



LUND UNIVERSITY  
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# Are Pop-Cultural References in Advertising Funny Enough?

A Mixed Method Study of Consumers  
in Skåne County

by

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# Abstract

**Title:** Are Pop-Cultural References in Advertising Funny Enough? A Mixed Method Study of Consumers in Skåne County

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**Key words:** Humor, Pop-Cultural References, Advertising, Likability, Purchase Intention

**Aim:** The aim of this research is to extend the theory of humor research and add a new nuance to humor theory. Additionally, the study intends to measure the effect different humorous content types have on ad likability and purchase intention, as well as the relationship between the two.

**Methodology:** A mixed method approach was applied, conducting focus groups and questionnaires in order to study and understand the attitudes towards humor in advertisements of south Swedish consumers in Skåne County. The findings from the focus groups were used to create two experimental humorous advertisements, one with a humorous reference and one with a pop-cultural reference, and additionally one control in order to test the hypothesis on a bigger audience.

**Theoretical perspective:** This study is mainly based upon theories regarding humor research in advertising, focusing on ad likability and purchase intention.

**Empirical Data:** The empirical data consists of discussion transcripts from three 45 to 60 minutes long focus group sessions, with focus on perceived humor in advertisements. Additionally, 242 completed questionnaires concerning questions about ad likability and purchase intention regarding advertisements with humorous content.

**Conclusions:** This study has found that pop-cultural references are considered humorous by south Swedish consumers in Skåne County, and can be considered as a new nuance in humor theory. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that humorous content have a positive impact on ad likability compared to advertisements without humorous references. However, no significant difference was found among the advertisements regarding impact on purchase intention. In the case of pop-cultural references, ad likability leads to higher purchase intention compared to advertisements with humorous references.

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Lund, 24th of May 2017

The authors,

Agata Anna Gornik

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Sabine Ljunggren

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# 1. Introduction

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*The opening chapter consists of a presentation regarding the background surrounding the topic of advertisements with humorous content. Following that, problem discussion, research aim and research questions are presented. In the last part of the chapter concepts are defined in order to position this paper in the context of humorous advertising.*

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## 1.1 Background

It is not an understatement to say that brands are fighting for customers' attention more than ever. Brands are searching for ways to stand out with their marketing and maximize those seconds of attention they are given by the viewer. A study presented by Yankelovich market research (2004) estimated that a 30-year-old American living in a city is exposed to more than 5 000 advertisements each day, equaling 5,2 advertisements each minute of a person's time awake. According to the study, 60 per cent of consumers have a more negative view on advertising compared to a few years ago, 61 per cent felt the amount of advertising is "out of control", 65 per cent argued that they felt "constantly bombarded" by advertisements and the majority stressed that the advertisements had little or no relevance to them. As a result of this overexposure, people are actively trying to tune out and avoid irrelevant advertising (Kotler, 2005) showing an increasing interest in products and services that would help them skip or block advertising (Walker-Smith, 2004).

A similar opinion is found in Sweden. A study conducted by Novus (2016) on over a thousand Swedes in the ages between 18 and 79 years old, found that 52 per cent have a negative attitude towards advertising, an up rise from 26 per cent in 2005. Respondents in this study further described advertising as "irritating", "manipulative" and "disruptive". The study also found that Swedes rarely find advertising entertaining and worth discussing. This development indicates that companies are now forced to come up with more creative and entertaining advertising in order to gain attention and likability.

Through the years, different trends in advertising have appeared with the common goal of catching the customer's attention and to promote a brand or product as effectively as possible (Kim, Hayes, Avant, & Reid, 2014). Our attention has recently been drawn to commercials and advertisements that integrate popular and talked about events in their marketing, as those seen in appendix A, B & C. McDonald's ad (Facebook, 2017a) refers to a quote in an acclaimed Norwegian TV-series called "Skam", Delicato (Facebook, 2017b) is referring to a controversial political statement made by Ms. Conway, Counselor to President Donald Trump, and Norwegian Airlines' ad (Daily Mail, 2017) refers to the divorce of a famous Hollywood couple. Other companies as IKEA (Rodionova, 2016), ComHem (Parkkila, 2013),

Boost Juice (Rodionova, 2016) and Dove (Ledbetter, 2017) has followed the trend and successfully integrated a similar type of humorous content in their marketing.

Multiple of these advertisements have gone viral and gained considerable attention worldwide, both being a hot topic in industry press and social media. Multiple journalists in news channels has expressed liking and consider such advertisements to be smart (Larbi, 2017), creative (Thambert, 2017), brave (Rodionova, 2016), humors (Plush, 2016), relevant (Ledbetter, 2017) and brilliant (Siebert 2016). In addition to the praise, some media outlets argue that brands do not only receive attention, but also emphasize how companies manage to profit of the hype by using this type of content in their marketing approach (Siebert, 2016; Plush, 2016).

When evaluating statements by the company representatives who have been part of producing some of these advertisements, they are aligned and pleased with the media's reaction. In an article written by the Vice President of Marketing for Norwegian Airlines, Stine Steffensen-Borke (2016), she explains how the "Brad is single" advertisement came about. The news story of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie's break up dominated the tabloids and was a subject of conversation worldwide. By connecting the subject of discussion with a service of interest, Norwegian Airlines saw an opportunity to promote their low fare flights to Los Angeles and join the ongoing discussion. In the article, Steffensen-Borke admits to the struggle brands are facing of gaining enough attention, as well as creating advertisements that customer's appreciate. At a time of constantly facing new information and impressions, this type of content gives brands the opportunity to stand out while recognizing the personality of a brand. In Norwegian Airlines' case, the advertisement was meant to illustrate the humorous side of the brand and highlight its character, charm and uniqueness (Steffensen-Borke, 2016).

Brands have used humor in advertising for decades (Sternthal & Craig, 1973). However, the way people are communicating with each other, as well as companies communicating with their costumers is constantly changing. The phenomenon of actively incorporating pop-cultural events or popular online phenomenon with a humorous undertone into product advertising is something new and different, and the customers' opinion of this marketing approach is yet quite unknown. The majority of humor research within advertising is dated, and lacks perspectives of how humor is expressed and perceived in modern media. By examining this new type of advertising approach brands can draw insights regarding ad effectiveness on factors as ad likability and purchase intent, and additionally if ad likability leads to purchase intention. A research of this kind also uncovers if people consider the advertisements as humorous or even preferred them to intentionally humorous or non-humorous advertisements.

## 1.2 Problem Discussion

The previous literature on humor research within marketing is inconsistent, dated and lacks dimension of what can be perceived as humorous and how it can be expressed. The aim of this research is to contribute to humor research, in the context of pop-cultural references.

This research further aims to determine the effect and impact this new advertising content has on ad likability and purchase intention in contrast to traditional humorous advertising and non-humorous advertising. Further, whether ad likability causes an increase purchase intention, in the context of humorous content types.

## 1.3 Research Aim

The aim of this study is to extend the theory of humor research, and add a new nuance to humor theory while defining a new discourse in the context of pop-cultural referencing. Our intention is to define the observed phenomenon and to what extent consumers consider it as humorous.

Furthermore, it is our aim to determine if humorous and pop-cultural references follow the same patterns in its effect on ad likability and purchase intention, which will be analyzed in relation to existing theories on humor.

## 1.4 Research Questions

- Do consumers consider pop-cultural references in advertising as humorous?
- Compared to humorous advertising; what effects does pop-cultural references in advertising have on ad likability and purchase intention?

## 1.5 Concepts

Below are the background and definitions of central concepts that will be further used in this study. The mentioned concepts are humor, and more specifically humorous references and pop-cultural references.

### 1.5.1 Humor

“The ability to comprehend and appreciate humor is a vital aspect of social functioning. Humor is a significant component of what makes us unique as human beings; we are perhaps alone among animals in engaging in behavior designed to encourage humorous responses. Without humor, much of the color and variety inherent in human social discourse would be lost (Brownell and Gardner, 1988). Indeed, the absence of a sense of humor can have distressing interpersonal consequences. Humor can be therapeutic, producing beneficial effects on the immune and central nervous system (Fry, 1992), and can provide coping mechanisms for life’s tribulations (Lefcourt et al., 1997).” (p. 1055)

Humor as described above by Moran, Wig, Adams, Janata and Kelley (2003) is an important part of our everyday lives. It is frequently used in all types of interpersonal interactions, with family and friends but also in corporate communication, between a company and consumers. The reason behind usage of humorous references is the humor appreciation is the emotional response depended upon the amusement of the experience or expectation. Humor appreciation has showed to be highly pleasurable emotion that affects the whole body and mind; it affects activity of the brain, heart rate, respiration rate and even memory (Moran, Wig, Adams, Janata & Kelley, 2003). Those factors combined increase the emotional attachment and memory much stronger than to logical content without humorous reference, which makes humor a highly interesting topic to study and use when marketing consumer goods.

### 1.5.2 Humorous reference

Humorous reference is the cognitive element of the joke, in other words “getting the joke” (Moran et al., 2003). In order to understand the humorous reference receiver is actively seeking for the pun based illogical elements and parts that refer to previous experiences. Psychiatrist William Fry (in Fine & Wood, 2010) divides humorous references in two parts; "canned jokes" and "situation jokes". According to the author, the first set of references are based on stable contexts and understandable for the most of people, while the latter are of spontaneous nature often emerge from impromptu production that responds to ongoing interaction between people. With background in those theories, humorous references used in advertisement and also this study, are messages of “canned” type.

### 1.5.3 Pop-culture

According to Sassatelli (2007) mass culture is based on mixed representations, consumer meanings and advertisement images, which reduce individual consumption to mass culture. In other words people need to consume certain types of products, services and media to become part of the industrialized society. Vattimo (1992; in Cooper 2001) adds to the discussion that mass culture engage in generalized communication in which mass media are involving in "superficial games that transmit novelties". According to the author pop-culture consists of popular meanings and understandings that are constantly discussed and reproduced collectively. This kind of communication is often constructed and shared by understandings of reality based on ease to comprehend and obtain (Cooper 2001). In other words the pop-cultural references in advertisement and also in this paper are references to common grounds and understandings available, communicated and shared to and by the mass.

## 1.6 Outline of the Paper

In order to answer the questions above, the following chapter presents the previous literature and theories on humor and its effect on ad likability and purchase intention. Subsequently, three sets of hypotheses are formulated and presented. The third chapter treats the

methodological strategy, data collection and method of analysis, also including an explanation of how the hypotheses will be answered. Chapter four presents the results of the research, and by analyzing the results the set hypotheses are being tested. The result follows by a discussion regarding existing theory in the light of the new findings. An analysis of this study's results with regards to the existing theory is then presented. The study ends with a conclusion, presenting our theoretical and practical contributions as well as discussing topics for future research.

## 2. Previous Literature and Theory

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*The second chapter provides previous research in terms of humor in advertisement. Later, the three areas of research are described in the following order; Humorous Advertisements and Ad Likability, Humorous Advertisements and Purchase Intention and lastly, Ad Likability and Purchase Intention. The last part of the chapter summarizes all of the areas in a Theoretical Model that also introduces the following method chapter.*

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### 2.1 Literature Review

Previous research shows that humor, as a form of communication, was studied already in the early 1970's, however its marketing value was not recognized until several years later (Madden & Weinberger, 1984). Since then, humor has been widely discussed in research and different humor styles have been established, concretizing how the communication is packaged from the sender, in our case the brands, to the receiver, meaning the consumers, and how the sender intends the receiver to decode the humor (Stieger, Formann & Burger, 2011). Different humor style can lead to different effects and depending on the purpose of the message, different styles can be more or less successful. Regarding the perspective of the receiver, the message they decode is defined as humor type. Many researchers have tried to label humor into different humor types (Leist & Müller, 2013; Speck, 1991; Veatch, 1998) yet no study has been found studying humor in the context of pop-culture.

To date, the usage of humor has been debated both in the field of communication and marketing, mainly focusing on its effect on responsiveness and ability to grab the viewer's attention. In a study made by Madden and Weinberger (1984) the authors queried marketing experts, discovering that 94 per cent of the advertising practitioners in question recognized humor as an effective way to gain attention and 55 per cent of them viewed humor as more superior than other types of advertising ques. In line with this, multiple studies stresses the positive effect humor has on increasing responsiveness of an advertised product and being the first most memorable feature to use (e.g. Cline, Kellaris, & Machleit, 2011; Zhang, 2006).

The purpose of integrating humor in advertising is also supposed to serve a moderating role to increase likability of a product or brand (Strick, van Baaren, Holland, & van Knippenberg, 2011). Beil and Bridgwater's (1990) study regarding commercial likeability shows that customers value different factors in order to perceive the commercial or advertisement as humorous and likable. Their results showed that customers highly value aspects such as "clever", "imaginative" and "amusing" and rated them as the most important traits of a commercial or advertisement in order to perceive it as likable. In line with this, other studies show that the content and construct of the ad also has an impact on likability of a brand or

product. When an ad is perceived as “creative” and “clever”, it evokes a positive attitude towards the product and the brand and favors the brand evaluation (Novus, 2016; Keller, 1987; Yang & Smith, 2009). When specifically looking at low-involvement categories such as fast moving consumer goods, the participants argued that an “energetic execution” played an important role for food and beverage advertisements in order to be viewed as likable (Beil & Bridgewater, 1990). Further, when a humorous ad is considered likable, the attitude is subsequently transmitted to the attitude towards the brand; also affecting the customer's purchase intention of the advertised product (Gelb & Pickett 1983; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Strick, van Baaren, Holland, & van Knippenberg, 2013). The reason why low-involvement product are interesting in research regarding humor is the long tradition of using humorous advertisement on low-risk consumer goods and services (Beard, 2008). Low-involvement goods are characterized by lower risk and are usually purchased by routine at lower cost. In contrast to that, high-involvement products are associated with higher involvement, risk and also price (Beard, 2008; Flaherty, Weinberger & Gulas, 2004). In other words, it has been found and put into use that lower relevance products with lower involvement and risks does not require sophisticated decision making process but instead should be related to peripheral cues in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Flaherty, Weinberger & Gulas 2004). This means that in case of those products, cues such as music, humor, celebrities and color act like an indirect and strong persuasive attribute (Flaherty, Weinberger & Gulas, 2004; Kitchen, Kerr, Schutz, McColl & Pals, 2014)

There are several previous studies examining the effect on purchase intention when using humor in advertisements, however the results point in different directions regarding how profitable it is to use humor in advertising in the end. While numerous studies show that the use of humor has a positive effect on purchase intention (Eisend, 2009; Petrescu et al., 2015; Zangh, 1996) others indicate that humor has minor or no effect on so called behavioral persuasion variables as brand selection and purchase intention (Chattopadhyay & Basu, 1990; Gelb & Pickett 1983; Scott, Klein, & Bryant, 1990; Zhang & Zinkhan, 2006). Additionally, there is research, which supports that humor, can negatively affect the recollection of products and brand claim, implying that humor distracts attention from the product or service in the advertisement (Gelb & Zinkhan, 1986; Krishnan & Chakravarti, 2003).

A study by Teixeira et al. (2013) suggest that there is an optimal point of humor in advertisements that brands should achieve in order to maximize the viewer's intent to purchase. The results show that the optimal point may differ depending on the product or service category, and that too much as well as too little humor in the ad can have an unfavorable impact on sales. It has been proven that when the humor fits the product category and is well incorporated with the message in the advertisement, it increases attention, credibility, recollection and purchase intention (Cho 1994; Osterhouse & Brock 1970; Scott, Klein and Bryant 1990; Zhang and Zinkhan 1991).

Lastly, Kuilenburg et al. (2011) argues that using humor as a prominent feature in advertising and marketing overall, may gain attention and buzz, yet not increase customers purchase intention of the product nor the brand. The authors stresses that there appears to be a gap

between the attention gaining act and intent to purchase, where the customer possible loses track of what the brand is actually selling. In line with this, Zillmann et al. (1980) argues that when customers face a humorous advertisement, they focus on understanding the entertaining part of the message, since the purpose of humor is to stimulate a pleasant reaction, consequently functioning as an incentive to focus. While the consumers are preoccupied with decoding the humor, they therefore pay less attention to other parts of the message the brand wants to communicate, diverting them from actively understanding brand-relevant cues and information (Mitchel & Olsen, 1981; Zillmann et al., 1980). In other words, the funnier the ad, the higher the value of the perceived humor and the easier the customer may be distracted from the overall selling point of the message (Eisend, 2009).

## 2.2 Humor Types

As this study focuses on the receiver of the humorous message, it is of importance to approach the theories behind different humor types. The definition of a humor type refers to the relationship between humor and the message it is applied to. Humor types are used when constructing messages, which are intended to be perceived as humorous. Still today, researchers are trying to label humor into different humor types (Leist & Müller, 2013; Speck, 1991; Veatch, 1998) yet none are consistent with references to current or pop-cultural events. This study will focus on the humor type definitions used by Taecharungroj and Nueangjamnong (2015) and Liptak, Tate, Flatt, Oakley and Linger (2013). These are; Exaggeration, Comparison, Personification, Pun, Surprise, Sarcasm/Dry wit and Silliness (as seen in attachments H, I and J.) By applying these existing humor types to the phenomenon of pop-cultural references, we aim to establish if the content of the advertising message indicates traces of any already established humor types and is thereby considered as humorous.

## 2.3 Ad Likability

When examining the liking of advertisements, it goes steps further than mere entertainment in order to grab attention and is closely related to customer persuasion. A study by Beil and Bridgwater (1990) shows that the way commercials impact and ability to persuades the consumer does not necessary result due to “a warm, glowy feeling” (p.43) but rather the commercial being relevant and worth remembering. Further, Gelb and Pickett (1983) argue that the aspect of entertainment in an ad itself creates positive associations to the brand responsible for the ad. In line with this, Beil and Bridgwater (1990) argue that a reason for this is that likable advertisements affect our attitudes emotionally towards the brand. In other words, if the customer likes the ad, they are more inclined to like the product and brand. When integrating a pop-cultural event into advertising, brands consider a widely discussed topic and apply the message to a product or service in, according to press and themselves, a creative, smart and humorous way. According to previous studies, customers highly value aspects such as “clever”, “imaginative” and “amusing”, subsequently making them the most important traits of an advertisement in order to perceive it as likable (Beil & Bridgwater, 1990; Keller, 1987; Yang & Smith, 2009). Further, Zhang (1996) argues that the content type

in advertisements has a direct impact on the overall appreciation of the advertised product and brand behind the marketing. His study on content responsiveness indicates that humor's ability to generate positive and favorable thoughts works as a persuasion mechanism increased level of likability towards the advertisement itself and the conveyed message. Therefore, the first set of hypotheses is as follows;

***Hypothesis 1a:*** *Advertisements with humorous references are considered more likable than advertisements without humorous references.*

***Hypothesis 1b:*** *Advertisements with pop-cultural references are considered more likable than advertisements without humorous references.*

***Hypothesis 1c:*** *Advertisements with humorous references show no significant difference in likability compared to advertisements with pop-cultural references.*

## 2.4 Purchase Intention

Dehghani and Tumer (2015) define purchasing intention as the likelihood of a customer who intends to purchase a particular product. Advertising is a catalyst and basic tool of marketing communication, providing necessary information and notifying potential customers about products that the brand offers. The provided information enables customers to compare the product with other competitors' offers, and by creating an awareness of the product and its advantages, the communicated messages lingers in the mind of the customer, potentially influencing their purchasing decision when buying the product (Yeshin, 1999).

In order to influence the purchase intention of a customer with the message of the advertisement, it is crucial that the customer notices the ad itself. In order to gain attention, brands and advertisers consider which channel the ad is communicated in, as well as the timing of the publication and the way the ad is executed. All these variables influence the final purchase intention of customers (Cline & Kellaris, 2007). However, using stimuli such as humor in an ad, it is also proven to distract the viewer from processing the ad and completely understanding the full-communicated message, resulting in a reduced amount of attention concerning the product in the ad (Gardner, Mitchell & Russo, 1985). When encountering a low-involvement product, customers are likely to focus on extrinsic cues such as price or country of origin disregarding whether they have previously been in contact with the brand or not (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos & Oldenkotte, 2012). This attitude resembles a heuristic behavior in low-involvement contexts that supports decision-making. The extrinsic cues helps the customer to simplify decision-making and as cognitives shortcuts, also known as rule of thumb (Verlegh, Steenkamp, and Meulenberg, 2005). In a low-involvement situation they tend to put as little effort as possible in processing external information, and therefore rely on extrinsic cues, which are easy to process. Humor is somewhat more complex and rather considered an intrinsic cue and may therefore be

unfavorable in a low-involvement situation since it requires more time and effort of the customers to process (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos & Oldenkotte, 2012).

When brands use pop-cultural events in their advertisements, they heavily rely on the customer ability to decode the message and understand intended wit of the reference. Since the companies themselves have no opportunity to explain the connection between the advertised service or product to the reference, if the message and connection is not clear enough, the communication may collapse if the customer has not been part of the topic in mind and therefore does not recognize the reference. According to Kuilenburg et al. (2011) there appears to be a gap between the attention gaining act and intent to purchase, where the customer possibly loses track of what the brand is actually selling while being busy decoding the message. In line with this, Zillmann et al. (1980) argues that when customers face humorous advertisements, they put higher emphasis on processing and understanding the entertaining part of the message, focusing less on other parts of the message, such as the actual product or service the brand is offering. Considering that advertisements that refer to pop-cultural events have a more complex message to process than humorous advertisements, the second set of hypotheses is as follows;

***Hypothesis 2a:*** *Advertisements with humorous references result in lower purchase intention compared advertisements without humorous references.*

***Hypothesis 2b:*** *Advertisements with pop-cultural references result in lower purchase intention compared to advertisements without humorous references.*

***Hypothesis 2c:*** *Advertisements with humorous references result in higher purchase intention compared to advertisements with pop-cultural references.*

## 2.5 Ad Likability's Effect on Purchase Intention

With hypothesis 1 and 2 as starting points, previous research has mainly focused on humor's effect on ad and brand likability as well as the final purchase intention of the advertised product or service. Further, theories pose that when using humor as a stimuli to achieve an increased purchase intention, brands have to "persuade" the customer with the message (Brooker, 1981; Chanthika & Tan, 2000; Strick, van Baaren, Holland & van Knippenberg, 2011; Yoon & Tinkham, 2013), and get the customer to like the message to further enjoy the thought of possessing the advertised product (Hsieh, Hsieh & Tang, 2012; Meng-Jinn, Grube, Bersamin, Waiters & Keefe, 2005).

In terms of routes of persuasion, representativeness of the product, level of complexity and prior experience are all the crucial factors leading to purchase intention (Kitchen, Kerr, Schutz, McColl & Pals, 2014). Interesting enough, some companies are using the opposite, and instead of persuade the consumer with product attributes they are instead using distancing stimuli. Distancing stimuli, as the name suggests, are all the factors non-related to the product like humor, reference to celebrities or specific color. One might assume that those factors

lower consumer's ability to process a message, however distancing stimuli such as humor are preferable when likelihood of elaboration is low (Kitchen, Kerr, Schutz, McColl & Pals, 2014). A study by Beil and Bridgwater's (1990) even suggest that consumers who are exposed to a humorous ad and "like it a lot" are twice as likely to consider purchasing the product in the advertisement than consumers who merely felt neutral towards the advertisement.

Following hypothesis 1 and 2, with the condition that both the humorous ad and pop-cultural advertisements are considered humorous, we pose the following set of hypotheses;

***Hypothesis 3a:** In the context of humorous references; ad likability leads to increased purchase intention.*

***Hypothesis 3b:** In the context of pop-cultural references; ad likability leads to increased purchase intention.*

***Hypothesis 3c:** In the context of humorous references; ad likability leads to a higher degree of increased purchase intention, than in the context of pop-cultural references.*

## 2.6 Theoretical Framework

With inspiration from the famous AIDA model (Kotler, 2012), we have constructed a framework incorporating the aspect of humor and what it has in advertising. The model, seen in figure 1, illustrates the interaction and relationship between ad likability and purchase intention depending on different humorous content types. The starting point of the model is the two different types of ad content, humorous reference and pop-cultural reference, which are studied in Phase I in focus groups. The participants were exposed to different advertisements in order to establish the level of perceived humor in the tested ad, in other words if the subject considers the ad humorous or not. Moving on to establishing which references that can be considered humorous content types in order to test its impact on ad likability, meaning if the subject recognizes certain traits of the advertisement in order to consider the ad likable. Further the model acknowledges the impact the advertisements content has on purchase intention, studying if the subject likes the product more after have seen the ad and would consider buying it. Lastly we evaluate the relationship between ad likability and purchase intention, meaning what impact ad likability has on purchase intention.

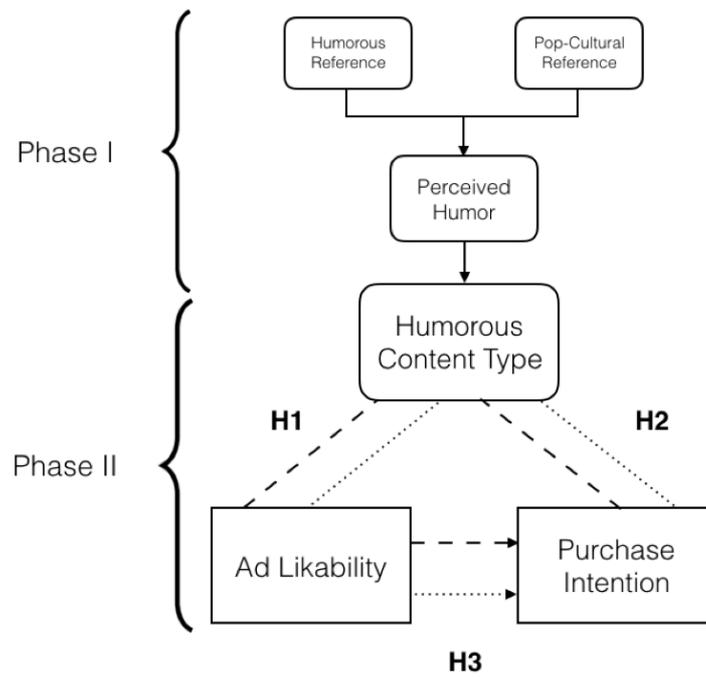


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

In order to answer the hypotheses and apply the model, the theory has been operationalized and organized in to questions. Questions from previous studies within humor research were used as inspiration when compiling the questionnaires. The operationalized questions can be found in table 2.

## 3. Methodology

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*This chapter explains the methodology of the paper starting with Research Method and Research Design. Further, the Data Collection Model is introduced in order to clarify mixed method approach. In the chapters later part Phase I, the qualitative part of the research is introduced and coding explained thoroughly. Phase II follows with the description of the quantitative part of the study, the questionnaire. The second part of this chapter consist of details regarding the questionnaire, its analysis and limitations.*

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### 3.1 Research Method

In order to increase reliability and credibility of the thesis it is necessarily to describe in detail the process that has lead to its results and conclusions. Since our intention is to study humor in advertising on south Swedish consumers in Skåne County it is important to firstly establish what south Swedish consumers consider funny in advertising. To come to that conclusion it is valuable to gain deep understanding of humor and its likability. By involving and examining participants in focus groups we gained this type of contextualized information and understanding of the social world (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The focus groups were used as a tool to establish whether "humorous reference" and "pop-cultural reference" in advertisements are considered as funny. Not until that was established we could continue to the second part of the study (see figure 1), measuring ad likability and purchase intention. Since our study is divided into a two-phase design, it has both a qualitative and quantitative approach and is therefor refer to as a mixed method study (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

According to Esterby-Smith (2008) mixed methods are powerful, but can yet be the pitfall when combined. We faced this risk by using them stepwise. Using their strengths to firstly gain deep knowledge and understand what subjects of a smaller sample find funny, to later test those assumptions on a bigger audience. By doing so we will gain general understanding of the situation as well as gather rich data of ideas and items based in few number of cases so they can later be tested on bigger audience through hypothesis testing (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Esterby-Smith, 2008). The most natural way of testing our hypotheses has been to sample representative groups of people and to generalize the results. In order to do so, the data collecting process was formal and structured, applying a quantitative approach and gathering a large sample (Malhorta, 2010).

The ontological position of this paper has taken a critical realistic course as the one developed and associated with the author Bhaskar. According to the Bhaskar, research should take on a more interdisciplinary approach, as any observed social phenomena are different from the knowledge of the matter (Bhaskar, 2008). Knowledge is different from existence, he means, and there is reality that is not dependent upon our understanding of it. In theory this means

that our reality and the effects are caused by invisible structures within a society (Bhaskar, 2008; Walker, 2017). It is up to the researcher to distinguish the visible effect of an event and the underlying structures that has caused it. In practice it means that a researcher has to create the conditions required to distinguish the structure from the effect and provide the explanation to the phenomena. By studying a phenomenon both qualitatively and quantitatively, we cover multiple social sciences and are one-step closer integrating knowledge and understanding across methods and theoretical fields.

## 3.2 Research Design

When planning and structuring our thesis we took into consideration the criteria of both qualitative and quantitative methods. When looking at Phase I of our study, we had taken into consideration trustworthiness of the study, referring to the creation of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Credibility refers to the researcher's understanding of the complexity in the empirical study, also referred to as internal validity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Researchers also have to take into consideration the requirement of confirmability, meaning the researcher's objectivity towards the data and results of the study. The expression of transferability on the other hand reflects upon external validity, confirming that the findings can be adapted in different contexts. And lastly, dependability reflects back to the to the trustworthiness of the study and the degree of reliability and possibility to replicate the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The latter Phase II of the study had three criteria of business research; reliability, replication and validity (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Reliability is concerned with the question whether the study is repeatable, which means when the study is recreated by other researchers would the findings be the same, or has a random condition affected our results (Bryman & Bell, 2003). This condition is especially important when using quantitative method and concerning whether a measure is stable and if the researcher is studying what he or she intends to study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In case of our study we chose to use previously coined concepts and used those as tools while establishing our questionnaire, we operationalized the key variables we were interested in, in order to ensure that we covered the areas we intended to study and covered validity of measurements.

The way of basing a study on previous research and concepts is recognized as deductive approach and popular in the quantitative method (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Although this study is inspired of the empirical phenomena we found in advertising, we chose not to pursue inductive research but rather to test this phenomenon in terms of previous research on humor. The theory-based method is therefore used to test larger assumptions stated in previous research and the correlations between humor and ad likability and purchase intention.

This together with a carefully chosen sampling method using randomized method when collecting our data will make our study replicable. Replication is one of the requirements of

quantitative study that ensures transparency and objectivity in research (Bryman & Bell, 2003). This is also important from another point of view, which is replication in order to further develop and understand a phenomenon and the effects that we are studying. In order to increase the degree of reliability we have chosen to present all of the steps in the process of developing, sampling and analysis that led to our conclusions. We have also chosen to include the questionnaire and extracts from the SPSS Statistics program to in detail present our findings.

Validity, according to Bryman and Bell (2011) is the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from the research. Ecological validity is ensured by creating a realistic setting, which in our case was creating realistic advertisements for the questionnaire. We made sure to create advertisements that were as accurate as possible, which is why we chose to recreate advertisements similar to a company that is selling low-involvement goods, Delicato (see chapter 3.4.4.1). By applying industry praxis we are ensuring the setting and with it the ecological validity of the study.

We also made sure to chose as representative respondents as possible, targeting different people in different locations and times during the day, so the data and results can be generalizable beyond the specific research context. In other words are aware of external validity of the study.

To summarize the above, the research was conducted in two phases, firstly Phase I consisted of focus groups of which we gained the in-depth conceptualized understanding of whether humorous references and pop-cultural references are considered as humorous or not. Those findings were later used in Phase II, in an experimentally designed questionnaire using cross-sectional data that compared two different humorous content types together with the none humorous control, testing ad likability and purchase intention (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Cross-sectional research is being chosen of following reasons, data is collected at one point in time and all of the answers are supplied simultaneously. In addition to that, we were interested in the variation between the groups, which is why our sampling varies in terms of gender and age. We were also interested in patterns of association and analyzing correlation in quantitative set of data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The details concerning sampling, collection and analysis of data are presented in detail in the following sections.

### 3.2.1 Sample Selection

The topic of this study, pop-cultural references in advertising, has been recognized among Swedish and Norwegian brands. Hence it is interesting to study the phenomenon in the context of Swedish consumers. However, due to time and budget constrains, the research has been conducted regionally, focusing on consumers in Skåne County, more specifically Helsingborg, Lund and Malmö. Since the product in the questionnaire advertisements was a low-involvement product which most people can relate to and has come in contact with, we focused on the whole population of Skåne. Due to ethical norms and marketing research

praxis, we have decided to exclude consumers younger than 18 years old and elderly, 65 years and older. This is due to eliminate any risk of us influencing the results if the participant would need assistance to interpret or read the questions, mainly in case of bad sight or hearing.

### 3.2.2 Data Collection Process & Timeline

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of the data collection process, the model as seen below was formed. The model illustrates each step of the data collecting process, including both Phase I and Phase II, as well as demonstrating the timeline of how much time that was spent during the process and during which phase.

The first step of the research is treated in chapter 1, discussing the new advertising phenomena, allowing us to (1) formulate the research question of weather pop-cultural references is considered as humorous. Further, we treat (2) previous literature and (3) theories within humor research in order to (4) decide our research method and answer our main research question. All, this is treated in chapter 3, moving on to the execution of the (5) focus groups and the actual (6) collection of the data. The focus groups were held during March 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> and are further explained in chapter 4.1, where also the (7) coding and (8) analyzing of the data is explained. The findings of the focus groups were then (9) interpreted and demonstrated in chapter 5, in order for us to (10) determine the different humorous content types, which are being perceived as humorous. Step 1 to 10 illustrates Phase I of our research, moving on to Phase II. Acknowledging the results from Phase I, as seen in chapter 2 (11) we formulated three sets of hypotheses based on previous literature and theories within humor research. In order to answer the hypotheses (12) we decided on a quantitative method. To further test the clarity and structure of our questionnaires we organized a (13) pre-study and after some value feedback made some changes before (14) handing out the final questionnaire. When all data was collected, the answers were (15) transferred and computed in SPSS Statistics. The results were then presented in chapter 4 and later (16) analyzed and (17) interpreted in chapter 5. Lastly, the findings were critically discussed, considering (18) theoretical and practical contributions as well as future research, as seen in chapter 6.

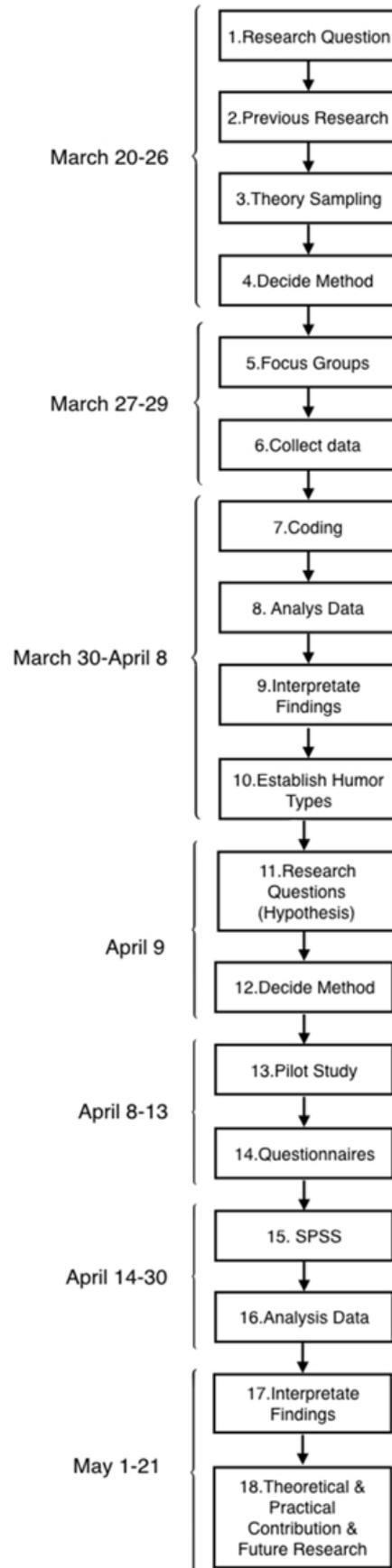


Figure 2. Overview of data collection process and timeline

### 3.3 Phase I: Focus Groups

In order to obtain profound insights regarding people's view on humorous advertising and whether they consider the humorous ad as funny, as well as studying the perceived humor of the pop-cultural, we arranged three focus groups. By using focus groups we did not only get in-depth information of people's view on humorous reference in advertising, but it also enables us to study the reaction and dialog that appears when participants react upon other's view and opinion of humor and the tested advertisements, and how they individually as well as collectively make sense of a phenomena (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Focus groups enables participants to listen to other's views and possible reconsider their own answers, reflecting a more realistic discussion setting than solely answering a questionnaire or conducting an in-depth interview (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Besides the interest in the personal insights and emotions regarding humorous and pop-cultural references in advertising, the aim with the focus group sessions was also to determinate what people consider humorous and why that is (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This is important to understand while structuring our questionnaire in order to move on and measure the impact and effect on ad likability and purchase intention.

The study followed a convenience sampling, where the participants of the three focus groups were chosen personally among our friends, family and acquaintances from Helsingborg and Lund. Consequently, the participants represented our chosen target group of inhabitants of Skåne County. We assured that each group entailed a mixture of female and male participants within the target group (18-65 years). We decided to conduct more than one focus group session in order to increase the dependability of the outcome and to make sure that our target group was represented (Bryman & Bell, 2011). All three focus group sessions lasted between 45-60 minutes and were set in a relaxed living room setting, in order to make the participants feel comfortable and assimilate a natural setting considering the subject of topic (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Regarding participant selection, Morgan (in Bryman & Bell, 2011) argues that when the aim of the focus group is to explore a collective understanding, it is most successful to use groups of people who already know each other. In our case, we want to discuss the view on humor and humorous references as well as pop-cultural references, and how they are perceived in advertisements. Three focus groups were compiled with participants divided into age groups of 18 to 34 years, 35 to 50 years and 51 to 65 years. According to Bryman and Bell (2011) focus groups with participants of similar age have a higher tendency of having more common reference points. By pairing the groups by age, we eliminate the fundamental step of disagreement and instead have the possibility of going deeper into why the participants have or share the assumptions or opinions as they do.

In terms of group size, each group consisted of between seven to nine participants, as the literature suggests a size of six to ten to generate a good discussion (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The groups were constructed in a way that some participants were familiar with each other, while others were unknown to one and other. By combining participants with already existing

relationships, it enables trust and comfort of talking freely. However, by incorporating new people, the participants are also challenged to express their opinion to new people. Additionally, all participants were familiar with us, in order to create a fundamental trust, which is necessary when the aim is to get a better understanding of a specific phenomena or context (Easterby-Smith, 2015).

The purpose of the focus groups were to study the participants outlook on humor, attitude towards advertising and whether they find certain advertisements humorous or not, and what makes them feel that way. During the sessions, the participants discussed their view on humor, what they consider humorous and their view on humor in advertising. Following this discussion, the participants were shown three different advertisements; one with a humorous reference and two advertisements with pop-cultural references. The advertisements (Facebook, 2011b; Daily Mail, 2017; Ad News, 2017) are found in appendix D, E and F. The participants were asked whether they recognized the references and what they thought about the different advertisements. Moreover, what emotions the advertisements were raising and how they made them feel. Since our study seeks to understand the shared perspective of humor, we applied a semi-structured interview approach following an interview guide to keep a conversational character, while still being able to trace the participants thoughts and ask follow-up questions (Bryman and Bell 2011). The interview guide was constructed following Dowling's (2013) previous research, studying how humor can be expressed, attitudes surrounding it and what meaning it has to different individuals. Following the interview guide in appendix G, the session was divided into three parts. As in Dowling's (2013) study, first the group was introduced to the subject of humor, given the opportunity to discuss humor in a broad sense and what they considered funny or not. Part two focused on their previous experience of funny advertisements and what they consider funny in advertising. During the third and last part the participants were presented three different advertisements and were asked to share their thoughts about them and whether they considered them humorous. Follow-up questions such as "why" and "give an example" were asked, both to initiate and facilitate the conversation, but also to uncover deeper thoughts and reasons behind the participants opinions (Easterby-Smith, 2015). However, we still kept a distance from the conversation, assuring that the dynamics of conversation was constructed and upheld by the participants themselves.

In order to get as elaborate and clear answers as possible, the focus group sessions were held in Swedish, which was the mother tongue of all the participants. The Swedish transcript was therefore later translated into English prior coding and analyzing. Regarding timing, all sessions took place in central Lund; two in the afternoon and one in the evening. The time between the completed sessions was used to discuss the results, note the reflections of the discussion and suggest improvement for future sessions. All three focus groups upheld a good conversation flow and resulted in a good outcome.

### 3.3.1 Coding and Analyzing the Script

The focus group transcripts were analyzed by using a framework for identifying humor types in order to answer our first research question. In order to analyze the transcribed material we applied theoretical coding. According to Saldaña (2009) theoretical coding covers and accounts for all previously defined categories and sub-categories in grounded theory analysis. As seen in appendix H, I and J, the framework is illustrated in tables divided by the presented advertisements. Each table consists of different previously established humor types (Liptak et al., 2014; Taecharungroj & Nueangjamnong, 2016), their sub-category codes, the definition of the humor type and lastly examples of quotes by the focus group participants. During the focus group, the participants had to answer the questions "What do you think about the ad?" and "Do you consider any of the advertisements as funny?" as well as explaining which one they found funny and why. By using Taecharungroj and Nueangjamnong (2016) and Liptak et al. (2014) theories on humor types, the participant's quotes were coded by dividing and matching words, phrases and statement to match a humor type, based on the definition of the humor type. Thus we could come to terms with whether the participants did perceive any humoristic aspects of the message in the advertisement. As seen in appendix H, I and J the examples show reactions, statements and explanations of why certain participants considered the advertisements as humorous. For example, as seen in appendix H, one respondent was asked to explain why she considered advertisement 1 to be funny and answered the following;

*[The ad] is unexpected because companies usually avoid talking about things that their products are lacking.*

The statement implies that the advertisement raised a level of surprise due to its unexpected nature and context. This goes hand in hand with the definition of humor type "surprise", explained as "when humor arises from unexpected situations". Hence, her statement implied that she perceived humor in the message of the advertisement.

However, as seen in appendix H, I and J some of the example boxes are left blank, this is due to the fact that all three advertisements had different messages and can therefore be located in different humor type definitions. For example, advertisement 3 (seen in appendix F) by Dove is stating an untrue statement regarding their product by referring to alternative facts, which was recognized as an "exaggerated" and "sarcastic" message by the participants. However advertisement 2 (seen in appendix E) by Norwegian Airlines are stating a true fact regarding Brad Pitt's current relationship status, meaning that this messages on the other hand does not have an exaggerated or sarcastic nature, explaining why the participants did not recognize the same humor types in both advertisements, leaving some boxes blank in the tables.

When all statements regarding the advertisements were categorized, with the proviso that all the advertisements were perceived as containing a humorous message, we could establish that the advertisements were perceived as humorous. The results of this phase would thereby help us to answer our main research question "Do consumers consider pop-cultural references in

advertisement as humorous?" and to move on to the second phase of the study, allowing us to use advertisements with such references in the questionnaires when testing ad likability and purchase intention.

### 3.3.2 Criteria for the Evaluation of Qualitative Research

By evaluating the quality of the research, we assured a high level of internal validity by eliminating any possible bias. The sessions were recorded, transcribed, translated and later coded by us. When coding transcripts, it is important that no participant quotes are taken out of context or skewed when translated (Saldaña, 2009). Hence multiple participant quotes are presented in appendix H, I and J to maintain a high level of dependability of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Moreover, when coding the transcript we independently evaluated the results from each focus group. Afterwards we compared how each of us perceived the results in accordance to the humor type definitions, prior summarizing the final results. In order not to favor anyone's opinion, only the results, which were consistent with both conclusions, were included in the final results. Regarding confirmability, we took a completely neutral and objective position when evaluating the results, putting our own views to the side.

Looking at external validity, the focus groups studied attitudes towards humor in advertisement, the common view on humor and whether humor was recognized in the presented advertisements. The research could also be conducted in a similar setting, changing the context, for example studying attitude towards sexism and the portrayal of different genders in advertising. Having the possibility to change context and still apply the same approach gives the study a high level of transferability (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, the sessions followed a previously prepared interview guide with questions previously studied in humor research (Dowling, 2013), to maintain a high level of trustworthiness to the studies subject. However, having a semi-structured interview approach always allows the participants to enter themes outside of the frame, providing large data sets of different topics, which is a issue discussed by Bryman and Bell (2011). However, since our aim with the focus groups were to get a general understanding in what people considered humors, the approach was successful.

## 3.4 Phase II: Questionnaire

After Phase I and established concepts of humor and pop-cultural references we proceeded to the next phase.

### 3.4.1 Pilot study

Literature and previous studies has been used to form the questions and focus groups together with the empirical study of advertisement in media helped us to create the layout of fictional advertisements used as examples in the questionnaire. Since the questionnaire created was made to be self-completed it was important for it to be as clear and understandable as possible

to the respondents, not only to be convenient and increase number of completed answers but to minimize the risk of respondents asking questions and risking the interviewer effect (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Dahmström, 2011).

By pilot testing we made sure that the research instrument of the questionnaire operated well and generated different yet logical answers (Bryman & Bell, 2003). We have strategically chosen a sample of three persons who were different in age, gender and background in each group; humorous references, pop-cultural references and the control. The strategic sampling was made in order to replicate potential variation of the population, making sure the questionnaire is understandable by everyone. After the questionnaires were filled out we went through the answers looking for inadequate answers based on previous questions and patterns. We even asked the respondents after they were finished if there were any questions that were hard to answer or hard to understand. Based on the feedback, we decided to develop questionnaire instructions and to re-structure the questionnaire giving it a better flow. We also chose to clarify in the instructions the neutral answer in order to give respondents an alternative where they could be indifferent to the statement, and not risk polarizing the results.

#### 3.4.2 Sampling and Data Collection

As mentioned above our ambition is to study the general population of Skåne County, which is why we target a sample representative in both size and behavior of the population in order to be able to generalize the results and come to valid conclusions (Esterby-Smith, 2008). In order to do a representative selection of the population we were using both random sampling method, stratified random sampling and systematic random sampling. Practically, as illustrated in figure 3 below, our hand-out took place at grocery stores that sell the product mentioned in advertisements in Skåne County. We chose three cities, Helsingborg, Lund and Malmö, a strategic selection that provided us with a mix of people and backgrounds similar to the population's. Later we have picked all of the bigger grocery stores in in area of the chosen cities and randomly chose three of them in each city. Since we have selected each of the stores based on their selection and size, any bigger store selling the product has the same chance to be chosen supporting the requirement of equal probability of inclusion in the sample (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

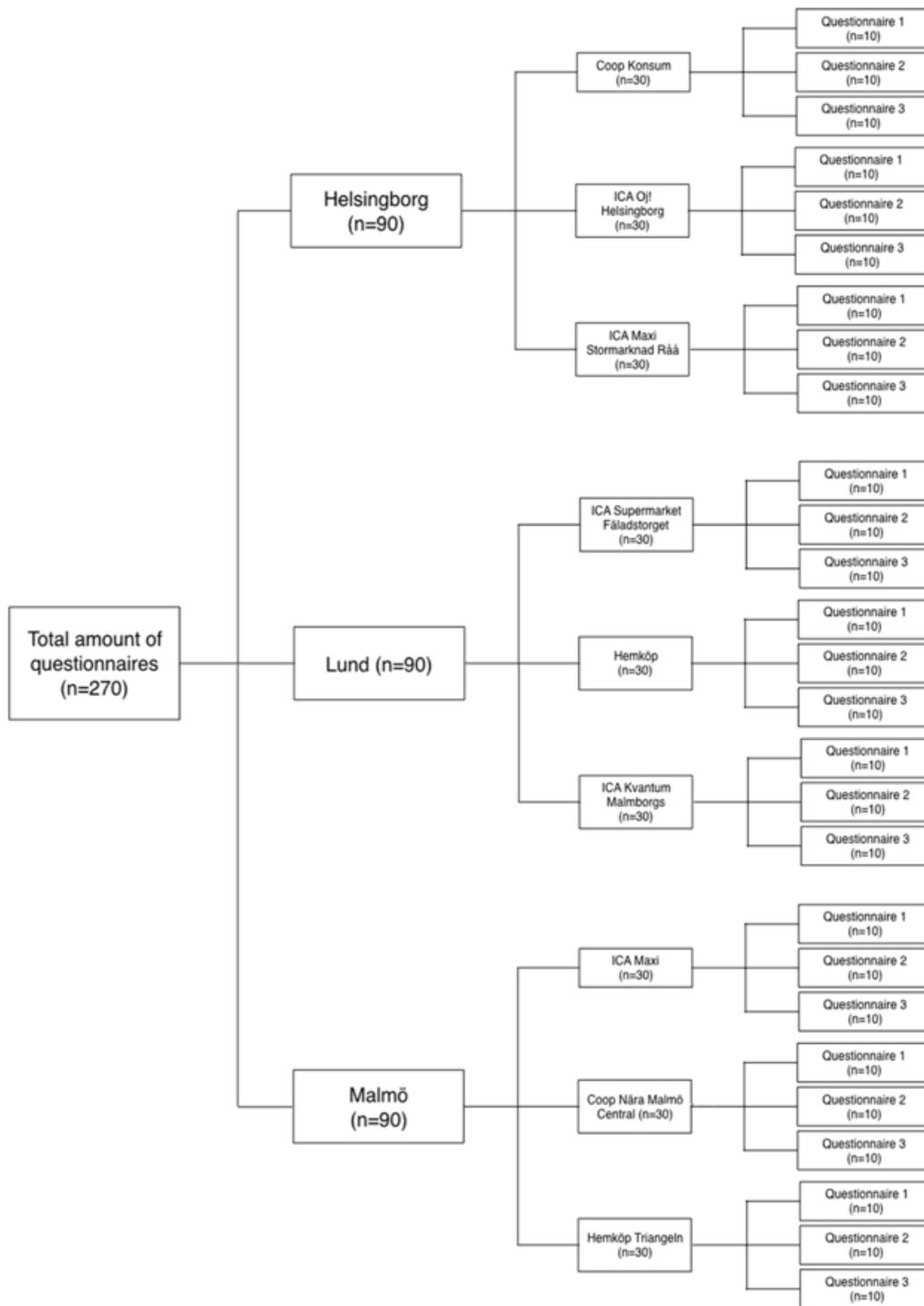


Figure 3. Data Collection Model

As seen in figure 3 above, this means that we had handed out equal amount of 90 questionnaires in each city, divided by 30 in each study at different grocery stores at different times at three different locations, in Malmö, Lund and Helsingborg. We believe that a geographical spread will add depth and variation to the data and reflect the variation that can be found in the population. The same reasoning applies to the variation in time of the day and stores approached. We believe that by being flexible with the times of our research we were able to gain a variation of different professions and ages. When it comes to who answered the questionnaire, we chose to target people between the age of 18 and 65 years old, this in order to create a range in age and follow the research praxis not asking people under aged and not bother the elderly that could had difficulties to read, hear or understand. We have chosen age of 65 since it is the age of retirement in Sweden, which is in line with our ethical reasoning. We later followed the rule of three when using systematic sampling, we asked every third person that looked to fit in the chosen age span to fill out in our questionnaire. The gathered questionnaires' were checked once before leaving a city and when we noticed that the sample mainly covered younger people we have chosen to adjust and ask every third person that could be over forty years old at a specific city. By doing so we were balancing out our sampling in order to recreate the variations in age as similar as the populations.

Method of data collection was a self-completion questionnaire (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The method of independent questionnaires was chosen mainly due to following reasons. Firstly, by choosing an independent way of filling out a questionnaire we can prevent any interviewer effects that could impact the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). By letting the respondent fill out the questionnaire by themselves we assure that the respondent answers truthfully questions regarding the humorous content and its effect on ad likability and purchase intention without an interviewer that exhibits and reminds about social desirability. Lastly, the matter of generalization requires an adequate number of respondents in each of groups, which we are covering by creating as convenient questionnaire as possible. In that way respondents can complete it at the speed they need and require to fully understanding the questions and provided answers (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

### 3.4.3 Questionnaire Design

Hypotheses formulated in chapter 2 focuses on ad likability and purchase intention in relation to humorous references, pop-cultural references and advertisements without humorous references. In practice this means that we conducted three different questionnaires in order to compare those without affecting respondents by repeatedly showing advertisements.

The first part of the questionnaire (see appendix L, M & N) includes the background information and is the same for all of the three forms. Those questions describe the participant in terms of gender and age. Those are the questions were the ones that contributed to the respondent profile, which were helpful while comparing with the characteristics of the population, in other words accuracy of the sample (Dahmström, 2011). Question considering educational level and time spent on the Internet were chosen due to support previous research

and as a control, should educational background and Internet usages affect expression recognition of the advertisement in the second part of the questionnaire.

The second part of the questionnaire revolved questions focusing mainly on the operationalization (see *Chapter 3.4.4.1: Operationalization*) and is the part that differentiates the questionnaires from each other due to the content type of the advertisements (see appendix L, M & N). The chapter starts with the advertisement and questions regarding the content recognition. As previous study suggested it might be valuable to understand the reference to find it humorous. This question was later followed by a control, in order to supervise if respondents indeed knew the reference. One question acted as a control to our focus groups, ensuring that the respondents perceived the advertisements as our focus groups. Following questions were based on operationalization in regards to ad likability and purchase intention.

Lastly, the third part of the questionnaire covered personal questions considering attitudes towards the ad, which is why it was followed by an introduction and a kind reminder of answering as truthfully as possible and the explanation of the scale and its neutral value – number four. These questions were presented in the end of the questionnaire in order not to affect the respondent's answers in part two.

### 3.4.3.1 Experimental Design

As mentioned in chapter 3.4.4 the experimental design in this questionnaire aims to study the three different content types confirmed in the Phase I, consumers' understandings and attitude towards humor in advertisements. In addition to that we studied multiple advertisements and companies that use different content types in their marketing. One that has been especially interesting for us was the confectionary brand. Delicato is a well-known company on the Swedish market with its sweets and treats but also advertisement. Delicato is one of few companies that use humorous content in their advertising as well as referring to pop-cultural events. Examples seen in appendix O, P, Q and R have been of value for us when constructing our experimental design were advertisement such as "Do you have a diverse diet?" (Facebook, 2011a) that refers to well-balanced diet and "This years cookie beat" where the word beat is referred to both Eurovision Song Contest and the Swedish word for piece of cake, which are pronounced the same way (Facebook, 2014). Advertisements that has inspired us the most was "Might contain vitamins and minerals" (Facebook, 2011b) due to its simplicity and humorous reference as well as "Alternative facts" (Facebook, 2017b) that was one of their most resent advertisements referring to a pop-cultural event. We re-used the advertising message in the two last mentioned advertisements, while stripping them of other elements that could affect the questionnaire in terms of ad likability or buying intention. The two advertisements were constructed in the same way, only differing in terms of content message. The brand logo was also eliminated, in case brand recognition would affect the results. The two advertisements were completed with a control advertisement without any humoristic or pop-cultural reference that shared similar layout and colors as the other two.

Table 1. Structure of the Questionnaires

Questionnaire 1	Questionnaire 2	Questionnaire 3
Demographic Questions (Question 1-4)	Demographic Questions (Question 1-4)	Demographic Questions (Question 1-4)
Attitude questions based on an ad with humorous references (Question 5-15)	Attitude questions based on an ad with pop-cultural references (Question 5-15)	Attitude questions based on an ad with no humorous references (Question 5-13)
Questions regarding attitude towards advertising and humour (Question 16-18)	Questions regarding attitude towards advertising and humour (Question 16-18)	Questions regarding attitude towards advertising and humour (Question 14-16)
		

### 3.4.3.2 Operationalization

To assure that the hypotheses were answered and that we were asking the participants the right questions in regards to our hypotheses, operationalizations covering the main concepts into a multitude of sub questions were set (Patel & Davidsson, 2011). In a study by Du Plessis (1994; in Smit, 2006), the author presented different statements, which described aspects of the advertisements to the participants; a study we have been inspired by in our own operationalization. In Flaherty et al.'s (2004) study on perceived humor, product type, and humor style in advertising; they operationalized their key concepts in order to later on efficiently use factor analysis. With a similar approach, we have operationalized the key concepts in our research; ad likability and purchase intention, using Zhang's (1996)

operationalizations from a previous study measuring the intended concepts. All measures, operationalized questions together with the translation can be found below in table 2.

*Table 2. Operationalization*

Measure	Operationalization	Translation
<i>Zhang (1996)</i>		
<b>Ad Likability</b>	I like the ad	Jag gillar den här reklamen
<b>Ad Likability</b>	I find the ad funny	Jag tycker den här reklamen är rolig
<b>Ad Likability</b>	I find the ad creative	Jag tycker den här reklamen är kreativ
<b>Ad Likability</b>	I find the ad clever	Jag tycker den här reklamen är smart
<b>Ad Likability</b>	I think the ad is relevant to the product	Jag tycker den här reklamen är relevant för produkten
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	I like the product more after have seen the ad	Jag gillar produkten mer efter att ha sett reklamen
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	The ad makes me want to buy the product	Den här reklamen får mig att vilja köpa produkten

### 3.4.3.3 Rating Scale

The set of questions is based on operationalization from previous studies and presented on fixed-response scale (seen in attachment L, M & N). A seven-point Likert scale from one to seven is being used where 1 means strongly disagreeing and 7 is strongly agree, in which we acknowledge the neutral value 4. Studying attitudes requires a neutral value to the respondents can express their indifference. In this way we will be able to talk about the results in a more descriptive way. In order to be able to trust the results of our analyzed data, a one-sided 95 percent confidence interval is being used (Malhorta, 2010).

## 3.5 Response Quality Evaluation

With a response rate of approximately 70 per cent we managed to hand out 270 questionnaires in three cities at nine different locations. Out of the 270 respondents and questionnaires, 28 were either above or below the chosen age group or simply missed out on all of the questions that were printed on the backside of the questionnaire. The biggest reason behind our missing data was missing answers to questions on the backside of the questionnaires. A small percentage of the missing values were questionnaires that were filled out by respondents outside our target group and questionnaire, which followed a distinctive pattern and failed to answer the control questions. One of the 28 followed a pattern and placed all of the answers in a value of five. Another of the 28 questionnaires had places all of the answers in the neutral value four. Hence, the answers did not follow any logic and could

belong to someone who was in hurry and did not have the time required to read and answer all of the questions truthfully.

### 3.6 Data Quality

Previously mentioned table 1, illustrates the structure of our experimental approach when studying different content types in advertisements. According to Malhotra (2010) when conducting an experiment, the researcher has to take into consideration internal validity while drawing conclusions about the effects of independent variables but also external validity while making generalizations. Internal validity, as seen below will be assured by operationalization based on previous research (*see Chapter 3.4.4.1 Operationalization*). By doing so we will find out the dependent variables effect on factors like; ad likability and purchase intent. Those will be later studied in order to find differences between humor and pop-cultural referencing in advertising. External validity will be taking into consideration by collecting the data in mixed environments and places.

### 3.7 Ethical Implications

Another important aspect when conducting the study are the ethical implications. According to Bryman and Bell (2011) every researcher has to take into consideration the codes of ethics and follow the guidelines to ensure that there is no; harm to participants, invasion of privacy, deception involved and lastly, that the researchers ensure that the participants are sufficiently informed about the research and its extent to which they can decide upon if they wish to participate or not (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In terms of focus groups we made sure to invite participants to a place that felt comfortable and safe; our home. We described that we are thankful for their participation but do not require or expect them to answer every question. Further we explained that there are no good or bad responses and that it is important for us to get as honest and truthful answers as possible. Lastly, we also informed that their participation would be handled with care and their answers would be anonymous.

When it comes to Phase II, we acknowledge that experimental method is of most delicate research practices (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011). This is why we were extra careful and gave participants as much information as needed about the study in terms of research area and researchers but no mention given that the study was concerning humor. We believe that mentioning humor could affect respondents to answer based on his or hers attitude or expectations about humor. We also guaranteed anonymity in line with Market Research Society's (MRS) guidelines and handled the data carefully and truthfully. (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

## 3.8 Data Analysis Method

The following sub-chapters explain the different methods and steps used when analyzing the quantitative part of the study, also referred to as Phase II.

### 3.8.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to plot out the base of the collected data in Phase II. They summarize the basic values and what has been measured, such as sums, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis (Malhorta, 2010). An advantage of using descriptive statistics is that the values can be used to benchmark and spot any possible abnormalities or errors in the data (Bulmer, 1979). In this thesis we also complement the descriptive statistics table with boxplots in order to observe any outliers that may affect the end result and skew the data.

### 3.8.2 One-way ANOVA

In this research, we are interested in analyzing the possible variance of means between and within the three different test groups. Therefore we have used a one-way analysis of variance; one-way ANOVA (Malhorta, 2010). In line with our hypotheses, we wanted to analyze if there is any difference between using pop-cultural references in advertisements compared to regular humor. Hence, the humorous content types used in the advertisement were our independent variables. In the ANOVA we will analyze the statistical significance, which shows that respondents in the compared advertisements answered more or less comparing the advertisements. This means that our hypotheses are one-sided, which will be studied using P-value. If the P-value is less than 5 % (0,05) the difference found in the test is statistically significant. Since most of our hypotheses study differences that are more than something we will only focus on one tail, which in practice means that the P-value will be divided by two (Wahlgren, 2012).

### 3.8.3 Post-hoc test

When the sample means of the three groups was significantly different between the groups, we used the post hoc test in ANOVA. By doing so we could make a stepwise multiple comparisons procedure-identifying sample means that were significantly different from each other (Malhorta, 2010). Since ANOVA uses F-tests to determine the quality of means, the significant F-test identifies where significant differences lie among three or more treatments. If the variances between the groups showed approximately equal, Tukey was preferred due to its powerful analysis when groups are similar in size compared with Bonferroni (Burns & Burns, 2011).

### 3.8.4 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to test and examine the relationship between an independent and dependent variable and how one response to the other (Montgomery, Peck & Vining,

2012). Further, regression analysis tests the hypothesis for causality, meaning to what extent the independent variable cause effect on the dependent variable (Miller, Acton, Fullerton & Maltby, 2002). In this study we only investigate one predictor and therefore linear regression model was used to present the results. Regression analysis was used to answer Hypothesis 3a, 3b and 3c found in 2.5 ad likability and purchase intention, testing the possible effect ad likability could have on purchase intention when using humorous and pop-cultural references as stimuli, as we test the impact the independent variable, purchase intention, has on the dependent variable, ad likability.

### 3.8.5 Quality Control

In order to control the data analysis performed and described in chapter above we chose to also run non-parametric tests of Mann-Whitney's two independent sample test and Kruskal-Wallis n-test. Non-parametric tests are measuring mean differences on ordinal scale, which our data can be considered as (Malhotra, 2010). Both Mann-Whitney's two independent sample t-test and Kruskal-Wallis n-independent sample test delivered the same results in the difference of means as when using ANOVA and Tukey, which increased the confidence of the results.

Both tests measures the differences between means also called for central tendencies and provide answers for hypothesis testing their statistical null hypothesis is equal mean between the groups and alternative hypothesis indicate difference. Kruskal-Wallis even examines the difference in means and ranks the differences of each case (Malhotra, 2010).

Since the results of both tests were similar to the ones in both ANOVA, Tukey and regression analysis, it indicates that the results were correct which enables data analysis and hypothesis testing. For more information and details regarding non-parametric Mann-Whitney (see appendix S, T & U) and Kruskal-Wallis test (see appendix V).

## 3.9 Limitations

The following sub-chapters gives an overview of the different limitations both Phase I and Phase II of this study has entailed and has taken into consideration.

### 3.9.1 Data Collection

As explained in chapter 3.4.2, when deciding upon the different possible locations for handing out the questionnaires, we considered grocery stores which offered the product in the experimental advertisements as well were big enough to potentially have a steady stream of customers. Some of these locations were mainly visited by customers with cars, meaning that it could allure a certain type of people regarding age, gender and income. Further, in order to get a diverse sample of people, the questionnaires were handed out both during midmorning and afternoon, however due to the high level of retirees shopping in the morning, meaning 65 years and older which are outside of our target group, we decided to focus on handing out questionnaires mainly during late afternoon. Furthermore, the focus group sessions we

conducted were compiled by our friends, family and acquaintances. By having participants who have a prior relationship to us as well as to one and other in some cases, it enables trust and comfort of talking freely. However, given a more mixed set of people who had no prior knowledge of our work may have given different results. Due to the fact that all the participants knew us from before, there was a risk of an interviewer effect, meaning that the mere presence of us could have affected the participant's answers and opinions.

### 3.9.2 Sampling Error

Any researcher that does not study the entire population face the risk of sampling error. Sampling error shines through when the characteristics of the sample does not match the population's. We were aware of the difficulty of matching a random sample with population, which is why we examined the questionnaires making sure both men and women in all ages were represented. It is important to point out that aspects as gender and age are easier to detect than others, like education and time spent on Internet. By being as random as possible, it should lead to varied results, yet it is not guaranteed.

### 3.9.3 Type I and Type II error

There is always a risk of a Type I and Type II error. When analyzing the data, we tested the significance level on each variable at a 95 per cent confidence interval to answer the hypotheses as correctly as possible and avoid committing a Type I error. In order to decrease the risk of a possible Type II error, we collected a large enough sample set to detect if any deviating pattern would occur. However, since the data was conducted systematically, there is a risk of over representing people by accident of the same age and gender in the sample. Even though the collected data covered all ages in the target group, the amount of young respondents was still slightly higher than the older.

### 3.9.4 Causation and Correlation

Phase II aimed to study the effect on ad likability and purchase intention by using different types of humorous content types in advertising, and the possible relationship between ad likability and purchase intention. When constructing the advertisements our intention has been to have identical advertisements and only changing the mere content of the message in the advertisement. However, when analyzing the correlation and causation we cannot be completely sure that the different advertisement contents were the only reason to the results. There is always a risk that participants focused on other parts of the ad, which we did not aim to study, and showed high or low interest in the advertisements due to other aspects such as the color and font of the ad, or the product itself.

### 3.9.5 Time and Budget Constrains

Due to time constrains and very limited budget of this thesis, we decided to firstly hand out questionnaires in Helsingborg and Lund, being two of the biggest cities in south Sweden but

also our hometown, thus eliminating the issue of travel time and costs. Secondly, we decided on Malmö due to its size and high stream of people. For an even more representative representation of south Sweden, questionnaires could have also been handed out in smaller rural cities. Due to the time frame, we limited the study to 270 questionnaires, which also could have been increased given more time in order to get an even more representative sample of the population. Furthermore, the as mentioned before, our focus group sessions were compiled by our friends, family and acquaintances. Given more time a more diverse selection of people could have been arranged.

## 4. Results

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*In this chapter results of Phase I and Phase II are presented. Firstly the qualitative part of the study will be described in three parts and its findings presented. Phase II of the study is conferred with respondent profile, descriptive statistics and results in terms of the three main hypotheses regarding ad likability, purchase intention and ad likability effect on purchase intention.*

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### 4.1 Phase I: Focus Groups

The following sub-chapters present the results of Phase I of the research; the focus groups.

#### 4.1.1 Respondent Profile

The three focus groups consisted of both female and male participants in the age rang of the target group (age 18 to 65). Group one consisted of seven people; five women and two men in the age span of 51 to 65 years. Group two consisted of six people; three women and three men in the age span of 35 to 50 years. And lastly, the third group consisted of nine people; five women and four men in the age span of 18 to 34 years.

#### 4.1.2 Outcome

Following is the outcome of all three focus groups, including quotes from the participants in the focus group sessions.

##### 4.1.2.1 Focus Group 1

The first focus group consisted of seven people, five women and two men between 51 to 65 years old. Participants were asked questions considering their perception of humor, humor in advertisement and their opinion regarding examples of advertisement with different elements of reference. When asked about humor, the group mostly focused on situational humor, something based on previous experiences and often including others like family members and children.

*"I laugh mostly at silly situations, like when I found out that my daughter drove into a building when practicing her driving. That was funny. [laughs]" (Female, 52)*

When asked about advertising overall, all of the participants expressed a hostile attitude. They considered advertisement redundant and amount of it disturbing. They claim to remember

humorous advertisement better than advertisement without funny elements, but when asked to recall and retell the funny advertisement they were referring to one man said;

*"Oh yes, I saw a funny commercial for not so long ago... I can't remember what it was about. But it was funny." (Male, 58)*

When showed examples of different advertisement, the group seemed to agree that Advertisement 1 (in appendix D) was the funniest. The statement was followed by reasoning as the advertisement is referring to food labels, which all of the respondents seemed to understand. When showed advertisement 2 and 3 (in appendix E & F) the opinions were not as clear. Three of the respondents found it funny and one of them explained;

*"Well, I think this [reference to advertisement 3] advertisement is funny, I would give it a three on a scale 1 to 10. But like that video of the boy that bites his brother's finger [Reference to 'Charlie Bit My Finger' YouTube Sensation], now that is a ten." (Female, 59)*

#### 4.1.2.2 Focus Group 2

The second focus group included six participants, three woman and three men in the age span between 35 to 50 years old. It was clear that this group valued humor and that humor is an important part of their every day lives. Some of participants mentioned situations at work when they joke with their colleagues, others described how they use humor to make others happy;

*"I often joke to calm my children when they're moody. A joke, funny face expression or even a recall of something funny can really make a difference for them, and I guess they do the same thing for me." (Woman, 37)*

When asked about funny advertisement, participants seem to refer to the same series of advertisements by ICA. They claim to notice humorous advertisement more than advertisement without humorous references, a man in his 40's explained;

*"I like ICA commercials on TV. They're funny (...) I like that you get to know the characters so every time a new commercial comes up you wonder what they are up to now. Until you see the ad forty times... It also features products without being irritating." (Man, 42)*

When showed different advertisements to the participants, discussion regarding advertisement 2 (in appendix E) broke out. While the majority considered it "funny", others could not grasp the humor the brand referred to. The issue was that all participants were not familiar with the concept of alternative facts and had not followed the discussion in media regarding the phrase, which U.S. Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway had used. The groups over

all agreed that Advertisement 1 was the funniest of the presented advertisement, due to its witty reference which every one understood, followed by advertisement 2 and lastly advertisement 3, and as one participant summarized it;

*"I guess you have to 'get it' to recognize the humor in it" (Man, 46)*

#### 4.1.2.3 Focus Group 3

The third focus group consisted of nine people, five women and four men between 18 to 34 years old. During the first part of the session, the respondents had a lively discussion about humor and what they considered as humorous. The majority of the group agreed that humor is an important part of their everyday life and they mostly laugh when they are with their friends, usually when talking about something funny or embarrassing that has happened to themselves or to others. Further, they discussed that they often laugh at images or statements found in different social media channels.

*"I love when I get a notification and see that a friend tagged me in one of the "Student problems" pictures on Facebook. It's the way we communicate with each other nowadays. [laughs] And it's fun, you can always relate and I usually tag my friends back." (Female, 22)*

Other participants made many references to funny TV shows that make them laugh, and considered it to be one of their main source of humor.

*"I can burst out in laughter when Chandler in Friends or Barney in How I Met Your Mother drops 'on point' lines, perfect for the situation at that moment. I wish I could do that in real life." (Male, 28)*

When asking the participants whether they could remember any funny commercials, one participant mentioned McDonald's advertising referring to SKAM, which other participants in the group also recognized. The participants used words such as "clever" and "in time" when describing why they had remembered it and why they enjoyed it.

*"I watch SKAM so I got the reference in the ad and think it was cool. You can see that they're trying to keep up." (Female, 25)*

When presenting the different advertisements to the participants, everyone understood the reference in advertisement 1 and 2 (in appendix D & E) however two participants did not recognize the reference in advertisement number 3. The group agreed that they liked and found advertisement 2 (in appendix E) to be the funniest one. One participant explained it as following;

*"The ad is funny because it's not just about a cheap flight, it's an encouragement to chase love in Hollywood. You know how you say "a picture says more than thousand words"? Well "Brad is single" in this context tells a whole story." (Female, 20)*

What the respondent above is referring to is humor, which occurs when putting two or more elements together to produce a humorous situation. An advertisement promoting flights to Los Angeles on itself, or just the statement "Brad is single" would not necessary be considered humorous. However, when combining the two components together they create humor, known as the humor type "Comparison". The respondent below recognized another element of humor when discussing advertisement 3.

*"You see it [reference to Advertisement 3] and go "I see what you did there". I like when brands do something unexpected, it gets your attention. I get so annoyed by advertisements, especially online, but this is ok, it's smart." (Male, 31)*

The statement above indicated that the humor type the participant is referring to is seen as "Surprise", when humor arises from something unexpected, such a situation, and execution or as in this case the reference.

#### 4.1.3 Outcome Summary

As presented above, the three focus groups focused on different aspects of humor and what they considered humorous. All groups agreed that they enjoyed situational jokes involving family and friends, where the timing and context had a high impact on the level of perceived humor in each situation. Group 3, with the youngest participants, expressed liking in different sources of humor such as memes, funny posts on social media and witty sites. Important to mention is that all these suggested sources of humor have one thing in common; they base the humor on situational references and pop-cultural references. Further, group 2 and 3 admitted that they often noticed funny or different advertisements. Even though all groups expressed different levels of irritation regarding the overwhelming amount of advertisements they encounter on a daily basis, they still agreed that advertisements can be appreciated if they are relevant, funny or entertaining.

When the participants were presented with the three different advertisements (see appendix D, E & F) the majority of participants in each group expressed liking in advertisement 1 and 2 (see appendix D & E). Moreover, at least one of the advertisements from each category was considered as humorous by the majority in all groups, when analyzed with our framework, identifying humor types. The participants provided clear explanations and examples of why they considered the advertisements funny or humorous, in order for them to be coded and categorized into humor types. As seen in appendix H, I and J, multiple humor types were detected in the case of all three advertisements, including the frequency of how many comments each humor type was given for each advertisement. Due to these results we could establish that the intended humorous advertisement (in appendix D) was perceived as humorous and the advertisements with the pop-cultural references (appendix E & F) were also

considered as humorous. Hence, we could move on to Phase II in the thesis, and use these insights when designing the experimental advertisements for the questionnaires in Phase II.

## 4.2 Phase II: Questionnaire

The following sub-chapters present the results of *Phase II* of the research; the questionnaire.

### 4.2.1 Quality Criteria

Before running the data and testing the hypotheses, it is important to ensure the quality criteria for quantitative research; meaning the reliability and validity of the study. By performing Cornbach's alpha reliability test we checked for internal consistency of each construct, in other words if all the items in each tested construct presented in table 2 are connected and thereby accepted to represent the construct or not (Bartelli et al., 2011). The Cornbach's alpha value is expressed between 0 and 1, representing each construct. As seen in a study by Tavakol and Dennick (2011), a value over 0.6 is considered an acceptable value of the test if the construct consists of no more than six items, however a high coefficient alpha does not guarantee a high degree of internal consistency as the results can be affected by size of the questionnaire or the case of to similar questions building up the construct. Hence, a value exceeding 0,95 is also not acceptable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). As seen in table 3 below, the construct representing the ad likability mean consisting of five items indicates a Cornbach's alpha value of 0,831 and the construct representing the purchase intention mean indicates a value of 0,802. Thus, both constructs lay in the accepted range of 0,6 to 0,95 and are thereby accepted.

*Table 3. Reliability test results: Cronbach's alpha*

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Ad Likability	0,831	5
Purchase Intention	0,802	2

In addition to Cornbach's alpha test, Pearson's correlation test was conducted in order to measure construct validity of the study. The test examines the strength of the combination between two constructs, and is illustrated by a value between (-1) to 1. The closer the value is 1, the stronger the relationship. As presented in table 4, in our case, the correlation value between ad likability and purchase intention is 0.542, indicating a positive correlation.

*Table 4. Validity test - Pearson's correlation*

		Ad Likability Mean	Purchase Intention
<b>Ad Likability Mean</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	0,542**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0,000
	N	242	242
<b>Purchase Intention Mean</b>	Pearson Correlation	0,542**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0,000	
	N	242	242

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (1-sided)

#### 4.2.2 Respondent Profile

As explained in figure 3, the data collection was conducted in Malmö, Helsingborg and Lund outside of grocery stores at different times during the day. All respondents had to answer question related to age, gender, education background and Internet activity. As seen in figure 4, the gender distribution was completely equal, with 50 per cent male and 50 per cent female respondents. Also seen in figure 4, the age distribution among the respondents resulted in a wide spread, with slightly higher representation in the age group with people born 1980-1991.

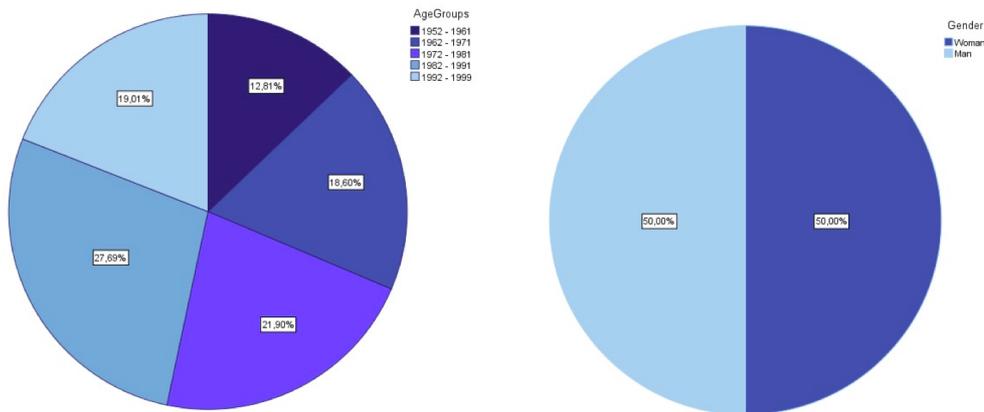


Figure 4. Age and gender distribution

Figure 5 below, illustrates the gender distribution per city, showing a good spread without any prominent gender over- or underrepresentation per city.

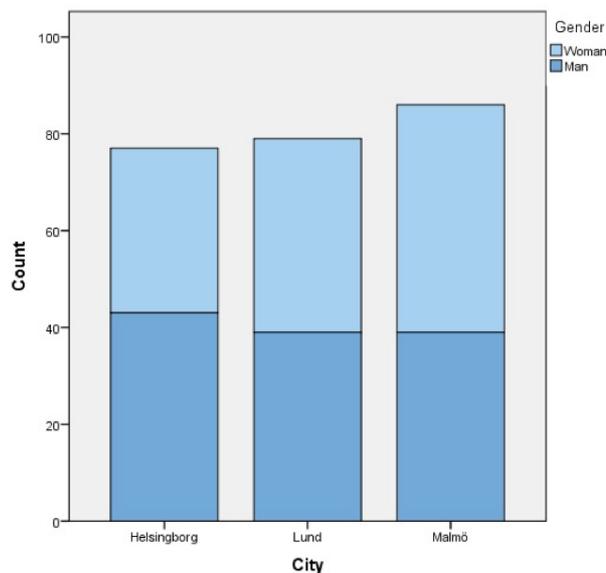


Figure 5. Gender distribution per city

As seen in figure 6 the sample mainly consists of respondents who spend between two to three hours on the Internet per day, and who holds an upper secondary school and university education. Consequently, the sample is somewhat underrepresented by people only holding a elementary school education as their highest degree of education. However, as explained in the method, the respondents were asked to fill out their educational background and time spent on the Internet as a control in order to see if the educational background and Internet habits had any effect on the level of expression recognition in the experimental advertisements. As seen in appendix K, no significant differences were found between the respondents' background and their ability to recognize the references in the advertisements.

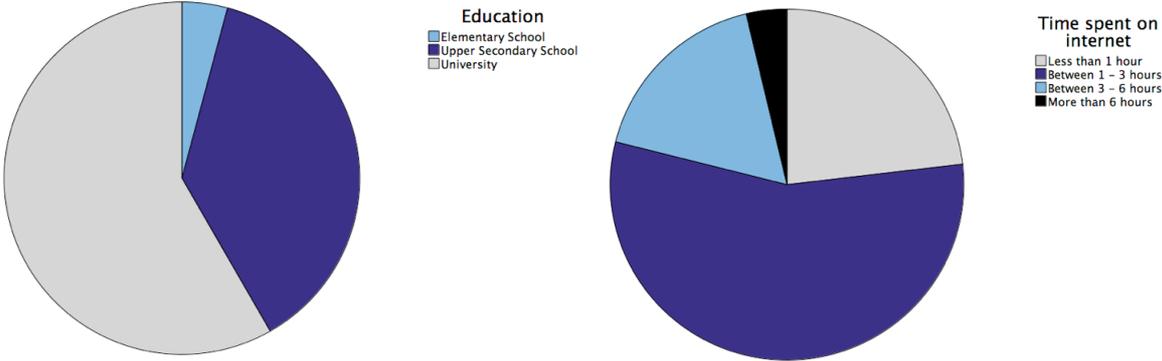


Figure 6. Education and time spent on the Internet

### 4.3 Descriptive statistics

In order to get an overview of the collected data and distinguish any possible differences between the groups we computed descriptive statistics. Following below are the descriptive statistics for each content type (see table 5, 6 & 7), representing the three different questionnaires. As seen in each table, the study has no missing data, however as mentioned in chapter 3.3.5, 28 out of 270 questionnaires were incomplete and therefore regarded as non-responses, hence not included in the results. Comparing the tables, the values also show that the mean value of the control advertisement concerning the questions regarding ad likability is lower than the mean value of the experiment groups with humorous and pop-cultural advertisements. In other words, the experiment groups rated the advertisements more positively.

As seen in the boxplots in figure 7, 8 and 9, the total amount of outliers was seven caused by seven respondents, mainly seen in the experiment group exposed to the advertisement with pop-cultural reference and the control group. As seen in figure 8, the question, "I think the ad is relevant for the product" experienced outliers consisting of four respondents diverged from the mass choosing to "strongly agree" with the statement. Additionally, there are three single outliers in figure 9 from the control ad. The outliers were kept in the data set since the reliability test was not considerably affected.

Moreover, although the data is negatively skewed in the experimental groups and positively skewed in the control group, the values do still not exceed +/- 2.0. According to Miles and Shevlin (2000) in case of a large sample size, slight divergence from normality does not have a crucial impact on the overall results. Since our sample size was greater than necessary, it further supports our decision of not eliminating the outliers.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics – Humorous Reference

	I like this ad	I think this ad is funny	I think this as is creative	I think this ad is smart	I think this ad is relevant for the product	I like the product more after I have seen the ad	This ad makes me want to buy the product
N	Valid 77	77	77	77	77	77	77
	Missing 0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3,77	3,74	3,99	4,05	3,68	2,60	2,55
Std. Deviation	1,776	2,086	1,983	1,979	1,689	1,480	1,474
Skewness	0,061	0,043	0,008	-0,22	0,210	0,879	0,757
Kurtosis	-0,878	-1,333	-1,092	-1,167	-0,513	0,494	-0,011

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics – Pop-Cultural Reference

	I like this ad	I think this ad is funny	I think this as is creative	I think this ad is smart	I think this ad is relevant for the product	I like the product more after I have seen the ad	This ad makes me want to buy the product
N	Valid 79	79	79	79	79	79	79
	Missing 0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3,27	3,46	3,63	3,51	3,58	2,65	2,67
Std. Deviation	1,810	6,068	1,896	1,804	1,676	1,485	1,534
Skewness	0,297	0,194	0,003	0,063	0,322	0,323	0,488
Kurtosis	-0,890	-1,362	-1,133	-1,029	-0,381	-1,249	-0,996

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics – No Humorous Reference (Control)

	I like this ad	I think this ad is funny	I think this as is creative	I think this ad is smart	I think this ad is relevant for the product	I like the product more after I have seen the ad	This ad makes me want to buy the product
N	Valid 86	86	86	86	86	86	86
	Missing 0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3,16	2,14	2,06	2,63	4,76	2,22	2,73
Std. Deviation	1,761	1,382	1,340	1,610	1,666	1,384	1,669
Skewness	0,407	1,195	1,542	0,834	-0,664	0,955	0,530
Kurtosis	-0,864	1,000	2,313	-0,263	-0,310	0,296	-1,119

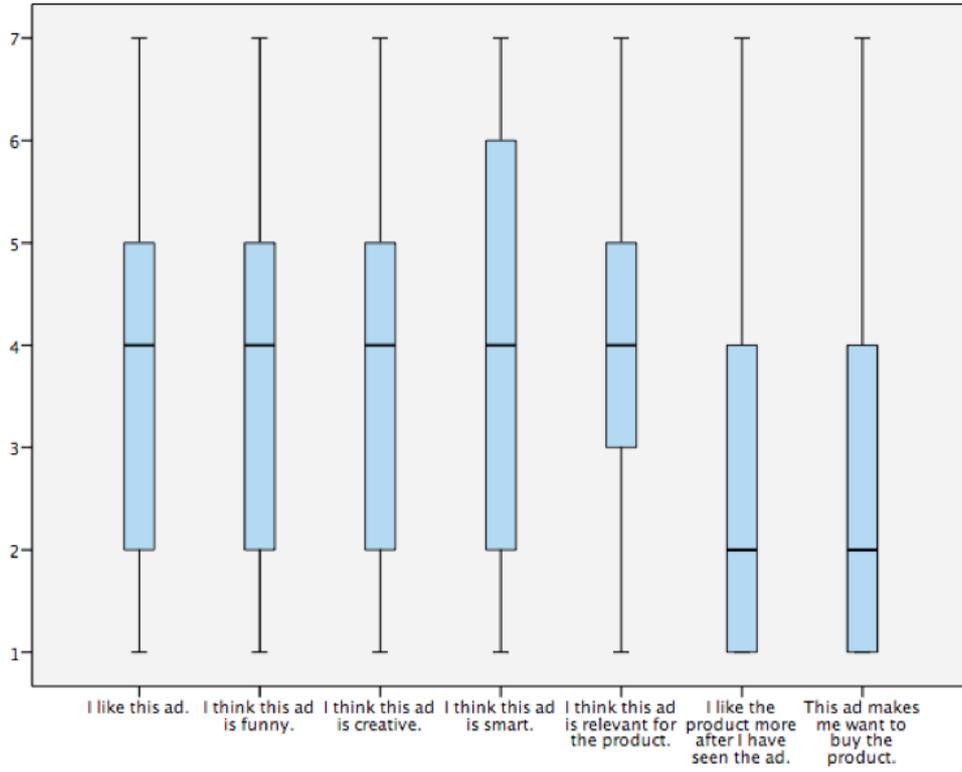


Figure 7. Boxplot - Humorous Reference

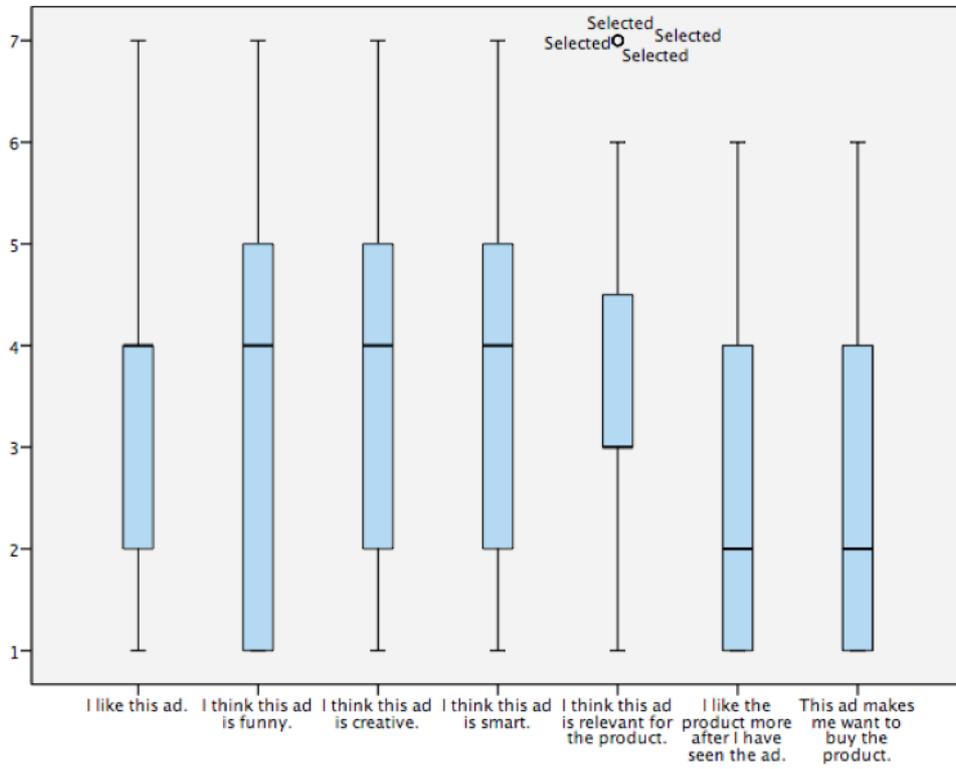


Figure 8. Boxplot - Pop-Cultural Reference

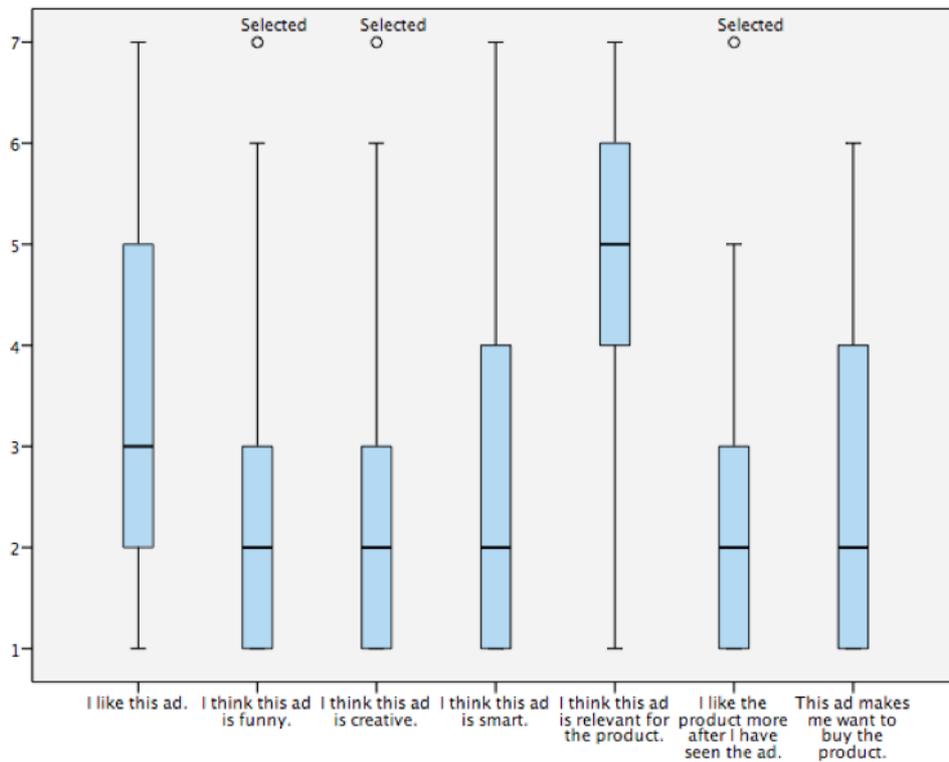


Figure 9. Boxplot - No Humorous Reference

#### 4.4 Hypotheses 1

In order to answer our first set of hypothesis we had to run an ANOVA test together with the Post Hoc Tukey test distinguishing between the three content types, humorous reference, pop-cultural reference and no humorous reference. As preciously mentioned, ANOVA tests the difference in mean and if those findings are of significant value. Since we had chosen the 95 per cent confidence interval and formed one-tailed alternative hypothesis all values over 0.025 indicate acceptance of the statistical null hypotheses and those under 0.025 indicate significant difference in the means and lead to rejection of statistical null hypothesis. In order to refine our results we had used Post Hoc Tukey test to further investigate the difference and significance between the specific groups. As seen in the ANOVA below (table 8) and the value of 0.000, there are significant differences between the groups and when comparing the means we could find that all of the groups show different values, significance of those can help us answer following hypothesis. As seen in table 9 below, the difference between humorous and advertisement without humorous references are significant and measure mean difference of 0.895 which makes us reject the statistical null hypothesis and accept the first alternative hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 1a:** *Advertisements with humorous references are considered more likable than advertisements without humorous references.*

When studying pop-cultural references in relation to the advertisement without any humorous references we could measure difference in mean of 0.540. Even though this difference is not as big as the previous that measured humorous advertisement with the one without any humorous references, the difference is still significant. We therefore reject the statistical null hypothesis and accept the second alternative hypothesis.

***Hypothesis 1b:*** *Advertisements with pop-cultural references are considered more likable than advertisements without humorous references.*

Table 9 below presents equal values for the pop-cultural references compared with humorous. When looking at difference in mean, we can observe lower ad likability of – 0.356 of pop-cultural references compared with humorous references. However this difference is not significant. We cannot prove that there are differences in ad likability between humorous and pop-cultural references in advertising. We therefore accept the following null hypothesis.

***Hypothesis 1c:*** *Advertisements with humorous references show no significant difference in likability compared to advertisements with pop-cultural references.*

*Table 8. ANOVA test for Ad Likability mean*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33,292	2	16,646	8,429	0,000
Within Groups	471,965	239	1,975		
Total	505,256	241			

*Table 9. Post Hoc Tuckey's test for Ad Likability mean*

(I) Content Type	(J) Content Type	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Humorous Reference	Pop-Cultural Reference	0,356	0,225	0,256
	No Humorous Reference	0,895*	0,220	0,000
Pop-Cultural Reference	Humorous Reference	-0,356	0,225	0,256
	No Humorous Reference	0,540*	0,219	0,038
No Humorous Reference	Humorous Reference	-0,895*	0,220	0,000
	Pop-Cultural Reference	-0,540*	0,219	0,038

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0,05 level

## 4.5 Hypotheses 2

The second set of hypothesis has been tested using the same methods as the previous one. Firstly an ANOVA has been run in order to find potential significance between and within the groups, later the Post Hoc Tukey test has been performed in order to spot significances between specific groups. The same confidence interval is being used, and since our alternative hypotheses are one-sided, meaning that significance values over 0.025 accepts our statistical null hypothesis and values under 0.025 threshold reject our statistical null hypotheses leaving place for the alternative hypotheses.

The ANOVA test in table 10 showed a level of significance equal to 0.701, a value far above the 0.025 - level, which indicates no significant differences between the groups. The Post Hoc Tukey test in table 11, indicates a value of 0,095 and thereby no significant differences in purchasing intention between advertisement with humorous references and without any humorous references. Therefore, we accept the statistical null hypothesis and reject the following alternative hypothesis.

***Hypothesis 2a:*** *Advertisements with humorous references result in lower purchase intention compared advertisements without humorous references.*

Regarding the next hypothesis, the Post Hoc Tukey test in table 11 indicated a value of 0,181 meaning no significant difference in purchasing intention between the advertisements with pop-cultural reference compared to the advertisement without humorous references. Therefore we also accept the statistical null hypotheses and reject the following alternative hypothesis.

***Hypothesis 2b:*** *Advertisements with pop-cultural references result in lower purchase intention compared to advertisements without humorous references.*

Finally, when studying the purchase intention of both humorous references and pop-cultural references we could observe that pop-cultural reference had a lower purchase intention mean value (- 0.87) compared to advertising with humorous reference. This difference was however not proven significant, which is why we cannot indicate that there are any significant differences between humorous references and pop-cultural references in concern to purchase intention. And thereby accept the statistical null hypothesis, and reject the following alternative hypothesis.

***Hypothesis 2c:*** *Advertisements with humorous references result in higher purchase intention compared to advertisements with pop-cultural references.*

Table 10. ANOVA test results for Purchase Intention mean

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1,359	2	0,680	0,356	0,701
Within Groups	456,583	239	1,910		
Total	457,942	241			

Table 11. Post Hoc Tuckey's test for Purchase Intention mean

(I) Content Type	(J) Content Type	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Humorous Reference	Pop-Cultural Reference	-0,087	0,221	0,919
	No Humorous Reference	0,095	0,217	0,900
Pop-Cultural Reference	Humorous Reference	0,087	0,221	0,919
	No Humorous Reference	0,181	0,215	0,677
No Humorous Reference	Humorous Reference	-0,095	0,217	0,900
	Pop-Cultural Reference	-0,181	0,215	0,677

## 4.6 Hypotheses 3

In order to answer the third set of hypothesis, linear regression was computed on each content type. Regression analysis, in similarity with ANOVA indicate possible significance but also is capable to demonstrate a unstandardized beta-value. The unstandardized beta-value indicates how much A grows for every unit of B. Looking at the following sets of data in table 12 and 14, both content types show a strong significance in the relation between ad likability and purchase intention, both with values of 0.000. The unstandardized beta-values for both content types indicate a positive relation between content type and purchase intention with values of 0.342 and 0.589. Hence we reject the statistical null hypothesis and accept both following alternative hypotheses.

***Hypothesis 3a:*** *In the context of humorous references; ad likability leads to increased purchase intention.*

***Hypothesis 3b:*** *In the context of pop-cultural references; ad likability leads to increased purchase intention.*

As seen at the unstandardized beta-value in table 13 and 15, the advertisement with the humorous reference has a value of 0.342 and the advertisement with the pop-cultural reference has a value of 0.589. This illustrates that the advertisement with the pop-cultural reference has the strongest relationship between ad likability and purchase intention. Thereby we reject the following alternative hypotheses.

**Hypothesis 3c:** *In the context of humorous references; ad likability leads to a higher degree of increased purchase intention, than in the context of pop-cultural references.*

Looking at the results in hypothesis 2c we can observe that the empirical findings disproves the literature, showing that pop-cultural references achieve a higher likability compared to humorous references. Same tendency is showed once again in case of hypothesis 3c, where in context of humorous references, ad likability leads to lower degree of purchase intention, the opposite of what previous research suggests.

*Table 12. Linear Regression - ANOVA of Humorous Reference*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	21,892	1	21,892	13,298	0,000
Residual	123,465	75	1,646		
Total	145,357	76			

*Table 13. Linear Regression - Coefficients of Humorous Reference*

Regression	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1,256	0,389		3,225	0,002
Ad Likability Mean	0,342	0,094	0,388	3,647	0,000

*Table 14. Linear Regression - ANOVA of Pop-Cultural Reference*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	58,095	1	58,095	47,499	0,000
Residual	94,177	77	1,223		
Total	152,272	78			

*Table 15. Linear Regression - Coefficients of Pop-Cultural Reference*

Regression	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0,605	0,323		1,873	0,065
Ad Likability Mean	0,589	0,085	0,618	6,892	0,000

# 5. Analysis

*This chapter demonstrates the analysis of the findings presented in the previous chapter. The findings are connected back to the Model of Theoretical Framework, focusing on Phase II of the model, including the significant findings of the study. The results are further analyzed and discussed in relation to previous humor research.*

## 5.1 Result Discussion

The finding in Phase I confirmed that humorous references and pop-cultural references in advertising were considered as humorous. The reactions and statements given the different advertisements could be categorized into different humor types and depending on the statement and message in the ad, different humor types were located. One can see that even though advertisement 2 and 3 both are referring to pop-cultural events, participants recognize different types of humor in both advertisements and can therefore not be categorized as being humorous in the same sense according to previously developed definitions of humor types. However, both advertisement 2 and 3 did have a considerably higher level of the humor type “Comparison” and participants often used terms as “relevant” and “in time” when explaining why they found the advertisements to be humorous. Thus, pop-cultural references have arguably their own nuance of humor, calling for a new definition of this specific humor approach.

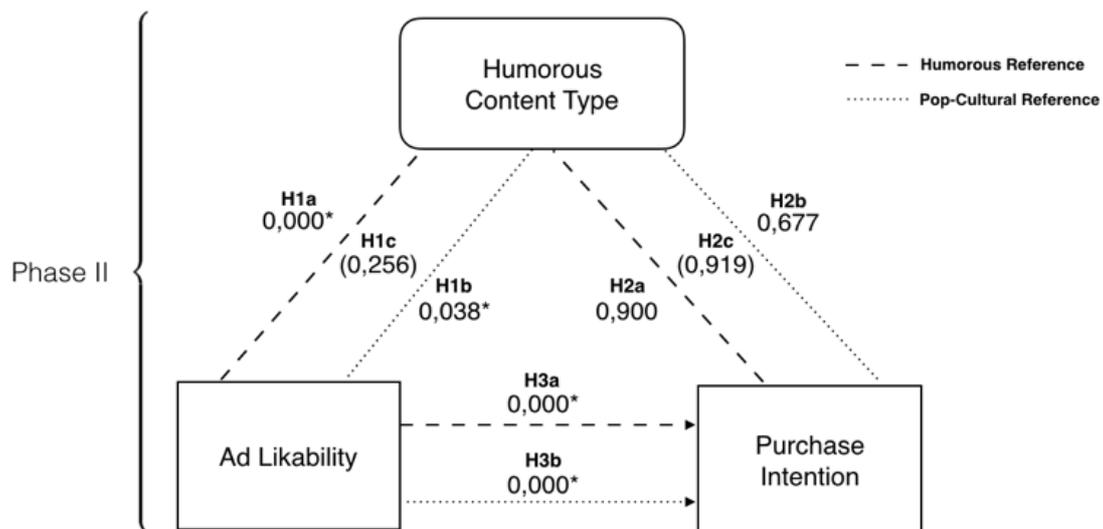


Figure 10. Theoretical Framework with results

When hypothesis testing using our questionnaire we came to the following conclusions; The finding in Phase I corresponded with the control question in the questionnaire (question 10 in appendix K), and according to the results both humorous references and pop-cultural references are perceived as a humorous content types in advertising. This finding can also be confirmed with the similarity in results when comparing with humorous references as the ones in hypotheses 1a and 1b regarding ad likability.

When comparing content types and ad likability in terms of funniness, creativity, smartness and relevancy we found a significant difference between the groups, summarized in our Theoretical Framework figure 10 and described below. Content type of the advertisements had in fact effect on likability. Humorous advertisement with value of 0.000 has proved a significant difference compared to advertisements without humorous elements. Looking at advertisement with pop-cultural references the results also indicated a difference in ad likability compared to the non-humorous control, measuring a value of 0.256. When analyzing this data set with Mann-Whitney's test (see table 16), humoristic references were the most appreciated in four of five operationalization, followed by pop-cultural references and lastly advertisement without humoristic references. However one of the ad likability operationalizations did not indicate any significant difference, and when asked if respondents agree on "I like this ad" statement, respondents of the three questionnaires' answered similar. This might seem problematic, which is why we wish to discuss and clarify potential reasons of why the question might not indicate the significance the other factors combine together. The answer might lay in two reasons, firstly the product and other aspects of the advertisement might affect the respondents more than we expected. It might be that the product itself is tasty and pleasurable, which makes its easy to like the advertisement regardless the message. Hence, the perceived likability of the advertisement with no humorous references may also be found in the humorous advertisements and the way they perceived the product unrelatedly to the message. In the control advertisement, some might for example have considered the price as low and therefore liked it. Another reason might be the question itself, when asking if something is "nice" or "likable", respondents might consider multiple aspects as well as agree since the advertisement does not include any negative impulses. Thus we accept the different response on questions regarding likability and the significance of the four concepts measuring ad likability of the advertisement.

*Table 16. Mann-Whitney test on Ad Likability*

	I like this ad	I think this ad is funny	I think this as is creative	I think this ad is smart	I think this ad is relevant for the product
Mann-Whitney U	2669,500	1858,500	1466,000	1945,500	2093,000
Wilcoxon W	6410,500	5599,500	5207,000	5686,500	5096,000
Z	-2,161	-4,967	-6,274	-4,607	-4,103
Asymp. Sig (1-tailed)	0,31	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000

When it comes to the hypothesis testing, we had found that humoristic references are indeed more likable than those without humoristic references, which is supported by previous studies that pointed out the importance of advertisement being “clever”, “imaginative” and “amusing” (Beil & Bridgwater, 1900; Keller, 1987; Yang & Smith, 2009). The same tendency can be seen in case of pop-cultural references that show even stronger link to likability compared with both advertising without humorous references and with traditional humorous advertisement. Pop-cultural references in advertisement have proven to be the most likable form of humor in our study.

As explained in chapter 2 previous studies regarding the effect on purchase intention when using humor in advertising has shown results pointing in different directions (Chattopadhyay & Basu, 1990; Eisend, 2009; Gelb & Pickett 1983; Petrescu et al., Scott, Klein, & Bryant, 1990; 2015; Zangh, 1996; Zhang & Zinkhan, 2006). As multiple previous studies on humor suggest, a complex message in need of decoding has the risk of decreasing the customer’s final intention of purchasing the product. Meaning that the more a consumer has to decode the message of the intended humor the higher the risk of decreased purchase intention since the focus is diverted from the main purpose of selling the product and instead the viewer concentrates on understanding and enjoying the entertainment value of the humorous message (Zillmann et al., 1980). However, as previously seen in table 11, hypothesis 2a, 2b and 2c does not show significance, meaning that we rejected our alternative hypothesis and accept the statistical null hypotheses that there is no significant difference, meaning no difference on effect on purchase intention when using humorous or pop-cultural references compared to the control advertisement including no humorous reference. A possible reason to this can be due to the nature of the questions the respondents had to answer regarding purchase intention. For example, we cannot guarantee that the answer to the questions “I like the product more after have seen the ad” and “This ad makes me want to buy the product” is solely based on the effect the humorous message has on the purchase intention of the participant, just as in the case of “I like the ad”. Factor such as the participants’ initial liking of the product, the aesthetic aspects of the ad, as well as the price in the control advertisement meaning that they considered it cheap or expensive could also have affected their attitude to the advertisement and intent to purchase. In order to get a clearer view of the participants’ attitude towards the message of the advertisement and how much it affected them, more questions surrounding purchase intention could have been operationalized and included in the questionnaire. It is also important to mention that 33 out of 79 respondents answering the pop-cultural questionnaire did not recognize the pop-cultural reference in the advertisement. We therefore also analyzed the respondents recognizing the reference separately in order to see if there was an significant difference in purchase intention compared to the control and advertisement with humorous references, however no significance was found. We therefore argue that previous studies on humor fall short when arguing that one has to fully understand the humorous message in order to generate purchase intention (Zillmann et al., 1980). As seen in our results neither the respondents which have fully understand the humorous message nor the ones who did not comprehend it have diverting attitudes towards purchase intention.

When analyzing the third set of hypotheses, we can observe an interesting discovery regarding ad likability's effect on purchase intention. As seen in table 17, the advertisement with a pop-cultural reference had a slightly higher ad likability mean compared to the one with a humorous reference, yet a lower purchase intention mean. Moreover, as seen in table 17, the advertisement with the pop-cultural reference has the highest unstandardized beta, meaning the pop-cultural advertisement has the strongest relationship between ad likability and purchase intention. In practice this means that even if the advertisement using a pop-cultural reference had a lower purchase intention, its ability to cause ad likability creates a stronger relationship and thereby has a more positive effect on purchase intention compared to humorous references. These results are in line with the previous literature arguing that the consumer has to enjoy the message of the advertisement in order to consider liking and then purchasing the product which is adverted (Hsieh, Hsieh & Tang, 2012; Meng-Jinn, Grube, Bersamin, Waiters & Keefe, 2005).

*Table 17. Summary of Concepts and Unstandardized beta-value*

	Ad Likability Mean	Purchase Intention Mean	Unstandardized $\beta$
Humorous Reference	2,57	3,84	0,342
Pop-Cultural Reference	2,66	3,49	0,589

## 6. Conclusion

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*This final chapter will connect the findings of the results to the research questions and aim, as presented in chapter 1. The aim of this study was to extend the theory of humor research, and add a new nuance to humor theory. Additionally, we intended to study the effect humorous and pop-cultural references had on ad likability and purchase intention, and on each other. With this as a starting point, the empirical data was analyzed and further presented in this conclusion. In this chapter we will present the theoretical and practical contributions of the study as well as suggestions regarding future research.*

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### 6.1 The Effect of Humor on Ad Likability and Purchase Intention

Our aim with this research has been to extend the theory of humor research, and add a new nuance to humor. Furthermore, we intended to study the effect the different content types would have on ad likability and purchase intention, and the relationship between the two. To summarize our findings we can state that both humorous references and pop-cultural references in advertising are considered as humorous, and therefore determine that pop-cultural references are considered humorous. We can also state that the effect of different content types in an advertisement is not definitive when it comes to purchase intention. We can further state that ad likability in terms of funniness, cleverness, relativity and creativity has bigger effect on purchase intention than the content type itself. Hence, in order to achieve an increased purchase intention, firstly ad likability has to be achieved in order to later on effect purchase intention positively.

### 6.2 Theoretical and Practical Contribution

Based on previous research and theories stating that complex humor might lower buying intention due to the concern and effort put in decoding the message on itself has been proven not entirely correct in our study. As seen in our results, pop-cultural references, which can arguably be consider more complex than humorous references, has a higher ad likability mean and when it came to the relation to purchase intention, pop-cultural references also showed a stronger correlation. This means that the pop-cultural references have a positive impact both on the over all ad likability as well as on purchase intention.

We further suggest that the way brands use pop-cultural events in their marketing can be labeled as “pop-cultural referencing”, thus adding a new nuance to the excising theories of humor types in humor research. A pop-cultural reference refers to brands’ producing and consuming a pop-cultural trending topic as a marketing phenomenon. Pop-cultural references result from trending topics within for example entertainment or political events. In line with

viral marketing, pop-cultural referencing often results in immediate attention and buzz due to its perceived imaginativeness and humoristic tone. However, contrary to humorous references, pop-cultural referencing aims to gain attention by mainly drawing on the combination between creativity, wit, timing and relevance in its marketing, often aiming to stand out and showing a unique side to the brand.

Lastly, this research also suggests that companies do not only have to create advertisements that are relevant to the product, but in order to create likability towards an advertisement, the advertisement content has to be considered funny, smart, creative and relevant. Pop-cultural references might be a solution and a compromise for brands that struggles to gain attention from the commercially exhausted consumer. And as this research proves, when incorporating the aspects mentioned, consumers do not only appreciate the advertisements judging by the increased likability of the advertisement, but it also leads to a stronger effect on purchase intention. In other words, it is of high interest for brands to incorporate pop-cultural references, not only to gain attention in media but also to increase the effect of their marketing efforts and sales.

### 6.3 Future Research

The method of this study described as Phase I and Phase II intended to firstly contextualize the ideas and attitudes of south Swedish consumers in order to later be studied on a bigger audience. This way of research can be transferred and used when studying different attitudes in advertisements, like sensitive topics as sexism or racism in advertisement. By adapting our research approach one can study the reaction and opinions in order to understand the reasoning behind the attitudes towards advertisements with sensitive content and later test those assumptions and reasoning on a bigger audience.

As our results illustrates, we can determine that ad likability has a positive effect on purchase intention. However, the effect the content type has directly on purchase has still aspects to be further studied. We suggest for future research to analyze the link between the pop-cultural references and purchase intention even deeper. We further suggest conducting a qualitative study by running focus group interviews with a varied composition of participants, to determine the unique selling points of pop-cultural advertisement and what further could cause increased purchase intention. Combining this with a quantitative approach, breaking down the concept of purchase intention and operationalizing it in order to define the degree of purchase intention, as a suggestion, both in low-involvement products and high-involvement products. The discussion regarding the effect of using humorous references in advertisement is very complex, and requires an even more extensive operationalization and study. Yet our findings can be considered as a start of the discussion, enlightening a new type of humorous marketing and its possible effects.

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## Appendix A: McDonalds Advertisement

Kroppen din  
trenger potet



## Appendix B: Norwegian Airlines Advertisement



**norwegian.com**

# Brad is single

Los Angeles. From/one way, incl taxes

---

# £169\*

\*Start your journey from London-Gatwick (LGW). Travel between 20 January 2017 – Feb 2017. Book by 26th September 2016. The fare is based on our lowest one way direct economy fare incl. taxes and charges excl. weekends, school and public holidays. Restrictions and baggage fees may apply. Fare correct as of 20 September 2016.

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## Appendix C: Delicato Advertisement

Today, 13,2 million\* Swedish citizens  
eat one Delicato ball each.



\*Alternative fact.

**DELICATO**

**Appendix D: Advertisement Showed During Focus Groups  
Delicato**



## Appendix E: Advertisement Shown During Focus Groups Norwegian Airlines



**norwegian.com**

# Brad is single

Los Angeles. From/one way, incl taxes

---

# £169\*

\*Start your journey from London-Gatwick (LGW). Travel between 20 January 2017 – Feb 2017. Book by 26th September 2016. The fare is based on our lowest one way direct economy fare incl. taxes and charges excl. weekends, school and public holidays. Restrictions and baggage fees may apply. Fare correct as of 20 September 2016.

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## Appendix F: Advertisement Shown During Focus Groups Dove

New Dove antiperspirant makes the lift arrive when you feverishly press the button.

New Dove antiperspirant knows a guy who can get you on the guest list.

#AlternativeFacts



## **Appendix G: The Interview Guide**

### **Part 1:**

1. Tell me what the word “humor” means to you?
2. What makes you laugh?
3. How do you make others laugh?

### **Part 2:**

1. Do you remember any funny commercial that you have seen on TV, in the newspaper or online recently? Last week or month? What was funny about it?
2. Do you find some advertisements funnier than the others?
3. Did the advertisement you saw make you smile or laugh?

### **Part 3:**

1. What do you think about the ad?
2. Do you recognize the reference in the ad?
3. Do you consider any of the advertisements as funny? Which one(s) and why?

## Appendix H: Framework for Identifying Humor Types I Advertisement with humorous reference, Delicato

Humor type	Sub Category Code	Definition	Example
<b>Exaggeration</b> Frequency = 0	Exaggeration	Overstating and magnifying something out of proportion	---
<b>Comparison</b> Frequency = 1	Comparison	Putting two or more elements together to produce a humorous situation	<i>It's funny, because you know that it's the complete opposite.</i>
<b>Personification</b> Frequency = 0	Personification	Attributes human characteristics to animals, plants and objects	---
<b>Pun</b> Frequency = 6	Pun	Using elements of language to create new meanings, which result in humour	<i>People are so crazy with their diets. I love how Delicato goes against that and just make fun of it. Life is already too serious.</i>
<b>Surprise</b> Frequency = 4	Surprise	When humor arises from unexpected situations	<i>[The ad] is unexpected because companies usually avoid talking about things that their products are lacking.</i>
<b>Sarcasm/Dry wit</b> Frequency = 3	Sarcasm/Dry wit	An ironic, taunt statement	<i>Love it, being proud of being anything but healthy.</i>
<b>Sarcasm/Dry wit</b> Frequency = 0	Stereotype	A generalisation of a type or group of people or situation	---
<b>Sarcasm/Dry wit</b> Frequency = 1	Teasing	An inside joke that may not make sense out of context or to the rest of the audience but makes sense between persons(s)	<i>Are you sure? I eat a few a week and my blood suger is just fine! (laugh)</i>
<b>Silliness</b> Frequency = 4	Flamboyant/Silly	An over the top statement action that is silly in nature	<i>It is a little funny (translation: smäkul) because it's what you read on food labels.</i>
<b>Silliness</b> Frequency = 3	Obvious	A true and well-known fact made aloud to the group	<i>Duuh, it obviously doesn't include vitamins.</i>

## Appendix I: Framework for Identifying Humor Types II

### Advertisement with pop-cultural reference, Norwegian Airlines

Humor type	Sub Category Code	Definition	Example
<b>Exaggeration</b> Frequency = 0	Exaggeration	Overstating and magnifying something out of proportion	---
<b>Comparison</b> Frequency = 7	Comparison	Putting two or more elements together to produce a humorous situation	<i>It is funny because for a second you actually think that "Hey, he's single lets go to LA and marry him, just a flight away".</i>
<b>Personification</b> Frequency = 2	Personification	Attributes human characteristics to animals, plants and objects	<i>Suddenly a plane ticket equals an engagement ring.</i>
<b>Pun</b> Frequency = 5	Pun	Using elements of language to create new meanings, which result in humour	<i>A plane ticket to LA suddenly means something completely different.</i>
<b>Surprise</b> Frequency = 5	Surprise	When humor arises from unexpected situations	<i>I think it is entertaining because Norwegian did something unique and unexpected.</i>
<b>Sarcasm/Dry wit</b> Frequency = 0	Sarcasm/Dry wit	An ironic, taunt statement	---
<b>Sarcasm/Dry wit</b> Frequency = 1	Stereotype	A generalisation of a type or group of people or situation	<i>I love how everyone is expected to love Brad Pitt and just leave their husbands and go chase him. Only the ring stopped everyone before.</i>
<b>Sarcasm/Dry wit</b> Frequency = 2	Teasing	An inside joke that may not make sense out of context or to the rest of the audience but makes sense between persons(s)	<i>Remember how I said that I would take the first plane to LA?</i>
<b>Silliness</b> Frequency = 0	Flamboyant/Silly	An over the top statement action that is silly in nature	---
<b>Silliness</b> Frequency = 3	Obvious	A true and well-known fact made aloud to the group	<i>Did anyone miss that they broke up? Norwegian sure didn't.</i>

## Appendix J: Framework for Identifying Humor Types III Advertisement with pop-cultural reference, Dove

Humor type	Sub Category Code	Definition	Example
<b>Exaggeration</b> Frequency = 4	Exaggeration	Overstating and magnifying something out of proportion	<i>They are taking the Alternative facts to a new level. Like the deodorant would be a person.</i>
<b>Comparison</b> Frequency = 6	Comparison	Putting two or more elements together to produce a humorous situation	<i>The lines are stupid and make no sense on their own, but by adding #alternativefacts it suddenly makes sense and puts a smile on your face.</i>
<b>Personification</b> Frequency = 0	Personification	Attributes human characteristics to animals, plants and objects	---
<b>Pun</b> Frequency = 2	Pun	Using elements of language to create new meanings, which result in humour	<i>It is amusing because it is making fun of the alternative facts thing in USA.</i>
<b>Surprise</b> Frequency = 4	Surprise	When humor arises from unexpected situations	<i>I think it's surprising because when you think about Dove, you think about those politically correct "big is beautiful" commercials.</i>
<b>Sarcasm/Dry wit</b> Frequency = 3	Sarcasm/Dry wit	An ironic, taunt statement	<i>Yeah right, and my armpit is one of the 7 world wonders.</i>
<b>Sarcasm/Dry wit</b> Frequency = 1	Stereotype	A generalisation of a type or group of people or situation	<i>It is funny because it is so absurd. What kind of super deodorant would that be?</i>
<b>Sarcasm/Dry wit</b> Frequency = 1	Teasing	An inside joke that may not make sense out of context or to the rest of the audience but makes sense between persons(s)	<i>All references to #AlternativeFacts is like a worldwide inside joke.</i>
<b>Silliness</b> Frequency = 2	Flamboyant/Silly	An over the top statement action that is silly in nature	<i>Both statements are absurd so you know it's a joke.</i>
<b>Silliness</b> Frequency = 3	Obvious	A true and well-known fact made aloud to the group	<i>Like come on, no way that would be true. Of course it's a joke.</i>

# Appendix K: Background Impact on Expression Recognition

## ANOVA

Expression recognition in ad

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.204	2	1.102	.567	.570
Within Groups	143.926	74	1.945		
Total	146.130	76			

## Post Hoc Tests

### Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Expression recognition in ad

Tukey HSD

(I) Education	(J) Education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Elementary School	Upper Secondary School	-.512	.847	.818	-2.54	1.51
	University	-.746	.831	.643	-2.73	1.24
Upper Secondary School	Elementary School	.512	.847	.818	-1.51	2.54
	University	-.234	.334	.763	-1.03	.57
University	Elementary School	.746	.831	.643	-1.24	2.73
	Upper Secondary School	.234	.334	.763	-.57	1.03

## ANOVA

Expression recognition in ad

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.476	3	.159	.080	.971
Within Groups	145.654	73	1.995		
Total	146.130	76			

## Post Hoc Tests

### Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Expression recognition in ad

Tukey HSD

(I) Time spent on internet	(J) Time spent on internet	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Less than 1 hour	Between 1 - 3 hours	.173	.401	.973	-.88	1.23
	Between 3 - 6 hours	.078	.533	.999	-1.32	1.48
	More than 6 hours	-.088	1.056	1.000	-2.86	2.69
Between 1 - 3 hours	Less than 1 hour	-.173	.401	.973	-1.23	.88
	Between 3 - 6 hours	-.094	.458	.997	-1.30	1.11
	More than 6 hours	-.261	1.020	.994	-2.94	2.42
Between 3 - 6 hours	Less than 1 hour	-.078	.533	.999	-1.48	1.32
	Between 1 - 3 hours	.094	.458	.997	-1.11	1.30
	More than 6 hours	-.167	1.079	.999	-3.00	2.67
More than 6 hours	Less than 1 hour	.088	1.056	1.000	-2.69	2.86
	Between 1 - 3 hours	.261	1.020	.994	-2.42	2.94
	Between 3 - 6 hours	.167	1.079	.999	-2.67	3.00

## Appendix L: Questionnaire - Humorous Reference

### Enkät

Detta frågeformulär är framställt av studenter vid Ekonomihögskolan vid Lunds universitet och syftar till att undersöka attityder mot reklam.

Undersökningen tar inte mer än 4 minuter att genomföra, så ta Din tid och fråga oss gärna ifall det finns någonting Du undrar över. Vi vill tacka Dig på förhand, för just Dina svar är viktiga för oss, då slumpen avgör vilka personer som besvarar våra frågor. Alla enkäter kommer att behandlas anonymt.

### Del 1: Bakgrund

1. Födelseår

19 \_\_ \_\_

2. Kön

Kvinna

Man

3. Vad är Din högsta slutförda utbildning?

Grundskola

Gymnasieskola

Universitetsutbildning

4. Ungefär hur lång tid spenderar Du på att internetsurfa om dagen?

Mindre än 1 timme

1-3 timmar

3-6 timmar

Mer än 6 timmar

## Del 2: Reklam

Nedan följer en rad frågor gällande ett reklamexempel. Varje fråga illustreras av ett påstående där 1 motsvarar att du "inte håller med alls" och 7 motsvarar "att du håller med helt". Önskar du vara neutral till påståendet, vänligen välj mittenvärdet 4 som svar. Vänligen svara så ärligt som möjligt.



5. Jag känner till uttrycket ”kan innehålla spår av...”.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

6. Jag tror uttrycket ”kan innehålla spår av...” kommer ifrån:

- Trafikregler
- Livsmedelsförpackningar
- CD skivor
- Vet ej

7. Den här reklamen fångar min uppmärksamhet.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

8. Jag fokuserar främst på produkten och inte budskapet i den här reklamen.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

9. Jag gillar den här reklamen.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

10. Jag tycker den här reklamen är rolig.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

11. Jag tycker den här reklamen är kreativ.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

12. Jag tycker den här reklamen är smart.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

13. Jag tycker den här reklamen är relevant för produkten.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

14. Jag gillar produkten mer efter att ha sett den här reklamen.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

15. Den här reklamen får mig att vilja köpa produkten.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

## Del 3: Attitydfrågor

Nedan följer en rad frågor gällande din attityd mot humor och reklam.  
Vänligen svara så ärligt som möjligt.

16. Jag ser humor som en viktig del av min vardag.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

17. Jag lägger märke till roliga reklamer.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

18. Syftet med reklam är att få människor att köpa saker de inte behöver.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

*Tack för din medverkan!*

## Appendix M: Questionnaire - Pop-Cultural Reference

### Enkät

Detta frågeformulär är framställt av studenter vid Ekonomihögskolan vid Lunds universitet och syftar till att undersöka attityder mot reklam.

Undersökningen tar inte mer än 4 minuter att genomföra, så ta Din tid och fråga oss gärna ifall det finns någonting Du undrar över. Vi vill tacka Dig på förhand, för just Dina svar är viktiga för oss, då slumpen avgör vilka personer som besvarar våra frågor. Alla enkäter kommer att behandlas anonymt.

### Del 1: Bakgrund

#### 1. Födelseår

19 \_\_ \_\_

#### 2. Kön

Kvinna

Man

#### 3. Vad är Din högsta slutförda utbildning?

Grundskola

Gymnasieskola

Universitetsutbildning

#### 4. Ungefär hur lång tid spenderar Du på att internetsurfa om dagen?

Mindre än 1 timme

1-3 timmar

3-6 timmar

Mer än 6 timmar

## Del 2: Reklam

Nedan följer en rad frågor gällande ett reklamexempel. Varje fråga illustreras av ett påstående där 1 motsvarar att du "inte håller med alls" och 7 motsvarar "att du håller med helt". Önskar du vara neutral till påståendet, vänligen välj mittenvärdet 4 som svar.

Vänligen svara så ärligt som möjligt.



5. Jag känner till uttrycket ”alternativ fakta”.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

6. Jag tror uttrycket ”alternativ fakta” kommer ifrån:

- Musik
- Politik
- Litteratur
- Vet ej

7. Den här reklamen fångar min uppmärksamhet.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

8. Jag fokuserar främst på produkten och inte budskapet i den här reklamen.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

9. Jag gillar den här reklamen.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

10. Jag tycker den här reklamen är rolig.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

11. Jag tycker den här reklamen är kreativ.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

12. Jag tycker den här reklamen är smart.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

13. Jag tycker den här reklamen är relevant för produkten.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

14. Jag gillar produkten mer efter att ha sett den här reklamen.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

15. Den här reklamen får mig att vilja köpa produkten.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

## Del 3: Attitydfrågor

Nedan följer en rad frågor gällande din attityd mot humor och reklam.  
Vänligen svara så ärligt som möjligt.

16. Jag ser humor som en viktig del av min vardag.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

17. Jag lägger märke till roliga reklamer.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

18. Syftet med reklam är att få människor att köpa saker de inte behöver.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

*Tack för din medverkan!*

## Appendix N: Questionnaire – No Humorous Reference, Control

### Enkät

Detta frågeformulär är framställt av studenter vid Ekonomihögskolan vid Lunds universitet och syftar till att undersöka attityder mot reklam.

Undersökningen tar inte mer än 4 minuter att genomföra, så ta Din tid och fråga oss gärna ifall det finns någonting Du undrar över. Vi vill tacka Dig på förhand, för just Dina svar är viktiga för oss, då slumpen avgör vilka personer som besvarar våra frågor. Alla enkäter kommer att behandlas anonymt.

### Del 1: Bakgrund

1. Födelseår

19 \_\_ \_\_

2. Kön

Kvinna

Man

3. Vad är Din högsta slutförda utbildning?

Grundskola

Gymnasieskola

Universitetsutbildning

4. Ungefär hur lång tid spenderar Du på att internetsurfa om dagen?

Mindre än 1 timme

1-3 timmar

3-6 timmar

Mer än 6 timmar

## Del 2: Reklam

Nedan följer en rad frågor gällande ett reklamexempel. Varje fråga illustreras av ett påstående där 1 motsvarar att du "inte håller med alls" och 7 motsvarar "att du håller med helt". Önskar du vara neutral till påståendet, vänligen välj mittenvärdet 4 som svar.

Vänligen svara så ärligt som möjligt.



5. Den här reklamen fångar min uppmärksamhet.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

6. Jag fokuserar främst på produkten och inte budskapet i den här reklamen.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

7. Jag gillar den här reklamen.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

8. Jag tycker den här reklamen är rolig.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

9. Jag tycker den här reklamen är kreativ.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

10. Jag tycker den här reklamen är smart.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

11. Jag tycker den här reklamen är relevant för produkten.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

12. Jag gillar produkten mer efter att ha sett den här reklamen.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

13. Den här reklamen får mig att vilja köpa produkten.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

## Del 3: Attitydfrågor

Nedan följer en rad frågor gällande din attityd mot humor och reklam.  
Vänligen svara så ärligt som möjligt.

14. Jag ser humor som en viktig del av min vardag.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

15. Jag lägger märke till roliga reklamer.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

16. Syftet med reklam är att få människor att köpa saker de inte behöver.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Instämmer inte alls	<input type="radio"/>	Instämmer helt						

*Tack för din medverkan!*

## Appendix O: Delicato Advertisement I



**Appendix P: Delicato Advertisement II**



## Appendix Q: Delicato Advertisement III



## Appendix R: Delicato Advertisements IV

Today, 13,2 million\* Swedish citizens  
eat one Delicato ball each.



\*Alternative fact.

**DELICATO**

# Appendix S: Mann-Whitney Test I

## Mann-Whitney Test

		Ranks		
	Content Type	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
I like this ad.	Humorous Reference	77	90,33	6955,50
	No Humorous Reference	86	74,54	6410,50
	Total	163		
I think this ad is funny.	Humorous Reference	77	100,86	7766,50
	No Humorous Reference	86	65,11	5599,50
	Total	163		
I think this ad is creative.	Humorous Reference	77	105,96	8159,00
	No Humorous Reference	86	60,55	5207,00
	Total	163		
I think this ad is smart.	Humorous Reference	77	99,73	7679,50
	No Humorous Reference	86	66,12	5686,50
	Total	163		
I think this ad is relevant for the product.	Humorous Reference	77	66,18	5096,00
	No Humorous Reference	86	96,16	8270,00
	Total	163		

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>					
	I like this ad.	I think this ad is funny.	I think this ad is creative.	I think this ad is smart.	I think this ad is relevant for the product.
Mann-Whitney U	2669,500	1858,500	1466,000	1945,500	2093,000
Wilcoxon W	6410,500	5599,500	5207,000	5686,500	5096,000
Z	-2,161	-4,967	-6,274	-4,607	-4,103
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,031	,000	,000	,000	,000

a. Grouping Variable: Content Type

## Appendix T: Mann-Whitney Test II

### Mann-Whitney Test

#### Ranks

	Content Type	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
I like this ad.	Humorous Reference	77	84,87	6535,00
	Pop-cultural Reference	79	72,29	5711,00
	Total	156		
I think this ad is funny.	Humorous Reference	77	81,56	6280,00
	Pop-cultural Reference	79	75,52	5966,00
	Total	156		
I think this ad is creative.	Humorous Reference	77	82,27	6335,00
	Pop-cultural Reference	79	74,82	5911,00
	Total	156		
I think this ad is smart.	Humorous Reference	77	84,71	6522,50
	Pop-cultural Reference	79	72,45	5723,50
	Total	156		
I think this ad is relevant for the product.	Humorous Reference	77	80,03	6162,00
	Pop-cultural Reference	79	77,01	6084,00
	Total	156		

#### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

	I like this ad.	I think this ad is funny.	I think this ad is creative.	I think this ad is smart.	I think this ad is relevant for the product.
Mann-Whitney U	2551,000	2806,000	2751,000	2563,500	2924,000
Wilcoxon W	5711,000	5966,000	5911,000	5723,500	6084,000
Z	-1,767	-,847	-1,043	-1,716	-,425
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,077	,397	,297	,086	,671

a. Grouping Variable: Content Type

## Appendix U: Mann-Whitney Test III

### Mann-Whitney Test

#### Ranks

	Content Type	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
I like this ad.	Pop-cultural Reference	79	84,34	6663,00
	No Humorous Reference	86	81,77	7032,00
	Total	165		
I think this ad is funny.	Pop-cultural Reference	79	98,47	7779,00
	No Humorous Reference	86	68,79	5916,00
	Total	165		
I think this ad is creative.	Pop-cultural Reference	79	103,30	8160,50
	No Humorous Reference	86	64,35	5534,50
	Total	165		
I think this ad is smart.	Pop-cultural Reference	79	94,99	7504,50
	No Humorous Reference	86	71,98	6190,50
	Total	165		
I think this ad is relevant for the product.	Pop-cultural Reference	79	65,96	5211,00
	No Humorous Reference	86	98,65	8484,00
	Total	165		

#### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

	I like this ad.	I think this ad is funny.	I think this ad is creative.	I think this ad is smart.	I think this ad is relevant for the product.
Mann-Whitney U	3291,000	2175,000	1793,500	2449,500	2051,000
Wilcoxon W	7032,000	5916,000	5534,500	6190,500	5211,000
Z	-,351	-4,119	-5,373	-3,149	-4,450
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,725	,000	,000	,002	,000

a. Grouping Variable: Content Type

## Appendix V: Kruskal-Wallis Test

### Kruskal-Wallis Test

		Ranks	
	Content Type	N	Mean Rank
I like this ad.	Humorous Reference	77	136,20
	Pop-cultural Reference	79	116,63
	No Humorous Reference	86	112,81
	Total	242	
I think this ad is funny.	Humorous Reference	77	143,42
	Pop-cultural Reference	79	133,99
	No Humorous Reference	86	90,40
	Total	242	
I think this ad is creative.	Humorous Reference	77	149,23
	Pop-cultural Reference	79	138,12
	No Humorous Reference	86	81,40
	Total	242	
I think this ad is smart.	Humorous Reference	77	145,44
	Pop-cultural Reference	79	127,44
	No Humorous Reference	86	94,60
	Total	242	
I think this ad is relevant for the product.	Humorous Reference	77	107,21
	Pop-cultural Reference	79	102,97
	No Humorous Reference	86	151,31
	Total	242	

Test Statistics <sup>a,b</sup>					
	I like this ad.	I think this ad is funny.	I think this ad is creative.	I think this ad is smart.	I think this ad is relevant for the product.
Chi-Square	5,256	28,341	46,385	22,911	25,025
df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	,072	,000	,000	,000	,000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Content Type