Bachelor Thesis

It’s All About Money:
Consumer Engagement with Brands on Social Media.

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Växjö 27th of May 2016

________________________________  __________________________________
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Abstract

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Title: It’s All About Money: Consumer Engagement with Brands on Social Media

Keywords: Consumer engagement, engagement factors, social media, social factor, monetary factor, hedonic factor, practical factor, trust factor.

Background: Social media platforms equip brands with an opportunity to increase awareness and extend the relationship with their current and possible future consumers by providing the possibility for social interaction, monetary rewards, entertaining content, practical information and cultivating trust. Brands transition to the social medias has thus made consumers co-creators of brands offerings, as they are allowed to interact and engage with brands and its content at any time. This has put high demand on brands to create content that actually encourage participation and engagement from their consumers.

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to explain the factors that positively influence consumer engagement towards brands on social media.

Methodology: This research took a quantitative approach with an explanatory purpose and a cross-sectional research design. The data was collected with the help of a self-completion questionnaire. The result was primarily derived from a multiple-regression analysis, correlation analysis and Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test.

Findings: This research provide empirical evidence that monetary factors positively influence consumer engagement with brands on social media, whereas the social, hedonic, practical and trust factors failed to generate significance. However, the study revealed that the rejected factors have some effect on consumer engagement that cannot be denied by brand managers.

Originality: Consumer engagement in an online environment has been an attractive topic for researchers in recent years and with the ever-increasing popularity of social media, research gaps in this setting has been identified. This research provides the first explanatory findings regarding antecedents of consumer engagement with brands on social media.
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1. Introduction

In the introduction chapter the reader is introduced to branding, consumer engagement and social media which make up the foundation of the research. The presentation of these topics leads to a discussion related to problems within the foundational phenomena of the study and finally the purpose is presented.

1.1 Background

Brands serve as symbols for a firm's offering by promising a particular level of quality, which both helps customers to simplify their purchase decisions and in the long run generate trust (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). They also have an important role to play in determining the effectiveness of a company's marketing effort, as brand managers and their peers in the recent decades have realized that the brand a company carries are the most valuable intangible asset they possess. Hence branding has become a top priority, as it can be used in order to strengthen the consumer's view of the brand (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Keller (2002) describes branding as the marketing practice of creating a name, symbol or design that identifies and differentiates a product/service from other products/services to increase the awareness and reputation of it in the marketplace. It involves a strategy of who, what and when and is concerned with through what channels the message should be delivered (Keller, 2002). Further, a branding strategy can have a significant consequence on both the brand's reputation and the pervasive effects it has on the minds of the consumers. However, the effect on the consumers’ minds and subsequently their behavior is dependent on the particular brand in question and the activities taken by the brand to initiate the engagement (Keller, 2002).

Hence, brands strive to perform activities that attract consumers who wants to become proactive partners with the brand rather than inactive recipients, and thus brands seek to encourage the consumer engagement (Peacemaker and Heinze, 2015). Engagement can be described as a psychological state where a person is being occupied, involved or absorbed into something specific, such as an activity, an event, an experience, etcetera, with the goal of satisfying an attraction (Higgins and Scholer, 2009). Hence engagement is a state of intimacy, where consumers actively engage in order to gain some sort of emotional connection or relation (Füller et al., 2004). To captivate this engagement towards the brand, firms need to motivate consumers on an emotional and
behavioral level to a brand-related activity (Hollebeek, 2011). In an online environment e.g. social media, this motivation has to be transformed into a commitment and a dynamic relationship towards a website or fan page, which has been constructed by a firm to communicate its brand and its values (Mollen and Wilson, 2010). This plays an important role in the consumer-brand relationship as it showcases the individual’s brand-associated state of mind and the motivation for consumers and users to engage in brand interactions (Hollebeek, 2011).

Users on social media sites act as co-creators and therefore are potential proactive partners for brands, as users are able to share, modify and communicate their own content (Kietzmann et al., 2011) and at the same time express their opinions, attitudes and beliefs on the content published by others (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The content and the platforms they are published on can vary greatly, from news, articles and discussions on forums, to images and videos on social networking sites (Laroche, Habibi and Richard, 2013). The diverse selection of media forms and platform designs has resulted in social media sites that specialize their platform to a specific main function (Kietzmann et al., 2011). The platform specialization can vary greatly between sites; such as Facebook's general focus on individual’s social life to Instagram's focus on images (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Consumers engage with brands on these sites through an ongoing process, where the actual engagement is visually evident in the consumer’s likes and comments on brand content (Zheng et al., 2015). The engagement is also visible in the co-creation, the participation and sharing of brand content in competitions, discussions and events (Zheng et al., 2015). Brands are therefore active on social medias by publishing content, as it provides a direct two-way communication to consumers, which enable the brand's voice to be heard and subsequently create the opportunity to encourage consumer brand engagements (Deighton and Kornfeld 2009; Verhagen et al., 2015).

However, marketers struggle to hold on to their consumers, as they can no longer rely on commercials and tacky web banners to generate brand engagement (Safko, 2009). Instead they are forced to redesign their brands communication, as old marketing practices fail to adapt to the new interactive environment (Qualman, 2009). Brands cannot just keep their own goals in mind, as they are compelled to provide an answer to the consumer question: What is in it for me? (Safko, 2009). Marketers need to find
an answer to this question, as the brand's communication content needs to impact the consumer in such a way the he or she will want to have the same experience and therefore seek engagement (Tripathi, 2014).

1.2. Problem Discussion
Social media is a modern and increasingly more popular tool for marketers to use in order to facilitate the communication between brands and consumers. However, it is a tool that can be hard to manage for marketers effectively, as the task of setting up and operating an account is daunting and filled with several challenges (Qualman, 2009). The central issues lie in the marketers’ selection and distribution of brand content that truly create consumer engagement on social media, where several marketers expand massive amounts of effort and still fail to raise the engagement (Verhagen et al., 2015; Ul Islam and Rahman, 2016). One study even shows that less than 0.5% of consumers who are fans of brands on Facebook actually engage with the brand and its content (Nelson-Field and Taylor, 2012). This is a major failure from the marketers and the brand's point of view, as the published content fail to resonate with consumers and therefore fail to raise engagement (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). This defeat has been noticed by researchers, who have continuously tried to explore the growing online environment in order to help marketers create strategies and content that lead to engagement between brands and consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Gummerus et al., 2012; Labrecque, 2014).

Research on consumer engagement online have mostly focused on brand community platforms that either have been created by consumers (e.g. Füller et al., 2004) or by companies themselves (e.g. Porter and Donthu, 2008). However, recent trends display a shift in research emphasis to the newer online platforms that social media provide (Labrecque, 2014; Nadeem et al., 2015; Ul Islam and Rahman, 2016). Still in spite of the transition in platforms, researches have mainly been concerned with similar topics and approaches. Researchers have either tried to identify different factors that may motivate consumer engagement and describe their characteristics (Hall, 2001; Brodie et al., 2011a; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015; Verhagen et al., 2015), or they have strived to relate consumer engagement online to other topics such as loyalty, customer involvement and customer trust (Labrecque, 2014; Zheng et al., 2015;
Nadeem et al., 2015; Ul Islam and Rahman, 2016). The nature of the researcher’s identified factors varies greatly, as they concern a diverse assortment of categories such as social benefits (Dholakia et al., 2009), monetary incentives (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004), practical benefits (Gummerus et al., 2012), hedonic enjoyment (Porter et al., 2011) and trust (Porter and Donthu, 2008).

The diverse assortment of identified factors that allegedly motivate consumer engagement online (social, monetary, practical, hedonic and trust) have been the topic of many studies, which has resulted in a field of diverse and sometimes contradicting findings, as the conclusions regarding the existence of factors, what they concern, their importance and their efficiency contradict each other (Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo, 2004; Nambisan and Baron, 2009; Porter et al., 2011; Tsai and Men, 2013). Gummerus et al., (2012) for example suggest that social and hedonic factors influence online consumers’ engagement behavior while rejecting the notion of any monetary effects, which completely contradicts van Dorn et al., (2010) research that urge for the implementation of monetary benefits as an antecedent to consumer engagement online. Meanwhile Porter and Donthu (2008) argue for the importance of trust and Park and Kim (2014) discuss the relevance of practical benefits on consumer engagement online. These are just a few excerpts that display how previous research offer a diverse field of contrasting factors, which put further pressure on brands, as they need to adapt impactful factors to their communication, in order to create content that resonate with their consumers (Wallace, 2010) and encourage active online engagement on social media (Hamzah, Alwi and Othman, 2014).

However, brands will face hardship when it comes to the selection of impactful factors for their social media communication as large parts of the existing research have been using exploratory strategies to survey the topic of online consumer engagement and relied on qualitative collection methods, which have resulted in research that primarily explore the factors behind consumer engagement rather than measure their impact (Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo, 2004; Brodie et al., 2011a; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Wallace, Buil and Chernatony, 2014; Hamzah, Alwi and Othman, 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015). The selection process suffers as a result, since brands have no way of knowing what impact the implementation of social, monetary, hedonic, practical and trust factors will have. Therefore, new research is
needed that explain the causal relationship that the factors have with engagement i.e. research that measure and compare the factors impact on consumer engagement in a social media context (Brodie et al., 2011a; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Verhagen et al., 2015). Researchers in fact encourage future research on the topic of factors that trigger consumer engagement online, specifically on social medias (Gummerus et al., 2012; Park and Kim, 2014; Labrecque, 2014; Zheng et al., 2015; Verhagen et al., 2015). In addition, they also suggest a research direction that test the causal relationship between identified factors and engagement on social media, in order to expand and deepen understanding (Gummerus et al., 2012; Park and Kim, 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015; Nadeem et al., 2015). Furthermore, the research suggestions include recommendations for broader quantitative studies, that not just choose a single social media platform (Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012; Gummerus et al., 2012; Tsai and Men, 2013).

The current gap in research that offers no deep understanding of what factors that drive consumer engagement positively on social medias is becoming problematic, as brands need to “Engage or die” (Nelson-Field and Taylor, 2012) in order to adapt with the ever changing marketplace. If brands want to win, retain and deepen their consumer relationships via the social media platforms, they need to understand the engagement initiatives that create attractive and impactful factors and drive both active and positive consumer engagement (Tripathi, 2014). Marketers in other words need an answer to the question; what social media content makes my brand more desirable and create reasons that cause consumers to remain interested, associated and involved? (Tripathi, 2014). Without deep understanding of the factors that affect engagement, brands run the risk of losing the closeness and trust to consumers’ which social media is supposed to foster (Yang, 2011). This research intends to be the tool that allows for greater understanding of how factors impact consumer engagement, which can be used in order to create positive consumer engagement, so that marketers can be successful in facilitating brand and consumer engagement online (Schau, Muniz and Arnould, 2009)

1.3 Purpose
The purpose of this thesis is to explain the factors that positively influence consumer engagement towards brands on social media.
2. Theoretical Framework

In the theoretical chapter previous literature is examined and discussed in order to obtain an understanding of consumer engagement and its role in social media. From the literature the hypotheses are derived and presented together with the theoretical model.

2.1 Consumer engagement in online environments

Engagement can be described as a psychological state of mind where an individual is putting in an effort to pursue a goal that fits with his or her ambitions, which makes the individual experience a strong relation to the activity (Avnet and Higgins, 2006; Brodie et al., 2011a). This is characterized by being occupied, involved or even widely absorbed into the specific activity, thus preserve the attention towards the target to provoke the consequences expected (Higgins and Scholer, 2009). The higher the consumer values the potential outcome, the more engaged he or she becomes (Higgins and Scholer, 2009; Brodie et al., 2011b). For brands to achieve consumer engagement they first have to fulfill the consumers’ needs, satisfaction, retention, loyalty and beyond to create a state of intimacy and sustain an emotional connection in order to move the consumers from passive recipients to proactive partners that wants to be a part of shaping the offering (Füller et al., 2004; Sashi, 2012; Peacemaker and Heinze, 2015). To further strengthen the engagement, brands have to remember that they have a dynamic relationship with their consumers through their online communities, hence, they need to initiate activities and provide offerings to increase the consumer's participation (Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012) as they want to attract the consumers’ behavioral, cognitive and emotional presence, which signals high engagement (Brodie et al., 2011a). In an online environment such as social media brands have an excellent opportunity to enhance the intimacy and fortify the consumers feeling of co-creating value with the brand through frequent interaction between the parts where they can offer relational exchange and build trust (Brodie et al., 2011a; Sashi, 2012).

The emerging field of consumer engagement in online environments has been researched by several authors in the marketing field. Relationships between cognitive, behavioral and emotional aspects of consumer engagement have been identified in a small online brand community setting (Brodie et al., 2011a). The cognitive aspect
concerns the value that consumers gain from sharing information and experience, whereas the behavioral aspect is related to the consumer’s activity and participation, and the emotional aspect regard the consumer’s intensity and long-/short-term effect on attitudes directed towards the brand (Brodie et al., 2011a). These findings were further developed and with an exploratory purpose tested by Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) in three social medias with a slightly redesigned model, and the independent variables were called cognitive processing (cognitive), affection (emotional), and activation (behavioral). They provided validated results, which gained insights to this emerging field where they urge for further research (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014). Further social integrative, hedonic and again reiterated cognitive benefits have been identified and validated to positively influence consumer engagement intentions towards brands in firm-facilitated online environments (Verhagen et al., 2015). Verhagen’s et al., findings were explorative and they claim that further research needs to be undertaken in less controlled platforms, such as social medias, blogs, etcetera.

2.2 Antecedents of Consumer Engagement Online

The factors that influence consumer engagement in an online environment are a collection of various factors that previous research have identified within online contexts (e.g. Dholakia et al., 2009; Gummerus et al., 2012). These aspects share the same recognized objective, as they are supposed to encourage consumers to interact with brands. The nature of these aspects appears varied, since they are concerned with different characteristics and procedures and are referred to by different terms. However, in the review of the diverse material it became evident that different researchers often discuss the same or similar topics, only that they refer to them in different terms and words. Hence, the review distinguished five main factors that influence consumer engagement positively towards brands in different online contexts, which all are applicable to a social media context. Therefore, the researcher created five collective terms for each identified factor from the patterns present in the literature. These are the five overarching terms with the basis for them included in brackets; 1) Social factors (soft rewards, social integration benefits, online self-expression). 2) Monetary factors (economic benefits, remuneration, utilitarian rewards, economic incentives). 3) Hedonic factors (hedonic benefits, entertainment values, enjoyment). 4) Practical
factors (functional benefits, practical benefits, informational benefits, learning, involvement, moderator-related utility). 5) Trust factors (See Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 displays the collective terms, and provide an overview of the underlying terms and the authors who have used them. Furthermore, the table presents the central aspects that the researchers have discussed under each term. For example, the soft rewards mentioned by Hall (2001) have to do with one’s reputation among peers and personal satisfaction, while the social integration benefits from researchers (Nambisan and Baron, 2009; Tsai and Men, 2013; Labrecque, 2014) mainly discuss identification, sense of belonging and enhanced connection. Table 2.1 therefore provides an overview over how the hypothesized factors were derived and the underlying terms that encompass each factor. Each identified main factor has also been assigned a theoretical definition based on the core characteristics in the gathered material. These definitions provide a clear depiction of each factors subject domain and element. In the forthcoming subchapters further discussions and detailed descriptions concerning each established factor (social, monetary, hedonic, practical and trust) will be presented.

**Table 2.1 Summary of previous literature**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Underlying aspects</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Benefits and gratitude perceived from sharing and exchanging information that increases the consumer’s likelihood to further engage with the brand by taking actions such as like, comment or share material.</td>
<td>Social benefits (self-expression, recognition, social identification, like-minded discussion, sense of belonging, social interaction)</td>
<td>Dholakia et al., 2009; Gummerus et al., 2012; Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013; Park and Kim, 2014; Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Soft rewards (reputation among peers)</td>
<td>Hall, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social integration benefits (identification, sense of belonging, enhanced connection)</td>
<td>Nambisan and Baron, 2009; Tsai and Men, 2013; Labrecque, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Online Self-expression (social self, emotional bonds)</td>
<td>Wallace, Buil and Chernatony, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>The monetary appreciation and reward that a consumer receive, which is the motivating factor for him or her to engage with the brand on social media.</td>
<td>Economic benefits (functional benefits, promotional deals, financial reward for specific behavior)</td>
<td>van Doorn et al., 2010; Park and Kim, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Remuneration (economic rewards, reward motivation, consumption decision)</td>
<td>Tsai and Men, 2013</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Utilitarian rewards (monetary rewards, deals, exclusive offers)</td>
<td>Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Economic incentives (signs of appreciation, rewards of tangible value)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hedonic</td>
<td>The consumer’s emotional takeaway i.e. the perceived enjoyment and experiential value from the interaction with the brand on social media.</td>
<td>Hedonic benefits (experiential benefits, pleasurable experiences, enjoyment)</td>
<td>Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014; Park and Kim, 2014; Verhagen et al., 2015</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Entertainment values (experiential value, fun/entertainment)</td>
<td>Sicilia and Palazon, 2008; Gummerus et al., 2012; Tsai and Men, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment (incentives for stimulation, affective dimension, gratification)</td>
<td>Füller et al., 2004; Porter et al., 2011; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Valuable information obtained from the interaction with the brand on social media in the form of product information, brand information and updates on upcoming deals.</td>
<td>Functional benefits (advice, expertise, problem solving, brand information, browsing)</td>
<td>Sicilia and Palazon, 2008: Park and Kim, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practical benefits (information, knowledge, awareness)</td>
<td>Gummerus et al., 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Informational benefits (assistance, up-to-date information, problem solving, exchange of information and opinions)</td>
<td>Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo, 2004; Tsai and Men, 2013; Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning (information gathering, advice, information expertise, problem solving benefits, learning)</td>
<td>Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement (affection, motivation, product trials)</td>
<td>Ul Islam and Rahman, 2016</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderator-related utility (convenience, problem solving, support)</td>
<td>Zheng et al., 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>How the consumer perceive the quality and honesty of the content published by the brand on social media that can influence interpersonal trust and foster brand interaction.</td>
<td>Trust (interactive and open communication, credible information, perceived risk, quality content, sources of information, honesty)</td>
<td>Porter and Donthu, 2008; Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides and Alarcon-del-Amo, 2011; Wang and Chen, 2012; Tsai and Men, 2013; Labrecque, 2014; Nadeem et al., 2015; Frasquet, Ruiz-Molina and Moilla-Descals, 2015</td>
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</table>

2.2.1 Social factor

Various research affirms the importance of underlying social factors, as they are based on people's basic need for association such as social identification, sense of belonging and social interaction (Nambisan and Baron, 2009; Dholakia et al., 2009; Schau,
Muniz, and Arnould 2009; Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014; Park and Kim, 2014). Consumers connect the social factors to benefits, which they perceive can be derived from the engagement. The social benefits will increase the likelihood of engagement, as the level of active participation is motivated by their value and provide chance to improve the *social self* (Dholakia et al., 2009; Wallace, Buil and Chernatony, 2014). Consumers perceive the ability to communicate and build relationships with other members as valuable, since it provides a form of friendship and supplies a *sense of belonging*, as they feel recognition by being part of something bigger than themselves (Dholakia et al., 2009; Gummerus et al., 2012; Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013). This allows consumers to feel an *enhanced connection* to others as they can interact and gain positive *reputation among peers* (Hall, 2001; Tsai and Men, 2013). However, it is worth to specify that consumers are more likely to engage in social interaction with brands that reflect their own self-concept, as the brand becomes portal for *self-expression* (Wallace, Buil and de Chernatony, 2014).

Personal relationships and the sense of a social community increase the chance for consumer engagement, as consumers tend to defend and recommend these brands to others (Tsai and Men, 2013). By engaging on social media consumers are also able to participate in *discussions with like-minded people* and can express their ideas and opinions (Dholakia et al., 2009; Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014). In fact, it is presumed that emotional benefits in a virtual environment are a direct effect of the gratitude that the consumer perceives from the community i.e. *reputation among peers*, when sharing and exchanging product knowledge (Hall, 2001; Füller et al., 2004; Labrecque, 2014). This is expected to increase the consumer's likelihood to contribute to the community further as he or she may receive valuable knowledge (Oliveira, Goodman and Tan, 2008). Experiential values from the social benefits have a positive impact on consumer engagement, as it can enhance the satisfaction level and loyalty by supplying opportunities for *social interaction* and the ability to communicate and build relationships with the brand and other consumers (Gummerus et al., 2012; Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013; Park and Kim, 2014). Hence these aspects have the possibility to positively influence consumer engagement on social media and thus we hypothesize;

*H1. Perceived social benefits obtained from the interaction with a brand on social media influence consumer engagement positively.*
In table 2.2 the underlying social aspects that have been discussed in the chapter are connected to two separate categories; relationship and gratitude, which in turn are connected to two measurement items that are utilized in order to operationalize and test \( H_1 \). These aspects have been derived from previous literature within consumer engagement in an online context (see table 2.1) and are connected to the different categories, as they are the core groupings that consumers see valuable benefits within and therefore motivate their engagement with brands on social media. The first category refers to the ability to build and maintain relationships, as it is an obvious central dimension of the *social* factor, as consumers seek a sense of belonging (e.g. Nambisan and Baron, 2009) through their engagement. This relationship of belonging drives consumer to engage, as it is an enhanced connection (e.g. Tsai and Men, 2013) i.e. an emotional bond (Wallace, Buil and Chernatony, 2014), which is derived from like-minded discussions (e.g. Park and Kim, 2014) and social interactions (Gummerus et al., 2012). The second category concerned with the fact that consumers also seek gratitude from this social engagement, since it provides them with an opportunity for self-expression (e.g. Baldus, Voorhees, Calantone, 2014), where they can express themselves and thus may gain both recognition (Gummerus et al., 2012) and an reputation among peers (Hall, 2001). Hence consumers feel a gratitude towards the social factor, as it allows them to display their social self (Wallace, Buil, Chernatony, 2014) and gain a social identification (Dholakia et al., 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Underlying social aspects</th>
<th>Measurement items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>1. Relationship Sense of belonging, enhanced connection, like-minded discussion, emotional bonds, social interaction</td>
<td>1. Ability to communicate and build relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Gratitude</td>
<td>2. Gratitude from sharing and exchanging product knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.2 Monetary factor

Monetary benefits have shown to be an important drive of humans, as consumers always evaluate the cost and benefits before taking action (Lawler in Hennig-Thurau, 2004; van Doorn et al., 2010). Therefore, it has been discovered that financial rewards can be used to leverage a specific behavior from consumers (van Dorn et al., 2010; Park and Kim, 2014). For example, if a consumer receives an economic reward he or she will experience a sign of appreciation for the specific actions he or she has taken, which can help to motivate the consumer to engage in a distinct behavior (Lawler in Hennig-Thurau, 2004; van Doorn et al., 2010; Tsai and Men, 2013). This is a reward motivation, where consumers are influenced to take certain actions in order to gain specific benefits (Tsai and Men, 2013). Consumers are in other words, seeking rewards of tangible value, before their actual purchase and consumption of products/services. These rewards come in the shape of various promotional deals and work as discounts that the consumer gain in exchange for their time, money and effort (Baird and Parasnis 2011; Park and Kim, 2014). Monetary rewards can take various forms, such as exclusive offers or deals, where free samples, percent discounts, competitions and monetary prizes etcetera are common practise (Tsai and Men, 2013; Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014).

Research have displayed that consumers often engage with a brand for the sole purpose of deriving consumption benefits, monetary rewards and good deals (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Baldus, Vorhees and Calantone, 2014). However, brands must be aware of that consumers may experience regret if they perceive that other consumer receive special treatment and thus decide to look for better deals elsewhere. But this can be partly avoided by providing attractive functional benefits for engagement (van Doorn et al., 2010). Hennig-Thurau et al., (2004) and van Doorn et al., (2010) labeled a lot of consumers as self-interested helpers, as they are consumers who are greatly motivated by financial rewards. In fact, according to Tsai and Men (2013), the idea of self-interest helpers applies to brand's social media pages, as most consumers are primarily driven
by economic rewards during their visits to the “fan page”, as they use the benefits they find as a foundation for their consumption decision. Since consumers seek incentives to motivate their behavior and consumption decision it has been shown that economic rewards serve as a strong reward motivation for higher frequency of visits and written comments by consumers i.e. more engagement (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Some research has displayed that monetary incentives are the most effective benefit to use in order to generate consumer engagement (Homburg, Ehm and Artz, 2015). Hence these aspects have the possibility to positively influence consumer engagement on social media and thus we hypothesis;

**H2. Perceived monetary benefits from a brand on social media influence consumer engagement positively.**

In table 2.3 the underlying monetary aspects that have been discussed in the chapter are connected to two separate categories; special offers and consumption decisions, which in turn are connected to two measurement items that are utilized in order to operationalize and test H2. These aspects have been derived from previous literature within consumer engagement in an online context (see table 2.1) and are connected to the different categories, as they are the core groupings that consumers observe valuable benefits within and therefore motivate their engagements with brands on social media. Consumers constantly seek to obtain the most beneficial special offers they can find, in order to obtain as much functional benefits (van Doorn et al., 2010) as possible and gain some kind of reward of tangible value (Bair and Parasnis, 2011) for their consumption. These economic rewards (Tsai and Men, 2013) can take the form of monetary rewards, exclusive offers (Baldus, Vorhees and Calantone, 2015) and promotional deals (e.g. Park and Kim, 2014).

Hence it makes it a key category of influence when it comes to consumer engagement. Another core area within monetary aspects concern the fact that consumers’ consumption decisions are often based on a reward motivation (Tsai and Men, 2013). Where consumers’ selection and engagement is determined by the financial reward they can obtain for a specific behavior (Tsai and Men, 2013) as a sign of appreciation (Hennig-Thurau, 2004).
Table 2.3 Underlying monetary aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Underlying monetary aspects</th>
<th>Measurement items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Monetary       | 1. Special offers  
Functional benefits, promotional deals, monetary rewards, deals, exclusive offers, economic rewards, rewards of tangible value | 1. Taking part of special offers (e.g. discounts, coupons, free samples) directly from the brand’s communication |
|                | 2. Consumption decision  
financial reward for specific behavior, reward motivation, signs of appreciation, consumption decision | 2. Facilitate consumption decision                                                  |

2.2.3 Hedonic Factor

Engaging in virtual communities such as different social medias may be an objective in itself for consumers, and the drive for it likely affect the consumer's perceived enjoyment from the participation, where the motivation and the derived level of enjoyment can be seen as hedonic benefits (Füller et al., 2004; Porter et al., 2011; Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014; Verhagen et al., 2015). For consumers these hedonic benefits may serve as incentives for stimulation, which could drive engagement. They also perceive entertainment value in the engagement, with pleasurable and mentally stimulating experiences, which can be found in the content and the social context (Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014). Hence hedonic and entertainment benefits deal with the same subject; the experiential value from the experience, which refers to consumer's emotional takeaway from the interaction with the brand via their social media (Gummerus et al., 2012; Park and Kim, 2014).

How consumers are affected by brands communication differ, as their personal perception of the content diverge and therefore the emotions gleaned from it will make them perceive different levels of enjoyment and enthusiasm, which impact their level of gratification (Porter et al., 2011; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015). As a consequence, brands messages are perceived in a multitude of ways, with different affective dimensions, and thus cannot guarantee enjoyment for the consumer, instead it may just provide a very short-term drive for engagement (Sicilia and Palazon, 2008; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015). Park and Kim (2014) therefore suggest that brands on social media should encourage commitment by supplying relevant content with entertainment benefits and by implementing interactivity in order to spark
and facilitate conversations, which would create long-term engagement. Thus brands would be able to attract and retain consumer engagement by rewarding consumers with superior entertainment value (Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014). However, brand’s first need to be humanized and implement a personality in their communication (Aaker, 1997). The personality will allow brands to apply different personality aspects such as happy, exciting, etcetera, which allows the most effective form of fun and entertainment; humor (Aaker, 1997; Sicilia and Palazon, 2008). The social media published content’s main focus should be on delivering videos, images, jokes or any other media form to convey experiential value that can encourage engagement (Tsai and Men, 2013). It has also been shown that experiential benefits have a positive impact on consumer engagement, as it enhances satisfaction and loyalty by supplying opportunities for emotional interaction with the brand and other consumers (Gummerus et al., 2012; Park and Kim, 2014).

Hence, brands should respond to the possibility of generating a pleasurable social media experience from participating with them by delivering content with experiential value in the form of enjoyment that goes in line with their personality (Sicilia and Palazon, 2008; Tsai and Men, 2013; Verhagen et al., 2015). As previously mentioned these aspects have the opportunity to positively influence consumer engagement, hence, we hypothesize:

**H3. Perceived hedonic benefits from the interaction with a brand on social media influence consumer engagement positively.**

In table 2.4 The underlying hedonic aspects that comprises the measurement items of the study are delineated and connected to two separate categories; enjoyment and relevance, which consequently are connected to two measurement items that are utilized in order to operationalize and test H3. These aspects have been derived from previous literature within consumer engagement in an online context (see table 2.1) and are connected to the categories, as they provide the main groupings that consumers see valuable benefits within and therefore motivate their engagement with brands on social media. The enjoyment segment is one of the main concerns for consumers looking to engage, as they want to acquire as much experiential benefits as possible (Park and Kim, 2014). These benefits are simply put the experiential value i.e. the level of
enjoyment, entertainment and fun (Gummerus et al., 2012; Baldus, Vorhees and Calantone, 2014) that consumers have in their engagement, which hopefully is a pleasurable experience (Verhagen et al., 2015) that consumers seek to maximize. The other segment relevancy, refers to the affective dimensions (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015) of brands content, where the gratification of consumers (Porter et al., 2011) is determined by the relevancy of the content brands communicate. The content published on social media need to provide an incentive for stimulation (Füller et al., 2004), by matching suitable material to the brand's personality.

Table 2.4 Underlying hedonic aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Underlying hedonic aspects</th>
<th>Measurement items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic</td>
<td>1. Enjoyment Pleasurable experience, experiential benefits, experiential value, enjoyment, fun/entertainment</td>
<td>1. Enjoyment of participating with the brand and obtain a positive experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Relevancy Incentives for stimulation, affective dimension, gratification</td>
<td>2. Brand’s sharing relevant and entertaining content in line with their personality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.4 Practical factor

The practical factor refers to the valuable information, knowledge and learning that consumers can glean from information gathering and browsing on social websites, which allows for better decision making (Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo, 2004; Gummerus et al., 2012; Tsai and Men, 2013; Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013). The consumer gathered material either concerns the product/service offering, with information on future deals, offers and prices (Gummerus et al., 2012; Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013; Park and Kim, 2014) or it contains brand information, with information of the brand's core values and public relation activities (Park and Kim, 2014). Where the learning consumers obtain from the engagement refers to the consumer’s derived knowledge and understanding of the brand, its offers and related subjects (Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013).

Consumers seek practical information for the problem solving benefits it provides (Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013; Park and Kim, 2014, Zheng et al., 2015). For example, the knowledge derived from the practical information provide consumers with assistance during consumption decisions (Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014), as
consumers can really on brands information to provide advice and support that helps them through the process (Sicilia and Palazon, 2008; Park and Kim, 2014; Zheng et al., 2015). Consumers also benefits from the convenience of having information expertise about brands various offer, as product trials are not required as often, which allows them to select the most beneficial offer (Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013; Zheng et al., 2015; Ul Islam and Rahman, 2016).

However, consumers who only look for these benefits are less likely to engage in active interaction with the brand, as they only seek information and not social or hedonic value (Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013; Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014). Brands therefore need to create more active information alternatives to counteract consumer’s passivity and increase consumers overall brand awareness and engagement (Gummerus et al., 2012; Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014). Brands can create awareness/motivation for engagement by keeping up with current events, by having up-to-date information on the offering and by providing content that is accurate, relevant and timely in their communication efforts (Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014; Ul Islam and Rahman, 2016). Another important factor in order to create active engagement between brands and consumers on a practical basis is to ask questions, exchange information and create a dialogue, as it will enable consumers to interact more with the brand (Ul Islam and Rahman, 2016). An active exchange of information and opinions will increase the chance for consumer affection towards the brand and creates a possible motivation, as consumers are more likely to engage with brands they like (Tsai and Men, 2013; Ul Islam and Rahman, 2016). Additionally, the shared content needs to provide consumers with answers to all their questions (Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013).

Practical and informational benefits are necessary to include in brands online communication as it is an efficient motivation for consumer engagement (Sicilia and Palazon, 2008; Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013). In fact, according to Tsai and Men (2013) consumers are often primarily driven by practical benefits when they visit social media sites. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that consumers perceive practical benefits on a brand's social media, as the ability to obtain information is one of the essential benefits consumers seek and thus is an essential driver for consumer engagement (Baird and Parasnis 2011; Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013; Park and Kim,
Hence the ability to obtain valuable information, knowledge and learning has the possibility to positively influence consumer engagement on social media and thus we hypothesize;

**H4. Perceived practical benefits from the interaction with a brand on social media influence consumer engagement positively.**

In table 2.5 the identified underlying practical aspects that have been discussed in the chapter are connected to two separate categories; information and learning, which in turn are connected to two measurement items that are utilized in order to operationalize and test H4. These aspects have been derived from previous literature within consumer engagement in an online context (see table 2.1) and are connected to the different categories, as they are the core groupings that consumers see valuable benefits within and therefore motivate their engagement with brands on social media. A major segment of the practical factor consists of consumers’ pursuit for information, which acts as substantial motivation (Ul Islam and Rahman, 2016) for engagement. Consumers seek knowledge (Gummerus et al., 2012) and information expertise (Ying-Feng and Lien Hui, 2013) and therefore go through a browsing or information gathering process (Ying-Feng and Lien Hui, 2013; Park and Kim, 2014) in order to collect up-to-date information (Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014). The information base provides convenient support (Zheng et al., 2015), assistance (Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone, 2014) and advice (Sicilia and Palazon, 2008) when the consumer later face purchase decisions and product trials (Ul Islam and Rahman, 2016). The other core category refers to the learning (Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013) that consumers gain from their brand engagement. The consumer’s awareness (Gummerus et al., 2012) of brands’ information and activities (Park and Kim, 2014) may create emotional affections (Ul Islam and Rahman, 2016) towards particular brand and thus make the problem of choosing between brands easier (e.g. Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo, 2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.5. Underlying practical aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Learning
brand information, affection, awareness, learning, problem solving benefits

2. Learning about the brand and its offering (e.g. core values and other activities)

2.2.5 Trust factor

Previous literature has put forward consumer’s trust with a brand as an important factor in obtaining consumer engagement and spreading positive word-of-mouth, as it affects the attitude and purchase intentions towards a brand (Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides and Alarcon-del-Amo, 2011; Nadeem et al., 2015; Frasquet, Ruiz-Molina and Molla-Descals, 2015). The trust that consumers have towards brand’s is affected by the perceived level of risk. Risk is a collection subconscious and conscious evaluation of the contents liability, which has a negative effect on consumers’ intention for engagement (Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides and Alarcon-del-Amo, 2011). Trusts counteracts the perceived liability and instead make engagement with the brand easier and more straight forward (Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides and Alarcon-del-Amo, 2011).

Consumers’ social interactions in communities are increasing interpersonal trust and commitment to the community and this may enhance the consumer’s willingness to develop new relations (Wang and Chen, 2012; Verhagen et al., 2015). There is a positive relationship between trust and consumer commitment i.e. the consumer’s attachment to a brand affects the online behavioral intentions positively (Porter and Donthu, 2008; Frasquet, Ruiz-Molina and Molla-Descals, 2015). Trusting consumers are more cooperative, more willing to share personal information, keener to talk about, or recommend the brand online and display more loyalty intentions (Porter and Donthu, 2008; Frasquet, Ruiz-Molina and Molla-Descals, 2015). Brands can basically use trust in order to foster embeddedness, participation and long-term relationships, as the consumer feel safe and as if though the brand shares the same values (Porter and Donthu, 2008).
Porter and Donthu (2008) revealed that brands need to publish *quality content* online, with *credible information* that needs to be accessible and relevant as it will build consumers’ beliefs, perception and confidence in the brand. Brand’s social media pages need to considered reliable *sources of information*, as the very credibility of the brand is judged upon it (Tsai and Men, 2013; Nadeem et al., 2015). The social media content need credibility in order to encourage engagement, further shares and continued word-of-mouth (Tsai and Men, 2013) Labrecque (2014) proposed that message cues and *interactive and open communication* from the brand via their social media channel is the key to engender trust. He suggested that *honesty*, timely responses, and personal replies to user comments can develop a parasocial interaction (a one sided relationship generally developed by an audience) that the consumer experience as a one-to-one relationship. This sense of intimacy is likely to develop the consumer-brand relationship that can strengthen loyalty intentions (Horton and Wohl, 1956; Labrecque, 2014).

Brands need to bear in mind that consumers trust towards their website or social media fan page is affected by their *perceived risk*, i.e. that the *source of information* (brand), the *quality of the content* and its *credibility* is affected by the consumer’s notion of trustworthiness (Porter and Donthu 2008; Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides and Alarcon-del-Amo, 2011; Nadeem et al., 2015). Brands also need to be *honest*, *interactive and open in their communication* with the consumers to foster engagement and strengthen the perceived trust. Based on the reviewed literature on trust in an online environment we hypothesize:

**H5.** *Perceived trust from the interaction with a brand on social media influence consumer engagement positively.*

In table 2.6 the underlying aspects of trust that have been discussed in the chapter are connected to two separate categories; credibility and honesty, which in turn are connected to two measurement items that are utilized in order to operationalize and test H5. These aspects have been derived from previous literature within consumer engagement in an online context (see table 2.1) and are connected to the different categories, as they provide the core groupings that consumers see valuable benefits within and therefore motivate their engagement with brands on social media.
Consumers care for two main categories when engaging in communication with brands on social media. First of they care about the quality of the content (Porter and Donthu, 2008), as they believe that brands should supply credible information (Porter and Donthu, 2008; Tsai and Men, 2013) and be a source of information which can be relied upon (Nadeem et al., 2015). Secondly they want honesty, where the communication and the engagement should be both interactive and open (e.g. Labrecque, 2014) in order to lower the perceived risk (Lorenzo-Romero, Constantinides and Alarcon-del-Amo, 2011)

Table 2.6 Underlying trust aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Underlying trust factors</th>
<th>Measurement items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td><strong>1. Credibility</strong> Credible information, quality content, sources of information</td>
<td>1. Credibility of a brand’s shared content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2. Honesty</strong> Interactive and open communication, perceived risk, honesty</td>
<td>2. Perceived honesty from a brand’s interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Conceptual model

The conceptual model has been extracted from the examined literature in chapter 2.2 Antecedents of consumer engagement online. The presented literature underwent an evaluation procedure to ensure that its content was credible and valid and thus relevant for this study (see appendix 5 for review process). All factors (i.e. independent variables) are hypothesized to have a positive influence on the dependent variable consumer engagement. In table 2.1 the subcategories that comprises each factor is presented to provide an understanding of the hypothesized factor.

Figure 2.1 Factors influencing consumer engagement towards brands on social media
3. Methodology

In the methodological chapter the research approach of the paper is presented including the research design, data collection method, operationalization, sampling procedure, data analysis method, quality criteria and finally ethical considerations.

3.1 Research approach

The research approach refers to the course that the researchers have used in order to approach the specific topic, problem or issue of interest, which the research is centered on (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Typically, this concern lies in the researcher's’ approach selection of either a deductive or inductive form of reasoning and in the choice of a quantitative or a qualitative approach to gather the data. The selection between the two impacts the entire research, as all alternatives come with both strong and weak areas, which affect the formulation of research. Simply put, the researchers must ensure that the selection provide the most advantageous approach to the research purpose (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Therefore, these areas will be presented and discussed in the subheadings below.

3.1.1 Inductive vs. Deductive Research

Business research has two main types of reasoning when it comes to scientific enquiries, which are deductivism and inductivism (Adams et al., 2007). These two approaches provide two contrasting descriptions of the relationship between theory and research and therefore researchers usually have to choose one of the two stances to implement in their research (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

In the deductive reasoning the theory steers the research throughout the process as it moves from a general to a case specific perspective (Adams et al., 2007). A deductive approach starts with the collection of existing theories, concepts and cases on the relevant subject domain (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005), which work as the foundation and the starting point for further research (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005). The gathered material has to be carefully reviewed regarding its applicability and contribution to the research (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005) as deductive research requires a strong foundation in relevant research (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Testable hypotheses
are deduced from this theoretical base and are formulated in such a way that they state what the research aim to test and report in the empirical investigation (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The hypotheses are then typically transformed into an operationalization, which make the concepts of the study measurable and applicable to reality (Bryman and Bell, 2011) while also clearly displaying how the concept and the variables will be measured (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The operationalization and the hypotheses are then tested against the gathered data and are either rejected or verified and are followed by the potential revision of the existing theory (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Bryman and Bell, 2011). Deductive reasoning is often associated with quantitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The inductive reasoning follows a different process, as the theory instead of being the driving force behind the research is the outcome of it (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This is an exploratory approach to research as theories are constructed from the observations and the findings presented in the empirical investigation rather than tested (Adams et al., 2007; Bryman and Bell, 2011). Where the research process is concerned with the identification of problems and the construction of new theories, typically via qualitative methods (Bryman and Bell, 2011) Thus inductive reasoning strives to describe complicated phenomenon, by identifying underlying motives, reasons and intentions (Adams et al., 2007).

Deductive reasoning is the most suitable research approach when the empirical collection is based on hypotheses deduced from coexisting research and quantitative models (Oghazi, 2009). Hence, this research follows a deductive reasoning, as it seeks to investigate the correlation between the factors that impact consumer engagement on the social media by employing coexisting theories and material. The hypotheses were deduced from relevant and carefully selected material within the domain of consumer engagement and the social media. The examination of the concepts presented in the literature review lead to the development of hypotheses and a conceptual model. The research’s rejection of inductive research is strengthened by the fact that it is often associated to assumption which state that its theory building process tend to be less effective, more time consuming, less valid/reliable and not as accurate as its deductive counterpart (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Bryman and Bell, 2011).
3.1.2 Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research

There are two main approaches to the gathering of data for research studies, namely those two approaches specified as quantitative and qualitative research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The two approaches differ in their philosophical disposition, their approach and in the frameworks for data collection they provide (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, researchers clearly have to choose between the two before starting the empirical data collection (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Quantitative research is explanatory, with a purpose focused on testing hypotheses in relation to data and therefore investigates the relationship between variables (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This is done by formulating hypotheses which aim to predict the relationship present in the data which then can be tested and either verified or rejected (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The data is usually gathered through questionnaires, surveys and other methods that generate statistical and numerical data (Abusabha, 2003; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; McCusker and Gunaydin, 2015). Quantitative research is very goal-orientated, as it strives to quantify the data in order to make generalizable claims (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Because of this, quantitative research often follows a very strict design, which has to be developed before the actual research i.e. the data collection and analysis (Adams et al., 2007).

Qualitative studies are instead exploratory, where the researcher seeks to understand complex situations and discover new phenomenon (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The data is gathered through close interaction with respondents as the researcher strives to gain insight into their perspective, beliefs and attitudes on the subject in question (Abusabha, 2003; Creswell, 2013). The data is typically massive word accounts of the respondent’s perspective, which allows the research to access the underlying motives, reasons and intentions behind phenomenon (Bryman and Bell, 2011; McCusker and Gunaydin, 2015). Because of this, the research process tends to be more flexible, less defined and more changing (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

This research follows a quantitative research approach as the purpose of the study is to explain the factors that positively influence consumer engagement towards brands on social media. This purpose require the collection of large amounts of data as respondents opinions likely are varied, which means more data is required in order to
create generalizable results. Quantitative research lends itself to the collection of large amounts of descriptive information from a large varied sample, which can be done in order to conduct statistical analysis, quantify the results and create generalizable results (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Previous studies on the area have mainly been concerned with exploratory studies and qualitative methods, which have led to the fact that they have failed to explain the causal relationship (Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo, 2004; Brodie et al., 2011a; Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Hamzah, Alwi and Othman, 2014), therefore the researchers take a quantitative approach in order to successfully explain and test the causal relationship between variables. Hence the quantitative research fit this research purpose better than qualitative, as quantitative is superior at covering large samples of populations, finding correlations and creating generalizable findings with an objective view (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

3.2 Research Design

A research design provides the framework for the gathering, organization and analyzing of the data, which is used in order to test the hypothesis or answer the research question (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The research design should define a strategy that includes the description of how the measurement of the hypotheses and the variables will be conducted and the context of the data collection (Bailey, 1987). Three of the most prevalent research designs are exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory/causal, which differ in their process and outcomes (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The designs are typically applied to either unstructured or structured problem areas (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005).

An exploratory research design is typically applied to relatively untouched subject areas, where the problem is unstructured (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005; Bryman and Bell, 2011). Hence, exploratory research is very flexible and can easily change direction, as it seeks to create as much knowledge as possible on a phenomenon (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). An exploratory design is adapted therefore in qualitative research in order to explore the subject area with focus groups, interviews and content analysis (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).
Descriptive research design has a precise purpose and follows structured research process (Hair et al., 2011). Its aim is to provide an accurate portrayal of the profile of the phenomenon and often work as the extension, forerunner or as a piece of future explanatory research as it creates knowledge within the research area (Adams et al., 2007). The design describes rather than explains the underlying reason and can therefore be implemented within both qualitative and quantitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Explanatory which sometimes is called causal research, strives at explaining the structure of phenomena, by interconnecting the underlying reason behind them (Adams et al., 2007). The researcher takes the data and tests it for correlation in order to establish clear image of the relationship between variables i.e. the cause and effect relationship (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The aim is to revise theories by explaining the causal relationship between variables (Adams et al., 2007; Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2009). Researchers usually utilize explanatory research in studies that concern the relationship between two or more variables with statistical tests (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

Previous research on consumer engagement in an online context have mostly utilized exploratory designs to identify and explore factors that may affect consumer engagement and therefore overlooked the causal examination of the actual relationship and impact of the factors (Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie, 2014; Wallace, Buil and Chernatony, 2014; Hamzah, Alwi and Othman, 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015). Therefore, new research that explains the relationships of the motives behind consumer engagement is vital. Hence this research held an explanatory research design, as it provides the best approach to the study’s purpose of examining the factors that influence consumer engagement on social media. The research aim is to explain the relationship between several variables with the help of statistical tests, which the explanatory design is suitable for (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The explanatory design support the implementation of regression and correlation tests between the identified factors and consumer engagement in order to derive a clear image of the relationship.
3.3 Data sources

There are two procedures to gathering empirical data, where the material either is collected from primary or secondary sources (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The two practices have certain characteristics that will influence the research, which the researcher has to consider before the selection (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, researchers are not limited to just one procedure, as it is common to use a combination of the two within the same research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Hair et al., 2011).

Primary data is data assembled straight from the source by the researcher in order to answer the problem identified in the research (Hair et al., 2011). The researcher therefore has first-hand interaction with the material, which allows for controlled procedures (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Procedures such as observations, interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and case studies are commonly used as the preferred gathering tool (Adams et al., 2007; Bryman and Bell, 2011). This direct approach ensures that the information is up to date, specific and tailored for the research and therefore provides meaningful and reliable data (Hair et al., 2011). However, collecting primary data tend to be more time consuming, require more resources and is dependent on the respondent’s cooperation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

Secondary data refers to the exploration and the conduction of new research through the gathering and analysis of already existing material from external sources originally gathered for another purpose (Smith, 2008). The material can be everything from previous studies, cases and journals to photographs, articles and conversation, etcetera (Smith, 2008; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Secondary data benefits from being time/cost efficient as the researcher does not need to conduct their own collection (Vartanian, 2011). Still the researcher has to consider the compatibility and the consistency between the different data they chose to implement (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Secondary data may also lack relevance and be inaccurate, as it serves the objectives of other research and in fact may be outdated (Vartanian, 2011).

This research was forced to generate new data due to the absence of research within the exact same domain that this research wanted to explore; the causal relationship between
consumer engagement on social media and its underlying identified factors (social, monetary, hedonic, practical and trust). Therefore, the main data in this study was principally gathered through primary sources, specifically through the use of a questionnaire. This was done in order to assess the different aspects that positively influence consumer engagement by allowing respondents to express their opinions and thoughts on the matter. Hence the data is tailored for the research, as it provides meaningful and reliable data on the motives that influence consumer engagement.

### 3.4 Research Strategy

There are several different research strategies to choose from, as they are not specifically formulated for a single research design. Instead the researcher has to base the selection of the strategy on the approach, the research questions, the research objective, the already existing material and on time/resource constraints (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The strategy refers to the orientation of the research and provides the framework for the data collection while considering whether the purpose is to understand or to generalize (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Hence this research’s explanatory design has to be matched to a strategy that ensures the collection of relevant material (Hair et al., 2011).

The explanatory design is concerned with the causal relationship between variables and accordingly considers a quantitative approach, which corresponds to the characteristics of a cross-sectional design, which favors data collection from surveys. Using a survey strategy allowed the researcher to go through a controlled process in order to test variables relationship, create models and generalize the results (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Bryman and Bell, 2011).

#### 3.4.1 Cross-Sectional Design

The cross-sectional design is a study of a specific phenomenon at a particular moment in time, where the researcher collects data on more than one variable on a sample of the population (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Bryman and Bell, 2011; Hair et al., 2011). Researchers utilize cross-sectional designs when they are interested in the
variation and relationship between variables i.e. the patterns of association. The aim of the design is to quantify the data in order to arrive at generalizable results (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005; Bryman and Bell, 2011). Cross-sectional research is often referred to as a social survey, since they often rely on questionnaires for data collection (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The cross-sectional design was chosen as it follows a quantitative approach, regularly features a survey, provides a structured procedure to the questionnaire formation and generates quantifiable data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The cross-sectional design allows for the collection of data on several variables at a single point in time (Bryman and Bell, 2011), and hence data on all the identified factors (social, monetary, hedonic, practical, trust and consumer engagement) can be gathered. The structured process allowed the researcher to collect material that displays the correlation between variables (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

### 3.5 Data Collection Method

When conducting a scientific study the researcher needs to gather empirical data to be able to draw any conclusions is a pivotal part of the research. The collection method is evaluated on its capability of collecting relevant information and supplying the right foundation to answer the research questions or hypotheses (Adams et al., 2007). Bryman and Bell (2011) says that there are a variety of different methods of collecting data and that the researcher must carefully select the one that match the research aim in the best way. Important to bear in mind is that the research design is closely connected to the method of gathering data, as the former holds a framework of how the research will be carried out (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

As this research hold a quantitative approach with an explanatory purpose and a cross-sectional design in order to gather primary data the most relevant method of collecting data appears to be by conducting a survey (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Surveys are a way of gathering quantifiable data through asking respondents’ face-to-face questions, by telephone, or by letting they answer the questions themselves. They can range from being small scale to large scale depending on the sample size (Adams et al., 2007).
intention is to gather a larger number of respondents as it makes the sample more
crepresentative to the population, and to collect quantifiable data to conduct data analysis
(Adams et al., 2007; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

This research applied a self-completion questionnaire (Appendix 1 and 2) with a
convenience sample (See 3.7.3). The questionnaire was shared and distributed on
Facebook, online forums and handed out at Linnaeus University campus as a method
of gathering data. This form of collecting empirical material was chosen because of the
cross-sectional design and explanatory purpose of the research, which stand in a close
relation to questionnaire as method format (Bryman and Bell, 2011). A self-completion
questionnaire is an excellent research method to use in order to collect quantifiable data
as it allows inferences to be made (Malhotra, 2010). It also provides the opportunity to
use analysis tools such as SPSS to derive various statistics conclusions from the
gathered data to enable the researchers to accept or reject the hypotheses.

3.5.1 Self-completed questionnaire

Self-completed questionnaire is a term coined for all types of questionnaires that the
respondents reads and answer themselves without having a moderator asking them the
questions. This includes those who have been distributed on the Internet, via Intranet,
by mail, or by hand (Adams et al., 2007; Bryman and Bell, 2011). The purpose is to
gather information about the respondents’ attitudes, behavior, opinions and values in
order to be able to generalize the findings beyond the specific research context. What
characterizes this type of questionnaire is that the respondents are provided with the
exact same questions containing the exact same wording, which minimizes any
variability and interviewer effect (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The questions asked are
normally so called *closed-questions* where the respondent have a given set of
alternatives to answer, which minimizes that questions are left blank (Adams et al.,
2007). Other advantages with this type of survey are that it is cheaper and quicker to
administer as well as it is more convenient for the respondents than other research
methods (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The researcher must; have a simple and pleasant layout to the questionnaire form,
consider each individual question carefully, give a clear and understandable
explanation of the purpose of the research within the questionnaire, and conduct a pilot
tested for optimization (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). When following these
guidelines, the researcher has to be aware of the fact that respondents cannot ask you
for help if there is anything that is unclear. Hence, the format of the questionnaire has
to be easy to follow and the questions easy to answer since the respondents cannot be
told or trained beforehand (Bryman and Bell, 2011). These factors need to be
considered beforehand, as they are required in order to create a questionnaire that can
be both carried out and later reproduced and still generate valid, reliable, consistent and
accurate results (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Bryman and Bell, 2011).

3.5.2 Questionnaire construction
With an explanatory research design, the researcher conducts a questionnaire to test a
predefined theory or theories to establish if there is a relationship between variables.
Therefore, prior literature within the field has to be carefully examined and
conceptualized to have a clear picture of what relationships that are expected to exist
(Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The first step is to specify the information
needed to be able to accept or reject the hypotheses and answer the purpose of the study
(Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Malhotra, 2010). The researcher must also have
defined the target population as the characteristics of respondents influence the design
of the questionnaire. E.g. what are appropriate questions for university students are
probably not equally appropriate for senior citizens, and understanding this is related
to socioeconomic characteristics (Malhotra, 2010). The target population of the study
is presented in chapter 3.7.1.

By conducting a questionnaire, the researcher wants to collect data that can be
considered trustworthy and thus lay the ground for generalizable results. In order to
collect trustworthy data, the researcher has to make sure that there are no biased results,
where a poorly constructed questionnaire is one of the factor that may influence the
respondents bias (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman and Bell, 2011). The researcher also has to
bear in mind that bias can occur due to the misinterpretation or the unwillingness of
respondents to answer certain questions and this is something that may be hard for the
researcher to realize (Malhotra, 2010). In self-completion questionnaires the respondent
cannot ask the researcher about potential misunderstandings or similar things to clarify the situation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

The first thing that the respondents should see and thus read when they look at the questionnaire is the so-called cover letter, which is the part where the researcher explains the purpose of sending out a questionnaire and introduce the related topic (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Bryman and Bell (2011) argue that an attractive layout and a clever structure can make it appear shorter than it actually is. However, this does not mean that one should reduce margins and space between characters and questions as this make it look cramped. It is more important that the layout makes it look easy for the eye (Bryman and Bell, 2011). A good layout and structure can make the questionnaire attractive and encourage potential respondents to participate (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The cover letter of the questionnaire can be read in Appendix 1. The cover letter introduces the reader to the topic of consumer engagement and social media.

The flow of the questionnaire is important as well, as it is a key factor that influences the perception of the structure. To maintain the flow, the questionnaire should be divided into different parts with natural transitions between them, e.g. numbering the questions in each part makes reader understand that branches of questions belong to each other (Malhotra, 2010). The questionnaire should also be outlined with the questions that are likely to be of most interest for the respondent first to not give a dull impression (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The questionnaire (see appendix 1) was divided into different parts were the control questions and the questions about the dependent variables were one part and the independent questions were divided into smaller parts to make it easier to comprehend. Each part had a short introduction text to help simplify the respondents understanding of the subject.

### 3.5.2.1 Question structure

When creating a self-completion questionnaire as a method of collecting data it is pivotal that the questions are precisely and clearly defined since the researcher only has one chance to gather information from a specific respondent. Hence, the time that is spend on planning what data that needs to be collected and how to design the
questionnaire is crucial in order to meet the objectives (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The researcher has to decide whether he/she wants to ask questions in an open or closed format or a combination of both (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

With open or *unstructured* questions, the respondents are able to answer the questions with their own words to easier express attitudes and beliefs in any way (Malhotra, 2010). Closed or *structured* questions are when the respondent is provided with a response set (i.e. different answers that he or she has to choose from) that can either be multiple-choice, dichotomous or scale (Malhotra, 2010). It makes it easier and quicker to answer for the respondent due to minimal writing and the responses are easier to compare for the researcher since they are predetermined (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Structured questions can also help clarify the meaning of a question for the respondent when he or she sees the answers as well as it minimizes any interview bias and variability (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This research intends to ask questions with a closed-format in order to overcome misinterpretations and ensure a relatively quick response time for the respondents and to avoid loss of concentration.

It cannot be assumed that the respondents will give accurate and reasonable answers to all the questions that are put forward to them (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Malhotra (2010) exemplifies this by stating that sometimes it occurs that the respondent do not remember or are not informed enough to give certain responses. Hence the researcher must design the questionnaire in a way to overcome the inability to answer and provide the desired information (Malhotra, 2010). Further there are also cases when the respondents are unwilling to provide an answer on certain questions due to various reasons such as, too much effort is required, disclosing sensitive information, the context seems inappropriate to share, or there is no apparent need for the information requested (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman and Bell, 2011). In order to help the respondent, remember a short introductory text is applied to every page of the questionnaire, as well as a clarification text beneath some of the questions to simplify the understanding as much as possible.

Malhotra (2010) and Bryman and Bell (2011) both emphasize on a set of rules that the researcher has to follow when constructing the questions. The questions should not be too long since the respondent might not read it all and might therefore provide a biased
answer. The questions must not either be double-barreled, i.e. ask about two things, e.g. are you satisfied with your job and salary (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Words that can be interpreted different i.e. subjectively should be avoided as well because they are likely to engender biased responses. Those words are for example, usually, normally, sometimes, regularly, among others. Instead a consistent reference frame should be used with numbers e.g. less than once, 1-3 times etcetera (Malhotra, 2010). Leading questions that give a hint of the expected answer run a great risk of potential bias as well; hence the researcher must pay attention to how the questions are phrased (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Implicit assumptions, or questions that are fully not stated because the researcher assumes that the respondent understand it all is also something that increases the risk of a biased answer and thus should be avoided (Malhotra, 2010). In order to check for double-barreled questions, leading questions, assumptions, etcetera a consultation with an expert in the field of quantitative business research was conducted prior to the pilot test.

Bryman and Bell (2011) states that there are four primary measurement scales used in quantitative research: nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio that all have a different impact to the analysis of data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Nominal scale is a form of labeling where the numbers only serve as tags to identify and cannot be ranked. A nominal question is typically a dichotomous question (two categories), a yes or no answer, e.g. Are you a resident in Stockholm, Yes or No, or a Male or Female question (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Bryman and Bell, 2011). Ordinal is when a variable can be ranked but the extent between the categories cannot be determined. A typical ordinal scale question is generally to rank order one’s preferences, for example rank and mark with numbers what categories you find most important before purchasing a house (Malhotra, 2010). In an interval scale there are equal distances between the measures and statistical operations can be employed, but there is no true zero point. Interval scaled questions are normally questions ranked on a 1-7 scale (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Ratio scales possess all the scales previously mentioned and there is also a true zero point, which enables the researcher to derive how many times greater or smaller an object is over another and it allows statistical inferences of absolute magnitude (Malhotra, 2010), e.g. age, income or time are questions that are related to this scale (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The questionnaire relied primarily on the use of interval scale questions in order to gather information related to the explanatory purpose
of the research. The control questions were designed with nominal and ordinal questions.

### 3.5.4 Pilot Testing the Questionnaire

Pretesting or pilot testing is the process of trying out the self-completion questionnaire on a smaller sample of respondents prior to the actual survey in order to identify and eliminate any problems (Malhotra, 2010). It allows the researcher to derive if the research instrument functions as expected and provides an opportunity to clarify questions which potentially may confuse respondents (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) argue that conducting a pilot test is an important tool to enhance the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The researcher is provided with an understanding of the face validity, i.e. if the questions make sense. Other concerns the pretest can help to assess include; whether the findings are robust and if will they be consistent at another point in time or with different samples (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

The pilot test should be extensive and include all aspects of the questionnaire, from the content, wording, layout and sequence (Malhotra, 2010). Prior to the pilot test, the researcher should contact a group of experts within the studied field and let them assess and comment on the suitability and representativeness of the questions as well as the structure of the questionnaire, which will help the researcher establish content validity (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Thereafter the pilot test should be send out to respondents that are similar to the actual respondents of the real questionnaire in terms of their knowledge of the topic, demographic and psychographic i.e. respondents from the same population (Malhotra, 2010). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) there are a few points that the researcher should seek to find out from the pilot test. These are whether the layout was stimulating and clear, if the instructions were understandable, if questions that were unclear or ambiguous, the time it took to complete the questionnaire, if some questions felt uneasy for the respondents to answer and finally if the respondents felt that there were topics that were missing (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).
The pilot test of this study followed the description mentioned in the previous paragraphs. First, the researcher created the questionnaire based on the summarized literature (chapter 2) from the field of consumer engagement in online environments. The questions were thought through carefully, and aimed to answer all measurement items that comprise the determined factors. Second, the questionnaire was presented to two experts within the field of marketing, one senior lecturer in marketing and one expert in quantitative research. From their opinion small changes were made in layout, wording, order and description. From that the researchers translated the questionnaire from English to Swedish, as the purpose was to hand it out in both languages, due to the location (Växjö, Sweden). Then in conjunction with what Malhotra (2010) and Aaker et al., (2011) states the pilot test was conducted on 15 randomly chosen people representative of the population in both languages to ensure that the questions were understood correctly and asked the question it was supposed to. Finally, from the advice of the participants of the pilot study the questionnaire was revised before its final distribution in order to avoid any form of bias and error.

3.6 Operationalization

The operationalization is concerned with the conversion of concepts and theories into measures, a conversion which is required in order to collect and analyze data (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005; Bryman and Bell 2011). It is the process of taking an abstract concept and transforming it into measurements, which can measure the relationship that is of interest and is evident in the conceptual model (George and Marino, 2011). The operationalization should clearly identify the core concepts, differentiate them from others, and cover them with sufficient information (Bryman and Bell, 2011; George and Marino, 2011). Hence an operationalization requires concepts that are clearly defined, and therefore relies on the theoretical chapter as provider of detailed description of concepts (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005). The descriptions need to provide an accurate foundation for the measure, as the validity and reliability of the measurement is dependent on it (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The core concepts are divided into components, which questions can be formulated on, questions which then are implemented in the data collection (Bryman and Bell, 2011) In general, the operationalization creates a connection between the theoretical and empirical chapter,
as it summarizes the reviewed concepts, transform them into measures, which are used in order to ensure the collection of data (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005).

The aspects of social, monetary, hedonic, practical and trust gathered and reviewed in the theoretical chapter have been conceptualized and operationally defined in order to ensure proper measurements. Each of the five factors is connected to the previously discussed subcategories and subsequently to the questions, which are implemented in the questionnaire in order to study the relationship between the factors and consumer engagement. The operationalization supplies an overview of the questions, their objective and makes sure that the research area is sufficiently covered. The result of the operational process is presented in table 3.1.
### 3.6.1 Operationalization table

#### Table 3.1 Operationalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Concept</th>
<th>Theoretical definition</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Measurement items</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Consumer engagement**   | A psychological state of mind where the individual is a proactive brand partner with active participation in the brand’s activities and offerings. (Avnet and Higgins, 2006; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012) | Consumer engagement in online environments | 1. Behavior Control questions dep_1/2/3. Cognitive dep_4/5. Emotional | CQ0) Have you ever engaged with a brand on social media?
CQ1) How frequently do you engage with brands on social media?
CQ2) In the future I expect to engage with brands on social media
CQ3) On which social media platform do you most frequently engage with brands?
cdep_1) I believe that there are benefits that I can gain from the engagement with brands on social media
cdep_2) I engage with brands on social media because I want to receive those benefits
cdep_3) I have received benefits from my engagement with brands on social media
cdep_4) I feel more connected to brands I engage with on social media
cdep_5) I have a strong opinion towards the brands I engage with on social media |
| **Antecedents of consumer engagement:** |                                                                 |soc_1/2. Ability to communicate and build relationships soc_3/4. Gratitude from sharing and exchanging product knowledge |soc_1) When I engage with a brand on social media I find it important to be able to communicate with brand representatives
soc_2) When I engage with a brand on social media I find that communicating directly with brand representatives increases my relationship with the brand
soc_3) Personally it is important for me to receive responses from other consumers when sharing my experience with a brand on social media
soc_4) Personally it is important for me to receive responses from other consumers when sharing a brand’s content on social media | |
| **Social factor**          | Benefits and gratitude perceived from sharing and exchanging information that increases the consumer’s likelihood to further engage with the brand by taking actions such as like, comment or share material. |                       |soc_1) When I engage with a brand on social media I find it important to be able to communicate with brand representatives
soc_2) When I engage with a brand on social media I find that communicating directly with brand representatives increases my relationship with the brand
soc_3) Personally it is important for me to receive responses from other consumers when sharing my experience with a brand on social media
soc_4) Personally it is important for me to receive responses from other consumers when sharing a brand’s content on social media | |
| **Monetary factor**        | The monetary appreciation and reward that a consumer receives, which is the motivating factor for him or her to engage with the brand in social media. |mon_1/2. Taking part of special offers (e.g. discounts, coupons, free samples) directly from the brand’s communication mon_3/4. Facilitate consumption decision |mon_1) I believe it is beneficial to receive discounts on products/services from a brand's social media content
mon_2) I believe it is beneficial to receive free samples/trials on products/services from a brand's social media content
mon_3) Receiving discounts from a brand’s social media content helps me decide if I want to purchase the brand’s product/service
mon_4) Receiving free samples/trials from a brand’s social media content | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hedonic factor</strong></td>
<td>The consumer’s emotional takeaway i.e. the perceived enjoyment and experiential value from the interaction with the brand on social media.</td>
<td>hed₁/₂. Enjoyment of participating with the brand, i.e. emotional takeaway&lt;br&gt;hed₃/₄. Brand’s sharing relevant and entertaining content in line with their personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practical factor</strong></td>
<td>Valuable information obtained from the interaction with the brand on social media in the form of product information, brand information and updates on upcoming deals.</td>
<td>pra₁/₂. Valuable information on products and future deals&lt;br&gt;pra₃/₄. Learning about the brand and its offering (e.g. core values and other activities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust factor</strong></td>
<td>How the consumer perceive the quality and honesty of the content published by the brand on social media that can influence interpersonal trust and foster brand interaction.</td>
<td>tru₁/₂. Credibility of a brand’s shared content&lt;br&gt;tru₃/₄. Perceived honesty from a brand’s interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hedonic**
- hed₁) When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me that I receive a positive experience from the information I obtain<br>- hed₂) If I communicate with a brand representative on social media I believe it is important to obtain a positive feeling from my interaction<br>- hed₃) For me to engage with a brand on social media it is important to enjoy the content that the brand shares<br>- hed₄) For me to engage with a brand on social media it is important that the brand shares content that is relevant to what they offer

**Practical**
- pra₁) When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me to obtain information about the brand’s products/services<br>- pra₂) When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me to obtain information about future deals on brand’s products/services<br>- pra₃) When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me to learn about the brand<br>- pra₄) When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me to learn about the brand’s other activities

**Trust**
- tru₁) For me to engage with a brand on social media it is important to perceive the content that the brand shares as trustworthy<br>- tru₂) For me to engage with a brand on social media it is important that the brand’s shared content have reliable information<br>- tru₃) When I engage with a brand on social media I find it important that the brand representatives are honest to me in our conversation<br>- tru₄) When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me that the brand is being honest in their information about their product/service quality
3.7 Sampling

Adams et al., (2007) argues that there is a close and thus important relationship between the research design, the research strategy, the data collection technique and the sampling method within business research. Each of these parameters determines each other’s contribution in one way or another, and suggests the way that the study will be carried out in order to answer the research questions (Adams et al., 2007). E.g. is the researcher interested in knowing how large the proportion of 20-30 year olds that visits the cinema are, or why they are visiting the cinema influence all these parameters all the way down to the sampling technique that will be used (Adams et al., 2007).

Sampling is a component of the research design that includes the sampling process, the target population, the sample size and the measures for controlling the validity and response rate (Malhotra, 2010). When conducting a quantitative study on a specific population it is hard, not to say almost impossible to obtain the desired information from all of the individuals within that population. Therefore, the researcher must obtain data from a group of people that are representative of the population (i.e. a sample) in order to be able to generalize the findings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Bryman and Bell (2011) describe a population as all the comprised units from where a sample can be selected. It does not necessarily have to be people but for example countries, cities or companies may be of interest for the researcher as well. Further a sample is a subset of the population that the researcher selects either randomly or non-randomly to participate in the study (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Sampling is a technique that researchers use as it is practical, saves a lot time and provides monetary benefits (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

According to Malhotra (2010) an important decision for the researcher is to decide whether to conduct a probability or non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is when all the units within the population have the same chance of being selected. With this technique the sample is representative of the population and therefore statistical conclusions can be made. Probability sampling requires a specific definition of the target population as well as the sampling frame (Malhotra, 2010). Simple random sampling, systematic sample and stratified random sampling are examples of some of the probability sampling techniques (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In non-probability
sampling the possibility of each unit to be selected is not known and therefore the researcher cannot be fully certain about the statistical inferences that are drawn about the characteristics of the population (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). It is the personal judgment of the researcher that decides what knowledge or interest the sample unit should have in order to be included in the sample (Malhotra, 2010). Typically used non-probability sampling techniques are convenience sampling, judgmental sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The research’s sampling approach held a non-probability method with a convenience sample (see 3.7.3) and a pre-specified target population (see 3.7.1) of adults that have previously been engaged with brands on any social media. The selected sample size of the target population (see 3.7.4) had to reach a lower limit of at least 109 participants. In order to make sure this a control question was implemented at the start of the self-completed questionnaire.

3.7.1 Target Population

Malhotra (2010) states that the first step of the sampling process is to define the target population. The target population can be described as the selection of objects or elements that hold the information that the researcher wants to extract to be able to make conclusions (Malhotra, 2010). Aaker et al., (2011) argues that one of the most important aspects of a quantitative research is to determine the target population accurately in order to be able to answer the research questions properly. The researcher has to very explicitly determine the population otherwise the results will be misleading or they will answer the wrong question (Malhotra and Birks, 2003). E.g. if a toy store defines their target population as ‘all the family households with children in Stockholm’ there are a lot of evidential uncertainties. They have not defined the age they consider children to be or the boundaries of Stockholm (Aaker et al., 2011). Hence, the target population needs to include a definition of the sample elements, sample units, the coverage area and the time period (Malhotra and Birks, 2003).

As the research holds an explanatory purpose the researcher's aim is to define the factors that positively influence consumer engagement towards brands on social media the target population is defined as follows. The sample elements are adults without any
specific characteristic traits. The sample units are adult consumers, who have engaged with brands on at least one occasion on a social media platform. This distinction was secured by the implementation of a control question (“Have you ever engaged with a brand on social media”) and if the answer was no they were excluded from the results. The area of coverage i.e. extent is not defined as measurement boundaries, instead consumers that are active on social medias.

### 3.7.2 Sampling Frame

When conducting a probability sampling technique, a sample frame is needed in order to be able to generalize the findings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Malhotra (2010) describe a sample frame as a list or representation over the elements, which help identify the target population. It can for example be a mailing list, telephone book or a list of firms within an industry (Malhotra, 2010). It is very important for the researcher that the sample frame is accurate and does not have any kind of deficiencies, as the researcher strives to create a sample that can be said to be representative of the studied population (Bryman and Bell, 2011). If there is no suitable list or sample frame available to the researcher, he/she should compile his or her own sampling frame with the help of previous existing lists (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). However, Malhotra (2010) argues that if a complete list of the sampling frame cannot be completed, there should be some directions, at least, on how to identify the target population, which should be specifically explained and written down.

As the pre-specified target population of the study (3.7.1) is expressed to be adults who have previously engaged with brands on social media, without any regards to geographic boundaries an accurate sample frame cannot be produced. In order to identify the target population a descriptive cover letter of the research’s purpose was provided to the respondents of the questionnaire with the addition of a control question (“Have you ever engaged with a brand on social media”: Yes, or No), which sorted out people who were not within the target population. If they answered ‘No’ on the online questionnaire they were sent to a landing page saying that they will not be able to answer more questions at this time due to that they are outside the scope of the research aim. The answers of the respondents who answered ‘No’ on the paper copy of the questionnaire but still continued to answer were discarded.
3.7.3 Sampling technique

Malhotra (2010) states that prior to deciding the sample technique that is to be used in the study the researcher has to consider whether to go for a Bayesian or traditional approach. Bayesian approach is when the researcher selects the elements to be included in the sample along the way of the research, taking costs, wrong decisions and information about the population into consideration. The traditional approach constitutes that the sample is decided prior to data collection, i.e. sample size and target population (Malhotra, 2010). If a traditional approach is selected Aaker et al., (2011) states that a probability sampling technique is preferred due to its randomness of selecting participants. However, in order to be able to conduct a probability technique a sampling frame is needed to randomly select elements of the population (Aaker et al., 2011). The researcher also has to decide whether the sample element have the possibility to be included in the study on more than one occasion (i.e. sampling with replacement), or at one time only (i.e. sampling without replacement) (Malhotra, 2010).

This research followed the traditional approach delineated by Malhotra (2010) with a predefined target population presented in 3.7.1 and a sampling without replacement approach, with the exception of respondents participating in the pilot test. However, as the target population of the research did not have any geographic boundaries or specific characteristic traits a sampling frame was impossible to produce, which is a necessity in order to conduct a probability sampling technique according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009). Hence, the sample had to hold a non-probability approach with a convenience sample.

3.7.3.1 Convenience sampling

A convenience sample is a relatively fast and inexpensive way of gathering empirical data in quantitative research (Aaker et al., 2011). It is an approach where the sample elements, or the participants of the study are obtained in a convenient manner selected by the researcher often followed by the notion ‘being at the right place at the right time’ (Malhotra, 2010). A convenience sample could be e.g. students at a university, church groups, consumers at a shopping mall, members of an organization, or players in a
sports team (Malhotra, 2010; Aaker et al., 2011). What is important to bear in mind when using this technique is that generalizations can only be made in theory, as population generalizations require fully representative samples (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Bryman and Bell (2011) agree to that notion and states that convenience sampling is appropriate in order to create a springboard for future research to generalize, as it allows theoretical links from the results to be drawn. In business research convenience sampling is a very common tool and it arguably plays a more important role than it gives credit to (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

A convenience sample was considered the most appropriate non-probability sampling technique as it allowed the researchers to distribute printed copies of the self-completed questionnaire as a method of collecting data after the online version of the questionnaire failed to attract the sufficient amount of responses. The questionnaire was thus handed out on Linnaeus University campus area with the intention of gathering a large sample size.

3.7.4 Sample size
One of the most frequent questions that researchers ask themselves prior to conducting a quantitative study is how large the sample size should be (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The sample size is the amount of elements that are to be included in the research. There is no exact number to follow; instead it is often affected by cost and time constraints, although different formulas and methods have been proposed (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman and Bell, 2011). Aaker et al., (2011) argue that there are four factors that determine one’s sample size namely: how many groups or subgroups are studied, the accuracy required to obtain sufficient information, the cost of obtaining the sample, and finally the variability of the population i.e. if the variability is big a larger sample size is needed (Aaker et al., 2011). In non-probability sampling the researcher should be logic in the decision (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). However, Green (1991) in Wilson VanVoorhis and Morgan (2007) suggests a rule of thumb for researchers without vast experience within quantitative research. When the aim of the study is to test regression and multiple correlations of individual predictors (independent variables), Green proposes the formula N > 104 + m (where m stands for independent variables) (Wilson
VanVoorhis and Morgan, 2007). According to the formula this research requires a minimum of 109 respondents. The formula is presented in Figure 2.

\[ \text{N} > 104 + (1 \times 5) = 109 \]

Figure 3.1. Formula for determining sample size (Wilson VanVoorhis and Morgan, 2007)

As there is only one group of elements that are studied (see 3.7.1) and the variability of the target population's opinion on this topic is not known for the researchers it was decided that the sample size of this particular research would follow the guidelines of Green (1991). Hence, a minimum limit for the numbers of respondents to complete the self-completed questionnaire had to be 109. However, as the target population is a wide group of individuals the researchers strived for a much larger sample size to increase the representativeness and to ensure that the amount of excluded responses would not lead to a smaller sample size than 109.

3.8 Data Analysis Method

The raw quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire have to be converted into relevant numerical data and transferred into a system that enables statistical analysis. The purpose and the defined objectives of the study tend to steer the selection of analysis technique, where quantitative research typically rely on descriptive statistics and some form of correlation and regression analysis (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Researchers utilize different techniques as they provide various insights on the variables characteristics, variations and correlations, which enable the researcher to draw accurate conclusions from the data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, raw quantitative data need to undergo a preparation process before the analysis to make it more suitable, where the process consists of data coding, editing and if required; statistical adjustment (Aaker et al., 2011).
3.8.1 Data Coding & Cleaning

The data coding is the preparation of data, where the answers from the questionnaire are given a code, typically a number which place it in a certain category. This step assembles the raw data in a Statistical Software Program (SPSS) and makes the data measureable and comparable (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Close-ended questions from questionnaires are preferable over open-ended, as they make the transition from questionnaire answer to numerical code easier due to the smaller range of categories needed (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

Data cleaning needs to take place when there is an error in the responses supplied by the participants. The error can be non-logical statistics, which are extreme values and outliers, or it can be due to missing responses, where the participant fails to complete all questions either due to unwillingness to cooperate or due to an involuntary action (Aaker et al., 2011). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) argue that everything in the data should be presented even the errors, to accurately depict the data. However, the researcher can display and discuss errors in the data and still take action to fill in the missing hole. The researcher can for example take the mean of the responses (if they are similar) and implement it, in order to create complete data that can be used in an analysis (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

First the English and Swedish questionnaires were compiled together. Then the raw data gathered from the questionnaires was entered into SPSS in order to convert the measures in relevant and comparable statistic. The data coding within this research took place when; 1) other, male or female participants were assigned either a 0, 1 or 2 depending on their gender identification, 2) the seven age spans were assigned correlating number categories, 3) the control questions, regarding engagement frequency were given corresponding numbers to the 5 ranges, 4) the question regarding the 6 social media platform alternatives were assigned numbers, and 5) all questions concerning the independent and dependent variables, were computed based on the 1-7 measurement scale with strongly disagree at 1 and strongly agree at 7. The descriptive statistics for all measures were then computed in order to provide an overview of all the data, to ensure a complete set of valid data, without errors. The data contained no missing responses and the outliers were deemed insignificant, as they would not impact the research given the result of the Cronbach test. The dependent variable (consumer
engagement) and the independent variables (social, monetary, hedonic, practical, trust), were tested for their Cronbach alpha and all received acceptable values. As a result, average indexes could be computed and utilized within the research, in order to test for correlation and multiple linear regression.

3.8.2 Descriptive statistics

The coding and the sorting of the data provide the researcher with the opportunity to survey the descriptive statistics present in the data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Descriptive statistics are basic statistical forms, which allow the researcher to describe and compare the variables based on their numerical value. The measures within descriptive statistics can be divided into two categories, one which concerns the central tendency and one which deals with the dispersion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Central tendency contains hard measures such as; the mean (the average value of all values within a category), the median (the middle value of all data values) and the mode (the most frequent value within the data category) (Bryman and Bell, 2011). While dispersion provide; the inter-quartile range (differences in the middle of the 50 percent values) and the standard deviation (the degree to which values differ from the mean) (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Other descriptive statistics of course exist such as range, percentiles, skewedness, kurtosis, etcetera, who along with the ones mentioned above all share the characteristic that they can be used in graphs and diagrams to describe the data (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The age and gender of the participants were implemented as descriptive statistics in order to describe the sample that participated in a comprehensive way without risking their anonymity. Three control questions regarding the respondent's social media usage was also utilized, which asked for the respondents current and future engagement frequency along with a question regarding the social media platform most regularly employed. This was done in order to provide a detailed description of when and where the engagement takes place. By displaying both central tendency and dispersion characteristics of the sample and the control questions, the research can give a valuable presentation of the participants, as they provide further insight and understanding of the respondents and the gathered data. The descriptive statistics was also applied to the dependent and the independent variables gathered from the questionnaire, in order to
assess the differences and similarities within each measure and to discover potential outliers and errors. Therefore, the descriptive statistics provide a detailed description of each independent measure, by providing the mean, the standard deviation, the skewness and the kurtosis which further benefits the analysis, as explanations of the findings and the models can be drawn from the statistics provided.

3.8.3 Correlation analysis

A correlation analysis is implemented within research in order to measure the relationship between two variables (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The measure is therefore concerned with the correlation coefficient, as it measures the degree to which two variables relate by displaying that the variation in one variable correlate to a variation in the other variable (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The most commonly used correlation analysis method is the Pearson’s r correlation, which measure the strength in the linear relationship between two variables on a scale between 0 and 1 (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005). A correlation coefficient value near to ±1 indicate that there is a strong relationship between the variables, while a value close to 0 display a weak relationship (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005; Bryman and Bell, 2011). Values should lie between ±0.3 and ±0.9, where strong correlation lies between ±0.7 to ±0.9 and ±0.4 to 0.6 are moderate correlations (Dancey and Reidy, 2004). Values that lie outside these limits indicate that the relationship between the variables are either to weak and share no correlation or too strong and therefore measure the same thing (Dancey and Reidy, 2004). The resulting values from a Pearson's correlation test is dependent on the p-value, as it indicates the level of significance and therefore determine if the measure is reliable. The value and its accompanying p-value should have a significance level of 95 percent i.e. a 0.05 level of acceptance (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Hence the research utilizes Pearson's correlation analysis within SPSS in order to examine the corresponding relationship between the dependent variable; consumer engagement in online environments and the independent variables; social, monetary, hedonic, practical and trust, where the significance level of 95% was considered.
3.8.4 Regression analysis

A regression analysis is used within research in order to measure the relation between a dependent variable and an independent variable, where the aim is to examine the variation in the dependent variable and its mean (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, when research contains more than one independent variable, the researcher needs to implement a multiple regression analysis instead, as it seeks to examine the cause and effect association between several independent variables and a single dependent variable (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). This association is based on linear regression, which displays how a change in the independent variable is connected to an increase or decrease in the dependent variable (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005).

The multiple regression analysis relies on r-squared and Beta values, in order to project the extent to which the variation in a dependent variable can be explained by a change in an independent variable (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The beta displays how a change in the independent variable will affect the dependent variable, where values over 0 indicate a positive relationship while a value below indicates a negative one (Bryman and Bell, 2011). While the r-square measure how much of the variation in the dependent is created by its relation to an independent variable, on a scale -1 to +1, where 1 means that 100% of the variation is explained by the independent. Hence the regression analysis can be used in order to test the hypotheses concerning the relationship of variables (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Still the statistical significance level of 0.05 have to be taken into account, as the r-squared values have to be trusted with 95% certainty (Hair et al., 2011). If the value is higher than 0.05, the hypotheses will simply face rejection (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Hence a multiple regression analysis is utilized within this research in order to assess and display the relationship between the dependent variable; consumer engagement, and the independent variables; social, monetary, hedonic, practical and trust. The regression analysis allowed the researchers to test the hypotheses, as it indicates the direction of the relationship, where there either is a positive or negative relationship between the dependent variable (consumer engagement) and the listed independent variables (social, monetary, hedonic, practical trust). The analysis also allowed the researchers to examine the strength of the relationship, which therefore display the factor that has the largest impact on consumer engagement in an online environment.
3.8.5 Cronbach’s alpha
Cronbach’s alpha is a reliability analysis and is carried out in order to survey the internal consistency and estimate the reliability of the scale, the measurement items and the results (Bonnet and Wright, 2015). The alpha can be calculated within statistical software programs such as SPSS and indicate the reliability of the entire research, as it examines the measures and its correlating data, which the final conclusions are drawn upon. The alpha scale lies between the range of 0 to 1, where the higher the value is, the more reliable the measure is (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Values should not go below 0.65 as it indicates a weak association between the items (Hair et al., 2011; Bonnet and Wright, 2015). The range between 0.65-0.8 can be seen as having a fair reliability; however, researchers should strive for a lower border of 0.8 in order to successfully obtain a 95 percent confidence interval for the reliability (Bonnet and Wright, 2015). The Cronbach alpha test is therefore conducted within SPSS in order to assess the reliability by examining the dependent and the five independent variables for their internal consistency.

3.9 Quality Criteria
One has to take several criteria into consideration when creating quantitative research in order to ensure that the quality standard of the empirical data and the analysis has remained constant (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The three main criteria for ensuring quantitative research quality is; validity (concerned with the integrity of the findings), reliability (deals with the stability of the measures), and replicability (questions if the study can be repeated) (Bryman and Bell, 2011). These three main criteria are listed and defined below, along with a description of steps this research implements in order to ensure them.

3.9.1 Validity
Validity is the criterion that is concerned with the strength of the conclusion, as the research has to produce findings that are valid and true in order to be considered as scientific (Adams et al., 2007; Bryman and Bell, 2011). It questions to which degree
the research is measuring what it is supposed to measure and if the measure precisely reflects the concept it is designed for (Adams et al., 2007). This research has followed Bryman and Bell’s (2011) suggestion to divide validity into three subcategories that are relevant for a quantitative study.

### 3.9.1.1 Content Validity

The objective of content validity (often referred to as face validity) is to examine if the measurements of the concept are justifiable, reasonable and legitimate (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The operationalization and its corresponding questions need to cover all the main components that make up the concept (Malhotra, 2010). The content validity can be ensured before the actual data collection by asking experts within the field of research to evaluate the measures or by conducting a pretesting with real respondents (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The questions and the operationalization can then be improved upon by implementing the feedback provided, as the researcher strives towards creating questions that are easy to understand but still cover the content of the concept (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The content validity of this thesis has been secured through two steps. First of the questionnaire was given to experts within the marketing field, namely two senior lecturers from Linnaeus University for critical review and evaluation. The feedback resulted in changes in the questionnaire structure and in the format of some questions, which ensured that all content of the concepts was covered. Secondly both the English and Swedish translation of questionnaire was put through a pretest with 15 respondents, which allowed for further refinement, as the wording and language could be improved and thus created an easily understandable questionnaire.

### 3.9.1.2 Construct Validity

Construct validity is commonly referred to as “the extent to which an operationalization measures the concept it is supposed to measure” (Cook and Campbell, 1979, in Bagozzi, Youjae and Phillips 1992, pp. 421). This criterion therefore concerns the accuracy of the measurements of specific theoretical concepts and the relevance of the hypotheses, as they provide the basis for the measurements (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The hypotheses need to be deduced from relevant theoretical material, as it connects
the theory to the operationalization, the questionnaire and the gathered material (Bryman and Bell, 2011). By assessing the construct validity, researchers can ensure that the hypotheses cannot be rejected due to error in the measure (Bagozzi, Youjae and Phillips, 1992). Content and construct validity is somewhat similar, however they diverge as content is more focused on if the measures are acceptable, while construct is focused on the accuracy of the measures with the help of statistical methods (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005). Construct validity can be divided further into convergent validity and discriminant validity. Where discriminant validity is the distinctiveness of the measures of concepts, if they are unique and do not correlate to much (Bagozzi, Youjae and Phillips 1992), while convergent validity is the comparison of measures in order to gauge their correlation and if they measure the same thing (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The questions displayed in the operationalization where clearly structured in their relation to the theoretical material in order to distinctly display where the measurements come from, how they differ and what they measure. Where the theoretical material went through a critical selection and evaluation process to ensure it contained relevant and credible content (see appendix 5 for review process). Hence the discriminant and the construct validity can be found in the fact that the research utilizes measures that are based on previous relevant research i.e. the identified social, monetary, hedonic, practical and trust factors. Furthermore, the construct/convergent validity can be found via SPSS by using a correlation analysis. The analysis establishes that there is a positive relationship between social, monetary, hedonic, practical, trust and consumer engagement on social media. Table 4.4 present the correlation analysis, which clearly display that all variables have a correlation, a correlation that is not to strong and the threat of measuring the same thing is therefore removed, with a significance level of 0.01.

3.9.1.3 Criterion Validity
Criterion validity, also known as concurrent validity, is employed in order to review the measures ability to accurately predict the things they encompass i.e. if the questionnaire questions can predict the thing they are questioning (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The measurements should perform, predict and correlate as expected with other valid constructs and variables (Hair et al., 2011). Hence, the criterion validity can be
ensured by relating the measurement of a concept with concurrent theory on the same concept (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Moreover, researchers can also implement a statistical analysis such as a correlation analysis to test the criterion validity (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

This research attains validity by relating the questions i.e. the measures in the operationalization to concurrent and coexisting theory, which have been evaluated for their relevance and credibility (see appendix 5 for review process). Consequently, the criterion validity is met as the measurements are based on already established identified factors that influence consumer engagement, derived from relevant and valid material.

3.9.2 Reliability and Replicability

Reliability aims to determine the stability of the measurement instrument over time, the consistency of the measures and the responses, and the degree to which a study can be reproduced or replicated (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Since reliability strives to test a wide variety of things, it can be divided into three subcategories; external reliability, internal reliability and replicability.

External reliability is the component that targets the stability of the measure over time, while internal reliability is concerned with the consistency of those measurements. Stability need to be attained in order to ensure that the result of the study will not fluctuate and may be determined through re-testing of the measures. While internal reliability consistency can be gauged by using a statistical tool such as a Cronbach Alpha test, with its 0-1 scale of relationship (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The Cronbach Alpha test utilizes data from a single administration, to reveal the consistency and estimate the reliability of the result, where scores need to be greater than 0.65 to be somewhat reliable (see chapter 3.8.5) (Bonnet and Wright, 2015). By creating reliable measures, the research enables the repeated use of the same measures within different research i.e. replicability (Bryman and Bell, 2011). If the reproduced research follows the exact same structure, the measures will provide the same findings. Hence reliable measures are sought after for by researchers in order to make the research replicable and accurate, as it always produces similar findings. Temporary situations, random conditions or biases may influence any step in the research process, which may lead to
diverging measures and findings that conflict with the original study (Bryman and Bell, 2011). It is therefore of utmost importance that researchers clearly display their entire research process, where the decisions taken should be distinctly apparent and the reasoning behind them evident. All actions taken within the course of the research need to be depicted, from research approach to the operationalization, in order to make the reproduction of the study as easy as possible (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The external reliability was dealt with by making sure that the measures in the questionnaire were stable. Firstly, the researcher ensured that the questionnaire measures i.e. the questions were easy to understand for the respondents and formatted in the way the researcher intended. Secondly the two pretests of the questionnaire, the first one with two experts within the field of marketing and the second one with 15 respondents resulted in reassessments and adjustments of the questions due to their supplied feedback, which enhanced the external reliability. The questions were also designed to limit variance and respondent interpretation. All these steps were taken in order to make the measures accurate and more stable over time. This research implemented a Cronbach Alpha test within SPSS to secure an internal reliability, where all the factors received acceptable values within the range 0.65-0.8 of fair reliability (see table 4.3). This ensured that the measures generated solid results, as all questions could be considered reliable. Thus all questions/measures and their correlating data could be implemented in the creation of the variables average indexes. Since the data is reliable, the index averages could be used both within the correlation analysis and the regression analysis, in order to test the hypotheses. The acceptable Cronbach alpha values (see table 4.3) also ensure the replicability of the study, as the questions can be used in future research, since they provide reliable measures. The researchers also give a detailed presentation and justification of and for all the steps taken within the research, in order to ensure that the research can be replicated, as its direction is evident. The discussion and performance of the method, the research technique, the operationalization and the questionnaire is designed in a straightforward and unmistakable way in order to make the replication as easy as possible. Furthermore, the comprehensive characterization of the research process seeks to remove the potential for any biases, random conditions and temporary situations, so that future researcher effortlessly can replicate the research within the same context.
3.10 Ethical Considerations

Research should always add something new and valuable to the scientific field and at the same time ensure that no individual has been damaged directly or indirectly by the research process (Remenyi, 1998). This commitment to avoid harm, can be regarded as the research codes of conducts, which highlights the ethical and unethical practices associated with research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The ethical issues often concern the individuals that fill the various roles within a research project, with key issues that questions the treatment of respondents and the behavior of researchers (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Bryman and Bell, 2011). If the researcher fails to address the appropriate ethical considerations, the entire work may be considered invalid or skewed (Remenyi, 1998).

Respondents are one of the main actors who may be affected by the way the researcher chose to use, analyze and report the gathered material (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Here researchers should consider their treatment of respondents and take certain measures to avoid mental and physical damage such as lower self-esteem or personal development (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Respondents should always have an informed consent and understand the research intentions/affiliations i.e. have a solid information base to stand upon before they choose to participate in the study. The participants have confidentiality and the researcher therefore need to secure the participants anonymity and privacy (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The researcher is another major actor who needs to be considered, to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the research findings (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Here the key issue lies in removing the researcher’s subjectivity, which needs to be done to create objective data which can be used in the analysis and the results. Data need to be gathered accurately and fully, where the researcher cannot be selective in gathering process, as it skews the data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009) The researcher must avoid window dressing and manipulating the data and throughout the research work in an open and honest way, without a hidden agenda (Remenyi, 1998). The strive for reliable and valid objective data is in fact concerned with the integrity of the research and the researcher, as it preserves the conclusions and the recommendations (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).
This research took several steps to ensure that its process had a proper ethical foundation. First of the respondents of the questionnaire received prior information in the heading about the study and its purpose, as it would provide a solid knowledge base to stand upon and enable them to make an informed consent. This ensured that the respondents knew what the study was about and that they freely could decide if they wanted to participate. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) suggest that anonymity can be ensured by excluding variables which disclose too much personal information. Therefore, the questionnaire only contained questions about the respondent’s age and gender, and choose to exclude questions regarding additional personal information. Furthermore, the researchers took careful action to not disclose any personal information gathered during the process to uninvolved parties. Respondents were also informed that their participation would be completely anonymous in the introduction of the questionnaire. Throughout the process, the researchers worked in an honest way and could have open communication with all involved actors such as advisors, pre-test respondents and questionnaire participants on the contents of the research. The researcher ensured their own objectivity by performing a quantitative study, as it makes it easier to remove personal subjectivity since it has to do with statistical and numerical measures (Remenyi, 1998). Moreover, the researcher ensured that the data collection was accurate as nothing was excluded, which allowed for the use of SPSS on accurate objective data from which valid and reliable analysis/findings can be derived.
4. Results

In the results chapter the data that was collected from the self-completed questionnaire is presented. It is divided into respondent demographic, descriptive statistics, reliability statistics, correlation statistics, regression statistics including hypotheses results and finally additional findings.

4.1 Respondent demographic

A total of 257 respondents took part in the questionnaire. However, 36 of these respondents were filtered out, as they answered ‘No’ on the first control question; Have you ever engaged with a brand on social media? These respondents could therefore not contribute further to the study, as it concerns consumers who either have engaged or currently are engaging with brands on social media. Hence a total of 221 respondents remained within the study after the control question and were able to complete the entire questionnaire.

Figure 4.1 Age and Gender distribution

The respondent age and gender demographic is presented in figure 4.1 above. The gender distribution is quite evenly distributed with a small imbalance towards females, as 57.5% of the respondents identified as female (127) and 42.6% identified as male (94). A majority of the respondents belonged to the younger age spans, primarily 18-
25, which accounted for 134 respondents and 26-33, which contained 56, while only a total of 31 respondents were over the age of 33. Figure 4.1 display that the number of respondents within each age spans decrease as the age increase and furthermore that the gender distribution within each age span appear to be quite evenly distributed, as both male and female respondents are present in almost all spans (except 65+). The respondents’ engagement frequency with brands on social media was quite imbalanced (see appendix 3: figure engagement frequency), as a combination of the lower frequencies (a few times a year and 1-4 times a month) demonstrate that a large segment of the respondents. Specifically, 182 of the respondents can be grouped as low engagement consumers, since they only engage with brands on a few occasions each year. This leaves 39 respondents (4-7 times a month, 7-10 times a month and more than 10 times a month) that can be considered as high engagement consumers. When the respondents choose to engage with brands, they most commonly preferred Facebook (142 answers), followed by Instagram (44), Twitter (18), YouTube (9) and LinkedIn (8) (see appendix 3: figure most frequently used social media platform).
### 4.2 Descriptive statistics

**Table 4.1 Frequency table of descriptive statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
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<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Std. error</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Std. error</td>
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<td>5.68</td>
<td>1.31112</td>
<td>-.841</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hed_3</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>1.50303</td>
<td>-.674</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hed_4</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>1.26774</td>
<td>-.1192</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pra_1</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>1.41242</td>
<td>-.827</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pra_2</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>1.59525</td>
<td>-.406</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pra_3</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>1.42811</td>
<td>-.266</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pra_4</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>1.58336</td>
<td>-.029</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tru_1</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>1.16261</td>
<td>-1.652</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tru_2</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>1.41242</td>
<td>-.827</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tru_3</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td>1.12706</td>
<td>-2.254</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tru_4</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td>1.10213</td>
<td>-1.661</td>
<td>.164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 4.1 the descriptive statistics of the dependent variable and each independent variable is presented in a frequency table. The collected empirical data of the study was incorporated into the analysis tool SPSS in order to enable statistical inferences and tests. The table presents data on the sample size (N), the minimum and maximum statistic (1-7) that the respondents have answered one each questions Likert-scale, mean, standard deviation (std. deviation), the skewness and the kurtosis.

Concerning the measurement items, it can be seen that the mean of almost every question is above 4, which show that the respondents had a positive view of the suggested variables. The three questions that received a mean below 4 can be seen in table 4.1. Question soc_3 and soc_4 indicates that it is not important for the respondents to generate responses from other consumers when they share their experience of a brand and when sharing a brand’s social media content. Also question pra_4 implies that the respondents did not find it very relevant to learn about a brand’s other activities through their social media content. Arguably they are more focused on attaining benefits from their activity with brands on social media, which dep_1/2/3 suggest (see 3.6, operationalization for variable clarification).

4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics of Variable Average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable average</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dep_avg</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>1.20489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc_avg</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>1.46353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon_avg</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>.93667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hed_avg</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>1.08777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pra_avg</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>.92870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tru_avg</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>1.24588</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 provides descriptive statistics of the average responses on each variable that was measured which could be computed given the Cronbach alpha values given below. Every variable had a mean over 4, which refers to that the respondents positively agreed to the importance of the different factors, although to a different extent. Hedonic, i.e. the enjoyment (5.57) that the respondents want to attain from the interaction with the
brand on social media as well as the trustworthiness (6.00) is something that respondents valued highly.

4.2.2 Skewness and Kurtosis
Regarding the skewness and the kurtosis Hair et al., (2011) suggests that the skewness should fall within ±1 whereas the kurtosis should be between ±3. Skewness and kurtosis are measurements used to illustrate the dispersion of the data on a normal distribution curve, where 0 skewness and kurtosis means that the curve is perfect. The table 4.1 shows that four questions fell outside the guidelines of the skewness and two outside kurtosis. Interestingly it is three of the four questions within the trust variable that had high skewness as well as the kurtosis. This due to that the vast proportion agreed that trust is very important (see mean), although a few respondents had a different opinion and did not find it important, hence the skewness. The kurtosis on tru_3 and tru_4 signals that there is an extreme tailedness towards 'strongly agree’. This show that it is very important for consumers active on social media that the brands they interact with are honest in their interaction as well as conveying trustworthiness.

4.3 Reliability Statistics

Table 4.3 Cronbach’s Alpha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha with outliers</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha without outliers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent (consumer engagement)</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>.787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>.726</td>
<td>.695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>.862</td>
<td>.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic</td>
<td>.660</td>
<td>.846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>.693</td>
<td>.574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.770</td>
<td>.685</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cronbach alpha was tested on each variable in order to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the measurements items. The test helps to derive the reliability of the research, in order to see if it holds water. Table 4.3 show the results of the Cronbach alpha test with outliers, i.e. all responses (221 responses) gathered from the questionnaire as well as the test when the outliers from the first test were removed.
(202 responses). The results of the original test show that all variables had an acceptable value, i.e. over .65 according to Hair et al., (2011) and Bonnet and Wright (2015). However, there were a total of 19 outliers that can be seen in Appendix 4, hence the test was made once again without the outliers in order to compare the differences. As can be read in the table 5 out of 6 variables had a stronger Cronbach alpha when the original data was tested, only the *hedonic* variable turned out stronger when the outliers were subtracted. Since all variables initially had an acceptable Cronbach alpha it was decided that the outliers were to be kept as well as all the questions within each variable.

4.4 Correlation statistics

Table 4.4 Correlation statistics between variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dep_avg</th>
<th>Soc_avg</th>
<th>Mon_avg</th>
<th>Hed_avg</th>
<th>Pra_avg</th>
<th>Tru_avg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dep_avg</strong> Pearson correlation</td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>.278</strong></td>
<td><strong>.616</strong></td>
<td><strong>.355</strong></td>
<td><strong>.393</strong></td>
<td><strong>.354</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. 2-tailed</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soc_avg</strong> Pearson correlation</td>
<td><strong>.278</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>.305</strong></td>
<td><strong>.397</strong></td>
<td><strong>.462</strong></td>
<td><strong>.348</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. 2-tailed</td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mon_avg</strong> Pearson correlation</td>
<td><strong>.616</strong></td>
<td><strong>.305</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>.346</strong></td>
<td><strong>.444</strong></td>
<td><strong>.309</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. 2-tailed</td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hed_avg</strong> Pearson correlation</td>
<td><strong>.355</strong></td>
<td><strong>.397</strong></td>
<td><strong>.346</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>.474</strong></td>
<td><strong>.650</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. 2-tailed</td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pra_avg</strong> Pearson correlation</td>
<td><strong>.393</strong></td>
<td><strong>.462</strong></td>
<td><strong>.444</strong></td>
<td><strong>.474</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>.585</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. 2-tailed</td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tru_avg</strong> Pearson correlation</td>
<td><strong>.354</strong></td>
<td><strong>.348</strong></td>
<td><strong>.309</strong></td>
<td><strong>.650</strong></td>
<td><strong>.585</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. 2-tailed</td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In table 4.4 the correlation statistics between each variable is depicted as well as the significance level. The correlation analysis is performed in order to measure to what degree two variables relate to each other, i.e. how the two affect each other when one changes (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005; Bryman and Bell, 2011). All the relationships except for the one between the dependent (dep_avg) and *social* (soc_avg) variable revealed to correlate between the acceptable values proposed by Dancey and Reidy (2004) who argue that the relationship should be between ±0.3 and ±0.9. The
relationship of .278** between dep_avg and soc_avg therefore reveal a very weak correlation between consumer engagement and social factors. Furthermore, the test reveals that the correlations are not too strong, which would suggest that the variables are measuring the same thing, as they all fall below the border of 0.8. The results of the correlation analysis also display that the monetary factor have the strongest correlation with the dependent variable, i.e. consumer engagement (dep_avg/mon_avg: .616**). The table 4.5 also displays the significance level that each relationship possesses and as the table demonstrates all relationships was significant on a 0.01 level.

### 4.5 Regression Analysis and Hypotheses Testing

A regression analysis was conducted with SPSS in order to test and evaluate the hypotheses presented in the theoretical chapter. The hypotheses have to maintain a statistical significance level of 0.05, i.e. p<0.05 in order to be accepted, as hypotheses with values above p>0.05 will face rejection. Table 4.5 display the primary statistical values generated through the regression analysis within SPSS, which are implemented in the evaluation of the hypotheses below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
<th>Model 6</th>
<th>Model 7 (All)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept B</td>
<td>5.219</td>
<td>3.950</td>
<td>2.037</td>
<td>2.412</td>
<td>3.017</td>
<td>2.337</td>
<td>.643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>(.276)</td>
<td>(.404)</td>
<td>(.357)</td>
<td>(.590)</td>
<td>(.440)</td>
<td>(.570)</td>
<td>(.533)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age B</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>-.033</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>-.094</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>(.072)</td>
<td>(.070)</td>
<td>(.058)</td>
<td>(.068)</td>
<td>(.067)</td>
<td>(.068)</td>
<td>(.059)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign</td>
<td>.482</td>
<td>.635</td>
<td>.634</td>
<td>.849</td>
<td>.636</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>.755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender B</td>
<td>-.305</td>
<td>-.275</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>-.160</td>
<td>-.281</td>
<td>-.257</td>
<td>.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>(.170)</td>
<td>(.164)</td>
<td>(.140)</td>
<td>(.162)</td>
<td>(.158)</td>
<td>(.159)</td>
<td>(.139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1: Social B</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>.324</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>(.067)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(.072)</td>
<td>(.072)</td>
<td>(.085)</td>
<td>(.085)</td>
<td>(.082)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2: Monetary B</td>
<td>.537</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.537</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>(.048)</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>(.048)</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3: Hedonic B</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>(.086)</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>(.086)</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4: Practical B</td>
<td>.439</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.439</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.439</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>(.072)</td>
<td>(.082)</td>
<td>(.072)</td>
<td>(.082)</td>
<td>(.072)</td>
<td>(.082)</td>
<td>(.082)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5: Trust B</td>
<td>.481</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.481</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.481</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>(.085)</td>
<td>(.106)</td>
<td>(.085)</td>
<td>(.106)</td>
<td>(.085)</td>
<td>(.106)</td>
<td>(.085)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.381</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td>.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.373</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error or the Estimates</td>
<td>1.24059</td>
<td>1.19620</td>
<td>.98661</td>
<td>1.17011</td>
<td>1.24059</td>
<td>1.16062</td>
<td>.96695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-value</td>
<td>1.940</td>
<td>7.219</td>
<td>44.607</td>
<td>10.806</td>
<td>14.085</td>
<td>12.171</td>
<td>21.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees of freedom (df) Regression</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 Multiple regression analysis
4.5.1 Hypothesis Results

The results of the regression analysis are displayed in table 4.6, which will be further discussed in the coming subchapters’ display that H1, H3, H4 and H5 were rejected and only H2 is accepted. This demonstrates that the monetary factors positively influence consumer engagement towards brands on social media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis result</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Hypothesis result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1 Social</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.649</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2 Monetary</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3 Hedonic</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4 Practical</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5 Trust</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.232</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**P<0.05

4.5.2 Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis; H1. Perceived social benefits obtained from the interaction with a brand on social media influence consumer engagement positively is rejected due to the high significance value of .649, as it falls above p>0.05 (table 4.5 model 7). Still the B value suggests that there is a very weak correlation (.029) between consumer engagement and the social factor. However, if one considers the statistics from model 2, where only the relationship between social and consumer engagement was computed, the relationship would be significant (.000**) with a slightly stronger correlation (B: .281). Still the adjusted r-square only indicates a value of .078, which means that the social factor only explain 7.8% of the variation in consumer engagement. This proposes a nearly non-existent relationship between consumer engagement and social factors related to brand engagement on social media.

4.5.3 Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis; H2. Perceived monetary benefits from a brand on social media influence consumer engagement positively is accepted, as the monetary factor indicates a strong relationship (B: .461) with consumer engagement at a p<0.05 significance level
4.5.4 Hypothesis 3
The third hypothesis; H3. Perceived hedonic benefits from the interaction with a brand on social media influence consumer engagement positively face rejection as it has a very weak relationship with consumer engagement (B: .107), which falls outside the acceptable significance level, 0.280>0.05 (table 4.5 model 7). The analysis still reveals that the hypothesis would be accepted if solely the relationship between the hedonic factor and consumer engagement was tested (table 4.5 model 4). This relationship would be positive (B: .455), as the hedonic factor would be able to explain 11.8% (adjusted r-square, .118) of the variation in consumer engagement at a significance level of p<0.05. This also proposes that the hedonic factor has weak relationship on consumer brand engagement on social media.

4.5.5 Hypothesis 4
The fourth hypothesis; H4. Perceived practical benefits from the interaction with a brand on social media influence consumer engagement positively, can be seen in model 7 (table 4.5) to have a very weak correlation (0.059) and is therefore rejected due the significance level of .474, which fail to be within the acceptable level. Once again the single linear test in model 5 (table 4.5) display that the hypothesis would be accepted as a single explaining factor for consumer engagement, with a positive relation of B: 0.439 and the ability to explain 15.1% of the variation (adjusted r-square .151) within the dependent variable consumer engagement.

4.5.6 Hypothesis 5
The information in table 4.5 model 7 reveals that the fifth hypothesis; H5. Perceived trust from the interaction with a brand on social media influence consumer engagement positively is rejected as the significance restriction is broken .232>0.05. Still a weak relationship exist between the two variables as can be seen in model 6 (table 4.5), as B indicates .127. This positive relationship (B: 481) is more evident in a single linear test, which display that H5 would be accepted if it was the only variable considered. Trust
has the capacity to predict 13.2% (adjusted r-square .132) of the variation within consumer engagement.

### 4.6 Additional Findings

In this subchapter results that are not directly connected to the hypotheses but yielded interesting results are presented and analyzed.

#### Table 4.7 T-test: Gender and engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.8310</td>
<td>1.18939</td>
<td>1.813</td>
<td>184.584</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.5196</td>
<td>1.30597</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data revealed further findings, when an independent sample t-test where the gender data was computed together with the average of dependent variable, which examined whether there was a significant difference between females and males’ tendency to engage with brands on social media. These findings are displayed within table 4.7 and revealed a statistically significant difference between males and females’ propensity to engage (t: 1813, sign: .000). This difference is evident in the mean variation between genders, which clearly displays that females (mean: 4.8310) are more willing and likely to engage with brands on social media than males (mean: 4.5196).

#### Table 4.8 Female multiple regression test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon_avg (monetary)</td>
<td>.465</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tru_avg (trust)</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>.020**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<0.10, **P<0.05

#### Table 4.9 Male multiple regression test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon_avg (monetary)</td>
<td>.484</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pra_avg (practical)</td>
<td>.244</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.084*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<0.10, **P<0.05

Another interesting result that appeared in the data was the significance levels for the different hypotheses when the multiple regression test was run with the ‘gender’ data
file split in order to read the different results for females and males. The results from the split test i.e. the grouping of genders can be surveyed in table 4.8 and 4.9, which show that both H₃ and H₄ would be accepted in addition to H₂. Hence, if the purpose of the study would be to test brand engagement on social media solely on females, H₅ i.e. the trust factor would have been accepted as well as the monetary factor on a 0.05 significance level (i.e. 95% confidence interval). If the aim of the study on the contrary was to test the hypotheses on males, H₄ i.e. the practical factor would have been accepted together with the monetary factor on a slightly lower significance level of 0.10 (i.e. 90% confidence interval). When comparing the practical B value for males only, .244 (visible in table 4.8) with the B value for males and females together .059 (visible in Table 4.5) it becomes evident that practical accounts for a stronger correlation to the dependent, when it comes to males. The comparison with the female B value for trust .302 (table 4.8) and the B value for both gender .127 (table 4.9), share similar results, only that this time it is trust that account for a stronger correlation to the dependent, when it comes to females.
5. Discussion

In this chapter a discussion concerning the findings that was presented in the results chapter is conducted. The emphasis on the chapter revolves around the rejection and the acceptance of the hypotheses. The chapter also contains an additional discussion regarding the additional findings reported in the result chapter.

5.1 Hypotheses discussion

The hypotheses discussion will revolve around the findings in conjunction with the hypotheses of the study and are therefore displayed and discussed separately in the forthcoming subchapters and is subsequently followed by a summarizing discussion of these results.

5.1.1 Hypothesis 1

This research has viewed consumer engagement as a psychological state of mind where the individual is a proactive brand partner with active participation in the brand’s activities and offerings (table 3.1). Where social factors are benefits and gratitude perceived from sharing and exchanging information that increases the consumer’s likelihood to further engage with the brand by taking actions such as like, comment or share material. The result of H1 did not reflect the expected outcome as it was insignificant and is therefore rejected. This rejection emerges even though previous studies have put significant weight on the importance of the social factors (e.g. Laroche, Habibi, and Richard, 2013; Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013) for its ability to personalize the brand, build relationships and engage consumers on social media it appears to be encountering contradicting findings. Given the result of this study it appears as though social media platforms provide more of a one-way communication, which can associate with what Labrecque (2014) proposes about a one sided relationship between content and consumer, which therefore do not encourage actual social interaction. This notion match Tsai and Men (2013), who suggest that consumers are perhaps more interested in the brand than in each other and may therefore not place any value on the social engagement available online. Hence, more attention needs to be placed on the creation of content that actually provide an open communication between members in order to fully utilize the theorized potential of the social factors.
Model 2 within the linear regression model suggest a very weak statistical correlation between consumer engagement and the *social* factor, which means that the factor still has to be considered. This correlation may primarily be based on one of the measurement items (Table 4.1 Soc_2), which show a strong mean in comparison to the other values and proposes that communicating directly with brand representatives increases the relationship with the brand. This can be connected to what Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone (2014) argue that some consumers might only contact brands to seek an answer on a question and are therefore not motivated to engage further in social interactions. Thus it enforces the notion that the social engagement segment of brands social media activity may need improvements.

### 5.1.2 Hypothesis 2

The *monetary* factor has been viewed as the monetary appreciation and reward that a consumer receives, which is the motivating factor for him or her to engage with the brand on social media (table 2.1). The outcome of the study reflected this notion hence $H_2$ is accepted. The findings of this study confirm with results from several other studies that indicate the relative importance for consumers of deriving tangible benefits in the form of monetary rewards from their engagement with brands on social media. Tsai and Men (2013) for example claim it to be the most predominant motivator while Bair and Parasnis (2011) call it an essential benefit. However, contradicting this are the findings provided by Park and Kim (2014) that suggests that monetary benefits fail to enhance the consumer's actual relationship to the brand community, as they simply are seeking a reward. Hence, the outcome of the *monetary* ($H_2$) factor may explain the rejection of the *social* ($H_1$) and *hedonic* ($H_3$) hypotheses as Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui (2013) findings revealed that consumers who seek monetary benefits from their interaction with brands are less likely to engage in other activities such as social discussions and fail to see the entertaining value from this interaction. This implies that even though the *monetary* factor has a strong correlation to consumer engagement and provide marketers with good opportunity to attract consumers to their social media platforms they need to consider implementing other activities that truly involve consumers, as their incentive should not only be to attract consumers, but also retain and encourage future engagement.
5.1.3 Hypothesis 3

The *hedonic* factor has been considered as the consumer’s emotional takeaway i.e. the perceived enjoyment and experiential value from the interaction with the brand on social media (table 2.1) and thus positively influences consumer engagement with brands on social media. However, the results of the study did not meet this expectation and thus H3 is rejected.

The relatively high mean generated from the questionnaire responses (see hed_1-4 table 4.1) along with the apparent significant correlation of model 4 suggest that hedonic value is something that consumers view as important, although the research reveal that it is not an antecedent of consumer engagement. Instead it might be a byproduct of already liking a brand, rather than a personal desire that drive the engagement. The positive byproduct of hedonic engagement has previously been well documented (e.g. Verhagen et al., 2015; Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui (2013), for example Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas (2015) claim that consumers perceive enjoyment and excitement from being a part of an online brand community. However, even though the entertainment value exists within brands communication and content it is not the primary driver for engagement, and must according to Park and Kim (2014) therefore not get in the way of commerce. This notion can be connected to the acceptance of the *monetary* (H2) factors, as it displays itself as being a real driver for engagement as consumers are attracted to its rewarding commercial nature. Still brands should reasonably include hedonic aspects in their communication, as it is a tool, which supplies some kind of value, and therefore may get already engaged consumers to remain interested in the brand’s content.
5.1.4 Hypothesis 4

The *practical* factor is made up of valuable information obtained from the interaction with the brand on social media in the form of product information, brand information and updates on upcoming deals (table 2.1). The outcome of the research did not find this as a significant factor that positively influences consumer engagement, hence the $H_4$ is rejected.

Hence, the respondents of the research did not find this factor as a significant antecedent of consumer engagement according to the multiple regression test, which correlate to the findings of Park and Kim (2014) who dismissed the notion of a positive effect of practical benefits. However, the single regression test where the effect of the other factors was excluded displayed that the *practical* factor would be significant, although with a rather weak correlation (table 4.5). This corresponds to Baird and Parasnis (2011) report regarding *practical* factors positive impact as well as Brodie’s et al., (2011a) findings, which suggest that consumer engagement is a profoundly interactive process where learning and advocating are among the sub-processes that drives the engagement. Even though previous research finds the *practical* factor as a motivator for engagement, the characteristics of the actual engagement has to be considered, as some consumers may only be interested when the information serve their own self-interest. This can be linked to what Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo (2004) findings propose that so-called information seekers only find the community useful if he or she find other peers with similar motives of contributing information and that practical benefits really do not increase the social interaction between members (Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013). Hence, marketing managers can consider *practical* factors as benefits that can be provided in order retain already active members, but they still need to find other ways of attracting and engaging those consumers who only are after the information.

5.1.5 Hypothesis 5

*Trust* has been viewed as a factor that comprises how the consumer perceive the quality and honesty of the content published by the brand on social media that can influence interpersonal trust and foster brand interaction (table 2.1). This factor did not engender significant results and thus $H_5$ is rejected. Tsai and Men (2013), research also suggests
that source credibility (i.e. brand trust) was not a significant influencer of consumer engagement.

However, the single linear regression analysis (table 4.5 model 6) reveals that trust has the second strongest correlation to consumer engagement and managed to attain significance given the exclusion of the other factors. In addition to this the very high means of all the trust factors (table 4.1) suggests that trust is an element of great importance in a social media engagement. This importance lies in the fact that trust has a strong positive impact on consumers who already engage (Wang and Chen, 2012) and it appears as though trust is a major factor to consider in order to retain consumers rather than to attract, as Frasquet, Ruiz-Molina and Molla-Descals, (2015) suggest it has a strong impact on consumers’ current behavior and future intentions. This reflection is supported by Ul Islam and Rahman (2016) results, which suggested that strong consumer engagement in online communities has a significant effect on their trust towards the brand they engage with. Hence, trust does not appear itself to generate any new consumer engagement, but rather helps to retain and prolong the relationship with already engaging consumers. Therefore, brands should consider Porter and Donthu (2008) reported findings, which proposed that brands that provide quality content through their online channels generate important trust-building effects on their consumers. While implementing a one-to-one interactive and open communication, which correlates to Labrecque’s (2014) suggestions, as it will increase the intimacy and loyalty between members and brands.

5.2 Summarizing Discussion
Social media can be utilized in order to create one-to-one communications directly with consumers, in a way that the older channels cannot wish to achieve. Brands hope to strengthen the relationship with their consumers and impact their engagement behavior via these social platforms through the implementation of antecedent factors. However, brands have not yet fully comprehended the varied nature of these factors, as consumers do not view them as the driver's that brands believe them to be, which corresponds to the thoughts of Tsai and Men (2013) who argue that brands still struggle with their social media communication because they lack strategic planning. The weaknesses of
brands understanding of some factors are visible in the outcome of the dependent variable (table 4.1). Here consumers have answered that they see that benefits exist within social media engagement, benefits which they strive to attain from their actual engagement. However, brands have failed to supply the benefits as a lot of consumers feel that they have been neglected and not received the benefits they perceived exist. Still benefits should, and need to be implemented in order to encourage engagement, as consumers still are more likely to conduct or repeat a specific behavior if they perceive some form of reward connected to the engagement (Zheng et al., 2015).

These benefits may have fluctuating and diverse effects on consumers’ engagement behavior, which is exemplified in the fact this study’s findings supports the notion of the positive influence of the monetary factor, while rejecting the multiple linear significance of the other four social, hedonic, practical and trust factor. While all of these factors have been deemed significant and accepted as influential within other pieces of research, such as social (e.g. Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui, 2013), hedonic (Verhagen et al., 2015), practical (Baird and Parasnis, 2011) and trust (Wang and Chen, 2012). Hence the actual influential impact of each independent factor may be hard to completely define and generalize into all different contexts, as the diverse nature of the social media platforms, the characteristics of the factors and consumers’ personalities are too extensive and varied to predict. In addition, by surveying this study along with previous research findings it becomes apparent that the different factors may also have an effect on each other (Gummerus et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2015), where for example a social media platform filled with friendly and intimate members in social conversations may increase the entertainment and the hedonic pleasure derived from the experience. Similarly, a social media platform than only offers practical information or monetary rewards lose out on the social and hedonic possibilities of the medium, while a platform lacking trust never will be able to convince consumers to continue with their engagement. Thus, brands should consider the varied nature of the factors, the large benefit characteristics and their possible effect both on each other and on the consumer engagement, before deciding on what content to communicate on their social media platform.
5.3 Discussion of Additional Findings

The additional findings revealed that females are more likely to engage with brands on social media and can therefore be considered as the more attractive gender group for brands who seek a somewhat more active engagement with their social media content, as females are more inclined to participate and engage.

These findings displayed that females beyond the monetary component of brands social media content highly value a trustworthy relationship with the brands they engage with. This goes in line with what Tsai and Men (2013) says that receiving reliable information and what Porter and Donthu (2008) proposed that cultivating trust from a brand’s online activity is pivotal to foster consumer embeddedness with the brand, and this is something that female consumers seem to agree with. These findings also contradict the findings from Nadeem et al., (2015) who’s study on brand trust in an online setting did not have any significant gender differences on trust, unlike this study.

As opposed to females, trust is not something that carries the same level of importance for males; however, they value practical factors as something important in addition to the monetary factor. Hence, male consumers seem to place more emphasis on finding information about, and take part of special offers and discounts when engaging with brands on social media, which according to Baldus, Voorhees and Calantone (2014) is an attempt to simplify their consumption decision. This is also something that seem to fit with what Ying-Feng and Lien-Hui (2013) argues that consumers who seek these benefits are less likely to engage in social interactions and does not see the importance in hedonic value from the participation, which the rejection of the social and hedonic hypotheses suggest.
6. Conclusion

In recent years’ consumer engagement in various online environments has emerged as a popular field for scholars and their likes. Due to the immensely growing popularity of social media, research gaps have been identified in this setting. Hence this research has aimed to address the gap about the anteceding factors to consumer brand engagement with the purpose to explain the factors that positively influence consumer engagement towards brands on social media.

This research provides empirical evidence that support the proposed notion that monetary factors positively influence consumer engagement with brands on social media. The multiple regression analysis led to the rejection of the hypotheses concerning the positive impact of the social, hedonic, practical and trust factors, however not without identifying smaller degrees of positive correlation to consumer engagement at a single linear level. However, the findings regarding the strength of these relationships contradict other previous studies, which have found a stronger relationship between these factors and consumer engagement.

Even though the monetary factors, with its promotions, rewards, special deals, etcetera, appears to be the primary factor that positively influences consumer engagement, it does not lack drawbacks. Monetary benefits in fact lack the opportunity for the creation of emotional relationship building between community members and instead create more of a give-and-take exchange relationship. Hence, brands should still seek to create meaningful and valuable relationship with consumers, where trust and hedonic factors could be useful tools to achieve this given their contribution of meaningful value, that necessarily do not attract new consumers but help to retain and build the relationship with current ones. Similarly, brands should still take advantage of practical factors, as social media platforms provide a useful communication channel that consumers evidently utilize in order to get answer to their questions. However, here it is essential that brands avoid communication that simply takes place between content and consumer, by employing brand representatives that emphasize the social factors, where the social interaction between members should be encouraged, in order to open up communication and retain those consumers who at first only visited the social media platform for information.
7. Implications, limitations and future research

In this chapter the theoretical and managerial implications, limitations of the research and suggestions for future research are discussed and addressed.

7.1 Theoretical implications

The rapid growth of the attractive social media platforms has evoked an interest from scholars and their likes to address the research gap that exist within this context. One of these main gaps is consumer engagement and its motivators on social media (e.g. Verhagen et al., 2015). Several researchers have urged for academic contribution to answer what factors that trigger engagement on social media, and the causal relationship between these factors and engagement (e.g. Brodie et al., 2011a; Nadeem et al., 2015). Hence, this is the area that this research has addressed and thus contributed to the emerging field of consumer engagement on social media. The researchers identified five factors that prior researchers have either tested in more controlled platforms such as firm or consumer facilitated communities, e.g. monetary (van Doorn et al., 2010), trust (Porter and Donthu, 2008) and practical (Park and Kim, 2014) benefits, or with an exploratory purpose on social media: social and hedonic benefits (Gummerus et al., 2012). All of the previously mentioned researchers have requested further contribution on their findings and therefore these identified factors provided the foundation for a theoretical model (see chapter 2.3) to facilitate the testing of these measurements.

Hence, this research contributes with the fact that there is a causal relationship between monetary benefits and consumer engagement with brands on social media, which proposes that the monetary factor positively influence consumer engagement. Further, the research also provides knowledge that trust is a strong incentive, as the result indicates the factors importance even though it did not have a causal relationship with consumer engagement within a multiple regression. As this is the first known explanatory research on consumer engagement and its relationship with the five identified factors (social, monetary, hedonic, practical, trust) with regards to brands on social media the study has prepared for several new research aims to be undertaken based on the results yielded, which will be further discussed (in chapter 7.4).
7.2 Managerial implications

The outcome of this study clearly suggests that the monetary factor is something that is considered important for consumers in order for them to engage with brands on social media. Hence, managers who want to raise engagement should consider implementing digital strategies via their social media platforms that provide incentives for consumers to purchase their goods and services. These incentives can either be used to encourage engagement and purchases by taking the form of discounts, promotional, codes and free trials, or they can be structured as rewards for consumers that have engaged and purchased, by taking the form of reward points for loyalty cards, premium deals and bonuses.

However, marketing managers should also consider the fact that even though the social, hedonic, practical and trust factors did not reach statistical significance together, they did achieve it on their own and all had an evident correlation to consumer engagement. Hence all factors appear to have a relationship with consumers’ engagement behavior i.e. have a positive influence on it. Therefore, marketers should still take the factors into consideration, as they can be implemented in order to create a wider communication dimension and provide more diverse incentives for engagement. These marketing implications are supported by the fact that even though both H5 and H3 were rejected, they both still received high means (6.00 and 5.57) and fairly low standard deviations (1.25 and 1.08777), which display that trust and hedonic factors are something that consumers interprets as very important (see table 4.2). Hence, brand representatives active on social media platforms should strive to make a trustworthy impression on consumers, by ensuring that the information they publish contains reliable information and/or that the content has some form of entertainment value. Marketers should also consider the results present in the additional findings, which first of suggest that females are more willing to engage with brands on social media (table 4.7) and secondly propose that females care more about the trust factor (table 4.8) while male are drawn towards the practical factor (table 4.9). Thus, it could be proposed that marketing managers could utilize different factors within their social media content in order to raise engagement and better target a specific gender.
7.3 Research limitations

As with most scientific research the study has limitations that scholars should take into account when interpreting the results chapter of the paper and thus they need to be addressed. First, the social factor evidently showed to have a very weak correlation with the dependent variable, perhaps suggesting that the measurements items derived from previous literature did not engender the sought after information sufficiently. Second, a clearer distribution between the age spans would have been preferred in order to increase the representativeness of all age groups. In this study the age groups were quite heavily skewed towards people in the age groups of 18-25 and 26-33, which is something that could have impacted the results and thus is an aspect that further research should strive to address. Third, a clearer definition between the frequency spans would have enabled the researchers to draw more compelling conclusions between consumers who engage more often with brands and those who engage less frequently. In relation to this more data could have been gathered from consumers who engage with brands on social media more often than ‘a few times a year’ and ‘1-4 times a month’ in other words, low engagement consumers.

In order to enhance the representativeness and engender results that are truly generalizable for a specific population the research could have been delimited to a specific subgroup, e.g. university students, people liking specific fan pages, etcetera. This would enable a sample frame to be created and hence, allow a probability sampling technique where a valid response rate could be calculated. Although this is not something that presumably affected the results of the research due to the sample size and the control questions used in the data collection method to ensure responses from the target population.
7.4 Future research

Consumer engagement and social media provide an interesting field for future research, as it presents a wide variety of research opportunities, due to its relatively unexplored/undefined character and its ever expanding and changing nature. Researchers should focus on expanding the knowledge base on consumer engagement with brands on social medias, as it is one of the primary occasions when brands and consumers meet and therefore is an area of great importance for marketers seeking to evolve their marketing and relationship building activities.

Based on the findings of this research, monetary factors have a statistically significant positive influence on consumer engagement within a social media context, while the hypotheses for a positive influence of the social, hedonic, practical and trust factors are rejected. However, future research should delve further into each of the rejected identified factors, as the findings revealed that all factors had a positive correlation with engagement and accounted for different levels of variation in the dependent (social 7.8%, hedonic 11.8%, practical 15.1%, trust 13.2%), i.e. they all had some effect on consumer engagement. This point is strengthened by the fact that all of the factors received statistical significance when they were computed on their own. Hence, future studies could test the identified factors, to see if they can find acceptable results that point out the relevance of these factors.

Future research may choose to focus on one gender in particular or choose to compare the two, as the additional findings suggest that there is a difference between how males and females engage with brands on social media and have contrasting opinions regarding the importance of the factors. The findings of this study display that females appear to be more willing to engage and are influenced by the factor trust, while males are less likely to engage but acknowledge the practical factors relevance. Hence, future studies into the difference between genders may generate interesting results.

This research relied heavily on users who most frequently utilized Facebook or Instagram as their primary platform for engagement (see appendix 3: figure - most frequently used social media platform). Future research can consider the varying nature of each social media platform, which likely may generate different result and either
choose to; 1) divide the platforms and simply focus on one platform, or 2) focus on the comparison of the factors influence between different platforms. For example, the *hedonic* factor may have a stronger influence on YouTube due to its entertainment focus and the *social* factor may be better suited for the business environment on LinkedIn.

Finally, future research may also choose a different sample frame, based on age or engagement frequency. Figure 4.1 displays that this research sample consisted mainly of respondents between 18-25 (134) and 26-33 (56) where only a smaller portion of 31 respondents were 33+. Similarly, a large part of the sample (182 respondents), consisted of what the researchers defined as low engagement consumers and only contained a smaller section of high engagement consumers (39) (see appendix 3: figure - engagement frequency). Therefore, further research could either focus on assessing whether the consumer’s engagement frequency affect the importance of certain factors, i.e. if some factors are more important for low or high engagement consumers. Or it could target different generation, as they may provide findings that display different results when it comes to the importance of the identified factors, as people of different ages may focus on different things.
8. Reference List


Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire (English)

Engagement with brands on social media

Hi!

We are happy that you have chosen to participate in our questionnaire and your responses are very valuable to us.

We are two marketing students from Linnaeus University in Växjö (Sweden) writing our bachelor thesis about consumer engagement towards brands on social media. Brands are the name, symbols and signs that represent companies, which you as a consumer know them by. Example of brands are IKEA, H&M, Spotify, Coca-Cola, etc. By social media we mean websites such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, where you as a member have the possibility to interact with a brand in any visible way. The interaction is an active engagement, where you either like, comment or share brand created content, participate in competitions, events or employment processes, or communicate and discuss topics with brand representatives (staff) and other consumers on the brands “fan page”.

Before you start answering the questions try to think back and remember times in the past where you have interacted with brand content or contacted a brand on any social media platform. Consider everything that a brand shares or communicate publicly on social media. This could be information, videos, pictures, messages, and/or special deals.

For ethical reasons you have to be at least 18 years of age to participate in this questionnaire. All your answers will be anonymous and no one will be able to trace them back to you. We can secure this since all the information you provide will be coded when inserted into the analysis program. It is voluntary for you to participate, but we value your cooperation highly.

The form will take approximately 5 minutes to complete and we ask you kindly to answer the questions as accurately and thoughtful as possible. If you have any questions or would like to contact us feel free to e-mail us at:

gi222bt@student.lnu.se or ig222cy@student.lnu.se

Thank you for your participation!
Gustaf Johansson & Isak Gunnarsson

*Required

1. Have you ever engaged* with a brand on social media? *

   When you engage with a brand on social media you either, like, comment or share their brand created content, participate in competitions, events or employment processes, or communicate in discussions with brand representatives and other consumers on the brands “fan page”.

   Mark only one oval.

   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No  Skip to “Thank you for your time.”

When you engage with a brand on social media you either, like, comment or share their brand created content, participate in competitions, events or employment processes, or communicate in discussions with brand representatives and other consumers on the brands “fan page”.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1djk3t6xKt7bl6q0c22Dymet9sab26iUX31D1kKvyw0D4/printform#responses
2. 1. How frequently do you engage with brands on social media? *  
Mark only one oval.
- A few times a year
- 1-4 times a month
- 4-7 times a month
- 7-10 times a month
- More than 10 times a month

3. 2. In the future I expect to engage with brands on social media *  
Mark only one oval.
- A few times a year
- 1-4 times a month
- 4-7 times a month
- 7-10 times a month
- More than 10 times a month

4. 3. On which social media platform do you most frequently engage with brands? *  
Mark only one oval.
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Flickr
- Other:

The upcoming questions will contain statements where we want you to evaluate to what extent you agree. 1. means that you don’t agree at all and 7. that you fully agree to the statement.

5. 4. I believe that there are benefits that I can gain from the engagement with brands on social media *  
Benefits refer to discounts/deals, practical product/service information, information to solve questions or issues, etc.
Mark only one oval.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Strongly disagree  ❌  ❌  ❌  ❌  ❌  ❌  ❌  Strongly agree

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1bdj3B8vWKBEL8npDE2OjmeS9sSBvw1U3HD14kw/E0D-4/printform#responses  Page 2 of 8
6. I engage with brands on social media because I want to receive those benefits *
   Benefits refer to discounts/deals, practical product/service information, information to solve questions or issues, etc.
   Mark only one oval.

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7. I have received benefits from my engagement with brands on social media *
   Benefits refer to discounts/deals, practical product/service information, information to solve questions or issues, etc.
   Mark only one oval.

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8. I feel more connected to brands I engage with on social media *
   This may be either a positive or negative connection to the brand.
   Mark only one oval.

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9. I have a strong opinion towards the brands I engage with on social media *
   This may be either a positive or negative opinion of the brand.
   Mark only one oval.

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This section contains more specified statements regarding your engagement with brands on social media. Where we once again want you to evaluate to what extent you agree to the statements below. 1. means that you don’t agree at all and 7. that you fully agree to the statement.

10. I believe it is beneficial to receive discounts on products/services from a brand's social media content *
    *taking part of discounts instantly by clicking on a shared link or copying a promotion code
    Mark only one oval.

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</table>
11. I believe it is beneficial to receive free samples/trials on products/services from a brand's social media content *
   *Taking part of free samples/trials instantly by clicking on a shared link or copying a promotion code
   Mark only one oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Strongly disagree   Strongly agree

12. Receiving discounts from a brand's social media content helps me decide if I want to purchase the brand's product/service *
   Mark only one oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Strongly disagree   Strongly agree

13. Receiving free samples/trials from a brand's social media content helps me decide if I want to purchase the brand's product/service? *
   Mark only one oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Strongly disagree   Strongly agree

14. When I engage with a brand on social media I find it important to be able to communicate with brand representatives *
   *Brand representatives are the staff that works with communicating and answering questions through the brands social media site
   Mark only one oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Strongly disagree   Strongly agree

15. If I communicate with a brand representative on social media I believe it is important to obtain a positive feeling from my interaction *
   Brand representatives are the staff that works with communicating and answering questions through the brands social media site
   Mark only one oval.
   
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Strongly disagree   Strongly agree
15. When I engage with a brand on social media I find it important that the brand representatives are honest to me in our conversation *

Brand representatives are the staff that works with communicating and answering questions through the brand’s social media site.
Mark only one oval.

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Strongly disagree | Strongly agree

16. When I engage with a brand on social media I find that communicating directly with brand representatives increases my relationship with the brand *

Brand representatives are the staff that works with communicating and answering questions through the brand’s social media site.
Mark only one oval.

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Strongly disagree | Strongly agree

17. For me to engage with a brand on social media it is important to enjoy the content that the brand shares *

Mark only one oval.

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Strongly disagree | Strongly agree

18. For me to engage with a brand on social media it is important to perceive the content that the brand shares as trustworthy *

Mark only one oval.

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Strongly disagree | Strongly agree

19. For me to engage with a brand on social media it is important that the brand shares content that is relevant to what they offer *

Mark only one oval.

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Strongly disagree | Strongly agree
21. For me to engage with a brand on social media it is important that the brand’s shared content have reliable information *
   Mark only one oval.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   Strongly disagree  □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Strongly agree

This section contains more specified statements regarding your engagement with brands on social media. Where we once again want you to evaluate to what extent you agree to the statements below. 1. means that you don’t agree at all and 7. that you fully agree to the statement.

22. When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me to learn about the brand *
   Mark only one oval.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   Strongly disagree  □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Strongly agree

23. When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me to obtain information about the brand’s products/services *
   Mark only one oval.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   Strongly disagree  □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Strongly agree

24. When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me to obtain information about future deals on brand’s products/services *
   Mark only one oval.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   Strongly disagree  □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Strongly agree

25. When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me to learn about the brand’s other activities *
   Mark only one oval.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   Strongly disagree  □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Strongly agree
26. When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me that the brand is being honest in their information about their product/service quality.

Mark only one oval.

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27. When I engage with a brand on social media it is important for me that I receive a positive experience from the information I obtain.

Mark only one oval.

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28. Personally it is important for me to receive responses from other consumers when sharing my experience with a brand on social media.

* Responses are shares, comments or likes from other people

Mark only one oval.

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29. Personally it is important for me to receive responses from other consumers when sharing a brand's content on social media.

* Responses are shares, comments or likes from other people

Mark only one oval.

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**General questions**

you are almost there...
Engagement with brands on social media

30. Age *
   Mark only one oval.
   ☐ 18-25 years
   ☐ 26-33 years
   ☐ 34-41 years
   ☐ 42-49 years
   ☐ 50-57 years
   ☐ 58-65 years
   ☐ 65 + years

31. I am *
   Mark only one oval.
   ☐ Female
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Other

Stop filling out this form.

Thank you for your time
You will not be able to answer the rest of the questionnaire as you have not been engaged with a brand on social media. We therefore have to exclude you from this study, as it aims to examine people who have engaged or actively are engaging. However, we thank you for your time and ask you to please press submit as your participation is still important for the outcome of our study.

Best regards, Gustaf & Isak

Powered by
Google Forms

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1djqkJ6hJ5mK6t8pDE20Qjme9a5IBiXKU3Hd4kYjW0GrV4/printform#responses
Appendix 2: Questionnaire (Swedish)

Konsumentengagemang mot varumärken på sociala medier

Hej!

Vi är glada att du valt att delta i vår enkät, dina svar är väldigt värdefulla för oss.


Före du svarar på frågorna vill vi be dig att försöka tänka tillbaka på tillfället då du har interagerat med ett varumärkes innehåll eller varit i kontakt med varumärken genom någon social media. Överväg och betänk allt som varumärken delar eller kommunicerar publikt på social medier. Detta kan vara information, videor, bilder, meddelanden och/eller erbjudanden.

På grund av etiska orsaker måste du som deltar i denna enkät vara minst 18 år gammal. Alla dina svar kommer att förbli anonyma och ingen kommer kunna spåra dem tillbaka till dig. Vi kan försäkra dig om detta eftersom all information du lämnar kommer vara kodad innan den implementeras i analysprogrammet. Detta är frivilligt och vi värderar ditt deltagande högt.

Formuläret tar cirka 5 minuter att genomföra och vi ber dig att besvara frågorna noga och betänksamt. Har du frågor eller vill kontakta oss av någon anledning är du hjälpligt välkommen att mejla oss på:

g222bt@student.lnu.se eller ig222cy@student.lnu.se

Tack för ditt deltagande!
Gustaf Johansson & Isak Gunnarsson

*Required

1. Har du någonsin engagerat dig mot varumärken i sociala medier? *

Du engagerar dig mot varumärken i sociala medier när du gillar, kommenterar eller delar varumärkens egna innehåll, deltar i tävlingar, evenemang, ansökningsprocesser, eller kommunicerar/disputerar med representanter från varumärken och/eller andra konsumenter på varumärkets "fan page".

Mark only one oval.

- Ja
- Nej

Skip to "Tack för ditt deltagande."

Du engagerar dig mot varumärken i sociala medier när du gillar, kommenterar eller delar varumärkens egna innehåll, deltar i tävlingar, evenemang, ansökningsprocesser, eller kommunicerar/disputerar med representanter från varumärken och/eller andra konsumenter på varumärkets "fan page".

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1lIe5k8nJGahinnKsI8GnRqWznEdv282THKbYxRwRf/printform#responses
2. 1. Hur ofta engagerar du dig med varumärken på sociala medier? *
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Några gånger om året
   [ ] 1-4 gånger i månaden
   [ ] 4-7 gånger i månaden
   [ ] 7-10 gånger i månaden
   [ ] Oftare än 10 gånger i månaden

3. 2. I framtiden förväntar jag mig att engagera mig med varumärken *
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Några gånger om året
   [ ] 1-4 gånger i månaden
   [ ] 4-7 gånger i månaden
   [ ] 7-10 gånger i månaden
   [ ] Oftare än 10 gånger i månaden

4. 3. På vilken sociala media platform engagerar du dig oftast med varumärken? *
   Mark only one oval.
   [ ] Twitter
   [ ] LinkedIn
   [ ] Facebook
   [ ] Youtube
   [ ] Instagram
   [ ] Flickr
   [ ] Other: __________________________________________


5. 4. Jag ser att det finns fördelar som jag kan ta del av genom att engagera mig med varumärken i sociala medier *
   Med fördelar menas rabatter/erbjudanden, praktisk information om produkter/tjänster eller information som hjälper till att besvara en fråga eller problem
   Mark only one oval.

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   Instämmer inte alls [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] Instämmer helt [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1IDeSKBeJGahhnRsGhUxLMrGgjxkNIV2k77THN9FVYRkJzE/printanswerresponses

Page 2 of 8
6. Jag engagerar mig med varumärken för att jag vill ta del av dessa fördelar

Med fördelar menas rabatter, rabatteringsbjudanden, praktisk information om produkter/tjänster eller information som hjälper till att besvara en fråga eller problem. Mark only one ovel.

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7. Jag har tagit del av dessa fördelar genom mitt engagemang med varumärken i sociala medier

Med fördelar menas rabatter, rabatteringsbjudanden, praktisk information om produkter/tjänster eller information som hjälper till att besvara en fråga eller problem. Mark only one ovel.

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8. Jag har en starkare relation till de varumärken jag engagerar mig med i sociala medier

Denna relation kan vara både positiv och negativ. Mark only one ovel.

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9. Jag har starka åsikter mot de varumärken som jag engagerar mig med i sociala medier

Dessa känslor kan vara både positive och negativa. Mark only one ovel.

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10. Jag upplever det fördelaktigt att ta del av rabatter* på produkter/tjänster från ett varumärkets sociala medier

*ta del av rabatter genom att klicka på en delad länk eller kopiera rabattkoden. Mark only one ovel.

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11. Jag upplever det fördelaktigt att ta del av gratis prover/tester* på produkter/tjänster från ett varumärkets sociala medier 

*ta del av gratis prover/tester genom att klicka på en delad länk eller kopiera rabattkoden 

Mark only one oval.

Instämmer inte alls ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Instäljer helt ☐

12. Ta del av rabatter från ett varumärkes delade material på sociala medier hjälper mig i mitt beslut om jag vill köpa varumärkets produkt/tjänst 

Mark only one oval.

Instämmer inte alls ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Instäljer helt ☐

13. Ta del av gratis prover/tester från ett varumärkes delade material på sociala medier hjälper mig i mitt beslut om jag vill köpa varumärkets produkt/tjänst 

Mark only one oval.

Instämmer inte alls ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Instäljer helt ☐

14. När jag engagerar mig med varumärken på sociala medier finner jag det viktigt att kunna kommunicera med representanter* för varumärket 

*representanter är den personal som arbetar med att besvara frågor och sköta kommunikationen på varumärkets olika sociala medier 

Mark only one oval.

Instämmer inte alls ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Instäljer helt ☐

15. Om jag kommunicerar med en representant för ett varumärke på sociala medier finner jag det viktigt att erhålla en positiv känsla från vår interaktion 

Representanter är den personal som arbetar med att besvara frågor och sköta kommunikationen på varumärkets olika sociala medier 

Mark only one oval.

Instämmer inte alls ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Instäljer helt ☐
16. 15. När jag engagerar mig med ett varumärke på sociala medier finner jag det viktigt att
varumärkets representanter är ärliga mot mig i vår konversation* 
Representanter är den personal som arbetar med att besvara frågor och sköta
kommunikationen på varumärkets olika sociala medier
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17. 16. När jag engagerar mig mot varumärken på sociala medier finner jag att
kommunicera direkt med varumärkens representanter stärker min relation till
varumärket* 
Representanter är den personal som arbetar med att besvara frågor och sköta
kommunikationen på varumärkets olika sociala medier
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18. 17. För att jag ska engagera mig med ett varumärke på sociala medier finner jag det
viktigt att deras innehåll är underhållande* 
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19. 18. För att jag ska engagera mig med ett varumärke på sociala medier finner jag det
viktigt att innehållet de delar är trovärdigt* 
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20. 19. För att jag ska engagera mig med ett varumärke på sociala medier finner jag det
viktigt att innehållet de delar är relevant för vad de erbjuder* 
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21. För att jag ska engagera mig med ett varumärke på sociala medier finner jag det viktigt att innehållet de delar innehåller pålitlig information. *Mark only one oval.

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22. När jag engagerar mig med varumärken på sociala medier tycker jag att det är viktigt att lära mig om varumärket. *Mark only one oval.

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23. När jag engagerar mig med varumärken på sociala medier tycker jag att det är viktigt att erhålla information om varumärkets produkter/tjänster. *Mark only one oval.

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24. När jag engagerar mig med varumärken på sociala medier tycker jag att det är viktigt att erhålla information om framtida erbjudanden på varumärkens produkter/tjänster. *Mark only one oval.

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25. När jag engagerar mig med varumärken på sociala medier tycker jag att det är viktigt att lära mig om varumärkets andra aktiviteter. *Mark only one oval.

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25. När jag engagerar mig med ett varumärke på sociala medier tycker jag det är viktigt att varumärket är ärligt i informationen om kvalitén på dess produkter/tjänster.

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27. Personlig sikt är det viktigt för mig att frambringen gansvara* från andra konsumenter när jag delar med mig av min upplevelse av ett varumärke via sociala medier.

*med gansvar menas att andra personer gillar, kommenterar eller delar din upplevelse

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28. Personligen är det viktigt för mig att frambringen gansvara* från andra konsumenter när jag delar ett varumärkes innehåll på sociala medier.

*med gansvar menas att andra personer gillar, kommenterar eller delar den informationen du delade med dig av

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Allmänna frågor
Appendix 3

Figure Engagement Frequency

![Engagement Frequency Pie Chart]

- A few times a year: 13
- 1-4 times a month: 20
- 4-7 times a month: 6
- 7-10 times a month: 25
- More than 10 times a month: 157

Figure Most frequently used social media platform

![Most frequently used social media platform Pie Chart]

- Twitter: 44
- LinkedIn: 9
- Facebook: 18
- Instagram: 8
- YouTube: 142
Appendix 4

Appendix 4. Boxplot with outliers
Appendix 5

A literature review is supposed to display the knowledge within a field of study, by presenting the phenomena, the theories, the methods and the concepts (Baker, 2000). So a solid theoretical framework should therefore contain main writings and relevant recent research within the field in order to give a legitimate representation of the existing research (Denney and Tewksbury, 2012). The compilation of previous research in the theoretical chapter, represents a literature review of the research field; consumer engagement in an online context, as it provides a comprehensive and thorough compilation of previous research (Denney and Tewksbury, 2012). The credibility, the validity and the reliability of a research is very much determined by the sources its foundation lies upon (Baker, 2000) and therefore, source criticism ought to be applied to the selection process, to ensure the credibility of the material. Source criticism is simply put the critical judgment the researchers employ in order to evaluate the data professionally in order to discern relevant content for the study in question (Zohrabi, 2013). There are several recommendations for filters and requirements which researchers should implement in their criticisms, which this research took into consideration. The source selection process utilized reliable databases (van Wee and Banister, 2016), primarily Oneseach via Linnaeus University webpage and Google Scholar. Keywords were used on these databases to limit the scope of the available research but still provide relevant material (Baker, 2000). At the same time core terms were implemented to ensure that no research were overlooked (Aromataris, 2014). Used keywords include; consumer engagement and variations of the words social, economic, hedonic, practical and trust, in connection with words such as value, benefits, rewards. Where additional words such as social media, online, Internet, web, etcetera were included to specify the context. The chosen sources had to be peer-reviewed articles within academic journals or relevant books as Denney and Tewksbury (2012) recommend. After the search process, the content of the sources had to be evaluated. The content had to be written in English, have a scientific foundation and concern consumer engagement and/or the ascendants to it, in an online context (Aromataris, 2014). The structure of the source had to follow a standard scientific structure, with consideration to; abstract, introduction, problem discussion, purpose, method, result/discussion and reference list (Aromataris, 2014).