



LUND
UNIVERSITY

BUSN 39
Business Administration: Global
Marketing

Title:

**#Hashtag: the implication of it as a marketing tool on
brand awareness in Twitter: A Study on the
Sportswear Industry**

Authors:

Bochen Zhang

Farhan Rashid Ahmed Ansari

Sky Preedanon

Abstract

Title: #Hashtag: the implication of it as a marketing tool on brand awareness in Twitter: A Study on the Sportswear Industry

Date of the Seminar: 31 May 2016

Course: BUSN 39 Degree project in Global Marketing, Master Thesis

Authors: Bochen Zhang, Farhan Rashid Ahmed Ansari, Sky Preedanon

Supervisor: Veronika Tarnovskaya

Thesis purpose: The Purpose of this thesis is to explore how companies can use hashtags as a communication strategy to raise brand awareness. This research aims to develop a framework for practitioners to create effective hashtags that function as marketing communication tool.

Empirical data: In this thesis, the researchers applied netnography to collect data on Twitter. The researchers first collected all the hashtags used by Adidas, Reebok, and Under Armour during the year of 2015. Secondly, the researchers observed all the tweets which contains the hashtags used by these three companies.

Conclusion & Suggestions: From the theoretical point of view, this research gives a new understanding of how hashtags can be effectively used on Twitter. The researchers found that the effectiveness of the hashtags as marketing tool was mainly affected by how consumers interpret them. If the hashtags are misused, it will create confusion among other users and lead to failure on raising brand awareness. From a managerial standpoint, the present research explored the vital components of successful hashtags and further developed a framework to guide companies to effectively increase brand awareness by using hashtags. This framework highlighted four suggestions for creating effective hashtags. Companies should make the hashtag be specific and brand related, ensure effective integrated marketing communication plan, and try to avoid identical hashtags. If companies incorporated these three suggestions but the outcome still does not meet their expectations. They should create a complementary hashtag to give consumers a more distinctive message.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor Prof. Veronika Tarnovskaya for her patience, immense knowledge, and aspiring guidance. Her insightful comments and continuous support helped us in all the time of this research. We thank our friends, classmates for all the fun we have had in the last year. We are also immensely grateful to our family for supporting us spiritually at a distance.

Lund, 23 May 2016

Bochen Zhang

Farhan Rashid Ahmed Ansari

Sky Preeda

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Formulation.....	2
1.3 Research Purpose	4
1.4 Research Question	5
1.5 Research Limitation.....	5
2. Literature Review	6
2.1 Basic Concepts of Brand	6
2.2 Brand Awareness	7
2.2.1 Defining Brand Awareness.....	7
2.2.2 Importance of Brand Awareness	8
2.2.3 Increase in Brand Awareness via Advertising.....	9
2.2.4 Brand Awareness via Social Media.....	11
2.3 Defining Online Branding.....	12
2.3.1 Importance for Companies to be Online.....	14
2.4 Social Media	15
2.4.1 Defining Social Media.....	15

2.4.2 Business Engagement on Social Media	17
2.4.3 Social Media Marketing	18
2.5 Communication Theory	19
2.5.1 Traditional Communication Theories	20
2.5.2 Schramm's Model of Communication	21
2.6 Online Marketing Communication.....	22
2.6.1 Twitter	24
2.6.2 Hashtag	25
2.7 Summary	25
3. Methodology	28
3.1 Research Philosophy	28
3.1.1 Constructivism Ontology	28
3.1.2 Interpretivist Epistemology	29
3.2 Research Strategy & Approach.....	29
3.2.1 Qualitative Research Strategy	29
3.3 Research Design.....	31
3.3.1 Exploratory Research Design.....	31
3.3.2 Cross-sectional Research	32
3.4 Data Collection.....	32

3.4.1 Netnography	32
3.4.2 Data Coding	34
3.4.3 Data Collection Site	35
3.5 Research's Political and Ethical Aspects	37
3.6 Research Design Limitation and Weakness	39
4. Findings.....	40
4.1 Hashtag Categories from the Perspective of Companies and Consumers	40
4.1.1 Categories from the Company' s Perspective	41
4.1.2 Categories from the Consumer' s Perspective	42
4.2 Hashtags Used from the Perspective of Companies and Consumers.....	43
4.2.1 Adidas.....	43
4. 2 .2 Reebok.....	57
4.2.3 Under Armour	70
4.3 Summary of Finding	79
5. Discussion	81
5.1. Communication theory via Hashtags.....	81
5.1.1 Hashtag as a Message in Communication	82
5.1.2 Interpretation of Hashtag.....	83
5.1.3 Summary of Communication theory via Hashtags	83

5.2 Online Branding Strategies via Hashtags	84
5.2.1 Ineffective Hashtags.....	87
5.2.2 Summary of Online Branding Strategies via Hashtags.....	88
5.3 Brand Awareness via Hashtags.....	89
5.3.1 Hashtags as Advertisement	89
5.3.2 Analysis of Hashtags by the Advertising model.....	90
5.3.3 Patterns indicating Brand Awareness.....	93
5.3.4 Summary of Brand Awareness via Hashtags.....	95
5.4 Summary of Discussion	95
5.5 Introduction of the Framework.....	96
5.6 Framework.....	97
6. Conclusion	100
6.1 Theoretical Implication.....	100
6.2 Managerial Implications.....	100
6.3 Limitation and Further Research	101
Reference List	103
Appendix.....	116

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Social media has changed the nature of marketing as a whole. The primary purpose of social media is to facilitate individuals to communicate and interact with each other. However, in the recent times, companies have capitalized social media websites to market their products and services to social media users. Companies are using social media for their own benefit as far as promoting their brands are concerned (He & Jimenez 2015). Promotional mix such as advertising, sales promotion, sponsorship etc. are a common feature in traditional or offline marketing. Such activities are undertaken by companies to have its brand chosen in the consideration set of consumers (Baggio et al 2011). One of the most prominent feature in social media is the usage of hashtags, which is denoted by the sign #. The practice of corporations using hashtags in their social media pages is becoming rampant. Renowned brands such as Addidas and McDonalds are using hashtags to promote their brand slogans and new offerings. Therefore, hashtag is turning out to be a vital marketing tool in social media. In the early days, hashtags were rarely used, but in the era of Web 2.0 it is a force to be reckoned with on social media. In an attempt to raise brand awareness online, companies are starting to use hashtags to great effect to spread brand message.

Companies are utilizing social media to meet marketing objectives. Companies are using social media which enables them to target their specific market. Barwise and Meehan (2010) points out that reputed organizations are using social media to directly interact with their target group with great success. Therefore, by using hashtags, companies are giving the scope to consumers to interact with its social media page. Therefore, it is one of the many reasons that make hashtags irresistible for companies to use. As a result, the usage of hashtags is becoming prevalent among companies. The journey of hashtags began when Chris Messina, the renowned open source advocate

Introduction

first used it nine years ago in Twitter (Kirkpatrick, 2011). Since then the usage of hashtags has grown from strength to strength. According to Saxton et al (2015), hashtags enables a message to spread fast and effectively to other users in social media. Furthermore, hashtags are a potent tool because it is participatory and it can categorize messages and certain content can be searched with ease. Suh et al (2010) further elaborates that once a hashtag is launched in Twitter, all the posts related to a particular hashtag are accumulated in a page.

This thesis will delve into how hashtags can facilitate in raising brand awareness. This is because hashtags are no longer a mere feature in social media as companies are now capitalizing it to raise brand awareness. According to Drell (2014) hashtags are widely being used by companies for marketing purposes to achieve traffic for a particular brand or product. However, it is also seen that hashtags are being excessively used (Drell, 2014). Companies belonging to various industries are heavily present in Twitter, which is one of the most popular social media websites. This thesis will be focusing on the hashtags over the past one year by sportswear brands Adidas AG, Reebok international Ltd., and Under Armour, inc. The sportswear brands are heavily reliant on social media for marketing purposes and interact with the target group. Moreover, these brands use hashtags on a regularly basis for various purposes on social media. Therefore, this thesis will investigate on how companies can use hashtags to raise brand awareness on social media.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Companies are now heavily present in social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter and use such websites to promote their brands and provide necessary informations to the social media users (Kaplan & Hanelain, 2010). Twitter is a unique social media website compared to its counterpart Facebook because one can write a

Introduction

post limiting to 140 characters (Twitter.com, 2016). People can post tweets on Twitter which are brief statements by the users through which they can share their thoughts and what they are doing (Fox et al, 2009). The communications that take place on Twitter has different purposes such as people share their day to day activities and brands using the website for the sole purpose of marketing (Miller, 2015). Brands use Twitter to enhance brand awareness among the users, this is done when a tweet is posted by them and users retweet (share) the post, hence spreading the message (Yan, 2011).

Hashtag is turning out to be a prominent feature in Twitter. Companies from different industries are using hashtags on a regular basis. Hashtag is without any doubt a very popular tool for companies in social media and that is because it has many advantages. Companies use hashtags because it is easy for them to initiate a conversation with its consumers as compared to starting one in their own website (Cooper, 2013). Consequently, the hashtags launched by companies are used by social media users in their tweets when they express their opinions regarding a product or service of a particular brand. Furthermore, hashtags enable one to track down tweets, hence brands using a particular hashtag can easily analyze the tweets by the users of Twitter (Kywe et al 2012). Therefore, brands can assess whether a particular campaign is being successful or unsuccessful.

Social media marketing has made immense strides in the recent times. Which is why there are many aspects of marketing in social media being discussed in the literature. In general, few research has been done dedicating to hashtags. However, there has not been any studies conducted on hashtags being used as a marketing tool in social media. Therefore, there is a significant gap regarding hashtag used for marketing purpose in the literature. An article by Saxton et al (2015) delves into how advocacy members of the National Health Council in US use hashtags to raise awareness regarding health in their social media campaign. In other words, this article is focused more on social activities performed by health organizations, instead of focusing on profit making firms.

Introduction

On the other hand, Laroche et al (2013) states “there is an important need in the literature to explore the effects of branding on marketing variables related to social media”. Therefore, it would be appropriate to conduct a research on the use of hashtag by profit making organizations, to raise brand awareness. More importantly, the sportswear companies’ hashtags which are used by social media users in their tweets will be analysed to understand to what degree brand awareness is present among the social media users. This particular thesis will introduce the concept of hashtags being used as a marketing tool to raise brand awareness, and this thesis will specifically investigate on how companies can raise brand awareness by using hashtags. Practitioners will find this thesis to be relevant because of a framework, which will be introduced in discussion part, which will articulate on how companies can use hashtags to effectively increase brand awareness.

1.3 Research Purpose

The principal objective of this thesis is to explore how companies can effectively use hashtag as a communication strategy to convey the message of its brand offerings and consequently raise their brand awareness. Specifically, this thesis intends to investigate the common features of effective hashtags used by companies particularly on Twitter. Moreover, by analyzing how different brands use hashtags on Twitter for their business purposes, and how Twitter users respond to and use these hashtags. This thesis seeks to find out the causes that lead to successful and unsuccessful hashtags from both business and consumer perspective, thereby summarize a set of practical and feasible framework of effectively using hashtags to increase brand awareness. A framework has been developed for companies as a guideline on how to use hashtags as part of its communication strategy.

1.4 Research Question

The specific research question of this paper is:

“How can companies effectively raise brand awareness among consumers by using hashtags as a communication strategy on Twitter?”.

The researchers intend to increase the knowledge on hashtag as an online marketing communication tool. Despite of its excessive usage by companies, it is an understudy topic within the academic realm. The authors will take the managerial perspective to analyse how hashtag could be used effectively to raise brand awareness. The company position will be assessed to examine company’s communication strategy and how hashtags are used on Twitter. In addition, the consumers’ perception and response towards the brand’s hashtags will be assessed. The question will be answered through analyzing of data collected from Twitter.

1.5 Research Limitation

Companies from different industries are heavily reliant on social media and are using hashtags on regular basis. Therefore, focusing solely on the sportswear industry will not yield the ideal conclusion on how hashtags can be used as a means to raise brand awareness.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Basic Concepts of Brand

Before digging deeper into the concept of branding, it is necessary to understand what a brand is and how it works in the business field. A brand can be comprehended as:

A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Keller, 1993).

According to Hankinson (2001), several components can be used to define a brand: (1) Visual - consumers recognize the brand based upon observation, such as its logo, packaging, and so on; (2) positioning - which is to position a brand in consumers' mind and be differentiated from competitors; (3) added value - which is to view the brand as a unique product, service, person or place, thus consumers can see a different added value which matches their demands most closely; (4) brand image - it is built upon the understanding of consumers' feelings, ideas, and attitudes' ; (5) personality - which is the features and symbolic values of the brand that the target consumers can identify. In today's highly competitive 'digital battlefield', Twitter has become a powerful weapon for businesses to enhance their presence and raise brand awareness. Therefore, successful brands should be able to consider all of the above components when developing their online branding strategies.

2.2 Brand Awareness

This section first explains the fundamentals of brand awareness. Later, the importance of brand awareness will be further elaborated such as how vital it is for brands to have brand awareness consumers. Furthermore, how companies can achieve brand awareness is discussed. Lastly, the dynamics of social media and the role it plays on brands are mentioned.

2.2.1 Defining Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is a concept that has been widely discussed in the academic literature. Aaker (1991) states that brand awareness is when a buyer knows that a brand belongs to a particular product category. The initial step of brand building is brand awareness, which is especially important for a new brand (Kapferrer, 2012). In this day and age with the advent of social media, companies use social media to garner the much needed brand awareness which is needed by a new brand. Kapferer (2012) explains that brands can obtain three kinds of brand awareness which includes, top of mind, spontaneous (brands from a particular category that an individual can recall) and aided (the brands which are known by an individual when showed).

On the other hand, Keller (1993) state that brand awareness is split into brand recognition and brand recall, in which the former concerns that consumers are familiar with a specific brand due to having previous experience with it and the latter is when a consumer can remember a particular brand when thinking of a particular product category. Whereas Rao and Monroe (1989) mentions that certain external features such as the name of a particular brand can convey the quality that the brand has to offer

through its products or services. In addition, as far as low involvement category is concerned, the brand awareness of a particular brand belonging to this category can be the key factor when deciding to buy a particular brand (Macdonald & Sharp 2000). According to findings of Radder and Huang (2008) advertising in various ways, play an important role in strengthening brand awareness of both high involvement such as sportswear products and low involvement products such as coffee. Which is why sportswear brands are striving to achieve a strong brand awareness by using Twitter and hashtags for marketing purposes. Therefore, a high and low quality product can be set apart on the basis of brand awareness of a brand. (Hsia et al 2014)

2.2.2 Importance of Brand Awareness

Prior to any form of communication, it is vital that brand awareness is well established because the communication process would be futile without brand awareness (Rossiter & Percy 1987). According to Rossiter et al. (1991) in order for a consumer to buy a particular brand it is imperative that he or she knows about it, only then a consumer will be motivated to make a purchase. Furthermore, the stepping stone towards forming associations with a brand in the minds of the consumers is to first generate brand awareness (Stokes 1985). This point is reiterated by Aaker (1991) that being aware of a brand, serves as a foundation for the consumer to absorb more information about it.

Brand awareness has many implications when it comes to buying a particular brand. Brand awareness is the major factor when a consumer makes a decision to buy a brand from the consideration set (Hoyer & Brown 1990). According to Macdonald & Sharp (1996), brand awareness plays an important role for a brand to be present in the consideration set of the consumers and also be chosen to purchase among other brands in the consideration set. Brand awareness is now being used as a heuristic for choosing

a particular brand and to determine the quality of a brand, in other words if the brand awareness of a particular band is stronger compared to others then it has a greater likelihood of being purchased and also deemed to have superior quality (Macdonald & Sharp 2000). A study by Dickson and Sawyer (1986) concludes that while buying fast moving consumer goods, consumers took less amount of time to make a purchase, which is primarily because of the familiarity they had with that particular brand. Alison and Uhl (1964) conducted an experiment on beer drinkers and it was found that they rated the taste of their preferred brand higher compared to when they were blindfolded. Hence this proves that brand awareness is crucial for the success of any brands.

2.2.3 Increase in Brand Awareness via Advertising

Advertising plays a crucial role for strengthening brand awareness. Bronnenberg and Vanhonacker (1996) mentions that consumers are going to buy those brands which they have bought before or the ones which have had numerous aggressive promotion campaigns. Hence, companies use hashtags to launch campaigns in social media so that social media users can use the hashtags which enables to spread the message and be present in the minds of the consumers.

Awareness sets and choice sets are concepts concerning the salience of brands in the minds of the consumers. Roberts and Lattin (1991) elaborates on awareness sets and choice sets, which the former may arise due to various advertising strategies that results in consumers to consider these brands. The latter is solely based on the decisions made by the consumer. Draganska and Klapper (2001) also regards choice sets to be the result of advertising and promotion. On the other hand, Kim, Albuquerque and Bronnenberg (2010) states that choice sets are formed in the process when consumers search for an ideal brand to purchase.

Rossiter and Percy (1992) have developed a model which would help brands to develop advertising strategies. The model also stresses that brand awareness consists of recognition and recall. Brand attitude is also highlighted, which delves how strategies can be formulated to entice potential customers to make purchase of low and high involvement products depending upon the need to make a purchase.

Advertising Model

Brand Awareness	
Brand Recognition (at point of purchase)	Brand Recall (prior to purchase)
Brand Attitude	
Low Involvement Informational	Low Involvement Transformational
High Involvement Informational	High Involvement Transformational

Table1: Rossiter and Percy's advertising model

Rossiter and Percy (1992) further explains that it is important to consider brand recognition and brand recall when creating an advertising strategy. Recall and recognition are regarded as two types of brand awareness but the difference depends on how the communication works on the mind of the consumers whether it is going to be category need or brand awareness (Rossiter & Percy 1992).

Rossiter and Percy (1992) suggests that advertisers can compel consumers by showing that they can fulfill consumers' satisfaction by eradicating any problems faced by being informational. Whereas transformational strategy can be used to convey a message that consumers can improve their wellbeing. Undertaking an informational and

transformational approach applies for products that are both high and low involvement. Differences in the tone of communication in the advertisement is crucial for both category of products. All in all, brand awareness can be achieved by using this model.

2.2.4 Brand Awareness via Social Media

Companies can utilize numerous advantages that social media has to offer in terms of its interactivity and communicative facilities (Sigala, 2012). Hutter (2013) explains that traditional methods such as advertising, promotion, public relations etc generates brand awareness but in this day and age social media has become one of the methods to achieve brand awareness. Brand awareness in social media context can be classified into two forms which are intensity and extent, the former is how consumers can easily recall a particular brand and the latter is about the likelihood of consumers buying a product or service (Kleinrichert et al., 2012). Therefore, hashtags have a role to play to ensure intensity and extent which would result in brand awareness.

According to Barwise and Meehan (2010) most companies in the recent times are present in social media for ensuring customer engagement and collaboration, but it can also be used to raise brand awareness. Social media is an ideal platform to enhance brand awareness, for instance if a user posts a status on Facebook it is seen by 30% to 35% of his or her friends (Bernstein et al., 2013). Therefore, it is vital that brands execute the marketing strategy in the proper manner in social media so that their message has a greater reach (Barwise & Meehan, 2010).

In the recent times the advances in social media has resulted in the rise of interesting word of mouth communication (Lugosi et al., 2012). Xiong and Hu (2010) states, the portion of the market that is aware of a particular brand are considered to have an impact

on word of mouth. On the other hand, Weber (2009) states that word of mouth takes place when the brand awareness is extremely strong. Marketing managers focus on achieving favourable word of mouth, which is why, this factor is considered when formulating a marketing strategy on social media. However, social media may be associated with providing numerous benefits for brands but one of the disadvantages is the negative word of mouth which can disrupt the tactics undertaken by brands (McCoy et al., 2007). Social media users who are well aware of a brand are likely to suggest the brands to others (Liao et al., 2012). Despite the unpredictability and risks in social media, brands are still willing to be present in such platforms because they want to maximize such a powerful medium to establish a strong brand awareness (Divol et al. 2012)

2.3 Defining Online Branding

There are quite a few studies that have been conducted, with regards to the processes of building brand online, the challenges that online branding faces, and the importance of online branding. However, the concept of online branding itself has not been thoroughly studied and have not been well defined. Based on limited studies, online branding can be defined as:

How online channels are used to support brands, which in essence are the sum of the characteristics of a product, service or organization as perceived and experienced by a user, customer or other stakeholder (Rowley, 2009).

Claudia Dobkin claims that “online branding is watershed marketing development” (Chiagouris & Wansley, 2000). Further, Chiagouris and Wansley (2000) argues that the internet is playing an increasingly significant role in strengthening brand relationship,

corporate reputations, and brand awareness. Compared to the traditional mass media, social media offers many advantages; in order to increase brand awareness and build relationship between consumers and brands, there are three stages that companies can go through these steps: (1) ensure consumers can recognize the name or logo and recall the brand (it does not necessarily mean that consumers trust in the brand); (2) entice potential consumers to try and purchase product or service as its feature meet their needs, (3) build trust among the consumers as they get familiar with brand (Chiagouris & Wansley, 2000). This online relationship building process gives companies a basic understanding of what they should be aware of at each stage when they use hashtag to communicate and create interactions with consumers.

In addition, other studies also expressed their views on the processes of online branding. For instance, Iben, Luo, and Dinnie (2005) suggests that in order to achieve online branding, companies should create an online brand as quickly as possible to obtain the first-mover advantages. They need to create an efficient process of comprehending, generating, engaging, maintaining, and learning about target consumers. Furthermore, companies should go further than just gaining awareness for their sites to a more expanded focus on creating trust and relationships by an enhanced repurchase rates (Iben, Luo, and Dinnie (2005). Then companies will be able to develop more solid relationships by targeting customers with distinctive messages, unique functions, and exclusive personalization techniques, etc (Iben, Luo, and Dinnie (2005). Both of Chiagouris et al (2000). and Iben et al (2005) have emphasised the process of creating relationship and brand reputation online as an essential step for companies to have a successful online branding strategy.

Besides various opinions on online branding processes, there are different views on the practicability of online branding. Fournier and Avery (2011) states that the purpose of internet was to facilitate people to have conversations and communicate with each other.

Therefore, branding activities are not always welcome in social media, consumers view it as intrusive and out of place (Fournier & Avery 2011). Hence this point of view states that companies may not successfully generate positive attention from consumers on social media no matter what online branding strategy they are using.

In conclusion, studies have shown very limited knowledge on the basics of online branding. However, studies presented various perspectives and different views of what marketers should be aware of while building brands online. The comparison between different authors' understanding of online branding has led to further research on the online branding strategies, how they contribute to brands' online presence, and ultimately increase brand awareness.

2.3.1 Importance for Companies to be Online

More companies are opting to expand their brand presence on social media. This has led to social media becoming a more competitive marketplace. Moreover, Tancs (2013) claims that in the social media era, the groundwork of branding is a website and social media platforms, which give brands powerful word of mouth to promote online. Therefore, it is necessary for companies be active on social media platforms in order to strengthen brand awareness and be competitive.

If companies want to successfully attract consumers' attention and increase their brand awareness on Twitter, they should be aware of that internet is an interactive medium, the improvement of one brand should not be decided by its own company alone, but by interactivity or dialogue between the company and its target audience (Haig, 2002). Haig (2002) further points out that companies communicate with consumers and let consumers communicate among themselves, which helps to achieve company's

objective. Hence, effectively using hashtags as marketing tool can be helpful for companies to build their brand image and promote their brand.

Based on aforementioned basics of online branding, natures of brand itself, and understandings of online branding from different perspectives, it can be concluded that online branding is essential for businesses. Successful online branding strategies not only enables brands to actively and efficiently deliver brand message to consumers, but also helps to increase the popularity and brand awareness. Although there are debatable areas, the contradiction between different point of views on whether companies should implement online branding strategy, gives a more objective understanding of online branding.

2.4 Social Media

This section presents the concept of social media and social media marketing. The nature of social media will be explained first, then supporting literature and discussion will be provided to gain a better understanding of the concept. Thereafter, the academic studies and the researches disclose the purpose of using social media as a promotional branding medium and the role it plays in the business field.

2.4.1 Defining Social Media

Social media has become not only a pervasive part of daily life, but also become a ubiquitous part of the business world. For instance, on Twitter, companies use it as a vital marketing tool to share a wide range of information with audiences and to increase

Literature Review

the visibility of the brand. As Shankar et al. (2011) states, the developments of technology have greatly enhanced marketer's ability to reach consumers with new touch points, for example, the increasing number of professional search engine, high tech mobile devices, and online social networks.

Social media is a vital aspect for companies' marketing success. It is important for them to have a deep insight regarding how social media works as a marketing tool and communication platform to effectively grow their business. Social media has been a misunderstood concept to business practitioners, consumers, even majority of marketers. As far social media is concerned, "media" is usually being highlighted, however, in reality, the "social" factor is the key aspect (Drury, 2007). Social media are defined by Tuten and Solomon's (2012) as:

Social media are the online means of communication, conveyance, collaboration, and cultivation among interconnected and interdependent networks of people, communities, and organizations enhanced by technological capabilities and mobility (p.4).

Social media is regarded as Internet-based applications that convey consumer-generated content which incorporates "media impressions made by consumers, most often informed by related experience, and collected or shared online for easy access by other susceptible consumers" (Xiang & Gretzel, 2009). Xiang and Gretzel (2009) also explained that consumer-generated created content upheld through social media is "a blend of actuality and notion, impression and emotion, founded and unfounded anecdotes, encounters, and even gossip". The past studies have clearly revealed the nature of social media and its advantages for marketers. Hence, further research on social media and business can be conducted based on the solid foundation.

2.4.2 Business Engagement on Social Media

Social media has become a growing phenomenon in the business field and is immensely affecting the way activities such as engaging with consumers, building brand awareness and building brand loyalty are concerned. As Jagongo and Kinyua (2013) argues, social media is a new and rising platform that has changed how companies operates in the competitive market. It enables companies to gain access to resources which will not be available to them without these platforms. Moreover, by putting efforts on social media, business can efficiently create values, develop stronger strategic partnerships, and strengthen the relationships with customers and suppliers. Entrepreneurs and marketers realized that it is becoming more important to understand the significance of social media functions which works as a communication and marketing tool (Jagongo & Kinyua 2013).

Zhang, Jansen, and Chowdhury (2011) also argues that social media services, such as Twitter, helps commercial businesses to actively take part in online word-of-mouth communication. Moreover, Zhang et al. (2011) claims that word-of-mouth among the users on social media have a huge impact on the commercial businesses. Other research also indicates that the online word-of-mouth communication can attract more consumers than the information created only by marketers (Bickart & Schindler, 2001). Hence it is imperative that consumers that companies can spread its messages in ways which will not only enable them to engage with the audience, but also entice new consumers through favourable word-of-mouth among the users, because word of mouth is deemed to be trustworthy.

2.4.3 Social Media Marketing

Firms are starting to realize the potential of social media. The benefits of social media have compelled them to incorporate social media as their marketing strategies (Constantinides et al, 2009). Unlike marketing with traditional media such as newspapers, television and news report websites which focuses on solely delivering a message, whereas marketing in social media is focused on building a relationship and ensure engagement with consumers (Drury, 2007). According to the research by Cone (2008), companies offer direct links on their official website to their Twitter and Facebook page, and use them as tools to promote brands and support the creation of brand communities.

As a marketing tool, companies use social media to achieve certain marketing objectives (Tuten & Solomon, 2012). Furthermore, Tuten and Solomon (2012) points out that the primary objective of social media marketing for promotional purpose is not only to enhance brand awareness, influence engagement, but also to convince consumers to action; the promotional message through social media channels can affect consumers' attitudes and ultimately move them through the purchase process. Hence, it can be concluded that companies promote their brands on different social media platforms to generate consumers' attention, build brand awareness, enhance brand image, and finally create profits from consumers.

According to Tuten and Solomon (2012), the University of Maryland conducted a research in regards to the influence of Twitter activates on generating profits. The researchers found positive relation between social media activity and sales. Moreover, they also discovered that social media marketing plays significant role in each stage of the purchase process: the increase awareness stage, influence desire stage, encourage

trial stage, facilitate purchase stage, and cement brand loyalty stage (Josh, Ma, Rand & Rashid, 2013).

In summary, studies in this part covered the basics and functionalities of social media, explained several reasons that enticed companies to use social media as an important marketing tool to increase brand awareness and grow business. In addition, the studies revealed how social media works in business operations as one of most powerful branding tools, and addressed the importance and effectiveness of social media marketing. The discussion disclosed the significant effect of social media on company's' branding efforts. However, online branding itself have not been clearly explained. Thus, the literature review further presents the concept of online branding from different perspectives.

2.5 Communication Theory

Hashtags, in general, can have a straightforward meaning, however at the same time, they could have hidden meaning that could be interpreted differently by social media user. Therefore, to have more understanding on hashtags strategy, it is better to understand the concept of communications both traditional and online. This section introduces the concept of communication theory, that is relevant to the topic. The topic of offline and online communication process is discussed in this section. Discussions are focused on various communication models and how they fit with a concept of marketing communication. Furthermore, the semiotic theory is addressed, to investigate how the hashtag is interpreted.

2.5.1 Traditional Communication Theories

Generally, communication is a process of message transmission, and a production and exchange of meaning (Fiske, 2002). The message then can be delivered in two forms; verbal, and nonverbal, each of which has its own advantages. Verbal communication, is when a message is delivered by means of using a particular language. The word could be delivered in two ways; in writing and speaking. On the other hand, non-verbal communication uses nonlinguistic method to deliver a message. The message can be delivered through; body gestures, use of object, and change in vocal tone (Gamble & Gamble, 2005). The models of communication are not uniform, due to the difference in the background of each scholar who have developed different models. This diversity of communication models provides different dimensions to the communication theory (Craig, 1999).

Fiske (2002) classifies the existing communication models into two types, one being functionalist and the other is interpretive. Models which are functionalist in nature focuses on the importance of how messages can be exchanged effectively. Because it is imperative that messages, should be communicated in a way so that the message which is being communicated is understood by the receiver. Whereas, the interpretive approach focuses on how a message is being interpreted. A person may interpret the same message differently, due to different culture background of the individual. The interpretative approach is closely related to semiotic study, which is knowledge of sign and meaning. Duncan and Moriarty (1998), suggested that in terms of marketing. communication more focus should be made on interpretive approach rather than functionalist. This is due to shift in marketing paradigm, that tends to focus more on brand and customers' relationship.

2.5.2 Schramm's Model of Communication

Wilbur Schramm developed a model of communication in 1954. The model presents a communication as circulation of message, which suggest that a communication is two-way process. Below is an illustration of the model;

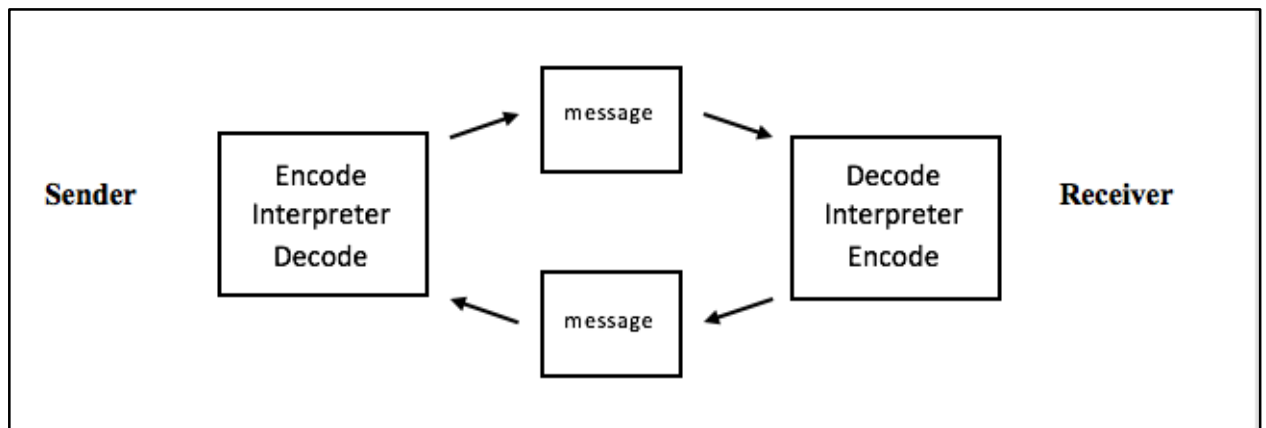


Figure1: Schramm's communication model

Schramm consider the communication as continuous interaction between the two parties; sender and receiver. Schramm takes into the account of the cultural background of the sender and the receiver when it comes to the interpretation of a message. Sender would encode the idea into message, then send the message to receiver. The receiver then would decode and interpret the message, using his or her own cultural background and subsequently encode the new message as a response. Schramm's model has had a significant impact on the communication theory paradigm, as all the communication models after Schramm's model incorporated the processes of interpreting messages as a concept in them (Bowman & Targowski, 1987).

2.5.3 Semiotic

In verbal communication theory, the term “polysemy” is used to recognize that one word could have different meanings. Accordingly, the meaning can be divided into two forms; denotation meaning and connotation meaning. Denotation meaning is the general meaning of the word derived from a dictionary. While connotation meaning is the alternative meaning of the word, that person connotes from their cultural experience and understanding (Berger, 2014). Semiotic then plays an important role in connotation meaning interpretation. To understand how hashtag is interpreted, this section will focus on semiotic theory in terms of interpretive approach. Using the works of pioneers in semiotic study, Berger (2004) summarized semiotic as follows. Semiotic is a study of sign and meaning. The focus of semiotic is on signs present in texts. The sign is composed of signified and signifiers. The signifier is the element of the text that is present to the person, and signified is the meaning that is interpreted from the signifier. Semiotic study has been applied to many other science fields, that involves communication and interpretation. It also has an important role in the area of marketing and advertising, as how they deliver the message to influence competitors and customers in terms of interpretation of ‘hidden information’ that signal certain meaning (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). As mentioned earlier, hashtag, which is the set of text that can be interpreted into more than one meaning. Semiotic then plays an important role in understanding how a hashtag is interpreted by person who uses it.

2.6 Online Marketing Communication

Marketing communication is long considered to be a part of promotion within 4Ps marketing mix. The role of marketing communication is to connect brand with consumer through communication (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998; Keller, 2001; Houman

Andersen, 2001). The example of marketing communication could be; advertising, public relation activity, sales representation, direct marketing, and online marketing. Traditionally, marketing communication has been used as persuasion tools, that involves one-way communication. However, with the shift in marketing paradigm, the practice now focuses more on consumer – brand relationship, which focuses more on interaction between companies and customer. Therefore, the importance of the effectiveness of the communication between the companies and consumers has become more important than ever before (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998, Andersen, 2001). With current social media trend, many companies now utilized the internet as their marketing tools to communicate with their customers.

Internet has three characteristics which makes it different from the other communication channels. These three characteristics are; (1) interactivity – the internet allows brand and target customer to conduct interactive communication, (2) transparency – information published online can be accessed by anyone, and (3) memory – the internet not only transmit information, but also stores the information as well (Holtz, 1999). These three characteristic then change how online audiences behave as they are now more connected to organization, and connected with one another, and have greater access to information (Holtz, 1999; Gurau, 2008). Furthermore, with the introduction of social media, consumers can now easily participate in communication by sharing information among themselves.

In addition, the internet has empowered consumers to have control over the communication process. This has led to a creation of communication concept called ‘user generated contents’, which has a formidable effect on online marketing communication practice (Gurau, 2008; Hennig-Thurau et al, 2013). User generated content is one form of “word of mouth” communication, specifically, e- word of mouth. This type of communication is when information is shared by consumers to express their idea, attitude, and perception towards brands. It has very high impact due to its

similar characteristic to word of mouth, but with better potential due to its nature as online content (Tirunillai & Telis, 2011). Consumer generated content could become a high threat to a brand, if it is of negative nature. Nevertheless, brands can use it for their own advantage, by using it alongside with marketing generated contents, such as, co-created brand stories (Goh et al, 2013). For brands to be successful in marketing communication in the online environment, they have to actively interact with their customer, through conversation. With the creation of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, this practice has become convenient to implement.

2.6.1 Twitter

Twitter is an online social media platform, launched in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Biz Stone, and Noah Glass. The aim for twitter is to become a real-time platform for users to update everything that matter to them (Twitter.com,2016). One of the unique feature of Twitter is that it allows users to generate the post called ‘Tweets’ within 140 characters. This feature then makes the characteristic of the tweets to be short and precise. Because a tweet is very brief due to having a certain limit of characters, many tweets are posted in short period of time, assembling the conversation communication (Yang et al, 2012). Similar to other social media platform, Twitter is used to create many types of contents from pointless self-expression to official government announcement. With it large number of users, Twitter has been utilized by business, as a communication tool. Brand use Twitter for many purposes, for example; product launch announcement, marketing campaign, or consumer relationship management. Furthermore, the most potential benefit feature of Twitter for the firm would be its interactive ability (Yang et al, 2012).

As mentioned before, Twitter is a social media platform that features conversations between the users via their tweets, it has high potential in the current online marketing environment that requires high interpersonal interaction between brand and consumers

(Hennig-Thurau et al, 2013). The interactive feature is not limited to interpersonal level, but include 'machine interactive' as well. Machine interactive refers to conversations which are information oriented. Twitter promote machine interactive by allowing the users to access more information through hyperlink posted on a tweet (Burton & Soboleva, 2011; Smith et al 2012). The hyperlink also includes a hashtag, a tool that is used to categorized the topic, that help Twitter user to track and navigate their interested information. As a result, consumers can be exposed to information about the brands which would help consumers to be engaged.

2.6.2 Hashtag

As mentioned earlier, large number of tweets are posted within the short period of time. This create large volume of tweets on Twitter. It becomes problematic for twitter user to track down their interested topic. Twitter then came up with the hyperlink tools called 'hashtag'. Hashtag emerged as information organized tool, it later on adopted by Twitter user as navigation tools to their interested topic. The hashtag started with the #symbol followed by keyword of the topic or information. Hashtag does not only serve as navigation tools for user, but as well is used to represent their identity or declaration that they belong to certain brand community (Yang et al, 2012). Because of it characteristic that promote machine interactive, hashtag has a potential as support tools for marketing campaign or marketing communication. The study on hashtag and social media advocacy by Saxton et al (2015), provide useful information and model to categorize the hashtag usage that suitable for different purposes. Nevertheless, there is still lack the research on hashtag and business relate in theoretical manner.

2.7 Summary

Literature Review

This thesis is investigating how companies using hashtags can raise brand awareness. Therefore, hashtags can be treated as one form of advertisement which intends to enhance brand awareness. Consequently, the advertising model by Percy and Rossiter (1992) in which it is explained how companies can design their advertisement to raise brand awareness is relevant to the phenomenon of this thesis. Similarly, how consumers perceive the hashtags of the companies is crucial. Which is why the communication process model by Schramm (1954) which explains how a message is delivered by the sender and understood by the receiver is also relevant to understand how consumers perceive the hashtags of the companies.

As discussed earlier advertising has a very important role to play as far as ensuring brand awareness is concerned. Companies can undertake certain tactics to formulate advertisement in a manner that can result in consumers purchasing their brand. The communication model by Percy and Rossiter (1992) explains that brand awareness are of two types which are brand recognition and brand recall but the difference depends on the how the communication works on the mind of the consumers whether it is going to be category need or brand awareness. Percy and Rossiter (1992) also explain how companies can send a message in its advertisement by citing a problem that a consumer can face or how potential customers can enhance their wellbeing. Hence, this model can be applicable to either high and low involvement products or services.

Moreover, as Chiagouris and Wansley (2000) suggests, companies can strengthen the relationship with consumers and raise brand awareness by going through three steps. This online relationship building processes enables consumers to recognize the brand, entice them to try the product, and help companies to build solid relationship with consumers. It is essential for companies to know how they can effectively deliver their messages and attract consumers in order to achieve the objectives of each step and finally increase brand awareness.

It is also important to understand how a particular advertising message is perceived by the target audience. The model of communication process formulated by Schramm (1954) explains how a message is sent and received by the sender and recipient respectively influenced by a particular setting in which two parties belong in. This model can be related to how companies' advertising strategy are perceived by consumers. In reality, companies encode an idea into a particular message which is conveyed via advertisement and later decoded by the consumers. Therefore, Schramm's model is a testament to how a particular message is conveyed by the sender and understood by the receiver. Therefore, this model can also be reminiscent to how a typical advertising campaign can work.

In conclusion, both models can serve as an understanding on how companies can use hashtags to enhance brand awareness. By understanding the motives of the companies' advertisement which is explained by the model for advertisement by Percy and Rossiter (1992) and Schramm's (1954) communication process model on the importance of how a particular message is perceived by the receiver. Therefore, for this thesis, it is important to understand the intention of the companies' usage of hashtags and how consumers perceive the hashtags. Hence the researchers of this thesis, has categorized the hashtags of the companies depending on their purpose and how consumers or social media users are perceiving these hashtags. This will be elaborately discussed in the following chapters.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy

The first important issue under consideration is the research philosophy position of this study. The term ontology refers to “philosophical assumption about the nature of reality”, while epistemology is regarded as “a set of assumption about ways to inquiring into the nature of the word” (Bryman & Bell, 2015). By understanding ontology and epistemology assumptions of this research, it serves as a solid guideline for which methodology approach is suitable for the research (Easterby-Smith et al, 2012).

3.1.1 Constructivism Ontology

The research purpose aims at how hashtag can be used by companies to raise brand awareness. The topic of this research involves understanding of companies’ strategies and consumers’ responses toward hashtag, which are created not pre-existing phenomenon. Therefore, the position of constructivist ontology is considered as the most appropriate position of this research. Constructivist ontology position asserts that knowledge is subjectively constructed as well as given meanings by social actors via social interactions, not pre-existed phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thus, the knowledge of hashtag strategies is constructed by interaction of each social actor involved; research subjects (companies and users), and researchers. Nevertheless, the knowledge constructed is not universal, it depends on social actors’ perspective toward that knowledge. As mentioned by Bryman and Bell (2011), the knowledge from constructionist perspective, is the attempt of a social actor to make sense of the world. Therefore, the knowledge may differ varying from each individual. In this case, the knowledge that is constructed from study on hashtag strategies used by the companies, will differ by the researcher’s perspective. Thus, the resulting knowledge does not exist

Methodology

and wait to be discovered, but it is created by the researchers, as an attempt to explain such phenomenon.

3.1.2 Interpretivist Epistemology

After the assumption of reality was made, the approach to inquiring the reality (epistemology) should be made as well. The approach that is suitable to the constructivist ontology is the ‘interpretivist epistemology’ stand (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This is because this type of epistemology stems from the view that there is no true reality, but the reality is constructed by society and given meaning by people. The role of research with interpretivist stand is then not to gather fact, but to understand and interpret it. In this case, the research falls into this epistemology stand, because the researcher aims to understand how companies’ hashtags strategies could raise brand awareness among consumer, and at the same time understand how consumers perceive those hashtags.

3.2 Research Strategy & Approach

In this section, the research strategy, methodological approach, and the reasoning of implementation is being presented and argued for. This research implemented a qualitative strategy. Following this strategy, an inductive approach and cross-sectional research design have been adopted.

3.2.1 Qualitative Research Strategy

Following the constructivist ontological position, a qualitative research strategy has been implemented for this thesis. As a means of following the interpretivist epistemological stance, the qualitative research design has been suggested because the

Methodology

qualitative research approach provides an in-depth means of understanding of a specific research phenomenon; for this instance, the impact of companies' use of hashtags on Twitter. By researching through the qualitative approach, the researchers were "immersed in a social setting for some time in order to observe and listen with a view to gaining an appreciation of the culture of a social group" (Bryman and Bell, 2015, p. 389). The qualitative approach has further been recognized as the appropriate research strategy because it operates most effectively within the interpretivist paradigm, which holds that, "researchers attempt to understand phenomena by examining the meanings that participants assign to them, within particular social organizational contexts" (Ignatiadis & Nandhakumar, 2009).

Within the qualitative research strategy, an inductive research approach was adopted for this thesis. The inductive approach incorporates observations and measures. These observations are then used in the construction of themes and generalizations (Bryman and bell, 2011). While quantitative research methodologies traditionally implement a deductive approach, "when a qualitative research strategy is employed within a cross-sectional design, the approach tends to be inductive" (Bryman and Bell, 2015). As the present research is interested in exploring the broad phenomenon of hashtag use on Twitter and its impact on consumers. The inductive research method enabled the researchers to observe the data collected in the year of 2015 and analyze the information that contribute to researchers' better understanding of the research phenomenon.

3.3 Research Design

The research has been designed with an exploratory research approach due to limited literatures to refer to. It helps generating background information and gaining insights of the research phenomena. Moreover, the cross-sectional approach is further discussed in detail under the overall research design structure.

3.3.1 Exploratory Research Design

Since research regarding the use of hashtags as a marketing tool to communicate with consumers was in the preliminary stage with its open-ended nature. The researchers implemented an exploratory research design as this method has been determined to be the best option within the research's constructivist ontological assumption and qualitative research strategy (Babbie & Earl, 2013). This type of research often takes place before generating sufficient knowledge to conclude a conceptual distinction (Shields et al, 2013).

As exploratory research often relies on secondary data, the researchers observed hashtags used by Adidas, Reebok, and Under Armour and responses from consumers on Twitter 2015. Through observing and analyzing the collected data, the researchers fulfilled the purpose of the research design, which is to develop increased understanding of a specific research phenomenon. The results achieved through this analytic approach will be a significant amount more authentic to actual lived-reality (Markle, West, & Rich, 2011)

3.3.2 Cross-sectional Research

A cross sectional research design is one in which data from more than one case is collected. This data collection occurs at a single point in time and is associated with more than one variables and generally will have multiple variables (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson 2012). In this research, all the data were collected virtually on Twitter from the year of 2015. The researchers categorized Adidas, Reebok, and Under Armour's intentions of using hashtags and classified how consumers responded to these hashtags. Analyzing data from both companies' perspective and consumers' perspective were considered as means of gaining a qualitatively understanding of the hashtags' impact on consumers. Therefore, it became possible to generate a broader spectrum of insights regarding how hashtags can be effectively used to increase brand awareness in the overarching context of the netnography.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection is an important aspect for any kind of research. For this particular paper, as previously mentioned the process of data collection will be done by the means of using the netnography method.

3.4.1 Netnography

As the Twitter accounts of major sportswear brands will be thoroughly analysed to identify the hashtags used by them, which is why the method of netnography would be used. According to Bryman & Bell (2011:654) netnography is a method of market

Methodology

research that examines conversations which takes place on a computer aided platform. However, as far as the data collection for this paper is concerned, no conversations as such will be investigated. This is because the focus is on how the hashtags are being used and how consumers or social media users use these hashtags, therefore no conversations will be investigated per se. According to Kozinets (2002) netnography is an online market research to gather consumer insights by analyzing communities online based. For this paper, observation will be made on how companies use hashtags and whether or not it helps to raise brand awareness. Hence the research questions will be answered by adopting such an approach.

Kozinets (2002) states that it is crucial to know which kind of forum to target and it is also important to understand the characteristic of the forum that is being targeted. Therefore, keeping these points in consideration, the sportswear industry has been chosen since hashtags are excessively used by these companies in social media websites such as Twitter. As the focus of the paper is primarily on hashtags posted by top sportswear companies, the success of hashtags as a marketing tools depends on how users use the hashtags in their tweets. Therefore, the tweets consisting of the company's hashtags will be analyzed to understand the reason why they have shared a particular hashtag. In other words, the behavior of the users which in this case is the tweet of the hashtags and the comments associated with it, will be observed.

Netnography has been chosen not only because the focus of paper is on hashtags but because of the numerous advantages that it brings to the table. According to Kozinets (2010) netnography is an inexpensive method compared to other conventional methods such as ethnography, focus group discussions etc. Moreover, the responses are raw, genuine, and are not being affected by the presence of a mediator which is common a feature in other research methods. Especially when it comes to social media, the consumer behaviour exhibited is genuine. With the advent of social media people can share their satisfaction or vent their frustration with ease through such platforms. This point is echoed by Kozinets (2010) that along with statements or text written by the

Methodology

users, images are also being used to convey feelings in social media such as Twitter. Therefore, Twitter offers multiple ways by which a user can convey his or her views. An interesting aspect of Twitter is that one can write a text with limited number of characters. Hence the user is bound to be precise when expressing a thought. Which makes it easier to decode a message.

Within the particular time frame of ten weeks, it was possible to gather data from Twitter. The hashtags used by the sportswear brands can be tracked in this time frame. Although, analyzing hashtags used over the last one year was a challenging task as such brands use numerous hashtags on a regular basis and for various reasons and the number of times the hashtags are being used again are extremely high. The advanced search function on Twitter facilitated the process of tracking down the hashtags to some extent.

Hashtags launched by companies are shared by numerous individuals. Among such individuals, it is often celebrities who are brand ambassadors of companies use hashtags as part of their endorsement agreement with a brand. For this reason, hashtags which are retweeted by such notable figures will be excluded. Only hashtags which are tweeted by users who do not have any obligations towards the brands have been taken into account. As a result, it would give an accurate and genuine result whether hashtags are being used effectively as a marketing tool to spread the brand message.

3.4.2 Data Coding

A tweet is a message posted to Twitter by a user and it may have photos and links of videos, which are limited to 140 characters. Therefore, the method of coding was used to analyze these tweets. Since the method of netnography is qualitative in nature, which is why coding is the ideal method to analyse the hashtags. Saldana (2009) explains that coding in qualitative inquiry, is a word or a phrase that symbolically assigns which is

Methodology

reminiscent to language based data. Saldana (2009) further explains that coding can be done for a single word, long sentences, photographs, videos etc. Saldana (2009) states that coding qualitative data can be performed in many ways, one way is to allocate codes into categories, which means that data is coded and then categorized on the basis of the code. By following this approach, the researchers allocated the hashtags to the categories which were initially created after analyzing how the hashtags were used by the companies and consumers in their tweets.

3.4.3 Data Collection Site

In order to answer the research question, it is important to understand how companies use hashtags and how consumers perceive the hashtags. The researchers have tried to emulate the method by Saxton et al (2015) in their study on The Strategic Use of Hashtags in Social Media Advocacy. Therefore, the researchers of this thesis adopted the method for studying of strategic use of hashtag for advocacy by analyzing the tweets of the companies and how the hashtags were used and perceived by consumers. The researchers have chosen to adopt the method of the study for hashtags for advocacy because it is a study which resembles this thesis. The study by Saxton et al (2015) delves into how hashtags can effectively deliver social and health messages. Hence the researchers have decided to somewhat replicate the method used for that study for this thesis, because this thesis focusses on at how hashtags can raise brand awareness which to a certain extent resembles the study of how hashtags can deliver or address social and health mess. After analyzing the same hashtags in tweets used by the companies and consumers, the researchers created categories of ways the hashtags were used by both parties. These categories were created after analyzing the tweets, hence they were empirically driven. The categories will be further elaborated in the findings [see Section 5].

Methodology

The first step of data collection was to identify the hashtags being used by sportswear companies Under Armour (@UnderArmour), Adidas (@adidas) and Reebok (@Reebok). This was done by using the advanced search option in Twitter. The time frame selected to identify the hashtags is 1st January 2015 to 31st December 2015. Then, all the hashtags used by the company's' twitter accounts were noted down. The accounts mentioned are not focused on a particular region or sports. For example, Adidas has numerous accounts for different countries (@adidasUS and @adidasIndonesia) and sports (e.g. @adidassoccer and @adidastennis). But for this thesis the @adidas account, an official account of Adidas, was chosen because it consists of posts regarding all the posts of various products and brands belonging to Adidas. This particular account also uses hashtags and retweets posts from other Adidas accounts. Hence using this account would be a proper representation of the Adidas brand.

After the hashtags were noted down, each hashtag was clicked to analyse the posts that containing the hashtag. Hence it would give a holistic understanding of how the hashtags being used by the companies are ensuring brand awareness among the consumers. Due to the limited resource of the computer programs, such as the Python programming language, which was used by Saxton et al (2015), on their study of hashtag, the hashtags were analysed and counted manually by the researchers. As mentioned earlier, hashtags that were used by notable figures were not taken into account. In addition, hashtags which were used by verified accounts were also not included. Verified accounts are those accounts which belong to important individuals and brands and these accounts also has huge number of followers (Twitter, 2016). The verified accounts are identified by blue icons. Therefore, analyzing the tweets of these accounts would not give an accurate data of how the hashtags are being receptive to the users. It is common that such verified pages which use the hashtags have affiliations with the brands. Therefore, only tweets from Twitter accounts that are not verified were analyzed. In addition hashtags which were used as a reply was not analysed because they are not considered to be tweets.

Methodology

The posts of each hashtag were analysed on a monthly basis for the year 2015. This is because each hashtag over the months are used in a different rate and purpose, which is why hashtags analysed throughout the year gives a holistic understanding of the effectiveness of the hashtags. There were hashtags which had more than a thousand posts each month. In such cases, analyzing each posts is a time-consuming process. Therefore, the researchers did not note down and analyse all the hashtags of a month which followed a certain trend. For example, when a new product was launched the majority of the hashtags were predominantly used by the consumers who expressed their interest or purchased a particular product.

3.5 Research's Political and Ethical Aspects

Bryman and Bell (2011) suggest that ethical challenges are a common aspect while carrying out a research and by any means cannot be disregarded. As, netnography is chosen as the method of data collection for this particular research, like any research method, it too, has various aspects of political and ethical aspects that have to be considered.

Kozinets (2010) explains that netnography has different approaches of analysis which are passive, active and explicit. This research will be adopting a passive analysis, which means that the researchers would not immerse in any interaction with the users in Twitter. It is important to note that the researchers would not be disguised, therefore certain ethical issues associated with such an approach is avoided. By not being immersed in any interaction, such ethical issues are avoided by researcher.

Twitter is the domain from where the data will be gathered, the hashtags which are used by sportswear brands are visible in this particular social media website. Therefore, it would be extremely convenient to have access to the numerous hashtags. As pointed by

Methodology

Bryman and Bell (2011) one of the factors of a research method is the political aspects, which concerns that researchers have to have the consent from respondents. As far as this paper is concerned, no such formality is required for netnography, since Twitter is a free access website, nearly all tweets on Twitter are open to public. Therefore, unlike other research, no permission has to be sought for gathering data via passive netnography on Twitter.

Nonetheless, Bryman and Bell (2011) point out that there are controversies surrounding netnography as researchers using this particular method could come under fire for 'lurking' in online communities, this practice is frowned upon by the members of such communities. As mentioned, for this research, Twitter pages of sportswear brands will be observed along with the hashtags being used by them. Therefore, there is no requirement to be actively involved to spur something online that would facilitate the process of gathering data. As Kozinets (2010) points out that if the documents are readily available publicly then there is no need to actively involved in the interaction with people in social media. In addition, there would be no need to visit personal Twitter accounts of individuals.

In addition, due to the qualitative nature of the research the analysis of the data is subjective to the researcher's interpretation. Kozinets (2002) mentions that netnography may be different from other research approach but the process of data collection and analysis can only be trustworthy if it is conducted in other typical qualitative methods. Bryman and Bell (2011) also points out that anything which is being studied should not be tampered with by any artificial means, therefore the subject of the study should be left as when examined.

3.6 Research Design Limitation and Weakness

The weakness of this research design should be considered as well. Bryman & Bell (2011) suggest several weaknesses of qualitative research as follow; first this research would encounter a generalization problem. Because, qualitative research only involves small size of sample. It could not be used to represent the whole population. In this case, the scope of research is limited to only Twitter and sportswear industry.

Furthermore, it is impossible to generalize the knowledge, that is subjectively constructed. As mentioned, in research position, different social actors may provide different meaning to the knowledge. Secondly, the research would be subjective, as the criteria and decision are made via researcher's' judgement, which have unequal view on what is important and what is significant for the research. As, this research involves classification and interpretation of users Twitter's tweet to gather information, high tendency of bias may have occurred. Thirdly, the issue on research replication. As suggested by Bryman & Bell (2011) and Easterby Smith et al (2012), the skill and knowledge of researchers' greatly impact the result of such interpretation. Therefore, the result from other research with same methodology may provide different knowledge that may or may not agree upon this research.

Due to the limited amount of time, only data from last year were collected. Nevertheless, many hashtags were created long before the period of data collection. Therefore, the information obtained may not reflect the true potential of hashtags contributing towards brand awareness. Furthermore, as this thesis is focused only on one particular social media platform and industry, therefore, the conclusions and findings may not be applicable to other industries and other social media websites where hashtags are being used.

4. Findings

The researchers have analysed 141,156 tweets which were posted on Twitter in 2015. These tweets consisted of hashtags used by Adidas, Reebok, and Under Armour. The tweets include the ones which were made by via company's Twitter account and also by the consumers. Therefore, the hashtags which were used by the companies in their tweets and the consumer who used those tweets, had different purposes and hence they were categorized differently. In this chapter, only the hashtags which are notable in their respective categories from both the company's and consumer's perspective are mentioned.

4.1 Hashtag Categories from the Perspective of Companies and Consumers

The company's intention to use hashtags is to ensure brand awareness among consumers. In order to understand whether brand awareness is accomplished among the consumers, tweets which were posted by the consumers were analyzed. As mentioned, tweets that consisting of hashtags posted by companies and its customers. In addition, it was observed that the sportswear companies use various hashtags to ensure consumer engagement with the objective to achieve brand awareness. In order to answer the research question, it is important to understand how consumers use the company's' hashtags in their tweets. On the other hand, the social media users use the companies' hashtags to engage with the brands. However, it is to be noted that, the hashtags which was used by the companies were classified as events and general were not taken into account. This is because these hashtags are not related to the company. Therefore, investigating such hashtags would be futile since these hashtags do not create any brand awareness despite them being used by companies.

It is important that the data gathered convey specific meaning. According to Easterby-Smith (2012) it is crucial that conclusions should be made on the basis of the data collected. Instead of preconceived notion of the researchers. Therefore, it is crucial that researchers do not interfere the process of interpreting the data. Hence a better knowledge is formed

Findings

when such biases of the researchers are eradicated. Therefore, these aspects were considered by the researchers of this thesis.

The categories of the hashtags which derive by the basis of the purpose by both the companies and consumer will be explained. Hashtags used by companies are perceived and used by consumers in different ways. The percentage within the tables in this section, refers to the year of 2015.

4.1.1 Categories from the Company's Perspective

The hashtags used by companies were categorized in the following way:

1. **Marketing Campaign** – Are those hashtags which have been used by companies to promote a product line or a particular event.
2. **Product Promotion** – Launching various products is a common aspect for sportswear companies. Which is why, companies have hashtags which are simply named after a brand name of a particular product. For example, Adidas launched a football boot which is named as F50. Therefore, the hashtag #F50 was used in the twitter account of Adidas to promote the brand.
3. **Events** – Sportswear brands often sponsor or affiliate with various sporting events. This was evident in their accounts on Twitter. Hashtags which were used to inform consumers that they were associated with a particular event one way or another. But these hashtags are not related to their product offerings or any sort of marketing campaign.
4. **Branding** – Hashtags belonging to this category are used to simply promote the companies themselves or used to state their brand motto. It was observed that hashtags were named after the company or a brand slogan.

Findings

5. General – Companies often use hashtags in sentences to simply complete their tweets. Hashtags of such kind are by no means related anything to the company. These hashtags are simply used for the mere purpose of completing a tweet. For instance, Adidas have used the hashtag #LimitedEdition in a tweet to inform users about a limited edition of a product.

4.1.2 Categories from the Consumer's Perspective

A number of tweets were made by consumers which contained hashtags belonging to the company. The hashtags used in the consumers' tweets were categorized in the following categories:

1. Involvement – This is the case when consumers use companies' hashtags in their tweets to convey a message that they are using a product of the company or participating in events organized by companies. It has been observed that, users often explicitly made it clear they are availing the company's offerings by posting Instagram links of their picture as proof that they are involved with the brand.

2. Desire – This tweets are those when consumers express their willingness to use a particular product of the company. In this case consumers are using the hashtag when they do not have a product but have the desire to purchase one.

3. Information – It is observed that users tweet sharing their experience with a product when they are seeking additional information relating to the sportswear company. In addition, bloggers post tweets along with the links of their blogs where they have written about a particular product. Interestingly, numerous online retailers are seen posting tweets providing information such as the price of the products or if there were any sales. Therefore, such online retailers are using the companies' hashtags for marketing purpose to increase their sales. Hence, such hashtags are classified as being informational.

Findings

4. **Emotional** – Users have conveyed their feelings towards the company through their tweets. Such tweets are identified when tweets containing certain keywords to express their emotion. For such tweets it is mostly observed that users have expressed their affection towards a particular product of a brand and in very few instances they have expressed disappointment. In addition of using just words to describe their feelings users often use symbols which are known as ‘emojis’, the symbols that can be used to easily express emotions.

5. **Unrelated-** It is observed that users have tweeted hashtags in ways that they are not related to the company. Therefore, in such cases it is seen that they use hashtags belonging to the company but simply for other purposes. Furthermore, it was observed that other organizations happen to use the exact hashtags which matched with the sportswear companies’ hashtags. As a result, many users have used the hashtags referring to other organizations besides the sportswear companies.

4.2 Hashtags Used from the Perspective of Companies and Consumers

4.2.1 Adidas

Hashtags used by Adidas

In the last year Adidas have used a total of 25 hashtags. However, Adidas (@adidas) have not used any hashtags in their tweets in the months of October, November and December. Not all hashtags have been discussed in this section. A table below provided an example of hashtags used by Adidas in 2015. This table shows some of the hashtags which have been used by Adidas arranged according to the purpose.

Findings

Marketing Campaign	Product Promotion	Related Events	Branding	General
#ThereWillBehater	#UltraBoost	#FifaWWC	#ThreeStripes	#LimitedEdition
#ImpactTheGame	#F50	#Wimbledon	#TeamAdidas	#NeedsNoTrasnlation
#BeTheDifference	#YeezyBoost	#UCLFinal		#ForceOfBlack
	#Climachill			
	#AdidasGo			

Table2.1: example of hashtags used by Adidas in 2015

Marketing Campaign - Hashtags by Adidas were predominantly used to promote product lines. The ‘There Will Be Haters’ campaign was when Adidas launched a series of football boots in early 2015. The hashtag #ThereWillBeHaters was a prominent feature in the twitter account of Adidas, especially in the months of January and February. In addition, #BoostYourRun was used to encourage people to buy Ultra Boost running shoes.

As Adidas has multiple twitter accounts dedicated to various sports. #ImpactTheGame is a hashtag which is used in a few months when retweeting from the Adidas Tennis page. Similar to “There Will Be Haters” campaign, and “Be The Difference” campaign also involve a campaign when another series of football boots were launched. But unlike #ThereWillBeHaters, and #BeTheDifference that are not heavily used by Adidas. Below is image of how Adidas used the #ThereWillBeHaters as marketing campaign.

Findings



Figure2.1: example of Adidas's marketing campaign tweet

Product Promotion - Adidas has been aggressive with their hashtag strategy when it comes to promoting their products. Some of their notable hashtags include #UltraBoost and #YeezyBoost which are shoe brands by Adidas and proved to be very popular hashtags in Twitter. Despite using many hashtags for different products not all hashtags have been used by consumers or users in such high numbers. Hashtags such as #Climachill , #AddidasGo have hardly been used by consumers. This is because these hashtags were not frequently used by Adidas.



Figure2.2: example of Adidas's production promotion tweet

Findings

Events – Adidas has used certain hashtags to inform that they are associated with a number of sport events. As many of the athletes endorsed by Adidas participate in such events, this makes it ever so important that Adidas uses such hashtags to make it evident of their affiliations with a certain event. Adidas has not used hashtags of this category very frequently. Some of the hashtags include #Wimbledon and #UCLFinal.



Figure2.3: example of Adidas's event tweet

Branding – The main strategy for Adidas is to promote their products aggressively on Twitter, which could well be a reason why Adidas has used very few hashtags referring to the company as a whole. Interestingly, only one such hashtag has been used in 2015, which is #ThreeStripes. In addition, these hashtags were not frequently used by Adidas as a result it did not generate any engagement from the consumers.

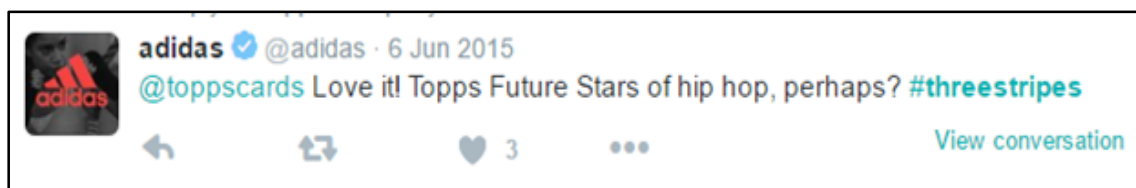


Figure2.4: example of Adidas's branding tweet

Findings

General – Adidas in a very few instances uses hashtags which are used to write a particular tweet. These tweets are often used to complement the tweets which belong to the category of Marketing Campaign and Product Promotion.



Figure2.5:example of Adidas's general tweet

Adidas' Hashtags used from the Consumers' Perspective

Involvement		
Hashtag	Company's Perspective	Consumer's Perspective
#UltraBoost	Product promotion	Involvement 51%, Information 40% Desire 3%
#YeezyBoost	Product promotion	Involvement 21%, Information 48%, , Desire, 17%
#ThreeStripes	Branding	Involvement 46%, Information 23%, Emotional 10%

Table2.2: example of Adidas's hashtag used by consumer on involvement tweet

Involvement – Since the majority of the hashtags used by Adidas are under the category of product promotion. It is observed that consumers use such hashtags in their tweets to inform their peers on Twitter that they are using a particular product of Adidas. For instance, Ultra Boost is a running shoe which was launched in the beginning of 2015. It is dubbed as the best running shoes ever. Adidas started using the hashtag #UltraBoost when the product was launched as a result it immediately started gaining popularity. In the initial months, users started using this particular hashtag in a different manner as most of the

Findings

tweets were about the features of the product. However, after a few months, users started using the hashtag to show they have purchased the particular product. In the month of January, a mere 18% of tweets containing #UltraBoost were used involvement as compared to 63% in the month of April [See Appendix 23]. Therefore, the manner of the usage of hashtags by users drastically changed in the span of few months.



Figure2.6: example of consumer's involvement tweet using Adidas's hashtag

Above is an example of the hashtag #UltraBoost used as involvement hashtag in a tweet. Similarly, when Adidas launched the shoe brand Yeezy, Boost, countless of tweets involving the #YeezyBoost were posted. Like Ultra Boost, users and retailers tweeted regarding the particular shoes. However, users gradually started posting tweets after purchasing the shoes. However unlike #UltraBoost, #YeezyBoost was mostly used in the category of information instead of involvement.

#ThreeStripes is the hashtag which is used as branding purpose by Adidas. It is observed that whenever users have purchased a particular product of Adidas or participated in an event by Adidas, the #ThreeStripes was used by them. Majority of the tweets which consisted of #ThreeStripes were used as involvement. However, #ThreeStripes were not often used by users in their tweets.



Figure2.7: example of consumer's involvement tweet using Adidas's hashtag

Findings

A total of 78 tweets consisting of the hashtag #AdidasGo were made by users in Twitter. Adidas Go is a mobile application which allows users to have different music depending on their running intensity, since the application was launched in April users started using the hashtag from the very same month. Despite the lower number of tweets, a high proportion of this hashtag was used as involvement as over half of the tweets belonged to this category.

Information		
Hashtag	Company's Perspective	Consumer's Perspective
#UltraBoost	Product promotion	Information 40% Involvement 51%, Desire 3%
#YeezyBoost	Product promotion	Information 48%, Involvement 21%, Desire 17%
#Messi15	Product promotion	Information 68%, Involvement 10%, Emotional 10%

Table2.3: example of Adidas's hashtag used by consumer on information tweet

Informational – Majority of the hashtags belonging to Adidas are predominantly used by users under the category of informational. Adidas launched a wide array of products which led to users in Twitter discuss about the products. Tweets which were posted related to the facts of a certain product. Online retailers often posted tweets mentioning the price of a product, availability of the product and discounts, if any. In the case of Yeezy Boost shoes, majority of the hashtags #YeezyBoost were used as informational. In the month of February when Yeezy Boost was launched the #YeezyBoost was used in a high number of tweets. When Yeezy Boost was newly launched in the market, there were certain days in the months when the hashtags were only used as informational. In the following months different versions of Yeezy Boost were released which caused the number of hashtags used as informational to rise rapidly. In the initial month of February around 50% of the hashtags were used as informational. However, as a result of the launch of several versions of Yeezy

Findings

Boost, the figure rose to 63 % [See Appendix 24]. The below image shows how a retailer used #YeezyBoost to inform users the date of availability of the product.



Figure2.8: example of consumer's information tweet using Adidas's hashtag

In addition, hashtags were used for tweets where reviews posted regarding the products belonging to Adidas. Products such as Ultra Boost made headways in Twitter as it was dubbed as the best running shoe available as a result numerous tweets consisted of links of the reviews.

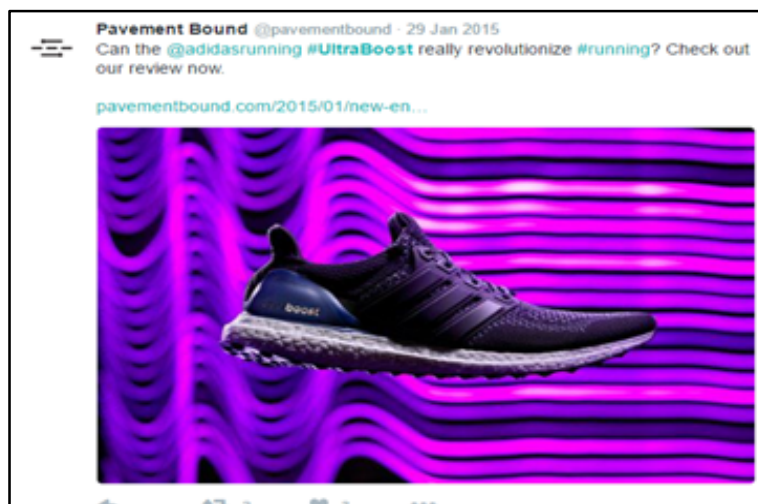


Figure2.9: example of consumer's information tweet using Adidas's hashtag

Findings

Renowned sports athletes often have endorsement deals with sportswear companies and Adidas is no exception. Adidas name a football boot after the footballer Lionel Messi called Messi 15. Therefore, there were tweets which contained the hashtag #Messi15 as the tweets mentioned news regarding Messi and his namesake boots. There were tweets that stating that Messi wore the boots for the first time and nominated other players to wear the them.



Figure2.10: example of consumer's information tweet using Adidas's hashtag

Prior to the launch of the X15 boots, the hashtags regarding #X15 were not exist in Twitter. When the product was launched in May, numerous tweets featuring the hashtag was posted. Since May, the hashtag #X15 where mostly used for the purpose of being informative as it was a new product at that point in time. The #X15 were used at least on an average of 45% for informative purposes from June to December of 2015 [See Appendix 25].

Findings

Emotion		
Hashtag	Company's Perspective	Consumer's Perspective
#ThereWillBeHaters	Marketing Campaign	Emotional 11%, Unrelated 57%, Information 20%
#StanSmith	Product promotion	Emotional 9%, Involvement 44%, Information 30%

Table 2.4: example of Adidas's hashtag used by consumer on emotion tweet

Emotional – Adidas' products are regarded as of high quality by consumers. However, Twitter users did not use Adidas' hashtags for emotional purpose as much as informational and involvement. This is because in the year 2015 Adidas launched several products line, therefore users used hashtags mostly which were under the category of informative and involvement. Consumers who have expressed their affection to a product or a marketing campaign in their tweets using Adidas's hashtags have been classified as being emotional. The "There Will Be Haters" marketing campaign launched by Adidas in early 2015 when it introduced a series of football boots received plaudits from users in social media. In the month of January and February, tweets having the hashtag #ThereWillBeHaters were used 15% and 11% as emotional and the figure dipped and plateaued in the following months [see Appendix 28]. The tweet below illustrates how a user is showing his affection towards the "There Will be Haters" campaign.

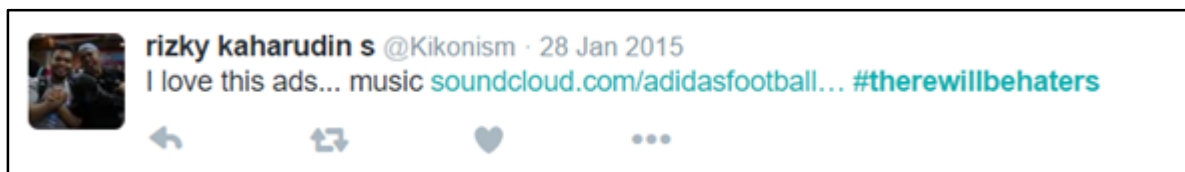


Figure 2.11: example of consumer's emotional tweet using Adidas's hashtag

Stan Smith which is another shoe brand by Adidas, has received affectionate tweets containing the hashtag #StanSmith. As aforementioned, users have often used certain

Findings

symbols to show their affection in their tweets. In general, the consumers did not post substantial number of tweets using Adidas' hashtags.



Figure2.12: example of consumer's emotional tweet using Adidas's hashtag

Desire		
Hashtag	Company's Perspective	Consumer's Perspective
#UltraBoost	Product promotion	Desire 3%, Involvement 51%, Information 40%
#SuperColor	Product promotion	Desire 15% Involvement 28%, Information 38%

Table:2.5: example of Adidas's hashtag used by consumer on desire tweet

Desire – Users have expressed their desire for Adidas' products on Twitter through their tweets using the company's hashtags. The users who have used these hashtags made it clear that they do not own the specific Adidas product and are willing to purchase them. Supercolor which is a shoe brand of Adidas, comes in different colours. In the months of January and February, there were hardly any tweets which expressed desire with the #SuperColor as it was launched in the market in March. When Super Color was launched in March, tweets started to appear which expressed a desire for Super Color. However, the percentage of the tweets in this category were not as high as involvement and information. The percentage of tweets containing the hashtag #SuperColor in March and April were 16%

Findings

and 17% respectively [see Appendix 29]. Moreover, it peaked in June as 22% of the tweets with the hashtag #SuperColor belonged to this category.

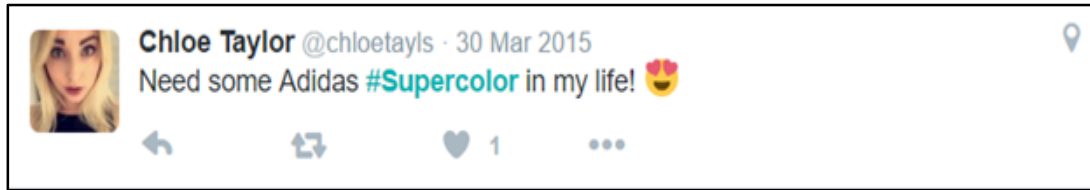


Figure2.13: example of consumer's desire tweet using Adidas's hashtag

The Ultra Boost running shoes was a highly discussed topic on Twitter. This led to #UltraBoost becoming very popular especially during the initial months when Ultra Boost was first launched. Since there were numerous tweets which were informational and consisted of reviews stating Ultra Boost to be the best running shoe. This make the users on Twitter were knowledgeable about the price and features of Ultra Boost which resulted in tweets expressing desire. Therefore, it was observed that many wanted to use Ultra Boost. The tweet below illustrates how a user is expressing desire to have Ultra Boost.

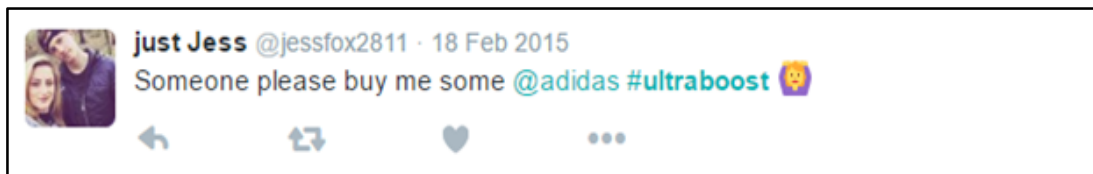


Figure2.14: example of consumer's desire tweet using Adidas's hashtag

Findings

Unrelated		
Hashtag	Company's Perspective	Consumer's Perspective
#ThereWillBeHaters	Marketing Campaign	Unrelated 57%, Information 20% Emotional 11%
#F50	Product promotion	Unrelated 29%, Information 41%, Involvement 23%
#Boost	Product promotion	Unrelated 53% Information 28% Involvement 14%

Table:2.6: example of Adidas's hashtag used by consumer on unrelated tweet

Unrelated - It was observed in many instances where users have used various hashtags by Adidas in ways that they did not have any relation to Adidas. In such cases it was observed that the hashtags which were used by Adidas where coincidentally used by other organizations. Moreover, Adidas' hashtags were also used by social media users to make humorous and personal tweets.

The hashtag #ThereWillBeHaters, were most of the time used in an unrelated way. In the months of April and May #ThereWillBeHaters were used in an unrelated way in 82% and 82% of the analyzed tweets for both the months [See Appendix 28]. It was also seen that #ThereWillBeHaters were used in tweets related to football matches or news. Even though the "There Will Be Haters" campaign is for different brand of football boots such tweets made no reference to the boots, hence they were categorized as being unrelated. Below are some of the tweets of #ThereWillBeHaters which made no reference to the campaign by Adidas.

Findings

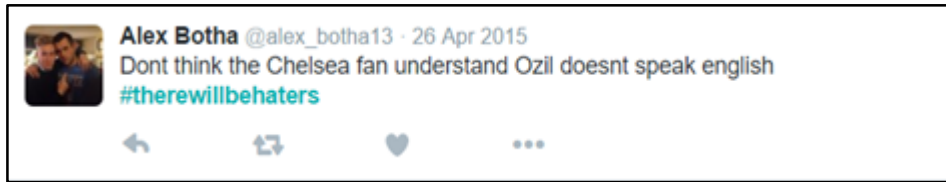


Figure2.15: example of consumer's unrelated tweet using Adidas's hashtag

Adidas had also launched football boots known as F50, but it was observed the hashtag #F50 was used by Twitter users for various purposes. Although most of the tweets containing #F50 were regarding the football boots. But it was seen that #F50 being used to refer to a model of the Ferrari car. In other tweets, this particular hashtag was also used in tweets to discuss proceeding of F50 which happens to be a technology conference. Therefore #F50 was not a distinct hashtag from Adidas.



Figure2.16: example of consumer's unrelated tweet using Adidas's hashtag

Ultra Boost has gained a lot of awareness due to its unique features as a running shoe. Apart from using the hashtag #UltraBoost, Adidas has also used the hashtag #Boost to refer to the running shoe. In the month of January 74% of the analysed tweet having the #Boost were unrelated. However, the scenario changed when Ultra Boost was launched and Adidas undertook an aggressive social media marketing in Twitter. In the month of February, the percentage of unrelated tweets dropped significantly to 47%, but since #Boost is such a generic word, many social media users used this particular hashtag for various purposes [See Appendix 27].

Findings

4. 2 .2 Reebok

Reebok International Ltd. is one of the largest companies in the sportswear industry; its business scope is mainly focused on the athletic and fitness gear, aerobic exercise, and sponsorship of UFC, Spartan Race, Les Mills, and CrossFit. (Adidas-group, 2016). By going through all the hashtags that used by Reebok in the year of 2015, the researchers have found that Reebok's Twitter account has been very active. Reebok used a significant number of hashtags not only for promoting their brand, products, or marketing campaigns, but also for interacting between the company and consumers by using over one hundred general hashtags.

Hashtags used by Reebok

Marketing Campaign	Product Promotion	Related Events	Branding	General
#BeMoreHuman	#getpumped	#CorssFitGames	#LiveTheDelta	#WeGotYou
#ToughisBeautiful	#nano5	#CrossFitInvitational	#BetterThanYesterday	#Goodluck
#getpumped	#Zpump		#Reebok	#noworries
#ReebokAthleteSummit	#LiveFreeRange			#WeApprove
#Bettertogether				#HappyFriday
#SoleMate				

Table3.1: example of hashtags used by Reebok in 2015

Marketing Campaign - During the year of 2015, there were total of nine hashtags used by Reebok with the intention of promoting its marketing campaigns. Among these hashtags, there were two of them contained the brand name “Reebok”. There were several predominant campaigns: “Be More Human”, “More Than Tape”, and “Break Your Selfie”. Reebok used the name of the campaigns as hashtag, then sent out tweet with relevant pictures and official website links to inform consumers and help them to understand the

Findings

central idea of certain marketing campaign. Moreover, the researchers have noticed that more than half of the marketing campaign promotion tweets contained at least two hashtags. When Reebok tweeted for one of its marketing campaigns, it often came with another hashtag of its own relevant campaigns or products. The tweet below is an example of such a case.



Figure3.1: example of Reebok's marketing campaign tweet

Another feature that the researchers have found is that the precedence of Reebok's hashtag can be clearly distinguished. For instance, by looking at the date of hashtag being used by Reebok, #BeMoreHuman can be determined as Reebok's primary marketing campaign, and #ToughisBeautiful as the secondary marketing campaign. This is because Reebok used the hashtag #BeMoreHuman more than twenty-five times a month and almost used it every day throughout the year of 2015, whereas #ToughisBeautiful only appeared less than five times in Reebok's tweets. The intention of launching #BeMoreHuman marketing campaign was to inspire people to take part in tough training, step out of their comfort zone, and explore their potential. #ToughisBeautiful was more focused on women, which encouraged them to approach fitness and expressed the perception of strong girls being beautiful.

Moreover, another unique phenomenon has been noticed. Reebok used its products' name in hashtags to promote both of its marketing campaigns and products. For example, Reebok organized a concert in conjunction with its #getpumped marketing campaign with famous

Findings

American rapper Kendrick Lamar in Hollywood, Los Angeles on March 24th 2015. The singer was singing on a moving truck with #getpumped sprawled on the side of the truck. (hiphodox, 2016). The hashtag #getpumped did not only refer to encourage people to get ready for building muscle and become stronger, but also refer to the Reebok Z Pump shoe.

Product Promotion - In 2015, Reebok used thirteen different hashtags specifically to promote its products. All the hashtags were exactly the same as the of products' name. Similar to Reebok's strategy on its marketing campaign promotions, it was very common that Reebok use one of its marketing campaigns' hashtag or a sponsored events' hashtag with its product name in the same tweet. For example, hashtag #CrossFitGames and #Nano5. The figure below is an example of this type of tweet.

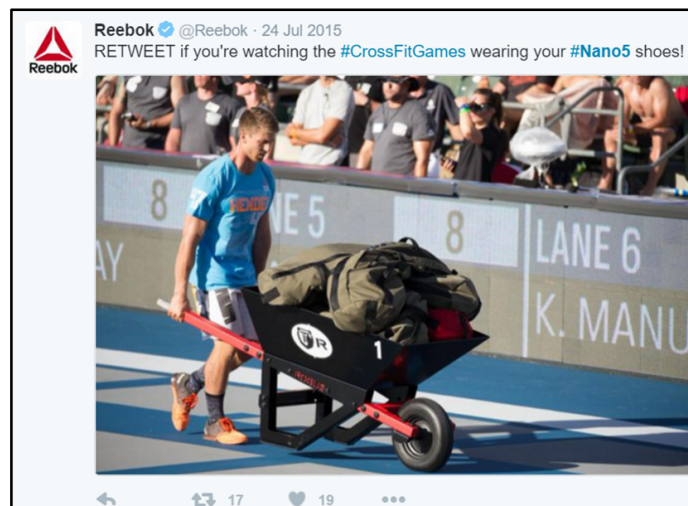


Figure3.2: example of Reebok's product promotion tweet

Reebok used their sponsored famous athletes' as advertisements to promote its products. For instance, Ronda Rousey was one of Reebok sponsored UFC player, when Reebok sent out tweet about its UFC Fight Kit product, there would be a picture of this well-known player with the product's name.

Findings



Figure3.3: example of Reebok's product promotion tweet

Related Event - Majority of the hashtags that Reebok used were to inform consumers of its sponsored events. However, as aforementioned, this type of hashtags were not related to Reebok's product offerings or marketing campaigns. There were twenty-one hashtags used by the company to simply describe the events and let consumers know about them. None of the twenty-one hashtags contained any product's name or relevant marketing campaign from Reebok. For example, Reebok have used the hashtag #CrossFitInvitational more than twenty times, but none of them was about their product, marketing campaign, or branding.



Figure3.3: example of Reebok's related event tweet

Branding - Compare to marketing campaign, product promotion, and relevant event, there were not many hashtags used for branding purposes. The researchers found three hashtags that were used as reference to Reebok, such as: #LiveTheDelta, #BetterThanYesterday, and #Reebok. The word “Delta”, #LiveTheDelta refers to the Reebok Delta brand logo which represents the positive and transformative change that fitness can impact on a person’s daily life. #BetterThanYesterday is a hashtag that Reebok used to convey the idea that their products are constantly developing and improving. It also has another meaning that interpreted by the researchers. Since Reebok’s core value is to encourage people to participate tough training and to push beyond their limit, #BetterThanYesterday is used for inspiring people to strive for a better and healthier body by taking part in Reebok’s exercises and campaigns. Similar to general hashtags, these hashtags were used to ensure consumers get involved with the brand and create interaction between Reebok and the consumers.



Figure 3.4: example of Reebok’s branding tweet

General Hashtag - Reebok has frequently used general hashtags to start conversations with consumers, such as #WeGotYou, #Goodluck, #noworries, #WeApprove, and so on. Although there were many general hashtags being used, Reebok did not use them as often as they use other type of hashtags. Most of the general hashtags only appeared less than five times throughout the year. Moreover, the researchers have found that general hashtags were usually created with a tone similar to daily conversation between people. For example, #HappyFriday were used seven times last year, tweets which contained such hashtags were similar to an informal conversation. Below is an example of a tweet with the #HappyFriday.

Findings

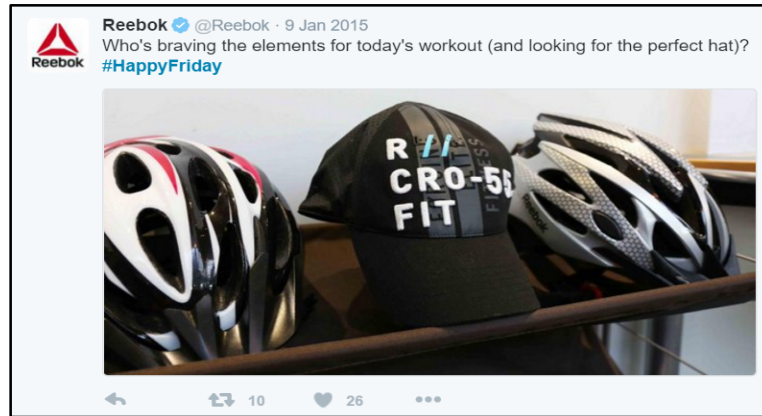


Figure3.5: example of Reebok's general hashtag tweet

Reebok's Hashtags used from the Consumers' Perspective

Involvement		
Hashtag	Company's Perspective	Consumer's Perspective
#Nano5	Product promotion	Involvement 57%, Information 25%
#Zpump	Product promotion	Involvement 30%, Information 47%
#SoleMate	Marketing Campaign	Involvement 0%, emotion 0.1%

Table:3.2: example of Reebok's hashtag used by consumer on involvement tweet

Involvement - Apart from hashtags used for relevant event and branding, most of the hashtags used by Reebok were related to product promotion and marketing campaign. As the researchers observed, Twitter users mostly used these hashtags to show that they have participated in campaigns held by Reebok or have purchased Reebok products.

However, the percentage of involvement have changed over time. For instance, hashtag #Nano5, which was Reebok's new shoe was released on June 2015. During the first month of launching the product, 55% of tweets mentioning #Nano5 from users were classified as the involvement category. During that time, consumers mostly used this hashtag in their

Findings

tweets and asked about the product's information or shared comments on this product. However, when time moved forward to July, the percentage of hashtags used by twitter users under involvement category raised to 67%. A month later, 75% of the tweets could be categorized as involvement [See Appendix 11].

Another example is #Zpump, it was a new shoe product that Reebok introduced to the market in February, 2015. During the first month, there were only a total of 16 tweets from Twitter users contained #Zpump, and none of the tweets fell into the involvement category. In the following months, the total number of tweets with #Zpump increased to 1032, and the percentage of involvement increased to 35%. In April, the percentage increased again to 43% [See Appendix 12].



Figure3.6: example of consumer's involvement tweet using Reebok's hashtag

In 2015, other hashtags under this category also had similar patterns to #Nano5 and #Zpump. However, some of the hashtags did not generate much attention from consumers. For instance, #SoleMate was a marketing campaign that Reebok launched on the Valentine's day 2015. It was aimed to encourage couples to wear the same Reebok shoe.

Findings

However, there were total of 917 tweets which contained #SoleMate in the whole year, but only 2 of them related to Reebok with 0% involvement [See Appendix 13]. Before Reebok started to use #SoleMate, this hashtag was used by several online shoe retailers and organizations. Therefore, there were already a huge number of Twitter users using #SoleMate for unrelated purposes before Reebok launched the SoleMate campaign.

Desire		
Hashtag	Company's Perspective	Consumer's Perspective
#ReebokAthleteSummit	Marketing Campaign	Desire 4%, emotion 48%
#LiveFreeRange	Product Promotion	Desire 2%, emotion 35%
#BeMoreHuman	Marketing Campaign	Desire 1%, involvement 56%

Table:3.3: example of Reebok hashtag used by consumer on desire tweet

Desire - Tweets are classified into the desire category when Twitter users expressed their willingness to participate in Reeboks campaigns or to purchase Reebok products. After the researchers observed the collected data from the year of 2015, an interesting phenomenon was noticeable. Hardly any hashtags of Reebok were used in tweets to express desire. For instance, #ReebokAthleteSummit, a campaign organized by Reebok to bring Reebok athlete together to work out with their peers, provided feedback on future product development. 4% of the tweets with #ReebokAthleteSummit showed twitter users' desire of to be part of this campaign, the majority of the tweets were emotional [See Appendix 14].



Figure3.7: example of consumer's desire tweet using Reebok hashtag

Findings

The researchers also noticed that there were Twitter users expressing their desire in Reebok's main campaign #BeMoreHuman and product promotion #LiveFreeRange. However, none of these hashtags had more than 4% of tweets which were classified under the desire category [See Appendix 10].

Information		
Hashtag	Company's Perspective	Consumer's Perspective
#BeMoreHuman	Marketing Campaign	Information 17%, involvement 46%
#Getpumped	Product Promotion	Information 10%, unrelated 71%

Table:3.4: example of Reebok hashtag used by consumer on information tweet

Information - There were a relatively high number of tweets categorized under the information category. Twitter users shared information about various Reebok products and marketing campaigns through posting tweets with pictures, videos, and links of official website or famous bloggers. #BeMoreHuman was the main marketing campaign for Reebok throughout 2015. Its purpose was to encourage people to participate in exercises and trainings, so they could explore their potentials and push beyond their limits. In the beginning of January, there were 18 tweets having the hashtag #BeMoreHuman. Among these tweets, three of them were categorized into involvement, and rest of the tweets were unrelated. After Reebok launched their new commercial 'Freak Show - Be More Human' during the Super Bowl, the number of relevant tweets boosted to 391 in the last week of January. Which resulted an increased in the percentage of informational tweets increased 54% during that month [See Appendix 16].

Findings



Figure3.8: example of consumer's information tweet using Reebok's hashtag

Similar to #BeMoreHuman, #Getpumpd have been used in a significant number of tweets by Twitter users. However, consumers have used #Getpumpd for many different purposes. In the year of 2015, 71% of the tweets containing this hashtag were unrelated to Reebok [See Appendix 10]. Moreover, the researchers found that this hashtag was used by Twitter users before Reebok started using it.

Among the Twitter users, the researchers have also noticed that there were retailers sharing information about Reebok products. It was observed that hashtags of Reebok were consistently being used by online retailers for providing information regarding the Reebok's products which are sold by them. Retailers shared information such as the date of releasing a new shoe, price, unique features about the product, etc.

Findings



Figure3.9: example of consumer's information tweet using Reebok hashtag

Reebok		
Hashtag	Company's Perspective	Consumer's Perspective
#ToughisBeautiful	Marketing Campaign	Emotion 41%, involvement 28%
#Livethedelta	Branding	Emotion 33%, involvement 31%
#BeMoreHuman	Marketing Campaign	Emotion 24%, involvement 46%
#Nano5	Product Promotion	Emotion 14%, involvement 57%

Table:3.5: example of Reebok hashtag used by consumer on emotion tweet

Emotion - The percentage of emotional tweets containing Reebok's hashtag were nearly in the same level as information. From the marketing campaign perspective, the percentage of emotional tweets were more than informational tweets. #ToughisBeautiful is a campaign that encourages women to take part in tough training, and convey the idea that it helps them to be more confident and attractive. There were 110 relevant tweets in the year 2015, 41% of them were emotional tweets [See Appendix 18]. Most of the Twitter users who tweeted this hashtag expressed their appreciation of the idea that women being tough is beautiful.

Findings



Figure3.10: example of consumer's emotion tweet using reebok hashtag

As mentioned in the information section, after launching the 'Freak Show - Be More Human' in January, the informational tweets increased the most among the five categories. Emotion had the second most increment, which was 25% [See Appendix 16].

The hashtags which were used by Reebok as product promotion did not often feature in tweets used by the consumer as emotional, compared to the tweets which were used as marketing campaign by Adidas. Twitter users tend to use the promotional hashtag to share information and show their peers that they have possess one of Reebok's products. For example, #Nano5 had 14% of emotional tweets, whereas informational tweets accounted for 25% [See Appendix 11].

When it comes to hashtags used for branding purpose by Reebok. Some of them had relatively large percentage of tweets which fell under the emotion category. For example, 35% of tweets regarding the branding hashtag #Livethedelta were used as emotional [See Appendix 10]. Other branding hashtags showed the totally different result, which will be presented in the unrelated category section.

Findings

Unrelated		
Hashtag	Company's Perspective	Consumer's Perspective
#Bettertogether	Branding	Unrelated 99%,
#getpumped	Marketing Campaign	Unrelated 71%, involvement 11%
#LiveFreeRange	Product Promotion	Unrelated 24%, information 26%

Table:3.6: example of Reebok hashtag used by consumer on unrelated tweet

Unrelated - The unrelated category made up a sizeable percentage of the tweets that contained Reebok's hashtag. For instance, #Bettertogether was used as a branding hashtag to convey its idea of encouraging the fit generation to work out together and improve their fitness experience. However, researchers have observed 11018 tweets having the hashtag #Bettertogether, 99% of the tweets featuring this hashtag were unrelated to Reebok [See Appendix 10].



Figure3.11: example of consumer's unrelated tweet using reebok hashtag

In addition, Reebok's primary marketing campaign and product promotion also had a large number of unrelated tweets. Although in the year of 2015, the hashtag #getpumped was used in total of 11015 tweets under the category of involvement, desire, information, and emotion, there were 7814 tweets categorized as unrelated [See Appendix 10]. In January 2015, there were 226 tweets having #LiveFreeRange, but 27% of them were used for other purposes that were not related to Reebok at all [See Appendix 16].

4.2.3 Under Armour

Under Armour Inc. is an American sportswear company, established in 1996. It is a supplier of sportswear clothing and casual outfit. The company is famous for its compassion clothing, that are presented in many movie and used by many famous athletes. By going through all the hashtags that were used by the Under Armour Twitter account in 2015, the researchers have found that the company used significant amount of hashtags for various purpose. A Large number of hashtag were used in nearly all of the categories. However, the company only used a few number of product promotion hashtags, in comparison to other companies. Below are examples of hashtags used by the Under Armour Twitter account during 2015.

Hashtags used by Under Armour

Marketing Campaign	Product Promotion	Related Events	Branding	General
#UANext	#CurryOne	#CES2015	#IWILL	#EraseAllDoubt
#UAALLAMERICA	#CurryTwo	#ALLStar2015	#TeamUA	#MondayMotivation
#DictateTheTempo	#GloryGold	#CutDownTheNets	#ProtectThisHouse	#MySummerin5 words
#ChargedByBelief		#Bearcat	#SlayYourNextGiant	#SpellingBee
#EarnYourArmour		#NBAFinal	#RuleYourSelf	#MotherDay

Table4.1: example of hashtags used by Under Armour in 2015

Marketing Campaign – During the year of 2015, there were a total of fifteen hashtags used by Under Armour with the intention to promote its marketing campaigns. The marketing campaign of Under Armour came in the form of sport events which were

Findings

organised by them. During 2015, there were two sport events arranged by Under Armour; UANext, a sport event for young talented children, and UAAllAMERICA, a college sport event of various sports. There were other hashtags which were used to refer other campaigns such as #ChargedByBelief and #EarnYourAnswer were not frequently used as #UANext and #UAAllAmerica. The illustration given below illustrates how #UANext and #UAAllAmerica were used.



Figure4.1: example of Under Armour marketing campaign tweet



Figure4.2: example of Under Armour marketing campaign tweet

Findings

Product Promotion – In 2015, Under Armour only used three hashtags that related to their products; #CurryOne, #CurryTwo, and #GloryGold. These three hashtag referred to the company's basketball shoes that named after the famous NBA basketball player, Stephen Curry. Unlike other companies, that had hashtags for many products lines, Under Armour did not have hashtag specifically for any of it products. Instead, they used their branding hashtag such as #IWILL on tweets to promote products, which is they have used in nearly all the tweets posted by the company.



Figure4.3: example of Under Armour product promotion tweet



Figure4.4: example of Under Armour product promotion tweet

Findings

Event – Under Armour used a large number of event related hashtag during 2015. With a total of 39 different hashtags in this category, a majority of the hashtags were under this category [see Appendix 1]. The company used the hashtag in tweets which were related to events, teams and any major news from around the world.



Figure4.5: example of Under Armour event tweet

The majority of sport events used as hashtags by Under Armour were U.S. based sport events such as NFA and NBA. However, other major sport competitions around the world were used as well such as 2015WGC, women golf competition and Davis Cup (a tennis tournament). However, the company only mentioned those international events when they were participated by athletes who were sponsored by the company. The company also follow the world events as well, such as #Starwar, when Star War:Episode 6 came out or #PrayforParis, when the city was under attack last year.

Branding – The main strategy for Under Armour was to use their main slogan of #IWILL in nearly every tweet. In August, Under Armour introduced another slogan #RuleYourself to compliment the #IWILL hashtag. These hashtags were used dominantly by Under Armour all year round. The branding hashtags of Under Armour were used for many purpose other than branding, such as for product promotion or marketing campaigns.

Findings



Figure 4.6: example of Under Armour branding tweet

General – In 2015, Under Armour used 20 general hashtags that were not associated with the brand [see Appendix 1]. Most of the time, hashtags were used as a reminder to their followers of their account of regarding some special days or were used to post motivating tweets. Hashtags used in this category are not originally created by Under Armour as they have already been used by the Twitter users. In addition, these hashtags were used as phrases or words to complete a tweet.

Hashtags used by Under Armour

Involvement		
Hashtag	Companies' Perspective	Consumers' Perspective
#UAALLAMERICA	Marketing Campaign	Involvement 50% Information 10%
#IWILL	Branding	Involvement 40% Unrelated 50%
#TeamUA	Branding	Involvement 60% Emotion 10%

Table 4.2: example of Under Armour hashtag used by consumer on involvement tweet

Involvement - Under Armour used several number of hashtag to promote their sport events, such as #UAALLAMERICA, to promote college sport competitions arranged by Under Armour, and #UANext, a sport event for young children. Social media users used these hashtags to inform other people of their participation in such events activities. But, majority

Findings

of the post came from athletes, participating in the sport events. These kinds of tweet seem to be an instruction from Under Armour, as the tweets have very similar structure of sentences. Not all users who used these hashtags took part in such events, some users who went as spectators or have friends who participated, used them as well.

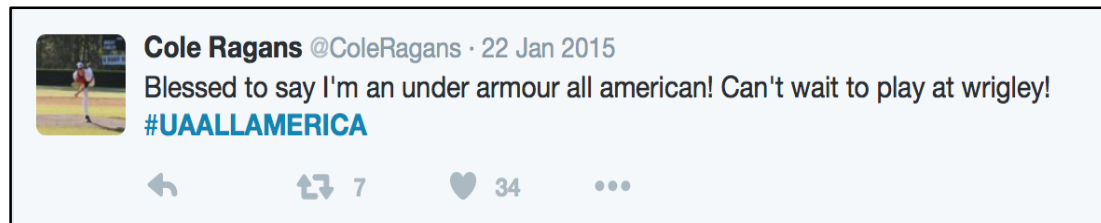


Figure4.7: example of consumer's involvement tweet using Under Armour hashtag

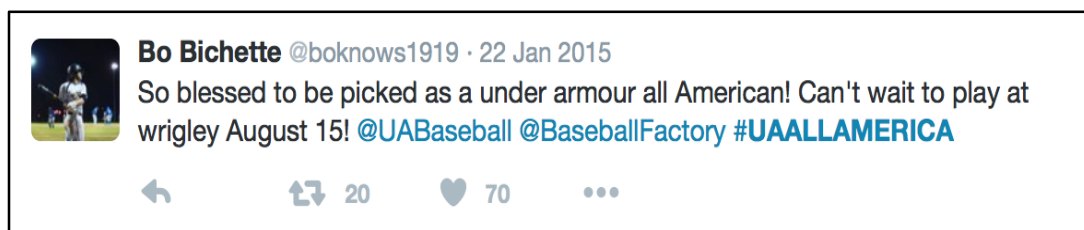


Figure4.8: example of consumer's involvement tweet using Under Armour hashtag

The pattern of hashtag usage could be clearly seen, during the month of certain activities or events, it was observed that a high number of tweets that used hashtags which referred to such events. For example, in January, UAALLAMERICA took place, more than 80% of the post were deemed as involvement category, compare to other months when the tweets that used the #UAALLAMERICA, were largely used as information and general.

Many people also used Under Armour's branding hashtag, such as #IWILL and #TeamUA to show their involvement with the brand. They used them when they participated in Under Armour sport events, or when they purchased products from Under Armour. 40% of tweets with #IWILL and 60% of tweets with the hashtag #TeamUA were used under the involvement category. [see Appendix 2].

Findings

Only three product hashtags were used; #CurryOne, #CurryTwo, and #GloryGold [see Appendix 1]. It was observed that these hashtags which were used by Under Armour as product promotion, were used in tweets as involvement by the consumers. It was common sight on Twitter that users posted a picture of these products by using the hashtag to show they own the product. Although, Under Armour only used a few product hashtags. A large number of involvement and desire tweets were generated by users using these hashtags.

Desire		
Hashtag	Companies' Perspective	Consumers' Perspective
#CurryOne	Product promotion	Desire 20% Information 50%
#CurryTwo	Production promotion	Desire 30% Information 60%
#UAALLAMERICA	Marketing Campaign	Desire 5% Involvement 50%

Table:4.3: example of Under Armour hashtag used by consumer on desire tweet

Desire - The majority of tweets recreating consumers' desire contained product promotion hashtags. #CurryOne and #CurryTwo are two hashtags used by Under Armour to promote their new basketball shoes that are named after the NBA basketballer Stephen Curry. #CurryOne and #CurryTwo were used in desire hashtag for 20% and 30% respectively. Nevertheless, a large number of tweet that contained these hashtags were used for other purpose as well, such as information [see Appendix 2]. It can be observed that a large number of tweets containing hashtag #CurryTwo were used to express desire since before the product was released in October, and continuity being used since then. The percentage of the tweets which contained the #CurryTwo used under the category of desire peaked in October (37%) [see Appendix 6]. Another hashtag that was used in tweet to express desire was #UAALLAMERICA. Users sometime used this hashtag on their tweets to express their desire to participate in the event.

Findings



Figure 4.9: example of consumer's desire tweet using Under Armour hashtag

Information		
Hashtag	Companies' Perspective	Consumers' Perspective
#CurryOne	Product promotion	Information 50% Emotion 20%
#UAALLAMERICA	Marketing campaign	Information 10% Involvement 50%

Table 4.4: example of Under Armour hashtag used by consumer on information tweet

Information - Most of the time, informative tweets were posted by retail shop or sport news. Retail shop used Under Armour hashtag to promote the company's products. While sport news used the hashtag to provide information regarding the company's sport events and sport teams that were sponsored by Under Armour. Nevertheless, normal users also created informative posts, such as product reviews or to provide information on sport events arranged by Under Armour that they participated in.

Most of the hashtags were used in this category, as marketing campaign, branding, and product promotion by the companies. 50% of tweets containing #CurryOne were informational tweets. The #CurryOne is the hashtag that can generate largest number of information tweets [see Appendix 2]. The information tweets that contained #CurryOne were mostly created by consumer and retail shop to review the CurryOne basketball shoes. A marketing campaign hashtag such as #UAALLAMERICA also provided a certain

Findings

amount of informative tweets, in comparison to other hashtag; around 10% of tweets were related to information [see Appendix 2]. The information which were provided via the hashtags were the date and time of events. Furthermore, the hashtag was also used to provide information on career progress of athletes who participated in UAALLAMERICA sport event.



Figure4.10: example of retail's information tweet using Under Armour hashtag

Emotion		
Hashtag	Companies' Perspective	Consumers' Perspective
#Ruleyourself	Branding	Emotion 30% Involvement 30%
#CurryOne	Product promotion	Emotion 20% Desire 20%

Table:4.5: example of Under Armour hashtag used by consumer on emotion tweet

Emotion - Very few hashtags used by Under Armour were able to generate emotional tweets. Only two hashtags generated emotional tweets of more than 10% namely #Ruleyourself and #CurryOne. These hashtags generate 30% and 20% of emotional tweets respectively.

The hashtag #Ruleyourself is used by Under Armour as a compliment hashtag to their main branding hashtag #IWILL, that generate large number of unrelated tweets. However, in August 2015, Under Armour came up with new slogan #Ruleyourself, which most of the

Findings

time were used together with #IWILL. From the observation, when the company started to use these two hashtags together, the number of emotional tweet by users increased significantly [see Appendix 3].

Another hashtag that generated a large number of emotional tweet from consumers is #Curryone. From observation, 20% of the emotional tweets, that had the hashtag #Curryone, were posted by consumers to express their positive feeling toward the shoes. Although, the hashtag was used extensively in informational tweets, it still generated a large number of emotional hashtag [see Appendix 2]

Unrelated		
Hashtag	Companies' Perspective	Consumers' Perspective
#IWILL	Branding	Unrelated 50%

Table:4.6: example of Under Armour hashtag used by consumer on unrelated tweet

Unrelated - A large number of unrelated tweets using the Under Armour hashtag were found during the data collection. A Majority of unrelated tweets included the hashtag #IWILL. As mentioned, #IWILL were used by other organization to promote social activity. Thus, this 50% of tweets that contained the hashtag #IWILL were not related to Under Armour. The situation did not change until the company introduced the new branding hashtag #RuleYourself in August to be used as complementary hashtag to #IWILL.

4.3 Summary of Finding

In this study the researchers have observed the Twitter accounts of three major sportswear companies; Adidas, Reebok, and Under Armour. From the observation, the researcher's categorised the companies use of hashtags into five different categories; marketing campaign, product promotion, related events, branding, and general. The empirical

Findings

findings have revealed that each company has its own hashtags strategies, as they focus their use of hashtags in different categories.

Hashtags by Adidas were predominantly used to promote their product lines. The company is very aggressive in product promotion hashtags. Thus, the company rarely focuses on other hashtags related to branding and marketing campaign. Reebok has similar hashtag strategies as Adidas, as they extensively focus their hashtags usage on the product promotion category and rarely use hashtags in others categories. For Under Armour, the company clearly has a different hashtag strategy, in comparison to the other two companies. The company concentrates its usage of the hashtag on branding and marketing campaign categories. Despite, having a large number of product line, the company used few product promotion hashtags.

Apart from hashtag strategies, the empirical finding also reveal the consumers' perspective on hashtag as well. As, many of the companies' hashtags were used on consumers' tweets for different purposes. The researchers categorized each tweets into five categories from the consumers' perspective; involvement, desire, emotion, information, and unrelated. It was observed that product promotion hashtags are used by consumers' involvement tweets. Furthermore, many hashtags were used by consumers in different ways other than what company intended to. Each hashtag has the scope of being being misinterpreted as all the hashtags featured in some tweets which were unrelated to the company. But there were hashtags which were had a high percentage of unrelated tweets compared to the others.

5. Discussion

In this part, the researchers analyse the empirical finding from the previous chapter. The data is analysed using three different theories; communication theory, online branding theory, and brand awareness theory. Then a practical implication is introduced at the end of this chapter as a suggestion for a company.

5.1. Communication theory via Hashtags

Initially, hashtags were used as a navigator, for Twitter users to find the certain topic of their interests. But now, the hashtag is turning out to be a great marketing tool for companies. By using the hashtag, companies could generate online conversation and search traffic on companies' product and marketing campaign. This eventually lead to an increase in brand awareness (Drell, 2014). Nevertheless, not all hashtags are successfully able to increase brand awareness. From the empirical findings, the authors have observed factors that contribute to the successful and unsuccessful hashtags. One of the main factors that have a significant impact on the success of each hashtag is how the hashtags are being interpreted by consumers.

To successfully increase brand awareness among consumers, hashtags used by the company must be acknowledged and used correctly. If the hashtags are used in irrelevant ways, it could create confusion among other users. This occurrence could be seen from the research findings, as many of the companies' hashtags were used in a way which were not related to the company (tweets that were placed in the unrelated category). By using the Schramm's communication process model and semiotic theory, the researchers aim to explain why some hashtags are more successful on raising brand awareness than the others.

5.1.1 Hashtag as a Message in Communication

Schramm's model of communication process illustrates that communication is a circulation of message between two parties, that involves interpretation (Bowman & Targoski, 1987). Schramm discussed that the accuracy of the message interpreted depends on the knowledge and background of both the receiver and sender. Misinterpretation occurs due to the difference in the knowledge and cultural background of the recipient and sender (Bowman & Targoski, 1987). From the research findings, hashtags that have the large percentage of unrelated usage to companies have one thing in common; which is the hashtags have a broad meaning and are susceptible to various interpretation. These hashtags tend to be used in other ways than what the company intended them to be used. For example, hashtags #IWILL, #Betterttogether, #ThereWillBeHaters. These three hashtags were used by the companies under the category of branding and marketing, but they were used in an unrelated way by Twitter users and consumers as 50% (#IWill), 99% (#BetterTogether), and 57% (#ThereWillBeHaters) of these were under the category of unrelated. It is very clear that these hashtags are too generic, as they do not contain any specific meaning or word that could be related back to the companies. Such hashtags give a scope for consumers to interpret the meaning hashtag in different ways other than what the company intended to. Therefore, as per the Schramm's model, the generic term of the hashtag is prone to consumers interpreting them according to their knowledge and background. As a results, these hashtags are used in tweets that make no reference to the company.

On the other hand, hashtags which were very specific or used to refer to the companies' product name, the percentage of unrelated tweets for them was very low, for example, #Ultraboost, #UAALLAMERICA, and #TeamUA, have lower percentage of unrelated tweets compare to the ones mentioned earlier. This is because, the hashtag has very specific meaning, and could not be used in other ways.

5.1.2 Interpretation of Hashtag

From the standpoint of the semiotic theory, the hashtag is a good example of polysemy. Polysemy is when a word, phrase or symbol can be interpreted in multiple ways (Duck and McMahan, 2014). Duck and McMahan (2014) states that word can be interpreted in two ways; denotation, a dictionary meaning of the word, and connotation, alternative meaning that relate to experience and knowledge. Hashtags such as #IWILL and #ThereWillBeHaters, could have different meaning than what they mean. For example, #IWILL, in general would mean that an individual is about to perform a task. However, Under Armour used the hashtag to encourage people to get out of their comfort zone and get physically fit. When consumers interpreted the hashtag in a wrong way, then they could not generate conversation or traffic that the companies want to create from using the hashtag. If users of these hashtags were familiar with the company's slogan and that these hashtags were used by the companies, then they would have interpreted the meaning of these hashtags in a connotation way instead of denotation and used the hashtags in the way companies intended them to be. Hence, misuse of hashtags occurs from lack of knowledge on the background of the hashtags. Moreover, if the hashtag is too broad, it can be used in many other ways. The users without the knowledge of the term of a hashtag then used the hashtag according to its denotation meaning.

5.1.3 Summary of Communication theory via Hashtags

In this section, the discussion focuses on how interpretation of messages plays an important role on the effectiveness of hashtag to raise brand awareness. Using Schramm's model of communication process and semiotic theory, the researchers have found that misinterpretation of hashtags by consumers lead to failure of hashtags to making any contribution as they are used in different ways from what companies intended. As misused hashtags could not generate a conversation or online traffics on companies' products and marketing campaigns. The main reason for the misinterpretation is due to the feature of the

hashtag itself. If the hashtag is too generic and has a large scope for interpretation, the hashtag is more likely to be misinterpreted by consumers.

5.2 Online Branding Strategies via Hashtags

The traditional branding theory introduces the concepts that a brand is a combination of a name, symbol, or design which enables customers to identify the goods and services of one seller and to differentiate them from other competitors (Keller, 1993). This theory also applies to companies that want to increase brand awareness and to build strong relationship with consumers on social media. To achieve this objective, there are three steps that companies can go through:

- (1) enable consumers to recognise the brand name or logo;
- (2) potential consumers start to try and purchase product or service
- (3) consumers become very familiar with the brand and build trust between them (Chiagouris & Wansley, 2000).

These procedures are to a large extent used by Reebok, Adidas, and Under Armour with their online branding strategies on social media websites such as Twitter. The data gathered for this thesis provides an indication that Reebok, Adidas, and Under Armour have experienced these three steps and increased their brand awareness by using hashtags.

Step One

Since verbal conversations on social media are the primary means to communicate on Twitter, companies try to exhibit its brand logo along with posting pictures. All of the three observed companies created the specific hashtag for branding purposes and made efforts to make their brand logo and brand name stand out. Reebok's Delta logo, Adidas' three stripes, and Under Armour's UA, was represented by #LivetheDelta, #ThreeStripes, and #UA respectively.

Discussion

Since Reebok, Adidas, and Under Armour are very well-known brands in the sportswear industry, they have already achieved the first step before the researcher's investigation. Consumers were able to recognize these brands' name and logo. Therefore, Reebok, Adidas, and Under Armour did not put much effort on this type of branding hashtag during the year of 2015. For instance, data shows that Reebok used the hashtag #LivetheDelta seven times [See Appendix 10].

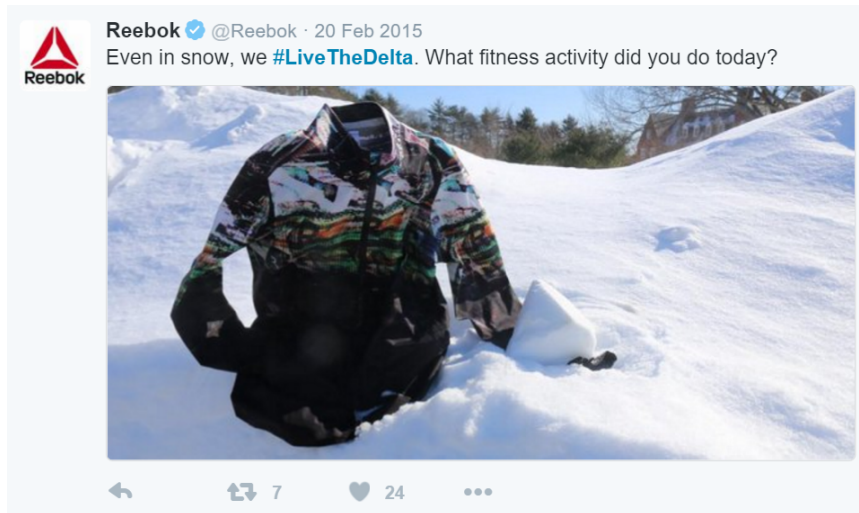


Figure 4.11: example of Reebok's used of hashtag #LiveTheDelta

Step Two

The empirical findings revealed that Reebok, Adidas, and Under Armour have also achieved the second step, which takes place when consumers start to try and purchase product or service. Before launching a marketing campaign or particular product, companies use hashtags in their tweets to ensure that consumers are well informed. By using such hashtags, companies ensure that customers would purchase the products once it is launched in the market. It can be seen in the data that the three companies used hashtags to spread the information and successfully attract consumers to be involved with them. Consumers used these hashtags to show that they have either purchased the company's product or participated in the company's event. For instance, in the first month of launching the Reebok Nano 5 shoe, 28% of the tweets containing #Nano5 could be classified as information. In the next two months, the percentage dropped to 18% and 16%.

Discussion

In the meantime, the proportion of involvement rose to 75%, which increased 20% compared to the first month of launching the product as consumers tweeted that they have purchased a new product [See Appendix 11]. Similar to #Nano5, a shoe product called Zpump was introduced to the marketplace in March, 2015. Reebok started to use the hashtag #Zpump as product promotion when the product was launched. It quickly generated 1032 tweets, 41% of them were used as informative by the consumers. Two month later, the percentage of informative tweets gradually reduced to 30%. Meanwhile, the involvement rate increased from 35% up to 44% [See Appendix 12]. Other brands' product promotion followed nearly the same pattern as Nano 5 and Zpump. For example, Ultra Boost is a running shoe which was launched by Adidas in the beginning of 2015. 18% of the tweets containing #UltraBoost have shown users' involvement with the product. A few months later, it increased to 63% in April [See Appendix 23]. Therefore, such patterns go to show that as companies start to use hashtags for such products, consumers are being enticed by the tweets of the companies and eventually make the purchase decision.

From the empirical data collected, it could be identified that hashtags used by companies for promotion purpose were mostly used by Twitter users under the category of information as these hashtags were mostly used by them to provide and share information regarding products which have been just launched. It was also observed that online retailers used the hashtags to let Twitter users know that their products can be purchased from them. Later as few months went by, the same hashtags used by Twitter users were mostly under the category of involvement. It indicates that they were either started to purchase the company's' product or started to participate in the campaigns

Step Three

The researchers have observed that there were a certain number of consumers who have already become very familiar with these companies' products or campaigns. This was done as they have expressed their willingness to participate in the events again in the future through their tweets by using the hashtags and showed that they have purchased these companies' products at least twice. Although this phenomenon was not observed often, it implies that the relationship was built between companies and consumers to some extent.

Discussion

The empirical material implies that Reebok, Adidas, and Under Armour have achieved the third step, which is strengthening consumer relationship and increasing brand awareness. The tweet below shows an example that a consumer purchased Reebok's product at least twice.



Figure4.12: example of Reebok's used of hashtag #Nano5

5.2.1 Ineffective Hashtags

The researchers have noticed that several hashtags from Reebok, Adidas, and Under Armour were not designed with the intention to differentiate their products or campaigns from other existing hashtags which are simultaneously used by other organisations and consumers. According to Keller (2003) brand elements such as the name, logo and slogan are used by companies to make themselves distinct from competitors. Moreover, brand elements enable companies to achieve strong brand awareness (Vranesćević & Stancić, 2003). Hashtags can be considered as a branding element as they are used so that the companies use these hashtags to distinct themselves. When the hashtags failed to serve the purpose of differentiating products or services from competitors, consumers will not be

able to distinguish them from the existing ones. For instance, Reebok launched a Sole Mate marketing campaign on Valentine's day, 2015. There were total of 917 tweets containing #SoleMate posted by users, 99% of them were not related to the campaign [See Appendix 10]. The researchers have found that the hashtag #SoleMate already existed and was trending because it was used by Twitter users and other organizations. These significant figures supported Keller's (1993) statement, and implied that a hashtag should be in a position to enable consumers to recognize and differentiate the products or campaigns from competitors. Otherwise, the objective of strengthening the relationship with consumers and building brand awareness cannot be accomplished.

Iben, Luo, and Dinnie (2005) suggest that to develop more solid relationship with consumers and entice them to relate themselves to the brands, companies should target customers with distinctive messages and unique functions of their products or campaigns. Authors of this thesis found there were several hashtags that failed to deliver distinctive message to consumers. For instance, Reebok's branding hashtag #BetterThanYesterday, it did not only express the idea that the company and its products are improving, but also encouraged people to become stronger than they were through fitness. However, the wording of this hashtag was too generic to attract Twitter users to use it for Reebok's branding purpose. 92% of the tweets involving #BetterThanYesterday were categorized as unrelated [See Appendix 10]. The findings indicate that the hashtags which did not express distinctive information will not enable companies to effectively build a solid relationship with consumers. Without clear and distinctive messages related to the companies and their offerings, consumers are not going to use these hashtags for relevant purposes.

5.2.2 Summary of Online Branding Strategies via Hashtags

As the discussion presented, the empirical data in this thesis supports Chiagouris & Wansley's statement that strengthening the relationship with consumers and building brand awareness can be achieved through the three steps. In the first two steps, consumers became familiar with the brand and its products. In the last step, the brand loyalty will start to set

in. Therefore, consumers purchase the product or participate in the events repetitively. In conclusion, companies can entice the consumers into buying their products or participate in events organized by the companies. But it is important that companies will have to make their hashtags as distinct and unique as possible otherwise the message of a particular campaign would not be delivered.

Hashtags without distinctive messages will not help companies to achieve the objectives of each step. Tuten and Solomon (2012) states that social media promotion should function as advertising and tag particular event or product to encourage consumers to feel the sense of willing to be involved with the brand. In the case of Reebok, Adidas, and Under Armour, all the three companies used several hashtags that did not successfully tag particular event or product. Therefore, consumers used these hashtags for different purposes that were not related to the companies. As a result, companies could not increase their brand awareness by using the ineffective hashtags to promote their brands, products, or campaigns among consumers.

5.3 Brand Awareness via Hashtags

5.3.1 Hashtags as Advertisement

Companies always strive for having its brands and products in the minds of the consumers. As a result, the consumers would purchase what a particular brand has to offer. According to Prakash and Wesley (1985) awareness of a product is the most crucial factor when it comes to consumers making a choice. Companies undertake various measures in order to maintain the brand awareness among the consumers. Companies are using various channels for its marketing communication, including social media websites such as Twitter. The rise of the social media has now prompted all companies (except Apple) to take social media seriously; this is because it can be used by companies as a channel to market their products

Discussion

and services in the form of engaging with social media users (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi 2012).

Sportswear brands are also using social media websites such as Twitter to engage with consumers by using hashtags. It was observed that hashtags were used in tweets for various purposes by the sportswear companies in focus. But the main goal of sportswear companies like any other companies in Twitter is to ensure brand awareness. Reebok, Adidas and Under Armour have used hashtags for different reasons, one being to promote their products or used as product promotion. As far as promoting products are concerned, Adidas and Reebok have used several hashtags to promote their products. On the other hand, Under Armour used a total of three hashtags in the year of 2015. Similar to advertising, hashtags too are also frequently used by firms. Keller (2003) explains that through numerous repeated advertising activities consumers will be familiar with a certain brand. Therefore, companies make a conscious effort to use hashtags to strengthen their presence in social media.

When it came to hashtags used by the three sportswear companies, it was observed they had different ways of using hashtags. For instance, Reebok and Adidas have used several hashtags in the category of product promotion (13 and 20 hashtags respectively). Whereas, in the case of Under Armour, a very few hashtags were used for product promotion. One of the reasons Reebok and Adidas used many hashtags to promote their products was because they have a large product assortment and several new products were launched in 2015.

5.3.2 Analysis of Hashtags by the Advertising model

According to the advertising model by Rossiter and Percy (1992) (which was discussed in the literature review chapter) companies can adopt certain themes in their advertisement such as informational and transformational. Therefore, by adopting such strategies can lead to companies achieve brand awareness.

Discussion

Transformational is when the companies convey a message through their advertisements that consumers can enhance their wellbeing. On the other hand, informational is when the message is shown that consumers' satisfaction can be fulfilled by eradicating any problems faced by them. Not all the hashtags in tweets by companies are precisely informational and transformational. But it was observed that significant number of hashtags in tweets had similar traits to being informational or transformational.

Adidas has used several hashtags in tweets used for product promotion. As aforementioned Adidas' hashtag #UltraBoost for its running shoe Ultraboost was used to promote the particular product. The image below illustrates a way how the hashtag #UltraBoost was used by Adidas.



In the above tweet it is seen that Adidas are trying to provide crucial information regarding Ultraboost. The tweet explains that shoe is compatible to inclement weather. According to Rossiter and Percy (1992), if an advertisement explains how a problem faced by consumers can be solved by using a particular product or service, therefore the advertising strategy is being informational. Adidas in this case is explaining how a common problem such as

Discussion

having wet shoes, can be avoided by using Ultra Boost. Therefore, the hashtag in this tweet can be deemed as informational as per the advertising model by Percy and Rossiter (1992). Furthermore, it was observed that product promotion hashtags used by the consumers were used mostly as involvement category and information category. For instance, in the case of Ultraboost, 51% of the tweets by consumers consisting of the hashtag #UltraBoost were involvement [See Appendix 23].



Similar to Adidas, Reebok has also used several hashtags for marketing its wide range of products. In the above tweet from the Reebok account, it is seen that the hashtag #ZPump is used to promote the running shoe called Z Pump. The above tweet mentions Z Pump can be suitable for anyone. Therefore, according to model by Percy and Rossiter (1992) this tweet can be deemed as transformational. This is because this tweet points out that one's running experience can be enhanced in a positive way by using Z Pump shoes.

Hashtags which were used by the sportswear companies as product promotion mostly had both informational and transformational features. The above example illustrates how companies have used hashtags in their tweets which bears resemblance to being informational and transformational. Therefore, undertaking such an approach can result in brand awareness.

5.3.3 Patterns indicating Brand Awareness

Numerous researchers have discussed that consumers' choice of brands is determined by the brand awareness they have (Haley & Case 1979; Nedungadi and Hutchinson 1985). Companies have used several hashtags for various purposes and on the other side of the spectrum, consumers have also used these hashtags in various ways. It was exhibited from the tweets by the consumers that they were knowledgeable about what the sportswear companies had to offer. This was especially evident from the fact that high percentage of tweets were in the categories of involvement, information, and desire. Under Armour, one of the sportswear in focus used the hashtag #TeamUA to brand themselves. Consumers have used this hashtag when they participated in certain events or purchased a particular product. Therefore, 60% percent of the tweets which included the hashtag #TeamUA were under the involvement category [See Appendix 4]. In such cases, consumers want to associate themselves with brands on social media by using such hashtags so that their peers are informed they are using a particular brand.

Keller (2003) states that brand awareness is divided into two parts one is brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition happens when consumers are familiar with a brand from having previous experiences with it. While, brand recall happens when a brand is remembered when thinking of a particular product category. The researchers observed that numerous hashtags were used by the companies as product promotion, these type of hashtags were mostly used by consumers as involvement and information. In some cases, it was observed that the percentage of involvement tweet using product promotion rose significantly within the year. For instance, the shoe Z Pump was launched in February 2015, in the initial month, there were virtually no tweets consisting of #ZPump under involvement. In the following months during March and April, the hashtag used as involvement rose from 34% to 43% [See Appendix 12]. This is because Reebok had started to use the #ZPump more frequently in the following months which resulted in the #ZPump getting more popular and it resulted consumers in using the hashtag more often. #ZPump started trending or getting popular because in the initial months, hashtags used by users for

Discussion

new products are mostly under the category of information. But then, the hashtag #ZPump was started being used as involvement, due to the fact they may have come across the hashtag #ZPump.

A similar phenomenon took place for Ultra Boost. In January and February #UltraBoost was mostly used as information but in the rest of the months the hashtag was used as involvement [see Appendix]. As far as brand recall (which is one aspect of brand awareness) is concerned it is when consumers recognise a brand when it comes to a particular product category. Similarly, for products such as UltraBoost and Z Pump, the hashtags which were used to refer these products, may have resulted in the consumers recognising these product brands when thinking of running shoe (the product category which UltraBoost and Z Pump belong). As time went by the hashtags used as product promotion by the sportswear companies resulted in high proportion of involvement tweets by the consumers. Because consumers recognized that these products belong to a certain company when a particular product category is considered by them. As a result, this led to people buying these products resulting in high proportion of hashtags under the involvement category.

According to Tellis (1988) advertising is extremely useful for loyal consumers to increase their purchase of products. Therefore, it can be argued that consumers who tweeted using the hashtags as involvement are loyal customers. However, most of the tweets were used only when they have purchased a product. This gave little evidence of their loyalty towards a brand. Tellis (1988) explains that apart from loyalty other factors such as features of the product and price have a stronger influence on consumers' decision on buying a particular product. Similarly, consumers have tweeted mentioning that they have purchased a product. Apart from advertising there are other reasons which may have resulted them in making a purchase.

5.3.4 Summary of Brand Awareness via Hashtags

Hashtags can be used by Adidas, Reebok, and Under Armor as a means of advertisement. Which is why, the hashtags were used by the companies to inform Twitter users or consumers on what the companies are offering. Hashtags which have been used by companies to promote their products (hashtags which are under the product promotion category) are crucial for companies as they use hashtags to advertise their products. In addition, similar to traditional advertising technique, the tweets used by companies also follows certain themes. These themes are transformational and informational which is a part of the advertising model. Also, it has been discussed that over time hashtags were used differently by the consumers. When a product was launched it can be observed that, Twitter users mostly used the hashtags for informational purpose, while the companies used it to promote the product. Twitter users also used such hashtags more as involvement which means that they have purchased the product and consequently tweets about it. The change of the hashtag usage pattern indicates that the consumers are able to recall the brand and hence make a purchasing decision. This However, there could be other factors that may have prompted consumers in buying the products.

5.4 Summary of Discussion

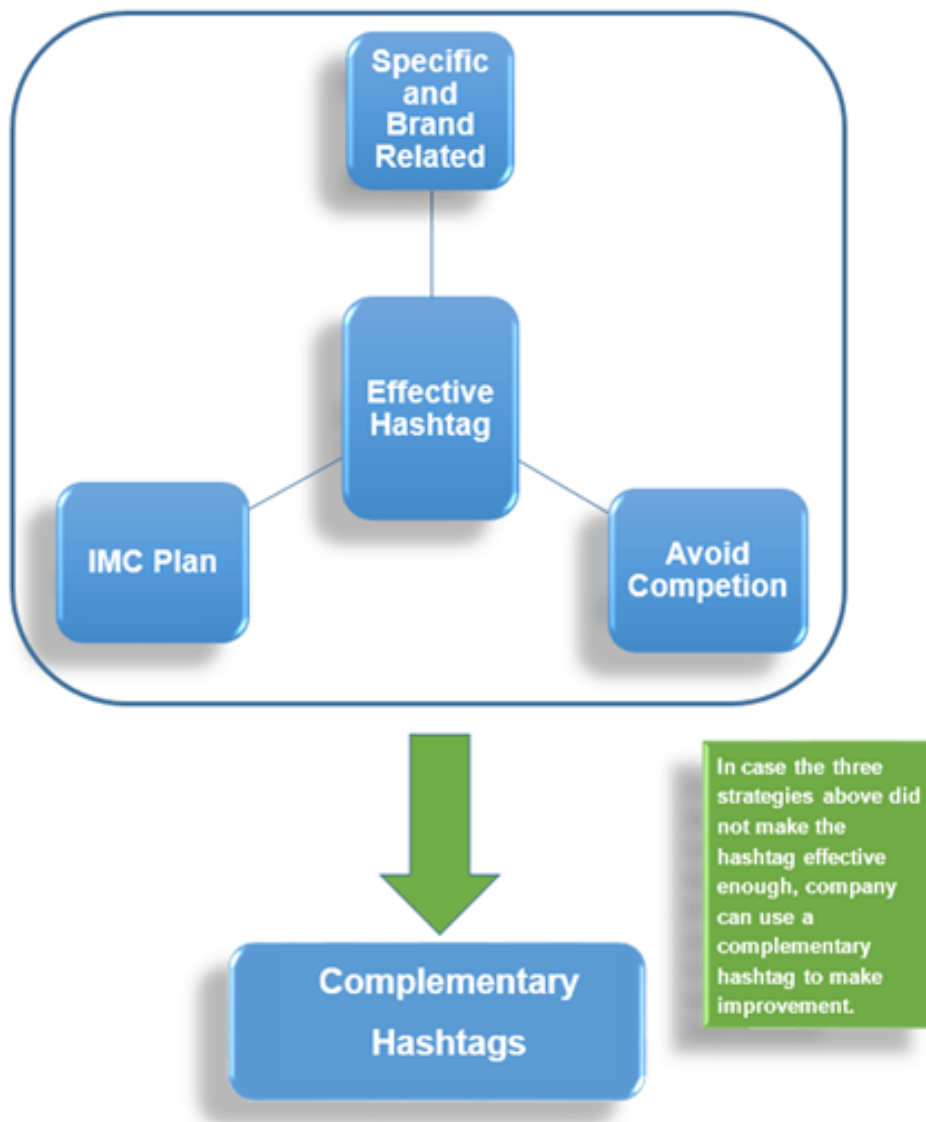
Hashtags are widely used by companies in social media, but they have a possibility of being misinterpreted by the consumers. It was observed that some of the hashtags were used in way that was not related to the company. One of the examples is #ThereWillBeHaters which was a marketing campaign used by Adidas. In most cases, consumers' tweet containing this hashtag had no reference to Adidas. This occurrence can be explained from the standpoint of communication and semiotic theories. Hence, the companies must ensure that certain procedures are implemented, in order to compel their customers in purchasing their products. Since the hashtag is a part of company's communication strategy, it is important how they are executed. From the analysis, it can be observed that consumers

have used hashtags to convey that they have purchased a product from the sportswear companies.

5.5 Introduction of the Framework

In the course of the thesis, the authors have attempted to answer the research question by analysing the way hashtags have been used by both companies and consumers. The sportswear companies in focus have used hashtags as part of its communication strategy in Twitter. To investigate whether brand awareness has been achieved among the consumers. The companies' hashtags used by the consumers in their tweets were thoroughly analysed. After gathering and analysing the data, it was observed that consumers can be familiar with the offerings of the companies. This was evident by the manner in which the hashtags were used during the year. It was noticeable that consumers were aware of the company's products and expressed that via their tweets using the hashtags. However not all the hashtags, were used in ways which could be related back to the company. It was observed that some hashtags were mostly used by consumers in their tweets had no connection to the company whatsoever.

It is possible for hashtags to be a potent tool for companies as part of their communication strategy. However, it is important to overcome the problems associated with hashtags that are susceptible to being misused or misinterpreted. Therefore, after going through the findings and analysis, a framework has been developed by which companies can use hashtags which would likely generate brand awareness



5.6 Framework

Having a specific and brand related name for the hashtag - From the findings, hashtags that have a broad meaning and do not show clear linkage to the brands, tend to be used in unrelated ways. If it is not specific enough for consumers to recognise that the hashtag is related to the company, it may have the scope of being misinterpreted. The best type of hashtags that will generate least unrelated tweet are the ones that are used for promoting products. This is because the name of the product tends to be distinct and related

Discussion

to the company. Since, such hashtags do not give any room for misinterpretation and ensures brand awareness as consumer will be able to recall the companies' product by the hashtags

However, not all hashtag used by the companies can be its product name. Hashtags which were used for other purposes by the companies, generated low unrelated tweets such as #TeamUA, #UAALLAMERICA, and #ThreeStripes. These hashtags have similar characteristics as they include the name of the company, in the case of Under Armour's UA, or have a word that is well known for consumer that symbolizes the company, such as Adidas' stripes in #ThreeStripes.

Ensure effective integrated marketing communication (IMC) plan - As mentioned in the previous section, misuse of hashtags exists from the lack of knowledge and background of the hashtags itself. In order to eradicate this problem, companies would have to implement an effective IMC plan that would feature hashtags in all the communication channels. By taking such steps, companies can ensure the hashtags are recognised by the consumers. Hence, the hashtags will be used by the consumers in such a way that they can refer back to the company. This results in an effective implementation of hashtags as a marketing tool to raise brand awareness.

Avoid identical hashtags - When companies use hashtags to effectively promote their brand's offerings and increase their brand awareness, the hashtag should not only be specific, but also unique enough to differentiate itself from the other identical existing hashtags. Therefore, it is crucial that companies check if there are any hashtags which are identical to the one which they are about to use on Twitter. Otherwise, it may fail to fulfill companies' purpose of using the hashtag. For example, Reebok intended to attract consumers to participate in its #SoleMate marketing campaign. However, #SoleMate could not gain any engagement from the consumers, as other organizations and individuals have already widely used the hashtag #SoleMate for different purposes. Since #SoleMate have been extensively used, consumers were not able to identify that it was from Reebok.

Discussion

Similarly, the hashtag #Boost was also an ineffective hashtag due its existence in Twitter before Adidas started to use it. As a result, it was used for many different purposes which were not related to the company. By observing and analyzing the tweets, it could be clearly seen that consumers did not recognize the particular message that Adidas was trying to send via #Boost. In 2015, 53% of tweets which contained #Boost was used, which made no reference to Adidas [See Appendix 22].

Complementary Hashtags – Even if the companies follow the mentioned strategies and is still unable to yield the desired outcome. Companies can include additional hashtags in their tweets. Companies can use hashtags which emanate their brand values or they could use hashtags which can be identical to their name. In other words, additional hashtags which are well known or are identical to the name of the company can be included whenever a firm posts a tweet. As a result, this will enable the consumers to associate certain hashtags with the companies. Hence, this will lead to consumers using the hashtags which are related to the companies. For instance, Under Armour used the hashtag #IWill for the purpose of branding, but the Twitter users often used this in an unrelated way. It was observed that in the later tweets #RuleYourself (which was also used for branding purpose) was used alongside #IWill. This helped the consumers to realise that #IWill is used by Under Armour .

6. Conclusion

6.1 Theoretical Implication

Hashtag is considered to be an understudy topic within academic business research, despite being excessively used by business organisations, an online marketing communication tool. Past studies on the hashtag have developed a knowledge only on social and cultural aspects of it. However, there is no academic research regarding the usage of hashtag in the business context. Hence, this research then enriches a knowledge on hashtags in the managerial perspective. As, it provides a new knowledge on use of the hashtag by the company to raise brand awareness on social media.

The academic contribution from this research is a new understanding on how hashtag could be used effectively. The findings have shown that, the effectiveness of the hashtags as marketing tools is dependent on how the hashtag is interpreted by consumers. In addition, by analysing the finding, the researchers have identified the key factors that contribute to the successful and unsuccessful hashtags as marketing communication tools.

6.2 Managerial Implications

Although companies are using hashtags on Twitter more than ever before, there were very limited studies guiding them to effectively using hashtags to achieve their objectives, specifically to raise brand awareness on social media. Therefore, this thesis underlined the vital characteristics of hashtags which can help companies to raise brand awareness more efficiently.

Discussion

Once a hashtag is launched via a company's' Twitter account, it is open to consumers to interpret based on their own knowledge and background, hence companies will not be able to control the discussion around the hashtag and the way consumers use it. Therefore, it is essential for companies to have a better understanding of how hashtags can be effectively used as marketing and advertising tool to communicate with consumers to raise brand awareness. This study provides companies with a framework which helps them to select the appropriate hashtag to interact with consumers, share brand offerings, and consequently increase brand awareness.

The collected data indicates that the use of hashtag can result in a completely different way. In order to reduce the unrelated hashtag usage among consumers and increase brand awareness, companies should try to incorporate the framework and use the suggested type of hashtags.

6.3 Limitation and Further Research

A method was adopted for this thesis that enabled the authors to answer the research question. However, there are certain limitations to the approach of the study. Moreover, the topic of this thesis can be researched further because the practice of hashtags being used by companies in social media is a practice that is becoming rampant.

As aforementioned, netnography was used to gather data for this thesis. The researchers had to analyse the tweets consisting of the hashtags of Adidas, Reebok and Under Armour in the year 2015. As far as analyzing how the hashtags of the companies were used by consumers is concerned, the researchers had to analyze the tweets of how the hashtags were used by the Twitter users by using the method of coding. Therefore, the researchers had to be subjective on how the hashtags were used.

Discussion

Alternative approaches could have been used to approach this study, for this thesis, only three sportswear companies were used to gather data, which is a small portion of the sportswear industry. Considering the time frame, focusing on three companies was ideal as these organizations have used numerous hashtags and most of them trend in high number of tweets. The researchers had to manually note down the hashtags used by the companies and the challenging aspect was that there were several tweets by users consisting of these hashtags. Hence it was not possible to analyze each and every single tweets of the consumers. In addition, to understand how hashtags can assist in building brand awareness, categories were formulated depending on how these hashtags were used by both company and Twitter users. Therefore, with more time at disposal other approaches could have been taken to investigate the effectiveness of hashtags as a communication tool

Since the sportswear companies were focused for this thesis, therefore the findings of the thesis may not be applicable to other industries. Therefore, in order to have a holistic understanding of hashtags as a marketing tool, future research can focus on companies from other industries and can even compare how firms from different sectors use hashtags for marketing purposes. Similarly, hashtags are widely used in other social media websites, the distinct feature of Twitter is that 140 characters is the maximum limit for a post. Which is why other platforms can be used for future research. The framework which has been developed is only applicable to sportswear industry, therefore further research has to be done to create theories that can be applied to other industries.

Reference List

Aaker, D.A. (1991). *Managing Brand Equity*, New York: The Free Press, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 11 April 2016]

Allison, R. I., & Uhl, K. P. (1964). Influence of beer brand identification on taste perception. *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 36-39, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 15 April 2016]

Armellini, G. & Villanueva, J. (2011). Adding Social Media to the Marketing Mix, *IESE Insight Second Quarter 2011*, Issue 9, pp. 29-36, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 20 March 2016]

Babbie, Earl. (2007). *The Practice of Social Research*. 11th edition. Belmont CA: Thompson - Wadsworth. pp. 87-89 [e-book] Available at: <https://books.google.se> [Accessed 01 April 2016]

Baggio, R., Mottironi, C., & Corigliano, M. A. (2011). Technological aspects of public tourism communication in Italy, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 105–119, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 18 March 2016]

Barwise, P. & Meehan, Sean (2010). The one thing you must get right when building a brand, *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 88, no. 12, pp. 80-84, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 19 March 2016]

Reference List

Batey, M. (2016). *Brand Meaning: Meaning, Myth and Mystique in Today's Brands*, [e-book] Routledge. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 02 April 2016]

Bernstein, M. S., Bakshy, E., Burke, M., & Karrer, B. (2013, April). Quantifying the invisible audience in social networks, *In Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 21-30), Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 21 April 2016]

Berger, A. A. (2014). *What objects mean: An introduction to material culture*. Available at: <https://books.google.se> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Bickart, B., & Schindler, R. (2001). Internet Forums as Influential Sources of Consumer Information, *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 31-40, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 26 March 2016]

Bowman, J. P., & Targowski, A. S. (1987). Modeling the communication process: The map is not the territory. *Journal of Business Communication*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 21-34. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Bronnenberg, B. J., & Vanhonacker, W. R. (1996). Limited choice sets, local price response and implied measures of price competition, *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 163-173, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 20 April 2016]

Bryman, A & Bell, E. (2011). *Business Research Methods*, New York: Oxford University Press

Reference List

Burton, S., & Soboleva, A. (2011). Interactive or reactive? Marketing with Twitter. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, vol. 28, no.7, pp. 491-499. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Chiagouri, L., & Wansley, B. (2000). Branding on the Internet. [pdf] Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 30 March 2016]

Cone (2008). 2008 Business in Social Media Study. [pdf] Available at: http://onesocialmedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/2008_business_in_social_media_fact_sheet.pdf [Accessed 1 April 2016]

Craig, R. T. (1999). Communication theory as a field. *Communication theory*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 119-161. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Divol, R., Edelman, D., & Sarrazin, H. (2012). Demystifying social media, *McKinsey Quarterly*, vol. 2, no.12, pp. 66-77, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 21 April 2016]

Dixon, P. R., & Sawyer, A. G. (1986). Point of purchase behaviour and price perceptions of supermarket shoppers, *Marketing Science Institute, Cambridge, MA: working paper*, (86-102), Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 12 April 2016]

Draganska, M., & Klapper, D. (2007). Retail environment and manufacturer competitive intensity, *Journal of Retailing*, vol. 83, no. 2, pp. 183-198, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 09 April 2016]

Reference List

Drell, L. (2014). Hashtags and Infographics and Videos! Oh My! *Marketing Insights*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 40-47, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 18 March 2016]

Duncan, T., & Moriarty, S. E. (1998). A communication-based marketing model for managing relationships. *The Journal of marketing*, vol. 62, no. 2, pp. 1-13. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 1 May 2016]

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Jackson, P. (2012). *Management Research*, London: Sage Publications Ltd

Fiske, J. (2002). *Introduction to communication studies*. Routledge. Available at: <https://books.google.se> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Fournier, S., & Avery, J. (2011). The Uninvited Brand, *Journal of Business Horizons*, Vol. 54, no. 3, pp. 193-207, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 02 April 2016]

Gamble, T. K., & Gamble, M. (2005). *Contacts: Interpersonal communication in theory, practice, and context. Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic*. Available at: <https://books.google.se> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Goh, K.Y., Heng, C.S., and Lin, Z. (2013). Social media brand community and consumer behaviour: Quantifying the relative impact of user-and marketer-generated content. *Information System Research*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 88-107. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Reference List

Gurau, C. (2008). Integrated online marketing communication: implementation and management. *Journal of communication management*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 169-184. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Haig, M., 2002. How Come You Don't Have an E-business Strategy?: The Essential Guide to Online Business , Vol. 4. Kogan Page Publishers. [e-book] Available at: <https://books.google.se> [Accessed 2 April 2016]

Haley, R. I., & Case, P. B. (1979). Testing thirteen attitude scales for agreement and brand discrimination. *The Journal of Marketing*, pp. 20-32, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 12 April 2016]

Hankinson, G., (2001). Location branding: A study of the branding practices of 12 English cities. *The Journal of Brand Management*, Vol.9, No. 2, pp.127-142. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 03 March 2016]

He, X & Jimenez, R.P. (2015), Chinese Social Media Strategies: Communication Key Features from a Business Perspective, *El profesional de la informacion*, vol. 24, no.2, pp.200-209, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 18 March 2016]

Henning-Thurau, T., Hofacker, C.F., and Bloching, B. (2013). Marketing the pinball way: Understanding how social media change the generation of value for consumers and companies. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 237-241. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Hipopdx.com (2016). Kendrick Lamar Delivers Reebok-Sponsored Free Concert On Moving Truck Throughout Hollywood. Available online:

<http://hiphopdx.com/news/id.33100/title.kendrick-lamar-combines-with-reebok-to-give-surprise-free-concert-on-moving-truck-in-hollywood> [Accessed 16 April 2016]

Houman Andersen, P. (2001). Relationship development and marketing communication: an integrative model. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 167-183. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Holtz, S. (1999). *Public Relations on the net: winning strategies to inform and influence the media, the investment community, the government, the public, and more!*. États-Unis, New York: AMA Publications.

Hoyer, W.D. & Brown, S.P. (1990). Effects of Brand Awareness on Choice for a Common, Repeat Purchase Product, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 141-148, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 18 April 2016]

Hutter, K., Hautz, J., Dennhardt, S., & Füller, J. (2013). The impact of user interactions in social media on brand awareness and purchase intention: the case of MINI on Facebook, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, vol. 22, no. (5/6), pp. 342-351, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 09 April 2016]

Ibeh, K. Lou, Y. & Dinnie, K. (2005) E-branding strategies of internet companies: Some preliminary insights from the UK, *The Journal of Brand Management* Vol. 12, No. 5, pp.355-373. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 27 March 2016]

Reference List

Jagongo, A., & Kinyua, G. (2013). The Social Media and Entrepreneurship Growth. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 3, no. 10, pp. 213-227. Available through: LUSEM Library website: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 07 March 2016]

Joshi, Y., Ma L., Rand, W. and Rashid, L (2013). How Social Media Drives Brand Engagement and Sales. [pdf] Available at: http://www.msi.org/artivles/how-social-media-drives-brandengagement-and-sales/?utm_source=20141&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Insights/ [Accessed 2 April 2016]

Kapferer, J.N. (2012). The New Strategic Brand Management Advanced insights and strategic thinking, London: KoganPage

Keller, K.L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity, *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 57, no. 1, pp.1-22, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 15 April 2016]

Keller, K. L. (2001). Building customer-based brand equity: A blueprint for creating strong brands. Available at: <https://books.google.se> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Kim, J. B., Albuquerque, P., & Bronnenberg, B. J. (2010). Online demand under limited consumer search, *Marketing science*, vol. 29, no. 6, pp. 1001-1023, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Kirkpatrick, M. (2011). The first hashtag ever tweeted on Twitter: They sure have come a long way, *readwrite*, Available Online: <http://bit.ly/1BnGNwV> [Accessed 31 January 2016]

Kleinrichert, D., Ergul, M., Johnson, C., & Uydaci, M. (2012). Boutique hotels: technology, social media and green practices. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, vol. 3,

Reference List

no. 3, pp. 211-225, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 16 April 2016]

Kozinets, RV. (2002). The Field Behind the Screen: Using Netnography for Marketing Research in Online Communities, *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 39, no. 61-72, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 6 March 2016]

Kozinets, RV. (2010). Netnography Doing Ethnographic Research Online, [e-book] London: Sage Publications Ltd. Available at: Google Books: books.google.com [Accessed 5 March 2016]

Liao, S. H., Wu, C. C., Widowati, R., & Chen, M. Y. (2012). Relationships between brand awareness and online word-of-mouth: an example of online gaming community. *International Journal of Web Based Communities*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 177-195, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 19 April 2016]

Lugosi, P., Janta, H., & Watson, P. (2012). Investigative management and consumer research on the internet, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, vol. 24, no. 6, pp. 838-854, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 21 April 2016]

Macdonald, E & Sharp, B (1996). Management Perceptions of the Importance of Brand Awareness as an Indication of Advertising Effectiveness, *Marketing Research On-Line*, vol. 1 pp. 1-15, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 20 April 2016]

Macdonald, E.K. & B.M. Sharp. (2000). Brand Awareness Effects on Consumer Decision Making for a Common, Repeat Purchase Product: A Replication, *Journal of Business*

Reference List

Research, vol. 48, no. 1, pp. 5-15, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 16 April 2016]

Markle, D.T., West, R.E. and Rich, P.J., (2011), September. Beyond transcription: Technology, change, and refinement of method. *Journal of Qualitative Social Research*, Vol. 12, No. 3. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 21 April 2016]

McCoy, S., Everard, A., Polak, P., & Galletta, D. F. (2007). *The effects of online advertising. Communications of the ACM*, vol. 50, no. 3, pp. 84-88, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Nedungadi, P., & Hutchinson, J. (1985). The prototypicality of brands: Relationships with brand awareness, preference and usage. *Advances in consumer research*, vol. 12, no. 1, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 10 May 2016]

Netemeyer, R. G., Krishnan, B., Pullig, C., Wang, G., Yagci, M., Dean, D., Ricks, J. & Wirth, F. (2004). Developing and validating measures of facets of customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 57, no. 2, pp. 209-224. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 11 April 2016]

Radder, L & Huang, W. (2008). High-involvement and low-involvement products: A comparison of brand awareness among students at a South African university, *Journal of Fashion Marketing & Management*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 232-243, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 16 April 2016]

Reference List

Rao, A.R. & K.B. Monroe. (1989). The effect of price, brand name, and store name on buyers' perceptions of product quality: An integrative review, *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 351-357, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 16 April 2016]

Roberts, J. H., & Lattin, J. M. (1991). Development and testing of a model of consideration set composition, *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol. 28, no. 4, pp. 429-440, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Rossiter, J.R. & Percy, R. (1987). Advertising and Promotion Management. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rossiter, J.R. & Percy, R. (1992). A Model of Brand Awareness and Brand Attitude Advertising Strategies, *Psychology & Marketing*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 263-274, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 16 April 2016]

Rossiter, J.R., Percy, L & Donovan, R.J. (1991). A Better Advertising Planning Grid, *Journal of Advertising Research*, vol. 31, no. 5, pp. 11-21, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 18 April 2016]

Rowley, J., (2009). Online branding strategies of UK fashion retailers. Internet Research. Vol.19, No.3, pp.348-369. [pdf] Available at: <https://books.google.se>

Saravanakumar, M., & SuganthaLakshmi, T. (2012). Social media marketing, *Life Science Journal*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 4444-4451, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 12 April 2016]

Reference List

Saxton, G.D., Niyirora, J.N., Guo, C., & Waters, R.D. (2015), #AdvocatingForChange: The Strategic Use of Hashtags in Social Media Advocacy, *Advances in Social Work*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 154 – 169, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 18 March 2016]

Shankar, V., Inman, J., Mantrala, M., Kelley, E., & Rizley, R. (2011). Innovations in Shopper Marketing: Current Insights and Future Research Issues, *Journal of Retailing*, [e-journal] Vol.87, Supplement 1, pp S29-S42, Available through: LUSEM Library website: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 26 March 2016]

Shields, Patricia and Rangarjan, N. (2013). A Playbook for Research Methods: Integrating Conceptual Frameworks and Project Management. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press. [e-book] Available at: <https://books.google.se> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Sigala, M. (2012). Social networks and customer involvement in new service development (NSD) The case of www.mystarbucksidea.com, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, vol. 24, no. 7, pp. 966-990, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 16 April 2016]

Stokes, R.C. (1985). The Effects of Price, Package Design, and Brand Familiarity on Perceived Quality. In J Jacoby & J Olson (eds.), *Perceived Quality*. Lexington: Lexington Books.

Suh, Bongwon., Hong, Lichan., Pirolli, P., & Chi, Ed H (2010). Want to be Retweeted? Large Scale Analytics on Factors Impacting Retweet in Twitter Account, *IEEE International Conference on Social Computing/IEEE International Conference on Privacy, Security, Risk and Trust*, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 19 March 2016]

Reference List

Tancs, L. (2013), 5 S.M.A.R.T. and Easy Steps to Create a Cult of Personality for Your Brand and Increase Sales. De Novo, Enterprise LLC. [e-book] Available at: <https://books.google.se> [Accessed 2 April 2016]

Tellis, G. J. (1988). The price elasticity of selective demand: A meta-analysis of econometric models of sales. *Journal of marketing research*, pp. 331-341.

Tirunillai, S., and Tellis, G. (2012). Does chatter really matter? Dynamics of user-generated content and stock performance. *Marketing Science*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 198-215. Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Tuten, T. & Solomon, M., eds. (2012). *Social Media Marketing*, [e-book] Prentice Hall. Available at: Google Books: books.google.com [Accessed 28 March 2016]

Vranešević, T., & Stancec, R. (2003). The effect of the brand on perceived quality of food products, *British Food Journal*, vol. 105, no. 11, pp. 811-825, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 12 April 2016]

Weber, L. (2009). *Marketing to the social web: How digital customer communities build your business*, [e-book] New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Available at: Google Books: books.google.com [Accessed 10 April 2016]

Xiang, Z. & Gretzel, U. (2009) Role of social media in online travel information search [pdf] Available through: LUSEM Library website: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 07 March 2016]

Xiong, L., & Hu, C. (2010). Harness the power of viral marketing in hotel industry: a network discount strategy, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, vol. 1, no. 3,

Reference List

pp. 234-244, Available through: LUSEM Library website
<http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 17 April 2016]

Yang, L., Sun, T., Zhang, M., & Mei, Q. (2012). We know what@ you# tag: does the dual role affect hashtag adoption?. In Proceedings of the 21st international conference on World Wide Web, pp. 261-270. ACM. Available Online:
<http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2187872> [Accessed 20 April 2016]

Zhang, M. Jansen, B.J., Chowdhury, A. (2011). Business Engagement on Twitter: a path analysis, *Electronic Markets*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp.161-75. Available through: LUSEM Library website: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/biblioteket> [Accessed 11 March 2016]

Appendix 1

Hashtags used by UNDER ARMOUR				
Marketing Campaign	Product Promotion	Related Event	Branding	General
#UANext	#CurryOne	#CES2015	#IWILL	#EraseAllDoubt
#UAALLAMERICA	#CurryTwo	#ALLStar2015	#IWILLWHATIWANT	#MondayMotivation
#DictateTheTempo	#GloryGold	#CutDownTheNets	#TeamUA	#MySummerin5words
#FootballAU		#Bearcat	#ProtectThisHouse	#SpellingBee
#CandyReign		#NBAFinal	#UACHicago	#MotherDay
#UANEXT		#WCF	#UABrandHouse	#Fatherday
#ChargedByBelief		#DubNation	#UABasketball	#MemphisMonement
#UAHighlights		#NBADraft	#SlayYourNextGiant	#Overnight
#TAKEYOURSPOT		#2015NBACHampion	#RuleYourSelf	#SpiethOver
#RoadToReady		#MMBT		#ESPYS
#PUSHTHEGAME		#RG15		#MylifeCouldUseMore
#EARNYOURARMOUR		#HBDJordan		#RepsAreEarned
#UC2UA		#TheOpen		#Underdog
#SpeedForm		#ASG		#NYC
#askJulieFoudy		#HBDDerby		#gotmyback

Appendix

#UARoadShow		#NBASummerLeague		#Usie
#LightTheGameUp		#4thofJuly		#Respect
#UAFreedom		#IndependentDay		#FBF
		#SC30Select		#DaylightSavingTime
		#PrincipalMisty		#TakeYourSpot
		#2015WGC		
		#ShamrockSeries		
		#Badgers		
		#NDvsNavy		
		#WarEagle		
		#PrayForParis		
		#E24X		
		#JourneyToMars		
		#Glasgow2015		
		#MLSCupPlayoffs		
		#DavisCupFinal		

Appendix

		#CottoCanelo		
		#ForColumbus		
		#WorldJuniors		
		#KeepPounding		
		#StarWars		
		#MLSCup		
		#UNDENIABLE		

Appendix 2
UNDER ARMOUR's consumer's perspective

Hashtag	Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
#UANext %	250	45	50	60	40
	56%	10%	11%	14%	9%
#UAALLAMERICA %	400	40	160	80	120
	50%	5%	20%	10%	15%
#DictateTheTempo %	3	25	29	121	29
	2%	12%	14%	58%	14%
#CandyReign %	5	3	1	0	4
	38%	23%	7%	0%	32%
#UANEXT %	430	35	29	121	30
	67%	5%	4%	19%	5%
#ChargedByBelief %	117	25	50	5	100
	40%	8%	17%	2%	33%
#UAHighlights %	0	0	0	85	0
	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
#TAKEYOURSPOT %	40	50	25	56	84
	16%	20%	10%	21%	33%
#RoadToReady %	35	4	10	10	69
	27%	3%	8%	8%	54%
#PUSHTHEGAME %	5	3	15	23	40
	5%	3%	16%	25%	43%
#EARNYOURARMOUR %	50	34	18	20	12
	37%	25%	14%	15%	9%
#UC2UA %	2	30	5	45	5
	2%	34%	6%	51%	7%
#SpeedForm %	40	23	15	40	56
	23%	13%	9%	23%	32%
#askJulieFoudy	0	0	0	120	34

Appendix

%	0%	0%	0%	78%	22%
#UARoadShow %	10	0	12	40	0
	16%	0%	20%	64%	0%
#LightTheGameUp %	84	15	20	12	42
	48%	9%	11%	7%	25%
#UAFreedom %	100	25	20	40	10
	52%	13%	10%	20%	5%
#CurryOne %	12	53	54	120	13
	5%	20%	20%	50%	5%
#CurryTwo %	13	75	12	150	0
	5%	30%	5%	60%	0%
#GloryGold %	0	0	0	3	50
	0%	0%	0%	6%	94%
#IWILL %	508	25	38	63	635
	40%	2%	3%	5%	50%
#IWILLWHATIWANT %	250	58	40	15	98
	54%	12%	7%	3%	24%
#TeamUA %	420	105	70	106	35
	60%	15%	10%	5%	5%
#ProtectThisHouse %	150	35	50	20	80
	45%	10%	15%	6%	24%
#UAChicago %	4	5	0	2	0
	36%	45%	0%	19%	0%
#UABrandHouse %	50	18	12	10	5
	52%	19%	12%	10%	7%
#UABasketball %	120	34	50	59	40
	40%	11%	16%	20%	13%
#SlayYourNextGiant %	80	24	50	48	48
	30%	10%	20%	20%	20%

Appendix

#RuleYourSelf %	133	88	135	66	22
	30%	20%	30%	15%	5%

Appendix 3
Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #IWILL

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	42	4	2	0	50
	%	43%	4%	2%	0%	51%
February	Number	45	2	3	20	50
	%	38%	2%	3%	17%	42%
March	Number	50	0	5	4	60
	%	42%	0%	4%	3%	50%
April	Number	43	1	4	15	40
	%	42%	1%	4%	15%	39%
May	Number	40	3	6	8	45
	%	39%	3%	6%	8%	44%
June	Number	36	0	5	3	65
	%	33%	0%	5%	3%	60%
July	Number	50	0	1	5	65
	%	41%	0%	1%	4%	54%
August	Number	50	2	3	5	43
	%	49%	2%	3%	5%	42%
September	Number	49	2	2	3	23
	%	62%	3%	3%	4%	29%
October	Number	60	0	1	2	45

Appendix

	%	56%	0%	1%	2%	42%
November	Number	43	1	3	1	80
	%	34%	1%	2%	1%	63%
December	Number	50	1	4	2	69
	%	40%	1%	3%	2%	55%

Appendix 4

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #TeamUA

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	35	8	7	15	5
	%	50%	11%	10%	21%	7%
February	Number	40	9	4	20	0
	%	55%	12%	5%	27%	0%
March	Number	25	4	9	10	8
	%	45%	7%	16%	18%	14%
April	Number	20	5	5	5	3
	%	53%	13%	13%	13%	8%
May	Number	35	7	7	8	2
	%	59%	12%	12%	14%	3%
June	Number	70	3	5	10	0
	%	80%	3%	6%	11%	0%
July	Number	35	17	6	7	1
	%	53%	26%	9%	11%	2%

Appendix

August	Number	22	5	7	8	5
	%	47%	11%	15%	17%	11%
September	Number	35	10	5	6	4
	%	58%	17%	8%	10%	7%
October	Number	25	13	7	4	3
	%	48%	25%	13%	8%	6%
November	Number	36	9	3	10	2
	%	60%	15%	5%	17%	3%
December	Number	42	20	5	3	3
	%	58%	27%	7%	4%	4%

Appendix 5

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #UAALLAMERICA

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	30	3	10	5	10
	%	52%	5%	17%	9%	17%
February	Number	40	3	12	8	17
	%	50%	4%	15%	10%	21%
March	Number	35	4	14	10	10
	%	48%	5%	19%	14%	14%
April	Number	25	4	12	10	7
	%	43%	7%	21%	17%	12%
May	Number	16	3	11	5	9

Appendix

	%	36%	7%	25%	11%	20%
June	Number	43	4	18	12	7
	%	51%	5%	21%	14%	8%
July	Number	51	2	10	4	8
	%	68%	3%	13%	5%	11%
August	Number	45	4	18	5	10
	%	55%	5%	22%	6%	12%
September	Number	30	3	15	6	16
	%	43%	4%	21%	9%	23%
October	Number	46	3	14	2	9
	%	62%	4%	19%	3%	12%
November	Number	20	5	15	5	8
	%	38%	9%	28%	9%	15%
December	Number	19	2	11	8	9
	%	39%	4%	22%	16%	18%

Appendix 6

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #CurryOne

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	1	1	2	15	2
	%	5%	5%	10%	71%	10%
February	Number	1	3	4	12	1
	%	5%	14%	19%	57%	5%

Appendix

March	Number	0	5	1	14	2
	%	0%	23%	5%	64%	9%
April	Number	1	4	3	14	1
	%	4%	17%	13%	61%	4%
May	Number	2	5	4	8	3
	%	9%	23%	18%	36%	14%
June	Number	1	4	5	10	0
	%	5%	20%	25%	50%	0%
July	Number	1	5	7	10	0
	%	4%	22%	30%	43%	0%
August	Number	1	3	6	12	0
	%	5%	14%	27%	55%	0%
September	Number	1	6	5	8	1
	%	5%	29%	24%	38%	5%
October	Number	2	5	3	6	2
	%	11%	28%	17%	33%	11%
November	Number	0	7	5	7	0
	%	0%	37%	26%	37%	0%
December	Number	1	5	9	4	1
	%	5%	25%	45%	20%	5%

Appendix 7 Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #CurryTwo

Appendix

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
February	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
March	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
April	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
May	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
June	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
July	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
August	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
September	Number	1	17	4	40	0
	%	3%	27%	6%	64%	0%
October	Number	4	21	2	55	0
	%	5%	26%	2%	67%	0%

Appendix

November	Number	4	15	3	35	0
	%	7%	26%	5%	61%	0%
December	Number	4	22	3	20	0
	%	8%	45%	6%	41%	0%

Appendix 8

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #RuleYourself

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
February	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
March	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
April	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
May	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
June	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
July	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
August	Number	32	18	30	12	5

Appendix

	%	32%	19%	30%	12%	8%
September	Number	23	10	23	15	4
	%	30%	13%	30%	2%	5%
October	Number	34	20	32	13	4
	%	33%	20%	30%	13%	4%
November	Number	26	17	30	16	5
	%	28%	18%	32%	17%	5%
December	Number	18	23	20	10	4
	%	24%	30%	27%	13%	6%

Appendix 9

Hashtags used by Reebok				
Marketing Campaign	Product Promotion	Related Event	Branding	General
#BeMoreHuman	#LiveFreeRange	#CrossFitGames	#LiveTheDelta	#HereToHelp
#ReebokAthleteSummit	#CardioUltra	#ProveYourFitness	#BetterThanYesterday	#goodthinking
#TeamReebok	#ThisISventilator	#CrossFit	#Reebok	#weseeyou
#BreakYourSelfie	#AllTerrainSeries	#LA		#HappyFriday
#ToughIsBeautiful	#BodyPump	#SweetForward		#StayTuned
#MoreThanTape	#Nano4	#AROO		#theOpen
#GetPumped	#Nano5	#CentralRegionals		#GoodLuck
#SoleMate	#UFCFightKit	#ArmedForAction		#AppleWatchEvent
#SpartanTrifecta	#ReebokSurvivalKit	#Contest		#AppleWatch
	#TrainLikeAFighter	#SouthRegionals		#GoodAdviceIn4Words

Appendix

	#SpeedTR	#Lesmill		#BringOnLawer
	#ZPump	#AtlanticRegionals		#happystpatricksdays
	#FuryLite	#GrandPalais		#SXSW
		#Dadacontest		#Auctin
		#SpartanStrong		#Imressive
		#HumansofCrossfit		#internationaldayofhappiness
		#RowdyHour		#GymEverywhere
		#SpartanUP		#EarthHour
		#CrossFitInvitational		#itstime
		#WOD		#treatyoself
				#YouGotThis
Marketing Campaign	Product Promotion	Related Event	Branding	General
				#contest
				#Earthday
				#BostonMarathon
				#GoodChoice
				#MakeItCount
				#alwaysbeprepared
				#WeApprove
				#smelllikeswet
				#reebokswet
				#Vegas

Appendix

				#TeamWeidman
				#shoesanta

Appendix 10

Reebok's consumers' perspective of 2015

Hashtag	Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
#BeMoreHuman %	3135	68	1653	1203	821
	46%	1%	24%	17%	12%
#ReebokAthleteSummit %	34	3	37	3	0
	44 %	4%	48%	4%	0%
#TeamReebok %	42	1	188	54	1
	15%	0%	66%	19%	0%
#BreakYourSelfie %	1438	0	183	218	61
	73 %	0%	9%	14%	3%
#BetterTogether %	1	0	1	1	11015
	0.01%	0%	0.01%	0.01%	99.97%

Appendix

#ToughIsBeautiful %	31	0	41	29	8
	28%	0%	37%	26%	7%
#MoreThanTape %	1039	0	68	67	42
	85%	0%	6%	6%	3%
#LiveFreeRange %	38	6	97	73	68
	14 %	2%	35%	26%	24%
#CardioUltra %	83	1	19	18	0
	69 %	1%	16%	15%	0%
#ThieISventilator %	81	3	58	229	0
	22%	1%	16%	62%	0%
#AllTerrainSeries %	19	1	6	1	1
	68 %	4%	21%	45	4%
Hashtag	Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
#GetPumped %	1233	23	887	1060	7814
	11%	0%	8%	10%	71%
#SoleMate %	0	1	1	0	915
	0%	0.1%	0.1%	0%	99.8%
#BodyPump %	208	1	156	103	7982
	2%	0%	2%	1%	94%
#Nano4 %	409	5	192	165	38
	50%	1%	24%	20%	5%
#Nano5 %	706	15	173	312	42
	57 %	1%	14%	25%	3%
#UFCFightKit %	311	5	1906	1074	40
	10%	0%	57%	32%	1%
#ReebokSurvivalKit %	24	0	19	3	0
	52%	0%	41%	7%	0%
#TrainLikeAFighter %	27	0	4	2	49
	33%	0%	5%	2%	60%
#SpartanTrifecta	130	9	58	11	7

Appendix

%	60%	4%	27%	5%	3%
#SpeedTR %	2	0	1	3	2
	25%	0%	13%	38%	25%
#ZPump %	598	14	419	953	23
	30%	1%	21%	47%	1%
#FuryLite %	91	1	26	126	22
	34%	0%	10%	47%	8%
#LiveTheDelta %	29	0	33	28	4
	31%	0%	35%	30%	4%
#BetterThanYesterday %	109	0	144	61	3384
	3%	0%	4%	2%	92%
#Reebok %	2965	48	8102	38187	108
	12%	0.2%	14%	42.3%	31.2%

Appendix 11
Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #Nano5

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	0	0	0	1	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
February	Number	0	0	0	1	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
March	Number	0	2	4	24	4
	%	0%	6%	12%	71%	12%
April	Number	0	2	2	6	0
	%	0%	20%	20%	60%	0%
May	Number	6	3	17	36	7
	%	9%	4%	25%	52%	10%

Appendix

June	Number	238	3	61	124	7
	%	55%	1%	14%	29%	2%
July	Number	274	5	46	75	10
	%	67%	1%	11%	18%	2%
August	Number	80	0	9	17	2
	%	75%	0%	8%	16%	2%
September	Number	34	0	10	7	4
	%	62%	0%	18%	13%	7%
October	Number	24	0	4	6	1
	%	69%	0%	11%	17%	3%
November	Number	22	0	9	7	3
	%	54%	0%	22%	17%	7%
December	Number	28	0	11	8	4
	%	55%	0%	22%	16%	8%

Appendix 12

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #ZPump

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
February	Number	0	0	0	16	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
March	Number	357	11	226	425	13

Appendix

	%	35%	1%	22%	41%	1%
April	Number	113	2	55	89	4
	%	43%	1%	21%	34%	2%
May	Number	56	1	30	38	2
	%	44%	1%	24%	30%	2%
June	Number	7	0	13	14	1
	%	20%	0%	37%	40%	3%
July	Number	12	0	11	9	0
	%	38%	0%	34%	28%	0%
August	Number	9	0	12	15	0
	%	25%	0%	33%	42%	0%
September	Number	15	0	9	19	0
	%	35%	0%	21%	44%	0%
October	Number	4	0	15	9	0
	%	14%	0%	54%	32%	0%
November	Number	21	0	41	314	3
	%	6%	0%	11%	83%	1%
December	Number	598	14	419	953	23
	%	30%	1%	21%	47%	1%

Appendix 13

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #SoleMate

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
-------	--	-------------	--------	---------	-------------	-----------

Appendix

January	Number	0	0	0	0	87
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
February	Number	0	2	1	0	97
	%	0%	1%	1%	0%	98%
March	Number	0	0	0	0	102
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
April	Number	0	0	0	0	78
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
May	Number	0	0	0	0	72
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
June	Number	0	0	0	0	93
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
July	Number	0	0	0	0	69
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
August	Number	0	0	0	0	75
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
September	Number	0	0	0	0	84
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
October	Number	0	0	0	0	64
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
November	Number	0	0	0	0	52

Appendix

	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
December	Number	0	0	0	0	42
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Appendix 14

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #ReebokAthleteSummit

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	34	2	31	2	0
	%	49%	3%	45%	3%	0%
February	Number	0	0	0	1	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
March	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
April	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
May	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
June	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
July	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
August	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Appendix

September	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
October	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
November	Number	0	0	4	0	0
	%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
December	Number	0	1	2	0	0
	%	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%

Appendix 15

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #LiveFreeRange

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	22	6	77	59	62
	%	10%	3%	34%	26%	27%
February	Number	3	0	12	2	2
	%	16%	0%	63%	11%	11%
March	Number	0	0	5	3	1
	%	0%	0%	56%	33%	11%
April	Number	4	0	0	5	2
	%	36%	0%	0%	45%	18%
May	Number	2	0	0	0	1
	%	67%	0%	0%	0%	33%
June	Number	3	0	2	2	0

Appendix

	%	42%	0%	29%	29%	0%
July	Number	3	0	0	1	0
	%	75%	0%	0%	25%	0%
August	Number	1	0	0	0	0
	%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
September	Number	0	0	0	1	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
October	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
November	Number	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
December	Number	0	0	0	0	1
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Appendix 16

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #BeMoreHuman

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	35	5	96	212	43
	%	9%	1%	25%	54%	11%
February	Number	330	7	203	242	97
	%	38%	1%	23%	28%	11%
March	Number	121	3	117	62	22
	%	37%	1%	36%	19%	7%

Appendix

April	Number	191	8	87	79	30
	%	48%	2%	22%	20%	8%
May	Number	295	4	155	109	110
	%	44%	1%	23%	16%	16%
June	Number	375	7	220	75	95
	%	49%	1%	28%	10%	12%
July	Number	264	5	147	124	63
	%	44%	1%	24%	21%	10%
August	Number	312	3	156	41	73
	%	53%	1%	27%	7%	12%
September	Number	323	7	81	74	165
	%	50%	1%	12%	11%	25%
October	Number	388	9	155	47	32
	%	61%	1%	25%	7%	5%
November	Number	135	4	127	60	44
	%	36%	1%	34%	16%	12%
December	Number	366	6	109	78	47
	%	60	1	18	13	8

Appendix 17

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #GetPumped

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	2	0	2	0	921

Appendix

	%	0.2%	0.5%	0.2%	0%	99.6%
February	Number	0	2	53	97	823
	%	0%	0.2%	5.4%	10%	84.4%
March	Number	488	0	188	218	542
	%	34%	0%	13%	15%	38%
April	Number	657	2	199	176	497
	%	43%	0%	13%	12%	33%
May	Number	24	0	83	78	708
	%	3%	0%	9%	9%	79%
June	Number	25	0	33	17	613
	%	4%	0%	5%	2%	89%
July	Number	1	0	0	6	758
	%	0.1%	0%	0%	0.8%	99.1%
August	Number	7	0	1	3	937
	%	0.75%	0%	0.12%	0.33%	98.8%
September	Number	3	0	5	2	529
	%	0.6%	0%	0.9%	0.4%	98.1%
October	Number	6	0	2	4	589
	%	1%	0%	0.33%	0.67%	98%
November	Number	17	19	312	447	622
	%	1%	1%	22%	32%	44%

Appendix

December	Number	3	0	9	12	275
	%	1%	0%	3%	4%	92%

Appendix 18

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #ToughisBeautiful

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	0	0	0	1	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
February	Number	5	0	3	4	1
	%	36%	0%	21%	29%	7%
March	Number	1	0	8	2	0
	%	9%	0%	73%	18%	0%
April	Number	5	0	3	5	0
	%	38%	0%	23%	38%	0%
May	Number	1	0	2	2	1
	%	17%	0%	33%	33%	17%
June	Number	5	0	1	0	0
	%	83%	0%	17%	0%	0%
July	Number	2	0	8	8	0
	%	11.1%	0%	44.4%	44.4%	0%
August	Number	2	0	3	0	0
	%	40%	0%	60%	0%	0%
September	Number	1	0	3	0	4

Appendix

	%	12%	0%	38%	0%	50%
October	Number	1	0	1	3	1
	%	16.6%	0%	16.6%	50.2%	16.6%
November	Number	4	0	3	2	1
	%	40%	0%	30%	20%	10%
December	Number	4	0	6	2	0
	%	33%	0%	50%	17%	0%

Appendix 19

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #LivetheDelta

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	2	0	7	9	4
	%	9%	0%	32%	41%	18%
February	Number	4	0	3	6	0
	%	31%	0%	23%	46%	0%
March	Number	3	0	5	1	0
	%	33%	0%	56%	11%	0%
April	Number	8	0	4	4	0
	%	50%	0%	25%	25%	0%
May	Number	4	0	1	0	0
	%	80%	0%	20%	0%	0%
June	Number	1	0	1	2	0
	%	25%	0%	25%	50%	0%

Appendix

July	Number	1	0	1	2	0
	%	25%	0%	25%	50%	0%
August	Number	0	0	1	2	0
	%	0%	0%	33%	67%	0%
September	Number	1	0	3	0	0
	%	25%	0%	75%	0%	0%
October	Number	3	0	3	0	0
	%	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%
November	Number	1	0	4	2	0
	%	14%	0%	57%	29%	0%
December	Number	1	0	0	0	0
	%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Appendix 20

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #Bettertogether

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	0	0	0	0	931
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
February	Number	0	0	0	1	784
	%	0%	0%	0%	0.13%	99.87%
March	Number	0	0	0	0	961
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
April	Number	0	0	0	0	905

Appendix

	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
May	Number	0	0	0	0	847
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
June	Number	0	0	0	0	1143
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
July	Number	0	0	0	0	1116
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
August	Number	0	0	0	0	932
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
September	Number	0	0	0	0	892
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
October	Number	0	0	0	0	831
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
November	Number	0	0	0	0	862
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
December	Number	1	0	0	0	811
	%	0.12%	0%	0%	0%	99.88%

Appendix 21

Hashtags used by Adidas				
Marketing Campaign	Product Promotion	Related Event	Branding	General
#BoostYourRun	#Boost	#BoostBoston	#ThreeStripes	#LimitedEdition

Appendix

#ThereWillBeHaters	#UltraBoost	#BoostLondon		#NeedsNoTranslation
#ImpactTheGame	#Superstar	#FIFAWWC		#Ger
#BeTheDifference	#F50	#UCLFinal		#ForceOfBlack
	#YeezyBoost	#Wimbledon		#OwnTheRoad
	#SuperColor	#Beijing2015		#EnergyRunning
	#PibeDeBarr10	#BoostBeijing		
	#AdidasStellaSport			
	#PredatorInstinct			
	#UncontrolYourself			
	#Climachill			
	#X15			
	#StanSmith			
	#11Pro			
	#AdidasGo			

Appendix

	#Messi15			
	#Ace15			
	#Barricade			
	#AdidasOriginals			

Appendix 22

Adidas Consumers' Perspective

Hashtag	Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
#UltraBoost %	2642	299	110	2066	73
	51%	6%	2%	40%	1%
#ThereWillBeHaters %	290	116	409	748	2110
	8%	3%	11%	20%	57%
#Boost %	565	83	163	1137	2177
	14%	2%	4%	28%	53%
#PibeDeBarr %	27	6	22	85	25
	16%	4%	13%	52%	15%
#Climachill %	124	9	22	161	23
	37%	3%	6%	47%	7%
#F50 %	337	53	51	601	421
	23%	4%	3%	41%	29%
#X15 %	238	151	113	573	120
	20%	13%	9%	48%	10%
#YeezyBoost %	274	226	147	642	41
	21%	17%	11%	48%	3%
#Barricade %	17	1	2	103	638
	2 %	0%	0%	14%	84%
#11Pro %	121	25	28	127	3
	40%	8%	9%	42%	1%
#Messi15 %	28	15	28	196	21
	10%	5%	10%	68%	7%
#ACE15 %	162	48	71	444	177
	18%	5%	8%	49%	20%
#SuperColor %	269	147	109	363	64
	28%	15%	11%	38%	7%
#ThreeStripes	399	78	87	199	98

Appendix

%	46%	9%	10%	23%	11%
#ImpactTheGame %	25	1	15	81	21
	17%	1%	10%	57%	15%
#BoostYourRun %	295	84	41	233	147
	37%	11%	5%	29%	18%
#AdidasGo %	48	6	3	17	4
	62	8%	4%	22%	5%
#UncontrolYourself %	23	1	3	31	14
	32	1%	4%	43%	19%
#StanSmith %	503	115	107	341	68
	44	10%	9%	30%	6%
#PreatorInstinct %	58	16	34	124	35
	22	6%	13%	46%	13%
#SuperStar %	219	109	131	250	837
	14%	7%	8%	16%	54%
#AdidasStella %	112	46	50	179	3
	29%	12%	13%	46%	1%
#BeTheDifference %	140	59	72	445	645
	10%	4%	5%	33%	47%
#AdidasOriginals %	392	129	162	669	69
	28%	9%	11%	47%	5%

Appendix 23 Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #UltraBoost

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	88	52	25	299	22
	%	18%	11%	5%	62%	5%
February	Number	220	45	10	361	16
	%	34%	7%	2%	55%	2%

Appendix

March	Number	291	25	5	249	7
	%	50%	4%	1%	43%	1%
April	Number	233	12	11	110	5
	%	63%	3%	3%	30%	1%
May	Number	183	23	9	124	3
	%	54%	7%	3%	36%	1%
June	Number	219	27	6	106	2
	%	61%	8%	2%	29%	1%
July	Number	145	6	4	76	0
	%	63%	3%	2%	33%	0
August	Number	272	26	5	171	2
	%	57%	5%	1%	36%	0%
September	Number	225	24	8	151	6
	%	54%	6%	2%	36%	1%
October	Number	272	24	12	99	2
	%	67%	6%	3%	24%	0%
November	Number	196	11	6	122	3
	%	58%	3%	2%	36%	1%
December	Number	298	24	9	198	5
	%	56%	4%	2%	37%	1%

Appendix 24 Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #YeezyBoost

Appendix

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
February	Number	23	28	17	74	6
	%	16%	19%	11%	50%	4%
March	Number	13	19	16	57	0
	%	12%	18%	15%	54%	0%
April	Number	9	12	13	44	7
	%	11%	14%	15%	52%	8%
May	Number	20	11	19	55	3
	%	19%	10%	18%	51%	3%
June	Number	22	5	12	76	6
	%	18%	4%	10%	63%	5%
July	Number	29	19	17	61	0
	%	23%	15%	13%	48%	0%
August	Number	50	56	15	91	5
	%	23%	26%	7%	42%	2%
September	Number	43	35	20	54	6
	%	27%	22%	13%	34%	4%
October	Number	23	12	5	36	2
	%	29%	15%	6%	46%	3%
November	Number	25	8	4	56	3
	%	26%	8%	4%	58%	3%

Appendix

December	Number	17	21	9	38	3
	%	19%	24%	10%	43%	3%

Appendix 25 Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #X15

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	0	0	0	0	6
	%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
February	Number	0	0	0	0	5
	%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
March	Number	0	0	0	0	7
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
April	Number	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
May	Number	20	38	14	99	6
	%	11%	21%	8%	56%	3%
June	Number	23	18	9	65	15
	%	18%	14%	7%	50%	12%
July	Number	39	17	18	74	9
	%	25%	11%	11%	47%	6%
August	Number	37	20	17	79	21

Appendix

	%	21%	11%	10%	45%	12%
September	Number	34	15	17	77	21
	%	21%	9%	10%	47%	13%
October	Number	33	23	21	75	15
	%	20%	14%	13%	45%	9%
November	Number	29	12	6	49	9
	%	28%	11%	6%	47%	9%
December	Number	23	8	11	54	5
	%	23%	8%	11%	53%	5%

Appendix 26

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #Climachill

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	0	0	0	3	0
	%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
February	Number	2	0	0	3	0
	%	40%	0%	0%	60%	0%
March	Number	5	1	1	22	0
	%	17%	3%	3%	76%	0%
April	Number	28	4	4	55	7
	%	29%	4%	4%	56%	7%
May	Number	17	1	4	39	8
	%	25%	1%	6%	57%	12%

Appendix

June	Number	9	2	1	10	2
	%	38%	8%	4%	42%	8%
July	Number	9	0	0	4	1
	%	64%	0%	0%	29%	7%
August	Number	8	0	1	6	1
	%	50%	0%	6%	38%	6%
September	Number	6	0	1	7	0
	%	43%	0%	7%	50%	0%
October	Number	29	0	9	7	2
	%	62%	0%	19%	15%	4%
November	Number	9	0	0	1	1
	%	82%	0%	0%	9%	9%
December	Number	2	1	1	4	1
	%	22%	11%	11%	44%	11%

Appendix 27

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #Boost

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	19	2	2	46	201
	%	7%	1%	1%	17%	74%
February	Number	30	11	0	112	138
	%	10%	4%	0%	38%	47%
March	Number	33	4	0	25	81

Appendix

	%	23%	3%	0%	17%	57%
April	Number	38	0	22	79	145
	%	13%	0%	8%	28%	51%
May	Number	47	0	17	36	121
	%	21%	0%	8%	16%	55%
June	Number	82	25	29	140	267
	%	15%	5%	5%	26%	49%
July	Number	58	0	0	66	180
	%	19%	0%	0%	22%	59%
August	Number	106	17	25	189	544
	%	12%	2%	3%	21%	62%
September	Number	60	14	25	91	211
	%	15%	3%	6%	23%	53%
October	Number	61	0	38	145	230
	%	13%	0%	8%	31%	49%
November	Number	13	0	5	117	25
	%	8%	0%	3%	73%	16%
December	Number	18	10	0	91	34
	%	12%	7%	0%	59%	22%

Appendix 28

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #ThereWillBeHaters

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
-------	--	-------------	--------	---------	-------------	-----------

Appendix

January	Number	152	59	239	400	723
	%	10%	4%	15%	25%	46%
February	Number	65	45	120	215	595
	%	6%	4%	12%	21%	57%
March	Number	28	5	18	36	154
	%	12%	2%	7%	15%	64%
April	Number	5	3	16	19	195
	%	2%	1%	7%	8%	82%
May	Number	9	1	6	4	107
	%	7%	1%	5%	3%	84%
June	Number	10	1	2	20	53
	%	12%	1%	2%	23%	62%
July	Number	5	0	3	25	45
	%	6%	0%	4%	32%	58%
August	Number	6	0	0	12	46
	%	9%	0%	0%	19%	72%
September	Number	3	0	2	5	47
	%	5%	0%	4%	9%	82%
October	Number	3	1	1	5	58
	%	4%	1%	1%	7%	85%
November	Number	1	0	1	3	34

Appendix

	%	3%	0%	3%	8%	87%
December	Number	3	1	1	4	53
	%	5%	2%	2%	6%	85%

Appendix 28

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #ThereWillBeHaters

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	152	59	239	400	723
	%	10%	4%	15%	25%	46%
February	Number	65	45	120	215	595
	%	6%	4%	12%	21%	57%
March	Number	28	5	18	36	154
	%	12%	2%	7%	15%	64%
April	Number	5	3	16	19	195
	%	2%	1%	7%	8%	82%
May	Number	9	1	6	4	107
	%	7%	1%	5%	3%	84%
June	Number	10	1	2	20	53
	%	12%	1%	2%	23%	62%
July	Number	5	0	3	25	45
	%	6%	0%	4%	32%	58%
August	Number	6	0	0	12	46
	%	9%	0%	0%	19%	72%

Appendix

September	Number	3	0	2	5	47
	%	5%	0%	4%	9%	82%
October	Number	3	1	1	5	58
	%	4%	1%	1%	7%	85%
November	Number	1	0	1	3	34
	%	3%	0%	3%	8%	87%
December	Number	3	1	1	4	53
	%	5%	2%	2%	6%	85%

Appendix 29

Hashtags used in analysis monthly: #SuperColor

Month		Involvement	Desire	Emotion	Information	Unrelated
January	Number	0	1	1	4	3
	%	0%	11%	11%	44%	33%
February	Number	0	1	2	9	3
	%	0%	7%	13%	60%	20%
March	Number	88	55	35	151	15
	%	26%	16%	10%	44%	4%
April	Number	33	27	24	66	7
	%	21%	17%	15%	42%	4%
May	Number	32	25	18	35	5
	%	28%	22%	16%	30%	4%
June	Number	35	13	6	35	9

Appendix

	%	36%	13%	6%	36%	9%
July	Number	23	6	5	14	4
	%	44%	12%	10%	27%	8%
August	Number	19	7	2	10	2
	%	48%	18%	5%	25%	5%
September	Number	11	3	4	12	1
	%	35%	10%	13%	39%	3%
October	Number	14	5	4	6	7
	%	39%	14%	11%	17%	19%
November	Number	8	3	5	14	3
	%	24%	9%	15%	42%	9%
December	Number	6	1	3	7	5
	%	27%	5%	14%	32%	23%