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Nike's Dream Crazy campaign and how it influenced views and opinions towards the brand

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Preface

This thesis is a bachelor thesis in marketing at Lund University School of Economics and Management. We want to thank all interviewees for their participation and engagement that contributed a lot. We also want to thank our supervisor Ekaterini Drosou for her help and guidance throughout the process!

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Abstract

Title: Nike's Dream Crazy campaign and how it influenced views and opinions towards the brand

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Key words: Nike, Swedish consumer behaviour, Political Consumerism, Kaepernick, Political stance

Purpose: In 2018 Nike launched an advertisement campaign called "Dream Crazy" that provoked controversial reactions in social media and large coverage in the media. This qualitative study aims to find out what Swedish students aged 19-24 think of specifically the political aspect of that campaign, and how much it matters and influences their decision making when choosing products.

Methodology: Data was collected through in-depth face-to-face interviews and subsequently analyzed through a method called thematic analysis as described mainly by Brown and Clarke (2006). The interview guide was formed to accommodate the aim and purpose of the study, which allowed for some themes to be created based on theoretical background, other themes were found through applying guidelines from the literature.

Theoretical perspectives: The data material was mainly looked at through the lens of political consumerism, however understanding theory regarding brand image, brand personality and brand meaning was required in order to apply political consumerism to this case.

Empirical foundation: The empirical material is based on in-depth one to one interviews.

Conclusions: The participants generally viewed the campaign in a positive light and recognized that Nike had an agenda. The agenda was seen as being based on either monetary gains or bringing awareness to a societal issues. Some participants argued whether or not Nike should engage in politics and societal issues but the general consensus seems to be positive towards what Nike trying to spread awareness regarding the societal issues. There's definite cynicism throughout the findings illustrating how the participants question Nike's agenda and multinational companies in general. This is consistent with previous literature regarding cynicism towards campaigns that use societal issues in their campaigns (Edelman, 2019). A minority of the participants express some level of understanding for Nike's financial responsibilities. The societal issues that are brought up in the campaign do not seem to affect our target group since they feel disconnected to the issue due to the physical and psychological differences. Price and quality outweigh the political aspect and the Nike's choice to bring awareness to societal issues is claimed to not have an effect on purchasing decision, nor view of Nike as a brand, by the majority of the participants.

Sammanfattning

Titel: Hur Nikes Dream Crazy kampanj påverkade åsikter och uppfattningar kring varumärket

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Nyckelord: Nike, Svenskt konsumentbeteende, Politisk konsumtion, Kaepernick, Politiskt ställningstagande

Syfte: Nike lanserade år 2018 en kampanj vid namnet Dream Crazy som skapade kontroversiella reaktioner i sociala medier samt en hög grad av mediaexponering. Denna kvalitativa studie syftar till att ta reda på vad svenska studenter med åldern 19-24 tänker kring den politiska aspekten av den här kampanjen, och hur mycket det påverkar deras köpbeslut.

Metod: Materialet samlades in genom djupgående personliga intervjuer som analyserades genom tematisk analys som beskrivs av Brown and Clarke (2006). Intervjuguiden formades för att uppfylla forskningsmålen och syftet med studien, som tillät oss att skapa teman grundade i teoretisk bakgrund. Andra teman formades genom att använda riktlinjerna skapade av litteraturen.

Teoretiska perspektivet: Materialet granskades primärt genom ett synsätt som fokuserade på den politiska konsumtionen. Förståelsen kring varumärkesbilden, varumärkespersonligheten och varumärkets betydelse var nödvändig för att kunna applicera den politiska konsumtionen till studien.

Empiri: Det empiriska materialet är baserat på djupgående personliga intervjuer.

Conclusions: Studien visar att deltagarna uppfattade kampanjen som något positivt och såg att det fanns ett motiv. Om motivet tolkades som att Nike antingen försökte tjäna pengar eller sprida uppmärksamhet kring samhällsproblem. Vissa deltagare ifrågasatte ifall Nike bör engagera sig i politik och samhällsfrågor men allmänna uppfattningen verkade vara positiv till att Nike försöker sprida uppmärksamhet kring samhällsfrågor. Det finns en tydlig cynism kring Nikes motiv och globala företag i allmänhet. Detta överensstämmer med tidigare litteratur kring cynism mot kampanjer som använder sig av samhällsfrågor (Edelman, 2019). En minoritet av deltagarna uttrycker någon form av förståelse för att Nike måste lägga deras monetära ansvar. Samhällsfrågorna som tas upp i kampanjen verkar ha liten effekt på vår målgrupp då dem inte känner sig varken fysiskt eller psykiskt nära problemen. Pris och kvalitet väger tyngre än den politiska aspekten. Nikes val att sprida uppmärksamhet kring samhällsfrågor påstås inte ha haft någon effekt på varken köpbeslut eller åsikter kring varumärket hos en majoritet av deltagarna.

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1 Background

1.1 Introduction

The first chapter of this paper focuses on giving the reader an expansive look into the background of Nike, their past marketing campaigns, the Dream Crazy campaign as well as outlining the purpose of the paper. The chapter is divided into several subchapters to make it easier to comprehend the vast amount of knowledge that is required to grasp the size and age of Nike.

1.2 Aim, scope and purpose

The study is being conducted and analyzed through the lense of political consumerism. This was done because there is a lack of research on the subject and because of the interest for political consumerism among the researchers. The aim of the study is to provide a better understanding of how a campaign that addresses societal issues affects Swedish consumers. The study will be based on Nike's Dream Crazy campaign which gained massive exposure due it featuring the highly controversial ex-NFL player Colin Kaepernick who kneeled during the national anthem as a protest to bring awareness to the racial injustices and police brutalities in the U.S.

To reach the aim and objectives of this study, the following research questions were formed:

- What are the views and opinions of Swedish students aged 19-24 on the political aspect of Nike's Dream Crazy Campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick?
- How has Nike's engagement in social issues affected the target groups view of the brand?
- How does the engagement in social issues affect the target group's decision when choosing a brand?

The focus on brands in the literature review is required to give an adequate understanding of how brands work, especially in connection to political aspects and political consumerism. The literature review regarding political consumerism was done to understand the fundamentals of political consumerism and how it is applied in today's society.

1.3 Nike

Nike, Inc. is an American company which was launched in 1964 by Phil Knight and Bill Bowerman as Blue Ribbon Sports, which became Nike, Inc. in 1971. Today the company owns other brands than Nike such as Converse and Jordan and is the world's largest manufacturer and supplier of athletic apparel and shoes (Statista, 2019). Nike has over 76,000 employees and had a revenue of 39 billion USD in 2019 (Statista, 2019), which makes them quite a powerful and influential company. "Just do it" started in 1988 and has had advertisements that makes people ask questions about the current state of affairs in our communities, raising awareness regarding issues ranging from gender equality and gay rights to the athletes role in society. In this report the researchers are investigating the effects or an advertisement that became political and sparked severe controversy in the company's home country.

1.4 Business today and Political campaigns

Corporate Social Responsibility is becoming increasingly popular for companies to engage in (Franklin, 2008). Most large brands that we are familiar with today often have some sort of philanthropic activity going on that they proudly show to the world as a part of their communication procedures. Consumer behaviour is the study of how individual customers, groups or organizations select, buy, use, and dispose of ideas, goods, and services to satisfy their needs and wants (Kotler & Keller, 2016). It refers to the actions of the consumers in the marketplace and the underlying motives for those actions. One of the underlying motives affecting consumer behaviour is increasingly more likely to be the approach to CSR a company takes (Franklin, 2008). In recent years more companies have involved CSR activities in their business and it can now be seen as a must, rather than a "nice to have" for corporations (Chojnacka & Lacroix, n.d.). A few companies have taken a more vigorous approach by adopting a political standpoint, and this practice has increased lately (Maxwell, 2018). Taking a stance in a current political issue allows the company to be part of a conversation which might add value for some consumers. On the other hand, they will also risk the opposite from consumers who disagree with the stance taken, potentially resulting in boycotts. A political standpoint can often divide the market into two segments, one in favor of the stance, and one in opposition.

Political consumerism is the notion that consumer behaviour is affected by political issues. Consumers can use their consumption as a "weapon" or "vote" to affect current political or societal issues (Brinkman, 2004, cited in Neilson & Paxton, 2010). The amount of people regarded as "belief-driven buyers" has increased in recent years and went from 51% to 64% on average in the countries studied in the 2018 Edelman Earned Brand Report, with an increase in every market (Edelman, 2018). In 2019, the numbers stayed on 64% (Edelman, 2019).

Campaigns regarding societal matters is not a new phenomenon even though an increase can be seen in recent years (Franklin, 2008). However, Nike is far from being the only organisation that has used this strategy in their marketing. As shown below there are several campaigns that has gained a lot of attention and sent the company into the spotlight.

On World AIDS day in december 1993 the HIV - prevention organisation ACT UP Paris put a giant pink, condom looking cloth over the 23 meters high obelisque on Place de la Concorde in Paris. The purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness of HIV and make it a symbol for the prevention efforts that had to be made. This guerilla marketing action was financially sponsored by the Italian brand The United Colors of Benetton. Even though the clothing was torn down promptly it generated great media attention and Benetton continued on the theme by displaying condoms in their ads (EndingHIV, 2019).

The American razor brand has made their tagline “The best a man can get” widely famous all over the world but after 30 years they in January 2019 decided to change it to “The best men can be” (Gillette, 2019). The new tagline was accompanied by an advert starring men in situations very a “toxic masculinity” was expressed (Wired, 2019). The ad encourages men to think over how they act against women and were riding on the waves of the recent #metoo movement. The ad sparked an extraordinary effect on social media as well as on other channels with both praises and hate (Entrepreneur, 2019; Wired, 2019).

The American apparel brand Patagonia calls itself for “The Activist Company” and has taken many stances in environmental issues throughout the years (Patagonia 2020a). In december 2017 the company put a stark message on their homepage reading “The President Stole Your Land” in response to President Trump’s actions to reduce the size of two national parks in the country (Patagonia 2020b; Andrews, 2017). Later that month the company continued by suing the president for his actions (Maracario, 2017).

1.5 Nike Social & Community impact

Big corporations often get criticized for making campaigns and commercials that highlight certain issues in our society because the majority of consumers see it as a marketing ploy (Edelman, 2019). Nike on the other hand, is very active and adamant about their community work. Nike has set a target of spending 1.5% of their pre-tax income on driving positive impacts in various communities. In 2019 Nike’s net income was \$4.0 billion. With an effective tax rate of 16.1% that would make their pre-tax income somewhere around \$4.8 billion (Nike 2019a). With a target of 1.5% that would mean Nike spent around \$70 million on their “Made to play” operation in 2019, however this target has been surpassed in the last four years and seems to average around 1.85% (Nike 2019b). Made to Play is Nike’s commitment to get kids moving so they can lead healthier, happier and more successful lives. As of 2019, 21 000 community coaches and 80+ organizations are involved in this program helping 16.5 million kids get active all over the world (Nike 2019b).

Beyond this, during the past five years Nike employees have generated over \$23.5 million through their donations and Nike’s matching gift program, supporting over 2400 charities (Nike 2019b). Additionally \$12 million has been donated to community organizations over a five year period through employee-led grantmaking initiatives such as the Nike Community Impact Fund (NCIF).

NCIF engages Nike employees to advise where contributions should be allocated to support local organizations in the communities where they live and work. In 2018 the NCIF granted more than \$1.3 million all around the world (Nike 2019b).

1.6 Previous campaigns by Nike

For many years, Nike's business idea has been to produce their products as cheap as possible and put their efforts and resources on marketing instead (Klein, 1999). By doing so they have been able to develop a powerful brand that is recognised all over the world. In 1982 Nike hired the marketing firm Wieden+Kennedy and launched their first “Just Do It” campaign six years later. Wieden+Kennedy is the bureau Nike has been contracting since then (Row, 2019; Bostock, 2019; Wieden+Kennedy, 2020). The motto “Just Do It” has become synonymous with Nike together with their swoosh logo.

Nike has been a forerunner in advertising and starting conversations about controversial issues (Tyler, 2018). They have been keen to portray themselves as a model for other businesses to follow. For example they had a majority of workers with backgrounds from racial minorities in 2016, when the workforce was 52% non-white (McGirt, 2016).

In many of their campaigns they have focused on starring famous athletes that can personalize the brand in the way Nike wants and in the early days they were making superstars out of their sponsorships. (Klein, 1999; De Luce, 2013). Some of their athletes has been active in raising issues about social justice even outside the Nike campaigns, such as Serena Williams and LeBron James (Asmelash & Muaddi, 2019; Bembry, 2018).

Naturally, many campaigns by Nike has been aired throughout the years, some examples that has gained exceptional attention can be seen below.

In 1988 Nike aired their first “Just Do It” campaign. This campaign featured the 80-year old man Walter Stack from the San Francisco Bay Area who got famous for running approximately 62 000 miles throughout his lifetime (Tyler, 2018). The topic to note here was Ageism.

In 1993 Nike aired a campaign called “I am not a role model” featuring legendary basketball player Charles Barkley). The campaign talks about how athletes should not be held to a higher standard, they are humans just like the rest of. This is summarized by this quote from the campaign: *“I’m not paid to be a role model. I’m paid to wreak havoc on the basketball court”*(Tyler, 2018).

In 1995 Nike ran the campaign “if you let me play” which featured numerous young girls who filmed quoting different statistics that indicated that if you let these young girls play sports they would have more confidence, be less likely to develop breast cancer, they would suffer less depression and they would lessen the risk of getting pregnant before they want to (Tyler, 2018).

The same year Nike also ran a “Just Do It” campaign featuring openly HIV-positive runner Ric Munoz. The campaign shows Munoz running while statements pop up on the screen. “80 miles every week”, “10 marathons every year” and lastly “HIV positive” (Tyler, 2018).

2007 Nike aired a campaign featuring Matt Scott of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association. The video shows Scott rambling about a bunch of excuses as to why he can not go workout. The video ends with him rolling away in his wheelchair and the “Just Do It” and the swoosh appear. The message here is clear, if a man in a wheelchair can become a professional wheelchair basketball player, then you can go workout, quit making excuses and... just do it (Tyler, 2018).

In 2012 Nike brought up gender issues again with the campaign “Voices”. The campaign features lots of girls and women quoting different things people have told them as to why girls should do various sports (Tyler, 2018).

In 2019 Nike featured “Dream Crazy” which again features lots of women and tennis superstar Serena Williams. The campaign shows various clips of women showing their emotions in sports and how they are labeled as crazy and unhinged (Tyler,2018).

It becomes clear that Nike has always done their marketing in a certain style. Focusing on bringing up certain societal issues and shedding some light on different minorities. These types of campaigns do not only stir a lot of emotions but also create a lot of debate regarding the topics they choose to bring up. The Dream Crazy campaign is not an anomaly as it also chooses to embark on societal issues.

1.7 The Dream Crazy campaign

The campaign this thesis is focused on was introduced on the 5th September 2018 on the 30th anniversary of the Just do it campaign. The label of the campaign is “Dream crazy” and is starring multiple famous athletes that are collaborating with Nike. The campaign was first aired on NBC during the NFL regular season open game 6th September 2018 (Kimble, 2018; Rovell, 2018; Rucker, 2018). The video features Colin Kaepernick as a narrator showing clips of professional athletes like LeBron James, The U.S. National Soccer team and Serena Williams together with amateur athletes. The congruent theme in the ad is defying the odds with statements such as “If you have only one hand, don’t just watch football, play it at the highest level”. The video ends with Kaepernick himself in focus, stating “So don’t ask if your dreams are crazy, ask if they’re crazy enough” (Kimble, 2018).

By launching this campaign and choosing to use Kaepernick as their front figure, Nike was considered to have taken a political stance (Kreuser, 2019; McArdle, 2018). This was further confirmed by the founder, Phil Knight, who was quoted:

“You have to take a stand on something, which is ultimately I think why the Kaepernick ad worked.”
In an interview featured in a Stanford Business story (Snyder, 2019, n.p.).

Colin Kaepernick is a former quarterback in the NFL franchise San Francisco 49ers and was once seen to be one of the best quarterbacks in the league (Farmer, 2013). In 2016 Kaepernick started to protest by sitting down at the benches during the national anthem during a preseason game, which was not noticed substantially. The protest was initiated as a statement against racial inequality and recent police brutality in the U.S. after shootings of unarmed citizens such as 17th year old Trayvon Martin (Chaplin & Montez de Oca, 2019). Kaepernick developed on the reasons behind his actions in a press conference after the game:

"I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of colour. To me, this is bigger than football, and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder" (Mindock, 2019, n.p.). When he later decided to "take a knee" to show respect to military veterans during the anthem the pose was seen more strongly and gained massive attention after a while, with many other players in the league joining the protests. The reaction of NFL fans were divided, with some strongly opposing the action, accusing him of disrespecting the American flag and the country itself (Mindock, 2019). On September 24th 2017 more than 200 players across the league kneeled during the Sunday games in response to President Trump's comments on the protests. The tweet from the president that led to this response:

"Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, 'Get that son of a b---- off the field right now. Out. He's fired. He's fired!'" (USA Today, 2017, n.p.).

He was initially contracted by Nike from 2011 until 2016 and it was unclear if Nike would prolong his contract as he was no longer signed with any team, but they chose to continue his endorsement (Berk, 2018).

"You have to take a stand on something, which is ultimately I think why the Kaepernick ad worked." (Snyder, 2019, n.p.).

Some examples of consumer responses to these campaigns that were observed were people burning Nike products in social media along with a message indicating boycotting behaviour (Petkar, 2018), but also a sales increase of 31% online in the U.S. compared to the same time period the previous year (Martinez, 2018). It lies in the nature of engaging in controversial conversations to be talked about, in our current climate it means getting coverage and exposure in the media. Through social media and elements such as hashtags every consumer has a voice and the ability to influence public opinion in a certain matter. It allows consumers to participate and engage with the brand, to join and direct the conversation in more ways than with just the wallet. Within 24 hours Nike had been mentioned 2.7 million times on social media and within 72 hours Nike that number had rose to more than 5.2 million times according to the social media analysis platform Talkwalker (Verry, 2019). The total value of the exposure that the campaign had generated within its first 24 hours was valued at around \$43 million according to Apex Marketing Group. The campaign was awarded a prize at the Creative Arts Emmys for "Outstanding commercial" in 2019 (Emmys, 2019). Ad Age also named Nike "Marketer of the year" for 2018 (Ad Age, 2018). Phil Knight, founder of Nike, had this to say regarding the Dream Crazy campaign:

“It doesn’t matter how many people hate your brand as long as enough people love it. And as long as you have that attitude, you can’t be afraid of offending people. You can’t try and go down the middle of the road. You have to take a stand on something, which is ultimately I think why the Kaepernick ad worked.” (Snyder, 2019, n.p.).

1.8 Unethical practices

While practicing CSR, Nike has done other actions that are deemed unethical business practices. Nike has been accused of using sweatshops during the 1990’s and was one of the main culprits described in *No Logo* by Naomi Klein (1999). These actions might have had a lingering effect on their image until today. There are two major labor rights monitoring groups that are associated with Nike: Workers Rights Consortium (WRC) and Fair Labor Association (FLA). Phil Knight cancelled a donation of 30 million USD to the University of Oregon after they revealed that they were joining WRC (Greenhouse, 2000). The FLA is the one Nike is currently using. In 2016 the two organizations were granted access to the Hansae factory in Vietnam after complaints, they revealed that Nike used this factory where several violations of labor standards had taken place, including wage theft, forced overtime, verbal abuse, denial of bathroom breaks and sick leave (Kish, 2016). As a response Nike put sanctions on this specific factory and reduced their share from 9% to 3% of the factory’s production. According to Nike’s website they have outsourced their production to 523 factories in 41 countries employing a total of about one million workers (Nike Manufacturing Map, 2020). Nike scored 36 out of 100 points in the 2017 Fashion Transparency Index which indicates how much they disclose about their social and environmental policies, practices and impact. The highest ranked companies of 2017 were Adidas and Reebok at 49 points (Fashion Revolution, 2017). In 2019 Nike had achieved a score of 57 while Adidas, Reebok and Patagonia are leading at 64 points (Fashion Revolution, 2019).

At the Nike headquarters in Oregon, it was revealed that the working environment had been considered toxic for women, after a survey was carried out regarding sexual harassment and gender discrimination, at least six male executives left the company (Creswell, Draper & Abrams, 2018). As recently as the summer of 2019, several women came out to speak against Nike’s policies for the women they sponsor, if they were to become pregnant the terms of the sponsorship would worsen significantly (Montaño, 2019). After huge public outcry and congressional inquiry however, they adopted a new policy that included maternity protections for their athletes. This subtopic of unethical practices is so huge that it could be a study in itself, it is discussed briefly here and only serves to provide some background information and balance for the reader’s image of Nike.

2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review explores two different main subjects which are then divided into smaller subjects. The first subject assesses topics connected to brands, in particular brand- personality, image, and meaning, whereas the second one explores the area of consumer behaviour with a specific focus on political consumerism. A subchapter on Swedish consumers are also provided. The gathering of this knowledge is deemed to be of utmost importance and relevance for the researchers in order to carry out the study. The literature studied gives a firm ground for the research questions by delving into how consumers behave on a marketplace, how brands are a significant aspect of this, as well as political and societal matters. By looking into demographic aspects, a better understanding of the target group's behaviour is obtained.

2.2 Brands

Brands are what separate similar products from each other, giving companies identities and attributes that are not solely dependent on the functional properties of the products themselves. A brand can give products added value in terms of personality and meaning (Kaur & Kaur, 2019). A few subtopics will examine what brands contain and how they can form their unique relationships with people in order to understand why the participants might think like they do regarding Nike. A basic understanding of brands are crucial to be able to analyse the campaign through the lens of political consumerism. The reader needs to be able to understand how consumers purchasing decisions are partially depending on the different values brands portray.

The chapter starts with an explanation of the concept, brand personality (2.2.1) and how Nike might have had an intention to achieve a somewhat different brand personality by this campaign.

The sub-chapter regarding brand image (2.2.2) explains the concept and how a brand is connected to customers by its image; how the Dream Crazy campaign affects the brand image and its effect on customers. Companies increasingly use auxiliary entities to relate their brands to and this will be further examined regarding how they use co-branding and events to affect the brand image. The difference between personality (2.2.1) and brand image (2.2.2) are sometimes ambiguous and have been used interchangeably to describe how customers perceive brands. Kaur and Kaur (2019) concludes that it is possible to affect the brand image by using brand personality dimensions in the marketing activities. An empirical study showed connections between brand image and brand loyalty but not brand personality and brand loyalty (Mabkhot, Shaari & Salleh, 2017).

At last, the meanings that a brand can signal in relation to the consumers self-identity is clarified in 2.2.3. Examples of how Nike has created a brand meaning in the past and how the Dream Crazy campaign might further develop this is illustrated.

2.2.1 Brand personality

In the same way a human has different personalities and characteristics, so does a company, and more specifically, a brand (Davies et al., 2018). A brand personality is defined by the distinctive characteristics that are associated with the brand. There seems to be solid evidence to support that there are some universal characteristics that carry positive associations such as sincerity (warm, friendly, agreeable, honest, genuine), competence (effectiveness, competent, efficient) and status (sophisticated, elegant, prestigious) (Aaker, 1997, cited in Davies et al., 2018). Secondly there are local characteristics that carry positive associations in their respective regions, such as peacefulness in Japan and ruggedness in the U.S. (Aaker et al., 2001, cited in Davies et al., 2018).

Customers benefit from signaling these characteristics as they can use them in constructing or maintaining their own self-image and in promoting this self-image to others (Davies et al., 2018). For a consumer this is relevant as the consumer will want to support companies that have a brand personality that corresponds with the one they want to portray (Davies et al., 2018). This is important as one could assume that the individual will choose to support a brand with a similar brand personality to their own personality. This does not necessarily have to be the case since the individual could have negative characteristics that he or she does not want to display (Davies et al., 2018).

This concept is relevant to our paper since it can be argued that Nike is trying to achieve a more “sincere” brand personality. The choice to take a risk by taking a political stance like they have done by featuring Colin Kaepernick in the campaign could be seen as Nike trying to appear more honest, more genuine and therefore increase their overall legitimacy as a business. Assumably, Nike hopes that this will make their potential customers perceive Nike as a more reputable and respectable brand.

2.2.2 Brand image

Previous research strongly suggests that branded products are used as a means to represent a part of the consumers self or ties to a certain community or group rather than just being a functional product (Drosou, 2016; O’cass & Frost, 2002; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). A status-conscious market is more likely to be affected by symbolic characteristics of a brand, feelings aroused by the brand, and by the degree of congruence between the brand-user’s self-image and the brand’s image itself (O’cass & Frost, 2002). Higher symbolic characteristics creates stronger positive feelings, and the higher congruency between the consumer and the brand image, the greater the likelihood of the brand being perceived as possessing high status elements (O’cass & Frost, 2002).

In our case it could be argued that the Nike brand becomes a symbol, supporting Colin Kaepernick's cause despite it being controversial. Consumers who consider themselves to be against police brutality and racial inequality might then have created an ingroup (Escalas & Bettman, 2005) who are more likely to consume Nike to display one's values and opinions. However, at the same time, this ingroup of anti police brutality and racial injustice supporters becomes an outgroup for those who do not wish to associate themselves with the ingroup consumers (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Because they might perceive the original Nike associated ingroup as being disrespectful towards the American military and flag, hence opting to not consume Nike products. The political divide is also worth taking into account in this situation as president Trump publicly denounced Nike for this campaign in several statements (Gleeson, S., 2018), possibly creating an in and- outgroup based on political preference. On the other hand, other influential figures chose to visibly wear Nike shortly after the campaign started in public settings such as talk shows and the Emmy awards event as to applaud Nike for taking a stance (Bieler, 2018; Jones, 2018).

Every time a consumer faces a brand, the image they have and the memories they interlink with it are subject to change (Keller, 2003). As markets have become more competitive, companies have begun to associate themselves with auxiliary entities such as brands, people, events, or even other companies to be able to seize a larger share of the customers' minds (Keller, 2003).

A marketing activity widely used to enrich a brand image in the industry Nike operates in is sponsorship of events (Klein, 2005; Businesswire, 2019). The sponsor pays the event organisation to be able to associate its brand with them. Thereafter, the sponsor communicates this to get an association to the event by its customers. By sponsoring events the brand can increase the congruence of their brand image (Kwon, Ratneshwar & Kim, 2016). "*Sponsorship relies on the principle that leveraging the image associated with an event can improve brand associations, such that events' associations are transferred to the brand in a beneficial manner*" (Gross & Wiedmann, 2015, cited in Mazodier, Corsi & Quester, 2018, p. 269). Additionally, the sponsor and the event can gain the benefits of co-branding. Co-branding means that a partnership between two or more organizations is formed, which entails that the brands of these partners get financial rewards for the association with each other (Jemma & Ahmad, 2014). Nike sponsor many events around the globe including *NFL* which with whom they in June 2019 signed a new deal which makes them the sponsor of all 32 teams apparel until 2028 (Businesswire, 2019; Liberto, 2019). By sponsoring *NFL* so rigorously in combination with their political stance supporting Colin Kaepernick they cohere their brand in the *NFL* games to social justice. When the spectators spot Nike's logo during *NFL* games they will be more likely to associate the brand with the social justice cause that Nike has been supporting (Kaur & Kaur, 2019; Keller, 2003).

2.2.3 Brand meaning

This section focuses on the concept of brand meaning and the value it has for Nike's brand. In addition to the basic needs they seek to obtain by a product, customers are also shown to find additional value in brands that can help them express their self-identity (Batra, 2019). Brands can provide that by creating a

brand meaning. Brand meaning implies that a company has created an association network in their customers' minds. This is made through the interactions the company have with the customers, such as their communication activities. This association network often consist of cultural values such as ethnicity, group identity or family. A brand can obtain this image in several ways, e.g. through ad campaigns, public statements, logos, the people that normally buy the products and the price level. When the image is obtained and transferred to the customers it becomes part of the brand and the customers gets this meaning when they purchase the products. The customer thereby becomes a channel for further conveying of the brand meaning (Batra, 2019).

Brand meaning can also consist of emotional values and an example is given in Batra's article (2019). The author argues that Nike's brand signals the feelings of being a winner as well as confidence. The brand has reached this by having an immense focus on successful athletes that not only are seen as winners but also have an extraordinary personality. By connecting those celebrities to the brand, an association is made in the consumer's mind which entails that the person conceivably think of Nike when watching the athlete (Conceptdrop, 2018). Examples of this from Nike's campaigns are collaborations with Michael Jordan, Serena Williams and Zlatan Ibrahimovic (De Luce, 2013; Nike News, 2014). The campaign with Colin Kaepernick is on the same track as he has been a successful quarterback in the NFL and can be said to have a strong rebellious personality. However, this campaign also adds a significant value to the brand meaning as it also includes a strong political standpoint. By linking its brand with Kaepernick, Nike creates associations with the social justice cause (Keller, 2003; Snyder, 2019; McArdle, 2018). By the strong denouncing made by president Trump it could possibly be linked with leftist political values and support of the Democratic party (BBC, 2018). When customers wears Nike they can thus obtain their wish of being able to express their self-identity as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter.

2.3 Consumer behaviour

The CSR aspect of a company is an increasingly important factor for consumers the past decade (Franklin, 2008), it has increased to the point where regular charity contributions seem unlikely to be enough today. A new factor to consider today is companies' stances on political and societal issues. According to the Edelman (2018) Earned Brand study, so called belief driven buyers are now a majority in all the 8 markets studied in the report, across all age groups and income levels. Belief driven buyers are defined as those who would "Choose, switch, avoid or boycott a brand based on its stance on societal issues" (Edelman, 2018, n.p.). Although the Swedish market was not included amongst the surveyed, other, larger western markets such as Germany, U.K, France and U.S were. In the US as much as 88% of the population agree that corporations have the power to influence social change (PRmoment, 2016). As consumers increasingly perceive companies to have the power and the responsibility to do something about societal issues in the larger economies, it makes sense that a company, which is inherently American, would address an issue in a larger market such as the U.S in this case, but also interesting to see if it had an effect on a smaller economy that also has a looser connection to the societal issue at hand.

Even though the cultural dimension of marketing was not examined comprehensively it is important to note that consumer behaviour can differ considerably between different countries. For example, the meaning of a symbol can have widely different associations connected to it depending on the region (Akaka et al, 2014). In this case there could potentially be quite a few items that generate different brand meanings in different cultures which could affect how the views and opinions have changed, such as the swoosh or Colin Kaepernick. The choice not to dive deeper into this was because of the complexity it would entail. It would not be optimal considering the time frame of this paper.

2.3.1 Political Consumerism

Political consumerism builds on the notion that political beliefs, ethics or principles can be a part of individual consumer patterns. Even though consumption is mostly a private activity, consumers can have political questions in mind when making their purchase decisions which is what the area of political consumerism analyses. The Oxford Handbook of Political Consumerism (2018) defines the concept as “*market-oriented engagements emerging from societal concerns associated with production and consumption*” (Boström, Micheletti & Oosterveer, 2018, p. 2) and it involves concerns about e.g. the environment, human rights issues, ethics of production and moral challenges such as race and ethnicity (Boström, Micheletti & Oosterveer, 2018).

Political consumerism is an important topic to discuss in this study because it explains the response of those who were affected by the Dream Crazy campaign. Nike clearly had an intention of engage themselves in societal issues and politics by launching this campaign, which further builds on the literature in the preceding subchapter. By taking a stand on the issues of racial inequality and police brutality, Nike presumably hoped to advance the image, personality and meaning connected to their brand.

Theories define two types of political consumers based on the response they have towards a politically motivated action taken by a company; buycotters who reward the business, and boycotters who punish the business, based on their political stance (Neilson & Paxton, 2010). Consumers use it as a form of political engagement and are through these behaviours able to contribute to how society is to be shaped (Brinkman, 2004, cited in Neilson & Paxton, 2010). It can be argued that a consumer who chooses to partake in boycott or buycott behavior has changed their opinions and views of the brand in some way that lead them to their decision. Political consumerism is not something new, political consumer boycotts have been applied to reinforce the independence of countries, claim civil rights or discipline companies for unethical behaviour (Micheletti, 2010, cited in Kelm & Dohle, 2017). Boycotts were four times as likely to occur in 1999 compared to 1974 (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005) but, since then been relatively stable in Europe (Boström, Micheletti & Oosterveer, 2018). In addition to this, since the 1990’s consumers are choosing to reward companies by buycotting products or services which are produced under fair conditions, have minimal effect on the environment or were made in regions considered eligible (Micheletti, 2010, cited in Kelm & Dohle, 2017).

Intellectuals have been questioning whether political consumerism is a form of political or civic engagement (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014; Stolle et al., 2005, cited in Kelm & Dohle, 2017), but the fact remains that political consumerism has become one of the most prominent forms of political or civic engagement in western democracies (Teorell et al., 2007; Zukin et al., 2006, cited in Kelm & Dohle 2017). This is especially true for the United States (Baek, 2010; Copeland, 2014; Zukin et al., 2006, cited in Kelm & Dohle, 2017), Germany (Baringhorst, 2015, cited in Kelm & Dohle, 2017) and Scandinavia (Strømsnes, 2009, cited in Kelm & Dohle, 2017). These areas have defined half of the population as political consumers. Nielson and Paxton (2010) states that most studies on the subject are made in Scandinavia which is optimal for our study.

A large portion of political consumers identify as affluent, well-educated, middle-aged women (Kelm & Dohle, 2017). These individuals are actively engaging in politics usually having post-materialist values and left-leaning ideologies (Kelm & Dohle, 2017). Political consumers are also notorious for being heavy media users that mistrust national political institutions (Copeland & Atkinson, 2016; Stolle & Micheletti, 2013, cited in Kelm & Dohle, 2017). These discoveries are primarily based on analyses that have combined boycotts and buycotts or only focused on boycott activities. One could assume that it would be justifiable to not differentiate between boycotts and buycotts, as analyses have exposed that both activities are highly correlated (Stolle & Micheletti, 2013; Teorell et al., 2007, cited in Kelm & Dohle, 2017). While the two are similar, there are key differences between them as they are driven by different motives. Boycotts are seen as a punishment primarily targeted at one or a few corporations while buycotts are usually targeted at multiple corporations and are categorized as a form of encouragement (Friedman, 1999). Both activities are mainly executed individually rather than collectively (Gotlieb & Cheema, 2017), but there are more examples of collective boycotts (Micheletti, 2010, cited in Kelm & Dohle, 2017), which suggests that this is more common than collective buycotts (Kelm & Dohle, 2017). To further differentiate between the two they are often influenced by different factors. Boycotts are influenced by higher levels of education, political mistrust, democratic/liberal party identification and engaged citizenship norms. Buycotts are influenced by income, trust in political institutions, republican/conservative party identification and altruistic values (Baek, 2010; Copeland, 2014; Koos, 2012; Neilson, 2010, cited in Kelm & Dohle, 2017).

Taking a stance on such controversial issues which the Kaepernick campaign correspond with is inevitably going to initiate buycott and boycott behaviour as has been observed, and hence somehow have changed the consumers' views and opinions of the brand. Nevertheless, it is relevant to acknowledge to what extent and the reasons behind why sales increased despite loud backlash promoting boycotts on social media, which according to Kelm and Dohle (2017) should have stronger influence than similar online communications promoting buycotts. As the reactions on the campaign were mainly on the internet, the effects on the campaign were expected to induce more boycotts than buycotts according to Kelm and Dohle (2017).

Through the eyes of Leak, Woodham and McNeil (2015) the campaign can be seen as Nike's corporate brand managers taking a stance, as it was approved by Phil Knight and Mark Parker (Snyder, 2019) who later also stood by the campaign and stated that he was proud of it (Thomas, 2019). Although people's attitudes towards brands are affected by the stance taken by corporate brand managers, the opinion overall

from individuals are largely determined by previous attitudes towards the brand which often creates a halo effect (Leak, Woodham & McNeil, 2015). A Halo effect is a cognitive bias that occurs when a person has a positive opinion about something which then influences new information. When the persons' initial opinion is negative, it is called a reversed halo effect (Psychology Today, n.d.). When there are competing beliefs, consumers tend to minimize the importance of their own dissonant beliefs, however only if there are also beliefs that are congruent between the brand and the individual (Leak, Woodham & McNeil, 2015).

As to how companies decide whether or not it is worth taking a stance or not, they have to evaluate the risks behind such an action, especially when it is about such a sensitive topic such as race (Caldwell, 2017). Albeit not taking a stance may also indirectly mean that the company is indifferent to the issue or against it (Cooper, 2016), which in itself also could cause consequences.

Nielson and Paxton (2010) argues that consumer behaviour is dependent on social capital and therefore is not a solely individual activity. This also applies on political consumerism, and findings indicate that individuals with greater personal social capital and those who live in regions with higher average levels of social capital are more likely to be political consumers. An individual with high social capital is more likely to have more information on a political subject as well as being more motivated to act politically (Nielson & Paxton, 2010). The article describes that word-of-mouth communication has a big impact on consumer behaviour (Arndt, 1967; Brown & Reingen, 1987; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955, cited in Nielson & Paxton, 2010), and considering that more people are being engaged in the discussion about the topic in the U.S., that would result in the word of mouth activities around the subject being higher there. This factor might contribute to the campaign being more likely to result in boycotts/buycotts in the U.S. than in Sweden.

2.3.2 Consumer behaviour in Sweden

As the study is conducted on Swedish consumers it is of concern to look into how they act in the marketplace. The choice to dive deeper into the concept of political consumerism in the purchasing behaviour is done to be able to get a picture of how the Swedes act in accordance to corporations' political stances, in a campaign as the one studied in this paper.

Sweden is regarded as a consumer society where price is the first factor considered and quality as the second most important (Santander, 2019). Swedes are very keen to follow new trends quickly (Solér, 2017).

Swedes see themselves as progressive and post-nationalistic but are rather nationalistic in their purchase behaviour. They prefer local companies and have a high loyalty towards European corporations compared to non-european. They are notably suspicious about global giants (Mitzner, 2018). Oscar Carlsson, a chief innovation officer at the Swedish consumer intelligence company, Cint, says that to be able to sell to Swedes *"You have to locally adapt your marketing and language to Swedish"* (Mitzner, 2018, n.p.). The author of the Forbes article (Mitzner, 2018) also suggest that it might be possible that an increased

hostility towards multinationals in EU and Swedish politics has spread to consumer behaviour. *“Globally, protectionist and localist attitudes are on the rise, and Sweden might be a glimpse into what consumer behavior will look like across the Western world”* (Mitzner, 2018, n.p.).

Swedish political consumers consider other aspects than merely self interested concerns when purchasing. They believe that every consumer should take considerations about the societal and ethical issues associated with the goods they buy (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005).

Northwestern Europe has long been seen as one of the leading regions for political consumerism (Stolle, Micheletti, & Crépault, 2013, cited in Boström, Micheletti and Oosterveer, 2018) and approximately 60% of Swedish consumers are political consumers (Boström, Micheletti & Oosterveer, 2018). Swedes ranked the highest in Europe 2002, with slightly more than twice as many boy- and buycotters’ compared to the average in the region, as seen in the chart below (European Social Survey, 2002, cited in Micheletti & Stolle, 2005).

	Boycott (%)	Buycott (%)
Europe, average	16	24
Sweden	33	55

Chart 1. Percentage of boy- and buycotts in Europe and Sweden (Data from European Social Survey (ESS), 2002/2003, cited in Micheletti & Stolle, 2005.)

In some European countries (including Sweden) vegetarianism and consumption in regards to environmental issues are noted as deeply rooted in society (Stolle, Micheletti, & Crépault, 2013, cited in Boström, Micheletti & Oosterveer, 2018). Consumption of ethically labeled goods are more widespread and significantly higher in Northwestern Europe than in other European countries and Northern America (Boström, Micheletti & Oosterveer, 2018).

Micheletti and Stolle (2005) made an exhaustive study on Swedish political consumers and concluded that seven factors played a significant role in who the political consumer was. The study suggest that a large portion of the political consumers are middle-aged women with a high income. Women have a higher political consumerism than men in almost every European country and in Sweden the gap is nine percent. Micheletti and Stolle (2005) suggest that this is due to the fact that they care more about those issues and that, as they are more active in consumer- and animal -rights organisations, they get reached by information about these issues more frequently (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005). However, there might be other factors behind this gender gap (Ferrer-Fons & Fraile, 2013). This is consistent with studies on political consumerism for other nationalities (Pettersson, Westholm, & Bloomberg, 1989; Pettersson et al., 1998; Stolle & Hooge, 2004; Ferrer-Fons, 2004, cited in Micheletti & Stolle, 2005).

The largest age group is in the range 30-39 years old. The youngest (15-19) and oldest (60+) were less involved in political consumerism. Education has been seen to play a big role as individuals with a university or college degree were more than twice as likely to be political consumers compared to those

with only an elementary school education (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005). This has also been shown in studies regarding other nationalities (Goul Andersen & Tobiasen, 2003; Petersson et al., 1998; Brady, Verba & Schlozman, 1995, cited in Micheletti & Stolle, 2005).

In Swedish culture, consumption in society is important as a sign of equality and lack of poverty (Solér, 2017). However, household income is shown to be important, the highest income group compared to the lowest income group showed a 1.5 times higher likelihood to be involved in political consumerism (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005). A reason Micheletti and Stolle (2005) suggest could have an impact is that organic and fair trade goods that are labeled as such generally have a higher price level, or are at least perceived as such. Political consumerism might therefore not be feasible for everyone in society to participate in (Ferrer-Fons & Fraile, 2013). There is a higher political consumerism for those who shop for groceries often but when it comes to shopping for clothes, those who shop very often does not have the highest political consumerism. This could be seen in the light that too much consumption of these goods goes against the ethical values this phenomenon builds upon (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005).

People living in rural areas are noted as less likely to be political consumers than those in urban areas (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005), although this cannot be seen in the newer study by Ferrer-Fons and Fraile (2013). There is a big gap between those who are interested in politics compared to those who are not (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005; Ferrer-Fons & Fraile, 2013). 78 % of those who are very interested in politics are said to be political consumers, compared to 35 % of those who are not at all interested. As nearly half of Swedes are regarded as political consumers it is clear that the phenomenon is widespread across the political spectrum but those who are more left-leaning politically tend to be more likely to be political consumers (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005). The group interviewed in our study are students in Lund where leftist opinions are disproportionately high compared to Sweden in general (Sellbjer, 2018). The political party with the highest percentage of political consumers in Micheletti and Stolle's study (2005) is the left-party (Vänsterpartiet) which have approximately twice the share of votes among the students in Lund compared to the whole country (Sellbjer, 2018).

An interesting discovery related to our study in Micheletti and Stolle's article (2005) is that political consumers in Sweden are significantly more critical to the U.S and multinational corporations, while also being more positive towards global protest movements. The critical view towards the U.S. was also prevalent for non-political consumers, although not as extensive (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005). A more critical view of Nike's action can therefore be anticipated from the interviewees whom are political consumers, while on the other hand a negative view of the U.S. entails that they should consider the critique against Nike to be less valid. The backing of global protest movements could mean that the political consumers in this study will be more aligned with Colin Kaepernick's actions and the Black Lives Matter movement and supportive towards Nike taking such a stance.

2.4 Conclusion

The chapter has reviewed literature regarded as the most relevant to the research questions intended to be answered. The literature has been divided into two subchapters, namely: 2.2 Brands and 2.3 Consumer behaviour, as the literature on the subject is somewhat divided into those areas, although they are interrelated. The authors has consistently sought to not only describe but also connect the literature to the context of the study, by linking it to Nike and the Dream crazy campaign.

The existing knowledge relevant to the study has been revised and the authors gained knowledge of what to put most effort on when they were proceeding with collection of data. There is an extensive amount of research on brands and consumer behaviour, but on the area of political consumerism the quantity is definitely less thorough. There is clearly a “research gap” when it comes to how a political stance is affecting consumers views and opinions of a brand. The antecedent literature shows that consumers pays great attention to companies position on political matters, but it fails to delve deeply into the subject. There is a notable lack of studies examining the effects on consumers views and opinions of a company/brand after they have engaged in a societal issue by taking a political stance in a marketing campaign. Any studies on political consumerism for Swedish consumers in relation to a campaign were not found.

The method of the study described in the next chapter, evolved from the literature review as to how the study could help to close the research gap in existing literature.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains what methods were used and how they were utilized. This includes data collection, data collection process, data analysis. The sample is shown and how the participants were chosen. The chapter also argues for why these methods in particular were more appropriate for this specific study compared to other reasonably considerable methods.

3.2 Data Collection

A qualitative method was chosen as views and opinions are based on subjective emotions and attitudes as opposed to a quantitative study that would analyze tangible figures and statistics (Bryman, 2015).

After evaluating a variety of qualitative methods, one-to-one interviews was chosen to be applied. They allow a higher focus on the interviewees point of view as opposed to quantitative interviews where the researcher's concerns are of higher interest (Bryman, 2015). A qualitative interview also gives the interviewee more room to expand when necessary and go into tangents that might reveal what they think is relevant or important to the subject, which can be essential when dealing with topics such as views and opinions. Furthermore, one-on-one interviews have been previously shown to be more successful in bringing out the interviewees opinion of themselves and their reactions to advertising practices as opposed to focus groups (Flynn, D'Arcy & Bowles, 1991).

The interviews were semi-structured consisting of 9 questions; warm-up questions were used to relieve potential tension that might arise in order to get the interviewees to open up more for the following questions related to topics that are more directly connected to the research questions (Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences Department of Sociology Interview Strategy Guide 2019). There are also several probing questions that are to be used depending on the situation, in order to encourage the interviewee to develop their thoughts further in specific topics.

Actions were taken to assure the interviewees' comfort in order to get more detailed answers; the interviews were conducted in a comfortable environment chosen by the interviewees, a location they would view as a safe place where they are able to express themselves freely, oftentimes the interview was conducted in a group room the interviewees were familiar with on Lund University campus, and a few interviews were carried out in the interviewees home. The only people present in the room during any interview would be the interviewer and the interviewee, to avoid any distractions.

Semi-structured interviews have the benefits of giving the interviewer power to control the direction of the interview while at the same time allowing the interviewees the opportunity to freely discuss their thoughts and opinions (Gill et al, 2008). The interviewees can freely expand on any topic that comes to

mind based on the questions they are asked. The researcher also has the option to request the interviewees to clarify or expand upon their answers if it is unclear or lacking in detail. Useful techniques such as asking the participants to keep talking when they are thinking according to the TAP method (Boren & Ramey, 2000), using silence at chosen points to allow the participant to reflect on their answer and perhaps add more to it, or responding with short affirmative words such as “mm” or “right” to encourage continued enthusiasm can also be easier applied when using semi-structured interviews as opposed to fully structured interviews for example.

Having face-to-face interviews as the go to method allows the researchers to register several additional ways of communication that might indicate the interviewees feelings and attitude towards whatever they are talking about, which potentially could be used as additional findings (Ozdemir & Koc, 2012). Examples such as tone, body language, laughs and pauses can sometimes be available in other forms of interviews as well, however more difficult to detect. Methods such as asynchronous online interviews such as email correspondence can bring other benefits such as longer, more coherent and more thought out answers (Bryman, 2015). The researchers believed however that the physical communication attributes are more important factors to consider when assessing the interviewees’ views and opinions, as emotion and tone can reveal much of what they think about the advertisement, especially for the first impressions.

The sampling method used is convenience sampling; the sample size for the two pilot studies total eight interviews, two in the first and six in the second. The main study consists of 11 interviews as can be seen in the chart below. Data collection stopped when many similar views and opinions started to appear more often, and barely any new information was provided. The target group for the study were Swedish students at Lund University between the ages of 19-25. This is to keep the effect of external factors that would potentially be very significant, such as culture, to a minimum, as it would be outside of our scope. Students at the university were chosen rather than a randomized sample of people in Lund because the interview is conducted entirely in English, and students are required to possess a certain level of English (UHR, 2019), which guarantees a higher level of accuracy in the responses and lowers the risk for misinterpretation compared to the average Swede. The age group also aligns with Nike’s primary target group, which according to Wedbush Securities analyst Christopher Svezia is males between the ages of 14-22 (Meyersohn, 2018). The target group for this study is slightly different from Nike’s due to legal reasons; interviewing individuals under 18 has legal complications, and strictly limiting participants to a maximum age of 22 would make it significantly more difficult to find participants as convenience sampling is used.

Participant	Interview length
Participant 1	31:35
Participant 2	25:50
Participant 3	15:14
Participant 4	21:01
Participant 5	18:36
Participant 6	25:15
Participant 7	34:46
Participant 8	15:51
Participant 9	22:06
Participant 10	20:35
Participant 11	25:55

Chart 2, Overview of interviews

Pilot studies serve several useful purposes such as identifying questions that might be misunderstood or that might cause the interviewee discomfort, indicate the average duration of the interviews, and whether or not the provided briefing of the event was adequate (Bryman, 2015). After conducting the first pilot study the interview guide was revised to include more open questions, and questions which felt out of place that consistently interrupted the flow of the interviews were removed. The questions used in the interview were meant to open up a conversation rather than requiring a simple “yes” or “no” answer. To further ensure that the interviewees open up regarding their own past experiences and emotions, the previously mentioned techniques (Boren & Ramey, 2000) were used more often. The second pilot study required a larger sample size as the focus there lied on removing any potentially leading or driving questions that would occasionally appear during probing. The final interview guide was formed to focus on drawing out the interviewee’s own experiences and views without leading them on by providing key words and the like, and to only expand on certain topics by using the terms the interviewees have said themselves.

3.3 Data Collection Process

During the interviewee recruitment process, the participants were asked to pick a convenient time and a place where they were comfortable with being interviewed.

All interviews started with the same introduction for consistency, with emphasis on that it is not a study on knowledge, but that only their opinions and views are in focus.

The interview started off with a few simple questions asking the participants if they engage in any sports and whether or not they had heard of Nike before. These questions are part of the aforementioned warm-up questions which serve the purpose of easing the interviewees into the interview so they feel comfortable and relaxed, but they are still relevant enough to a point where they could provide potential insights and findings. Before the video was shown the participants were briefed about Colin Kaepernick and were given background information regarding the events that unfolded when he kneeled; a portion of the briefing read: *“According to him it was because he wanted to protest police violence and inequalities against colored people in the U.S. People were divided into two sides, some supported his actions while others, including president Trump, condemned it because they saw the act as disrespectful towards the American military and flag”*. In order to make sure it is not mistaken as a purely political advertisement, general results from the campaign were briefed as well. The purpose is to give the interviewees adequate knowledge and context so they were able to address the political aspect of the campaign despite not having knowledge about it beforehand, but not to lead them on to think that the campaign was only about that. The brief was identical for everyone regardless of their previous knowledge of the event to keep it as consistent as possible from the researchers’ side.

After this background information the participant was shown the video. After the video the participant was asked to answer a few more questions; the interview guide featured in appendix 1 contains the structured questions that were the same for everyone and several probing questions that could be used depending on the situation. If the interviewee mentioned anything relating to *politics, stance, message* or *purpose* for example, a probing question containing the same words they used would be asked to have them develop their views and opinions further. Examples could be

“But then you have like the other side where they do it in order to forward their like corporate agenda...”
- Participant 11

“What is the corporate agenda here?” - Interviewer

and

“I think, Nike’s definitely capitalizing on Kaepernick, the position that he’s in and trying to turn it into, like a marketing strategy.” - Participant 3

“When you say capitalizing on the position, what position do you mean and how are they capitalizing on it?” - Interviewer

If the interviewer wanted to get more information regarding another topic the interviewee was currently talking about, the previously mentioned techniques such as silence or “hmm” were often used to encourage further development of whatever the interviewee was talking about.

3.4 Data Analysis

Other researchers suggest that thematic analysis is appropriate when looking into people’s views, opinions, experiences and values from a set of qualitative data, such as in our case; interviews and interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2015) and seemed more appropriate than grounded theory as higher level of detail that grounded theory entails is redundant.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) and (King 2004, cited in Bryman 2015), a thematic analysis is advantageous when investigating the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting the similarities and differences, and developing unforeseen insights. Thematic analysis is also suitable for condensing key features of a large data set, as it requires a systematic approach to handling data, aiding in producing a clear and organized final report (King 2004, cited in Bryman 2015). All of the above listed reasons made for strong arguments as to why thematic analysis would be highly appropriate to use in order to discover relevant findings that will aid in answering the research questions. Hence, thematic analysis was chosen as the analysis method.

Thematic analysis is carried out in the following six phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006):

1. Familiarization of data
2. Initial coding
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

What was done in each of the phases are explained in detail below.

In the first phase, familiarization of data, interviews were recorded and subsequently manually transcribed. In order for the researchers to further familiarize themselves with the material, a collective reading of all transcripts was carried out where recurring words that could be indicators for potential patterns were noted, such as (*political*) *stance*, *capitalize*, *inspiring* etc. These were noted because they were generally repetitions and expressions or words that were used specifically to say something about what the interviewees thought about the campaign, and that would very seldomly be used in other contexts during the interviews, which are indicators for potential themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). One of the first examples being the focus on shoes in particular or interviewees hinting at the motives behind the advertisement being somewhat similar to what greenwashing infers in environmental promotions, but in purpose driven marketing it is called woke-washing (Schaefer, 2019).

Before we go in to the initial coding process, it is important to understand how the data material is structured and what each part is used for. A coded piece of data, in this case a quote or an excerpt, is the data extract, there is a plethora of such extracts, and only a selection of those are featured in the final analysis. The data extract is pulled from a data item, which is a transcript. All data items, the 11 transcripts, make up the data set.

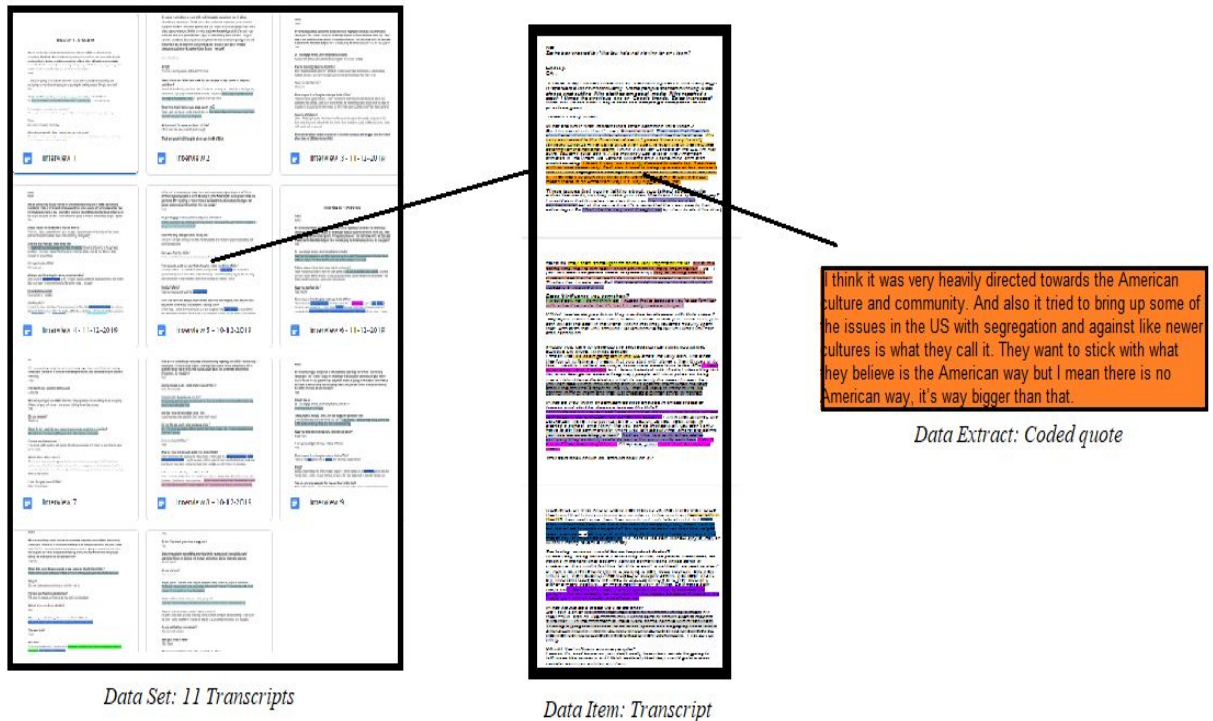


Figure 1, Illustrates data set, data item and data extract

The second phase is the initial coding, which entails giving labels to information in the transcripts that were deemed theoretically significant or potentially relevant to answer the research question (Bryman & Bell, 2015); this information was highlighted in different colors representing a code. Code names and new codes were generated as soon as the researchers found an excerpt that expressed something that they were aware of being recurring or theoretically significant but did not belong in any of the already existing codes. Some examples of codes that were generated during this process were brand associations such as comments regarding quality or specific items, personality descriptors which were when the interviewee would state something about themselves as a person or consumer, and one where they address the geographical aspect of the event and how it affects the relevance of the issue. The codes consist of data extracts with similar distinct meanings or opinions, and the purpose of a code is to be used for deeper analysis later on in the thematic analysis process (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The final code list consisted of 21 codes and can be found in appendix 2. It is important to note that coded data differs from the units of analysis (the themes) despite both containing data extracts.

The third phase was searching for themes; to get an even more organized view of the data material to draw findings and patterns from, fewer categories that are more concentrated with relevant data are desired. This was done by sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating the relevant data extracts. We compared the amount of extracts that were in each respective code; codes with relatively few extracts could be merged into larger groups if the contents were related. An example would be to group extracts from the codes *Opinions on Nike's actions* and *Opinions on companies taking a political stance* into the new initial theme *Opinion of actions taken*. The directions of Bryman (2015) and Ryan and Bernard (2003) regarding what criteria a theme needs to fulfill in order to be useful and how to identify them were taken into strong consideration during this phase. Not all of the criteria mentioned were applied but the most essential ones included for example looking for repetitions and recurring topics, which is one of the most common ways in which themes are identified. Observing theory-related material is also a useful way of finding inspiration for themes, which can be done by using the scientific concepts discussed in the literature review chapter (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). After grouping codes, a copy of the data set was made, and the highlight colors in the copied items (transcripts) were changed to match the new themes, which resulted in a data set with six different highlight colors representing themes (initial themes, see appendix 3) as opposed to the 21 colors (codes).

Next step, phase 4, was theme revision. After phase 3 there were six themes, but they were too broad as there were contradicting opinions within the same theme, which lead to a theme review with the purpose of trying to generate higher level themes or create subthemes to make better sense of the material. In order to do that next, all data extracts, was gathered in one place and sorted by highlight color (theme name). At this stage the full context that was provided by the whole transcript is gone, the extracts were instead analysed in themselves to remove irrelevant quotes and connect relevant ones. By attaching respondent number to the extracts as well it became easier to clearly see which opinions were more prevalent than others and if there were multiple similar answers from different participants. Links and connections were found between extracts and how they could provide insight to how or why a participants opinions of Nike was affected over the course of the interview as well as a result of the advertisement campaign. An example of a link between themes that lead to a finding would be excerpts from two of the initial themes, *opinions of actions taken* and *reasons why campaign changed view* which lead to a finding which suggests that despite people having positive views of the actions, they are prevented from boycotting due to monetary reasons. At the end of this phase there were seven themes.

Phase 5 was defining and naming themes, further determining what was essential in each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and making sure the theme names show relevance to the research questions.

In summary, there were several different ways of viewing the information:

- Codes: Transcripts with highlights in 21 different colors representing codes.
- Initial themes: Transcripts with 6 different colors representing initial themes.
- Theme review: Excerpts and quotes collected sorted by the 6 theme colors and interviewee numbers.
- Final themes: Excerpts and quotes sorted in to the 7 final themes with interviewee numbers.

The sixth and final step is producing the report; the final themes are found in the following *Findings* chapter with data extracts demonstrating the prevalence of each theme. The *Discussion* chapter subsequently interprets and analyses the data by linking it to relevant literature.

4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the final seven themes that were determined in phase 5 of the thematic analysis process as described in the methodology chapter. The findings are described and backed up with selected data extracts that best captures the essence of each theme, they should provide a clear picture of why it became a theme and give an indication of how they are relevant to the research questions. Their connection to theory and the research questions is specified more elaborately in the discussions chapter.

4.2 Themes

Nike's agenda is questioned

When the participants were asked about what they think the purpose of the campaign was from Nike's side the answers were pretty consistent. Understanding what the participants thought Nike's motives were for making such a controversial campaign provided insight on how they viewed the campaign and if their image of the brand itself was affected.

The campaign was mostly seen as having a strong monetary motive. They thought Nike's primary purpose for launching the campaign was to make more money rather than bringing awareness to the Kaepernick campaign. As seen in the examples below, participants viewed the campaign rather cynically:

"That's a marketing technique to make money. You get the attention of the people and then you get the money."

- Participant 1

"I mean, I understand, business is business, you go where the money is. And then Nike is like "oh hold on a minute, we do too because everybody else does"

- Participant 2

"I think, Nike's definitely capitalizing on Kaepernick, the position that he's in and trying to turn it into, like a marketing strategy."

- Participant 3

"Again I might be a bit cynical but i just, I kind of just think it's just a marketing thing, I don't necessarily think that like Nike... I mean Nike is just a collection of many many people right, I don't think that like this, is the Nike CEO really believing in this."

- Participant 3

“I’ve read a lot about it (CSR), and done courses in CSR so I know all about what they try to do with it and nowadays it’s more of a... it’s something companies feel like they have to do.”

- Participant 5

“Most of the time companies will always try to maximize profit, and winnings. And if you’re trying to maximize profits and winnings you’re going to not go into a political view based on what you think, but based on how you could maximize profits and winnings.”

- Participant 6

“But companies always have a money making motive in it”

- Participant 7

“But I think it’s also in a companies nature to capitalize on such things. There cannot be a not money making motive.”

- Participant 7

“They wanna make money because they know that, I mean I think they want us to think they’re ahh “they’re so nice”, that Nike picked that guy because he believed in himself and stuff like that but we all know. I know... I know that they did it because of the cash. Marketing yeah.”

- Participant 10

Although the sample above does not include every interview, the cynical perspective was very prevalent throughout.

Positive views on the political aspect

One of the more surprising and interesting findings was the universal attitude towards Nike engaging in some sort of social/political issues. This was one of the most prevalent themes that were discovered as every single participant in the study except for one seemed to agree on the fact that a company the size of Nike does have a huge platform and that this power has to be utilized for something. The participants all had different ideas and preferences as to what this platform should be used for, which is normal considering how polarizing politics tend to be. The following quotes are examples of the participants stating their positive opinions regarding Nike’s choice to engage in a social issue.

“I think it is a great, a great procedure to go through for the company because then you get the attention of all those stakeholders and you spark controversy and that gains a lot of attention.”

- Participant 1

“I mean that (the Dream Crazy campaign) got a lot of attention from people, so in those kind of things I think it’s a... I think it’s good, I think it’s needed.”

- Participant 2

“I mean the reason is, it [the Dream Crazy campaign] kind of showed some integrity of the company that they were willing to stand behind a person that can be viewed as controversial.”

- Participant 4

“I believe that as a company you are part of the society that you work in, that you sell in, that you affect people and the people around you, and in the community, so being involved and taking active stances on social issues can be a very powerful way to show that you’re more than just your products.”

- Participant 4

What is more interesting is that some of the participants who expressed cynical views can still agree that even if Nike is doing this out of a financial interest, the fact that they bring awareness to these types of issues is still positive.

“I mean even though they’re trying to make financial winnings out of it obviously, and they obviously did, it still shows a message that Nike, one of the biggest companies, is endorsing Kaepernick... that still sends a positive message.”

- Participant 6

“As I said earlier, I think it’s both good and bad. On one side you are helping individuals from the community and you are giving exposure to those communities who often could be like left out. So you are giving a broader perspective to the general public in using your platform for something good. On the other side you could also see it as them exploiting these communities in order to draw consumers emotional strings and... create a false genuinity their brand and what they’re trying to do.”

- Participant 11

Cynical views on the perceived risk taking by Nike

Two of the participants acknowledged that Nike was willing to take a risk by choosing to feature Colin Kaepernick in the Dream Crazy campaign. However this so called risk taking is viewed cynically and the two participants claim that Nike do not genuinely believe in the cause they are supposedly supporting. The following quotes illustrate how the participants feel towards Nike’s risk taking.

“I guess you can say it’s risky... [choosing to feature Colin Kaepernick] but I assume that they did some sort of a risk analysis to figure out whether or not this would be smart, and it seemed to have paid out.”

- Participant 3

“So when a company, a large company like that takes a stance and it like shockingly, you know “shockingly”, improves their sales numbers I just think it’s like a cynical... Like I’d think cynically like “oh they’re just doing this to boost their marketing”

- Participant 3

“I’m guessing Nike took a gamble on this one”

- Participant 8

“I think very often they [companies] take the popular stance though and then it doesn’t mean anything anymore.”

- Participant 8

“I think companies they do eh... in quotation marks “risky campaigns” from time to time.”

- Participant 8

The view of Nike as a brand is claimed to be unaffected

Even though the majority of the participants saw the campaign in a positive light, saying it was a well-made commercial and their attitude towards Nike engaging in a political issue is positive, their opinions of Nike as a brand remained unchanged in most cases. If they liked Nike, they still like Nike and if they did not like Nike, they still do not like Nike. The following quote shows a participant who liked Nike before the interview and have not changed their view.

“I liked Nike before the interview, I still like Nike now.”

- Participant 2

While another participant had the opposite opinion, expressing that he was already biased against Nike and therefore this campaign will not change their mind.

“I think I am far too biased like from the beginning, from before I always think like this is an advertisement, so I don’t really think that this advertisement does anything to change my view of the brand.”

- Participant 11

When asked directly if the campaign had changed their views and opinions in any way, six out of eleven answered that it had not. This is illustrated by the following quotes:

“No I mean no I never really had a strong opinion on Nike.”

- Participant 3

“I would say no.”

- Participant 5

“No, I wouldn’t say so.”

- Participant 6

“No I wouldn’t say so.”

- Participant 8

“No it didn’t.”

- Participant 10

“No, my opinion of Nike as a brand hasn’t changed.”

- Participant 11

This is however quite hard to measure as the participant could state that their opinion of Nike has not changed whatsoever even if it actually has, without them realizing. What can be said though is that the participants themselves do not think that their views and opinions on Nike have changed as a result of this campaign communicating a societal stance .

Enhanced views of Nike as a brand because of the political aspect

Even though our findings above suggest that most customers are not directly taking action after viewing the campaign, three of the participants said that they gained a better view of the company.

One participant responded with the following to questions about if the campaign had any effect on his view of the brand:

“I respect Nike for running an ad like this [an ad that brings awareness to a societal issue] and it makes me, yeah, I would buy Nike, definitely.”

- Participant 1

“So yeah I’d say I like Nike, even more now after I saw the ad”

- Participant 1

“Yeah, I’d actually say that [that his opinion has changed], cus before that, it was just like, like any other multi like billion dollar company you know, or corporation... but now I’ve..., you get the feeling that you relate to them, cus I agree with their opinions as far as I know”

- Participant 1

The following participant claims that his views of Nike as a brand were already positive but that they were reinforced.

“My view on Nike was kind of already established, I already have a very positive view of them and what they’re trying to do. I mean there are certain things that most global companies have issues with like how they produce, how they treat their workers and things like that but kind of like the message that their clothes stand for I guess was kind of like reinforced.”

- Participant 4

Another participant had similar opinions, this is illustrated with the following quotes.

“Yes, ehm, like I said, they, it's a very bold move to make (choosing to feature Colin Kaepernick), and a very specific stand, that I personally find good, so therefore they rose in my eyes.”

- Participant 9

“Yes, because what they have taken a stance on agrees with my values so yes, so I would consider supporting them just because of that.”

- Participant 9

“They have put the attention on them [minorities in America] instead of fashion or just quality or something like that.”

- Participant 9

“I think they have an honest agenda behind it as well, they want to support him and they want to support people that think like him. They put their entire brand behind it because the brand has a lot of power, so there's a lot of power in putting something like that against the odds, well, against the general opinion.”

- Participant 9

Price and quality outweigh the political aspect

This theme explains the reasoning that many participants gave for not taking a concrete action in supporting Nike by purchasing their products, despite agreeing that Nike's platform is being used to bring awareness to societal and viewing it as a positive thing. People put value in value; price and quality or a combination of the two seemed to be the deciding factors for the vast majority of participants, who thought that these factors carried significantly more weight than the fact that Nike took a stance in the Kaepernick debate. This is exemplified by the following excerpts where the participants explained that price is the deciding factor when making a purchasing decision.

“For me when I buy a product I'm very stringent with my money so it's all about the quality to price ratio.”

- Participant 2

“I don't really have the monetary assets to just go buy a pair of shoes just cus I like a commercial.”

- Participant 4

“When I choose a product I'm quite pragmatic, I try to look at many things like price, or reviews”

- Participant 6

“I choose mostly based on my wallet.”

- Participant 8

Other participants claimed that quality or the combination of quality and price were the deciding factors. This is illustrated by the following quotes.

“For me it’s price, obviously... quality, and sure... who made it”
- Participant 1

“For me it just comes down to the quality of the product.”
- Participant 3

“I think quality is always the main (factor).”
- Participant 10

“I value quality, comfort, top performance.”
- Participant 11

This finding might suggest that despite the campaign’s political stance having a certain effect on the participants’ views and opinions, it does not necessarily reflect in their actions when it comes to how they choose brands.

Lack of relatability to the issue

The last theme uncovered that many participants felt disconnected to the issue for various reasons and therefore Nike’s political stance in the Kaepernick debate did not affect them very much, since they were never really that concerned with the issue to begin with. The following quote shows the opinion of one of the participants on the Kaepernick debate.

“I was kind of following this whole kneeling thing from the sidelines. I didn’t get too passionate about it one way or another. I thought it was a bit silly that it got so big as it did.”
- Participant 2

Another reason to why they were not affected by this campaign could also be due to the geographical context, which some participants have pointed out:

“Well, first of all because ehm this whole, first of all the NFL, it’s this with Colin Kaepernick at least, that’s the NFL, and we don’t have American football here.”
- Participant 1

“Yeah the case in the US but, otherwise it’s so far away doesn’t really concern us, the whole thing about police brutality it’s not eh... it’s not really a problem here in Sweden. At least as far as I know and then in the US it’s been a racial problem for a long time and they raised the issue, but yeah it doesn’t concern us directly so then eh usually people don’t care as much in that case I think. “
- Participant 1

The participant then went onto say that if Nike had focused on another issue such as the environment he would be more inclined to support them. This is shown in the following quote.

“Let's say if Nike work on making shoes more environmentally friendly instead of not environmentally friendly. Like let's say you make a shoe cost 20 euros more I feel like a lot of people would buy that shoe still. Cus they know Nike's stance and they support it.”

- Participant 1

One participant mentioned that if Nike would sponsor someone that was not already a superstar and instead some more local athletes then that would make a bigger impact in his purchasing decision.

“Like my football team here in Sweden, something that I feel close to, If something would happen with like a player there then I would be like “Oh this speaks to me” because that's someone that I have a relation to, at least I feel like I have a relation to that. Something like that could possibly influence me. It'd also be like “oh they're supporting him?” he's not that big and I really like him.”

- Participant 6

Miscellaneous findings

This subchapter presents findings that did not end up in a theme because of lack of prevalence or if the extract did not fit into any theme. These findings were still considered interesting as they could be used in the discussion which will be presented in the next chapter.

“It wouldn't surprise me if Nike has its production in a poorer country. Most of these companies do for obvious reasons”

- Participant 1

“I kind of always saw Nike in a pretty good light, I was kind of following this whole kneeling thing from the sidelines. I didn't get too passionate about it one way or another. I thought it was a bit silly that it got so big as it did.”

- Participant 2

“When companies take a stance like.. If they take a stance that's known to affect their sales negatively but they feel strongly enough about that stance to take it anyway... Then I can respect that cus it feels like more genuine stance is being taken whereas if a company is taking a stance like a company like Nike they probably would never take a stance that would negatively affect their sales.”

- Participant 3

“If I would read a newspaper with that a company is silently helping people, then that would definitely affect my decision.”

- Participant 7

“I mean corporations like Nike are part of the... like if we put this in the wider economic system they do create a lot of change and they do move the economy which has a lot of other effects so I don't, I don't know if I can say it's [Nike choosing to feature Colin Kaepernick] positive or negative but they're definitely good and bad aspects to it.”

- Participant 11

4.3 Conclusion

The cynical perspective where participants think that the underlying purpose of the campaign is self-gain in the form of profits is quite prevalent. On the other hand they generally view this campaign in a positive light and most people reflected on an agenda, whether that agenda was increasing profit or trying to bring awareness to social issues or maybe a bit of both remains unknown, however one does not exclude the other and both can be done simultaneously. Two participants acknowledged risk-taking but also saw it cynically, claiming it was a calculated risk. Despite the positive attributes that were associated with the societal issues which Nike brought to light with campaign, the participants' views and opinions of Nike as a brand mostly remained unchanged according to themselves. Three participants expressed an enhanced view of Nike because of the actions they have taken. Price and quality seems to be the biggest denominator factoring in purchasing decisions in the target group, a factor that was consistently prioritized over Nike's engagement in these social issues. Another reason that seems to have contributed to the low effect on purchasing behaviour is found to be that the people in the target group do not always feel connected to the issue surrounding Kaepernick and the social injustices he fought against since it is far away from our everyday life here in Sweden compared to people of a similar target group in America in which it probably could have higher levels of relatability.

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter revolves around discussing the findings and linking them to the research questions and relevant literature from the literature review in detail to further solidify our findings. Each theme is discussed separately at first, and in the conclusion of this chapter a more overarching view is presented.

5.2 Discussion of Themes

Nike's agenda is questioned

The findings showing that the campaign is viewed in a very cynical perspective, which is not very peculiar since it is not uncommon for marketing displaying societal issues to be interpreted that way (Khandelwal, Sharma & Jain, 2019). Cynical consumers view companies as acting in their own self-interest disregarding consequences and using deceptive marketing strategies (Helm, Moulard & Richins, 2015). The people in our study seem to think that this simply is a marketing strategy that is only being used to increase sales. This aligns with the Edelman (2019) study which showed that 56% of consumers in all age and income groups across eight countries claim that brands are using societal issues as a marketing ploy. The following quote exemplifies that.

“Again I might be a bit cynical but i just, I kind of just think it’s just a marketing thing, I don’t necessarily think that like Nike... I mean Nike is just a collection of many many people right, I don’t think that like this, is the Nike CEO really believing in this.”

- Participant 3

The participant did not know this, but as was covered in our background chapter, Phil Knight, founder of Nike and CEO up until 2016 (Forbes, 2020), stated, *“You have to take a stand on something, which is ultimately I think why the Kaepernick ad worked.”* (Snyder, 2019, n.p.). Despite Knight not being the current CEO of Nike, he publically approved the campaign.

People generally do not put a lot of faith in companies nowadays and are cynical towards the true intentions of the company (Edelman, 2019). Swedish consumers are seen to be critical towards the U.S. (Micheletti and Stolle, 2005) and to show suspicion towards large multinational companies (Mitzner, 2018), which is again strongly shown to be the case in this study too. The majority of the participants in our study expressed cynical views on the agenda of the campaign and multinational companies like Nike in general, as shown in findings and in the quote below.

“That’s a marketing technique to make money. You get the attention of the people and then you get the money.”

- Participant 1

Another contributing factor might be that most of the participants in our study are classed as millennials which is the generation seen to be the least trusting and most cynical (Frick, 2014).

The understanding shown towards Nike’s monetary priorities might be in part caused by the halo effect (Leak, Woodham & McNeil, 2015). Large multinational companies in today's society generally have financial responsibilities that come first and are hence mostly focused on increasing their revenues; consumers might think that it is the way it is and therefore show understanding and oversight for the business. However, even though they viewed it in such light, some participants showed understanding for Nike to do so.

“But I think it’s also in a companies nature to capitalize on such things. There cannot be a not money making motive.”

- Participant 7

The participant claims that companies have to put financial responsibility first. One participant stated that Nike moves the economy forward and that they also contribute to change in society. This is exemplified below.

“I mean corporations like Nike are part of the... like if we put this in the wider economic system they do create a lot of change and they do move the economy which has a lot of other effects so I don’t, I don’t know if I can say it’s [Nike choosing to feature Colin Kaepernick] positive or negative but they’re definitely good and bad aspects to it.”

- Participant 11

Nike’s perceived purpose is not described as entirely of a monetary nature. Some participants mentioned that they might do it to raise awareness of the issues and that they want to support Colin Kaepernick, as seen in the quote below.

“They have put the attention on them [minorities in America] instead of fashion or just quality or something like that.”

- Participant 9

Some of the participants question whether Nike should engage in societal issues seeing as they claim Nike themselves have some unethical business practices. Some of the participants seem to think that Nike is exploiting poorer countries for their manufacturing process. This is exemplified by the following quotes:

“It wouldn't surprise me if Nike has its production in a poorer country. Most of these companies do for obvious reasons”

- Participant 1

“These global companies... it’s always scary to just accept everything that they do because I’m sure that a lot of the things they do are still wrong. Like, for instance their production. I don’t know how ethical that is”

- Participant 2

It is interesting to see how some of the participants claim that Nike’s production is unethical or exploitative even though this mostly seems to be a thing of the past, as was covered in chapter 1.8 regarding unethical business practices. Even if Nike has actively been working towards improving the conditions in their factories (Nike 2019b), their past business practices still seem to haunt them. Johan Anselmsson, professor in marketing at Lund University School of Economics and Management recently discussed a phenomenon where purpose- and belief driven campaigns might cause an unwanted boomerang effect. The boomerang effect in question suggests that purpose- and belief driven marketing might cause the consumer to research the company’s business practices in search for something that contradicts whatever purpose or belief they have chosen to feature. This might implicate that the campaign leads to criticism toward the company instead of the intended positive outcome (Rågsjö Thorell, 2019).

Positive views on the political aspect

The findings showed that almost every single participant in the study thought that it was a positive thing that Nike chose to engage in social and political issues. While not all of them saw it as a predominantly honest action as Nike was profiting off the campaign, almost all of them still agreed that it is better for them to do something rather than doing nothing. The participants are seemingly ok with the fact that Nike are making financial winnings from supporting Kaepernick because the end result is in their mind still positive as Nike is bringing awareness to Kaepernick and everything he stands for.

“I mean even though they’re trying to make financial winnings out of it obviously, and they obviously did, it still shows a message that Nike, one of the biggest companies, is endorsing Kaepernick... that still sends a positive message.”

- Participant 6

Since our target group consists of people aged 19-24 it is not surprising that almost all of them are positively inclined towards companies engaging in societal issues since the amount of belief driven consumers is more prevalent among younger people (Edelman, 2018). This also aligns with (Franklin, 2008) where CSR is claimed to have become more important in the last decade. This explains why the participants view Nike’s stand in a positive light which is seen in the following quote.

“I believe that as a company you are part of the society that you work in, that you sell in, that you affect people and the people around you, and in the community, so being involved and taking active stances on social issues can be a very powerful way to show that you’re more than just your products.”

- Participant 4

Participant 7 expressed that they would admire a company for doing community work or charity work as long as they do not boast about it.

“If I would read a newspaper with that a company is silently helping people, then that would definitely affect my decision.”

- Participant 7

If they do it without trying to use it as a marketing strategy then it would be admirable and it would affect his purchasing decision. It can be considered ironic as Nike does do community work relatively silently, as can be seen in chapter 1.5 regarding Nike’s social and community impact. They are actively working against a lot of the issues they present, however this does not seem to be common knowledge as none of the participants were aware of Nike’s community work. The participant claims that if they would read about it in an independent newspaper then it would affect the purchasing decision, this is however a lot to ask. If they somehow influenced the journalists to cover their community work they could risk losing their credibility.

Even if Nike only featured Kaepernick in their campaign for monetary reasons, they still utilize their marketing platform to bring attention to societal issues. This has been a repeated pattern for Nike ever since 1988, as can be seen in the subchapter 1.6 regarding previous Nike campaigns. All of these campaigns serve the same purpose, bringing awareness to different issues in society. These issues range from ageism to inequality to racism.

Cynical views on the perceived risk-taking by Nike

Cynicism towards Nike and other large companies is prevalent throughout the findings. This theme shows how some participants criticize Nike for their supposedly risky campaigns by saying that they are in fact not very risky at all. This indicates some support for Micheletti and Stolle’s (2005) study claiming that Swedish consumers likely are critical towards the U.S. The following findings were surprising and were not expected.

“I guess you can say it’s risky... [choosing to feature Colin Kaepernick] but I assume that they did some sort of a risk analysis to figure out whether or not this would be smart, and it seemed to have paid out.”

- Participant 3

So when a company, a large company like that takes a stance and it like shockingly, you know “shockingly”, improves their sales numbers I just think it’s like a cynical... Like I’d think cynically like “oh they’re just doing this to boost their marketing”

- Participant 3

“I’m guessing Nike took a gamble on this one”

- Participant 8

“I think very often they [companies] take the popular stance though and then it doesn't mean anything anymore.”

- Participant 8

“I think companies they do eh... in quotation marks “risky campaigns” from time to time.”

- Participant 8

None of the participants quoted above buy into Nike's Dream Crazy campaign and like Edelman (2019) suggested, they claim it is all a marketing ploy. This could also be linked to some of the participants associating big multinational companies like Nike to dishonest and unethical business practices. This could be connected to brand personality since these opinions could stem from that Nike's brand personality could carry negative associations such as dishonesty (Davies et al., 2018) in the eyes of the two participants quoted above. As for the substance behind the cynical claims, a study has been carried out regarding the financial results of the Dream Crazy campaign by Munoz (2019) in which they concluded that the campaign was a *“huge win”*.

An opposing view was found that appreciated that Nike took a risk.

“By going against the odds are always bold, especially if you're up against general opinion, which it was, because there was a lot of controversy like with what he had done. So you're going against the general opinion eh, even though you know some people are going to be on your side, you also know that there's a lot of them that won't agree. So it's bold to risk your brand in that way.”

- Participant 9

“Yes, because what they have taken a stance on agrees with my values so yes, so I would consider supporting them just because of that.”

- Participant 9

Customers value when companies take a risk by joining a conversation in a controversial, hot debated topic such as this one (Maxwell, 2018). It is noteworthy is that the participant stated that they agree with the values in Nike's political stance which is of high significance for the outcome of a campaign like this. When consumers agree with the stance on an ideological level the outcome should be more positive (Leak, Woodham & McNeil, 2015). As Swedes tend to be relatively progressive in their political views (Foreign Policy, 2018) the agreement with a stance against police brutality and racial inequality was expected. It was a very unexpected finding that only one out of eleven participants valued that Nike took a risk when they chose to feature Kaepernick in the Dream Crazy campaign.

The views of Nike as a brand are claimed to be unaffected

Seven out of the eleven participants in the study claimed that their view of Nike had not been affected after the video nor after the interview. As the target group does not share the characteristics of the people who tend to have the highest level of political consumption, which was a middle-aged, affluent, well-educated woman (Kelm & Dohle, 2017) this was neither surprising nor to be expected. The Swedish people in general have a relatively high level of political consumption (Boström, Micheletti & Oosterveer, 2018). Some of the participants had already seen the campaign, their views might have affected them the first time they saw it but it makes sense that it would not affect them the second time. Additionally some of our interviewees already had positive views of Nike to begin with so it would be hard for a campaign to further increase that positive feeling towards Nike. This is shown by the following quote.

“I liked Nike before the interview, I still like Nike now.”

- Participant 2

The same participant said the following when they were asked whether or not his opinion of Nike as a brand had changed after the interview.

“I kind of always saw Nike in a pretty good light, I was kind of following this whole kneeling thing from the sidelines. I didn’t get too passionate about it one way or another. I thought it was a bit silly that it got so big as it did.”

- Participant 2

This shows that since the participant does not feel connected to the Kaepernick debate and therefore it seemingly had little to no effect on his opinion of Nike. The participant’s geographical location might have created this disconnect. Another participant suggested a similar reason as to why some people’s views of Nike might not be affected by the Dream Crazy campaign. This is shown with the following quote.

“Yeah the case in the US but, otherwise it's so far away doesn't really concern us, the whole thing about police brutality it's not eh... it's not really a problem here in Sweden. At least as far as I know and then in the US it's been a racial problem for a long time and they raised the issue, but yeah it doesn't concern us directly so then eh usually people don't care as much in that case I think. “

- Participant 1

The arguments relating to geographical reasons exemplified in the quote above can be in part explained with arguments from Nielson and Paxton (2010) where they claim that word-of-mouth is a strong accelerator in promoting boycott or buycott behaviour, which also could be part of the reason why the campaign has had a limited effect with our target group, since it is a topic that has less relevance in Sweden and hence less talked about. Swedes are also more sensitive to campaigns that have not been locally adapted and translated as can be read in chapter 2.3.2 regarding Swedish consumers. This could again be a contributing factor to why the campaign could have a smaller breakthrough in Sweden compared to in America.

Enhanced views of the brand because of the political aspect

Some links between brand personality and political consumerism have been observed through this theme as the two participants who claimed they would boycott give reasons such as respect and honesty to justify their hypothetical purchasing behaviour. This is shown by the following quotes.

“I respect Nike for running an ad like this [an ad that brings awareness to a societal issue] and it makes me, yeah, I would buy Nike, definitely.”

- Participant 1

“Yes, ehm, like I said, they, it's a very bold move to make [choosing to feature Colin Kaepernick], and a very specific stand, that I personally find good, so therefore they rose in my eyes.”

- Participant 9

The participants here clearly explain how they have gained the respect of Nike and that Nike has risen in their eyes. This could indicate that Nike's brand personality now has gained the positive association of sincerity (Aaker, 1997, cited in Davies et al., 2018). This is shown by the following quote where the participant believes this is Nike's honest agenda.

“I think they have an honest agenda behind it as well, they want to support him and they want to support people that think like him. They put their entire brand behind it because the brand has a lot of power, so there's a lot of power in putting something like that against the odds, well, against the general opinion.”

- Participant 9

This corresponds with the theory in our chapter regarding Brand Personality that consumers support companies that have the brand personality that the consumer wants to portray (Davies et al., 2018), as the participant then goes on to say the following.

“They have taken a stance on something that agrees with my values so yes, so I would consider supporting them just because of that.”

- Participant 9

This corresponds to a high degree of congruence between the participants self-image and how they see Nike's brand image. According to Escalas and Bettman (2005), this could lead to a higher likelihood to consume Nike in order to show that they support the stance they are communicating.

The following quote can be interpreted why a participant's view was not enhanced.

“When companies take a stance like.. If they take a stance that's known to affect their sales negatively but they feel strongly enough about that stance to take it anyway... Then I can respect that cus it feels like more genuine stance is being taken whereas if a company is taking a stance like a company like Nike they probably would never take a stance that would negatively affect their sales.”

- Participant 3

This quote suggests that as long as a corporation or company profits economically from certain actions or by engaging politically, it can not be seen as a genuine move. These opinions might be rooted in deeper associations for the company's brand personality that are clouding a potentially objective judgement of the motives behind the campaign. In order for sales to be affected negatively, a boycott of bigger size than a buycott would presumably be required, which then begs the question of whether or not such an action would be considered good in the first place.

Price and quality outweigh the political aspect

Despite belief driven consumers becoming more common and making up the majority of consumers in the big western countries (Edelman, 2018) and Scandinavia (Micheletti 2003; Micheletti, Føllesdal & Stolle, 2004; Micheletti & Stolle, 2005; Strømsnes, 2005; Tobiasen, 2005, cited in Nielson & Paxton, 2010), our target group specifically seem to not be belief driven consumers. This might be explained in part due to the general lack of monetary resources which can be shown by this quote.

"I don't really have the monetary assets to just go buy a pair of shoes just cus I like a commercial."
- Participant 4

Studies have shown that the income level is highly correlated to the level of political consumerism and that specifically buycotts are influenced by income (Baek, 2010; Copeland, 2014; Koos, 2012; Neilson, 2010, cited in Kelm & Dohle, 2017; Micheletti & Stolle, 2005). This phenomenon can be seen in the findings but is illustrated again by some of the quotes.

"I choose mostly based on my wallet."
- Participant 8

Sweden is furthermore, as mentioned in the literature review, regarded as a consumer society where price and quality are considered to be the first and second most important factors (Santander, 2019), as can be seen in this quote.

"For me when I buy a product I'm very stringent with my money so it's all about the quality to price ratio."
- Participant 2

Lack of relatability to the issue

The participants feel disconnected to the issue which is probably why the majority of the participants claim that this campaign has not affected their view of Nike as a brand and that it would not affect their purchasing decision. One of the participants mentioned that if Nike would feature someone or something that he felt more connected to then that would influence his view of Nike. This is shown by the following quote.

“Like my football team here in Sweden, something that I feel close to, If something would happen with like a player there then I would be like “Oh this speaks to me” because that’s someone that I have a relation to, at least I feel like I have a relation to that. Something like that could possibly influence me. It’d also be like “oh they’re supporting him?” he’s not that big and I really like him.”

- Participant 6

The participant here indirectly explains that he does not feel connected to the issues that Kaepernick brought up and therefore his views about Nike are not affected. He would feel more strongly about something that he felt connected to, for example his own football team. It would be interesting to see what would have happened if Nike had done a similar campaign in the Swedish football league Allsvenskan. The protests would have been closer to the participants and a similar campaign by Nike would then most likely have generated a bigger effect in how the participants view Nike as a brand.

Another reason to why some participants could feel low levels of relatability could also be interpreted from Google Trends (2020a; 2020b) as the relative search interest for Nike in the U.S at the time of this event was significantly higher than in Sweden as can be seen in the diagrams below. Online communications is a way of promoting boycott and boycott behaviour, and it is easier to promote boycotts on the internet according to Kelm and Dohle (2017). Data in Google Trends also suggests that consumers in the U.S connects Kaepernick much more to Nike in their online behaviour as searches on Kaepernick are on the sixth place of searches in relation to Nike in the U.S but not even on the top 25 list in Sweden (Google Trends, 2020a; Google Trends, 2020b). The numbers shown in the diagrams below display the search interest in relation to the peak amount of searches for a given time and region. The number 100 indicates the highest level of search interest, 50 indicates it is half as popular as what it was at the highest point. In figure 2 the remarkable peak indicates the time of the Dream Crazy campaign. The timeline is the same for both graphs.

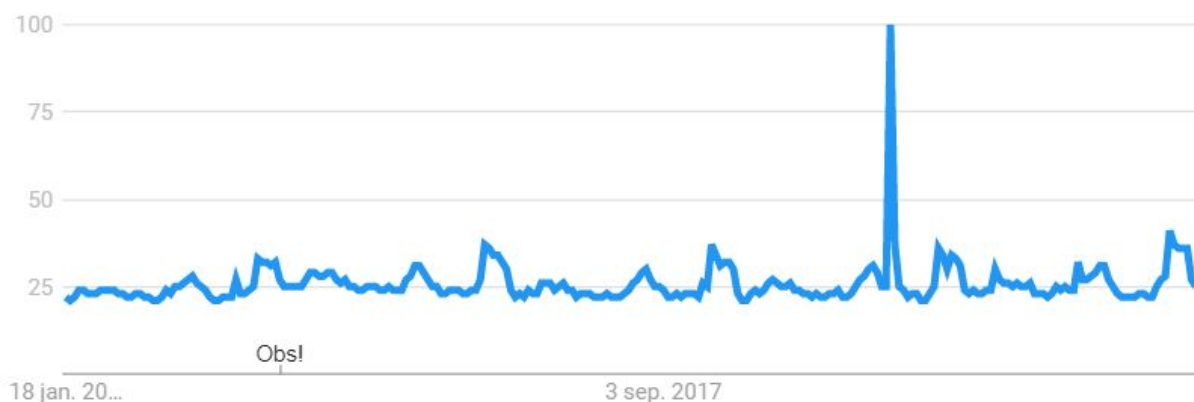


Figure 2: Google trends: Interest for the term “nike” over the past 5 years in USA (Google Trends, 2020a)

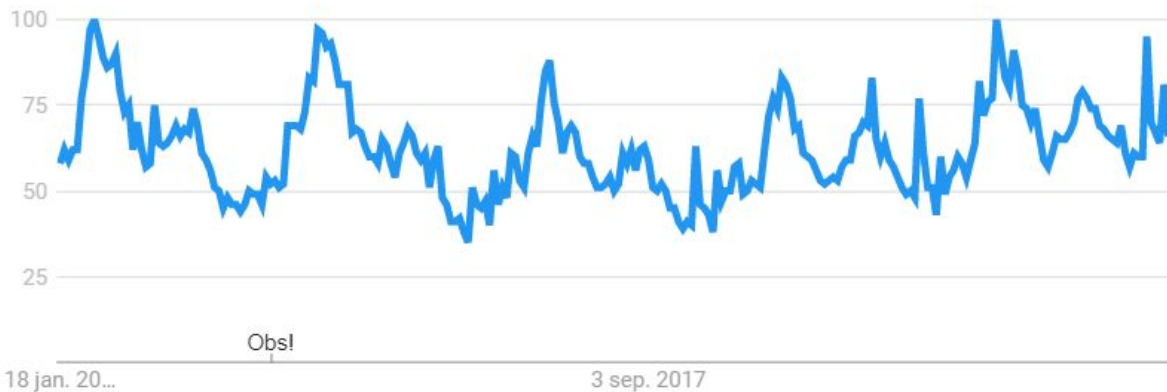


Figure 3: Google trends: Interest for the term “nike” over the past 5 years in Sweden (Google Trends, 2020b)

5.2 Conclusion

The findings and discussion show consistent displays of cynicism towards multinational companies in general, Nike’s production, Nike’s motives behind the Dream Crazy campaign as well as Nike’s supposed risk taking when they chose to feature Kaepernick in the campaign. In the discussion, several factors were found that contributed to this. Cynical views could be attributed to the fact that Swedish consumers as a whole tend to be quite negative towards the U.S. The relatability towards the issue seems to be low due to the geographical context but also due to the differences in society between Sweden and the U.S, specifically regarding racial injustice and police brutality. This results in little to no effect on how Nike as a brand is viewed partly due to preexisting associations with the brand, both positive and negative. The political aspect does not outweigh the more traditional attributes such as price and quality because the target group lacks monetary resources. As this was an event that was discussed exhaustively online, it would have been more likely that people would have been influenced to boycott as opposed to buycott Nike and their products (Kelm & Dohle, 2017).

6 Conclusion

Generally people view this campaign in a positive light and most people recognized that there was an agenda, whether that agenda was increasing profit or trying to bring awareness to social issues, or maybe a bit of both, remains unknown. However, one does not exclude the other. People had nuanced opinions on whether or not Nike should engage in politics and social issues but generally the target group is positive to the idea of Nike bringing awareness to a societal issue. There is a cynical perspective towards Nike's agenda, where the participants think that the underlying purpose of the campaign is self-gain in the form of profits. Multinational companies as a whole are also criticized and viewed cynically. This is consistent with previous literature on a global level (Edelman, 2019). A minority of the participants sometimes also express understanding for Nike's as a corporation that has financial responsibilities, claiming that the companies are primarily accountable to the shareholders, not society.

The participants in our target group do generally not care enough about this issue for it to be a deciding factor in their purchasing decision. Attributes such as price to quality value, brand image associations might play a bigger role than this stance in this specific issue, which is also supported by literature. The general takeaway however seems to be that most people in our target group do not have the monetary assets to justify purchasing products from Nike only because they agree with the message of the campaign. Another reason seems to be that the people in our target group do not relate to the issue surrounding Kaepernick and the social injustices he fought against since it is so far away from our everyday life here in Sweden compared to people of a similar demographic in America.

According to Kelm and Dohle (2017) promoting boycott should be easier done than promoting buycott, but as could be seen in the findings surrounding Nike's engagement in the Kaepernick debate the general consensus seem to be cynical but not inherently negative. The majority of the participants claim Nike's engagement in societal issues have monetary motives but the participants do not have a negative view of Nike nor their engagement in the debate as a whole, which is shown by the following quote.

"I mean even though they're trying to make financial winnings out of it obviously, and they obviously did, it still shows a message that Nike, one of the biggest companies, is endorsing Kaepernick... that still sends a positive message."

- Participant 6

This would then entail that our target group is not likely to boycott since they do not have inherent problems regarding Nike nor their engagement in societal issues but since they lack monetary resources they can not boycott either, even if they wanted to.

6.1 Contributions and suggestions for further research

This thesis has contributed with new insights to the research on the concept of political consumerism and belief-driven marketing. The paper has contributed to the research gap regarding the effects on consumers by campaigns that are addressing societal issues. Additionally, this study is specifically based on insights from Swedish consumers, which is unique in this area of research. The study has examined how Nike's political stance in the Dream Crazy campaign has affected Swedish students aged 19-24, views of the brand and how heavy these political aspects weigh in a purchasing decision for them.

Due to the time restrictions there were only 11 interviews conducted. To create a more exhaustive study it would have been interesting to expand the target group in terms of both age and occupation. This would allow us to further examine how the monetary resources would affect the purchasing decision if the participants had a larger disposable income. It would also be very interesting to research to what extent higher levels of education affect the level of political consumerism within the target group, and if they have different views and opinions regarding the political aspect of campaigns that bring awareness to societal issues. A similar study but on a Swedish campaign would also be a great approach in the future.

7 Limitations

7.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to clarify the limitations of our study, encompassing everything from limitations with qualitative research, language barriers, face to face interviews as well as time and resource constraints. It is important to be aware of these limitations and set the expectations of the research accordingly. It is easy to have great ambitions when stepping into the world of academic research but one must be realistic and honest with themselves about what can be achieved.

7.2 Limitations within the research

A limitation of this study acknowledged is the risk for a potential language barrier. As all of the interviewees are Swedish and have Swedish as their first language, and for most of them English is a second language, there is a slight risk of misinterpretations or a limited ability from the participants side to fully express and convey their feelings and thoughts. The interviewees do however all study at Lund University which guarantees a certain level of proficiency; all students entering a university in Sweden are required to have the basic Upper Secondary School English B/English 6, which meets with the CEFR B2 level. It also meets with an IELTS Academic Model with a global score of 6.5, TOEFL PB/IB 575/90 or a Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (UHR, 2019). The alternative of conducting the interviews in Swedish would instead have the risk of losing content through translation.

Compared to other methods such as online personal interviews through email, respondents in face-to-face interviews tend to provide less considered or coherent (read grammatically correct) answers due to the relatively short thinking-time they get before answering a question as opposed to if they were to type it out (Bryman, 2015). This might be relevant in this study in particular as the protests in question concern a relatively domestic issue for the United States, which might evoke less responses and exposure in Sweden.

The responses of the participants are likely to be affected by the characteristics of the researcher such as personality, age, gender etc. which leads to the interpretation being influenced by the preferences of the researcher (Bryman, 2015). To minimize the effect that the researcher has on the interview process it was decided that the same interviewer would be used for all the interviews. This created a more consistent interview process. Even though this does not ensure that there will not be slight deviations in each interview it does at least make the interviews easier to replicate. If a rotating interview schedule had been used where the interview role was split the three of us there would be too many variables interfering with the interview process. Since qualitative methods already lack consistency it was decided that one of the factors that actually could be altered was the human factor, where we decided that the same person would conduct all interviews. This is important since the three of us have different interview styles,

personalities, vocabulary. By doing this the issues regarding a lack of consistency have at least been reduced. Lastly one of the biggest weaknesses for qualitative research is the lack of transparency. It is often not clear what the researcher did after analyzing the data to reach whatever conclusion is stated (Bryman, 2015). Without a clear understanding of how the researcher ended up with the conclusion it is difficult to assess the validity of said conclusion.

Thematic analysis is a relatively new data analysis method derived from grounded theory, and might be considered somewhat underdeveloped compared to other methods (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The vast volume of data required extensive amounts of time to code as thematic analysis is flexible and has relatively undefined rules, carefulness during coding was important to combat the risk of developing inconsistent and potentially incoherent themes as explained by Holloway and Todres (2003). As with all methods that utilize coding, there is a risk of using quotes incorrectly since they are eventually analyzed out of context, separate from the transcript. In order to prevent this however, all quotes and excerpts have been double checked in the original transcripts as to make sure there is no contextual misinterpretation. It is inevitable nonetheless that some of the social context will be lost when only a quote is provided (Bryman, 2015).

The lack of relevant literature also interferes with the research as a lot of the literature that is based around the topics of brands, consumer behaviour and political consumerism is not generally based on Swedes or Sweden in general. There has been some research conducted within Sweden and Scandinavia which has helped us a lot in giving us an overall view of the field in general.

Another limitation for the study was simply the lack of time and resources. The lack of time is a massive limitation for any researcher. The given time frame of research project was 10 weeks which meant that we had to be realistic in what could have been achieved within this timeframe. This time frame did not allow us to dive deeper within some topics that might have been required to make an even more comprehensive study as there were other things that had to be prioritized given that there was this limited time of 10 weeks. This also meant that even if it would have wanted to conduct more interviews it simply would not have been possible due to the immense amount of work that is required in scheduling, interviewing, transcribing and analyzing interviews.

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9 Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Hello, we are conducting a study at Lund University regarding one of Nike's advertising campaigns. So this is not a study on knowledge, but your perception and point of view only.

Please feel free to ask questions at any point. We are going to record this interview which will be used for the purposes of analysing the data but you will of course remain anonymous. Do you consent?

- 1. Do you engage in any sports or physical activities?**
- 2. Have you heard of Nike?**
- 3. What are your first thoughts when you think of Nike?**
- 4. What do people around here think when they see others wearing Nike products?**
What do you think the people wearing Nike wants to communicate?
- 5. Do you agree/or when you see someone wearing Nike products, what comes to mind for you?**
Develop your thoughts please (the answers can be very different)

The man at the end of the video is called Colin Kaepernick. He's an american football quarterback who became famous for initiating a protest during nfl games in 2016. Instead of standing, he kneeled during the US national anthem that's played during the start of the game and soon other players joined the protest. According to him it was because he wanted to protest police violence and inequalities against colored people in the US. People were divided into two sides, some supported his actions while others, including president Trump, condemned it because they saw the act as disrespectful towards the American military and flag. Since this event Kaepernick has not been signed to any NFL team and Nike themselves were close to terminating their contract with Kaepernick, but instead renewed it. For their 30th anniversary they launched the Dream Crazy campaign with people from marginalized communities using Colin Kaepernick as the front figure, which generated a lot of reactions. Some people were burning shoes and cutting clothes. There were a lot of reactions on social media platforms and in the media, searches on Nike reached a peak 4 times the previous one on Google trends. Sales increased with 31% in the first 4 days after the campaign compared to the previous year.

Show video

- 6. What are your first impressions after seeing this video?**
Did it influence you somehow?
Does similar advertisement make you view the brand in any specific way?
What do you think the message of this campaign is?
- 7. What do you think of companies that engage in politics and social issues?**

What do you think of it when Nike does it?

- 8. Has your opinion of Nike as a brand changed after this interview?**

How has it changed?

- 9. Is there anything you would like to add?**

Which factors do you consider when choosing a brand?

Appendix 2: Codes

Red - Reasons as to **why boycott/buycott** occurred

L. Red Berry 2 - *Cynicism*

L. Red 3 - *Opinion of Ad*

Orange - Perceived **purpose/message** of campaign

L. Orange 2 - *Factors influencing choice of brand*

D. Orange 2 - *Contradictions*

Yellow - *Findings to include in essay*

L. Yellow 1 - *Geographical context of issue*

Green - *Original opinion of Nike*

L green 1 - *Effect of ad on interviewee*

Cyan - *Familiarity with CK/Situation*

Light Cyan 2 - *Athleticism*

Cornflower Blue - *Values, brand image, associations*

L. CF. Blue 2 - *Recognizes underlying political message*

D. Blue 2 - *Understanding for business putting economical needs first*

Purple - *Opinion on companies taking a political stance*

L. Purple 1 - *Opinion of Nike's actions*

Magenta - *Doubt, acknowledged ignorance*

L. Magenta 2 - *Describing their personality + political views*

L. Grey 1 - *Hypothetical scenarios that would affect opinion (can be used as arguments to why it did **not** affect them)*

D. Gray 2 - *Trump*

Appendix 3: Initial Themes

Type - What type of campaign is this?

Perceived message/purpose of campaign

Opinion of Ad

Recognizes some sort of underlying message

Motivations - Perceived motivations behind campaign

Cynicism

Perceived message/purpose of campaign

Personality/Political views

Understanding for businesses economical responsibilities

Opinions - Opinions of the actions taken

Opinion on Nike's actions

Opinion on companies taking a political stance

Personality/Political views

Effect - If/How/how not the campaign changed their opinion

Effect of Ad on interviewee

Original opinion of Nike

Contradictions

Reasons - If or why/why not campaign changed views

Reasons why boycott/boycott occurred, factors

Cynicism

Opinion on Nike's actions

Geographical

Personality

Original opinion can affect

Factors influencing choice of brand

Hypothetical scenarios

Hypothetical scenarios

Extra

Not an effect of the campaign

Sweatshops

Appendix 4: Final Themes

Nike's agenda is questioned

Positive views on the political aspect

Cynical views on the perceived risk-taking by Nike

The views of Nike as a brand are claimed to be unaffected

Enhanced views of the brand because of the political aspect

Price and quality outweigh the political aspect

Lack of relatability to the issue