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The Role of Influencers in Generating Customer-Based Brand Equity & Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

A Mixed Method Approach to Measuring Influencer Marketing's Effect on Customer-Based Brand Equity and Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting Content on Instagram.

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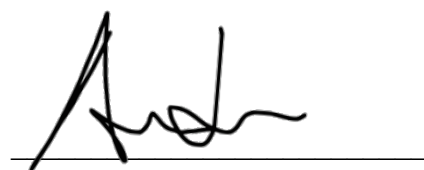


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Abstract

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Keywords	Influencer Marketing, Paid Social Media Advertising, Brand Equity, Customer-Based Brand Equity, Brand Equity Dimensions, eWOM, Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content, Social Media, Instagram
Purpose	The purpose of this study is to examine influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content.
Methodology	An integrative mixed method approach, with qualitative pre-study for scale development and a quantitative (n=222) main study, has been applied for testing the communication forms effect on the concepts.
Findings	A significantly larger effect for influencer marketing compared to paid social media advertising was found on five out of eight customer-based brand equity dimensions. Influencer marketing also has a significantly higher effect on customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising.
Theoretical Contributions	This study has contributed to the literature by validating influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. As part of this study, scales have been developed for influencer marketing and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content.
Managerial Implications	The findings support managers further use of influencer marketing to strengthen brand associations, perceived quality, leadership and differentiation. Using influencer marketing also increases customers' willingness to engage in posting brand-promoting content on social media.
Originality/Value	The thesis brings originality in presenting an initial attempt to synthesise a definition for influencer marketing, as well as scale development for both the as fore mentioned but also customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content on social media.

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1 Introduction

This chapter introduces influencer marketing as a growing trend for promoting brands in the online context, alternative to paid social media advertising. The background will give a brief overview of the concept and its placement in the industry and academia, which is followed by the problem formulation and research question for this study.

1.1 Background

Over 80 % of the population in the developed world are internet users (International Telecommunications Union, 2016). Consequently, the internet has quickly attracted a large share of the total marketing budget on the expense of traditional advertising channels such as television and print (Institutet för reklam & Mediestatistik, 2016). The increased presence of users on the internet, in combination with growing investments in digital marketing activities, results in an amplified competition for customers' attention online. Thus, to achieve a sufficient degree of advertising impact, marketers can no longer rely solely on reach, as advertising must be engaging (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011) and interesting enough for customers to voluntarily take part of it (Rosengren & Dahlén, 2015). An industry report by McKinsey has found that in some product categories up to 40-50 % of consumers look to social recommendations when considering products and services. For this reason, increasingly more marketers have turned to social media to engage consumers during the last decade (Bughin, 2015).

Marketers turning to social media has led to a recent phenomenon called influencer marketing. The term refers to companies' commercialisation of the relationship between an influential user on social media and their followers (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017; Uzunoğlu & Misci Kip, 2014). According to an industry source, influencer marketing has come about as an alternative to paid social media advertising, which incorporates a brand message as part of an influencers valuable online content creation. Ordinary users who voluntarily wish to take part of the influencer's content is thus exposed to the brand message (Wong, 2014). Dahlén, Lange and Rosengren (2017) refers to traditional marketing as companies paying media channel owners for advertising exposure, and for paid social media this relates to the social media platform owner. One of the opportunities with influencer marketing is to bypass and reach customers who otherwise use ad blocking software, which is used actively by more than two out of five internet users in eleven European countries (Cortland, 2017). Additionally, it seeks to be more interesting to the point where customers wish to voluntarily take part of it as Hanna, Rohm and Crittenden (2011) considers necessary. Using influencers as a communication intermediary, potentially leverages on the almost 20 % higher consumer trust that is associated with word-of-mouth (WOM) compared to that of other online advertising (Nielsen, 2013). The increased

confidence comes about as influencers public endorsement, although paid for by the brand is still perceived as earned media (Dahlén, Lange & Rosengren, 2017; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Further, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found indications that influencers promotion is possibly perceived as of high quality, as it otherwise would not warrant the influencers endorsement and public association with the brand. Instagram has also been identified as one of the most dominant platforms for following influencers on social media (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Dahlén, Lange and Rosengren (2017) state that beyond immediate effect on sales and customer loyalty, an important customer group response to marketing communication is that of customers forwarding information to others in the form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). The information forwarding to other customers is highly favourable as it acts as an extension of the marketing program investment. Advertising that successfully encouraged customers to forward the brand message, often sees the total value of the marketing investment multiplied. Kotler and Keller (2016) similarly state that marketing communication has the effect of generating WOM and buzz around products and brands, the behaviour can be related to customers having fun or learning, but intrinsic factors such as social and self-image considerations are also important drivers. The success for making brand-promoting information to cascade, to more than one user beyond the initial recipient, is highly dependent upon customers willingness to talk about the brand to other customers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Considering the more than 2.5 Billion users on social media (Statista, 2016) as participants and creators of content (Obar & Wildman, 2015), brand advertising messages has the potential to be rebroadcasted and multiply as eWOM between customers. An industry example that has leveraged on such a strategy is the Swedish watchmaker Daniel Wellington founded 2011, who exclusively relies on influencer marketing. Interesting in this case is that there is a substantial tendency for customers adopt the same behaviour to post brand-promoting content, posting creative images of their watch and linking their posts to the brand using hashtags. The company has been amongst the fastest growing companies in the EU, and by 2017 Daniel Wellington watches are being retailed in 6 000 shops in 75 countries with a profit of \$220 million in its 2015 financial statement (Turula, 2017). The success story of Daniel Wellington's growth indicates that influencer marketing's might have merit in building strong brands and that considering customer's willingness to rebroadcast advertising messages as a marketing strategy, might be a valuable component to capture the true potential of advertising on social media fully.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Ries and Trout (1972) describes how the escalating amount of advertising results in that customers are mentally shutting out a significant amount of the advertising they are exposed to daily. Today's digital marketing is no exception from the problematic issue of information overload described already in the 1970's, a substantial portion of today's Internet users even installs advertising blocking software. Consequently, marketers are becoming increasingly more dependent upon consumers' willingness to approach marketing and advertising voluntarily (Rosengren & Dahlén, 2015).

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has come to stand as an alternative form of advertising on social media to that of paying the platform owner for banner exposure. Influencers are influential users with a large follower base because of their online content creation, the influencer then acts as an intermediary of the marketing communication with their audience as target group (Liu, Jiang, Ding, Duan, Xu, 2015). Aaker (1991) implies that brand investments aimed to increase brand equity needs to be justified as there is a constant competition for capital between marketing activities within companies. According to the theory, influencer marketing stands as an alternative form of marketing communication, directly opposed to paid social media advertising, competing over the same marketing budget. Should influencer marketing not be able to generate same brand-building effect as paid advertising, the invested resources would see a decreased return-on-investment and over time dilute the brand's strength. With an increasing share of advertising spending moving online, it is essential to test and evaluate the brand building effect for new forms of marketing investments. The previous literature on influencer marketing is limited and no previous research, to the knowledge of the authors, has investigated its effect on customer-based brand equity and justified it gaining an increased share of marketing budgets.

There is also no previous literature that provides a complete definition nor measurement of scales for influencer marketing, to the knowledge of the authors of this study. This lack of previous research and knowledge constitutes a clear gap in the current literature. The theoretical importance to investigate the brand building effect of influencer marketing is further not only limited to justify its use and existence as part of the marketing mix but also to gain a deeper knowledge on which dimensions of customer-based brand equity it affects. Should influencer marketing generate a sufficient degree of customer-based brand equity but on different dimensions from that of paid advertising, it can be theorised that the two forms could be used in optimal combinations. Campaigns incorporating both forms at various degrees would allow campaigns to accomplish more precise results in particular dimensions of the customer mindsets and increase the overall efficiency of brands value-creating process.

Customers Tendency to Rebroadcast Advertising Messages

Another important aspect when considering the brand building effect of influencer marketing is that the nature and opportunities of social media as a platform has implications for customer-based brand equity. The implication, in this case, is derived from the notion that social media is a platform for customer participation, which is fuelled by user-generated content (UGC) (Obar & Wildman, 2015). Previous research has shown that customers user-generated content have a higher effect on the hedonic brand image compared to firm-generated content (Bruhn, Schoenmueller & Schäfer, 2012). However, no previous literature to the knowledge of the authors has investigated customers' willingness to forward eWOM in the form of posting brand-promoting user-generated content because of exposure to marketing communication. It can be problematized that in a platform driven by customer participation, the consumer group response of forwarding marketing information to other customers becomes highly relevant, yet however neglected in current customer-based brand equity theory.

Lehmann, Keller & Farley (2008) propose that the endorsement dimension from the Brand Asset Valuator (BAV) industry model can be used to measure whether the customer would recommend the brand. However, this can be regarded as both misleading and obsolete, for two reasons. Firstly, it only has one item regarding whether a customer would forward a recommendation of the brand to others, while the two other items are concerned with whether the customer perceives the brand as recommended by others. Secondly, there is a difference between recommending a brand through traditional WOM compared to recommending a brand online in the form of eWOM, as the latter is associated with a much higher degree of social risk (Eisingerich, Chun, Liu, Jia & Bell, 2015). This difference can be explained by the fact that WOM is an oral, short-lived and ephemeral form of one-to-one communication, while eWOM is a more lasting statement form of one-to-many communication (Barreto, 2014; Eisingerich et al., 2015). Therefore, customers are less likely to promote a brand online rather than face-to-face (Eisingerich et al., 2015; Kotler & Keller, 2016). The decreased likeliness to promote a brand online is an important aspect to consider as Dahlén, Lange and Rosengren (2017) suggest that the customer group response to forwarding information to other customers may multiply the value of the total marketing program investment.

What has been found is a mitigating effect that increases the probability for customers to forward eWOM as user-generated content, which is self-image (Kotler & Keller, 2016), self-enhancement (Eisingerich et al., 2015) and self-confirmation (Dahlén, Lange & Rosengren, 2017). Arvidsson and Caliandro (2016) conceptualised the notion of Brand Publics, where brands act as a medium on social media, which offers publicity to a diverse set of identities from users posting brand-promoting user-generated content. Associating oneself by recommending a brand online thus seems connected to the representation of the public self and

Endorsement as a brand metric from the BAV model does not account for either social risk or the self-identity. This theorization implies that the endorsement dimension could not be considered sufficient to measure the probability of customers posting brand-promoting user-generated content online as eWOM.

It can thus be problematized that customer-based brand equity theory is currently inadequate to measure endorsement on social media in the form of user-generated content, despite that it extends the marketing program investment (Dahlén, Lange & Rosengren, 2017) and is a key building block of what constitutes social media platforms (Obar & Wildman, 2015). The phenomenon of customers posting brand-promoting user-generated content online needs to be tested for its relation to customer-based brand equity theory to extend the knowledge on how to create strong brands in the context of social media. The choice of a particular form of eWOM, namely brand-promoting user-generated content, has been zeroed in on for two reasons. The first is that user-generated content stipulates a key component that fuels social media platforms (Obar & Wildman, 2015). The other reason is that Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) identified Instagram as a dominant platform for following influencers, which also happens to be an image-based social media platform focused on sharing user-generated content.

To summarise the problem formulation, two problems concerning influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity has been highlighted. Firstly, there is a gap in the current literature that supports using influencers to build customer-based brand equity, as well as the absence of a definition and measurement scales for the concept. Secondly, the current customer-based brand equity theory has been critiqued for neglecting to measure an integral part of the social media ecosystem, which is customers' willingness to generate eWOM as a result of marketing communication. With eWOM it is referred to the particular form of brand-promoting user-generated content on social media, for which there is to the knowledge of the authors, no prior conceptualization nor measurement of scales.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

It is needed to test the effects of influencer marketing on customer-based brand equity and consider the opportunities that social media provides in generating eWOM, in the form of brand-promoting user-generated content. To achieve this, the study needs to proceed in two stages. A first stage involves creating empirically grounded instruments to (a) assess whether operationalized communication is perceived as influencer marketing and (b) customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. In the second stage, a validating test is needed for influencer marketing's effect on both customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting content, compared to social media advertising.

The purpose of this study is to extend the knowledge on and test influencer marketing's brand building effect on customer-based brand equity, and whether the form of communication can increase customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content.

1.4 Research Question

To achieve the purpose of the study, this research will be concerned with quantitatively examining influencer marketing's and paid social media advertising's effect, on both customer-based brand equity, as well as customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. Using an integrative mixed methods approach, a qualitative pre-study for scale development will break ground for a succeeding quantitative main study. The main study will both assess the scales developed and test influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising. Derived from the purpose of this study, a research question can thus be formulated as follows:

To what extent do influencer marketing affect (a) customer-based brand equity and (b) customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content on Instagram, compared to paid social media advertising?

1.5 Delimitations

In this study, several delimitations are necessary to set a scope which enables the study but also act as boundaries as to what can be explained. Marketing through influencers implies that an influencer expresses their favourable opinion and demonstrate their usage of a product by incorporating it as part of the valuable content creation. Instagram was chosen as the context for the study, as previous literature suggested it as the most common platform for following influencers, although alternative platforms were evaluated. This implies that the study will investigate influencer marketing on Instagram, and the results cannot be generalised beyond this context to other social media platforms. The nature of Instagram will also limit the investigation to influencer marketing that is primarily image-based. Concerning influencer marketing, the lack of a definition amongst scholars implies that the study needs to define such of its own. Therefore, the results of this study will be limited to what the self-constructed definition constitutes as an influencer. Further, the concept of customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content is also conceptualization constructed in the course of this study. What is referred to is eWOM, but in the more specific form where the eWOM has been incorporated in user-generated content rather than only been a recommendation in writing. The result of this concept cannot be generalised to other social media platforms, as both the

consumer culture and the user-generated content process may be differing significantly. Lastly, this study will also be limited to the choice of a rather unisex product namely sunglasses and as such the study cannot imply that the results apply to other product categories.

1.6 Intended Contributions

The intended contribution is first to arrive at a definition of influencer marketing. Further, it is intended to qualitatively develop an instrument, to measure influencer marketing as a communication form as well as customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content online. By the development of scales, a quantitative study is enabled that further is intended to test influencer marketing's effect on both customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising.

1.7 Disposition

The disposition of this thesis is divided into six distinct chapters. Chapter I above introduces the reader to the topic, its relevance and sets the course for the rest succeeding chapters by defining the purpose and the frame by delimitations. Chapter II is concerned with a literature review of the academic literature concerning social media influencers, influencer marketing, customer-based brand equity, brand publics and user-generated content. The literature review will result in chapter III, which will present clear research models and conceptual frameworks, from which hypotheses can be formulated and further on empirically tested. Chapter IV will go in depth and thoroughly account for the methodology and method that has been applied in this study. This fourth chapter has an introduction to the research philosophy and overall method, and will then be comprised of two parts; The qualitative pre-study applied to create understanding to build indicative measurement scales for customer's willingness to participate in brand publics and secondly, the main quantitative study. Chapter V will state the results of the main quantitative study and the test of hypotheses. Chapter VI will conclude the study with discussion around the results, its relation to current literature, theoretical and managerial contribution as well as suggestive direction for future research.

2 Literature Review

This chapter look at existing literature to combine three theoretical building blocks for this study; influencer marketing, customer-based brand equity and the behaviour of posting eWOM in the form of user-generated content.

2.1 Social Media Marketing

2.1.1 Influencer Marketing

2.1.1.1 Influence – Why some Opinions Matter more than Others

Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) was early into the field of investigating the part played by individuals and their social role, in the propagation of mass-media communication. Mass communication messages were believed to have a direct link from TV and radio to each person in society, however, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) suggested a two-step communication model based on their findings. The implication of their two-step model is that mass communication messages are received by a small number of people, thought leaders, who then forward this information with their subjective opinion to the subgroup they are influencing. This two-step communication model lay a fundamental understanding that certain individuals in social network theory play a crucial role in propagating and cascading messages (Gladwell, 2002; Higie, Feick & Price, 1987; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Keller & Berry, 2003).

Corey (1971) continued pioneering the field of influence, considering a certain type of individuals being ‘opinion leaders’ that shape opinions in social constellations and thus could play an important part in marketing through WOM. Higie, Feick and Price (1987) broadened the concept of opinion leaders into three categories; early adopters, opinion leaders and market mavens. (1) Early adopters are the second segment in the innovation adoption curve, following the innovators they are early picking up on new trends (Rogers, 1962) and by this behaviour exerts social pressure which increases the adaptation probability of the succeeding adaptation groups (Bass, 1969). (2) Opinion leaders as described by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) implies that certain individuals exert a higher probability of influencing others through their inherent persuasiveness. Being persuasive builds on social status, interpersonal communication skills and character traits (Gladwell, 2002; Higie, Feick & Price, 1987; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Keller & Berry, 2003). (3) Maven has its etymological meaning from Yiddish, ‘one who accumulates knowledge’ (Gladwell, 2002), and thus market mavens are individuals with expertise in market and product information. Their high product category involvement establishes knowledge and a social perception of expertise, through which gives their recommendations higher adaptation probability (Gladwell, 2002; Higie, Feick & Price, 1987;

Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Keller & Berry, 2003). A complementary category is proposed by Gladwell (2002), coined (4) ‘Connectors’, who are individuals with a substantially higher number of personal connection to others. The explanation for a higher connectedness is suggested by previous influence theory and gives connectors in social network structures a central role in the spread of messages.

Keller and Berry (2003) suggest that ten percent of the population could be characterised, based on their self-perception, in these above-mentioned categories as ‘influentials’ (i.e. individuals with heightened influence over others). This historic overview of the term influential is important to clarify, as influentials could be considered the corresponding term for influencers in an offline context, where the latter is used in conjunction with online contexts.

2.1.1.2 WOM – The Evolution from Offline to Online Word of Mouth

An essential building block in exerting influence is WOM, the passing on of first or second-hand experiences from one customer to another (Keller & Berry, 2003). Traditionally this refers to face-to-face communication between customers, and this has primarily been done using oral communication. The implication of this for WOM is that it has mainly been communication between two individuals in a one-to-one situation. Although recordings could imply one-to-many or group meetings many-to-many in discussion formats. However, with the rise of web 2.0 and social media, WOM has become electronic and consequently expanded into formats such as text, video, music and images. Social media has widened both the scope and the reach for electronic WOM (eWOM). Traditionally, one-to-one has been a bidirectional communication format for WOM and one-to-many unidirectional. However, through social media, this has changed where the latter also has become a two-way conversation as eWOM (Barreto, 2014). The two-way conversation means that influential individuals, using the internet can have conversations with a broader audience online compared to offline. Digital influencers by this have a wider reach online compared to influentials offline, as face-to-face has more limited reach compared to the marginal cost of spreading information online (Lyons & Henderson, 2005).

2.1.1.3 Social Media and Communication Message Propagation

Social media constitutes a platform for peer-to-peer communication, where content is mainly created by and for the users. There is a multitude of different social media platforms on the internet which makes the terminology and definition for social media to a challenge. However, there are four commonalities to the different perspectives. Social media is first, at writing moment, Web 2.0 Internet-based applications, which makes users part of creating, interacting, collaborating and sharing the process of creating and consuming content. Second and consequently, user-generated content is the fuel for interaction and user engagement. Thirdly,

social media builds on individuals or groups having ownership of different user-specific profiles, which as fourth and last commonality is connected to the profiles of others (Obar & Wildman, 2015). The interactions on social media put pressure on companies to transition from traditional marketing with objectives mainly concerned with reach and awareness, to incorporate social media and build a conversation with consumers to create long-term attention via engagement. The important understanding of social media is that it allows consumers to form smaller clusters with different spheres of influence. From a brand perspective, spheres of influence are an ideal segmentation opportunity, as users with similar characteristics form subgroups. However, the challenge lies in becoming part of the conversation rather than intervening it with traditional advertising (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011).

By the peer-to-peer communication, individuals are broadcasting their first and second-hand opinions to their peers and the online community. Li and Bernoff (2011) segment online user participation profiles into five different categories; Creators (publishing and generating content), Critics (commenting and rating content), Collectors (indexing content by saving and sharing, Joiners (connects and unite) and lastly Spectators (who reads, follows and receives content). Booth and Matic (2011) mean that companies should seek users who are sharing the brand ownership online and leverage on these individuals as brand ambassadors and storytellers. Leveraging and cultivating on these users as part of the social media marketing strategy would shape and fuel the discussion regarding the brand (Booth & Matic, 2011) between spheres of influence favourable to the brand (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011).

2.1.1.4 Social Media Influencers

Previous research regarding influencers is limited with the problematic issue that there is no universal or generally accepted definition amongst scholars for who should be considered an influencer. In fact, no suggestive definition has been proposed within the previous literature as the term is used with implicit understanding and without concrete clarification. However, this chapter will describe the current understandings and assumptions regarding influencers, to arrive at a definition of the academic fields collective understanding.

Three Criteria for Influencers

Fulgoni and Lipsman (2015) suggests three criteria's for being an influencer, which is (1) having the means, (2) motive and (3) opportunity to influence others. This could be regarded as a prerequisite or hygiene factors, essential to determine whether a given person should be considered an influencer. The literature from influence theory suggest influencers have the (1) means to influence others through their high connectivity, knowledge and character traits, meeting the first criteria set by Fulgoni and Lipsman (2015). Social media offers influencers the (3) opportunity for one-to-many WOM, meeting the third criteria. Lastly, the (2) motive

for exerting influence over others, could be both internal or external. Influencers may have inherent personal, i.e. internal motives for exerting their influence online. However, amongst external motives, one has strongly emerged, which is brands interest in commercialising the influencers relationship with their followers for advertising purposes (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). Freberg, Graham, McGaughey and Freberg (2011) mapped out personality traits related to social media influencers, by applying a psychological framework. The character traits attributed to influencers, was verbal, smart, ambitious, productive and poised, showing strong similarities between influencers personality and those of CEOs (Freberg et al., 2011). The similarity of character traits further strengthens the connection between influence theory and the theory of influencers, as the former describes influence as a result of social status and character traits of opinion leadership and early adopters, acting as trendsetters.

Influencers as Opinion Leaders

Zhang, Moe and Schweidel (2017) research support previous theory that not all individuals contribute equally to the propagation of social media messages. The difference in message forwarding provides an argument that some users are influential while others hold a passive recipient role of communication messages. An important finding of Zhang, Moe and Schweidel (2017) is that influentials probability of forwarding messages is the contents alignment and similarity with content earlier posted by the influencers accounts. Li, Lai and Chen (2011) has also previously investigated content as a factor for ranking influencers on the blog sphere and found content to be of importance, combined with the influencers network structure and readers' engagement. Given that both Li, Lai and Chen (2011) as well as Zhang, Moe and Schweidel (2017) have found content alignment important for influencers message propagation-tendency, companies should consider content-adaptation as a strategic approach for working with influencers effectively. The importance of content alignment indicates that influencers gain their influence from being opinion leader for a subgroup or within a competence and alternative a niche area. In defining what makes a user into an influencer under the term is not unilateral or conclusive, but embody a given framework as ‘...an individual who creates Instagram content that inspires...’, ‘...someone who is known on Instagram by more people than merely their friends.’ and ‘...those with a strong presence online, usually people with really nice lives...’ (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017, p. 4). These findings are in line with influence theory regarding extended personal connections, character traits and persuasiveness through their ideal visual self-representation through their content creation.

Influencers in Relation to Celebrities

Looking at influencers through the personal branding perspective, which was studied by Khamis, Ang and Welling (2017), who implies that ordinary social media users attract large

audiences by crafting compelling narratives. Their online presence can be inspirational, relatable, instructive or provide other forms of value to other users, making them into ‘micro-celebrities’ by sustaining a coherent and public persona (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). An important difference between traditional celebrities and traditional users becoming micro-celebrities is that the former is famous before even entering social media while the later become known through their online content creation. Another important difference between influencers through the concept of micro-celebrities is that their relationship with followers is bidirectional and offer insight into their private life in contrast to traditional celebrity's interaction with their fan bases. The difference in relationship indicates a clear distinction between traditional celebrity endorsement and online influencers (Chae, 2017; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). Abidin (2016) also identifies influencers as everyday ordinary Internet users who accumulate a large following on social media by building a narrative around their personal life and lifestyle. Social media thereby provide a platform for users, where fame can be gained through their own autonomously authored personal brand rather than gaining celebrity status through participation in traditional TV formats. A coined term online is that users gain ‘InstaFamous’, referring to a high degree of followers in the Instagram platform. The notion of InstaFamous sheds light on what is meant by becoming an influencer that some users become famous by their online presence. The underlying principle of this term is also transferable and similar for other social media platforms (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). The idea of personal branding on social media, is also further supported as behaviour such as selfie-editing, for example, is a phenomenon caused not by low personal self-image, but because the desire to displaying a favourable public-self (Chae, 2017).

Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) identified Instagram as a robust platform according to respondents for following influencers, as it offers a visual and appealing opportunity to get a glimpse of people's lifestyle and physical appearance that users desire or consider ideal. A more significant finding is that respondents find lower-end celebrities in the InstaFamous segment more influential through their authenticity and intimate relationship with followers compared to traditional celebrities. Influencers are thus directly according to Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) research more trustworthy.

The halo effect has long been a fundamental idea supporting celebrity endorsement, as it transfers favourable attributes of celebrities to a brand (Kapferer, 2012; Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). According to Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) influencers, in contrast to traditional celebrities do not always have pre-existing attributes in consumers mind that are immediately transferable. Instagram users, however, continuously look for new influencers as inspiration sources, and would find these either on initial impression or by forming a relationship by following them over time, as credible with favourable attributes derived from their overall content creation. Another important indication is that new influencers would more

easily be found credible should they follow others that the user already is following (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). The credibility by association implies that user's familiarity or identification with an influencer eases the acceptance and credibility of the same. What is not stated by previous literature is whether influencers by the creation of valuable content possess favourable attributes that could be transferable to brands as a halo effect.

Influencers in Relation to eWOM

Online media can be divided into three media types; owned, paid and earned media. The former, owned media refers to the brands' controlled channels such as company's websites and other platforms where the business itself holds ownership and control. Paid media, like traditional advertising in television and radio, is where companies have bought exposure on other online platforms or sponsorship. Lastly, earned media refers to eWOM in the peer-to-peer communication online, where consumers talk, engage or promote the brand (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011). Influencer marketing could be considered a hybrid construct of paid and earned media, in some cases even paid for but perceived as earned (Dahlén, Lange & Rosengren, 2017).

Products that are promoted by an influencer on social media is suggested to be good, as it warrants the influencers public promotion, which is in line with source credibility theory and indicates influencers as credible information sources (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). However, influencer marketing is distinctly different to eWOM as the latter refers to a non-commercial conversation free from manipulation and thereby considered as a trustworthy form of communication (Uzunoğlu & Misci Kip, 2014). Although Dahlén, Lange and Rosengren (2017) implies that customers perceive influencer marketing as earned media, it cannot be assumed that it has similar effect and trustworthiness as eWOM as the communication is commercialised.

Comparative Compilation of Influencers, Celebrities and eWOM

A few key differences have been identified for influencer marketing compared to both eWOM and celebrity endorsement that is worth compiling for easier overview. As can be seen in Table 1 below, influencer marketing is different from eWOM as it is a commercialised communication although considered as earned media. On the other side, influencers do not hold a previously established fame or recognition as traditional celebrities do from a previous offline career. The relationship with the followers or fans also differs, which can also be noted from the linguistic difference in the two terms.

Table 1. Differences between eWOM, Influencer Marketing and Celebrity Endorsement

	eWOM	Influencer Marketing	Celebrity Endorsement
Nature of communication	Non-commercial	Commercialized	Commercialized
Personal brand	N/A	Yes	Yes
Origin to fame	N/A	Valuable narrative and content creation online	Fame through a previous offline career
Relationship to followers or fans		Bidirectional and intimate with followers	Unidirectional, more distant and less conversational

2.1.1.5 Synthesising a Definition for Influencers on Social Media

The above literature regarding influencers gives a coherent frame for the meaning of what constitutes an influencer but is lacking a stated definition that is accepted amongst scholars. To arrive at a definition, previous literature is empirically rich enough to be synthesised in combination with influence theory, and thus distil a definition that can act as a framework of who should be considered an influencer.

The influence theory supports that certain individuals, by the two-step communication model is essential for interpreting and forwarding mass communication messages. Influence is exercised by being influential; either by having a high number of connections to other individuals, persuasiveness through social status or certain ideal character traits or expertise through a high degree of relative knowledge. The building block of exerting influence is WOM, which in social media allows users to reach a broad mass by one-to-many communication. Online influencers, as stated by previous theory, thus have a wider reach than offline influentials meaning their importance has increased drastically with the emergence of social media. Besides internal motives for gaining influence on social media, companies desire to commercialise on the relationship between influencers and their followers act as a strong external motive for gaining a large online following. The influence theory, the evolution of WOM to eWOM and the commercial motives behind gaining a large online following thus meet the three criteria's Fulgoni and Lipsman (2015) stated for being an influencer; having the means, motive and opportunity to influence others.

From previous social media influencer theory, it is known that influencers are a distinct phenomenon from traditional celebrities. Given the importance put on influencers being ordinary users becoming known through their online content creation (Abidin, 2016; Chae, 2017; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017), it can be stated that

influencers may be known by certain subgroups or equally famous as celebrities. However, with the important distinction that they have generated their fame from a strong online presence built around the narrative of their personal life and lifestyle. Social media influencer theory also supports a strong connection, that social status, self-representation and character traits are a basis similarly to influence theory. The social media influencer theory also demonstrates a degree of explanation by personal branding theory, suggesting that influencers craft a coherent self-representation that gives them certain favourable attributes, which other users find inspirational, relatable, informative or valuable (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017).

Synthesising these theoretical views and approaches to social media influencers, a tentative and provisional definition of influencers for this study can thus be suggested as the following:

***Influencer** – An individual that attracts an audience beyond their immediate friends and family through their online content creation, and have the power to influence the behaviour, opinion and values of others through their valuable narrative*

The above definition, holistically formulated to be inclusive of all the variations, explanations and views found in previous literature, is a suggestive definition for the phenomenon of influencers and will be the guiding framework moving forward. By using the definition for influencers as stated above, and the definition of 'marketing', the term influencer marketing can also be clarified and stated. The term marketing has evolved throughout the 20th century, but is coherent and accepted across scholars and the industry alike. For this study, the definition provided by the American Marketing Association (AMA) will be used, as it is recently updated (as of July 2013) and is also widely used.

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (American Marketing Association, 2017).

Definitions of two terms, which is used coherently together, can be combined by integrating both definitions into a meaningful whole. By this logic and for this study, influencer marketing will onwards be defined as follows:

Influencer marketing is the activity, for communicating with customers, through the digital content creation of influencers and their valuable narratives, that are of interest for customers.

The definition mentioned above for influencer marketing, is limited compared to the overall marketing definition, as it relates to the aspect of marketing communication. Influencer marketing is thereby a sub-field, within marketing, that refers to the communication element but do not cover the areas of creating, delivering and exchanging offers. Also, not included in

the above definition for influencer marketing, is the clients, partners and society at large. These stakeholders, could be holistically seen included, however, based on current literature and to increase the precision of the definition for the purpose of this study, these have been consciously left out for conservative reasons.

2.1.2 Marketing Communication

Marketing communication has traditionally been focused on messages in bought media channels, where companies pay for the advertising message to be exposed to a given number of individuals in the target group. Marketing communication follows several steps, as described by communication theory, these will by necessity not be covered in detail, however, common for all communication is the end goal to create a desirable response from the target group (Dahlén, Lange & Rosengren, 2017).

2.1.3 Paid Social Media Advertising

Traditional advertising, as proposed by Dahlén, Lange and Rosengren (2017) is paid for marketing communication through bought media channels, with the brand as the sender. The field of advertising is vast and rich, with emerging fields such as creative advertising aiming to be better noticed, remembered and persuade the customers. Even using advertising aimed at stimulating the limbic system, by appealing to ulterior instincts, feelings and emotions (Dahlén, Lange & Rosengren, 2017).

However, traditional advertising will in contrast to influencer marketing, stand differentiated by the fact that the influencers act as an intermediary between the brand as sender and customer as the recipient. Narratives using storytelling can be achieved by traditional advertising as well, and also engaging or encouraging towards customers' interaction. However, it could be assumed that the personal connection between customers and an influencer is stronger, as it is an inter-human relation compared to that of customer-brand relations.

In the purpose of this study and by the literature, traditional advertising will in this study onwards, be defined as paid for or bought media advertising on the same social media platform as influencer marketing.

An important note is that these two, influencer marketing and paid for social media advertising, often co-exist as alternatives for marketing program investments on the same social media platform, such as Facebook, Instagram and blogs. The road-choice between these two is what makes the effect on customer-based brand equity necessary to study.

2.1.4 Differences Between the Two Communication Forms

To illustrate differences between influencer marketing and paid for social media advertising, the Table 2 below has been put together to show the differences between influencer marketing and paid social media advertising, in the context of Instagram for illustrative reasons.

Table 2. Differences between Influencer Marketing and Paid Social Media Advertising

	<i>Influencer Marketing</i>	<i>Paid Social Media Advertising</i>
<i>Primary content</i>	The influencers narrative through content creation	The brand, product or related functional or hedonic value
<i>Product focus</i>	Product is part of the context and specific to the valuable narrative	Product is in itself, or part of a general context
<i>Product exposure</i>	Medium to low prominence	Medium to high prominence
<i>Perceived sender</i>	Influencer	Company or brand
<i>Communication objective</i>	Inspirational, informative or educational	Sell focused
<i>Source credibility</i>	Medium-high	Medium-low
<i>Platform</i>	Instagram	Instagram
<i>Fee recipient</i>	Influencer	Social media platform owner

The primary content of an influencers post, endorsing a product is the use and likeability of the product as part of the influencers narrative, whether that be lifestyle or product review based. In contrast to an influencers narrative, paid social media advertising more has the brand or product with its functional or hedonic values. The primary content could be of highly similar degree, suppose a watch commercial in paid social media advertising format displaying the watch as contextual to sailing, in this highly similar case the only difference in primary content would be that the influencer is him- or herself part of the narrative. However, as Dahlén, Lange and Rosengren (2017) denotes, product placement and endorsement is visually most effective when not entirely being the total focus of the message. Thus, influencer marketing has a product focus contextual to, and around the narrative while in advertising the product itself more often is in focus. The product focus reflects itself in the fact that the product exposure in the communication message, is less prominent for influencer marketing compared to paid social

media advertising. The perceived sender, is the influencer regardless if the endorsement is paid or unpaid, which builds on the customer perception found by (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). The communication objective is one dimension where the two is most set apart. Influencer marketing highly relies on being part of an inspirational, informative or educational narrative. Paid social media advertising could try to imitate such communication objective, but paid social media advertising has demonstrated a higher focus on sales whether the advertising being functional or hedonic in nature (Dahlén, Lange & Rosengren, 2017).

2.2 The Effects and Measurements of Strong Brands

2.2.1 Brand Value Chain – Brands Chain of Creating Value

In the Brand Value Chain model developed by Keller and Lehmann (2003) the value-added chain of events of branding is explained and concretized; how brands through marketing program investments lead to the creation of value for the company. The model aims at providing an overarching perspective of the connection between value-creating activities and how their outcomes accumulate to a brand's equity regarding both changes in customer mindsets and later in financial value. The theory is used to monitor the process of how value is created through investments in marketing programs and how the value creation can, given multipliers, be made more efficient.

The brand value creation is initiated when a company invest in a marketing program, which affects customers' mindsets regarding a brand, including awareness, attitudes and attachment. The customers' feelings and thoughts concerning a brand will later result in how the brand performs in the marketplace which is reflected in price premiums, changes in market share and profitability. Ultimately, the stages in the process accumulate into financial value for shareholders (Keller & Lehmann, 2003).

Each stage in the brand value chain illustrates how an initial marketing program investment evolves, and throughout the process, stepwise generate brand equity for a company. The model further consists of three multipliers, which in between the four value stages affect the value which flows from one step to another, the multipliers can both increase or decrease the value in the chain. The transitions between the value stages are program quality, marketplace conditions and investor sentiment (Keller & Lehmann, 2003). Keller and Lehmann (2003) argue that the value is created in the model's initial stages, which is why these are of utmost importance and should be in focus. Based on this argument, combined with the question formulation of this study, the first two stages of the Brand Value Chain are of interest and are therefore considered more in detail.

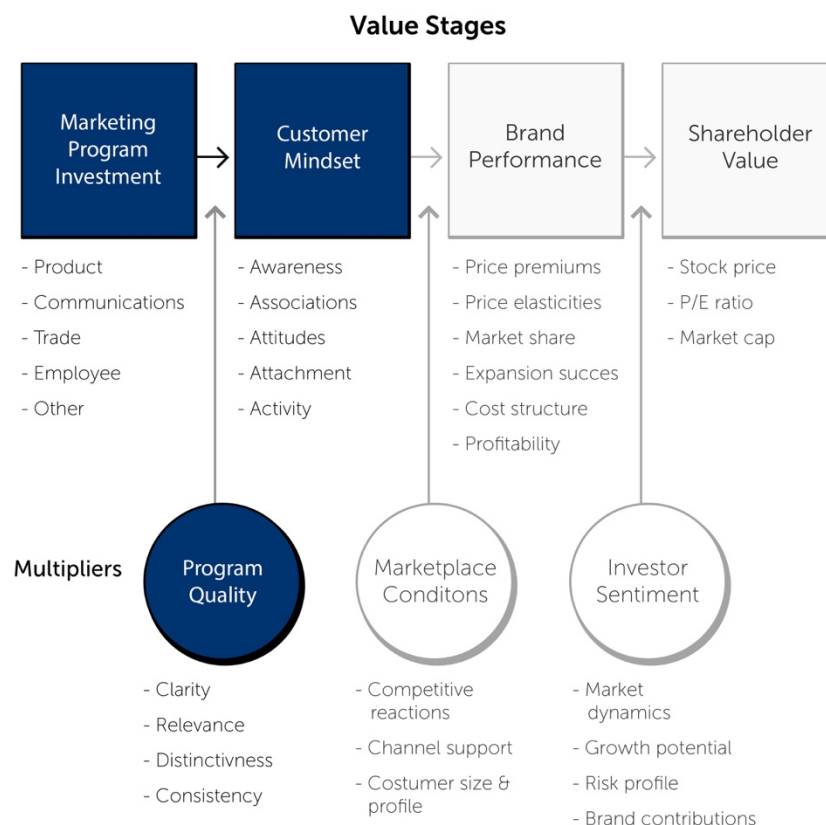


Figure 1. Brand Value Chain (Keller & Lehmann, 2003)

2.2.2 Marketing Program Investment and Program Quality

The first step of the Brand Value Chain is the marketing program investment in the product, communication, trade or employees, which according to Keller and Lehmann (2003) constitutes the value creating process first step. More concretely, this step could stipulate an improvement in the product, changes in communication quantity or quality, trade improvements with suppliers or internal education of staff and employees. In the study of influencers, it is the communication that is in focus, as marketing through influencers acts as intermediaries of the communication between brand (sender) and customers (receivers). Influencer marketing is thus an alternative to paid social media advertising, where the difference in the form of communication is in focus. As Keller and Lehmann (2003) state, the efficiency of the marketing program investment dependent upon the multiplication from the program quality. The quality of the communication will thus affect the transition from marketing program investment to changes in the customer mindset. The determination of the program quality rests on the communications clarity, relevance, distinctiveness and consistency (Keller & Lehmann, 2003). For influencer marketing, this implies that there needs to be clarity

in the influencers brand promotion, that they are promoting or sufficiently associating themselves with the brand and that the brand is relevant to their followers. It must also pose as a distinct product related to the influencer, which is consistent in using it as part of the endorsement. In contrast, for paid social media advertising with the brand as a direct sender of the advertising, it must be a clear brand message to a target group who finds the brand's offerings relevant. It also requires the distinctiveness to gain customers attention and interest, as well as being consistent over time. Keller and Lehmann (2003) implies that the quality may in many cases be more important than the size of the initial marketing program investment, which places heavy emphasis on the multiplier effect of the program quality. Given the qualities importance, a distinct listing of its components and meaning is relevant:

1. **Clarity** – *Does the customer interpret and evaluate the messages correctly?*
2. **Relevance** – *Is the message relevant to the customer it is communicated to?*
3. **Distinctiveness** – *Does the message stand out to customers by being unique in comparison to competitors?*
4. **Consistency** – *How persistent and to what extent is the communication in line with previous market program investments by the brand, to develop the brand in a strategic and favourable direction?*

2.2.3 Introduction to Brand Equity

Brand equity refers to the added value endowed to a product or service, through associations and perceptions of the brand (Chaudhuri, 1995). Similarly, Dahlén, Lange and Rosengren (2017) regards brand equity as the marketing efficiency and implies for companies that customers choose their products over others.

Brand equity is a collective term which can be seen from two dominating perspectives; financial and customer-based brand equity. The former considers the brand as an asset which generates profit through attracting new customers, retaining existing ones and allows the firm to charge a price premium (Farquhar, 1989). In customer-based brand equity, the focus is on the customers and their perceptions surrounding the brand (Dahlén, Lange & Rosengren, 2017). In the purpose of this study, brand equity is referred to the latter, customer-based brand equity and will be the theoretical point of departure.

2.2.4 Customer-Based Brand Equity

Previous literature presents multiple theoretical views on customer-based brand equity. The consensus and accepted perspective of these views are that customer-based brand equity is built up by established associations to the brand (Aaker, 1996a; Lehmann, Keller & Farley, 2008). The two dominating sources yet with minor differences in their perspective, within customer-based brand equity, is the theories by Keller and Aaker (Rios & Riquelme, 2010).

Keller (1993) considers customer-based brand equity to be a result of differences in customer response, as a consequence of customers' previous knowledge about a brand. Knowledge about a brand affects the customers' reflection, perception and preference to the marketing of the same brand. A brand possesses positive customer-based brand equity when the customer response to marketing program investments is more favourable when the brand is displayed, compared to when the brand is not displayed. This kind of positive customer responses occurs when a customer has previous knowledge and favourable associations of the brand in mind (Keller, 1993). Farquhar (1989) offers a broader definition of customer-based brand equity, as the value customers attach to a specific brand. Aaker (1991) considered it as the value consumers associate with a brand, as reflected in the dimensions of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty and other proprietary brand asset. At a later time, Aaker (1996b) developed his view more into detail. The main perspectives on customer-based brand equity may be presented chronologically as below in Table 3.

Table 3. Perspectives on Customer-Based Brand Equity

Author	Perspective on customer-based brand equity
Leuthesser (1988)	<i>The set of associations and behaviours on the part of the brand's consumers, channel members, and parent corporation that permits the brand to earn greater volume or greater margins than it would without the brand name and that gives the brand a strong, sustainable, and differentiated advantage over competitors.</i>
Farquhar (1989)	<i>...the "added value" with which a given brand endows a product.</i>
Aaker (1991)	<i>...the value consumers associate with a brand, as reflected in the dimensions of brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty and other proprietary brand asset.</i>
Aaker (1996b)	<i>Brand equity is: (1) Loyalty (brand's real or potential price premium), (2) loyalty (customer satisfaction based), (3) perceived comparative quality, (4) perceived brand leadership, (5) perceived brand value (brand's functional benefits), (6) brand personality, (7) consumers perception of organization (trusted, admired or credible), (8) perceived differentiation to competing brands, (9) brand awareness (recognition & recall), (10) market position (market share), prices and distribution coverage.</i>

Keller (2003)

The differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. Brand knowledge is the full set of brand associations linked to the brand in long-term consumer memory.

Anselmsson, Johansson & Persson (2007) claims that Keller and Aaker in principal, emphasises the same aspects of customer-based brand equity in their theories, but that what set their views apart is the view on brand loyalty. Aaker considers loyalty to be an influencing factor to brand equity, while Keller, on the other hand, considers brand loyalty to be a consequence of a strong brand (Anselmsson, Johansson & Persson, 2007).

2.2.5 Brand Equity Dimensions

Aaker's theoretical framework for customer-based brand equity is referred to as Brand Equity Dimensions and describes how brand equity within different dimensions creates value for brands from its intangible assets (Farquhar, 1989). According to Farquhar (1989), brand equity could be defined as:

"...a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers." (Farquhar, 1989)

The intangible assets Farquhar (1989) describes, assists consumers to interpret and collect information regarding products and services. The assets can also decrease the perceived uncertainty in the purchase process and provide increased post-purchase satisfaction. The assets create a theoretical model with five dimensions, which together constitute the basis for customer-based brand equity; loyalty, awareness, quality, associations and other proprietary assets. By these five dimensions, a combination of consumer and market behaviour is created that is in line with Keller's (2003) view in customer responses to brand equity. For the Brand Equity Dimensions model, there is an acknowledged and accepted set of questions that operationalise and measure customer-based brand equity. Aaker (1996a) emphasises however that the individual questions should be adapted to fit the context of the study in which the questions are used as measurements.

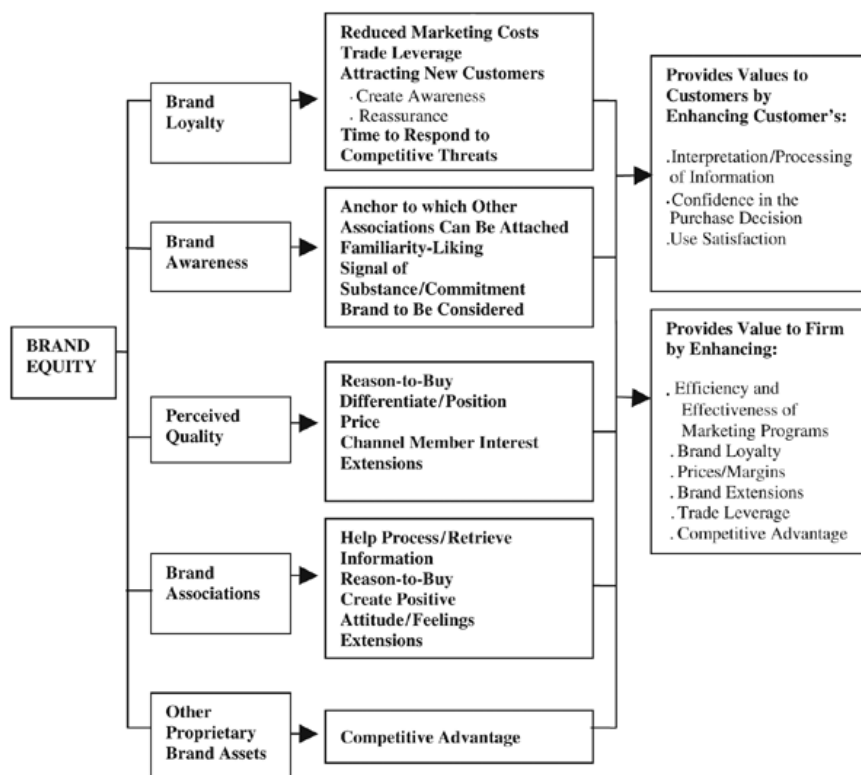


Figure 2. Brand Equity Dimensions (Aaker, 1991)

In the purpose of this study; to investigate influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity, there is no relevance or applicability to measuring brand awareness or other proprietary assets. Thereby the theoretical basis of customer-based brand equity will rest upon Aaker (1991) brand equity dimensions perceived quality, brand associations and brand loyalty.

2.2.5.1 Perceived Quality

Perceived quality comprises customers' subjective impression about the quality of a product related to its purpose. Firms must thereby be aware of how customers perceive the quality to be able to meet customers' expectations (Aaker, 1996b). According to Farquhar (1989), it is not an objective and measurable quality that Aaker (1996b) refers to, but a subjective perception made by the customer of the products quality related to their expectations. The perceived quality dimension creates value by motivating and creating purchase intention amongst consumers, along with differentiating the brand, create a basis for brand extensions, appeal interest of retailers to retail and distribute, as well as justify a price premium for the product (Farquhar, 1989).

The perceived quality has a direct effect on the brand's positioning, and determines whether the brand is premium or a low-cost alternative, defining if it is the leading brand in the category or not (Jacoby, Olson & Haddock, 1971). Positioning, in turn, effects if the brand can charge a higher price, as higher quality products justify a higher price premium (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Farquhar (1989) also implies that perceived quality can be linked to the usage and purchase frequency of the brand, as a high degree of usage indicates that the customer finds the brand of high quality. A higher price premium or purchase rate consequently leads to increased profit which can be reinvested in the firm (Keller, 2009). The perceived quality can also generate value more long-term when established quality perceptions is transferable to extended product lines or brand extensions (Farquhar, 1989; Kapferer, 2012). Farquhar (1989), however, emphasises that the underlying factors of customers' judgment regarding perceived quality are highly contextual.

To measure the dimension of perceived quality, Aaker (1996a) suggest two measurements, namely perceived quality and leadership. Perceived quality can be measured by asking questions regarding price premium, price elasticity and brand usage. Measuring leadership could be conducted by questions related to popularity, whether customers perceive the brand to be leading in its category (Aaker, 1996a).

2.2.5.2 Brand Associations

Brand associations are the perception of a brand held by a customer's mind and considered the most significant dimensions, as it is the basis for both brand loyalty and customers purchase behaviour (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble & Donthu, 1995; Keller, 1993). Associations can vary in strength, extent, product attribute, lifestyle, product category, origin, emotions, symbols and usage (Aaker, 1991). Customer-based brand equity is created with cognitive associations, which effects remembrance, purchase behaviour and customer satisfaction (Aaker, 1991). Associations can also prevent customers switching from a brand to a competitor, or even trying out a competitive brands product (Gladden & Funk, 2001). By this prevention from brand switching, brand associations act as a barrier for competitors (Aaker, 1991). To build lasting and strong associations, customers should be exposed to the brand in multiple channels, through multiple interactions and experiences over time (Keller, 1993). As brand associations are subjective at nature and personal, they may vary and even at times go against those associations which the brand strives to induce (Aaker, 1991).

Farquhar (1989) presents different ways by which brand associations creates value. Associations may act assisting in the process of collecting and clarifying information, as well as reducing the time and cost of collecting information before purchasing by recall. Associations also further create value to brands by acting as a foundation for differentiation and may be used by customers to distinguish different brands and their value offer. Unique associations also create a strong and long-lasting competitive advantage to brands, as such associations are difficult and hard to imitate (Farquhar, 1989). Strong brand associations create value, similarly to perceived quality, by its effect on motive or intention of purchase. Brand associations may also create positive emotions and attitudes towards a brand, which may have

a direct effect of making a product taste better or feel more exclusive. Lastly, brand associations also have a strong value in being the basis for extended product lines or brand extensions (Farquhar, 1989).

The dimension of brand associations is measured by considering the brands value, brand personality and organisational associations. The brand's value includes the value proposition and investigates whether the brand is perceived as affordable and if there is a reason to purchase the brand, rather than those of the competitors. The brand personality includes if the brand is perceived as interesting and if there is a clear understating of the persona or person who would use the brand. Lastly, the organisational associations refer to whether the brand is perceived as reliable, admirable and legitimate (Aaker, 1996a).

2.2.5.3 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to the favourable attitudes towards a brand, which results in repeat purchase of the brand over time (Chaudhuri & Hoibrook, 2001). Farquhar (1989) implies that loyalty is a measurement of how attached a consumer is to a given brand. Loyalty is considered an efficient way to build brand equity, as repeat purchases and customer satisfaction decreases the marketing costs. Repeat purchases and customer satisfaction are most often an indication of a strong brand (Keller, 1993).

The brand loyalty dimension is considered one of the key dimensions according to Farquhar (1989), as loyalty can be directly linked to revenues from a firm's loyal customer base (Aaker, 1996b). Farquhar (1989) also further suggest that firms should generate and maintain customers' loyalty using positive interactions with the brand.

The brand loyalty dimension can be divided into two aspects, price premium and customer satisfaction. Both aspects can be measured by questions to customers who have already bought and used a product, or by investigating purchase intention and preferences (Aaker, 1996a).

2.2.6 Complementary Dimension & Industry Brand Metrics

In addition to the theoretical models of measuring customer-based brand equity, there is a plenitude of different industry models with the purpose of measuring brands strength. Complementary industry models are considered in many cases to be both more applicable and linked to the reality of working with brands compared to academic frameworks (Ruževičiūtė & Ruževičius, 2010). To strengthen the current theoretical customer-based brand equity foundation of Aaker's brand equity dimensions, several industry models have been taking into consideration.

From the compilation of measurement variables, from both industry and theoretical frameworks, presented by (Lehmann, Keller & Farley, 2008) two additional Brand Metrics has

been selected to support the current customer-based brand equity theory; Endorsement and Intention. The former measures customers' probability to recommend the brand and the later, refers to whether the customer has the intention to purchase or test the brand's product.

2.3 Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting Content

Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip (2014) research on influencers in the blogger context, further support the two-step communication model where influencers act as an intermediary of messages between brands and customers. But in addition to only validating the intermediary role of influencers, they also recognised the power of social media in generating customers' rebroadcasting of the advertising message as peer-to-peer communication on social media. Online, every recipient is also a possible second-tier sender, who could in turn forward messages to their peer-connections. The probability of recipients rebroadcasting activity would extend the current two-step communication model into a multi-step model, wherein, the two-step communication fuels eWOM by peer-to-peer communication in social media.

Kiss and Bichler (2008) studied information propagation in social media from the perspective of the key player problem. The problem refers to the issue with identifying the central nodes with highest forwarding probability by imitation-nodes, meaning influencers who also has connected followers who are more likely to forward the advertising message to their friends, and followers-friends to their friends, etc. Their proposed diffusion planning mechanism sees message forwarding as a sequential path planning (i.e. the message is rebroadcasted multiple time by several users as a chain of events). This means that leveraging on influencers builds on both the influencers reach and degree of influence, but also on the behaviour of the followers concerning interaction, transition probability and willingness to share.

2.3.1.1 eWOM as a Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

When investigating influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity, it has been argued that it is necessary to take into consideration the amount of eWOM that could be potentially generated as Dahmén, Lange & Rosengren (2017) state it may multiply the initial value of the entire marketing program investment. Instagram was suggested by previous literature as one of the most common social media platforms to follow influencer (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017) and as such, it must be considered that eWOM takes the form of user-generated content in such image-based social media. Previous literature has identified a difference between offline WOM and online eWOM, as the latter being associated with higher perceived social risk (Eisingerich et al., 2015). It would, however, be overly simplistic to assume that all eWOM is the same and not account for variation in how eWOM is created online or possibly differences in the consumer culture depending on context. Therefore, this

study undertook the mission to look at eWOM as a consumer behaviour in social media rather than traditional ways of considering and asking customers whether they would recommend a brand, as current customer-based brand equity theory does.

2.3.1.2 Self-representation as a Driver behind the Behaviour

The opportunities of social media and as Kiss and Bichler (2008) demonstrates, users/followers of influencers, fulfil two out of the three criteria suggested by Fulgoni and Lipsman (2015) for being an influencer themselves. Which is (1) having the means and (3) opportunity to eWOM/rebroadcast an advertising message the influencers has forward to them. The interesting reflection is what underlying reason could pose as a motive for ordinary users, as customers to promote and share brand-promoting content. One very recent motive identified for doing so is presented by Arvidsson and Caliandro (2016). The two authors conceptualised the notion of brand publics. In difference to brand communities, brand publics is set apart in three important ways. Firstly, brand communities are based on interaction, while brand publics are based on the continuous focus of interest and mediation. Secondly, participation in brand publics is not about discussion or deliberation, but by an individual or collective affect. Lastly, brand publics do not develop one collective identity around the focal brand, but rather the brand act as a medium that offers publicity to a multitude and diverse set of identities. Brand publics are thus a new form of collective interaction with brands, in a social media-based consumer culture, where publicity to customers' self-identity is the essence (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2016). The drivers of the behaviour to forward advertising-information have been mentioned in previous literature as social and self-image representation (Kotler & Keller, 2016), self-enhancement (Eisingerich et al., 2015) and self-confirmation (Dahlén, Lange & Rosengren, 2017). However, Arvidsson and Caliandro (2016) explained how these drivers are applied in the contexts on social media to generate brand-promoting user-generated content. In this study, the focus is on conceptualising the behaviour and develop scales that are not present in current literature to the knowledge of the authors.

2.3.1.3 Customer's Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting UGC

Users consider their participation in brand publics to be tightly knit with their self-representation. As such, brand-promoting user-generated content may be less based upon recommending a brand of goodwill to others and more related to associating oneself with the brand to gain publicity as means for self-representation. Considering influencers, trendsetters on social media associating themselves with brands for publicity, their behaviour might impose the same on ordinary users who are customers of the brand. This implication is highly intriguing, as it would convert Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) two-step communication model into a multi-step model as suggested by Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip (2014) which would lead to

a sequential diffusion planning mechanism (Kiss & Bichler, 2008) in this case for brand advertising messages.

Although the behaviour to participate in brand public's, promoting brands and creating online buzz has been touched upon by previous literature, the authors of this study did not come across a sufficiently defined and complete conceptualization which could provide a basis for scale development. As such, the literature familiarised and theoretically anchored a self-constructed concept regarding the behaviour for this study. As mentioned, the specific form of eWOM refers to brand-promoting user-generated content, and as Kotler and Keller (2016) state, it is the willingness to promote or recommend a brand that determines the virility and success of eWOM. With this knowledge and an aim to investigate non-commercial eWOM in the specific form of user-generated content on social media, as a result of exposure to marketing communication, the concept will be conceptualized and defined as follows: *Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content.*

3 Research Model and Hypotheses

This chapter summarises the purpose of this study and the existing literature into a conceptual framework. It will also, given what is already known, make testable hypotheses which collectively will answer the research question.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework builds on Keller and Lehmann's (2003) theoretical framework, the Brand Value Chain. The theory provides a link between the marketing program investment to the customer mindset, with program quality as a mediating factor. In the conceptual framework (see Figure 3) the program quality has been left out for illustrative purposes but is still accounted for as part of the theoretical model. The conceptual framework has further been extended with the concept of customers' willingness to post brand-promoting content. In the conceptual model, there is a proposed relationship between customer-based brand equity and the extended concept. Further, the conceptual model also illustrates a proposed effect from the two forms of marketing communication on customers' willingness to post brand-promoting content.

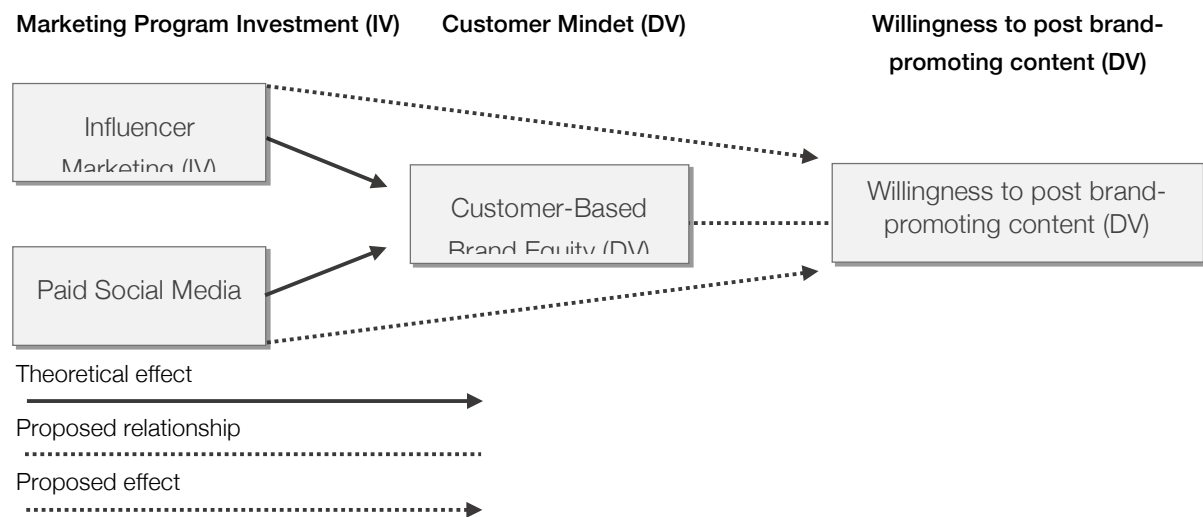
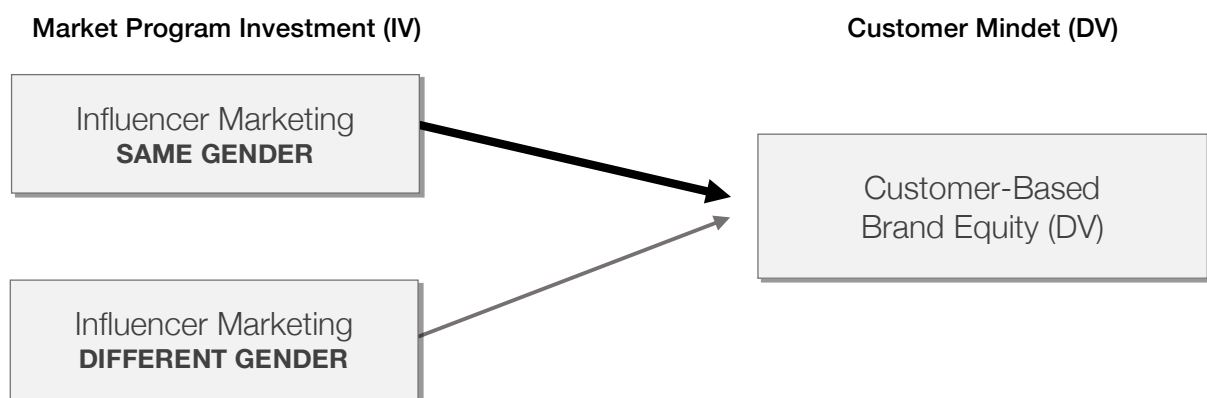


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework

3.2 H₁: Genders Effect for Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing builds on the influencer as an intermediary for the marketing communication, to present the brand-message to users who actively follow and is attentive to the influencers valuable content creation. This implies an embedded inter-human relationship where the user following an influencer most preferably considers the influencers opinions as valuable for its opinion-making. Influence theory indicates that influentials primarily exert their influence within their competence domain, as such the question of genders role is imminent. To establish the role gender plays in influencer marketing, it is necessary to consider whether the influencer needs to be of the same gender of the user, for influencer marketing to have an effect. By taking this into account, the succeeding hypotheses do not risk being affected by different genders reducing influencer marketing's effect under the premise that same gender have a more substantial effect. Therefore, the first hypothesis is stated regarding influencers effect on customer-based brand equity, depending on same or different gender.

H₁: Influencer marketing will generate a higher effect on customer-based brand equity when the influencer and user are of the same gender.



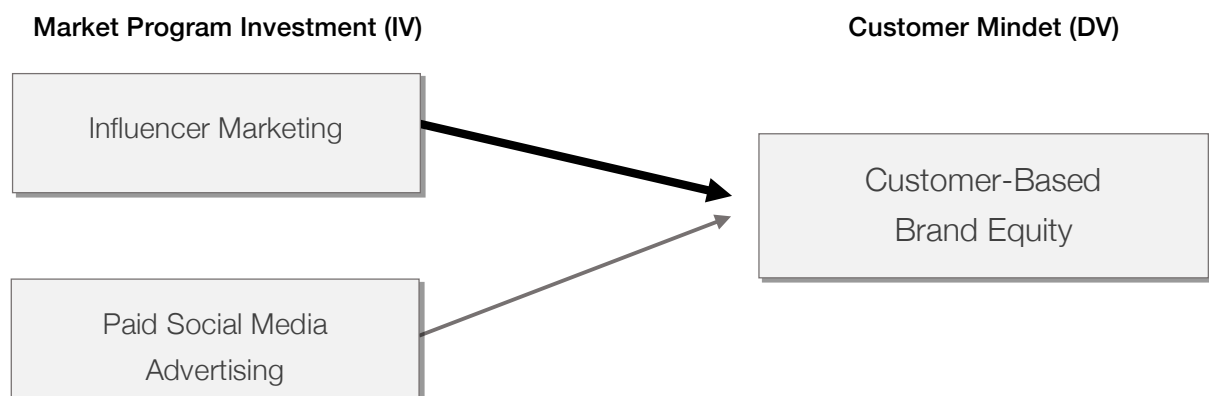
$$H_1: CBBE_{(Same\ gender)} > CBBE_{(Different\ gender)}$$

Figure 4. Hypothesis 1: Influencers Effect on Customer-Based Brand Equity

3.3 H₂: Influencer Marketing’s Effect on Customer-Based Brand Equity

Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that influencers have an intimate relationship with followers and becomes influential through their character traits and authenticity. Dahlén, Lange and Rosengren (2017) further explain that hybrid communication, such as influencer marketing, although being paid media often is perceived by customers as earned media. This is also supported by Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) who found that customers consider a product, to be of high quality, as it otherwise would not warrant the influencers public endorsement. Given the perception as earned media and the influencer as an authentic intermediary of the communication, it is assumable that customers have higher trust in advertising from an influencer compared to brands own paid advertising of subjective nature. For the two different marketing communication forms, the following null hypothesis has been set:

H₂: Influencer marketing will generate a higher effect on customer-based brand equity, compared to paid social media advertising.



$$H_2: CBBE_{(Influencer\ Marketing)} > CBBE_{(Paid\ Social\ Media\ Advertising)}$$

Figure 5. Hypothesis 2: Influencers Effect on Customer-Based Brand Equity

3.4 H₃: Relationship between Brand Equity and Brand-Promoting UGC

Customer-based brand equity can be identified in the brand value chain as customers' mindsets (Keller & Lehmann, 2003). Arvidsson and Caliandro (2016) proposed a motive for customers to participate in brand publics, which is users desire to gain publicity with the brand as a medium, to a diverse set of self-identities by posting brand-promoting content. A more favourable customer mindset about a brand, would thus most likely increase the interest of being publicly associated with the brand. This is motivated by the fact that customers otherwise would not desire to use the brand to attract publicity to the self-identity as suggested by Arvidsson and Caliandro (2016) and similarly strengthen the self-confirmation as proposed by Dahlén, Lange and Rosengren (2017). The null-Hypothesis has thus been set to:

H₀: There exists a positive relationship between customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting content on social media.



H₃: $\text{Corr}(\text{CBBE}, \text{WPBPC}) > 0$

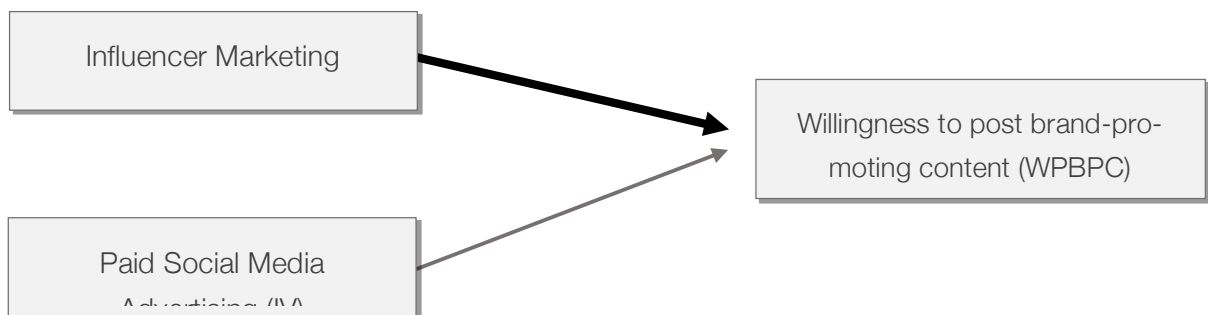
Figure 6. Hypothesis 3: Relationship between Customer-Based Brand Equity and Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting Content

3.5 H₄: Influencer Marketing's Effect on Brand-Promoting UGC

As supported by influence theory, opinion leaders affect the opinion, values and behaviour of others (Keller & Berry, 2003). Using an influencer as an intermediary of marketing communication puts the influential person in the context as a role model when it comes to the behaviour of posting brand-promoting content online. It is thereby likely to assume that th behaviour is adopted by the customers to a higher degree, compared to when paid social media advertising is used and no influential role model sets the example of posting brand-promoting content online for the brand in question.

H₄: Influencer marketing will have a higher effect on customers' willingness to engage in brand publics, compared to paid social media advertising.

Marketing Program Investment (IV) Customer Mindset (DV)



$$H_4: WPBPC_{(Influencer\ Marketing)} > WPBPC_{(Paid\ Social\ Media\ Advertising)}$$

Figure 7. Hypothesis 4: The Communication forms effect on customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content

4 Methodology

This chapter introduces the methodology and research strategy that has been applied to the study. This study stipulates a sequential mixed method approach. Thus, the method section will initially account for the qualitative pre-study and its resulting measurement scales, which will be transferred into the second quantitative main study.

4.1 Introduction to the Study

Methodology in research builds on a philosophical stance within paradigms of ontology and epistemology (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Creswell, 2014; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015) that underlies and informs the style of research (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Creswell (2014) consider research methodology as the overall approach to the designed process for conducting research, from the theoretical underpinning in paradigms to the collection and analysis of data. Creswell's (2014) view accommodates mixed methods as an approach that borrows assumptions from contrasting ontologies and epistemologies, to use methods of best fit with the research question at hand. Due to the nature of this study, to apply an integrative mixed method approach, extra emphasis is placed on the philosophical stance to provide transparency on what underlying assumptions are at work behind the research conducted.

4.2 Research Philosophy

In this study, a mixed method strategy has been used to carry out a quantitative development of measurement scales which has enabled the predominant quantitative research study regarding influencer marketing. Bryman and Bell (2015) provides an explanation of the term 'mixed method research' as an emergent form of research which within the same study, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research has been conducted.

For this study, the advantages and disadvantages of a mixed method were weighed against each other. A determining factor for moving forward with a mixed method was the authors' two different paradigmatic backgrounds and fields of competence – As neither author alone would regard themselves as proficient in the opposite field with respect to its traditions, depth and comprehensiveness. This combination of two researchers with complementing backgrounds, the practical limitations in researchers competence as mentioned by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2015) has been to some extent mitigated and taken into consideration for this study.

This study has resided within one paradigm, which is that of quantitative research and the resulting choice of paradigm is based on the predominant quantitative part for this study. Such mixed method design is what Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2015) terms a master-servant

design, where a qualitative pre-study serves the needs of a dominating quantitative research study. Bryman and Bell (2015) lifts the fact that in mixed methods the integration is only on a superficial level and researcher will remain within a single paradigm and only borrows from the opposing paradigm as pointed out by Creswell (2014).

Pragmatism has characterised this study, which according to Creswell (2014) is pragmatic in the sense that it focuses on applications that work, and finding solutions to problems. Pragmatism allows for the use of multiple methods by considering and using different paradigms and their assumptions. Pragmatism thus enables a mixed method approach with the various forms of data collection and analysis within a single study (Creswell, 2014).

Pragmatism is a broad philosophy and could be considered a philosophical approach that draws from the different paradigms necessary to approach the research question at hand, rather than strict application and being restricted to a mono-methodological approach (Creswell, 2014). Pragmatism can by this logic be employed as the philosophical underpinning for using mixed methods and mixed models (Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010)

'Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality... Truth is what works at the time. It is not based in a duality between reality independent of the mind or within the mind. Thus, in mixed methods research, investigators use both quantitative and qualitative data because they work to provide the best understanding of a research problem.' (Creswell, 2014, p. 11)

4.2.1 Ontology

The ontological departure is related to how the researcher considers and builds assumptions about the nature of reality and existence (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). In this study, with the purpose to create measurement scales and test influencer marketing's effect implies an ontological philosophy as that of realism (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Along the continuum on degrees of realism, this study holds the internal realism stance, implying that there is a single true reality, however, with the recognition that it is impossible for research to completely and directly access the reality. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2015) state that realism comes in several varieties, but with the commonality of considering the world as concrete and external, which science can progress through observing occurring phenomena.

The view of this study on influencers effect on customer-based brand equity, the ontological view of this study is that there is a single truth about its effect. However, due to the nature of business research and operationalisations necessary, there is no possibility to directly access and accurately measure it in an absolute sense, but properly conducted research may gather empirical support to imply and interpret the truth in a meaningful way. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe

& Jackson (2015) explains that internal realists hold the view that it is only possible to gather indirect evidence of the reality, implying that a single truth exists, but is obscure, i.e. not unambiguous and plain clear for the researcher.

A qualitative pre-study is needed to create instruments to enable the quantitative research. As part of the pragmatic paradigm, the qualitative pre-study borrows from the ontology of social science. In this contrasting ontology, research is concerned with people rather than inanimate objects, where answers according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) are dependent upon both the topic being enquired as well as the preference of the researcher. The ontology of social science allows concepts, formed in the minds of people to be treated as phenomena's that exists independently of the researcher. In borrowing the methods to create measurement scales using a qualitative pre-study, the ontology is that of an internal realist. For the internal realists, social concepts are often hard to define and measure, but disagreement on its definition or measurement does not change that they have consequences in reality (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

In conclusion, the qualitative pre-study borrows from the ontology of social science although the research of the study primarily resides in the internal realism of natural science. Such borrowing is a key component of pragmatism and mixed methods, where researchers draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions to engage in research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). However, Bryman and Bell (2015) notes that research still mainly resides in a single paradigm depending upon where the weight of the research is placed.

4.2.2 Epistemology

This study, with the quantitative research being dominant, has taken an epistemological departure from positivism, on the notion that the social world exists externally and its characteristics can be estimated. Positivism is in line with Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) who regards the social world as external in the view of positivism, with properties that can be measured objectively. A fundamental aspect to positivism is that its results are derived from observations of the external reality as supporting evidence, and can be put under empirical scrutiny for verification (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

This study resides in the positivistic epistemology, meaning that the authors of this study are independent of what is being observed, as Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) refers to as *independence*. The choice of studying influencer marketing and its effects has been based on the *value-freedom* to do so on objective criteria with the aim to asserting *causal* explanations on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. Further, this study builds on four *hypotheses* as statements on the outcomes and *deduce* the empirical observations to either accept or reject such claims on probability. To

test and validate the hypotheses, an *operationalization* of the theoretical concepts will be based on previous literature on customer-based brand equity, as well as creating measurement scales for customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, using a qualitative pre-study. For the phase of the analysis, multi-item scales will be reduced using factorial dimension *reduction* into nine more manageable and meaningful dimensions. The random sample of more with randomization within the experimental design will allow for *generalisation* amongst the defined population of this study

For conducting a qualitative pre-study as part of this mixed method research, assumptions have been borrowed from social constructionism for the empirical development of measurement scales. The borrowing from the field of social constructionism is primarily motivated by its potential to gather rich data which are induced, and thus allows the research to progress. Influencer marketing as a phenomenon could be considered a social construction, and to develop quantifiable instruments, it is necessary to recognise its nature as a form of social interactions between people on social media. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) explains that in social constructionism the reality is not objectified and considered as external, but rather socially constructed and given meaning by people in the interactions of their life. The idea of social constructionism is to focus on the way people make sense of the world by their interactions and sharing experiences with others via the medium of language and other communication, both verbal and non-verbal.

Concluding, it should be noted that the research of this study belongs to positivism, but as part of the pragmatic paradigm that allows for mixed methods, a borrowing of assumptions from social constructionism will be necessary to execute a qualitative pre-study and the instrument development required for the quantitative research.

4.3 Research Design

4.3.1 Basis for the Choice of Research Design

Due to the absence in current literature, to the authors' knowledge, of instruments that can act as measurement scales for (a) whether communication lives up to the definition of influencer marketing and (b) customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, an incorporated qualitative pre-study was imperative. As Creswell (2014) suggest, using necessary means and multiple methods to answer the research question is a hallmark character trait of pragmatism, by borrowing assumptions from the different field as Bryman and Bell (2015) implies that mixed method research takes the stance from a single paradigm.

A qualitative pre-study is according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) used to develop items for the main quantitative study. However, the pre-study itself serves no other

function in the final result other than yielding more accurate and reliable data. Creswell (2014) similarly considers the opportunities to explore using qualitative data and analysis to use the findings further in a quantitative main study, by this approach Bryman and Bell (2015) considers that qualitative research prepares the ground and facilitates the quantitative.

For the credibility and validity concerns, this study chose and conducted a mixed method approach. However, previous literature on influencers and adjacent literature fields formulations of measurement scales have been taken into consideration and guiding to some extent when developing new quantitative instruments through the qualitative pre-study. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) suggest that arguments for the use of mixed methods is increased confidence, credibility and validity by being created for the context of the study, thus provide better inferences.

4.3.2 A Mixed Methods Approach

This study stipulates an exploratory sequential mixed method approach in two distinct stages, an initial qualitative pre-study to create measurement scales and a succeeding quantitative study. According to Creswell (2014), an exploratory sequential mix method design can be used as a strategy to develop better measurements from a specific population through qualitative pre-studies, for a quantitative study to build on to test concepts on a larger sample of the population.

The mixed method is exploratory as it starts with a qualitative phase that explores the views of participants to generate information used to build a second, quantitative phase (Creswell, 2014). Sequential implies that one method has been conducted before the other with information transference between the two (Creswell, 2014; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015), and sequence of methods for this study is a qualitative pre-study is conducted before the quantitative main study.

Another consideration when deciding upon a mixed method research design according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) is the dominance, implying which, if any, of the two methods, uses significantly more time and resources than the other. The balance of dominance between qualitative and quantitative for this study is as expressed a pre-study that utilises less time and resources compared to that of the quantitative main study that have the greatest bearing in this study. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) terms this mixed method research design as ‘master-servant’, were one method serves the needs of the other and is thus most common and recommended in the development of new measurement scales.

Creswell (2014) implies that a challenge in the data collection for a master-servant design lies in transferring information from the initial phase need to provide and enable the second phase. The qualitative data analysis that has been conducted has yielded quotes and codes that have

been translated into an instrument. Creswell (2014) considers such procedure as used for moving from quantitative data analysis to scale development, which later enables the quantitative research. It is, however, of importance to follow good procedures for designing instruments, which includes item discrimination, construct validity and reliability estimates (DeVellis, 2011).

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) notes that mixed methods allow for cross-over design concerning analysis, but is normally analysed within their respective traditions. For this study, each method was conducted independently from the other and in order, meaning that the pre-study has followed the tradition of qualitative research and the main quantitative study has followed the traditions of such research. Creswell (2014) note that the interpretation and results of the qualitative pre-study are presented before that of the succeeding main study, as well as a comparison between the two databases, is not sensible as part of the results.

4.4 Literature Search & Quality Criteria

A critical source evaluation of has been applied throughout this study, where the authenticity of the sources, tendencies, time relations and unobtrusiveness has been considered as emphasised by Bryman and Bell (2015). The articles collected and used has been collected from trusted databases with articles being peer-reviewed should it not be otherwise mentioned as an industry report or similarly noted. Databases that were used was Google Scholar and LUB Search, where the latter is Lund University's article database. Keywords that have been used during the literature review was "influencer marketing", "social media influencers", "brand equity", "customer-based brand equity", "user-generated content" and "eWOM".

For this study, the authors have been consistently careful to exclude authors' personal opinions should such have been found in the sources used and to the best extent gone back to the source of origin to avoid subjective perspectives. Due to limited previous research to influencer marketing, in a few cases including industry sources was necessary but these have not constituted approved literature and has been treated with a critical approach and been referred to in the study as industry sources.

4.5 Pre-study: Qualitative Measurement Scale Development

4.5.1 Qualitative Research

Malhotra (2010) describes qualitative research as a predominant methodology in exploratory research, that aims to further the knowledge based on small samples that provide deep insights and understanding of the problem set. As to its nature, qualitative research leads the way and opens up new fields to where quantitative research can follow (Malhotra, 2010). Bryman and

Bell (2015) describes qualitative research as a strategy that tends to emphasise words and their meaning rather than quantification, and the research is most commonly inductive, constructionist and interpretivist although some research deviates in different regards to some of the mentioned concepts. Qualitative research methods aim to engender a subjective understanding of reasoning and ambition behind people's actions and experiences. The purpose is thus to interpret and contextualise perspectives from a significantly smaller sample size compared to quantitative research (Macdonald & Headlam, 2008).

4.5.2 Inductive Approach

An inductive research approach departs from empirical observations to draw conclusions which can be theorised. As such, Bryman and Bell (2015) describes the inductive process as a way of drawing a generalizable inference from observations. However, Bryman and Bell (2015) notes that it is not necessarily always the aim to create new theories but to use grounded analysis using focus groups or similar, to develop a theoretical understanding of social concepts. As such, new theories are not always the case for inductive research and similarly, inductive research often uses theory and existing literature as a background before its empirical investigations (Bryman & Bell, 2015). For this study, the inductive approach explored the concepts to create a theoretical understanding as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2015) and from this theoretical understanding develop a pool of items for the development of measurement scales for the concepts in focus (Creswell, 2014; DeVellis, 2011; Malhotra, 2010).

4.5.3 Sampling Technique

Bryman and Bell (2015) outlines the main differences between quantitative sampling and qualitative, as the former relates to probability sampling while the latter more commonly tend to revolve be concerned with the notion of purposive. The term purposive in this case refers to selecting sampling units that are relevant and with direct reference to the research question. As such the sampling is conducted with reference to the goals of the research and units of analysis are selected on criteria that will allow the research question to be answered (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Malhotra (2010) describes the two branches of sampling within qualitative research, as either probability and non-probability; similarly referred to as purposive sampling by Bryman and Bell (2015). This pre-study has not strived for generalizability through saturation, but rather purposely aimed to explore and develop a pool of items for developing measurement scales for customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, and thus a non-probability sampling was selected.

Within non-probability sampling, Malhotra (2010) state that there are four common types of sampling, where judgemental sampling is a form of convenience sampling, but the population

elements are selected based on the researcher's judgment. By exercising judgment as a researcher, Malhotra (2010) describes that judgmental sampling is a sampling technique that allows for selecting test units that are of interest and otherwise appropriate. The drawbacks of judgemental sampling are that it does not allow for direct generalisations to the population, as it is not explicitly defined and accounted for. However, it is convenient and quick and is beneficial when broad population inferences are not required (Malhotra, 2010). For the qualitative pre-study of this research, the emphasis was placed on understanding influencer marketing and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content to identify key components to develop measurements of scale based on these findings.

The part of the research question related to the qualitative data collection thus had the interest in gaining insight from test units who were familiar with the use of social media, and Instagram in particular. As such, the subjective judgment of the authors was to sample individuals with average or above use of social medias, following at least one influencer as to have prior experience with the phenomenon. Further, the subjective judgment in the sampling applied for this pre-study was to find a gender balance amongst the test units. In conclusion, the judgmental sampling was a form of convenience sampling based on three criteria; (1) daily user of Instagram (using the app and not necessarily publishing themselves), (2) following or regularly visit the account of at least one influencer and (3) equal gender representation.

Table 4. Overview of the Participants for the Focus Group

Participants	Abbreviation	Gender	Age	Follows or visits influencers on Instagram
Participant 1	P1	Female	23	Follows
Participant 2	P2	Female	26	Follows
Participant 3	P3	Female	25	Follows
Participant 4	P4	Female	23	Visits
Participant 5	P5	Male	24	Follows
Participant 6	P6	Male	27	Visits
Participant 7	P7	Male	26	Follows

4.5.4 Qualitative Research Procedure

Malhotra (2010) classifies research procedures as either direct or indirect, where the former the research purpose is disclosed (or indirectly understood by participants) and the latter uses projective techniques to disguise the purpose of the study. Disguising the purpose was not deemed necessary as Malhotra (2010) state that projective techniques are more necessary when

the topic is sensitive, embarrassing or in another way invasive to respondents privacy. On the contrary, test units seemed eager to discuss their social media habits as well as whom, why and how they follow and consider influencers. As such, this study conducted a direct qualitative research procedure for gathering primary data, more precisely a focus group, which will be accounted for in this section.

4.5.4.1 Focus Group Sample Size

Bryman and Bell (2015) state that focus groups normally have six to twelve participants, for this study a sample of eight respondents was selected and agreed to participate in the focus group, a sufficient number to stimulate the discussion while still maintaining control. One problem often facing focus group practitioners is that there is always a risk of participants not showing up, this can, to some extent be accounted for by strategically over-recruiting (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Since the minimum number of participants recommended for focus groups is six, the authors of this thesis judged it suitable to book eight participants, four male and four females, to have room for drop-offs. The overbooking was a good tactic, considering that one of the male participants cancelled last minute and could not be replaced.

4.5.4.2 Conducting Focus Groups

Focus group can be described as group conversations between a number of individuals, which are less strictly structured in format and more about facilitating open conversations between respondents under the guidance of a moderator (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The choice of using focus group as a pre-study for this thesis was to, with an exploratory approach, gain insights and understanding of what respondents believe characterise an influencer and to retrieve knowledge regarding what triggers people to post brand-promoting content on social media. When trying to form a unified understanding of respondents' perception of a topic, the method of using focus groups is favourable (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Malhotra (2010) further states that the use of focus groups can generate insights especially regarding respondents' perceptions, preferences and behaviour as well as obtain information that is helpful in structuring questionnaires. Focus groups are also a common qualitative research approach in generating a pool of items for developing measurement of scales (DeVellis, 2011; Malhotra, 2010)

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) state that a topic guide is a valuable tool for the moderator to allow the discussions of focus groups to be within the main area of what is to be explored. Thus, the moderator can cover the areas of interest while allowing unforeseen areas to emerge during the moderated discussion. The format of the conducted focus group was semi-structured, and a topic guide was used by the moderator to explore the different dimensions of the underlying factors behind why some individuals on social media are perceived as

influencers and further, what makes customers willing to post brand-promoting user-generated content online. Throughout the focus group the interview technique *laddering* was used, to ask participants to further explain and elaborate on their answers (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The insights gained from the focus group were, as mentioned earlier, later used to create scales of measurements for the main quantitative study.

When selecting a moderator for the focus group, it is important to choose someone with experience, who can make respondents feel relaxed, comfortable and managing to facilitate the discussion (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). As mentioned earlier, the two authors have previous experience from the field of quantitative and qualitative respectively, as such, the latter felt comfortable in shouldering the role of moderator for the conducted focus group. Further, the choice of anonymity for the participants in the focus group was of utmost importance, based on both ethical and legal reasons (Bryman & Bell, 2015). According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015), the choice of location is essential, therefore the focus group was held in a surrounding without external distraction, where the participants could feel as relaxed as possible. The focus group was held on April 18, 2017, and lasted for 1,5 hours.

One of the drawbacks of using focus groups is that the social pressure might hinder the respondents to share sensitive information amongst others and should thus be used with caution regarding sensitive topics or behaviour that goes against the norm. This can, however, be mitigated using projective techniques by the moderator (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). During the conducted focus group, the overall attitude was neutral regarding posting brand-promoting content and to a large extent positive regarding following influencers. As such, the topic of the focus group was not particularly sensitive to its nature overall, although both positive and some sceptic opinions towards people's behaviour of posting brand-promoting content too frequently. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) also highlights that advantages of using focus groups are that they are a useful exploratory tool that encourages discussions from different viewpoints and stimulate further discussion between respondents.

4.5.4.3 The Focus Groups Topic Guide

As mentioned earlier, a topic guide is an important tool when planning and conducting focus groups, and it is used in an informal manner, where the researcher has a list of questions and topics which can be used in no specific order during the focus group (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Malhotra (2010) suggest that to create a moderator's outline or topic guide, the researcher should start with specifying clear predefined objectives, this is further supported by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015). Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) put emphasis on the fact that researcher should be cautious about perceiving the focus group

as an exercise of data extraction, and stresses that it instead is of utmost importance to view the focus groups as meaningful conversations.

The topic guide initially reminded the moderator to ask for the respondents' consent (see Appendix 7.1 for complete form) to be interviewed, and then had some opening questions to ease the respondents into start discussing and interacting with each other and the moderator. This was followed by questions related to the key areas of interest for the study and lastly followed by closing questions which showed the moderator's appreciation for the respondent's participation (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). For the complete topic guide, see Appendix 7.2.

4.5.5 Grounded Analysis

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) describes grounded analysis as a more open approach to analyse data compared to content analysis. This study has not tried to impose external structure but rather ground the categories and theory from the data collected. However, in the limitation of this pre-study, this study has not conducted iterative or more than one research cycle as grounded theory often applies (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The key reason behind not conducting further research cycles was that the pre-study aimed at generating a pool of items for quantitative measurement of scales rather than generate qualitatively grounded theories.

4.5.6 Analysing Collected Data

As an initial step, this pre-study applied a familiarisation process of the recorded data and additional notes. Following this, it was reflected over how the data relates and corresponds to previous knowledge on the subject to see what is in line with existing literature and what is new or different given the collected data. Thirdly, an open coding was applied to categorise and make thematic sense of the insights grounded in the collected data. The categorised data demonstrated three distinct fields, which was conceptualised using similarity and differences as well as frequency and correspondence. Following the conceptualisation, a re-coding was made and whereas Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) explains an initial framework is more turned into reframed data that allows for more in-depth analysis. Lastly, the data was turned into an analytical framework using a pool of items that could measure who is to be considered an influencer, influencer marketing and why users post brand-promoting content. Due to the limited scope of this pre-study, the analysis of data was conducted internally from a critical stance in the evaluation.

4.5.7 Trustworthiness

To assess the worth of a study, it is important to ensure trustworthiness. Thus Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that qualitative research should be evaluated on its *transferability*, *credibility*, *dependability* and *confirmability*. This qualitative pre-study has primarily acted as an empirical approach to generate a pool of items to be tested in the succeeding quantitative main study, however, the trustworthiness of the pre-study is still relevant to mention briefly. For the transferability, this study was conducted once in a distinct setting, as such, it limits the transferability and may be difficult to replicate with precision. The credibility of this study was improved with familiarisation using existing but scarce literature on the phenomenon and using the focus group as a source for primary data. It is however recommended that further studies continue to explore the phenomenon and considers complementary items for measurement to either increase the credibility or propose contrasting views. The dependability, meaning to what extent the same results could be yielded, is considered moderately strong. All steps for the qualitative procedure has been accounted for although it should be emphasised that the methods are dependent upon situational factors and thus the possibility for complete replication is limited. The confirmability through researcher bias has been considered and attempted to control for with using open-ended questions or encouraging opposing views to fully explore the concepts from several viewpoints. Concluding, this pre-study is due to its scope limited regarding trustworthiness, however, Creswell (2014) state that a pre-study for developing qualitative instruments is more concerned with generating a larger pool of items. As such, the qualitative trustworthiness is also tested at later stages for the indicators.

4.5.8 Empirical Findings

Introduction Questions

The first part of the focus group was related to getting to know the participants and to get insights about their social media habits, especially their habits concerning Instagram. The discussion revolved around how often the participants used Instagram and the reasons behind their choice of using Instagram. All the participants stated that they used Instagram at least once daily to keep updated, P1, P4 and P5 emphasised that they checked it almost one time per hour, to be sure not to miss anything. Further, the participants all used it both to stay updated with friends and family and to get inspiration from other accounts. All respondents agreed that they like the simplicity of Instagram and that the focus is on pictures instead of words, as on other social media platforms. As P3 stated: *“The pictures provide an opportunity to get a glimpse into people’s lives in a quick and capturing way. It is easy to get carried away and explore and find new accounts from those you are already following, however, that often leads you to end up spending more time browsing than what you planned for”* (P3, personal communication, 2017-04-18)

Influencers

The next section of the focus group aimed to uncover perceptions of the participant's definition of what makes an individual an influencer and why the participants follow influencers. The first topic that was addressed by the participants was that an influencer is a person with a very large base of followers, typically bloggers or individuals who have published themselves online for a long time with an interesting lifestyle, which therefore is a person many enjoy following. The participants further discussed that influencers usually post well thought through pictures, which look professional. P4 discussed that she does not follow influencers actively on Instagram, however there are several accounts that she regularly checks *"Even though I don't follow influencers [on Instagram] I check their profiles almost daily to get inspiration and stay updated on different trends and what's happening in their lives"* (P4, personal communication, 2017-04-18). When addressing the topics of why they choose to follow influencers and which type of influencers, the participants mention that they often follow accounts their friends also follow, where the focus is on trends, inspiration and aspirational lifestyles. The group agreed that being an influencer is about being interesting, either through their persona or for any other reason that appeals many people. The names of various bloggers, as mentioned earlier was a recurring theme, and the participants found common ground in that following such influencers gives a glimpse into their everyday. However, as opposed to the other members of the group P7 mentioned that sometimes influencers who are less known are equally or more interesting. When asked to develop on this, the participant stated that some are more influential to a smaller group or within a specific area. The participant also mentioned that there was a value in getting inspiration or content from other influencers than those who are followed by his friends as *"...then you are the one to introduce new or fun things to your friends"* (P7, personal communication, 2017-04-18).

Influencer Marketing

The next part of the focus group revolved around the participant's perception of influencers promoting brands and products on social media and when it is perceived as something good respectively bad. All the participants knew people get paid to promote various brands and products to their followers and that there is much money that can be made by doing so. They had all been exposed to an influencer marketing a product or brand. P5 stated that he does not have a problem with this type of marketing, should it seems credible and genuine. *"A product or brand that a person is using and likes is always interesting to know about, but when they just promote something for the sake of it, it is rather annoying"* (P5, personal communication, 2017-04-18). P1 agreed and developed that for her a promotion needs to fit the influencer and be a meaningful part of the reason why she follows the content from a specific influencer. The group discussed that promotion should be meaningful rather than intrusive. There was an

ambivalent balancing act to what constituted too much or irrelevant promotion, but all participants came to the consensus that it is meaningful to get good recommendations or information on new trends as part of influencers promotion but purely commercial and not directly related promotions quickly became something highly negative.

Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

The aim of the last part of the focus group was to uncover what makes the participants willing to post content online, which promotes a product or brand, even though the participants do not consider themselves to be influencers. P6 stated that he would only post pictures of specific products or brands that he uses himself and the brand would look good on his account. When asked to elaborate and with input from other respondents, it became implicitly apparent that the posting of content partly related to the representation of the self by creating a visual representation of their personality. Good looking pictures enhance such representation and brands both carry underlying associations as well as indicate that one is on par with what is trendy at the moment. The rest of the group agreed on the fact that they would not be willing to post pictures of products or use specific hashtags if it was not self-enhancing to publicly associate oneself with that specific product or brand. The participants were asked if they could elaborate on the use of hashtags, P2 mentioned that hashtags are a good way for other users to find their content as they share interests and can get inspired by one another. When asked what kind of hashtags the group both published and browsed for, it was apparent that using a brand's hashtag was only one of several which are meant to capture the essence of the moment in the posted picture. P2 stated one example wherein she used a running shoe brand as a hashtag, with an associated slogan and other health related and inspirational hashtags. The group's discussion concluded that hashtags, on the one hand, make more people beyond your friends see your content and on the other is a way of expressing more complex feelings or situations using shortly coded words, whose meaning is shared amongst users on the platform.

4.5.9 Analysis

In the analysis of the empirical findings, three different themes were found for influencer marketing; valuable content creation, influence power and the prominence of the product promotion. The first one relates to *why* influencers gain their followers' interest which comes from the value their content poses to other users. Secondly, the influence power relates to what extent the person has influence over others, which relates to what degree people turn to the influencer for direct or indirect advice. It should be noted that it is a domain sensitive theme as one influencer might not be sought out for advice regarding everything. Thirdly, the product promotion needs a balance in prominence and connection to the influencer and the valuable content creation. It is a small thread between a product promotion bring perceived as

reinforcing the content as valuable, compared to being felt overly promoted or disconnected and as such ruled out as purely commercial and thus unauthentic.

Regarding posting pictures on social media that promote a brand or product, interestingly related similarly to that of the influencers valuable content creation together with a strong emphasis of the self-representation. The participants as Instagram users seek to balance the act of creating content that is inspirational or by other means valuable to other users while at the same time create a favourable and public self-representation.

4.5.10 Results

The qualitative findings and the analysis resulted in generating a pool of items for each of the three themes identified for influencer marketing together with five items related to users posting content on social media that promote brands or products. This pre-study provides an initial grounded set of indicators for influencer marketing and customers willingness to post brand-promoting user generated content. It should, however, be noted that this pre-study only represents an initial attempt to understand the phenomenon and develop measurable indicators, which implies that further research is recommended to increase the trustworthiness and to fully understand both concepts.

Influencer Marketing

For the first theme, influencer marketing, the following items were extracted; many followers, high-quality pictures, interesting lifestyle and being interesting to many. For the second theme, influence power items found related to "being someone whom people look to for inspiration", being a "trendsetter" and considered having "influence" or not. Thirdly, product promotion identified three items concerning whether the influencer him or herself "genuinely liked" what is being promoted. Whether they would be "proud to publicly promote" the brand and to what extent it is perceived that the brand or promotion "has a value" by reinforcing the valuable content creation and lifestyle.

Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

The findings for users posting brand-promoting pictures on Instagram generated a pool of five key components; (1) whether brand could positively contribute to a picture, (2) whether public association with the brand was favourable to one's public self, (3) whether the picture would look good or fit well in with the visual content, (4) whether they would seek publicity to the content or visits from like-minded people and (5) lastly to what extent the brand as a hashtag could be part of expressing oneself.

4.6 Quantitative Main Study

The choice of subject for this study was based on the authors' interest in anchoring the industry phenomenon of influencer marketing in an academic context. By taking an analytical and experimental research approach, the goal was to test if the use of influencer marketing had a larger effect/impact on customer-based brand equity, compared to paid social media advertising.

In the main study, a quantitative approach for research was selected to be most suitable, data main quantitative through a digital survey with an experimental and randomised design. After that, the data was analysed to respectively measure the independent variable's effect on the dependent variable, customer-based brand equity, this to be able to compare for differences. Through secondary data, the theory of brand equity was studied, from the customer-based brand equity perspective. The customer-based brand equity perspective relies in large on Aaker's (1996) Brand Equity Dimensions.

4.6.1 Deductive Approach

A deductive approach was applied for the second and main quantitative research phase. Where the current literature on influencer marketing, customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content was deduced into four distinct hypotheses. The quantitative study conducted data collection to be tested on the empirical findings. Bryman and Bell (2015) explains deductive theory as an approach where knowledge on a domain is deduced to hypotheses which then is put under empirical scrutiny. During this study, a deductive approach has been central to be able to test and validate influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content on social media. Bryman and Bell (2015) emphasises the importance of deductive research, to competently formulate hypotheses and translate the concepts within these, into researchable entities by operationalization. In this case, a qualitative pre-study was conducted as part of a mixed method approach to empirically develop operationalize influencer marketing and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, by creating instruments to increase the study's validity and credibility. A deductive approach further needs to be documented thoroughly in how the data has been collected and resulted in an assumption regarding the formulated hypotheses. As such, deductive studies is research that tests theories through theoretical considerations that underpin hypotheses which are confirmed or disconfirmed through statistical inference (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Malhotra, 2010). This study, in line with a deductive approach, developed hypotheses grounded in previous literature and by the conducted data collection as well as a series of statistical methods resulted in rejection or acceptance of the hypotheses.

4.6.2 Quantitative Method

Previous literature has provided a foundation to synthesise a definition for influencer marketing, and suggested it be perceived as an earned endorsement in the eyes of consumers despite it being a paid for collaboration between influencers and brands. However, what previous literature has not investigated is its effect on customer-based brand equity and if it stimulates the behaviour of customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content on social media. For this reason, a quantitative method was needed to investigate influencer marketing's relationship as an independent variable, on customer-based brand equity and whether there were differences compared to that of paid social media advertising. Bryman and Bell (2015) explains that a quantitative method implies quantification of gathered data that is processed and undergoes statistical analysis to enable empirically founded conclusions and statements for the hypotheses.

Advantages of a quantitative method are that it allows more precise estimations compared to qualitative methods, and enables identification of relationships between the concepts in focus. As such, the quantification of influencer marketing, customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content allows for testing and validation of the relationships between the concepts. Bryman and Bell (2015) however emphasises that when concepts are comprised of more than single measurements, the concept in its entirety needs to be considered. For this study, customer-based brand equity builds on several dimensions that each, in turn, builds on multiple indicators. By accounting for these dimensions, both separately and in its entirety, a conclusion could be drawn regarding influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity. Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, is further a concept for which the qualitative pre-study generated a multi-item measurement scale instrument, where each indicator and the concept as one was considered.

There are, however, also less advantageous aspects to note regarding a quantitative method, as Bryman and Bell (2015) underlies, such method does not generate a deeper understanding of people and social institutions from the natural world. One of the principles behind positivism is considering the social world as to that of the natural, which implies ignoring the fact that people interpret the world around them in contrast to objects of the natural world, which exists with its characteristics. Another important critique is that quantitative research within business and management research applies an artificial and unauthentic sense of precision and accuracy (Bryman & Bell, 2015), and thus need to be modest in not claiming results to be absolute and unequivocal, but rather probabilistically indicative and supportive in progressing knowledge and theory. This study finds empirically grounded acceptance or rejection towards the hypotheses and on the probable nature of the results, answer the research question. on. Further,

and importantly a regression analysis was conducted to see in what capacity and extent the communication form can explain the variation in customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content on social media. This regression analysis is based on the empirical set of data collection gathered by this study, however, in customers' perception of advertising, there are numerous factors that need to be accounted for. As such, the degree of explanation is regarding the advertising operationalisation used in this study, and any comparative difference between the two is under the condition of *ceteris paribus*, as sought after to the farthest extent by this study. Thus, results interpreted conservatively and not generalizable across all types of advertising, products, markets and contexts.

4.6.3 Research Design

Malhotra (2010) defines the term 'research design' as the framework and blueprint that has been applied for conducting the marketing research project, with details on the necessary procedures to obtain information and structure to solve the research problem. Bryman and Bell (2015) similarly considers research design as the framework for conducting the research and is interconnected to research strategy by being the choice between quantitative or qualitative deployment of the research design.

4.6.3.1 Causal Investigation

There are two major branches within research design, where conclusive research is the branch related to larger samples and quantitative analysis. As such, conclusive research is to test specific hypotheses and examine specific relationships and is as such more formal and structured compared to explorative research (Malhotra, 2010). Conclusive research generates findings considered conclusive by nature and is often the basis for decision making. Malhotra (2010) however underlines that the philosophical nature of science implies that nothing can be proven beyond doubt and as such, the term conclusive research should not be interpreted literally.

This study has concerned itself with causal research by measuring the effect on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content as dependent variables to influencer marketing, that half of the sample population has been exposed to. Malhotra (2010) gives the comparative view of causal research as related to manipulation of independent variables to measure the effect on dependent variables by control of other mediating variables using experiments. The causal research approach thereby has the purpose to determine the nature of relationships between variables and predict effects in between those. An important aspect of causal research is that it requires a relatively controlled environment, and the research due to its nature and complexity is associated with experimental research (Malhotra, 2010). This study purposely isolated the occurrence of influencer

marketing in a controlled manner to account for mediating factors and conducted causal research using experimentation.

4.6.3.2 Experimental Design

Malhotra (2010) underlines an important note on causality, in relation to causal research and experimental design, which is that causality in scientific meaning can never be proven but rather only be inferred on probabilistic grounds. The implication is that when making statements about cause-and-effect relationships, it should be with scientifically conservative as no to imply more than what can be inferred. Experimental design is highly concerned with causality, which is why the meaning of the term is important to note (Malhotra, 2010).

In this study, influencer marketing has been introduced to respondents as an independent variable for the experiment group while exposing the control group for paid social media advertising. Bryman and Bell (2015) implies that true field experiments are less common in business and management research, to a large extent as it is hard to control the environmental factors to the necessary degree. However, experiments, when conducted correctly, is praised for its high robustness and trustworthiness in causal findings, and thus tend to have a strong internal validity.

According to Bryman and Bell (2015), a fundamental component of experimental research is the ability to divide the sample into an experiment and control group, to intervene with a manipulation of the independent variable for the experimental group. Malhotra (2010) notes that experiments are not only comprised of independent and dependent variables, but also extraneous variables which are all other variables that influence the test units.

In this research, the test units are comprised of the individuals in the defined population, and extraneous variables have been kept at a minimum by total replication of the data collection method for both influencer marketing and paid social media advertising. Replication means that the respondents have from the point of contact throughout the data collection process both groups has had the same experience and questionnaire, with the information presented to them similarly, except for the exposure to either influencer marketing or paid social media advertising. Concerning guaranteeing the control of extraneous factors, this study has gone to a great extent by using the same visual (image) content in both influencer marketing and paid social media advertising. Such exceptionally high similarity between the two advertising formats has isolated the concept of influencer marketing by eliminating any difference in effect derived from the content, and thus any difference in the dependent variables will be a result of the advertising frame which differs between influencer marketing and paid social media advertising.

The experiment in this study has thus manipulated the independent variable of "communication form". By introducing influencer marketing to the experiment group to measure the effects on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, both as dependent variables while controlling for extraneous variables by what Malhotra (2010) defines as an experiment.

The test units have been divided into control and experiment group respectively, through a two-step-randomization technique developed for this study, which guarantees a random assignment of respondents both *to* each group and *within* each group. From the email sent to each test unit using given sampling technique, a link has taken respondents to a webpage that has informed the local web browser to randomise a number between 0 and 1, and round it off to the nearest integer (i.e. either 0 or 1). The integer has then acted as the basis for redirecting the respondent to zero being the experiment group and one being the control group. Within both the experiment group and control group, the influencer and model in the control group have been either male or female. Respondents, regardless of gender, has been randomly assigned to either a male or female influencer (or model in the paid social media advertising) by repeating the procedure of randomising a number, rounding it to nearest integer and forwarding. In the second step of the randomization 0 = male and 1 = female. For illustration see Appendix 7.3, "Randomization procedure of Respondents to Experiment & Control Group". As Malhotra (2010) points out, random assignment of units to groups by using random numbers, other exogenous factors of the sampling technique and population can be represented equally in both groups and thus controlled for.

In the experiment of this study, respondents were randomised into an experiment or control group, where the former was exposed to influencer marketing and the latter paid social media advertising. After the exposure, respondents were asked a series of questions using a questionnaire with the intention to measure their attitude towards an actual sunglasses brand, which according to Malhotra (2010) classification implies a post-test-only control group design. There are several advantages with such a test as it is simpler to implement and thus has less cost in terms of time, cost and resources. There is, however, an increased sensitivity to selection bias and mortality (Malhotra, 2010). This study has strongly controlled for selection bias by utilising a two-step randomization and the which Malhotra (2010) describes as the defector's rate (test units initiating the test but not completing it) was improved using a pilot study and competent questionnaire design. By these, the selection bias and mortality have been controlled as Malhotra (2010) suggest that carefully designed experimental procedures may.

This study could in some respects be compared to a cross-sectional research design. However, Bryman and Bell (2015) points out that an important aspect of such research design is to study

variation, why cross-sectional studies ideally and in practice tend to study *more than* two cases. As such, this study took a true experimental post-test-only control group design.

4.6.4 Data Collection Method

The quantitative study due to its deductive approach and objective to test and validate using a larger sample, choose a digital self-completion questionnaire. A digital questionnaire allowed the contact list to the defined population to be used by sending out an invitation to the survey by email. Bryman and Bell (2015) state that digital questionnaires as a tool for data collection have several advantages, therein being cost and time efficient to gather data from larger samples and as Malhotra (2010) indicates they also increase speed and facilitate data processing. The use of a digital questionnaire resulted in a large sample size, which was necessary for the data analysis with special regards to the inverted operationalization of a factorial analysis and testing for a difference in mean between the control group and experimental group.

4.6.5 Operationalising the Experiments Advertising Examples

Influencer marketing and paid social media advertising are two forms of marketing communication, which in this case acts as the independent variable. As such, the two forms need to be operationalised to introduce the experimental group with influencer marketing as a manipulating variable and paid social media advertising to the control group. As Malhotra (2010) state, introducing the manipulating variable, in this study influencer marketing, is necessary to consider the difference in effect on the dependent variables customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content between the two groups. On this basis, a brand and product were selected. For the experiment to have real life application, an actual brand which is lesser known but actively use influencer marketing as part of their marketing mix was used in the experiment which will be accounted for in this section.

4.6.5.1 *The Brand & Product for the Experiment*

As the gender distribution of the defined population is considered relatively equal, according to figures from 2012 there is a gender ratio of 40-60 at Lund University, School of Economics and Management. For this reason, the product and brand for the experiment needed to be appealing to both men and females and sunglasses were selected as a suitable choice due to its homogeneity in product variation between genders with many sunglasses being unisex models. The advantages and drawbacks of using a fictitious and an existing brand were weighted respectively. The choice of selecting an actual brand was mainly due to two reasons; a real brand would have an existing visual identity that could be composed into an advertising example of higher quality and secondly, it could be argued to have more practical and real-life

relevance. However, a major counterargument was that an actual brand might result in skewing the results, but at the same time a fictitious brand might not meet necessary quality as of real-life examples and would be judged negatively overall by respondents. The skewing an existing brand might have was also considered less of an issue in this study as an experimental design was implemented and would as such, through the randomization process statistically distribute the skewness across both the experiment and control group. For this reason, the marketing communication that was needed to be developed was based on actual brand with their influencers from social media, namely the Swedish brand Chimi Eyewear (www.chimieyewear.com).

4.6.5.2 Choice of Social Media Platform

The literature review on influencer marketing identified several platforms that had been studied, including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. However, Instagram as an image-based social media platform was considered the more common for ordinary social media users to follow influencers on to Djafarova and Rushworth (2017). With the high incidence of following influencers on Instagram, together with the argument that it as a platform was one of the more stripped forms of social medias mentioned, the isolation of the phenomena would be improved and thus Instagram was selected as the social media context for this study.

4.6.5.3 Operationalizing Influencer Marketing as Advertising

The manipulating variable introduced for the experiment group of influencer marketing, needed to be operationalized into an actual form of influencer advertising. The choice of Chimi Eyewear and Instagram as a context for social media platform enabled the use of the brands already pre-existing influencer marketing advertising. The brand has a continuous collaboration with a few influencers and using this, the operationalisation of influence marketing would be more realistic. In difference to paid social media advertising, influencer marketing comes about as a post from the influencer promoting or associating them with a product to a sufficient degree. As a consequence, the user following an influencer will in practice be exposed to the influencers overall profile before being exposed to the actual brand-specific influencer marketing post. On this basis, the Instagram account of respective influencer were displayed before starting the survey as a way of introducing the influencer to the respondents. It should be noted, that the frame surrounding the visual content has followed the actual looks of the social media platform, to create realism for both marketing communication examples. Following this, the two gender specific influencer posts were constructed using two images with the influencer together with the brand-specific product in focus. An important manipulation of the influencers account and post was conducted, which was the number of total posts, followers and likes on the post. The change to equal values was done as to set the

framework between the two gender examples as equal as possible to not skew or distort the results within the group. The two influencers in the example were Kenza Zouiten and Andreas Wijk. During the study questions regarding the respondent's previous knowledge and opinion was recorded to remove respondents less than neutral to the influencer as this would create negative skewness and would be inconsistent with the definition of influencer marketing. The two examples of influencer marketing, operationalized as marketing communication can be seen in Figure 8 and Figure 9 below.

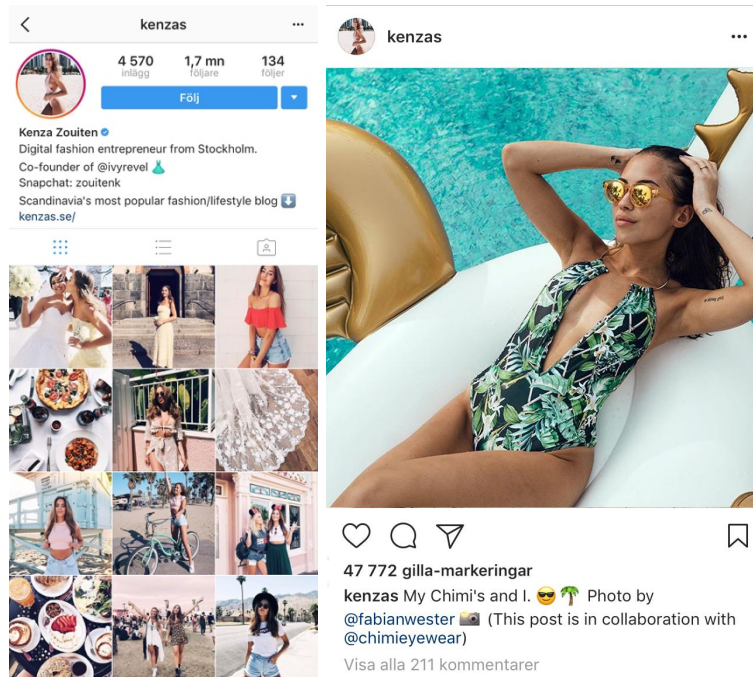


Figure 8. Operationalization of Influencer Marketing Advertising using Female Example

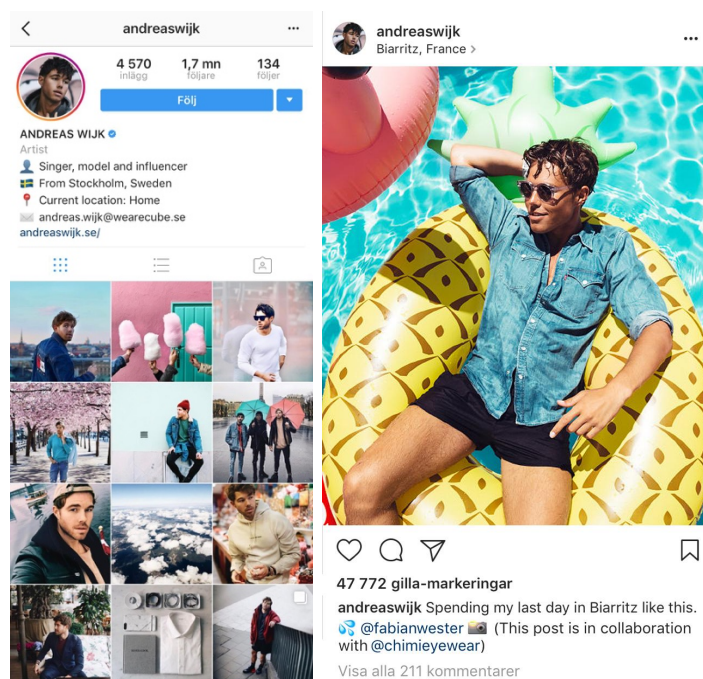


Figure 9. Operationalization of Influencer Marketing Advertising using Male Example

4.6.5.4 Operationalizing Paid Social Media Advertising

Similarly to influencer marketing, the paid social media advertising needed operationalization. Dahlén, Lange and Rosengren (2017) has as previously stated, mentioned that paid advertising refers to exposure which is paid for by the brand to the platform owner, in this case, Instagram. As such, the advertising frame surrounding the visual content follows the platform owner's guidelines, which has been replicated in this case. Further, as an experimental design was applied and the objective has been to isolate the phenomenon of having an influencer as the intermediary of the marketing communication, the same images used in influencer marketing was applied for the paid social media advertising examples. Counterarguments to this would be that should the respondent recognise or be familiar with the influencer, it could be considered influencer marketing through paid for exposure. This argument is valid, and thus this study asked questions regarding whether the respondent was familiar or had seen the 'model' of the advertising before as part of the questionnaire. All respondents, who recognised the model in the photo thus had their responses removed. By this logic, the remaining respondents had only seen an unfamiliar photo model in the paid for social media advertising which is common in traditional advertising (Dahlén, Lange and Rosengren, 2017) and the effect of influencer marketing was controlled for. The two gender examples of paid for social media advertising can be seen below in Figure 10.

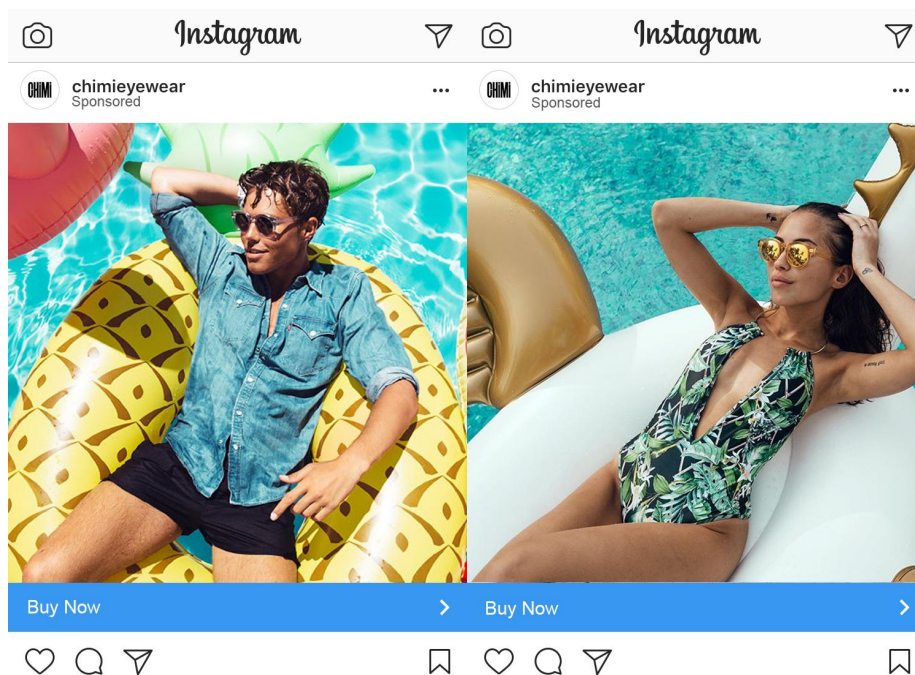


Figure 10. Operationalization of Male & Female Paid Social Media Advertising

4.6.6 Indicators & Development of Multi-Item Scales

Three different concepts were operationalised during this study; influencer marketing, customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. The first and last mentioned both were operationalized using a qualitative pre-study that developed an instrument to measure each respectively. Customer-based brand equity as a theoretical concept, have general operationalization existing in current literature that is too great extent accepted amongst scholars. Bryman and Bell (2015) defined concepts as theoretical building blocks or labelled elements of the social world, as such to be employed in quantitative research the concepts need to be transformed into something measurable. Concepts measurability is what makes it possible to consider concepts as independent and dependent variables and infer possible relationships. To make concepts measurable, indicators are used which are meant to represent and stand for the concept. In quantitative research Bryman and Bell (2015) implies that indicators for questionnaires are questions asked about concepts or statements regarding a concept for the respondent to consider and rate using scales. Malhotra (2010) further discuss the need for multi-item scales when concepts are more complex and comprised of more than one aspect needed to take into consideration for measurement, as such the concept is referred to as constructs. For this study, each concept has been built on multi-item scales as constructs. In the following sections, each of the three constructs and paid social media will be thoroughly accounted for.

Table 5. Indicators of the Study - Numbers, Type, Corresponding Dimension & Origin

	Indicators	Type	Dimensions	Origin
Influencer Marketing	10	Multi-item scale	3	Qualitative pre-study
Customer-based brand equity	23	Multi-item scale	8	Literature review
Paid social media advertising*	10	Multi-item scale	3	Literature review
Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	5	Multi-item scale	1	Qualitative pre-study

*The rating of traditional advertising was conducted on the same basis of questions as those of influencer marketing by refit to the context of advertising, to be used solely for regression analysis to consider the communication forms degree of explanation on the dependent variables.

It should be mentioned, that influencer marketing is operationalized twofold; both as the measurement of scale development (from the qualitative pre-study) and as visual advertising example as a manipulating variable in the control group.

4.6.6.1 Measuring Customer-Based Brand Equity

The operationalization of customer-based brand equity as a dependent variable was conducted in for this study by a compilation of the questions for respective dimensions as presented by Aaker (1996a). Because of the purpose of this study and the choice of a less known brand as advertising example for the experiment, two dimensions were excluded from Aaker's (1991) original Brand Equity Dimensions model, which was brand awareness and other proprietary brand assets. Further, as suggested by Aaker (1996a), the corresponding questions for each indicator should be fitted to the context and the brand to be measured. The theoretical model has already established questions that operationalize each dimension, which was used and fitted to the context of this study. Similarly, two of the brand metrics, as presented by Lehmann, Keller and Farley (2008), was incorporated into the study; namely intention and endorsement. The reason behind adding brand metrics was to get a deeper understanding of influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity. Lehmann, Keller and Farley (2008) suggest that brand metrics, to a large extent being industry models, is often more practical and could be beneficial to add to the academic customer-based brand equity dimensions when appropriate.

The underlying indicators was that of multi-item scales, written as statements which respondents answered with agreeing or disagreeing using a seven-point Likert-scale, with the middle alternative being neutral. The individual indicator items for customer-based brand equity was together with the items of customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, tested so that they matched the intended dimension using factor analysis. Malhotra (2010) indicates that factor analysis could be considered an inverted operationalization, backwards-testing variables for the same latent and underlying factor and thus increases multi-item scales validity. After the factor analysis was conducted, the individual items could be grouped together as larger customer-based brand equity dimension, based on the empirical data collection and could be compared to that of what is suggested according to the literature.

4.6.6.2 Scale Development for Influencer Marketing

Creswell (2014) supports that a qualitative pre-study as part of a mixed method approach is common and a suitable course of action for developing instruments, that can be used as indicators and measurements of scales for a quantitative main study. Influencer marketing builds on a definition that was synthesised by this study using existing literature from the field. As such, the definition itself needed corresponding indicators that would (a) act as validating whether the respondents had perceived the advertising example operationalized in this study as influencer marketing by the definition and (b) be used as criterion variables for a regression analysis. As the complexity of the construct, customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, a multi-item scale development was considered most appropriate. Malhotra (2010) similarly considers concepts that exist at higher levels than those of everyday concepts are appropriate to measure using multi-item scales. Developing new multi-item scales is according to Malhotra (2010) a procedure that needs both theoretical knowledge and considerable technical expertise, as it follows a series of procedures. Initially, researchers need to consider current literature and develop a concept or theory (Malhotra, 2010), which was conducted using a literature review and synthesised definition for influencer marketing in this study. Further, and in line with the mixed method approach suggested by Creswell (2014), the second step according to Malhotra (2010) to develop the measurement of scales is to generate a pool of items using qualitative research. In this study, a qualitative focus group was conducted with the objective to identify themes and items relevant to the topic of influencers and influencer marketing. By this, a large set of items was generated by the qualitative data analysis as presented in the previous section. Malhotra (2010) further explains that the researchers need to reduce the set of items based on qualitative judgment, as such the qualitative data analysis of the pre-study was reduced to ten items relevant for measuring influencer marketing based on three distinct themes. The questions developed in the qualitative phase as indicators can be

connected to the synthesised definitions for influencer and influencer marketing, and thematically divided into three categories. Malhotra (2010) proposes in the process of scale development that indicators should be connected to the constructs theory and definitions.

***Influencer** – [a]An individual that attracts an audience beyond their immediate friends and family through their online content creation, [b] and have the power to influence the behaviour, opinion and values of others through their valuable narrative.*

[a] = valuable content creation

[b] = influencer power

Influencer marketing is the activity, for [c] communicating with customers, through the digital content creation of influencers and their valuable narratives, that are of interest for customers.

[c] = prominence of product promotion

The first definition, for what constitutes an influencer on social media, two themes, a and b, emerged during the focus group as different but important components. In this case, a represents the aspect that influencers have a valuable content creation that is of interest to others, enough to make them actively choose to follow their future content creation on Instagram. Secondly, b in the definition represents another aspect of influencers on social media, which is their influential power. Third and lastly, influencer marketing, is defined as the activity for communicating with customers using influencers, is dependent upon respondents recognising the product as important to the influencer. During the qualitative pre-study, some respondents said they do not always reflect upon brands being promoted by some influencer's while other influencers have brands and products that they like a lot and more prominently associate themselves with.

Influencer marketing was by this study translated into a construct comprised of three dimensions, each of which measured with multi-item scales using a seven-point Likert scale, with a total of ten questions (See Table 6). As a third step in the general process of creating measurement scales for constructs, Malhotra (2010) explains that from the qualitative data collection, researchers need to use qualitative judgment to reduce the set of items into a set that is to be quantitatively tested using a larger sample. In the quantitative main study conducted as part of the mixed method approach, the answers from 222 number of respondents were used to apply factor analysis and statistical reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha. The ten indicators were by the first test identified to have three latent underlying factors, with more than acceptable cumulative variance explained and one indicator was excluded based on low factor loading. Each suggested grouping of variables scored above 0.7 on the Cronbach's

Alpha, as such the three multi-item scales were deemed sufficiently reliable and further used in this study as a measurement of scales for influencer marketing. One of the most important evaluations of indicators reliability and internal consistency is measured by Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1990; DeVellis, 2011). Malhotra (2010) state that collected data from a quantitative study should be used to perform statistical analysis. Suggested tools for analysis are exploratory factor analysis by which further reduction into a purified scales of measurement can be set, after testing for reliability (DeVellis, 2011; Malhotra, 2010).

This study has due to its limitations only conducted one quantitative main-phase, and as such the newly developed multi-item scales have only been quantitatively tested once. Malhotra (2010) emphasises that the scale development is an iterative process with several feedback loops to test for further additions, reductions or modifications to indicators which are carried out by scholars retesting and validating indicators in future studies. An iterative retest loop of the multi-item scale indicators has not before, as this study is limited to one quantitative study. Therefore the developed indicators are encouraged to be put under future empirical scrutiny by other researchers to further test reliability, validity and generalizability.

Table 6. Quantitative Outcome for Qualitatively Developed Multi-Item Scales for Influencer Marketing

#	Dimension	Individual Indicators	Statistical Analysis Outcome
1	Valuable Content Creation	...has a lot of followers beyond their friends and family	<i>Excluded*</i>
2		...has high-quality pictures on their Instagram	<i>Included</i>
3		...has an interesting lifestyle	<i>Included</i>
4		...is an interesting person to follow for many	<i>Included</i>
5	Influence Power	...is someone whom many looks to for inspiration	<i>Included</i>
6		...is a trendsetter for their followers	<i>Included</i>
7		...influences others	<i>Included</i>
8	Product promotion	...genuinely likes his/her [brand]	<i>Included</i>
9		...is proud to show his/her [brand]	<i>Included</i>
10		...feels that [brand] has value to his/her lifestyle	<i>Included</i>

*Indicator(s) excluded after conducted Exploratory Factor Analysis, based on insufficient Factor Loading.

4.6.6.3 Scale Development for Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting UGC

A customer group response to advertising is that of forwarding information to other customers (Dahlén, Lange & Rosengren, 2017). In an online context, that forwarding of information in

an online context is referred to as eWOM (Barreto, 2014), but social media is a platform for customer interaction and participation which is fuelled by user-generated content (Obar & Wildman, 2015). As such, eWOM on social media may take the form of brand-promoting user-generated content. This, more specific form of eWOM, does not to the knowledge of the authors have measurements of scale to be operationalised in a quantitative manner. As part of the purpose of this study, the qualitative pre-study has acted as empirical data collection from which scales have been developed following the same procedure as the instrument for influencer marketing. As suggested by Malhotra (2010) the existing literature was gathered to define and develop a theory on the phenomenon of customers posting brand-promoting user-generated content. Using a qualitative pre-study, quantitative scales for concepts can be developed using a mixed method approach (Creswell, 2014) as conducted by this study. The pre-study constitutes an empirical data collection to generate a larger selection of items to be used as potential indicators (DeVellis, 2011; Malhotra, 2010). The set of items from the pre-study was then based on the decision of the authors reduced to a smaller set of items consisting of five questions. Malhotra (2010) suggest that the pool of items need to be reduced using qualitative judgement, to be further used in a quantitative study from a larger sample to perform statistical analysis. The main study of this paper put the five indicators of customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content into context and gathered responses from 222 number respondents to the experiment. Based on this, exploratory factor analysis that illustrated on single latent factor explaining sufficiently more than 60 % of the cumulative variance, with KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity supporting the application of such dimension reduction. The suggested grouping of variables was tested using Cronbach's Alpha for reliability and internal consistency with above 80 % of an internal consequence of the conceptual construction, which indicates an extra good results in the premise of only five items (Cronbach, 1990; Malhotra, 2010). Followed by these statistical tests, the instrument developed from the qualitative pre-study was found to be caused by the same underlying factor and displayed acceptable reliability for all five items and was concluded a scale for measuring customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content all together (see Table 7).

Table 7. Quantitative Outcome for Qualitatively Developed Multi-Item Scales for Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

#	Dimension	Individual Indicators	Statistical Analysis Outcome
1	Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	...I could imagine posting an inspirational picture of [brand] on my [Social Media]	Included
2		...[Brand] is a brand that I feel good about being associated with on [Social Media]	Included
3		...A picture with [Brand] would look good on my [Social Media]	Included
4		...I would like to get more visitors to my Instagram who also likes [Brand]	Included
5		...I could consider using [Brand] as a hashtag	Included

No items were reduced from the initial set of pooled items from the qualitative pre-study after being tested in the quantitative main study and statistical analysis using Exploratory Factor Analysis and Cronbach's Alpha.

4.6.6.4 Indicators for Paid Social Media Advertising

Traditional advertising may take many different forms, and be functional or hedonic at nature, using creative, emotional and engaging content (Dahlén, Lange & Rosengren, 2017). However, in the purpose of this study paid social media advertising was operationalized as equal content to that of influencer marketing regarding visual representation as mentioned above. To perform an additional test, beyond the scope of the hypotheses, to give an experimental attempt to indicate the two forms of communications degree of explanation on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content as dependent variables using a bi-variate regression analysis, some predictor variables were necessary. To perform a meaningful comparison, the predictor variables of paid social media advertising needed to be like those of its counterpart (Malhotra, 2010). As such this study applied the similar indicators as those used for measuring influencer marketing, for measuring the paid social media advertising example with the exclusion of two items which were not applicable. The indicators were fitted to the context, referring to the brand rather than of the influencer. It should be firmly noted, that the study was not aiming at developing measurement's nor in any way measure the construct of paid social media advertising as a theoretical construct, but rather rate the advertising similarly to influencer marketing to enable a meaningful comparison for the regression analysis only. All other tests related to the hypotheses were based on ordinal division and test in the difference of mean between influencer marketing and paid social media advertising. The introduction of a regression analysis as a test for explanatory power served the purpose to deepen the knowledge on the

effects of influencer marketing as an experimental attempt to quantify how much of the variance the communication form can explain the dependent variables (Malhotra, 2010).

4.6.7 Data Collection using a Digital Survey

The data collection in this study was conducted using a digital self-completion questionnaire which was emailed to the selected sample frame. Surveys are according to Bryman and Bell (2015) the most common data collection method for quantitative research, which allows for coding and analysis of the variables in an efficient manner. Digital distribution of surveys allows for responses from a larger sample with less demand on resources and time (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Malhotra, 2010). For this main quantitative study, the scope implied a limited time in collecting a larger sample was argued as an important reason for selecting a digital distribution of surveys. In difference to structured interviews, self-completion questionnaires imply that respondents themselves answer formulated questions without being guided by an interviewer. As such, the survey needs to be simple and easy to understand (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The survey developed was before being sent the sample population, tested using two pilot-studies, comprised of five respondents in each. The first pilot study resulted in adjusting technical aspects of the survey to be more ease of use and adapted to mobile smartphones, where the second pilot study resulted in reformulating two questions as to be more clear and easily understood. Bryman and Bell (2015) implies that one of the advantages is that digitally distributed surveys is time efficient and can be sent to the entire sample population at the same time. However, one drawback with digitally distributed surveys is that many respondents can choose not to reply, where a good approach is to remind respondents to complete the survey (Malhotra, 2010). The first round of sending out the survey resulted in 326 responses and with 54,3 % of the selected sample completing the survey within seven days, as such the total number of responses was considered more than sufficient and it was considered not necessary to send out a second reminder.

4.6.7.1 Survey Design

Digital distribution of surveys requires a platform provider for the questionnaire, after evaluating three different software's (Sunet Survey, Qualtrics and Survey Monkey), Qualtrics was selected. The criteria for the selection process was based on functionality and ease of use for respondents regarding device responsive user-interface. Large emphasise was placed on the design, layout and structure of the questionnaire to reduce the non-response rate. Malhotra (2010) further implies that introduction letter to the study, short surveys, clear instructions and appealing layouts increase the raises the response rate. The questionnaire for this study briefly introduced the respondents about the study at large without disclosing information that might affect the results for either experiment or control group. The survey was comprised statements that were simple to respond to using a seven-point Likert scale for all questions except gender

and four questions which used multiple-response checkboxes. As the number questions were rather high, the design was crucial to make the responses simple, as such Qualtrics functionality to bring the user to the next question easily helped improve the response rate.

4.6.7.2 Scales of Variables

Questions related to influencer marketing, customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, all applied a seven-point Likert scale. The Likert scale was similar across all questions, which according to Bryman and Bell (2015) is less confusing for respondents and increases the response rate. The Likert scale had a neutral middle-point with the coded value of four, while seven indicated "Completely Agree" and the value one "Completely Disagree", with each value-step was explained and visually presented in plain text throughout the entire survey. Malhotra (2010) emphasises that Likert scales with middle options not having stated meanings, might confuse and make respondents consider the scale differently which might skew the results. The use of Likert scale is a suitable measuring scale for allowing respondents to examine attitude and preference to different statements, as such the scale is commonly used in marketing and management research (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Malhotra, 2010). The Likert scale in this study had a neutral centre option with an equal incremental length between the options in both agreeing and disagreeing direction. Malhotra (2010) supports that Likert scales when having a neutral middle point and equal incremental length between answers in both directions may be interpreted as interval scale within marketing and brand management research. As such the Likert scale in this study has been interpreted and used as an interval scale, which allowed for a broader set of statistical methods to be applied. Gender, knowledge and opinion about the influencer as well as the brand were ordinal scales using multiple choice where only one alternative was allowed. Gender comprised of "Male", "Female" and "Rather not disclose", where the latter considered the integrity of the respondents which only seven respondents selected and as such had little interference yet still discounted for when comparing results between gender combinations. Age was the only alternative that allowed respondents to enter an integer value on a ratio scale.

4.6.8 Sampling Design & Procedure

Bryman and Bell (2015) suggest five distinct steps for the sampling process of quantitative research; (1) define the target population, (2) determine the sampling frame, (3) selection of sampling technique, (4) determine the necessary sample size and (5) execution. The target population for this research is students attending Lund University, School of Economics and Management (LUSEM), where each student represents a test unit. Academic students might not be representative for all subgroups of society and could thus not be generalised for the general population at large. However, it is not part of the purpose to strive for a representative result but rather to test whether a difference in the effects of influencer marketing could be

explained by the dependent variables. A smaller more defined target population is beneficial as it allows for a better application of sampling techniques to control for sampling biases (Malhotra, 2010). It should, however, be noted that the results of this study should not be generalised beyond the target population, although the nature of statistical differences for the target population in focus can be considered as indicative for future research.

4.6.8.1 Simple Random Sampling

The target population of students at LUSEM is sampled using probability sampling as each test unit is represented on a list of email addresses as the sampling frame. When sampling from a target population, the method might result in covering test units that are beyond the defined target or in opposite way miss to include test units in the sampling frame which are part of the target population (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Malhotra, 2010). The obtained list of students at LUSEM was accessed through the student's membership in the designated student union. As membership is not mandatory the coverage of the sampling frame to correspond the defined target population is not complete, however, determined as acceptable sampling error for this study as some under coverage would affect the sampling bias less than the opposite with an over coverage. Malhotra (2010) state that probability sampling can and does not eliminate sampling errors, it does, however, stand as a better approach than non-probability sampling.

The simplest form of probability sampling is simple random sample drawn from the sample frame, where each test unit stands an equal chance of being included. Systematic sampling is similar, besides that test units are selected from the sample frame using a system or pattern, which requires that there not is an inherent order of the sample frame as it would bias the resulting sample (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Malhotra, 2010). For the obtained list of the sample frame, it was unknown whether it had an inherent order of some kind and could not be checked as only email addresses, without name, gender or other specification to each test unit. This resulted in selecting simple random sampling technique which excluded any possibility of bias in the procedure. The total sample frame (N) is comprised of 3 154 test units and the sample size (n) was decided on 800 test units. As suggested by Malhotra (2010) each test unit was assigned a random number between one and N, and 800 random numbers were generated and selected from the sample frame. The individual test units of the sample size were emailed the invitation to participate in the study. The response rate after the survey were conducted was calculated to 54,3 % or in absolute numbers, 326 respondents participated in the survey. Malhotra (2010) explains that non-responses may bias when sampled test units do not participate, as those who choose to participate may differ in their response to those who do not. Such difference could be to measure by contacting a smaller group of non-response test units and compare to the test units who responded. This study, however, did not have sufficient time and resources to do such weighting and comparison of the difference in responses which need

to be acknowledged. However, the number of responses and the participation of a majority was deemed sufficient for the course of this study.

4.6.9 Data Analysis Method

Bryman and Bell (2015) points out one of the most common mistakes when conducting quantitative studies, as researchers not being concerned with what data analysis method is supposed to be used until after the data collection has been conducted. The main issue of such approach is that different statistical tests need different prerequisites and scales of variables. For this study, the data analysis method was determined before the development measurement scales and the quantitative main study, to secure that necessary data analysis could be applied. Beyond the quantitative tests necessary to develop the measurement of scales for influencer marketing and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, a data analysis method was needed for answering the hypotheses and ultimately the research question. Malhotra (2010) suggest that constructs using multiple indicators should undergo factor analysis, which is an inversed operationalization that checks how the empirically collected data corresponded to the same theoretical dimensions it is to correspond. As such, has an exploratory factor analysis been the initial procedure to manager the large set of indicators and turn the raw data into meaningful dimensions which are to be further used. Before grouping variables, the reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. In the second step of the data analysis, hypotheses testing was necessary to accept or reject the hypotheses. Malhotra (2010) suggest that a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) can be used when there are one or more independent variables. In this study, the communication form is the independent variables, comprised of two categorical alternatives; influencer marketing and paid social media advertisement. For one-way ANOVA the dependent variables need to be interval scaled, which a Likert scale may be treated as in business and management research (Malhotra, 2010). In the following sections, each of tests used for this study and the threshold levels will be accounted for. However, the resulted values from each test are presented in the descriptive statistics section, as the method for data analysis was established before the data collection, as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2015).

4.6.9.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical method for reducing a large set of indicators into a manageable set of grouped variables that share the same underlying latent factor, which is recommended when working with multi-item scale constructs (Malhotra, 2010). As factor analysis used a large set of items and based on correlation amongst the set identify a new smaller set of uncorrelated variables to replace the original set, it can be considered exploratory in a quantitative sense and is thus referred to as exploratory factorial analysis (Malhotra, 2010). Before conducting factor analysis, it is necessary to examine whether the data analysis method

is suitable. For this study, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity was calculated, to examine sampling sufficiency. For an infinite number of factors, the minimum threshold of KMO should be larger than 0.7 (Kaiser, 1974) however, Malhotra (2010) suggests values above 0.5 as adequate for factor analysis to be appropriate. Bartlett's test of Sphericity should be significant for the set of items to be suitable for factorial analysis (Malhotra, 2010). The factor analysis applied a principal component analysis, which Malhotra (2010) recommend when the primary concern is the reduction to a minimal number of factors. Eigen-value represents the total variance explained by each factor, as a rule of thumb eigenvalues larger or equal to one is included, although factors with close to one may be included to improve the cumulative variance explained which should exceed 0.6 (Malhotra, 2010). A varimax rotation of the factors was applied as part of the factor analysis for this study, which Malhotra (2010) suggest as a method for increasing the interpretability of the factors. The extracted factors, should consist of more than two variables and load higher than 0.5 (Malhotra, 2010).

Reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha

Underlying latent factors identified for the items using factor analysis, need to undergo reliability testing to check for the internal consistency of the conceptual construct that grouping a set of items means. Malhotra (2010) suggest Cronbach's Alpha to be no less than 0.6 to be at sufficient level and over 0.8 is considered extra good (Cronbach, 1990). The dimensions created in this study all exceeded the minimum threshold levels with good measure, as such the procedure of grouping variables could be conducted.

Grouping of Variables to Manage Construct Indicators as Dimensions

Malhotra (2010) suggest that indicators that have been extracted using factorial analysis can be grouped in SPSS using each item as part of calculating a mean for the group. Each underlying latent factor needs to be named based on the set of items belonging to the group, and the groups will then represent the dimensions it has belonging to. In more simplified terms, several questions together represent a dimension from customer-based brand equity theory, should those indicators be grouped together as a result of factor analysis, then the grouped mean value represents the dimension as a whole (Malhotra, 2010).

4.6.9.2 One-way ANOVA for Test of Difference in Mean

To test for differences between influencer marketing and paid social media advertising's effect on both customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content as dependent variables, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The one-way ANOVA is a statistical technique for examining the differences among means for two or more populations, in other words, it tests for significance in the difference of mean values when there

are one or more independent variables (Malhotra, 2010). For this study, the communication form represented the independent variable with two categorical values; influencer marketing and paid social media advertising. By conducting the one-way ANOVA, significance could be interpreted and used in answering the hypothesis.

4.6.9.3 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Malhotra (2010) suggest that indicators that have been extracted using factorial analysis can be grouped in SPSS using each item as part of calculating a mean for the group.

4.6.9.4 Bi-variate Regression as Complementary Statistical Analysis

As part of further the knowledge beyond only the hypotheses, a bivariate regressions analysis was conducted. Interpreting the values of influencer marketing as a dimension on interval scale, as suggested to be acceptable in marketing research (Malhotra, 2010), the test could determine how much of the variation in customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content (as dependent/criterion variables) can be explained by influencer marketing and paid social media advertising (as independent/predictor variables). Malhotra (2010) describes bivariate regression analysis as a procedure for deriving a mathematical relationship as an equation, between a dependent and independent variable. As the indicators for influencer marketing has been applied to rate the paid social media advertising as well, as described earlier, the comparison between the explanation degrees could be considered meaningful as proposed by the authors of this study. The explanation rate is determined by a value between 0 and 1, where higher value gives better explanation power (Malhotra, 2010).

It should, however, be noted and emphasised in particular that this supplementary analysis is an addition to the study and not a necessary part to answer the hypotheses. The creation of a regression analysis is an experimental attempt to measure the explanatory power of influencer marketing. Therefore, the results should be interpreted with caution as a similar application has not been made in previous research to the authors' knowledge.

4.6.10 Quality Criteria's

Reliability and validity are two important concepts for the quality in quantitative studies. Reliability is concerned with whether the results are due to random factors or the results would be achieved again if the test would be repeated. Validity is a second quality aspect, whether the measurement that has been conducted corresponds to the concept the research is intended to measure (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

4.6.10.1 Inner and Outer Reliability

Reliability is related to the extent a measurement scale produces consistent results after repeated measurements when scales produce low inconsistency in repeated studies it can be concluded that it is free from random errors. As such, scales being reused in other studies under equivalent conditions affirms the scales using test-re-testing (Malhotra, 2010). The retest could also be administered within the same study, however, due to the scope of this study, this has not been conducted, as such future studies are encouraged to re-test the measurement scales for influencer marketing and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, developed by this study. As for customer-based brand equity, the operationalization builds on indicators which have been retested and are accepted amongst scholars. Aaker (1996a) suggest that indicators for customer-based brand equity should be fitted to the context of the study, as has been conducted in this study.

The operationalization of influencer marketing and paid social media advertising that has been conducted for the qualitative main study, did not originate from a previously established way of portraying the respective forms of communication. However, the examples for influencer marketing were retrieved from the industry as an actual instance of the communication form, as such it tests an actual brand's current way of conducting influencer marketing, by this the advertisement builds on real-life examples.

Internal validity relates to what degree the quantitative research has measured what is intended to be measured, and thus refers to how well the operationalization has measured the concepts it was meant to measure (Lundahl & Skärvad, 1992). Malhotra (2010) suggest that multi-item scale indicators internal consistency reliability can be tested for using Cronbach's Alpha that tests the indicators consistency using calculations of an alpha coefficient. For this study, all dimensions for both dependent and independent variables have been tested for internal consistency.

4.6.10.2 Internal and External Validity

For experimental designs, Malhotra (2010) implies that internal validity refers to whether the manipulation of influencer marketing caused the observed effect on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. By this logic, internal validity determined to what extent influencer marketing or another exogenous factor caused the effect, to sufficiently infer a causal relationship between the independent and dependent variable. For this study, a high degree of isolation of the advertising and replicating the respondent's experience during the survey has been kept constant, and the only difference has been the communication form presented to them. As such, exogenous factors have been

kept to a minimum while randomization has evenly distributed such skewness to both groups, that further improves to experiments internal validity.

External validity is concerned with the generalizability in the cause-and-effect relationship, in other words to what extent the results of the experiment can be generalised to exist beyond the experimental situation. The main source of issues with external validity for experiments is when they are based on unrealistic assumptions or interactions that are different from those of the real world (Malhotra, 2010). For this study, the operationalization of influencer marketing is a real-life example of an actual brands communication working with influencers, the frame for a visual representation of the advertising is also further replicating the social media context of Instagram. The real-life example and the replication of Instagram's way of presenting an influencers post, as well as paid for advertising could be considered to improve the external validity.

4.6.10.3 Face Validity

Face or content validity implies that individuals with expertise within areas give their subjective evaluation of how well the content of a scale represents the measurement it is intended to measure, such feedback should be applied before executing the research (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Malhotra, 2010). For this study, a few people have been contacted and to different extents given feedback or directions regarding the scales. In the development of measurement scales for customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, a professor within the Department of Marketing and Strategy at Stockholm School of Economics provided examples of research articles that had indicators that assisted in formulating those developed in this study. The formulation on the developed indicators, and fitting customer-based brand equity indicators to the context, were further improved through feedback from an assistant professor at the Department of Statistics at Lund University, School of Economics and Management. To both of which, gratitude has been expressed. Although Malhotra (2010) points out that face validity alone is not a sufficient measure of the validity of a scale, it still provides aid in interpretation of the scale scores and improves the measurements validity.

4.6.11 Descriptive Analysis

4.6.11.1 Truncation of Data

From the 326 recorded responses, the data was cleaned from responses deemed invalid or did not meet criteria, as such the data was mutilated and 222 valid responses remained. The truncation implied removing 22 answers that were deemed invalid for one of two reasons. The first reason was respondents that had answered the same answer through the entire survey with a standard deviation of zero. The second reason answers were invalidated was for respondents who completed the survey in less than two and a half minutes and as such did not provide

thoughtful answers. To establish that the operationalization using the two marketing communication examples, a truncation was made for both experiment and control group. The former resulted in 48 respondents having a negative opinion about the influencer or rating the influencer marketing indicators below an average cut-off value of four. The reason for excluding these from the experiment group was to secure that the operationalization lived up to the theoretical definition of influencer marketing. In other words, respondents who have an immediate negative opinion about an influencer or do not on average rate the influencer on the characteristics of what constitutes an influencer, cannot be said to have been exposed to influencer marketing. In the case of the control group, 34 respondents recognised the influencer on the image and as such the influencer was more than merely a model in advertising. For this reason, their responses need to be excluded from securing that the paid social media advertising was not perceived as influencer marketing. It should be repeated, that using the same image for both groups were a necessity to secure the experimental isolation of influencer marketing as a phenomenon without allowing a difference in visual representation affects the results.

4.6.11.2 General Description of Data

The gender distribution indicated 144 women and 78 men, in other words, 64,9 % females and 35,1 % males which are similar to what is estimated among the total population. The age distribution indicated 50 % of respondents were 20-24 years old, another 37,8 % no more than five years older and only 8,6 % older than 30 years old. The experiment group consisted of 121 responses, 41 males and 80 females while the control group had 101 valid recorded responses with 37 males and 64 females. As both influencer marketing and the paid advertising had been operationalized with both a female and male influencer (or model in the case of advertising), two groups could be formed where the respondent and the influencer was either of the same or different genders. In total, influencer marketing had 41 recorded responses of the same gender, and 80 of different gender, with paid social media advertising, had similarly 37 and 64 responses.

The general description of the data shows a high cut of responses that was found valid and meeting the criteria's but with good representation in gender and age distribution. The respondents were to a high degree familiar with and used Instagram as a social media platform, which was beneficial for measuring the effect of influencer marketing and paid social media advertising on Instagram.

4.6.11.3 Factor Analysis

The factor analysis met criteria's of KMO and Bartlett's test of Sphericity, as such a principal component analysis was carried out. The factor analysis had four eigenvalues larger than 1, as extraction criteria. Two additional eigenvalues of .997 and .915 were not included although

could have to increase the cumulative percentage of variance explained from 60 % to close to 70 %, mainly because the objective was dimension reduction to the furthest extent and also as endorsement and personality demonstrated factor loadings for more than one component in the case. Varimax rotation was used and converged in 7 iterations.

The factor analysis comprised of four components, resulted in that perceived quality & leadership group as one dimension, while Intention and Price Premium grouped together, similarly as Associations & Differentiations did with Endorsement. All groupings demonstrated extra good internal consistency with scores well above 0,8. The tests were further tested as these dimensions. To create a total score for customer-based brand equity, an Index was created by the summation of the four components which altogether resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of 0.855, which is considered well above being extra good.

5 Results and Analysis

This chapter initially presents the relevant findings which during the analysis assists to answer each of the four hypotheses one by one. Succeeding this, an experimental attempt to define the communication forms explanatory power is presented.

5.1 Results

Table 8. One-Way ANOVA for Differences in Mean for Customer-Based Brand Equity when Influencer is of the Same or Different Gender as the User Exposed to the Communication.

Difference in customer-based brand equity for influencer being of same or different gender as the user exposed to influencer marketing	Mean Scores of Influencer Marketing		
	Same Gender (A)	Different Gender (B)	Sig
Associations & Differentiation (Aaker, 1996) + Endorsement (BAV)	3.86	3.85	n.s.
Intention (Keller) & Price Premium (Aaker, 1996)	2.53	2.65	n.s.
Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	3.10	3.16	n.s.
Perceived Quality & Leadership (Aaker, 1996)	3.72	3.83	n.s.

Upper-case letter in the opposite column indicates significant difference between the mean value.

s = significance n.s. = No significance

* 1% < p-value < 5% ** 0,1% < p-value < 1% *** p-value < 0,1%

For complete One-Way ANOVA SPSS output see Appendix 7.8

Table 9. One-Way ANOVA for Customer-Based Brand Equity and the Marketing Communication Form using Dimensions Grouped based on the Factor Analysis

Difference in customer-based brand equity depending on the marketing communication form	Mean Scores		
	Paid Social Media Advertising (A)	Influencer Marketing (B)	Sig
Index – customer-based brand equity	3.15	3.49 (A)*	S
Associations & Differentiation (Aaker, 1996) + Endorsement (BAV)	3.67	4.01 (A)*	S
Intention (Keller) & Price Premium (Aaker, 1996)	2.46	2.70	n.s.
Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	2.86	3.35 (A)*	S
Perceived Quality & Leadership (Aaker, 1996)	3.61	3.90 (A)*	S

Upper-case letter in the opposite column indicates significant difference between the mean value.

s = significance n.s. = No significance

* 1% < p-value < 5% ** 0,1% < p-value < 1% *** p-value < 0,1%

For complete One-Way ANOVA SPSS output see Appendix 7.9.1

Table 10. One-Way ANOVA for Customer-Based Brand Equity and the Marketing Communication Form using Dimensions as Individual Concepts

Difference in customer-based brand equity depending on the marketing communication form		Mean Scores		Sig.
		Paid Social Media Advertising (A)	Influencer Marketing (B)	
DIMENSION	Sub-Dimension			
Perceived Quality & Leadership (Aaker, 1996)	Perceived Quality	3.61	3.89 (A)*	s.
	Leadership	3.62	3.90 (A)*	s.
Price Premium (Aaker, 1996)		2.27	2.49	n.s.
Associations & Differentiation (Aaker, 1996)	Organisational Associations	3.67	4.01 (A)*	s
	Perceived Value	3.45	3.88 (A)*	s
	Personality	4.24	4.64 (A)*	s
Endorsement (BAV)		3.30	3.50	n.s.
Intention (Keller)		2.64	2.90	n.s.
Brand Public		2.86	3.35 (A)*	s

Upper-case letter in the opposite column indicates significant difference between the mean value.
 s = significance n.s. = No significance

* 1% < p-value < 5% ** 0,1% < p-value < 1% *** p-value < 0,1%

For complete One-Way ANOVA SPSS output see Appendix 7.9.2

Table 11. Pearson Bivariate Correlation between Customer-Based Brand Equity Dimensions and Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

Correlation between CBBE Dimensions & customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	
	INFLUENCER MARKETING	PAID SOCIAL MEDIA ADV.
Index – customer-based brand equity	.907**	.812**
Perceived Quality & Leadership (Aaker, 1996)	.525**	.354**
Intention (Keller) & Price Premium (Aaker, 1996)	.710**	.488**
Associations & Differentiation (Aaker, 1996) + Endorsement (BAV)	.797**	.621*

* 1% < p-value < 5% ** 0,1% < p-value < 1% *** p-value < 0,1%

For complete Pearson correlation SPSS output see Appendix 7.10

5.2 Analysis

5.2.1 H₁: Genders Effect for Influencer Marketing

This study formulated the research hypothesis, H₁: Influencer marketing will generate a higher effect on customer-based brand equity when the influencer and user are of the same gender.

Before discussing the outcome for the research hypothesis, it is necessary to describe the statistical test. A one-way ANOVA tests if the two-sample means are equal for the population. Should the sample means be significantly different, the test indicates that there is a difference between the two groups for the entire population. When comparing the effect of gender, Influencer marketing resulted in no significant results across all factor analysed dimensions (See Table 8). As such, the H₁ hypothesis was rejected. It can be concluded that gender has no effect on customer-based brand equity.

5.2.2 H₂: Influencer Marketing's Effect on Customer-Based Brand Equity

Comparing the effects on customer-based brand equity for paid social media advertising and influencer marketing, resulted in significant differences for the following dimensions: "Perceived Quality & Leadership", as well as "Associations & Differentiations + Endorsement". No significant difference was found for the "Intention & Price Premium" dimension.

However, interesting results were found when conducting a deeper analysis, treating customer-based brand equity as individual constructs as provided by the literature. The result for "Endorsement" deviated when tested as a single theoretical construct, rather than grouped as suggested by the factor analysis. Ungrouped Endorsement did not achieve a significant result, while grouped together with "Associations & Differentiation" it appeared to be so. Although Endorsement as a construct in the quantitative main study overlapped "Associations & Differentiation", it would be misleading to say it is significantly different for influencer marketing, compared to paid social media advertising.

In conclusion., two dimensions of customer-based brand equity was found to be significantly higher for influencer marketing, compared to paid social media advertising; "Perceived Quality & Leadership" and "Associations & Differentiation". Three dimensions, although higher on all counts for influencer marketing, did not demonstrate significance in difference; "Price Premium", "Intention" and "Endorsement". However, influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity, as a total index of all dimensions, was significantly higher than paid social media advertising.

H₂: Influencer marketing will generate a higher effect on customer-based brand equity & customers', compared to paid social media advertising.

As a result of the one-way ANOVA, the hypothesis is accepted.

5.2.3 H₃: Relationship Between Brand Equity and Brand-Promoting UGC

The correlation was tested between (a) Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content and (b) customer-based brand equity using a bivariate Pearson correlation (see Table 11). "Perceived Quality & Leadership" was shown to have a weak relationship with paid social media advertising and moderate for influencer marketing. Paid social media advertising also showed a weak relationship with "Associations & differentiation" and slightly higher but still weak with "Intention & Price Premium". Influencer marketing, on the other hand, showed high correlation and a substantial relationship with both of these dimensions. Both paid social media advertising and influencer marketing demonstrated a high correlation with the customer-based brand equity index, although the former had a strong relationship. All of the correlations for both communication types were two-star significant, meaning a probability value less than one but still larger than zero point one percentage. The hypothesis that customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content has a positive relationship can be accepted in both forms of communication type.

H₃: There is a positive relationship between customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting content on social media.

As a result of the bivariate Pearson correlation, the hypothesis can be accepted for both influencer marketing and paid social media advertising.

5.2.4 H₄: Influencer Marketing’s Effect on Brand-Promoting UGC

The concept of customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content was tested for both communications forms, influencer marketing and paid social media advertising. A one-way ANOVA demonstrated a significantly higher value for influencer marketing’s effect customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising (See Table 9). Thus, it can be inferred, with the support of statistics that influencer marketing, compared to paid social media advertising increases customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content on social media.

H₄: Influencer marketing will have a higher effect on customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising.

Based on the one-way ANOVA the hypothesis can be accepted.

5.2.5 An Overview of the Analytical Outcome for Each Hypothesis

Table 12. Overview of Hypotheses, Method of Analysis and Outcome

H _x	Stated Hypothesis	Method of Analysis	Outcome
H ₁	Influencer marketing will generate higher effect on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content when the influencer is of the same gender as the user exposed to the communication	One-Way ANOVA	Rejected
H ₂	Influencer marketing will generate a higher effect on customer-based brand equity, compared to paid social media advertising.	One-Way ANOVA	Accepted
H ₃	There exists a positive relationship between customer-based brand equity and customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting content on social media.	Bivariate Pearson Correlation	Accepted
H ₄	Influencer marketing will have a higher effect on customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising.	One-Way ANOVA	Accepted

5.3 Explanatory Power of the Communication Form

The analysis this far has resulted in significantly higher effect for influencer marketing compared to paid social media advertising, in the dependent variables of customer-based brand equity and customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. Using a bivariate regression analysis, the actual explanatory power of each communication form can be expressed in an “experimental attempt”. This approach needs to be interpreted with caution because using the explanatory power to describe the strength of the communication form is not an established or common procedure in previous literature.

Table 13. Regression Analysis for Customer-Based Brand Equity as Predictor of Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

CRITERION VARIABLE		PREDICTOR VARIABLE	
		Paid social Media Advertising	Influencer Marketing
INDEX – Customer-based brand equity	Adjusted R ²	0.401***	0.667***
	Standardized B	0.638***	0.818***
Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	Adjusted R ²	0.268***	0.621***
	Standardized B	0.518***	0.790***

* 1% < p-value < 5% ** 0,1% < p-value < 1% *** p-value < 0,1%

Dependent Variable (DV₁): customer-based brand equity

Dependent Variable (DV₂): customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content

Predictors: Influencer Marketing and Paid Social Media Advertising (Multi-item scale comprised of 9 identical indicators for both concepts).

For complete regression analysis output from SPSS see Appendix 7.11

Influencer marketing, measured using nine items in three dimensions, could as a predictor variable explain 66,7 % of the variation in customer-based brand equity and 62,1 % of the variation in customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. Paid social media, measured using the same nine items but fitted to the context of rating advertising, only accounted for 40,1 % of the variation in customer-based brand equity and 26,8 % for customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. All regressions for both forms of communication were significant at the 0,1% level.

The interpretation of this is that using influencer marketing as a communication form can to a greater extent explain the variation for both customer-based brand equity and customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising. Considering the standardised B coefficient, the effect of the communication form generates higher results for both concepts when using influencer marketing.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter concludes the study with discussion around the results, its relation to current literature, theoretical and managerial contribution as well as suggestive concluding on the results and direction for future research.

6.1 Discussion

Scale Development for Influencer Marketing

The development of measurement scales for influencer marketing created three distinct aspects. First, the valuable content creation was identified as a source to attract an audience and was consequently measured by three items. This can be linked to previous literature as crafting a compelling narrative (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017) and strong presence online with content that inspires (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Secondly, to affect the opinions of others, influencers need to possess influence which was explained by Freberg et al. (2011). In their research, they identified influencers personality traits as verbal, smart, ambitious, productive and poised. Three items of the developed scale aimed to capture such influence, by considering influencers as being trendsetters possessing favourable personality traits, which theory on influence suggest as a means to gain influence (Gladwell, 2002; Higie, Feick & Price, 1987; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). Third and lastly, to communicate with customers using influencers, the product promotion needs to be perceived as liked, used and desired by the influencer to be persuasive (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016). These items indicate a need for a content fit between the promotion and the influencer (Zhang, Moe & Schweidel, 2017) and that the content fit is related to the reader's engagement (Li, Lai & Chen, 2011).

The synthesized definition of influencer marketing was the basis for the developed operationalised indicators, which requires three distinct aspects; the content is valuable and relevant for customers, the influencer being a forerunner or trendsetter within a given domain, and that the product promotion is perceived as genuine by the influencer as well as fitted to the context by reinforcing the content as valuable and relevant. Should these three criteria be sufficiently fulfilled, then influencer marketing has significantly higher effect on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising

Scale Development for Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting UGC

The concept of users generating eWOM in the form of user-generated content that is promoting a brand was conceptualised in the course of this study. Indicators were constructed using a pre-study focus group, and the generated pool of five items was tested in the quantitative main

study. The dimension referred to as customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content was included in two factor analysis tests. The first factor analysis was conducted on the pool of items separately, testing without disturbance from other items. The operationalized indicators shared the same underlying factor and represented the same latent factor with sufficient internal consistency. Furthermore, they were used combined as a multi-item scale for the concept. The second analysis, the same items were factor analysed together with the dimensions of customer-based brand equity. The concept demonstrated to have a distinct underlying factor as those of the other dimensions, which strengthened the argument for considering it as a sufficient measurement of scale.

The items of customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, can partly be associated with those of influencers valuable content creation. Both of which are concerned with the inspirational value and whether something would be a nice visual representation similar to what Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) find important for being an influencer. Further, the question if a customer would feel good about being publicly associated with a brand could be explained by Eisingerich et al. (2015) who suggest that there is a higher social risk related to promoting a brand as eWOM compared to traditional WOM. The third aspect was related to whether users were seeking to get more visitors to their published content and would consider using the brand as a hashtag. Arvidsson and Caliandro (2016) conceptualised Brand Publics, which implies that brands offer publicity to a diverse set of identities in their self-representation as a consumer culture on social media.

In conclusion, the concept of customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content can be considered comprised of three aspects; content creation, self-representation and desire for publicity. This study conceptualised the behaviour amongst consumers to rebroadcast marketing communication as eWOM in the specific form of user-generated content.

Customer-Based Brand Equity

Few studies about influencer marketing have been conducted, which reduces the ability to compare the results of the experiment with other research. However, the results from the different analyses can be derived from the theory presented on customer-based brand equity, brand value chain and influencer marketing. The result reinforces the theory that customer-based brand equity can be measured by Aaker's (1996a) dimensions. It also showed that the added complementary dimensions of Intention (Keller) and Endorsement (BAV) overlap with Aaker's existing dimensions. According to the result, they measure the same latent or underlying factors and could, therefore, be considered redundant. Aaker's (1996a) Association's & Differentiation was significant both individually and when grouped with Endorsement, which however was not the case for the latter when tested alone. Endorsement may be considered to measure the same underlying factor as Associations & Differentiation,

but failing to capture the underlying factor sufficiently to indicate any significance. Another result was that Aaker's (1996a) dimension Price Premium overlapped with Intention, as they loaded high on the same (evaluative) factor. The results support that influencer marketing could be considered a more advantageous form of communication to build customer-based brand equity overall. On the other hand, influencer marketing is not unequivocally significantly better across all dimensions, but it can be established that the communication form creates better results on five specific sub-dimensions; perceived quality, leadership; organisational associations, perceived value and personality. Three dimensions did not show significantly higher results for influencer marketing compared to social media, namely; price premium, intention and endorsement. The result also demonstrated that influencer marketing as communication form could explain 66,7 % of the variation in customer-based brand equity, compared to 40,1 % in the case of paid social media advertising.

The first hypotheses of this study were rejected, which tested if influencer marketing had higher effect when the influencer and user exposed to influencer marketing were of the same gender. It was found, that influencer as an intermediary between marketing communication and the user as the recipient of the marketing communication, did not show significantly different results depending on whether the two were of same or different gender. On the one hand, this result was found in the context of investigating a brand in the product category of sunglasses. The product itself could be considered more unisex compared to other product categories, which may have played a role in that no significant difference was found for the gender. On the other hand, it may also be that gender plays less of a role in building customer-based brand equity through the use of influencer marketing. It can only be speculated in how this outcome occurred, but it does to some extent indicate that influencer marketing is not as gender-specific as it might have been thought of initially.

Another interesting finding related to customer-based brand equity, is that perceived quality, one of the key dimensions of the concept, was significantly higher, while price premium was not. Also, that Price Premium overlap with the Intention dimension is interesting from a theoretical viewpoint. Aaker (1996a) state that all customer-based brand equity indicators should lead up to improving the price premium. Aaker's (1996a) Price Premium dimension is related to whether customers are willing to pay more for the brand in question compared to another brand. The relativeness makes the dimension sensitive to the frame of reference it is being evaluated to, which has not been controlled for in this study using conjoint multiple brand analysis. Further, intention, as described by Keller (2008), may be an absent result from marketing communication despite the fact that beneficial associations have been created, in such cases where no immediate need recognition is present for the consumer. This result, with Intention and Price Premium overlapping and not being significantly different, could be seemed to support the brand value chain presented by Keller and Lehmann (2003). This study shows

that influencer marketing as a communication form can improve the customer mindset measured by Aaker's (1996a) dimensions except for Price Premium. But for the Brand Value Chain by Keller and Lehmann (2003) the price premium and conceivably intention arises not in the customer mindset, but rather later in the succeeding step of the Brand Value Chain, namely Brand Performance where marketplace conditions must be taken into account.

Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

The concept defined in the course of this study, Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, was used as a dimension and factor, analysed together with other dimensions of customer-based brand equity. An interesting finding was that all indicators for customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content loaded high on an (evaluative) underlying factor of its own. This indicates that the current Endorsement dimension of customer-based brand equity did not sufficiently capture the phenomenon of users posting brand-promoting content. The results of this study do not, however, support that Endorsement is redundant, but should rather be considered to measure something else, possibly traditional WOM and maybe eWOM but more possibly forms such as product reviews or recommendations in direct messages between a smaller group of users.

Although customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content was found to be explained by an independent underlying factor compared to the dimensions of customer-based brand equity, the two concepts still demonstrated significant positive correlation. Influencer marketing as a form of communication resulted in a higher positive correlation compared to social media advertising on all counts. Influencer marketing also resulted in the significantly higher effect on customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising. As the explanatory power analysis showed with significant results, influencer marketing could explain 62,1 % of the variation in customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to social media advertising which rated on equal indicators could only explain 26,8 %.

6.2 Conclusion

The Research Hypotheses

In conclusion, three out of the four hypotheses for this study was significant. Contrary to the research hypotheses, gender combinations did not demonstrate a difference on customer-based brand equity. The results showed that influencers of the same gender as users exposed to their marketing did not lead to a higher effect on customer-based brand equity, compared to when influencer and user where of different genders.

For the second hypotheses, significant results showed that influencer marketing as a communication form leads to a higher effect on customer-based brand equity overall as a total index, compared to paid social media advertising. It should be noted that one of three-factor dimensions of customer-based brand equity did not demonstrate a significant difference, namely Intention and Price Premium which was factor grouped together. However, when analysed as individual concepts, as provided by the literature on customer-based brand equity, endorsement by itself did not yield significant results on its own as it did when factor grouped with Associations & Differentiation.

The third hypotheses that there existed a positive correlation between customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content could be accepted in its entirety. Both influencer marketing and paid social media advertising demonstrated a positive and significant correlation between customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. An important finding in the correlation analysis was that paid social media advertising demonstrated only moderate correlations for each dimension and a substantial correlation for customer-based brand equity as a whole. As such, influencer marketing led to much higher correlation between the two concepts on all counts, with an extra strong positive relationship for customer-based brand equity as a whole.

The fourth and last hypotheses, stated that influencer marketing compared to paid social media advertising would have a higher effect on customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, which held true and the hypotheses could be accepted. Using influencer marketing as a form of marketing with influencers as the intermediary of the communication will lead to higher willingness amongst customers to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising.

General Concluding Words

In the course of this study, steps have been taken forward in more than one direction to investigating the effects of influencer marketing. This is stated more to underline wariness to the results and their interpretation to not infer it as hard truths or overstatements. First, this study synthesised a holistic definition for influencer marketing based on available literature to operationalize the concept. Secondly, based on the definition, scale development was made for both influencer marketing and a second concept, namely customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. The latter, a concept developed to measure eWOM in the form of user-generated content which promotes a brand on social media. Although this study was a precursor in scale development for these two concepts, it did build on scholarly accepted views on what indicates paid social media advertising and established dimensions of customer-based brand equity. As such, customer-based brand equity posed as a rigid theoretical backbone

for this study, but it needs to be stressed that this has been an initial attempt to conceptualise and measure influencer marketing and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content.

Although the synthesised definition for influencer marketing might be altered or progress in future research, and the measurements need to evolve as a consequence, does not change the existence of it as a phenomenon, although the precision of measuring it hopefully will be improved.

To what extent do influencer marketing affect (a) customer-based brand equity and (b) customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content on Instagram, compared to paid social media advertising?

The research question formulated at the beginning of this study and seen above can be concluded from the empirical findings. Influencer marketing has compared to paid social media advertising, a significantly higher effect on customer-based brand equity overall but not on all dimensions. Influencer marketing also has a significantly higher effect on customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising. An experimental attempt has also been conducted to quantify to what extent influencer marketing as a communication form can explain its effects. It was found that influencer marketing has 26,6 % more explanatory power on customer-based brand equity overall, compared to paid social media advertising. In the case of customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, influencer marketing was found to have 35,3 % higher explanatory power compared to paid social media advertising. These results should be taken with caution as estimating the effect of the communication form by this means is not an established procedure in current marketing management research. However, with the results of the significantly higher effect, it can be inferred that influencer marketing to a greater extent affects (a) customer-based brand equity and (b) customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content on Instagram, compared to paid social media advertising.

It is stressed that the conceptualizations, scale development and results of this study must be tested and verified by future research. The theory of knowledge requires new understandings to be further explored, anchored and verified to gain stature and theoretical height. This is of particular importance for the results of this study, as it incorporates a synthesised definition for influencer marketing and a conceptualization of eWOM as user-generated content, as well as scale development for both concepts.

6.3 Theoretical Contribution

The theoretical contribution of this study is an initial and tentative proposed definition for influencer marketing, which has been synthesised from available literature on the subject. A peer-reviewed holistic definition has not prior been present in the literature, to the knowledge of the authors and after a literature search on the subject. With the holistic definition, this study refers to a definition that defines how the concept perceives its existence to adjacent concepts such as eWOM and online celebrity endorsement. Further, this paper contributes to the literature on influencer marketing by scale development to quantitatively measure influencer marketing. This constitutes an initial set of items that can be used to capture and evaluate influencer marketing, as well as establishing that it lives up to the definition regarding having valuable content creation, influencer power and is well promoted.

This study further conceptualised the idea of eWOM, when users are propagating brand messages in the form of user-generated content and how the willingness of doing so could be measured. The particular rather narrow conceptualization had not to the knowledge of the authors been proposed as an independent phenomenon on its own in existing literature, although social media consumer culture theory and others have touched upon and illuminated the subject. As such, this paper felt the context of researching customer-based brand equity on social media could not omit an attempt to conceptualise and conduct a scale development for the phenomenon. This is an interesting theoretical contribution, which, however, similarly to influencer marketing needs to be both explored and validated further by future research.

The last theoretical contribution has been to investigate influencer marketing and paid social media advertising, as marketing communication forms, and their effect on both customer-based brand equity dimensions and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. This study has through a quantitative main study concluded that particular dimensions of customer-based brand equity are significantly more affected by using influencer marketing compared to paid social media advertising. It has been established that influencer marketing has a significantly higher effect on customer-based brand equity overall, compared to paid social media advertising. The combination of same or different gender between the influencer and user exposed to influencer marketing was also tested and showed to not have a significant effect on an of the customer-based brand equity dimensions. It has also established that influencer marketing has a significantly higher effect on increasing customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to social media advertising. This comparative test between the two forms of communications effect on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, has not previously been presented in existing literature to the knowledge of the authors. This study further supports Keller's (2008) brand value chain that theoretically connects marketing

communication to customer mindsets. It further supports Aaker's (1996) dimensions to measure customer-based brand equity and how the dimensions relate to the brand metrics Intention and Endorsement as proposed by (Lehmann, Keller & Farley, 2008).

6.4 Managerial Contribution

The managerial implication is that a new form of marketing communication has been tested to justify its use and increased share of a limited marketing budget for advertising on social media. From a managerial perspective, the results of this study justify that managers increase the use of influencer marketing to build favourable associations better, positioning through differentiation and establish a perceived value and leadership by choosing this form of marketing communication over paid social media advertising. However, the results of this study further show that influencer marketing may not necessarily lead to increase and justify a price premium as well as create a purchase intention for consumers, any more than what paid social media advertising does. In terms of managerial contribution, this implies that a combination of influencer marketing and paid social media advertising is beneficial. As influencer marketing can be used to more effectively strengthen some aspects of the brand equity while retaining paid social media advertising might have other advantages. Such advantages might be increased conversion rate in terms of purchases or similar, which however is something that has not been explored as part of this study and could only be speculated about. The results also show that using influencer marketing, will not have a significantly higher effect on one gender more than the other, depending on whether the influencer is male or female. From a managerial standpoint, this contribution implies that target groups using influencer marketing need not be gender specific, but is rather dependent upon the influencer marketing's quality.

The second and last managerial contribution is conceptualising and implying that customers may adopt a behaviour of posting brand-promoting user-generated content as a consequence of being exposed to marketing communication. The willingness to adopt such behaviour is more stimulated using influencer marketing compared to paid social media advertising, which is an important managerial contribution for managers who seek to stimulate and build a marketing strategy around eWOM in the form of user-generated content on social media.

6.5 Limitations

This study is not without its limitations which need to be critically acknowledged. First and foremost, this study is humble in the sense that it builds on a self-made definition of influencer marketing which was synthesised from existing literature and formulated to holistically

incorporate a broad view on what scholars consider constitutes an influencer. It has also conceptualised eWOM in the form of brand-promoting user-generated content for the context of image-based social media platforms and Instagram in particular. On the subject, Instagram was by existing literature suggested as a predominant platform for following influencers and was as such chosen as the context of this study. This implies a limitation, in the sense that the results are not proved to be transferable to other social media platforms and shall not without further evaluation be considered valid for all platforms. Similarly, the results are using a probability sampling representative for the target population of students, but it is not established that the results are generalizable to populations with other characteristics.

Another important limitation of the study is that the collected data for influencer marketing needed to be truncated for ensuring a reliable operationalization of the term. A proportion of respondents either had a negative opinion about either the influencer or the summated score on the items measuring influencer marketing, this group of respondents were truncated to secure that the operationalization met the definition of influencer marketing. As a result, only the records for respondents who perceived the example as influencer marketing were retained and further used for the analysis while all respondents of paid social media advertising were included. Although this measure was necessary to ensure operationalization, the limitation is important to emphasise. For this reason, the study is also wary to what extent the result is generalizable because it is unlikely that influencer marketing always will be perceived as valuable only because a user has chosen to follow the influencers stream of content. The theoretical starting point underlying the outcome of the study should be seen as a practical ideal case, rather than a constant prevailing situation. It is therefore with some reservation, and under the premise that the marketing communication meets the standards for influencer marketing, this study presents the result that influencer marketing has a better effect on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising.

6.6 Future Research Suggestions

It is suggested that future research extends the knowledge by both continue to explore influencer marketing and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content as well as further validate influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content. This study has been an initial attempt in both defining and measuring influencer marketing and customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, but neither should be seen as established or definitive. In terms of influencer marketing's effect on customer-based brand equity dimensions, it is recommended that future research further investigates Price Premium

and Intention with conjoint analysis using multiple brands for the former and takes customers need recognition into account for the latter.

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7 Appendix

7.1 Consent Form for Qualitative Pre-study



LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick the appropriate box):

1.	I understand the information about the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymization of data, etc.) to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	If applicable, separate terms of consent for interviews, audio, video or other forms of data collection have been explained and provided to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Select only one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like my name used and understand what I have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research output so that anything I have contributed to this project can be recognised. • I do not want my name used in this project. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Participant:

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Researcher:

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

7.2 Topic Guide for Qualitative Pre-study

Opening

- Consent declaration
- Introduction and information
- Nature of focus group (Open discussion, sharing different perspectives and views, no such thing as right or wrong and open honest opinions are encouraged)
- Opening question
 - First name
 - Frequency of Instagram use
 - Reason or motivation behind using Instagram

Main topics

- Questions regarding why an individual can be seen as an influencer, definition, what is special about influencers, what kind of influencers they follow, why do they choose to follow someone on Instagram, etc.
- Questions regarding influencers promoting brands and products on social media (how, why, how it is perceived, do's and don'ts, etc.)
- Questions regarding what makes people willing to post content online that promotes a brand although the person posting such content are not (or do not consider him-/herself) an influencer

Closing

- Anything to add
- Thank the respondents for their participation

7.3 Two-Step Randomization Procedure

Table 14. Two-Step Randomization Procedure

Two-step Randomization Procedure		
Incoming	100% of respondents	Inbound link from the email to the sample frame.
Step 1		Randomization between control and experiment group

Gender randomization within experiment group (50%)		Step 2	Gender randomization within control group (50%)	
25 % of Respondents Influencer: Female Respondent: Male or Female	25 % of Respondents Influencer: Male Respondent: Male or Female		25 % of Respondents Advertising: Female Respondent: Male or Female	25 % of Respondents Advertising: Male Respondent: Male or Female
		Resulting gender composition		
25 % of Respondents Same Gender Influencer & Respondent	25 % of Respondents Different Gender Influencer & Respondent		25 % of Respondents Same Gender Advertising & Respondent	25 % of Respondents Same Gender Advertising & Respondent

All percentages are probability distributions for the procedure and not a distribution in numbers of respondents, for details see the descriptive analysis section.

7.4 Developing Measurement of Scales

7.4.1 Influencer Marketing

Table 15. Factor Analysis for Items of Influencer Marketing

Rotated Component Matrix		Factor Component			α
Dimension	Question (Item)	1	2	3	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.752			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Sig. 0.000			
Cumulative Variance Explained*		74.6 %			
Valuable Content Creation	...has high-quality pictures on their Instagram	.426	.039	.643	.719
	...has an interesting lifestyle	.202	.213	.807	
	...is an interesting person to follow for many	.208	.073	.837	
Influence Power	...is someone who many looks to for inspiration	.794	.081	.384	.865
	...is a trendsetter for their followers	.869	.074	.246	
	...influences others	.905	.124	.159	
Product Promotion	...genuinely likes his/her [brand]	.120	.774	.253	.793
	...is proud to show his/her [brand]	.019	.876	.024	

feels that [brand] has value to his/her lifestyle	.088	.845	.046	
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**Eigenvalue of .950 has been included to increase cumulative variance from 64 to 75 % and strengthen the variance explained*

α = Cronbach's Alpha for grouped variables

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Note: Factor analysis confirms the three thematic constructs that constitute influencer marketing at large. An influencer needs valuable content creation to attract an audience and secondly influence power. As such, marketing through an influencer is possible given that the product promotion is perceived as the influencer likes the products, is proud to promote it publicly and that it has value to the lifestyle (reinforces the valuable content creation).

7.4.2 Customers’ Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting UGC

Table 16. Factor Analysis for Items of Customers’ Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

Rotated Component Matrix		Factor	α
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.827		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Sig. 0.000		
Cumulative Variance Explained*	61 %		
Dimension	Question (Item)	1	
Customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	...I could imagine posting an inspirational picture of [brand] on my [Social Media]	.796	.719
	...[Brand] is a brand that I feel good about being associated with on [Social Media]	.787	
	...A picture with [Brand] would look good on my [Social Media]	.819	
	...I would like to get more visitors to my Instagram who also likes [Brand]	.784	
	...I could consider using [Brand] as a hashtag	.705	

α = Cronbach’s Alpha for grouped variables

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Note: All factors load high within one singular component which is in line with customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content as a one-dimensional concept measured using a multi-item indicator as the measurement of scale.

7.5 Descriptive Analysis

Table 17. Gender Distribution of the Sample

Female		Men	
N ₁	%	N ₂	%
144	64.9	78	35.1

Table 18. Age Distribution of the Sample

Age	Sample	
	N ₁	%
20-24	111	50.0
25-29	84	37.8
30-34	12	5.4
35+	7	3.2
Missing	8	3.6
Total	222	100.0

Table 19. Number of Respondents based on Gender & Communication Type

		Influencer Marketing (N)	Paid Social Media Advertising (N)	Total (N)
Gender	Male	41	37	78
	Female	80	64	144
Total		121	101	222

Table 20. Number of Respondents based on Same or Different Gender as the Influencer or Advertising Model

		Influencer Marketing (N)	Paid Social Media Advertising (N)	Total (N)
Gender	Same Gender	41	37	78
	Different Gender	80	64	144
Total		121	101	222

Table 21. Personal Opinion to the (A) Influencer or (B) the Brand of the Advertising

	Influencer Marketing	Paid Social Media Advertising	Total
Completely Dislike	0	3	3
Dislike a lot	0	16	16
Slightly dislike	0	40	40
Neutral	14	40	54
Slightly like	21	2	23
Like a lot	49	0	49
Completely like	37	0	37
Total	121	101	222

Note: As part of operationalizing Influencer Marketing, the synthesised definition required "4" as a cut-off value for the "Index – Influencer Marketing" variables, thus established the operationalization as valid.

Table 22. Response Distribution on Respondents Usage of Instagram

	Influencer Marketing	Paid Social Media Advertising	Total
Do not use Instagram	3	4	7
Use Instagram Monthly	5	5	10
Use Instagram weekly	5	5	10
Use Instagram several times a week	11	13	24
Use Instagram Daily	36	25	61
Use Instagram several times a day	61	49	110
Total	121	101	222

Note: The distribution of using Instagram was considered in favour of respondents having a good knowledge regarding the social media platform and its social topology.

7.6 Principal Component Analysis of Dependent Variables

Table 23. Principal Component Analysis for All Dependent Variables

Rotated Component Matrix				Factor Component				α
KMO	0.900	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Sig. 0.000	1	2	3	4	
Cumulative % of variance explained			60 %					
Dimension	Question (Item)			1	2	3	4	
Perceived Quality & Leadership (Aaker, 1996)	Q1...is of high quality			.267	.086	.161	.662	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.811 N of items = 5
	Q2...is one of the best in its category			.088	.136	.086	.805	
	Q3...is the leading brand within its category			.100	.232	.011	.795	
	Q4...is a popular choice that increasingly more people choose to buy			.267	.304	.161	.591	
	Q5...is an innovative brand that is first out with new product improvements			.182	.182	.028	.715	
Intention (Keller) Price + Premium (Aaker, 1996)	Q19...I plan to buy Chimi Eyewear in the future			.407	.741	.207	.067	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.850 N of items = 5
	Q20...If I buy Sunglasses, I am likely to buy Chimi Eyewear			.406	.701	.217	.148	
	Q6...I would purchase Chimi Eyewear before other brands in the same category			.242	.638	.178	.319	
	Q7...I am prepared to pay more for Chimi Eyewear compared to other brands in the category			.125	.747	.116	.260	
	Q8...Chimi Eyewear would have to become a whole lot more expensive than other brands before I would choose another brand of sunglasses			.025	.662	.006	.186	
Associations & Differentiation (Aaker, 1996) + Endorsement (BAV)	Q9...I trust the brand			.773	.052	.139	.288	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.887 N of items = 10
	Q10...I admire the brand			.672	.331	.222	.232	
	Q11...the brand is credible			.775	.093	.172	.197	
	Q12...Chimi Eyewear offers Sunglasses which gives me good value for my money			.670	.196	.132	.172	
	Q13...there is a clear advantage in purchasing Chimi Eyewear over other brands			.598	.263	.121	.300	
	Q14...Chimi Eyewear is a brand which is interesting for me			.505	.496	.336	.050	
	Q15...I get a clear picture about the kind of person who would use Chimi Eyewear			.546	.067	.040	.007	
	Q16...Chimi Eyewear is recommended by people I respect			.608	.353	.276	.113	
	Q17...I would recommend Chimi Eyewear highly			.545	.462	.260	.162	
	Q18...I hear good things about Chimi Eyewear			.580	.344	.082	.172	
Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	Q21...I could imagine posting an inspirational picture of Chimi Eyewear Sunglasses on my Instagram			.234	.269	.694	.064	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.337 N of items = 5
	Q22...Chimi Eyewear is a brand that I feel good about being associated with on Instagram			.359	.296	.587	.087	
	Q23...A picture with Sunglasses from Chimi Eyewear would look good on my Instagram			.309	.142	.689	.094	
	Q24...I would like to get more visitors to my Instagram who also likes Chimi Eyewear			.168	.081	.774	.118	
	Q25...I could consider using Chimi Eyewear as a hashtag			.050	.046	.808	.071	

α = Cronbach's Alpha for grouped variables

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

7.7 Differences Between Gender in Mean for Influencer Marketing

Table 24. Mean Values of Factor Dimensions by Communication Type

	Influencer & Respondents Gender	
	Same Gender (A)	Different Gender (B)
Comp 1 - Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement	3.86	3.85
Comp 2 - Price Premium + Intention	2.53	2.65
Comp 3 – Customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	3.10	3.16
Comp 4 - Perceived Quality & Leadership	3.72	3.83

a. Communication_typ = Influencer Marketing

Table 25. One-Way ANOVA for Differences in Mean by Respondents with (1) Same or (3) Different Gender as the Influencer

ANOVA ^a						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Comp 1 - Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement	Between Groups	.111	1	.111	.082	.776
	Within Groups	161.603	119	1.358		
	Total	161.714	120			
Comp 2 - Price Premium + Intention	Between Groups	.031	1	.031	.019	.891
	Within Groups	196.620	119	1.652		
	Total	196.651	120			
Comp 3 – Customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	Between Groups	.104	1	.104	.039	.844
	Within Groups	317.198	119	2.666		
	Total	317.302	120			
Comp 4 - Perceived Quality & Leadership	Between Groups	.000	1	.000	.001	.981
	Within Groups	92.755	119	.779		
	Total	92.756	120			

a. Communication_typ = Influencer Marketing

7.8 Differences in Mean for Customer-Based Brand Equity and Customers’ Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

7.8.1 One-Way ANOVA for Dimensions of Factor Analysis

Table 26. Mean Values for Dimensions of Factor Analysis by Communication Type

	Paid Social Media Advertising	Influencer Marketing
Index – customer-based brand equity	3,15	3.49
Comp 1 – Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement	3.67	4.01
Comp 2 - Price Premium + Intention	2.46	2.70
Comp 3 – Customers’ willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	2.86	3.35
Comp 4 - Perceived Quality & Leadership	3.61	3.90

Table 27. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Dimensions of Factor Analysis

ANOVA						
<i>Factor: Communication type [Influencer Marketing, Paid Social Media Advertising]</i>		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Index – customer-based brand equity	Between Groups	6.303	1	6.303	6.531	.011
	Within Groups	212.289	220	.965		
	Total	218.591	221			
Comp 1 – Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement	Between Groups	6.393	1	6.393	5.602	.019
	Within Groups	251.052	220	1.141		
	Total	257.445	221			
Comp 2 - Price Premium + Intention	Between Groups	3.193	1	3.193	2.173	.142
	Within Groups	323.200	220	1.469		
	Total	326.393	221			
Comp 3 - Brand Pub	Between Groups	13.059	1	13.059	5.814	.017
	Within Groups	494.097	220	2.246		
	Total	507.155	221			
Comp 4 - Perceived Quality & Leadership	Between Groups	4.465	1	4.465	6.127	.014
	Within Groups	160.323	220	.729		
	Total	164.788	221			

7.8.2 One-Way ANOVA for Individual Constructs as Deepened Analysis

Table 28. Mean Values for Individual Constructs by Communication Type

	Paid Social Media Advertising	Influencer Marketing
INDEX – Customer-based Brand Equity	3.67	4.01
Perceived Quality	2.46	2.70
Leadership	2.86	3.35
Price Premium	2.46	2.70
Organisational Associations	2.86	3.35
Perceived Value	2.46	2.70
Personality	2.86	3.35
Endorsement	2.46	2.70
Intention	2.86	3.35
Brand Public	3.61	3.90

Table 29. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Individual Constructs

ANOVA						
<i>One-Way ANOVA SPSS Output. Factor: Communication type [Influencer Marketing, Paid Social Media Advertising]</i>		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
INDEX – Customer-based Brand Equity	Between Groups	6.303	1	6.303	6.531	.011
	Within Groups	212.289	220	.965		
	Total	218.591	221			
Perceived Quality	Between Groups	4.301	1	4.301	5.565	.019
	Within Groups	170.046	220	.773		
	Total	174.347	221			
Leadership	Between Groups	4.159	1	4.159	4.494	.035
	Within Groups	203.570	220	.925		
	Total	207.728	221			

Price Premium	Between Groups	2.651	1	2.651	1.761	.186
	Within Groups	331.254	220	1.506		
	Total	333.905	221			
Organisational Associations	Between Groups	6.077	1	6.077	4.081	.045
	Within Groups	327.547	220	1.489		
	Total	333.624	221			
Perceived Value	Between Groups	10.399	1	10.399	6.243	.013
	Within Groups	366.463	220	1.666		
	Total	376.861	221			
Personality	Between Groups	8.717	1	8.717	5.205	.023
	Within Groups	368.419	220	1.675		
	Total	377.135	221			
Endorsement	Between Groups	2.165	1	2.165	1.304	.255
	Within Groups	365.251	220	1.660		
	Total	367.415	221			
Intention	Between Groups	3.785	1	3.785	1.744	.188
	Within Groups	477.369	220	2.170		
	Total	481.154	221			
Brand Public	Between Groups	13.059	1	13.059	5.814	.017
	Within Groups	494.097	220	2.246		
	Total	507.155	221			

7.9 Correlation Analysis

Table 30. Bi-Variate Correlation Using Pearson's *r* for Influencer Marketing

Correlations INFLUENCER MARKETING		Index – customer- based brand equity	Comp 1 – Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement	Comp 2 - Price Premium + Intention	Comp 3 - Brand Pub	Comp 1 – Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement
Index – customer- based brand equity	Pearson Correlation	1	.933**	.886**	.907**	.720**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	121	121	121	121	121
Comp 1 – Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement	Pearson Correlation	.933**	1	.809**	.797**	.616**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	121	121	121	121	121
Comp 2 - Price Premium + Intention	Pearson Correlation	.886**	.809**	1	.710**	.519**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	121	121	121	121	121
Comp 3 - Brand Pub	Pearson Correlation	.907**	.797**	.710**	1	.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	121	121	121	121	121
Comp 1 – Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement	Pearson Correlation	.720**	.616**	.519**	.525**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	121	121	121	121	121

Note: Individual seven-point Likert scale items would benefit from a nonmetric correlation comparison, however as all above variables are Likert scales (sum of multiple scale items) as summation scores obtain more possible values within the interval and have been considered and analysed using Pearson's *r* as a continuous variable. Although Spearman's rho was also calculated with similar slight more conservative but significant correlations overall.

Table 31. Bi-Variate Correlation Using Pearson's *r* for Paid Social Media Advertising

Correlations paid social media advertising		Index – customer-based brand equity	Comp 1 – Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement	Comp 2 - Price Premium + Intention	Comp 3 - Brand Pub	Comp 1 – Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement
Index – customer-based brand equity	Pearson Correlation	1	.849**	.834**	.812**	.699**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	101	101	101	101	101
Comp 1 – Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement	Pearson Correlation	.849**	1	.636**	.621**	.482**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	101	101	101	101	101
Comp 2 - Price Premium + Intention	Pearson Correlation	.834**	.636**	1	.488**	.554**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	101	101	101	101	101
Comp 3 - Brand Pub	Pearson Correlation	.812**	.621**	.488**	1	.354**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	101	101	101	101	101
Comp 1 – Associations & Differentiation + Endorsement	Pearson Correlation	.699**	.482**	.554**	.354**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	101	101	101	101	101

Note: Individual seven-point Likert scale items would benefit from a nonmetric correlation comparison, however as all above variables are Likert scales (sum of multiple scale items) as summation scores obtain more possible values within the interval and have been considered and analysed using Pearson's *r* as a continuous variable. Although Spearman's rho was also calculated with similar slight more conservative but significant correlations overall.

7.10 Regression Analysis

7.10.1 Influencer Marketing

Table 32. Model summary, ANOVA and Coefficients for Bivariate Regression Analysis of Influencer Marketing and Customer-Based Brand Equity

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.818 ^b	.670	.667	.62405
a. Communication_typ = Influencer Marketing				
b. Predictors: (Constant), Influencer Marketing				

ANOVA						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	93.916	1	93.916	241.153	.000 ^c
	Residual	46.344	119	.389		
	Total	140.260	120			
a. Communication_typ = Influencer Marketing						
b. Dependent Variable: customer-based brand equity						
c. Predictors: (Constant), Influencer Marketing						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	-2.125	.366		-5.807	.000
	CBBE	1.010	.065	.818	15.529	.000
a. Communication type = Influencer Marketing						
b. Dependent Variable: customer-based brand equity						

Figure 11. Scatterplot with Index (summation) of Customer-Based Brand Equity and Influencer Marketing

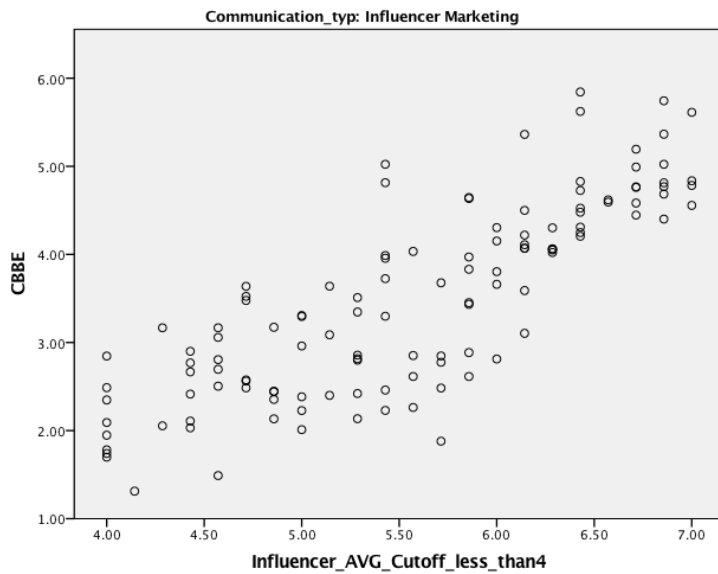


Table 33. Model summary, ANOVA and Coefficients for Bivariate Regression Analysis of Influencer Marketing for Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.790b	.624	.621	1.00094
a. Communication_typ = Influencer Marketing				
b. Predictors: (Constant), Influencer Marketing				

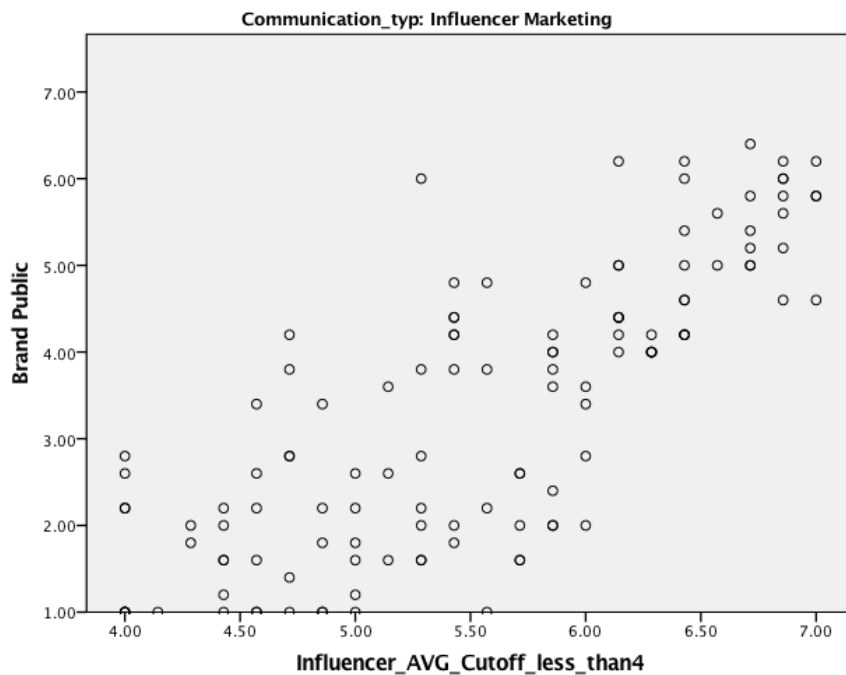
ANOVA						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	198.078	1	198.078	197.705	.000c
	Residual	119.225	119	1.002		
	Total	317.302	120			
a. Communication_typ = Influencer Marketing						
b. Dependent Variable: customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content						
c. Predictors: (Constant), Influencer Marketing						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-4.801	.587		-8.181	.000
	Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	1.466	.104	.790	14.061	.000

a. Communication type = Influencer Marketing

b. Dependent Variable: customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content

Figure 12. Scatterplot with Index (summation) of Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content and Influencer Marketing



7.10.2 Paid Social Media Advertising

Table 34. Model Summary, ANOVA and Coefficients for Bivariate Regression Analysis of Paid Social Media Advertising and Customer-Based Brand Equity

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.638b	.407	.401	.65673
a. Communication type = Paid Social Media Advertising				
b Predictors: (Constant), Influencer_AVG_Cutoff_less_than4				

ANOVA						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.330	1	29.330	68.005	.000c
	Residual	42.699	99	.431		
	Total	72.029	100			
a. Communication_typ = Paid Social Media Advertising						
b. Dependent Variable: customer-based brand equity						
c Predictors: (Constant), Paid Social Media Advertising (As measured by Influencer_AVG_Cutoff_less_than4)						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.788	.294		2.681	.009
	CBBE	.521	.063	.638	8.247	.000
a. Communication type = Paid Social Media Advertising						
b. Dependent Variable: customer-based brand equity						

Figure 13. Scatterplot Index (summation) of Customer-Based Brand Equity and Paid Social Media Advertising

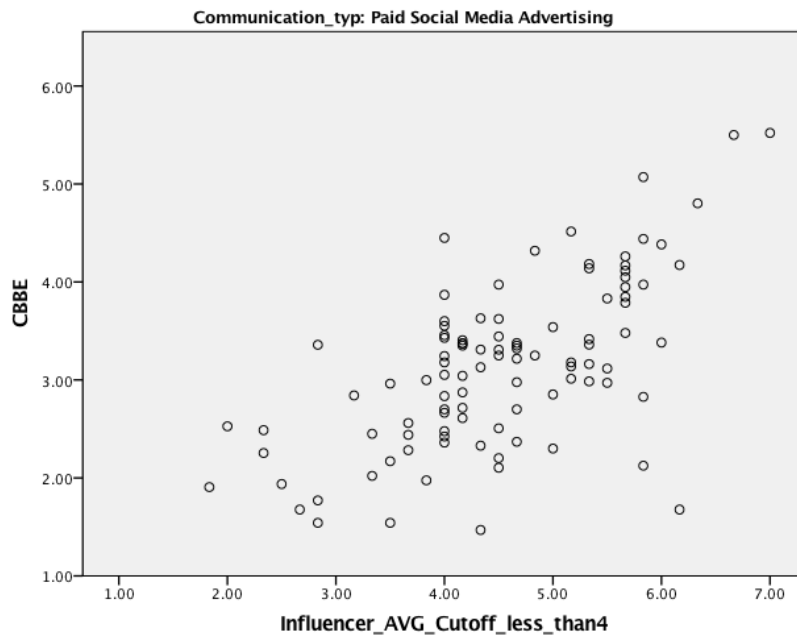


Table 35. Model Summary, ANOVA and Coefficients for Bivariate Regression Analysis of Paid Social Media Advertising and Customers' Willingness to Post Brand-Promoting User-Generated Content

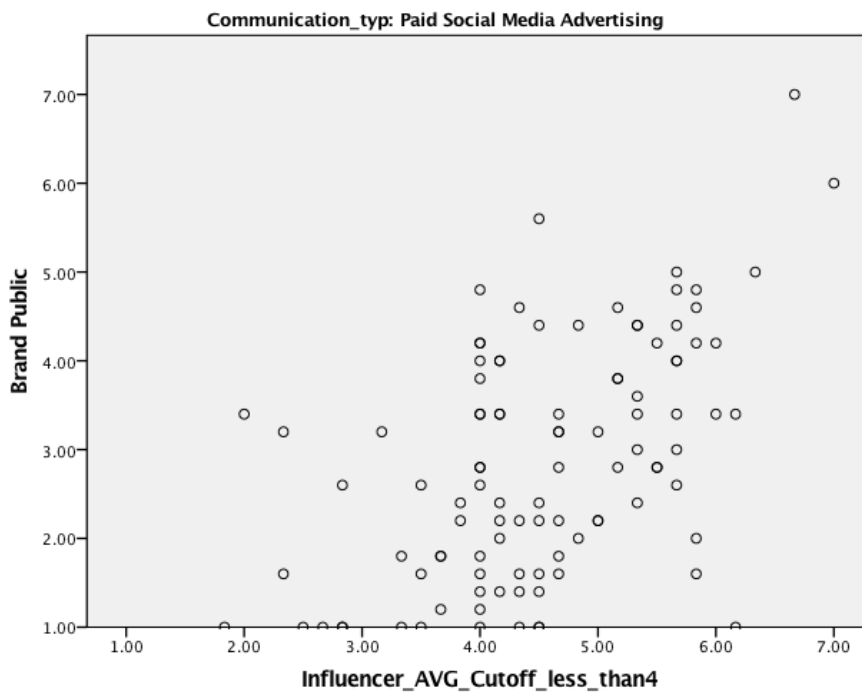
Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.518b	.268	.261	1.14339
a. Communication type = Paid Social Media Advertising				
b Predictors: (Constant), Influencer_AVG_Cutoff_less_than4				

ANOVA						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.368	1	47.368	36.232	.000c
	Residual	129.426	99	1.307		
	Total	176.794	100			
a. Communication_typ = Paid Social Media Advertising						
b. Dependent Variable: customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content						
c Predictors: (Constant), Paid Social Media Advertising (As measured by Influencer_AVG_Cutoff_less_than4)						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.139	.512		-.271	.787
	Customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content	.663	.110	.518	6.019	.000

a. Communication type = Paid Social Media Advertising

b. Dependent Variable: customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content



7.11 Survey for Control Group – Paid Social Media Advertising

Default Question Block



LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

Welcome!

You have been selected to participate in an experiment as part of a Master thesis at LUSEM. **Do you use Instagram? Yes..** Then we need your help take our short survey!

The survey will take approx. 4-5 min.

All answers will be anonymous.

I have a question, who should I contact?

- Get in touch with us at jfv12ala@student.lu.se

I am

- Male
- Female
- Rather not say

My age is

15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65

Pull on the handle to set
age



How often do you use Instagram?

- Do not use Instagram
- Monthly
-

- Once a week
- Several times a week
- Daily
- Several times a day

We will now show you an advertising from Chimi Eyewear.

My relation to Chimi Eyewear

- I am very familiar with this brand
- I have heard about this brand before
- I have never heard of this brand before

Are you familiar with the person in the picture?

- I have never seen the person before
- I might have seen the model elsewhere
- I know exactly who the person is

Personal opinion

	Completely Dislike	Dislike a lot	Slightly Dislike	Neutral	Slightly Like	Like a lot	Completely Like
How I feel about this brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

This brand...

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..has high-quality pictures in their advertising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

..has advertising that represents an interesting lifestyle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
.. has advertising that is interesting for many	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..has advertising that is inspirational	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..is a trendsetter on Social Media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..has advertising that influences others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..has advertising which is typically seen on Social Media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..has advertising that promotes its products as better than others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In comparison to other brands, I believe that Chimi Eyewear..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..is of high quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..is one of the best in its category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

..has advertising that represents an interesting lifestyle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
.. has advertising that is interesting for many	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..has advertising that is inspirational	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..is a trendsetter on Social Media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..has advertising that influences others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..has advertising which is typically seen on Social Media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..has advertising that promotes its products as better than others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In comparison to other brands, I believe that Chimi Eyewear..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..is of high quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..is one of the best in its category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

..is the leading brand within its category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..is a popular choice that increasingly more people choose to buy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..is an innovative brand that is first out with new product improvements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I believe that...

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..I would purchase Chimi Eyewear before other brands in the same category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I am prepared to pay more for Chimi Eyewear compared to other brands in the category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..Chimi Eyewear would have to become much more expensive than other brands, before I would choose another brand of sunglasses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From the image I have seen, I feel that..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..I trust the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I admire the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..the brand is credible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..Chimi Eyewear offers Sunglasses which gives me good value for my money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..there is a clear advantage in purchasing Chimi Eyewear over other brands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..Chimi Eyewear is a brand which is interesting for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I get a clear picture about the kind of person who would use Chimi Eyewear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From the image I have seen, I feel that..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..Chimi Eyewear is recommended by people I	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

respect.

..I would recommend Chimi Eyewear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I hear good things about Chimi Eyewear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I plan to buy Chimi Eyewear in the future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..If I buy Sunglasses, I am likely to buy Chimi Eyewear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From the image I have seen, I feel that..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..I could imagine posting an inspirational picture of Chimi Eyewear Sunglasses on my Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..Chimi Eyewear is a brand that I feel good about being associated with on Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..A picture with Sunglasses from Chimi Eyewear would look good on my Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I would like to get more visitors to my Instagram who	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**also likes
Chimi Eyewear**

**..I could
consider using
Chimi Eyewear
as a hashtag**



Powered by Qualtrics

7.12 Survey for Experiment Group – Influencer Marketing

Default Question Block



LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

Welcome!

You have been selected to participate in an experiment as part of a Master thesis at LUSEM. **Do you use Instagram? Yes..** Then we need your help take our short survey!

The survey will take approx. 4-5 min.

All answers will be anonymous.

I have a question, who should I contact?

- Get in touch with us at jfv12ala@student.lu.se

I am

- Male
- Female
- Rather not say

My age is

15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65

Pull on the handle to set
age

How often do you use Instagram?

- Do not use Instagram
- Monthly
- Once a week

- Several times a week
- Daily
- Several times a day

We will now introduce you to Andreas and his Instagram profile.

My relation to Andreas Wijk

- I am very familiar with this person
- I have heard about this person before
- I have never heard about this person before

Personal opinion

	Completely Dislike	Dislike a lot	Slightly Dislike	Neutral	Slightly Like	Like a lot	Completely Like
How I feel about this person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

This person..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..has a lot of followers beyond their friends and family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..has high-quality pictures on their Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..has an interesting lifestyle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..is an interesting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

person to follow for many	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..is someone who many look to for inspiration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..is a trendsetter for their followers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..influences others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

This is one of Andreas latest posts.

This person..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..genuinely likes his Chimi Eyewear Sunglasses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..is proud to show his new Chimi Eyewear Sunglasses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..feels that Chimi Eyewear Sunglasses has value to his lifestyle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In comparison to other brands, I believe that Chimi Eyewear..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..is of high	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..is one of the best in its category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..is the leading brand within its category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..is a popular choice that increasingly more people choose to buy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..is an innovative brand that is first out with new product improvements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I believe that..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..I would purchase Chimi Eyewear before other brands in the same category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I am prepared to pay more for Chimi Eyewear compared to other brands in the category	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..Chimi Eyewear would have to become much more expensive than other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**brands, before
I would
choose
another brand
of sunglasses**

From the image I have seen, I feel that..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..I trust the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I admire the brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..the brand is credible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..Chimi Eyewear offers Sunglasses which gives me good value for my money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..there is a clear advantage in purchasing Chimi Eyewear over other brands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..Chimi Eyewear is a brand which is interesting for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I get a clear picture about the kind of person who would use Chimi Eyewear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From the image I have seen, I feel that..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..Chimi Eyewear is recommended by people I respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I would recommend Chimi Eyewear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I hear good things about Chimi Eyewear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..I plan to buy Chimi Eyewear in the future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..If I buy Sunglasses, I am likely to buy Chimi Eyewear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From the image I have seen, I feel that..

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
..I could imagine posting an inspirational picture of Chimi Eyewear Sunglasses on my Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..Chimi Eyewear is a brand that I feel good about being associated with on Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
..A picture with Sunglasses from Chimi Eyewear would	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**look good on
my Instagram**

**..I would like to
get more
visitors to my
Instagram who
also likes
Chimi Eyewear**

**..I could
consider using
Chimi Eyewear
as a hashtag**

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