limitation would have made it virtually impossible to objectively view the relationship between attitude and consumer-based brand equity dimensions as respondents could then freely base their answers without limits to any industry, brand, or product category. Therefore, after much consideration, it was determined that the fashion industry would suit well to the study mainly due to it being a widely consumed product that respondents can easily relate to. In addition to this, as previously mentioned, the fashion industry has seen intensified competition (Kim 2013), is a relevant industry that strives to keep up with ongoing trends and allows for the exploration of different categories (Ki and Kim 2016).

This leads to the fifth delimitation of this research concerning the division of the study into two fashion categories. Viewing the relationship between the variables studied towards fast fashion brands and bridge brands is based on the argument that the dimensions of CBBE need to be researched within different product categories and between different brands as is supported by researchers such as Buil et al. (2013) and Pappu and Quester (2008).
The sixth delimitation of this study regards the research scope. The authors of this study limit themselves to only look at if there is a relationship between attitudes towards push notifications and CBBE, and partly what this relationship looks like. The purpose of this research is therefore not to examine the underlying factors influencing how and why the relationship appears as it does. Thus, this approach will result in less managerial implications and more theoretical implications.

Finally, this study did not seek to compare or expand upon the research made by Aaker (1991), or other researchers, extending the conceptualisation of his findings. Although this study draws its CBBE conceptualization from numerous researchers and bases its model on Aaker’s (1991), it is beyond the scope of this study to compare or discredit the measurements proposed by other researchers within the field. This research finds added singularity in translating this construct and measurements onto mobile marketing tactics.

1.6 Report Structure
This research will continue with an extensive literature review within the fields of attitudinal and brand equity research with the aim of providing a vast and deep understanding of the subjects. The literature review chapter is followed by the conceptual framework, which presents the hypotheses formed for the current research and connects these to previous literature and relevant theories. The methodology chapter discusses what the researchers have done and why. This chapter contains the choice of research approach and design, data sources, data collection method, and sample. An operationalization and development of data collection instruments is included in order to show that the items in the surveys have been based on previous research. Additionally, pretests, data analysis method, as well as data cleanup and outliers are addressed in this chapter. The method chapter ends with a discussion regarding quality criterias and ethical considerations of the research. In chapter five, the data analysis and results from the data collection are presented, containing a presentation of the descriptive statistics gathered, reliability tests, construct validity and hypotheses testing. The analysis is followed by chapter six, containing a discussion concerning the findings as well as a conclusion in chapter seven where the main findings of the research are evaluated. Lastly, the final chapter in this study covers the limitations of the study, managerial implications and proposes suggestions for further research.
2. Literature Review

This chapter presents an extensive review of previous prominent researches within the field of attitudes in connection to mobile marketing and the concept of brand equity.

2.1 Attitudinal Research

2.1.1 Defining the Concept of Attitudes

It is argued in literature that every person has a certain amount of attitudes towards everything. Attitudes are used in order to understand and explain people’s behaviors (Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2015; Schiffman and Kanuk 2004) and they are acquired through experience and learning (Kotler and Keller 2009). Attitudes are claimed to be either positive or negative and incapable of being neutral (Bennett and Kassarjian 1972). Kotler and Keller (2009) argue that there are five different consumer attitudes toward a brand: enthusiastic, positive, indifferent, hostile, and negative. Attitudes can be described as “a person’s enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluations, emotional feelings, and action tendencies towards some object or idea” (Kotler and Keller 2009 p. 210) or as Fishbein and Ajzen (1975 p. 6; Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2015 p. 358) state: “a learned predisposition of human beings [that leads them to respond] to an object, idea or opinion.” Attitudes are, according to Bennett and Kassarjian (1972), insistent, dynamic, and stirred-up.

It is argued that attitudes consist of three components: one cognitive, one affective and one conative component. The cognitive component of attitudes refers to a person’s perceptions, opinions, and knowledge about an object. The affective component consists of a person’s emotions towards an object, which are based on the opinions and perceptions the person has towards it. Finally, the conative component of attitudes refers to how people react towards an object, based on the knowledge and feelings they have towards it (Evans et al. 2006).

People’s social behavior are strongly influenced by the attitudes they hold, which affects their judgement and perceptions and thereby also forms the personalities of individuals (Britt 1967). Predicting how attitudes affect the behavior of people is one main concern for consumer behaviour researchers (Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2015; Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Schiffman and Kanuk 2004) as they put consumers in a state of mind that determines whether they like or dislike a product/brand and, in turn, move
either towards or away from it (Kotler and Keller 2009). Marketers aim to convince consumers that their products are the best choice and this is generally seen as an attempt to influence consumer attitudes. Attitudes are, however, very stable structures and changing them is both difficult and expensive for firms. How successful marketers are in their attempts to influence the attitudes of their consumers is largely dependent on the firm’s perceived trustworthiness (Evans et al. 2006).

Consumer attitudes are generally divided into three different categories: attitudes towards the brand, the advertising media, and the advertisement itself. The attitudes that consumers hold towards advertising is generally seen as negative within marketing literature with exceptions when the advertisement is perceived as informative (Park et al. 2008). Researchers examining consumers attitudes towards different advertising strategies are therefore also often interested in the effectiveness of these. Researchers such as Jin and Lutz (2013) suggest that attitudes are a valid predictor of marketing outcomes due to its connection to customers involvement or engagement with the advertisements.

2.1.2 Attitudes in Connection to Mobile Marketing

Consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing can be defined as “respondents’ feelings and beliefs toward using their mobile phones for accessing information from brands, purchasing products, or receiving incentives such as coupons” (Gao et al. 2012 p. 214). The literature considers attitudes as indicators of mobile users behaviour and intentions to accept and make use of mobile marketing (Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2015). In spite of the growing importance of comprehending the dynamics of attitudes in relation to increasingly prevalent methods of marketing through mobile mediums, researchers such as Watson et al. (2013) and Gao et al. (2012) maintain that academia has devoted little attention to these factors, especially in relation to smartphones. This entails that a lack of academic literature can be found to establish clear theoretical connections between consumer attitudes and mobile marketing practices. Karjaluoto and Alatalo further state in their research from 2007 that the consumer aspect, and attitudes in specific, has not been thoroughly researched and that only a few empirical studies on this subject exist. However, researchers have identified four underlying dimensions, or components, that can be utilized to determine consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing practices. These are: informativeness, enjoyment, credibility, and irritation (Tsang et al. 2004;
Entertainment and credibility are seen as the key factors for determining positive attitudes (Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2015). The information component refers to the ability of providing up-to-date, timely and immediately accessible information through an advertisement. The dimension of enjoyment refers to the entertainment connected to the marketing practices, such as gamification or visual stimuli. Credibility refers to the perception of truthfulness and believability in general of the mobile marketing tactic. These components elicit positive attitudes in consumers. Finally, irritation is the only dimensions which has a negative effect on consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing as certain features of these strategies may be perceived as annoying, offensive, insulting or manipulative. The component of irritation may prompt users to ignore the mobile marketing activity (Altuna and Konuk 2009). Researchers such as Altuna and Konuk (2009) also suggest a fifth dimension, perceived advertising value, that relates to the worth or the utility of the marketing activity to consumers.

As one of the first researchers of consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing, Tsang et al. (2004) aimed to understand the relationship between consumer attitudes and behaviour. Their results show that there is a generally negative attitude amongst consumers towards mobile marketing unless the consumers have given their explicit consent to receive this form of advertising (Tsang et al. 2004; Park et al. 2008). Tsang et al. (2004) maintain that it is not beneficial for firms to send mobile marketing to unassumming consumers and argue that permission-based advertising might therefore come to play a major role in mobile marketing (Tsang et al. 2004). This is in line with the findings of several other researchers, who state that the success of mobile marketing is dependent on the consumer’s consent (Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2015; Watson et al. 2013; Wells et al. 2012) and that it increases the likelihood of eliciting positive attitudes towards the marketing content (Wells et al. 2012; Watson et al. 2013). In accordance with Tsang et al. (2004), Watson et al. (2013) concluded that the main reason behind negative consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing lies on the view that smartphones are highly personal devices. As a result, unsolicited mobile marketing material is regarded as intrusive (Watson et al. 2013). These findings are supported by Park et al. (2008) who state that the notion of privacy surrounding a person’s smartphone creates unaccountable consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing. Persaud and Azhar (2012) also investigated consumers willingness to accept marketing
through their smartphones, disclosing that trust is a key component in order for consumers to accept mobile marketing, a statement that later was supported by Watson et al. (2013). In addition to this, Tsang et al. (2004) and Park et al. (2008) argue for the importance of giving consumers the option to choose if they want to partake in mobile marketing activities or not. Similarly, Persaud and Azhar (2012) found that consumers want to have control over how and when they participate in mobile marketing, suggesting a positive relationship between control and level of involvement.

Numerous researchers including Tsang et al. (2004), Persaud and Azhar (2012), Watson et al. (2013), Bart et al. 2014, and Izquierdo-Yusta et al. (2015), have identified several factors that can have a positive affect on consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing content from firms. In their study, Tsang et al. (2004) found that attitudes towards mobile marketing were highly affected by the factor of entertainment. This has also been confirmed by later researchers such as Xu (2006), Barutçu (2007), Parreño et al. (2013), and Izquierdo-Yusta et al. (2015). However, this is contradictory the findings by Chowdhury et al. (2006) who found that a certain geographically specific population of consumers held negative attitudes towards the factor of entertainment. These findings may differ from other researches based on the very specific sample used by Chowdhury et al. (2006) and its lack of exposition to, or familiarity with, mobile marketing practices. Other attributes that also affect consumers attitudes are identified as personalization, credibility, ease of use, trust, and perceived utility of the advertisement (Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2015). The factor of trust in particular is found by Persaud and Azhar (2012), in addition to Watson et al. (2013), to positively affect consumer acceptance to mobile marketing. Factors that in turn influence the trustworthiness of mobile marketing include the appearance, entertainment features, and perceived value of the mobile marketing (Watson et al. 2013). According to Bart et al. (2014), the positive effects on attitudes are more likely for high involvement products and utilitarian products. However, the findings of Bart et al. (2014) are not generalizable as the effectiveness of mobile marketing suffers from high variation and are usually small. Altuna and Konuk (2009) further state that the differences in attitudes towards mobile marketing is correlated with the technology infrastructure and with cultural properties, thereby influencing its effectiveness. Wells et al. (2012) take a stance from Altuna and Konuk’s (2009) research and further extend the existing knowledge by investigating consumers attitudes towards mobile marketing and their behavioral intentions to adopt
it. Similar to Altuna and Konuk (2009), Wells et al. (2012) investigate the differences in attitudes towards mobile marketing among different nationalities. Wells et al. (2012) found that each nationality within their sample favoured mobile marketing when they were provided with some sort of additional value from it, concluding that the success of a firm’s mobile marketing and increase in consumer engagement lays in the provision of value. Bauer et al. (2005) argue that mobile marketing can be seen as an innovation, thus affect consumers attitudes towards it. Furthermore, they maintain that attitudes towards this marketing method may be affected by consumers intention to search for and use new information. Consumers with high intentions to search for new information are more aware of new phenomenons, such as mobile marketing, compared to less informed consumers, which in turn leads to increased positive attitudes towards it (Bauer et al. 2005).

Some researchers, such as Jasarspahic and Duman (2014) propose practical suggestions as to how firms can improve consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing. The first proposal is in accordance with the findings of Wells et al. (2012), Watson et al. (2013) and Izquierdo-Yusta et al. (2015), which posits that consumers must give their explicit approval to receive advertising material via devices (such as smartphones) in order to not regard it as intrusive. The second proposal involves firms adjusting their marketing strategies depending on customers level of involvement with the product advertised, effectively increasing involvement among all consumers, which is in line with the findings of Bart et al. (2014). The third proposal entails that firms need to deliver the convenient, benefit or discount promised in the advertisement, in order to create a pleasant and satisfying experience for the customers (Jasarspahic and Duman 2014). This incentive factor has been widely discussed in marketing research. Researchers including Barwise and Strong (2002), Tsang et al. (2004), Dawson and Kim (2009), and Xu and Huang (2014) affirm that numerous forms of incentives presented to users subjected to mobile marketing content are positively correlated with increased positivity in attitudes towards such material.

Awad and El-Shihy (2014) expand on previous knowledge about mobile marketing by examining consumer profiles and attitudes towards mobile marketing, in particular push notifications. Awad and El-Shihy (2014) state that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are two strong determinants of consumers attitudes and intentions to receive push notifications. These findings are somewhat contradictory to the findings
of previous researchers. Studies by both Bamoriya and Singh (2012) and Gao et al. (2012) similarly found that perceived usefulness is a strong determinant of consumers attitudes towards mobile marketing, however, perceived ease of use did not have a significant impact. Similarly, Parreño et al. (2013) maintain that perceived usefulness is a main driver in consumer attitudes and argue that companies must provide consumers with timely and exclusive information, and not solely rely on discounts, in order to be successful.

2.2 Brand Equity Research

2.2.1 Defining the Concept Brand Equity

Ever since the late 1980s brand equity has been a hot topic in research (Srinivasan et al. 2005) and today the importance of brand equity is widely accepted in marketing literature (Nikabadi et al. 2015; Veloutsou et al. 2013). Although academics, such as Farquhar (1989), had in some form or another touched on the topic, brand equity as a concept was not fully developed until the early 1990s. Researchers such as Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) were at the forefront of establishing and defining the constituent dimensions of brand equity and were major proponents in its widespread popularity. Several different definitions of the concept of brand equity are widely available in marketing literature. Farquhar (1989) defined it as the added value a brand bestows on a given product. Aaker (1991 p. 15) provided a more definite definition of brand equity as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers”, which is the conceptual definition that this current study uses. Similarly, Keller (1993) viewed brand equity as the marketing effects specifically derived from the brand itself. Building upon these definitions, Yoo and Donthu (2001) view the concept as the value added or incremental utility a product receives from its brand name. More contemporary researchers have defined brand equity as “the value attached to a brand because of the powerful relationship that has been developed between the brand and customers and other stakeholders over time” (Khan et al. 2009 p. 13). In its essence, it is the added value endowed by brand name (Tong and Hawley 2009). By establishing brand equity a firm can benefit from several competitive advantages, such as greater revenue, lower costs, higher profits, high consumer preferences, higher purchase intentions and it also has direct implications for
a company’s effectiveness of marketing communications, the success of brand extensions and licensing opportunities (Atilgan et al. 2005; Pappu et al. 2005; Su and Tong 2015).

2.2.2 Consumer-Based Brand Equity

Establishing brand equity is in both academia and practice considered as a key part in brand building (Pappu et al. 2005; Su and Tong 2015) and at its core is likely the most prized asset for firms (Christodoulides and de Chernatony 2010; Christodoulides et al. 2015). For example, positive brand equity aids in developing corporate success through differentiation which leads to competitive advantage (Aaker 1991; Wang and Li 2012) and furthermore increases consumer preferences, purchase intentions and brand choice behaviour (Wang and Li 2012; Su and Tong 2015). The concept is, in principle, classified as intangible and generally refers to the effects that are attained as a direct result of effective branding (Veloutsou et al. 2013; Aaker 1991; Keller 1993). As a market-based intangible asset, and due to its ‘relational’ nature, brand equity reflects the interconnection between a firm and its stakeholders (Veloutsou et al. 2013; Khan et al. 2009), the main of which are commonly identified as the firm and its consumers (Christodoulides et al. 2015; Aaker 1991). Marketing academics have viewed brand equity from two distinct perspectives: the firm’s (or organisational) perspective and the consumer’s perspective (Veloutsou et al. 2013; Washburn and Plank 2002). The former perspective of firm-based brand equity (FBBE) considers the financial values of a brand whereas the latter perspective of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) captures the added value of a brand to the consumers, their positive attitudes and perceptions of a firm (Veloutsou et al. 2013; Smutkupt et al. 2012). Keller (1993 p. 2) maintained that CBBE is the “differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.” In other words, it involves the reaction of consumers to a marketing mix element, or stimuli, occurring based on consumers familiarity with a brand and the favorability, strength, and uniqueness of brand associations in their memory (Keller 1993; Yoo and Donthu 2001). According to Veloutsou et al. (2013), recent research suggests that CBBE explains variance in risk measures exceeding that which is explained by existing financial models.

Washburn and Plank (2002) state that there are prevalent methods of measuring financial equity for firms but a lack of research on how to measure value from a
consumer’s perspective. This lack of knowledge explains the increasing interest in measuring the intangible asset from a CBBE perspective over the last decade (Veloutsou et al. 2013; Yoo and Donthu 2001; Lieven and Hildebrand 2016). According to Tong and Hawley (2009), the CBBE approach is important because if a brand does not give added value to its consumers, none of the dimensions of financial brand equity matters. As a proponent of the brand equity concept, the importance of comprehending the concept from this viewpoint rather than an organisational perspective is stressed by Keller (1993). Keller (1993 p. 8) states: “though the eventual goal of any marketing program is to increase sales, it is first necessary to establish knowledge structures for the brand so that consumers respond favourably to marketing activities of the brand.” A review of existent marketing literature on brand equity reveals that, in general, researchers rely on the two separate definitions of the concept of CBBE provided by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993). Both Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) maintain that the CBBE approach is based on consumer knowledge, familiarity, and associations connected to the brand. As the CBBE approach is defined from the perspective of consumers, it provides an accurate understanding of brand equity from a viewpoint other than that of the firm and is crucial for successful brand management (Tong and Hawley 2009).

2.2.3 Conceptualizing Consumer-Based Brand Equity in Research

Even though researchers have devoted substantial time and effort in developing and researching CBEE, it is without doubt that there is little harmony amongst researchers as to what exactly constitutes as brand equity or how it is defined (Christodoulides et al. 2015; Washburn and Plank 2002; Pappu et al. 2005; Veloutsou et al. 2013). Aaker’s (1991) definition suggests that the main recipients of brand value are either (or both) the firm and its customers. Keller’s (1993) definition, on the other hand, is built on cognitive psychology (Christodoulides et al. 2015) and looks at consumer memory and awareness. More recently, researchers such as Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010) base their definition of CBEE by combining psycho-cognitive and information economics perspectives of brand equity (Veloutsou et al. 2013).

In addition to differences in definition, there is no general consensus amongst studies as to what comprises brand equity on the conceptual level (Pappu et al. 2005; Christodoulides et al. 2015). This can be accredited to Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993)
who defined brand equity and identified its component dimensions but failed to develop and propose operationalizations for the measurement of these scales (Christodoulides et al. 2015). As a result, often at times the dimensions of CBBE are blurred to the convenience or conceptualization of the particular researcher to the point that certain dimensions are collapsed, measured using single scales, or hard to differentiate between. The difference in the compositions and analysis of CBBE dimensions makes it an especially hard task for those wishing to explore the subject to ground research on one particular study and for practitioners to invest in brand building initiatives (Christodoulides et al. 2015). For example, in developing and validating a multidimensional CBBE scale, Yoo and Donthu (2001) integrate the features of brand awareness and brand association, consequently failing to clearly differentiate between these two elements. Similarly, examining the impact of brands’ country of origin on the multidimensionality of the construct CBBE, Pappu et al. (2005) measure brand awareness on a single item and furthermore inadequately distinguish between brand associations and awareness, creating some limitations. In their own research, Margaret and Thompson (2012) fail to differentiate between the four dimensions of brand equity on their item scales but do however clearly define them in their research which is largely based on Yoo and Donthu (2001). Other examples on the lack of consensus in brand equity research can be found in Smutkupt et al. (2011) who include the dimension of brand knowledge in their study, comprised of brand awareness and brand image, unlike Sasmita and Suki (2015) who extract brand image as an additional dimension to brand equity.

Despite the multiplicity and number of different conceptualisations of the composition of brand equity, the most dominant, frequently utilised model in empirical research builds upon Aaker’s (1991) proposed dimensions (Christodoulides et al. 2015; Bick 2009; Buil et al. 2013; Atilgan et al. 2005; Smutkupt et al. 2012; Su and Tong 2015; Tong and Hawley 2009; Nikabadi et al. 2015; Donlan 2013; Christodoulides and de Chernatony 2010; Veloutsou et al. 2013). A number of previous researchers have therefore built upon Aaker’s (1991) research by developing and validating scales to measure the dimensions of brand equity (Christodoulides et al. 2015) and approach the concept of this intangible asset from different perspectives (Veloutsou et al. 2013). Aaker’s (1991) dimensionality of CBBE identified brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and other proprietary brand assets (such as patents and...
other intellectual property rights) as the core elements of the concept (see Figure 1 below).

![Aaker's (1991) Consumer-Based Brand Equity Concept and Dimensions](image)

**Figure 1: Aaker’s (1991) Consumer-Based Brand Equity Concept and Dimensions**

### 2.2.4 Dimensions of Consumer-Based Brand Equity

As previously mentioned, for the purpose of this research, Aaker’s (1991) model was used as the basis for CBBE conceptualization. Measurements of CBBE dimensions brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations (excluding perceived quality and other proprietary brand assets) were compiled from numerous researchers.

#### 2.2.4.1 Brand Loyalty

The cornerstone and most important dimension of CBBE is argued to be brand loyalty. Despite its importance and direct implications on CBBE, there is no definite definition of the dimension (Atilgan et al. 2005). However, there are several suggested definitions of the brand loyalty dimensions. Furthermore, according to research, the brand loyalty dimension can be divided into three different perspectives: behavioral, attitudinal, and composite loyalty (Smutkupt et al. 2012).

A large number of researchers agree upon defining the dimension from behavioural aspects as “the attachment that a customer has to a brand” (Aaker 1991 p. 39; Su and Tong 2015 p. 126; Pappu et al. 2005 p. 145). Therefore, the behavioural perspective is the outcome of consumers repeated purchase behavior (Smutkupt et al. 2012). Other researchers, such as Yoo and Donthu (2001 p. 3) view brand loyalty from
a more attitudinal perspective and describe it as “the tendency to be loyal to a focal brand, which is demonstrated by the intention to buy the brand as a primary choice.” Attitudinal loyalty as a result evaluates the level of loyalty consumers have towards the brand (Smutkupt et al. 2012) and captures a brand’s preferences and commitments (Balaji 2011). The behavioral and attitudinal perspectives of loyalty are also brought up by Atilgan et al. (2005) who argue that the behavioral perspective is based on the amount of purchases made by a consumer from a specific brand and maintain that the attitudinal perspective refers to consumers preferences and dispositions towards a brand. Finally, the composite definition measures brand loyalty by both intention to purchase and repeated purchases (Smutkupt et al. 2012).

Customers who are loyal towards a brand are strongly committed to it and view it as more satisfying than other alternatives. At the same time they are not as price sensitive as compared to non-loyal customers and are more frequent buyers of the brand (Esmailpour 2015; Lee 2011; Tong and Hawley 2009). The customers who tend to be loyal towards a brand are those with high experience and involvement levels with a certain product category (Esmailpour 2015). When a firm succeeds in establishing loyalty amongst its customers it adds value to the brand and creates strong brand affiliation, reduces marketing expenditure and influences other potential customers through positive word-of-mouth (Balaji 2011; Veloutsou et al. 2013).

2.2.4.2 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is an important part in understanding consumer behaviour and especially consumer decision-making (Lin et al. 2014). This dimension has been described as “the ability for a buyer to recognize and recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category” (Aaker 1991 p. 61) or more specifically as “the strength of the trace of a brand in consumer memory, as reflected by the consumers’ ability to identify the brand under different conditions” (Wang and Li 2012 p. 149). At its core, brand awareness intrinsically refers to the strength of a brand’s presence in the minds of the consumers (Su and Tong 2015). It is therefore the strength of brand node reflected in consumers ability to identify the brand under different conditions (Keller 1993).

Based on these definitions brand awareness is argued, primarily by Keller (1993) and Aaker (1991), to consist of two components, namely brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition refers to the first step in brand communication (Su and Tong
and relates to consumers ability to confirm previous exposure to the brand when they are given the brand as a cue (Keller 1993). As such, brand recognition “requires that consumers correctly discriminate the brand as having been seen or heard previously” (Keller 1993 p. 3). On the other hand, brand recall denotes the consumer’s ability to correctly retrieve the brand from memory (Su and Tong 2015; Keller 1993) when certain types of “probes”, such as product category or need fulfillment supplied the specific product category, act as cues in the consumer’s mind (Keller 1993). Therefore, brand recall calls for the capability of consumers to adequately generate a particular brand from memory. Keller (1993) states that both factors of brand recall and brand recognition are dependent on the extent of consumer decision-making process.

Thorougly expanding on the concept, Keller (1993) argues that brand awareness has three important roles in consumers decision-making. Firstly, when consumers think about a product category it is important that the brand comes to their mind. Higher brand awareness increases the likelihood that the brand will be a part of the consideration set, meaning that it is seriously evaluated by the consumers in their purchasing process. Secondly, if consumers have a low involvement in the decision making, due to lack of information or motivation towards the products, they might base their choices on the brand awareness. In other words, “in low involvement decision settings, a minimum level of brand awareness may be sufficient for product choice, even in the absence of a well-formed attitude” (Keller 1993 p. 3). Lastly, brand awareness influences the strength and formation of brand associations.

Having a high degree of brand awareness is beneficial for a firm since it has a dominant role in the consumer’s choice of brands (Srinivasan et al. 2005) and is crucial in order for companies to attract consumer attention (Balaji 2011). This is especially prominent when consumers have limited knowledge about a product category since their awareness about a brand then becomes an important factor in the decision-making process. In other words, when there is uncertainty about specific products, consumers tend to base their purchasing decisions on the perceptions of what is popular, has a strong reputation or is better known among the general public (Lin et al. 2014). Brands with high awareness are as a result more likely to be purchased and recommended than those with low brand awareness among consumers (Barreda et al. 2015; Srinivasan et al. 2005). Marketing mediums have a clear effect on the brand awareness at purchase depending on how they exhibit and promote a brand or product (Keller 2010).
2.2.4.3 *Brand Associations*

Another significant component of brand equity, albeit often hard to conceptualise, are brand associations (Pappu et al. 2005; Aaker 1991; Keller 1993). Brand associations are argued to contain the consumer’s inherent meaning of a brand (Manpreet and Jagrook 2010; Pappu et al. 2005; Keller 1993) and can be defined as “anything, including attributes of a product/service, reputation of a company, and characteristics of product/service users, which [link] in consumer memory to a brand” (Wang and Li 2012 p. 149). Aaker (1991 p. 109) views brand associations “as anything linked in memory to a brand” and provides a more straightforward conceptualisation of this dimension whereas Keller (1993) contemplates the types, strength, favorability, and uniqueness of brand associations as a subset of brand image. In turn, according to Keller (1993), brand image, along with brand awareness, are subsets of the so-called brand knowledge dimension, a stance which is usually conflicted amongst proponents of either definition of brand associations.

Brand associations are acquired through consumers awareness and perceptions towards a brand (Srinivasan et al. 2005) and differ depending on the brand’s perceived strength, favorability and uniqueness in the mind of the consumer (Keller 1993; Su and Tong 2015; Manpreet and Jagrook 2010). Brand associations can derive from a wide range of sources, however, there is a general agreement amongst researchers that these are mainly created through visual impressions (Thellefsen and Sørensen 2015; Zaltman 1997).

The associations of consumers towards a brand, or even firm, can be both favourable and unfavourable as they are acquired through the consumers’ perceptions towards it. These perceptions are in turn created through previous experiences or exposures with the brand (Yoo and Donthu 2001). Consumers who have a positive experience with a brand will thus have positive emotions towards it, while negative experiences will result in negative emotions. When consumers later on are confronted with information from that specific brand, they make associations based on these previous positive or negative experiences (Thellefsen and Sørensen 2015). Favorable brand associations with regards to a brand is beneficial because it provides the consumers with additional value, positive feelings and attitudes, and also increases their purchasing intentions towards it (Su and Tong 2015). Positive brand associations
furthermore allow consumers to process and retrieve information about a brand and is an added reason for consumer to engage in the purchasing process (Aaker 1991).

As previously mentioned, brand associations can be divided into different conceptual categorisations, mostly depending on whether the research framework is based on Aaker’s (1991) or Keller’s (1993) definition of brand equity, and can vary greatly or to some extent between researchers (Washburn and Plank 2002; Pappu et al. 2005; Christodoulides et al. 2015; Yoo and Donthu 2001; Wang and Li 2011; Sasmita and Suki 2015). Pappu et al. (2005) argue that brand personality and organisational associations are the most crucial from a CBBE perspective. Brand personality is a well established concept within marketing literature and it can be described as the amount of human characteristics that are associated with a brand (Pappu et al. 2005). Brand personality is suggested by Aaker (1991) to be a sub-dimension of brand associations used to contribute to brand equity. In their research Yoo and Donthu (2001) fail to provide a scale or measurement for brand personality but advocate for its inclusion in future research (Pappu et al. 2005). Similarly to Pappu et al. (2005), (who expand upon the empirical measurement of brand associations proposed by Washburn and Plank (2002) and Yoo and Donthu (2001)), Su and Tong (2015) further argue that brand associations can be divided into categories related to the products. Keller (1993) proposes a more intricate evaluation of the brand associations dimension, claiming that it can be distinguished through three major categories: attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Attributes refer to the descriptive features that characterize a product or service, and therefore reflect the true meaning of the product for the consumer. In addition, attributes relate to the components involved in purchasing and consuming a product. In turn, this category can be viewed from both product-related (i.e. physical composition) or non-product-related attributes (i.e. price information and packaging appearance information) (Keller 1993). Benefits are the personal values attached to a product by the consumers, that is, what the consumers believe the product can do for them. Again, this category, according to Keller (1993), views the underlying motivations of consumers through functional, experiential, or symbolic benefits. Finally, brand attitudes are the overall evaluations of a brand and are the basis for consumer behaviours, such as brand choice (Keller 1993). As previously mentioned, Keller (1993) further differentiates between other factors of brand associations such as their strength, uniqueness, and favorability. Every brand, irrelevant of direct competition or not, shares some associations with other
brands and therefore brand associations are critical to a brand’s success in the way that a brand with strong, favorable and unique associations is superior to its competitors. This proves to be a building block in a firm’s ability to retain a strong and successful overall CBBE (Keller 1993).

The strength of the associations are dependent on how information enters the minds of consumers and secondly how the information is maintained. It is also reliant on both quality and quantity, that is, in what way and how much the consumers think and reflect about this information. When consumers are actively thinking and elaborating on the importance of information regarding a product or service the association becomes stronger (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993). A brand with strong brand associations will benefit from several advantages, such as competitive advantage and higher purchase intentions, and the higher the associations are the more the brand will be remembered by the consumers, which in turn can create loyalty among the brand’s customer base (Sasmita and Suki 2015).
3. Conceptual Framework

In this chapter an argumentation for the research hypotheses developed in connection to the relevant theories are presented.

The conceptual framework used in this study is presented in Figure 2 below. This framework is built upon the brand equity dimensions of Aaker (1991) selected for the purpose of this study and the attitude of consumers towards receiving push notifications from either fast fashion or bridge brands. As can be seen from Figure 2, Aaker’s (1991) model consists of brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations with the exclusion of perceived quality and other proprietary brand assets which are omitted due to irrelevance to the scope of this research. The figure presents each hypothesis related to the dimension of brand equity observed.

![Conceptual Model of Attitudes and Brand Equity Dimensions](image)

**Figure 2:** Conceptual Model of Attitudes and Brand Equity Dimensions

3.1 Consumer Attitude

Attitudes explain people’s behaviours acquired through both learning and experience (Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2015; Schiffman and Kanuk 2004; Kotler and Keller 2009). Attitudes are either positive or negative but never neutral (Bennett and Kassarjian 1972)
and consist of cognitive, affective, and conative components (Evans et al. 2006). More specifically, consumer attitudes with regards to mobile marketing encompass users feelings and beliefs towards accessing mobile marketing related content (Gao et al 2012). In other words, research suggests that the attitudes consumers hold towards mobile marketing indicate their behaviour and intentions to use their mobile devices when engaging with brands (Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2015). The conative component of attitude observes individuals reactions towards an object derived from previous knowledge and feelings towards it (Evans et al. 2006). Marketing mediums are therefore said to have a significant effect on the brand awareness depending on how they exhibit and promote a brand or product (Keller 2010).

3.2 Brand Loyalty

Literature regarding brand loyalty within CBBE reveals that this dimension can be viewed from different perspectives (Yoo and Donthu 2001). Based on its definition in previous studies and stance on consumer attitude, the attitudinal perspective of brand loyalty was selected as the most relevant for this study. Attitudinal brand loyalty takes into account consumer loyalty towards a specific brand that results in it being the consumer’s first choice (Yoo and Donthu 2001; Smutkupt et al. 2012). It therefore evaluates the level of brand preference and commitment consumers have towards a brand (Smutkupt et al. 2012; Balaji 2011). Unlike attitudinal brand loyalty, the perspective of behavioural loyalty reflects the attachment of consumers towards a particular brand (Aaker 1991; Su and Tong 2015; Pappu et al. 2005) quantifiable on the amount of purchases made by the consumer and does not account for the preferences and dispositions of consumers towards the brand (Atilgan et al. 2005). In relation to the theory of brand loyalty and attitude, the following hypotheses were developed:

\textit{H1A: There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) and consumer brand loyalty towards fast fashion brands.}

\textit{H1B: There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) and consumer brand loyalty towards bridge brands.}
H4A: There is a difference in how strongly attitudes influence brand loyalty for fast fashion brands and bridge brands.

3.3 Brand Awareness

The dimension of brand awareness is argued to consist of a consumer’s ability to recognize and recall a brand under different conditions, strengthened by the brands retention in the consumer’s memory (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993; Wang and Li 2012; Su and Tong 2015). The component of brand recognition confirms a consumer’s previous exposure to a brand provided by cues related to the brand whereas brand recall is the ability of a consumer to adequately retrieve the brand purely from memory (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993). Based on these theories regarding brand awareness the following hypotheses were developed in connection to consumer attitudes:

H2A: There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) and consumer brand awareness towards fast fashion brands.

H2B: There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) and consumer brand awareness towards bridge brands.

H4B: There is a difference in how strongly attitudes influence brand awareness for fast fashion brands and bridge brands.

3.4 Brand Associations

Previous researchers define brand associations as anything present in the consumer’s mind, such as attributes and characteristics of a product, which is linked to a particular brand (Wang and Li 2012). It is acquired through consumers' awareness and perceptions of the brand and derives from a variety of sources (Srinivasan 2005; Thellefsen and Sørensen 2015) but are often created through previous experiences or exposure with the brand (Yoo and Donthu 2001). The strength of brand associations are dependent on how information enters, and later on are maintained, in the minds of consumers. Consumers associations towards a brand can be favourable or unfavourable deriving from previous experiences and exposures to the brand (Yoo and Donthu 2001). As a result, a positive experience with a brand will elicit positive emotions in the consumer, the opposite
occurring for negative experiences. Positive brand associations bring about benefits such as additional value and increased consumer purchasing intentions (Su and Tong 2015) and, furthermore, allow consumers to process and retrieve information about the particular brand (Aaker 1991). Brand associations are also reliant on both quality and quantity. That is, in what way and how much the consumers think about and reflect about this certain information (Aaker 1991; Keller 1993). In relation to consumers attitudes and theories regarding brand associations, the following hypotheses were developed for this dimension:

\[ H_3A: \text{There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) and consumer brand associations towards fast fashion brands.} \]

\[ H_3B: \text{There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) and consumer brand associations towards bridge brands.} \]

\[ H_4C: \text{There is a difference in how strongly attitudes influence brand associations for fast fashion brands and bridge brands.} \]
4. Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology used in order to conduct the study. It argues for the choice of approaches and appropriate methods in connection to the purpose of the study. It also stresses the importance of quality criteria and ethics in research.

4.1 Research Approach and Research Design

The core of this research was based on the model proposed by Aaker (1991) and its constituent dimensions, with the aim of adding knowledge to the relationship between consumer attitudes towards push notifications on smartphones as a function of mobile marketing strategies and their effect on the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity for fast fashion and bridge brands. Since this study utilizes previous research as its theoretical foundation, it was conducted with a deductive approach. Researches performed through a deductive approach between theory and research take their stance in existing literature from which hypotheses are later conceived and lay the foundation for the proceedings of data gathering (Bryman and Bell 2011).

Based on its deductive standpoint, the appropriate research approach for this study was found in the form of quantitative research. Quantitative research focuses on numbers and tests objective theories by examining the relationship between specific variables (Creswell 2014), which this study aims to do between consumer attitude and CBBE. Bryman and Bell (2011) maintain that the quantitative approach is well suited for a deductive study which adds validity to its suitability with regards to the objectives of this study. The quantitative research design of this study was further categorized as an exploratory research as the purpose is to explore the relationship between the variables mentioned. The primary objective of this research design is to provide insights to and an understanding of the nature of marketing phenomena (Malhotra and Birks 2008; Saunders et al. 2016). A quantitative exploratory method provides usable results that can highlight specific conclusive findings where the process employed for research is flexible and may evolve (Malhotra and Birks 2008). The versatility of exploratory research aids in expanding the understanding of under-researched phenomena by clearly defining problems (Malhotra and Birks 2008). To clarify the understanding of a phenomenon whose nature is imprecise entails gaining additional comprehension prior
to confirming findings, which in this study is supported by secondary data through an extensive literature review of existent researches pertaining to the scope of the study (Malhotra and Birks 2008; Saunders et al. 2016). The insights acquired from reviewing literature guided the research presented in this study and was adapted as new insights were obtained (Saunders et al. 2016). The research questions, and eventual hypotheses, developed for the purpose of this study are a result of the literature review performed, which further supports both the deductive approach and the exploratory nature of this study. The wording of the research questions presented in this study furthermore seeks to explore the attitude of participants (Saunders et al. 2016). The exploratory research designs allows for the identification of the attitude of the study’s participants which in turn allows for the interpretation of data and statistical analyses by establishing previously unknown connections between the variables observed (Malhotra and Birks 2008), a perspective supported by the lack of previous studies focusing on exploring the connection between the subjects presented in this study. According to Malhotra and Birks (2008), exploratory research seldomly involves large samples or structured questionnaires, which adds singularity to this particular study.

4.2 Data Sources

For this research, data has been gathered from primary as well as secondary data sources. Primary and secondary data differ from each other in their origin (Creswell 2014; Lantz 2014). Primary data is new data that researchers collect with the aim of a specific study in mind through a number of means such as interviews, surveys or observations. Secondary data on the other hand is data that has already been collected by other academics for the purposes of a different study and therefore derives solely from the gathering process of the authors. Secondary data can take form as scientific articles in journals and academic papers, books, conference papers, organisational records, and so forth (Bryman and Bell 2011; Creswell 2014; Ghauri and Grønhaug 2005).

Secondary data was used in the initial phase of this research where numerous studies regarding the theories and concepts presented in this research were collected and reviewed by the authors, in order to present the readers with a detailed presentation of the topics. An extensive literature review in the field of consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing and consumer-based brand equity was therefore conducted, followed
by a conceptual framework within the same field based on the secondary data gathered. Hereby, the main focus was directed towards reviewing scientific sources in order to reduce the risk of gathering data from unreliable sources. The secondary data was obtained from a number of academic journals accessed through scientific databases such as, but not limited to, Google Scholar, OneSearch, and Business Source Premier. The theoretical framework was given explicit reliability by using mainly peer reviewed articles or articles included in the ABS list (The Association of Business Schools 2010) although a limit of such articles was encountered with regards to push notifications.

The purpose of utilising secondary data does not only present readers with a deeper understanding of the topics covered but also adds reliability and validity to the primary data gathered. Primary data was collected in the later phase of this research by conducting two different surveys, a process which is further discussed in the following chapters.

4.3 Data Collection Method

Based on the quantitative approach, design and nature of this research, the most appropriate choice of data collection method was found in the form of a survey (Brymand and Bell 2011), examining consumers attitudes towards mobile marketing and its effect on brand equity. A survey is a set of questions which aims at collecting information from respondents (Malhotra 2010) and provides the researchers with a numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of the population (Creswell 2009).

For the purpose of this study, two separate surveys distributed in English were employed which measured the same items albeit from different perspectives. Survey A focused on fast fashion brands which participants regularly purchase from. Firstly, the survey presented participants with a brief purpose statement and definition of push notification features on smartphones. Participants were asked to confirm their familiarity with this particular function of mobile devices. Survey participants that were not familiar with the feature of push notifications were omitted from the following sections of the survey although personal data on them was gathered for analytical purposes. Secondly, the survey measured participants attitudes towards receiving push notifications from fast fashion brands followed by statements regarding the three dimensions of brand equity covered in this study. Both of these sections of the survey were presented in Likert scales ranging from ‘Strongly Disagree’ (1) to ‘Strongly
Agree’ (5). Lastly, personal questions concerning participants gender, age, and nationality were gathered for descriptive and demographic purposes including a question concerning their receival of push notifications from fashion brands. Survey B was structured in the same way and consisted of the same statements and personal questions, although participants were instead asked to base their answers in relation to bridge brands that they had previously bought from or would consider buying from. In both surveys, respondents were free to rate the statements based on whichever fashion brand (either fast fashion or bridge brand) they had in mind as no particular brand or specific firm was presented in the surveys. The separation of the surveys into fast fashion and bridge brands allowed the researchers to observe the differences in respondents ratings of statements concerning the variables viewed in the study. Furthermore, the split enabled the researchers to easily acquire defined results for each type of fashion category and also minimized the risk of misinterpretation which would occur if both types of brands were included in the same survey. Figure 3 below shows a more detailed visual representation of the structure of both surveys.

The surveys were mainly distributed online on several different international Facebook groups consisting of diverse nationalities and numerous members in order to ensure that the sample became as diverse and representative as possible. Participants were encouraged to invite friends or share the surveys through their own Facebook profiles. It was deemed that an online setting would be advantageous by targeting a wider range of participants in order to reach the desired amount of responses. However, due to a lack of engagement by group members and a plateau in responses across both surveys, the authors of this study conducted on-site distribution of the surveys to random students and the general public present on campus at Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden. This latter distribution complemented the online surveys and allowed for the collection of a larger population and additional data, successfully surpassing the required amount of responses per survey.
4.4 Sample and Sample Size

When conducting surveys, researchers wish to generalize their findings and in this context it is important to understand the terms population and sample. Sampling is concerned with the selection of appropriate respondents to participate in the research, in relation to the research purpose. A sample consists of a segment from the whole population whereas the population refers to all of the individuals from where the sample can be selected (Bryman and Bell 2011). The population in this research refers to multinational, private consumers, not limited in age, gender, educational background, profession or origin, thus including any imaginable consumer. The population is however limited to those who are familiar with push-notification features on smartphones.

In this research a non-probability sample was used, which entails that the sample has not been selected using a random selection method, implying that some individuals in the population have a higher chance of being selected than others (Bryman and Bell 2011; Denscombe 2009). The employment of a non-probability sample is based on the fact that the publications of the surveys were firstly limited to Facebook followed by on-site distribution at Linnaeus University and as a result an equal chance for every individual of the population to be chosen could therefore not be provided. Due to the
Researchers accessibility to the sample used, it belongs within the context of convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is used because of its availability to the researchers and is a commonly utilized approach within research (Bryman and Bell 2011). Furthermore, in connection to the convenience sample it is also classified as a snowball sample where the researchers use a small group of the targeted population in order to establish contact with others within the population (Bryman and Bell 2011). This was done through requesting participants to share the surveys on their Facebook pages or invite friends to participate.

To account for the generalisability of the results rendered from this study to other samples, the amount of cases needed for an analysis was based on a sample size rule-of-thumb. This rule for the size of samples has been proposed by researchers including Green (1991) and is further supported by Pallant (2010) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2012). For testing multiple correlation, as is the purpose of this study, Green (1991), Pallant (2010 p. 150), and Tabachnick and Fidell (2012 p. 123) propose the following equation:

$$N = 50 + 8m$$

where \( N \) denotes the required amount of cases, or sample size, and \( m \) the number of independent variables measured in the study. Both surveys used in this study, therefore, were required to contain the following minimum amount of cases:

$$50 + 8(3) = 74$$

The number of cases acquired per survey reached a total of 100 (\( n = 200 \)). However, as later explained in Chapter 5.1 Descriptive Statistics, the number of usable cases for analysis purposes was based on participant familiarity with push notification features on smartphones therefore decreasing the number of cases for Survey A to 94 (\( n = 94 \)) and Survey B to 91 (\( n = 91 \)). In addition to this, as is further expanded upon in Chapter 4.8 Data Cleanup and Outliers, the number of usable cases on Survey B was further decreased by two due to outliers in the data.
4.5 Operationalization and Development of Data Collection Instruments

According to Bryman and Bell (2011 p. 40), an operationalization can be used as a data collection instrument providing “[...] a framework for the collection and analysis of data.” Wells et al. (2012), based on Altuna and Konuk (2009), developed scales to measure the attitude of consumers towards mobile marketing through behavioural intentions. Altuna and Konuk’s (2009) original intention for these items was to measure the value of online advertising. This research adapts the scales developed by Altuna and Konuk (2009) and Wells et al. (2012) for the concept of consumer attitudes. However, it is worth noting that the frequency of items used in this study is not equal to the amount used in the original studies. For the purpose of this research, a total of eight items were selected and adapted from attitudinal and mobile marketing research conducted by Altuna and Konuk (2009) and Wells et al. (2012). Consistent with the components of attitude identified by Altuna and Konuk (2009) (i.e. information, enjoyment, credibility, and irritation), the items used in this study included a combination of these factors in order to measure consumers attitudes. Therefore, the statements presented in the surveys ranged from the informative, enjoyment, and credibility benefits from receiving push notifications from fashion brands in addition the component of consumer irritation towards this marketing strategy.

A combination of existent literature on brand equity was used to develop the scales for the dimensions of brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations. As previously mentioned, the lack of consistency in literature as to the definitions, conceptualization and measurement of consumer-based brand equity required the authors of this research to base the operationalization on multiple researchers. The operational definition of brand loyalty was derived from Yoo and Donthu (2001) whereas the scales were adapted to the context of this study from Su and Tong (2015), Wang and Li (2012), and Margaret and Thompson (2012). Similarly, brand awareness was explained using Aaker’s (1991) definition with scale adaptation from Sasmita and Suki (2015), Yoo and Donthu (2001), Wang and Li (2012), and Su and Tong (2015). Finally, the third dimension of CBBE, that is brand associations, was defined by Wang and Li’s (2012) conceptualization and adapted from a combination literature authored by Smutkupt et al. (2011) and Wang and Li (2012) for measurement purposes. A visual representation of this is displayed in Figure 4 on the following page.
The operationalization table (see Appendix Operationalization Table) presents the instruments (i.e. items/scales) measured in the surveys, scale type, the operational definition of each variable including the original statement and its respective adaptation to the scope of this study. The table shows the variables of attitude as well as the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity measured. Furthermore, the single items measuring both the independent variable of attitude and each dependent variable of consumer-based brand equity are listed according to their corresponding author or authors and their scale type as measured by the surveys.

![Figure 4: Scale Adaptations of Attitudes and Brand Equity Dimensions](image)

4.6 Pretests
As stressed by the literature review for this research, the conceptualization and scale measurement of the brand equity concept can be a difficult task. This is due to the lack of consensus amongst researchers as to the definition, construct, and actual measurement of dimensions (Washburn and Plank 2002; Christodoulides et al. 2015; Pappu et al. 2005; Veloutsou et al. 2013). Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the adequate definition, scales, and constructs of items measured was crucial. As a result, this study adapts items from numerous other studies (see Appendix Operationalization Table and Figure 4), which in turn were applied to the relevant dimensions researched and within the context of mobile marketing and fashion brands.
The adaptations of items and statements from previous literature was based on the principles and procedures of scale development proposed by Streiner et al. (2015) and Kline (2005).

The lack of consensus amongst marketing academia regarding CBBE increases the importance that measures are taken to avoid misunderstandings within the surveys. Both surveys applied to this research were pretested on multiple stages. During the first phase, a pretest on the face validity of contextual level (see 4.9 Quality Criteria), content, and structure of the surveys was conducted with two professional researchers within the field of marketing without involving an empirical approach. The results gathered from the first phase required some minor changes to the surveys concerning the structure, positioning of certain statements, and so forth. Once these minor changes had been adjusted, the surveys were submitted again to one marketing researcher at the Linnaeus University. As the content of both surveys was identical, with the exception of which type of fashion brand participants were required to contemplate, only one survey was submitted to the second phase, which contained a larger population for pretest purposes. In this second phase, a total of six participants from the target population were asked to review the context, content, and structure of the survey. No additional changes were required. An additional 32 participants from the target population were asked to complete the survey in a pilot-test in order to examine the internal consistency and reliability of the variables on a construct level using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient analysis. The results gathered from the second phase of pretesting revealed strong reliability of the constructs as Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were all above 0.7 (Hair et al. 2003), ranging from 0.842 to 0.920. The respondents of both phases in the pretest were omitted from the final data analysis.

4.7 Data Analysis Method

Figure 5 below gives an overview of the conceptual framework for the data collection and data analysis used within this research and provides a clear understanding of the research structure.

This research made use of the IBM SPSS Statistics software as a tool for organizing the data and performing the analysis. The collected data was structured and organized in four different analysis methods. The first method was a descriptive analysis, which was used in order to characterize, organize and summarize the data
collected from the surveys. The age, gender, nationality and whether participants had previously received push notifications from fashion brands were categorized. Secondly, an inter item correlation was conducted in order to measure the reliability of the scales. This was made by a coefficient analysis, which in turn determined the Cronbach’s alpha values. The construct validity of the research was measured by conducting a correlation analysis on the variable level. The correlation analysis was performed on each variable investigated including consumers attitudes and the three dimensions of CBBE.

Lastly, the hypotheses of the research were also tested. This was done by performing a multiple regression in order to test the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The multiple regression was further conducted individually on both surveys and included results gathered on control variables and independent variables.

![Conceptual Framework of Data Analysis](image)

**Figure 5: Conceptual Framework of Data Analysis**

### 4.8 Data Cleanup and Outliers

None of the answers submitted in this research were incomplete. The results were cleaned and given schematic values to allow for analysis procedures. A cleanup of the data files revealed that the brand awareness dimension in Survey A identified two outliers according to SPSS. An outlier is an observation, or case, that is considerably
different from other cases through extreme values (i.e. unusually high or low value) on one or more variable investigated (Hair et al. 2010; Pallant 2010). A deeper analysis of the outliers identified in Survey A revealed that the 5% Trimmed Mean was 3.50 whereas the mean was recorded at 3.47. It was concluded that these cases would be retained in the data file due to the similarity in mean values and representativeness of population in accordance with the guidelines provided by Pallant (2010) and Hair et al. (2010). On the other hand, an analysis of outliers in Survey B for the brand awareness construct revealed that two participants answered consistently negatively and as a result a larger difference between the 5% Trimmed Mean (3.74) and the mean (3.67) was recorded. It was deemed that these cases were not usable as they consistently answered in a biased manner and furthermore did not represent a consistency with the remainder of the population investigated. Therefore, a total of 94 usable answers were included in the analysis of Survey A and a total of 89 individual answers for Survey B.

4.9 Quality Criteria

When conducting a research study it is important to ensure that a high quality standard is maintained. In order for this research to establish good quality, validity and reliability tests were performed. Validity and reliability tests are considered as the most essential tests in order to describe and secure the quality of a research (Bryman and Bell 2011). There are several validity tests researchers can utilize and this study made use of face validity and construct validity. The face validity of a research tests whether a survey really reflects the concept in question (Aaker et al. 2011). The face validity of this research was assured by performing several pre-tests, previously described in detail (see Chapter 4.6 Pretests). The construct validity of a research is needed when the research hypotheses are derived from theories relevant to the concept in question (Bryman and Bell 2011; Aaker et al. 2011). The construct validity of this research was assured by performing a Pearson’s correlation analysis. Construct validity in terms of this study was obtained by basing the theoretical concepts measured on previous studies within the field of marketing. A number of studies were analysed and adapted to the scope of this study (see Chapter 4.5 Operationalization and Development of Data Collection Instruments). As previously mentioned, to measure the scales internal consistency, reliability tests were conducted by the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient analysis on an item correlation level. Hereby, the correlation between the items of attitude towards
receiving push notifications and the dimensions of CBBE (i.e. brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations) for fast fashion and bridge brands respectively were analysed.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Researches within the area of business are often dependent on an examination that includes participation from the general public. This stresses the importance for researchers to conduct their study in an ethical way ensuring the preservation of the participants respect (Christensen et al. 2011). According to Flick et al. (2008) it is crucial that the material will not reveal any information that can uncover the identity of the respondents and since the results of this research would not be affected by anonymity, precautions were taken throughout the whole study to not reveal the respondents identities. It is also important to consider the type of questions that are appropriate to ask the respondents. Some people highly value their privacy and if the nature of the questions is sensitive they are likely to not answer (Bryman and Bell 2011). In this research the surveys were pretested in order to make sure that the questions were perceived accurately by the respondents in order to not intrude their privacy.

Another frequent issue in research concerns the lack of informed consent. Although this is most prominent in disguised or covert observations it can occur within other data collection methods as well (Bryman and Bell 2011). When there is a lack of informed consent, the true identity of the researcher is unknown and respondents are not given the choice whether they want to participate in the study or not (Bryman and Bell 2011; Flick et al. 2008). It can, however, be difficult for researchers to provide respondents with all the information needed in order for them to make an informed decision on whether they want to partake or not. What researcher can do to minimize the risk of lack of informed consent is to provide the participants with as much information as possible in order for the respondents to know what they are participating in (Flick et al. 2008). The authors of this study did not force any participants to answer the surveys and participation was therefore voluntary. A text explaining the aim of this research in addition to the guarantee of participant anonymity was provided prior to the actual surveys.
5. Data Analysis and Results

The empirical material gathered from the surveys is presented in this chapter and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The results are shown as Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Tests and Construct Validity. Finally, a Multiple Linear Regression aims to test the developed hypotheses.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Survey A (fast fashion brands) was answered by 100 respondents in total, however, six of the responses were omitted on questions regarding attitude and CBBE dimensions based on non-familiarity with push notifications. Out of the remaining 94 valid respondents 45 % were male and 53 % were female. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 19-24 (58 %) and 25-29 years old (36 %). Swedish (70 %) was the most represented nationality among the respondents of Survey A followed by Icelandic (9 %).

Survey B (bridge brands) was answered by a total of 98 respondents and nine respondents were omitted on the same basis as in Survey A. Here, males stood for 43.9 % and females for 56.1 % out of the 89 remaining valid respondents. As in Survey A, the main age groups for Survey B were 19-24 (65.3 %) and 25-29 years old (30.6 %). The main nationality here was also represented by Swedish respondents (63.3 %) followed by Dutch participants (7.1 %).

The results regarding whether the respondents had ever received push notifications from fashion brands, irrelevant of fashion product category, were combined from the two surveys. Out of the total number of respondents (183), 53 % recalled that they had received some sort of push notification from a fashion brand on their smartphone.

Figure 6 provides a visual representation of the descriptive statistics gathered for both surveys. Further descriptives like means, standard deviations, minimums and maximums of respondents on item scales for both surveys are shown in Table 2.
5.2 Reliability test

To assess the reliability of the scales internal consistency used in both surveys, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were calculated using SPSS for the dependent variable (attitude) and each independent variable of the CBBE concept. Cronbach’s alpha values are sensitive to the amount of items used in each scale and, according to Pallant (2010), scales with fewer than five items commonly produce low Cronbach values. Researchers such as DeVellis (2003; 1991), Pallant (2010), Hair et al. (2003), and Venkateswaran et al. (2011), report that Cronbach’s alpha results above 0.7 (> 0.7) are generally regarded as reliable, which is therefore the basis for minimum criteria. The figures derived from the reliability tests are presented in Table 1 below. The first survey used in this study (Survey A) which examined the attitude of participants towards push notifications from fast fashion brands (0.880) and the CBBE dimensions of brand loyalty (0.832), brand awareness (0.771), and brand associations (0.873) reached Cronbach’s alpha values of above 0.7 (> 0.7) for all constructs. Similarly, the second survey (Survey B) which examined the same items on bridge brands revealed Cronbach’s alpha coefficients above 0.8 (> 0.8) for all constructs with attitudes (0.880), brand loyalty (0.814), brand awareness (0.853), and brand associations (0.874). In accordance with DeVellis (2003; 1991), Pallant (2010), Hair et al. (2003), and Venkateswaran et al. (2011), both surveys consisted of highly reliable constructs as the Cronbach’s alpha values exceeded the
recommended 0.7 margin. This indicates that the items utilised for the purpose of this study measure the underlying constructs and as such the statements used in the surveys measured exactly what they were intended to measure (Pallant 2010).

Table 1: Reliability of Construct Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude towards push notifications</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Association</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.873</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of items tested = 23; Reliability = Cronbach’s alpha coefficient > 0.7; n = 94

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Association</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.874</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of items tested = 23; Reliability = Cronbach’s alpha coefficient > 0.7; n = 89

5.3 Construct Validity

To determine the construct validity of the study and that the different constructs do not correlate too highly with each other (Bryman and Bell 2011; Saunders et al. 2016), a Pearson’s correlation analysis was performed through SPSS. Cronbach and Meehl (1955 p. 281) suggest that construct validity “is established by showing that the test items are a sample of the universe in which the investigator is interested.” Streiner et al. (2015) provide more detailed guidelines on construct validity within research. The correlation analysis for this study was performed on each variable investigated including attitude and the CBBE dimensions brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations with items for every construct grouped together. The variable attitude consisted of eight separate Likert scaled measures whereas as the remaining three dimensions consisted of five items each. The correlation analysis was furthermore divided between both surveys, i.e. Survey A (fast fashion brands) and Survey B (bridge brands). Table 2 presents the construct validity outcomes for both surveys independently (in addition to means, standard deviation values, and minimums and
maximums per dimension). The figures show that there is a positive correlation between the variables investigated in this study (Pallant 2010). The positivity of the values presented in the table shows that the variables move in tandem with each other. In addition to this, the grouped variable correlation values are all below 0.8 (< 0.8) meaning that there is no indication of multicollinearity, as researchers such as Pallant (2010) and Bryman and Bell (2011) suggest multicollinearity occurs at levels of 0.9 or above. The dependent variables for Survey A show a correlation with the independent variable on values ranging from 0.484 to 0.743, whereas in Survey B the values range from 0.500 to 0.701. Both surveys find correlation to be significant at the p < 0.01 level (2-tailed). The systematic sampling and clear definition of items used in this study fulfill Cronbach and Meehl’s (1955) definition of construct validity and are below the margin of multicollinearity (Pallant 2010; Bryman and Bell 2011). The construct validation for this study was achieved through adaptation and combination of multiple validated scales and items from numerous previous researches. The results gathered from the correlation analysis of the variables proves that the authors of this study can adequately investigate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables used in the surveys and furthermore assists with the process of testing the hypotheses proposed in this research.

Table 2: Correlation on Variable Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey A (fast fashion brands) Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Attitude towards push notifications (All items)</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.856</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Brand Loyalty (All items)</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.858</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.663**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Brand Awareness (All items)</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.891</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.464**</td>
<td>0.533**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Brand Association (All items)</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.860</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.743**</td>
<td>0.683**</td>
<td>0.521**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); n = 94

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey B (bridge brands) Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Attitude towards push notifications (All items)</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Brand Loyalty (All items)</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.701**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Brand Awareness (All items)</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.500**</td>
<td>0.467**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Brand Association (All items)</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.860</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.625**</td>
<td>0.709**</td>
<td>0.449**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); n = 89
5.4 Hypotheses Testing

A multiple regression was performed to test the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables observed in this study (Hair et al. 2010). The regression analysis was conducted individually on both surveys and includes results gathered on control variables and independent variables. An overview of this study’s hypotheses and respective analytical status is provided in Table 6.

A closer look at the diagnostics derived from the regression test gives a detailed look at the possibility of multicollinearity (also collinearity) present in the results (Pallant 2010; Hair et al. 2010) by observing the Tolerance and VIF (or Variance Inflation Factor) values. Pallant (2010 p. 158) states that tolerance “is an indicator of how much of the variability of the specified independent is not explained by the other independent variables in the model.” The lower the tolerance value (< 0.10), the more likely the particular variable observed is to be predicted by the other independent variables (Hair et al. 2010; Pallant 2010). Similarly, the VIF value indicates the effect of independent variables on standard error of a regression coefficient (Hair et al. 2010) and is an inverse of the tolerance value (Pallant 2010). Here, suggest that large VIF values (> 10) indicate the possibility of a high degree of multicollinearity among the independent variables (Pallant 2010; Hair et al. 2010). In accordance with these guidelines, cut-off points for this analysis were set at the levels for the assumptions of multicollinearity used an added as a precaution to data analysis. Across both surveys the tolerance values exceeded the recommended value (> 0.10) for all variables investigated (including control variables) and therefore do not violate the multicollinearity and collinearity assumption. This was supported by the VIF values which were all recorded at below 5 (< 5), and therefore well under the suggested cut-off limit of 10 across all variables in both surveys. In addition to this, an analysis of the plots rendered from SPSS for every analysis revealed a normal distribution of results with no outliers detected, in accordance with the findings presented in Chapter 4.8 Data Cleanup and Outliers. This was furthermore supported by the residual statistics developed in the statistics program where the Mahalanobis distance values were checked to not exceed the cut-off critical values suggested by Pallant (2010) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2012).

The multiple regression analysis presented in this chapter was conducted to test the results gathered from the surveys for the developed hypotheses H1A to H3B, where
the relationship between the dependent variable and each respective independent variable was observed, additionally to hypotheses H4A to H4C. The control variables, independent variables and corresponding hypothesis, in addition to fashion product type are presented in Table 3 providing a clearer overview of the models rendered from the analysis. Hypotheses H1A, H2A, and H3A examined the positive relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables for fast fashion brands (Survey A), whereas hypotheses H1B, H2B, and H3B observed the same relationship from a bridge brands perspective (Survey B).

Table 3: Overview of Multiple Regression Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion Product Type</td>
<td>Fast fashion brands</td>
<td>Bridge brands</td>
<td>Fast fashion brands</td>
<td>Bridge brands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Variables</td>
<td>Age, gender, fashion push notification¹</td>
<td>Age, gender, fashion push notification</td>
<td>Age, gender, fashion push notification</td>
<td>Age, gender, fashion push notification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variables</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations</td>
<td>Brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Participant has received push notification from fashion brand

Table 4 displays the data collected from the multiple regression analysis where the results are reported on Beta coefficients and standard deviation of the sampling distribution (Standard Error) for each model. The significance values are marked with one or more stars depending on its corresponding level (see notes in Table 4). The lower section of Table 4 presents the coefficient of determination (R-Squared), Adjusted R-Squared, and R-Squared Change values for the models. R-Squared informs us how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model. The Adjusted R-Squared value estimates how adequately the model fits the population investigated whereas the R-Squared Change coefficient predicts the change in R-Squared when an independent variable is added or subtracted from the model. Therefore, the higher the R-Squared Change, the likelier the added independent variables are good predictors of the dependent variable. (Pallant 2010; Hair et al. 2010; Tabachnick and Fidell 2012)
To begin with, the control variables (gender, age, and receival of push notifications from fashion brand) were tested against the dependent variable for Survey A (Model 1). On a significance level of $p < 0.001$, the regression model displays relatively low Adjusted R-Squared (0.203) value for Model 1. This suggests that the model does not exhibit a strong explanatory power of the regression equation (and is therefore a weak predictor of the dependent variable) in addition to not fitting well with the population investigated. Furthermore, the R-Squared Change value is fairly low too. In comparison to Model 1, Model 3 tests the same control variables in addition to the independent variables (brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations) against the dependent variable. This model is comprised of a substantially higher adjusted coefficient of determination and R-Squared Change value. At a significance level of $p < 0.05$ (\( p = 0.022 \)), the third model yields an Adjusted R-Squared value of 0.649 and an R-Squared Change value of 0.443. In total, 64.9 % of the variance in the dependent variable of consumer attitudes is explained by both the control variables and the three dimensions of consumer-based brand equity observed. As a result, the unstandardized Beta coefficients and standard deviation values presented in Model 3 are taken into consideration for the hypotheses testing procedure.
Out of the three dimensions of Aaker’s (1991) consumer-based brand equity, two dimensions were significant determinants in attitudes towards push notifications from fast fashion brands. Accordingly, brand loyalty was significant at the p < 0.1 level (p = 0.07) and brand associations scored a p-value of 0.000 (p < 0.001) whereas brand awareness was not significant. Hence, both hypotheses H1A (There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) and consumer brand loyalty towards fast fashion brands) and H3A (There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) and consumer brand associations towards fast fashion brands) are supported. The positive unstandardized Beta coefficients presented in Model 3 show that there is a positive correlation between these two dimensions of CBBE and attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) from fast fashion brands.

Following the same procedure, the control variables of gender, age, and receival of push notifications from fashion brands were, again, tested against the dependent variable for Survey B (Model 2). On a significance level of p < 0.001, regression Model 2 presented in Table 4 yielded very low values compared to Model 1, suggesting that, overall, the control variables are less of a fit to the dependent variable. Here, the Adjusted R-Squared value was recorded at 0.064 and the R-Squared Change coefficient at 0.96. Compared to 20.3 % for fast fashion brands, only 6.4 % of the variance in consumer attitudes can be explained by the control variables for bridge brands. This strongly entails that Model 2 neither displays a high goodness-of-fit measure of the linear model nor suits well to the population observed as the control variables are weak predictors of the dependent variable. However, the change in R-Squared displayed in Model 2 is substantially higher compared to Model 1 (0.96 > 0.229). Model 4 presented in Table 4 compares the same control variables in addition to the independent variables (brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations) against the dependent variable to test the developed hypotheses H1B, H2B, and H3B. Here, the regression analysis yields significantly higher values for the coefficient of determination, the adjusted coefficient of determination and R-Squared Change in comparison to Model 2. Significant on a level of p < 0.05 (p = 0.034), Model 4 produced an Adjusted R-Squared value of 0.526 and an R-Squared Change value of 0.462. Hence, 52.6 % of the variance in attitude in explained by both the control variables of age, gender, and receival of push notifications from fashion brands and the CBBE dimensions of brand loyalty, brand
awareness, and brand associations. Likewise, the unstandardized Beta coefficients and Standard Error values shown in Model 4 are taken into consideration.

The linear regression reveals that, again, two out of the three dimensions of Aaker’s (1991) CBBE are significant determinants of consumers attitude towards push notifications from bridge brands. Unlike fast fashion brands, the dimension of brand associations is not significant for bridge brands. However, brand loyalty was significant at a higher level for bridge brands compared to fast fashion brands at a level of p < 0.001 (p = 0.000). The dimension of brand awareness was also significant with a p-value of 0.031 (p < 0.05). As a result, hypothesis H1B (There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) and consumer brand loyalty towards bridge brands) is supported as well as hypothesis H2B (There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) and consumer brand awareness towards bridge brands). Moreover, Beta values shown in Model 4 suggest that there is a positive correlation between two of the three dimensions of brand equity observed and attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notification) from bridge brands.

Using the values presented in the multiple regression table above, the remainder of the hypotheses (H4A, H4B, and H4C) can be observed to test the difference in how strongly the dependent variable influences every respective independent variable between fast fashion and bridge brands. The strength of the influence can be determined from the Beta values gathered from the regression analysis in order to test the hypotheses. Table 5 below displays the Beta and Standard Error values, significance (including p-values and levels), dimension of CBBE observed, in addition to the corresponding regression hypothesis from where the Beta was recorded.

**Table 5: Beta Values for Hypotheses Testing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Dimension (independent variable)</th>
<th>Regression Hypothesis</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Beta (Std. Error)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H4A</td>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>H1A</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.1 (p = 0.07)</td>
<td>0.249(0.089)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H1B</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001 (p = 0.000)</td>
<td>0.457(0.116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4B</td>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>H2A</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.053(0.081)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H2B</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.05 (p = 0.031)</td>
<td>0.187(0.084)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4C</td>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td>H3A</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>p &lt; 0.001 (p = 0.000)</td>
<td>0.471(0.088)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H3B</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>0.167(0.112)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NA: Not Applicable; (Bold): highest scoring Beta value per dimension (independent variable) observed
As can be seen in the aforementioned table, the highest scoring Beta value per dimension (or independent variable) observed are presented in bold (see notes Table 5). For the dimension of brand loyalty, the highest scoring Beta value is 0.457 (0.457 > 0.249) which suggests that attitude has a stronger influence on brand loyalty for bridge brands compared to fast fashion brands. Hence, hypothesis H4A is supported (There is a difference in how strongly attitudes influence brand loyalty for fast fashion brands and bridge brands). Similarly, brand awareness for bridge brands was recorded at 0.187 compared to 0.053 for fast fashion brands which proved to be a non-significant result for the latter fashion product type. Therefore, we can assume that attitude has more influence on brand awareness for bridge brands in comparison to fast fashion brands and thus hypothesis H4B is accepted (There is a difference in how strongly attitudes influence brand awareness for fast fashion brands and bridge brands). Finally, brand associations scored a value of 0.471 and 0.167 for each fashion product type respectively. This entails that attitude has a weaker influence on brand associations for bridge brands (which yielded a non-significant value) compared to fast fashion brands (0.167 < 0.471) and therefore hypothesis H4C is also supported (There is a difference in how strongly attitudes influence brand associations for fast fashion brands and bridge brands). Out of the dimensions of CBBE for fast fashion brands, brand associations are the strongest (Beta = 0.471), whereas for bridge brands the dimension of brand loyalty scores the strongest Beta value (0.457). The results for all hypotheses developed for this study are also presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Overview of Hypotheses Analytical Status
6. Discussion

This chapter provides a discussion regarding the research findings in connection to previous research.

An analysis of the results from this study reveals that, firstly, consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing have a relationship with the dimensions of brand equity and, secondly, affect these dimensions dissimilarly depending on the fashion product type observed.

The first consumer-based brand equity dimension observed relates to brand loyalty. The multiple linear regression performed in the previous chapter aimed to explore whether the relationship between the consumer attitudes and this dimension was positive. The data gathered uncovers that the relationship between consumer attitudes and loyalty towards both fast fashion and bridge brands is in fact positive. This is supported by the significance of the brand loyalty dimensions across both populations observed. As a result, the more positive attitude a consumer has towards receiving push notifications from a fashion brand, the more likely the consumer is to consider him-/herself as loyal towards the brand. Both fast fashion and bridge brand responses show a tendency to lean towards a more loyal attitude towards the respective fashion category. This can be related to the experience and involvement level consumers hold with regards to a specific brand (Esmaeilpour 2015; Bart et al. 2014). Researchers such as Balaji (2011) and Veloutsou et al. (2013) maintain that establishing brand loyalty amongst customers reduces expenditure as consumers engage in positive word-of-mouth. However, the results show that neither of fashion product types’ consumers feel an inclination to recommend the brand to others despite receiving push notifications. The fundamental fact with regards to brand loyalty is that a positive relationship between attitude towards push notifications from both fashion types exists. The level of loyalty, however, is felt far stronger amongst bridge brands consumers as is shown in Table 5. As such, attitude towards receiving push notifications from bridge brands has a higher influence on brand loyalty.

The dimension of brand awareness was also observed in this study. The results indicate that the relationship between consumer attitudes towards fashion brand’s push notifications and the dimension of brand awareness differs depending on the fashion
product category observed. An analysis of the linear regression reveals that the CBBE dimension of brand awareness is not significant for fast fashion brands, whereas a significance level was reached for bridge brands. The items used to measure brand awareness contain the components of brand recognition and brand recall as suggested in literature from, amongst others, Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993). These two components maintain that consumers are able to confirm previous exposure to the brand (brand recognition) and capable of generating the brand from memory (brand recall). Little difference was found amongst participants as to their ability to recall and recognise a bridge brand with answers leaning more towards the positive spectrum. Based on the positive relationship and distribution of participant responses, it can thusly be assumed that push notifications do, to some extent, increase the consumer’s awareness towards bridge brands. Here, the overall assumption lies on consumers awareness of the fashion product types. It is likely that push notifications do not influence, or even reinforce, consumer brand awareness of brands that are readily available, ubiquitous, and mass consumed in contrast to product types such as bridge brands which are generally regarded as exclusive secondary luxury brand extensions (Solomon and Rabolt 2007). A clear, positive relationship therefore exists between the attitudes of consumers towards receiving push notifications from bridge brands and the brand awareness level of consumers of this particular category. The increase in positive attitudes towards receiving push notifications from bridge brands is correlated with a positive increase in consumers awareness of the brands. Similar to the dimension of brand loyalty, consumer attitudes have a stronger influence on the outcome of brand awareness for bridge brands than fast fashion brands.

The final dimension of Aaker’s (1991) consumer-based brand equity model investigated in this study considers brand associations. The data analysis process employed in this study shows that there is a positive relationship between attitudes towards push notifications and brand associations, albeit only for fast fashion brands based on significance level attained. Judging by the distribution of participant answers on statements regarding brand associations, the receipt of push notifications does not seem to reinforce associational features, or consumer perceptions, such as likeability and attractiveness of the brand (Srinivasan et al. 2005). This suggests that the perceived strength, favorability, and uniqueness of fast fashion brands in the minds of consumers is tenuous (Keller 1993; Su and Tong 2015; Manpreet and Jagrook 2010). On the other
hand, the factors of credibility and trust towards push notifications are often regarded as positive. This is supported by previous researchers who maintain that the component of trust positively influences consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing strategies (Izquierdo-Yusta et al. 2015; Persaud and Azhar 2012; Watson et al. 2013). A consumer that retains a positive experience with a fashion brand that provides better product features or benefits (as is generally the case when comparing bridge brands to fast fashion brands) will evoke a positive emotion towards it (Thellefsen and Sørensen 2015). These results can entail that consumers’ previous knowledge or experience with certain product features reigns stronger with bridge brands and thusly do not require reinforcement through push notifications. Such a presupposition can be related to how consumers process and retrieve information about the particular brand in what manner these emotions are retained (Aaker 1991; Yoo and Donthu 2001). Fundamentally, relationship observed here implies that the more positive attitude a consumer holds towards receiving push notifications from a fast fashion brand, the more likely the consumer is to retrieve positive associations towards the brand. Dissimilar to the dimensions of loyalty and awareness observed in this study, the influence of consumer attitudes towards push notifications is far stronger amongst fast fashion brands compared to bridge brands, as is shown in Table 5.
7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the main findings deduced from the analysis and discussion are concluded in order to answer the purpose of this research.

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between consumers' attitudes towards mobile marketing (push notifications) employed by two types of fashion categories and the CBBE dimensions of brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations. The results set forth in this study, firstly, support the assumption that push notifications as a mobile marketing strategy have a direct relationship (and effect) on the brand equity of fashion brands. It can thusly be presumed that this relationship may also be present in other industries which may utilize mobile marketing strategies as a means of brand equity building and precise consumer targeting by breaking the constraints of time and location, which generally govern traditional marketing practices. Secondly, there is evidence that suggests that mobile marketing strategies (such as push notifications) can have a dissimilar relationship with the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity depending on the product category within a specific industry. This has been shown in this study by observing the differences in results yielded for each dimension between the fashion product categories selected. Here, the dimensions of brand loyalty are equally statistically significant for both fashion product categories and as a result there is a positive relationship between this particular dimension and consumer attitudes towards receiving push notifications from either product type. Brand awareness, on the other hand, is only statistically significant for bridge brands. This suggests that consumer attitudes towards receiving push notifications from this fashion category is positively correlated with consumer awareness of it. Similar to brand awareness, brand associations is only statistically significant for fast fashion brands. This indicates that consumers' attitudes towards receiving push notifications from fast fashion brands is more strongly correlated with positive brand associations compared to bridge brands. Overall, the influence of consumer attitudes is far stronger in bridge brands across the dimensions of loyalty and awareness whereas the opposite is true for the dimension of brand associations.
8. Implications, Limitations and Further Research

This chapter discusses the main contributions of this study and provides suggestions for further research within the field. The limitations faced within the research are also elaborated upon in this section.

8.1 Managerial and Theoretical Implications

With regards to the managerial implications of this study, several contributions have been formulated that fashion firms can take into consideration when aiming at successfully building brand equity through push notifications as a mobile marketing strategy. It has been revealed from the results of this study that consumer attitudes towards push notifications holds a positive relationship with the dimensions of brand equity. However, this relationship varies across dimensions depending on which fashion product category utilizes the tool. The results show that more benefits in terms of positive relationship are derived from employing push notification practices for bridge brands. The usage of this marketing tool shows a correlation between attitude and the dimensions of loyalty and awareness for bridge brands compared to fast fashion brands. A firm providing fast fashion products may gain more on the dimension of brand associations as opposed to bridge brands. The factor of consumer attitude towards push notifications has, according to the results of this study, a stronger influence on bridge brands and as a result it would be beneficial for such brands to be aware of its implications. Such implications include, for example, the relevancy of marketing content, user permission to engage with consumers via their smartphones, and most importantly the overall attitude of consumers towards this practice. In addition, it would be wise for fashion brands to be extremely cautious when utilizing push notifications as a marketing tool. The attempt to build and maintain a suitable brand equity is a delicate task as a vast number of other factors, ranging anywhere from the components of consumer loyalty to exposure to a particular brand, detailed in this research may adversely affect both the overall attitude of consumers towards the brand and the effectiveness of the mobile marketing strategy employed. Finally, with the increasing popularity, reach, and ubiquity of smartphones across the globe, including the advances within this technology, the importance of firms presence on these devices is increasing. As the modern technology industry shifts to newer areas of innovation it is crucial for
companies to follow these trends and adapt to the newer ways of targeting and persuading consumers to purchase products.

The research presented in this study contributes to the existing literature in several ways. Firstly, the absence of clear definitions of the concept of CBBE and its integral dimensions makes it strenuous to approach the subject from a clear-cut theoretical perspective. The amount of previous research provides different conceptualizations and scale measurements though usually by taking a stand towards a specific product or brand. A fundamental aspect of this study was to approach the concept of CBBE from a more abstract, or even broad, perspective by allowing participants (under a set of guidelines) determine which brand they related either fashion product category to. This allowed the authors to observe brand equity from a standpoint not bound to a distinct brand or product. As a result, the operationalization and scale measurements provided in this study can be used by other academics wishing to approach the concept of consumer-based brand equity in an equitable manner. Furthermore, these measurements can be applied to other marketing practices and settings in order to investigate either consumer attitudes, consumer-based brand equity dimensions, or the relationship between the both under different circumstances. Secondly, as stated throughout this study, the lack of consistent previous research on the subjects of CBBE and attitude in relation to mobile marketing strategies such as push notifications makes it a hard task to ground research on strong theoretical bases. This research contributes to the field of marketing with valuable insights and new knowledge by providing results that may be valuable in future attempts at grasping the subject. Finally, the literature review conducted for the purpose of this study equips other researchers with a comprehensive and structured evaluation of previous academic studies on the subjects of consumer attitudes and consumer-based brand equity and their respective relation to mobile marketing.

8.2 Limitations

This current research faced some limitations that may have affected its outcome. In consideration of the fact that it was increasingly hard to engage a broad population of participants across nationalities and segments, the primary data used in this study had to be collected through the usage of a convenience sample. This limits the generalizability of the results gathered in this study and furthermore limits the ability of developing
statistical deductions on certain aspects of the study and populations observed. In spite of the aim of obtaining a diverse population of participants in terms of nationality and a balanced portion of younger and older respondents, the final sample obtained was heavily dominated by young (19-29 year old) Swedish consumers. This can accredited as a direct result of lack of participant engagement with the subject. A balanced proportion of diverse demographics (i.e. age and nationality) could have provided added valuable insight into the differences in attitude and perception towards different fashion product types. With the globalization of markets and brands, the importance of applying scales and item measurements into an international context by comparing several market would be largely beneficial, as is stressed by researchers such as Christodoulides et al. (2015). Altuna and Konuk (2009) claim that consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing differs depending on cultural properties, further accentuating the limitation of the results due to one-sidedness and non-generalizability to countries that are culturally and intrinsically different from Sweden. The results of this study does not account for smartphone users that are unfamiliar, or lack experience, with push notifications. The importance of investigating the differences between those who are familiar and unfamiliar with mobile marketing strategies is highlighted by researchers such as Izquierdo-Yusta et al. (2015). The limited amount of previous research within the context of consumer attitudes towards push notifications and its effect on consumer-based brand equity proved to be a hindrance in the establishment of a connection between the results of this study and previous literature.

8.3 Further Research

This exploratory study has offered a range of insights into the relationship between consumer attitudes and consumer-based brand equity in the smartphone era and a variety of aspects related to these. However, further research is required in order to develop more in-depth evidence on these subjects to fully generalise findings on: 1) consumer attitudes towards mobile marketing practices, in particular push notifications; 2) the effectiveness of this tool to adequately engage consumers and provide financial benefits to firms across different industries; and 3) the mediating role and relationship between such marketing strategies and the intangible assets of consumer-based brand equity.
Other research areas could focus on the nature of the relationship and the underlying factors for its appearance, taking a standpoint from this particular study. A future research could therefore take on a qualitative approach to the subjects in order to get more depth information about the phenomenon. In addition, further research might include an exploration of how push notifications increase or decrease consumers willingness to engage with brands across industries, the effect of demographics and culture on the factors of attitudes in relation to brand equity building through mobile marketing, and/or the differences in relationships, strengths, or effects of this marketing practice compared to other mobile marketing strategies.
References


http://www.slideshare.net/ishaqbaticklyeba/push-notifications-42089758?qid=02e2bd05-309c-479b-b9c3-02a5495ed887&v=qf1&b=&from_search=3
[Accessed 23.04.16]


Appendix – Operationalization Table

The questionnaires used in this study, derived from the operationalization conducted by the authors of this study, consisted of 23 items of which 8 measured the attitude of participants towards push notifications from fashion brands and the remaining 15 items measured the dimensions of brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand associations. Additional questions included in the surveys gathered personal information on age, gender, and nationality of the participants. Two control questions were also included which assessed participant familiarity with push notification features on smartphones and whether participants had received push notifications from fashion brands. The familiarity control question omitted respondents not familiar with the features of push notifications, however, personal information on these individuals was gathered for descriptive statistic purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational definition of variable</th>
<th>Original Item</th>
<th>Adapted Item*</th>
<th>Scale Type**</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>“A person’s enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluations, emotional feelings, and action tendencies towards some object or idea” (Kotler and Keller 2009 p. 210)</td>
<td>1. I feel that receiving mobile advertisements that relate to my interests is pleasant.</td>
<td>1. Push notifications from [BX] brands are pleasant.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Mobile marketing provides all the information I need.</td>
<td>2. Push notifications from [BX] provide all the information I need.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. I use mobile marketing as a reference for purchasing.</td>
<td>3. I use push notifications from [BX] as a reference for purchasing products.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Mobile marketing is a good source for up-to-date product information.</td>
<td>4. Push notifications from [BX] are a good source for up-to-date product information.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>“The tendency to be loyal to a focal brand, which is demonstrated by intention to buy the brand as a primary choice” (Yoo and Donthu 2001 p. 3).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I consider myself to be loyal to X.</td>
<td>1. I would consider myself to be loyal to BRAND X if I accepted to receive push notifications from them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I will keep on buying X as long as it provides me satisfied products.</td>
<td>2. I would keep on buying BRAND X even after I received push notifications from them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I would recommend the product or service of X brand to others.</td>
<td>3. I would recommend BRAND X to others even after I received push notifications from them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I would buy X brand on the next opportunity.</td>
<td>4. I would buy BRAND X on the next opportunity if I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Su & Tong 2015
Wang & Li 2012
Margaret & Thompson 2012
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Awareness</th>
<th>received push notifications from them.</th>
<th>5. BRAND X would still be one of my first choices even after I received push notifications from them.</th>
<th>LIK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>“The ability for a buyer to recognize and recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category” (Aaker 1991 p. 61).</td>
<td>1. Some characteristics of BRAND X come to mind quickly if I receive push notifications from them.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>2. I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of BRAND X when I receive push notifications from them.</td>
<td>3. Receiving push notifications increases my awareness of BRAND X.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>4. Push notifications make me recognize BRAND X among other competing brands.</td>
<td>5. When receiving push notifications I become more familiar with BRAND X.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td>“Anything, including attributes of a brand”</td>
<td>1. X is a very good brand.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td>1. BRAND X is still a good brand to me even after I received push notifications from them.</td>
<td>2. I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of X.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td>3. I am aware of X</td>
<td>4. I can recognize X among competing brands.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td>5. I am familiar with X brand.</td>
<td>6. This mobile phone would be my first choice.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. BRAND X would still be one of my first choices even after I received push notifications from them.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Some characteristics of BRAND X come to mind quickly if I receive push notifications from them.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of BRAND X when I receive push notifications from them.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Receiving push notifications increases my awareness of BRAND X.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Push notifications make me recognize BRAND X among other competing brands.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. When receiving push notifications I become more familiar with BRAND X.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. X is a very good brand.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. BRAND X is still a good brand to me even after I received push notifications from them.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
product/service, reputation of a company, and characteristics of product/service users, which [link] in consumer memory to a brand” (Wang and Li 2012 p. 149).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Wang &amp; Li 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. X is a very attractive brand.</td>
<td>2. BRAND X is still an attractive brand to me even after I receive push notifications from them.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. X is an extremely likeable brand.</td>
<td>3. BRAND X is still a likeable brand to me even after I receive push notifications from them.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This brand is made by an organization I trust.</td>
<td>4. I would trust the push notifications of BRAND X because I trust this brand.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The organization associated with X brand has credibility.</td>
<td>5. The push notifications associated with BRAND X are credible.</td>
<td>LIK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Questions adapted to the scope of this research – [BX] represents either fast fashion brand or bridge brand depending on survey; ** Scale Type = Likert Scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).