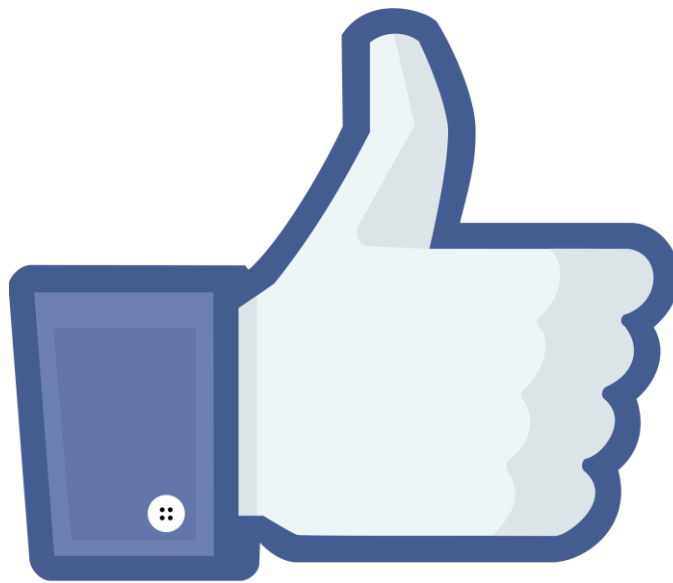


Factors Influencing Involvement, Brand Attachment and Brand Loyalty on Facebook Brand Pages



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Factors influencing involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty on Facebook brand Pages.

Marketing in an online environment has put an emphasis on strengthening relationships with consumers in order to gain a competitive advantage. Social media networks may provide a great opportunity for brands to engage with its stakeholders due to the media's interactive nature. However, social media's interactivity may become a two-edged sword for brands that undermines consumers' desire to use social media networks as a platform to communicate primarily with each other. This research investigates factors influencing involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty on Facebook brand Pages.

Based on prior empirical research within relationship marketing, media dependency theory, parasocial interaction theory, and the uses and gratifications theory, a conceptual framework was developed. Further, research specifically addressing these factors in the context of a Facebook brand page aided in building the model. Five motivations of "liking" a Page was identified and defined appropriately for the context of Facebook brand Pages. Information, entertainment and remuneration were thought to have an influence on involvement together with Facebook dependency, whereas social self-expression was thought to have an influence on brand attachment and positive word of mouth intentions. Moreover, inner self-expression was thought to have an influence on brand attachment. Parasocial interaction was thought to have a positive influence on involvement and brand attachment. Further, involvement was thought to have a mediating effect between motivations for "liking" a Page and brand attachment, whereas brand attachment was thought to have a mediating effect between involvement and brand loyalty.

An online self-administered survey is used to collect data from Norwegian consumers that has "liked" a Facebook brand Page. This data is further analyzed by using SmartPLS. An assessment of the data's validity and reliability is made, where the data is evaluated to pass the requirements of validity and reliability. To test the hypotheses, the bootstrap procedure is used. The results suggests that information has a significant and positive influence on involvement. Moreover, parasocial interaction is found to have a significant and positive influence on involvement and brand attachment. Moreover, brand attachment is found to have a mediating effect on the relationship

between parasocial interaction and repeat purchase intentions. Social self-expression is found to have a positive influence on brand attachment and repeat purchase intentions. Brand attachment is also found to have a mediating effect on the relationship between social self-expression and repeat purchase intentions. Lastly, the relationship between brand attachment and brand loyalty in terms of repeat purchase intentions and positive word-of-mouth intentions is found to be significant and positive.

Brands can use the results to get a better understanding of how brands can strengthen its relationships with consumers through Facebook brand Pages, but also to get insights to the platforms' potential limitations. This is useful for brands as the results shows that Fans "liking" Facebook brand Pages as a means of social self-expression increases the likelihood of an emotional bond between the brands and the Fan as well as repeat purchase intentions. Moreover, the results indicates that a perceived parasocial relationship on Facebook brand Pages increases the likelihood of brand attachment. Involvement did not have a significant influence on brand attachment. Moreover, Facebook dependency did not have a positive influence on involvement. The results suggests that brand strategies may vary depending on the brand category as well as the consumer's social life. Thus, future studies should address these differences.

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APPENDICES

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, we live in a society that is increasingly interconnected, where people can communicate unbound by time and geographical boundaries, thanks to the development of Information Technology and people's ability to make use of it. The Internet has experienced a dramatic growth – over 3.2 billion people have Internet access worldwide, and the number increases as we speak (internetlivestats.com). Like in most other countries, having Internet access is considered as a given among the Norwegians. A recent study by Norsk Mediebarometer reports that 88% of the Norwegian population in the ages between 9 and 79 has Internet access. Further, the rise of social media networks has gained high popularity among Norwegian consumers, especially that of Facebook. The popular social media network has over 3 million registered Norwegian users, (Metronet, 2014), and the average number of Fans for top 20 brands in Norway totals 232,920 (Social Bakers, August 2015). As the Norwegian population consist of just above 5 million people in total (Wikipedia), this number is relatively high. However, little is known about why Norwegian consumers interact with Facebook brand Pages and how it influences the consumer-brand relationship as such.

The proliferation of the Internet has given consumers an enhanced opportunity to obtain information about products and services, where they can compare offerings and share information with others with easy access. Consumers are increasingly using social media networking sites to search for information, and at the same time turning away from traditional media such as television, radio, and magazines (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). As consumers' media habits have changed, and consumers' power of searching for and comparing brand offerings online, the job of a brand manager becomes even more demanding in terms of breaking through the clutter and to ensure a consistent and compelling brand image. Thus, this ultimately changes the bases for how brand value is created, and thus, the bases for how organizations can gain a competitive advantage. The advent of social media has transformed traditional one-way communication into multi-dimensional, two-way, peer-to-peer communication. Hence, consumers are gradually shaping traditional brand communications previously controlled and managed by brand and marketing managers.

Merz et al. (2009) argue that, *“branding has undergone four stages of development: from a goods focused logic, through value and relationship focused logics to a stakeholder logic”* (Merz et al., in Gyrd-Jones & Kornum, 2013:1485). The American Marketing Association defines a brand as *“a*

name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers, and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 141). Thus, a brand is more than a product as such. In line with a service-dominant logic where stakeholders are seen as co-creators of value, relationship marketing regards brand value as determined by what kind of relationship the company is capable of maintaining – not what kind of offering the company provides (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996, in de Chernatony, 1998:127). Maintaining strong relationships with consumers are thus understood to be a key competitive advantage according to this perspective.

Social media provides both opportunities and challenges for brands. It is stated that brands can effectively reach their audience in their social networks to build relationships with consumers on a more personal level (Men & Tsai, 2013). However, from a critical point of view, it has been stated that, *“...consumers are becoming overwhelmed by marketers’ attempts to engage them in relationship marketing strategies...and only recently, it has become apparent that consumers are using the Internet to communicate with each other”* (Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006 in Sicilia & Palazón, 2008:255). Among the various types of social media, Facebook has gained interest among both researchers and practitioners. Although more and more brands are getting a presence on Facebook brand Pages, it seems like practitioners are still struggling to get a grasp of what it takes to engage their audience. The quest to understand users’ motivations and gratifications in effective social media communication and relationship building is therefore crucial.

1.1. Research objective and question

The aim of this thesis is to develop a conceptual framework to understand and explain how and to what extent Facebook brand Pages creates value for Norwegian consumers, and whether involvement with Facebook brand Pages and parasocial interaction can influence the consumer-brand relationship. As little is known what causes Norwegian Facebook users to “like” Facebook brand Pages, this research will contribute to inform practitioners of whether and how they can utilize Facebook brand Pages as a strategic tool to gain a competitive advantage in the market place.

Involvement has been studied as an important antecedent to attitudinal and behavioral responses in the marketing literature, and can be instructive in understanding whether Facebook brand Pages

creates value for consumers and the consequences as such. Solomon et al. (2006) defines involvement as, “...a person’s perceived relevance of the object based on their inherent needs, values and interests”, where the word object is used in the generic sense (Solomon et al., 2006:105). Further, involvement is closely related to motivations, and has been referred to as “the motivation to process information” (Solomon et al., 2006:106). It is therefore interesting to investigate to what extent consumers are involved with the Facebook brand Pages as this can be instructive in understanding whether brands successfully provides relevant content, and thereby influences the consumer-brand relationship as such.

In order to provide relevant content to consumers, it is vital to understand what motivates consumers to get involved with the Facebook brand Page. In understanding consumers’ motivations to “like” a brand Page, the uses and gratifications paradigm (UGP) has been identified to be useful (e.g. Gøtzsche & Vang Rasmussen, 2010; Men & Tsai, 2013; Lin & Lu, 2010; Wallace et al. 2014a; Muntinga et al., 2011). Muntinga et al. (2011) has suggested six types of user motivations for social media use that can be useful as a starting point in understanding involvement with Facebook brand Pages, which will be investigated in this research in order to understand what drives consumers to “like” a Facebook brand Page, and thus influence involvement with the Page as such.

As it is stated that social media networks provides the opportunity for brands to communicate with consumers in a more personal way, and thereby influence the consumer-brand relationship, it is interesting to understand to what extent Facebook brand Pages facilitates for these perception among Facebook users and how this influences the consumer-brand relationship as such. Parasocial interaction has gained some attention related to social media engagement in recent research. Initially applied to the relationship between audience members and television characters, parasocial interaction (PSI) refers to “...the audience’s illusion of having an intimate and personal relationship with media personalities” (Horton and Whol 1956; Russel and Stern 2006 in Men & Tsai 2013:78). Parasocial interaction has often been referred to as a motivational construct (Ballantine, 2005), and recent empirical research has found that PSI experiences positively influences social media engagement (Men & Tsai, 2013b). Moreover, Labrecque (2014) found parasocial interaction to have a significant and positive influence on brand loyalty. Thus, this thesis will aim at uncovering to what extent Norwegian Facebook users perceives a personal and intimate relationship with brand

representatives on Facebook brand Pages, and how this influences the consumer-brand relationship as such. This can inform how brands should communicate with its stakeholders, and provide a better understanding of its impact on the consumer-brand relationship.

Lastly, as it is stated that consumers are increasingly using social media to search for information about brands, it is interesting to investigate to what extent Facebook brand Pages can be considered as a primary source of information about brands. Thus, this research will aim to uncover to what extent Norwegian Facebook brand users are dependent on Facebook, and how this is related to their involvement with the brand Page they have “liked”. This can be instructive to understand to what extent Facebook brand Pages is an important brand touch point in consumers’ buyer journey, and thus, inform how much time and resources brands should invest in utilizing the platform to communicate and influence the consumer-brand relationship as such.

With a point of departure of recent research, this research will aim at answering the following research question:

What factors influences involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty on Facebook brand Pages?

The following sub-questions will guide the research:

- What motivates consumers to “like” A Facebook brand Page, and how does it influence involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty?
- How can a perceived parasocial relationship with brand representatives influence involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty?
- To what extent does Facebook dependency influence involvement?
- How, and to what extent can involvement on Facebook brand Pages influence brand attachment, and thereby brand loyalty?

1.2. Intro to Research Methodology

This research primarily takes a positivistic approach in that hypotheses are developed and tested in order to answer the research question. Further, it takes an objective stance where prior empirical research is critically examined in order to form the basis for the suggested framework. However, bias is arguably inevitable as I as a researcher have my own pre-understandings of how value is created on Facebook brand Pages as such. Thus, the thesis will aim at objectivity to avoid bias, but acknowledges that my own pre-understandings may affect the research. In order to answer the research question, this research will first clarify the definition of Facebook brand Pages and the context in which it is situated. This will then allow me to develop a research model based on former empirical research on the topic. Central theories deducted that will aid in answering the research question includes Keller's (1993) customer-based brand equity model, the uses and gratifications paradigm (UGP), media dependency theory and parasocial interaction theory. By combining these theories, it is possible to gain insight to consumer behavior in relation to how brands can be managed in the context of Facebook brand Pages as it is acknowledged that consumers do not only behave in a rational manner, but may also be driven by his/her inner desires and emotions. A self-administered online survey is distributed on Facebook in order to obtain data from Facebook users that has "liked" a Facebook brand Page. Moreover, in order to test the hypotheses, Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares path modeling is used to analyze the data accordingly. This will allow me induct theory by statistically test the suggested relationships in the model, which then will be discussed to conclude and give an answer in accordance with the research objectives and question at hand.

A full explanation of the chosen research method of this research can be found in Chapter 4.

1.3. Research outline

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1. *The introduction* provides a presentation of the motives of the research, together with a presentation of the objectives and the research questions that will guide the research. This is followed by an introduction of the methodology of the research.
2. *The theoretical background* serves the foundation for developing the conceptual framework of the research, where Facebook brand Pages will be defined and elaborated on. Further, an introduction to brand value will be presented.
3. *The Conceptual framework* will be presented, including definitions central to the research. Hypotheses are formulated, which forms the research model.
4. *The Research Methodology* is presented, including the scientific approach, research design, research method, sampling design, questionnaire design, measurements, data analysis methodology and finally reliability and validity of the research.
5. *The data analysis* includes a descriptive presentation of the characteristics of the respondents of the research. This is followed by an assessment of the research model using SmartPLS. Hypotheses are tested using the bootstrap procedure. Moreover, an assessment of mediation is presented.
6. *A discussion* of the results from the data analysis is presented.
7. *The conclusion* of the research is presented.
8. *Managerial implications* of the concluding results of the research is presented
9. Suggestions for future research is presented
10. *Limitations* of the study is presented, which is the final chapter of the research.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In order to get a clear understanding of the context of this research, this section will provide a definition of Facebook brand Pages and its characteristics, which will lay the foundation for developing a conceptual framework of the factors influencing involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty on Facebook brand Pages. First, an introduction to Facebook will be made in order to give an understanding of its origin and development.

2.1. Introduction to Facebook: a social media network

The beginning of Facebook initially started in 2004, where a group of students from Harvard University launched “Thefacebook” – a social study tool created and launched to help share notes and ease communication between the college students (Gøtzsche & Vang Rasmussen, 2010). Mark Zuckerberg, the key founder, soon realized the great potential of the platform, and with help from fellow students Dustin Moskovitz, Eduardo Saverin, and Chris Hughes, the site grew to become much more than a site for students (ibid). In august 2005, “Thefacebook” was officially named Facebook (ibid). Today, Facebook is widespread with 1,32 billion active users across the world (May, 2015: metronet.no).

Facebook is characterized as a social media network, which is defined as *“web-based applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending e-mails and instant messages between each other”* (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009:65). Thus, Facebook as a social network provides a platform for people to interact, communicate and share with one another, enhancing human connectivity and sociability (Nie, 2001 in Hsin et al., 2014). Further, social media networks are mediated, meaning they are unbound from time and geographic location. Visibility on Facebook is high, where people can see who is connected to whom and what others has commented, uploaded and liked. The primary focus for people on Facebook is the friend relationship, thus, “liking” Pages is understood to be a secondary goal. Facebook has evolved immensely since the beginning, and has now become an attractive place for commercial interests in addition to the aspect of connecting with others. Advertising and brand Pages are two examples of that.

2.2. Facebook brand Pages

Facebook Pages allows people and organizations to form customized topic sites within the platform. This thesis will focus on Pages owned by a brand. In this context, Facebook brand Pages are brand-oriented profiles that provide additional functionalities like detailed analytics as well as content- and fan- administration, where members can access information and discuss and share the ideas of the brand. Users who have “liked” a Page are defined as *fans*. Two characteristics that will be defined and discussed that is of relevance to this thesis is *Content* and *Interaction*.

2.2.1. Content on Facebook brand Pages

Pages looks similar to that of a consumer’s profile, where a profile picture and cover photo can be uploaded accompanied by a wall, including detailed contact information. Further, applications such as *instant messaging* can be implemented to enhance users’ experience. Similarly to that of user profiles, Fans can visit a brand’s Page by searching for it or click on the profile when visible in his/her newsfeed. This allows the Fan to be exposed to content directly on the wall. Another way a consumer can be exposed for content through Facebook brand Pages is by getting status updates from the Page that shows up in his/her newsfeed. Content on Facebook brand Pages includes text, pictures, videos, links to external sites, events, and groups. Content can be both user and brand generated. Additionally, Pages allows for promoting posts in order to increase visibility among Fans for a payment. Further, promoting posts allows the Page to target an audience based on geographical and demographical variables. Content on Pages can further be “liked” using a “like” button, and allows for commenting and sharing with others through a *Fan’s* profile through a “share” button. A *Fan* can choose to share content with its entire network, where the *content* becomes visible to the *Fans network*, who are referred to as *friends*. However, a Fan also has the possibility to share it only with a selected audience from his/her network. Further, new features have emerged like *Instant Messaging* and other applications that further enhance the opportunities to communicate with brands and fans. Pages allows fans to get status updates, share links, upload pictures and videos, create events and post textual content to the *wall*.

Facebook is in continuous change, where new applications and features are frequently introduced in order to enhance the user experience. Thus, it is likely that consumption of content on Facebook Pages changes as time passes, as well as the user experience as such. It is therefore important to note

that the situation is analyzed in accordance with how Facebook Pages looks like *today*, keeping in mind that it is in continuous development.

2.2.2. Interaction on Facebook brand Pages

Facebook users can interact with brands and other users on Facebook brand Pages, and there is no barrier to enter. This implies that users can get easy access to both seek and provide information. The marketing literature has established interactivity as an important feature of online environments (Song & Zinkhan, 2008; Stewart and Pavlou, 2008; Yadav and Varadarajan, 2005 in Labrecque, 2014:137). In defining perceived interactivity, Song and Zinkhan (2008) found that both “...the speed of the response (speed) and the ability to communicate something that is related to a consumer's prior message (reaction) as being message features that can heighten perceived interactivity” (Labrecque, 2014:136). Moreover, they found evidence that perceived interactivity has a positive impact on perceptions of site effectiveness (i.e., satisfaction, loyalty, attitude toward the Web site, and site quality, repurchase behavior, and WOM) (ibid). The focus of this research in terms of interactivity is on who interacts with who and what. After having reviewed research on the topic (e.g Men & Tsai, 2013; Gøtzche & Vang Rasmussen, 2010), interaction on Facebook brand Pages happens mostly between the brand and the Fans and only rarely between the Fans. More specifically, Fans interact with the *content* that is posted on the Facebook brand Page in the forms of e.g. “liking”, “commenting”, “sharing” and “viewing”. Further, the discussions that happen on Facebook brand Pages are primarily between the Fan and the brand representatives hosting the Page.

Understanding interaction on Facebook brand Pages is important in order to understand how Facebook brand Pages can be conceptualized in general. Previous research on the topic of how value is created on Facebook brand Pages conceptualize Facebook brand Pages as a kind of virtual brand community. For example, Men & Tsai (2010) stated that, “*The social, communal, and participatory environment of brand SNS pages constitutes virtual brand communities where advertisers can engage consumers at a more intimate and interactive manner...*” (Men & Tsai, 2013:77). A virtual community is defined as “*...mediated spaces in the digital environment that allow people to form and be sustained primarily through an ongoing communication process*” (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002:134). Further, Muniz & O’Guinn (2001) conceptualized a brand community as “*a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand*” (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001:412). Thus, combining the two definitions which

then becomes a virtual brand community implies that value creation occurs when interaction is sustained not only between the brand and consumers, but also that interaction must be sustained between consumers on Facebook brand Pages.

In Men & Tsai's (2013) research on what motivates consumers to engage with Facebook brand Pages, they found that Fans in general were not motivated by social integration, nor to connect with likeminded others (Men & Tsai, 2013:83). Another attempt to conceptualize Facebook brand Pages in terms of a virtual brand community is that of Gøtzsche & Vang Rasmussen (2010), who investigated whether Danish Fans on Facebook brand Pages perceived a psychologically sense of brand community (PSBC), which is defined as "*The degree to which an individual perceives relational bonds with other brand users*" (Carlson et al., 2008:286). However, their research suggests that Fans on Facebook brand Pages do not experience high levels of PSBC, and is considered as "non-influential" in terms of how value is created on Facebook brand Pages (Gøtzsche & Vang Rasmussen, 2010:100). Although virtual brand communities may exist on Facebook brand Pages, this thesis understands that interaction happens mainly between the Fan and the brand, either one-directional or two-directional. Thus, this thesis will primarily focus on how the interaction between the Fan and the brand is sustained on Facebook brand Pages, and in turn co-creates brand value as such.

2.3. In sum

Facebook is characterized as a social media network, which is defined as "*web-based applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending e-mails and instant messages between each other*" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009:65). Creating, maintaining and visualizing relationships are therefore key elements of Facebook. Further, social media networks are mediated, meaning it is unbound from time and geographic location. With regards to both Facebook and Facebook brand Pages, the actions of individuals and brands are visible to the Facebook user's network. *Content* includes both brand and fan-generated content in the forms of video, picture, text and links to external sites, as well as applications inherent in the Page. As the aim of this research is not to evaluate how different types of content may affect value creation, this thesis will refer to content as a general term related to all types of content as such. Lastly, interaction on Facebook brand Pages happens primarily between the Fan

and the brand, and can occur both one- and two-directional. Interaction can take form as “liking”, sharing, commenting, and viewing.

In order to understand how brands create value for consumers through Facebook brand Pages to enhance customer-based brand equity, a definition of Facebook brand Pages will be clarified which will further form the basis of how the research model will take form.

2.4. Defining Facebook brand Pages

In order to understand how value is created on Facebook brand Pages, and thus, how brands can enhance the consumer-brand relationship as such, it is necessary to get a clear understanding of attachment in this particular context. Bond- and identity based attachment in online communities as well as network-based and small-group based virtual communities will aid in understanding how consumers can be attached in an online/virtual community, as well as the implications for how relationships in such communities can be sustained. These will be presented, followed by how it can apply in the context of Facebook brand Pages.

2.4.1. Bond-based vs Identity-based Attachment

Ren et al (2007) contrast two different ways that people can develop commitment to online communities – by becoming attached to the community as a whole or by becoming attached to individual members (Ren et al., 2007:380). They argue that the theories describing these forms of attachment, common identity theory and common bond theory, help us understand and predict important antecedents and outcomes of online communities, including the conditions under which these communities can recruit new members, retain old members, and successfully solicit contributions from them (Ren et al., 2007). When people feel identity-based attachment to a group as a whole, they tend to perceive others in the group as interchangeable (Turner 1985 in Ren et al. 2007:380). In contrast, in bond-based attachment, people feel connections to each other and less to the group as a whole (Ren et al., 2007:380).

2.4.2. Network-based vs small-group based communities

Dholakia et al (2004) supports the distinction between bond-based and network-based attachment in virtual communities. They distinguish these two types in terms of a network-based virtual community

and a small-group-based virtual community. A network-based community is defined as, “*a specialized, geographically dispersed community based on a structured, relatively sparse, and dynamic network of relationships among participants sharing a common focus*” (Dholakia et al., 2004: 248). This implies that such communities does not have a strong attachment within the community, but rather an attachment towards the shared focus, similarly to that of an identity-based attachment defined previously.

On the other hand, a small-group-based community is defined as “*constituted by individuals with a dense web of relationships, interacting together online as a group, in order to accomplish a wider range of jointly conceived and held goals, and to maintain existing relationships*” (Dholakia et al., 2004: 248), implying that individuals within such communities are likely to have bond-based attachment. Dholakia et al.’s (2004) definition is of particular interesting in this context, as they relate these two types of virtual communities to the different types of value fans may obtain from liking the page.

2.4.3. Attachment and relationships on Facebook brand Pages

Following the discussion of content and interaction on Facebook brand Pages, it is likely that fans liking a brand Page are mainly attached to the group as a whole, and not with the individual members as such. The group as a whole in the context of Facebook brand Pages, are the Fans’ of the Facebook brand Page, and the focus of the group becomes the brand as such. It is further assumed that the symbolic meaning of the brand the Fans’ have “liked”, becomes the main attachment. Hence, it is most likely that attachment on Facebook Pages is mainly identity-based.

Antecedents of group identity can be caused by defining,

- a collection of people as members of the same social category, namely social categorization (Turner 1985)
- a group of people who are dependent on each other to cooperate on a joint task, referred to as interdependence, and/ or
- a group of people who define and categorize themselves as members of a group who compare themselves with other groups, referring to intergroup comparison (Hogg & Terry, 2000 in Ren et al., 2007:387).

As Facebook is a self-expressive medium and actions of individuals are visual to others, it is assumed that consumers may “like” a Facebook brand Page to show affiliation with others who likes the same

brand, supporting their social identity as such. Thus, the antecedent of intergroup comparison may be applicable in understanding consumers' attraction and attachment to a Facebook brand Page as such. Moreover, as it can be assumed that people like Facebook brand Pages because they are interested in the subject-matter – namely the brand – and not to meet and interact with others, the definition of network-based virtual community by Dholakia et al. (2004) seems appropriate in defining a Facebook brand Page as such. The extent to which individuals have a bond- or identity-based attachment may differ among individuals. One particular situation where there might exist bond-based attachment is when people that are already friends like the same page. In such cases, the social aspect of showing an affiliation through inter-group comparison as suggested by Dholakia (2004) may be relevant in the context of Facebook brand Pages. Further, it is worth noting that people who like a certain Page on Facebook are to a lesser or greater extent attached to the brand/page.

Thus, the focus of this thesis will be on identity-based attachment and to investigate the level of attachment between the fan and the brand as well as the perceived identity based attachment to the group as a whole, in relation to the perceived value a Fan receives from interacting with the Facebook brand Page.

2.5. In sum

A Facebook brand page is understood to be a kind of virtual brand community, as Facebook brand pages allows people to interact with brands, which is the shared, common topic of interest/focus – the brand “liked”.

Further, I characterize relationships on Facebook brand Pages using the definitions provided by Dholakia et al. (2004) of a network-based virtual community, where members are likely to have an identity-based attachment. This seems relevant as Facebook brand Pages are understood to have minimal attachment to individual Fans, but rather attachment to the brand and the group as a whole. Further, members are likely to primarily have an attachment to the brand. However, due to the symbolic meaning brands hold and Facebook's self-expressive characteristic, attachment to other Fans may exist in the sense that group identity is formed through intergroup comparison.

These descriptions and definitions will serve as the foundation for analyzing value creation on Facebook Pages and the relationship between the brands and the fans.

Next, a discussion of how brand value can be conceptualized will be presented, as well as how it will be applied in this research.

2.6. Brand value

Brands are defined in various ways in the literature, and can be viewed from various perspectives (e.g. the economic, identity, consumer-based, personality, relational, community and cultural approach (Heding et al., 2009). The American Marketing Association defines a brand as *“a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers, and to differentiate them from those of competitors”* (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 141). Thus, a brand is understood to be more than a product as such.

The main goal of a brand manager is to build brand equity, which is defined as *“the added value endowed on products and services”*, and marketers and researchers use various perspectives to study how brand equity is created (Keller, 1993:2). Measurement of brand equity has been researched from two main perspectives in the literature, namely the financial perspective (Simon & Sullivan, 1993) and the customer-based perspective (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Thus, the focus in branding literature has mainly been on one stakeholder relationship: the brand-customer relationship, as the main source of brand value (Keller, 2008 in Gyrd-Jones & Kornum, 2013:1485). But as knowledge of consumer behavior has progressed, and new contexts in which brands operate have emerged (e.g. social media networks), there has been an increased focus on multiple stakeholders in the creation of brand value (Gyrd-Jones & Kornum, 2013:1485). Merz et al. (2009) points this out, where they argue that, *“branding has undergone four stages of development: from a goods focused logic, through value and relationship focused logics to a stakeholder logic”* (Merz et al., in Gyrd-Jones & Kornum, 2013:1485). From a goods logic perspective, the focus has been on *“...the exchange of goods in which value is embedded and distributed through transactions”*, where consumers are seen as passive in the creation of value (Vargo & Lush, 2004:2). The Service-dominant logic, suggested by Vargo & Lusch (2004) on the other hand, focuses on services as the “unit of exchange” rather than manufactured goods (Vargo & Lush, 2004:2). In this context, Vargo & Lush (2004) defines services as, *“...the application of specialized competences (knowledge and skills) through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself”* (Vargo & Lusch, 2004:2). This

view therefore regards a mutual relationship between the manufacturer and its stakeholders, where value is co-created as such.

In line with a service-dominant logic where stakeholders are seen as co-creators of value, relationship marketing regards value as determined by what kind of relationship the company is capable of maintaining – not what kind of offering the company provides (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996, in de Chernatony, 1998:127). Relationship marketing has been of high interest among researchers for a long time, and there is strong agreement that brands can form relationships with consumers (e.g. Fournier, 1998). Grönroos (1989) defines relationship marketing as follows: “*Relationship marketing is to establish, maintain, and enhance relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met*” (Grönroos, 1996:57). Thus, in line with the service-dominant logic suggested by Vargo & Lusch (2004), this definition reflects that brands do not only form relationships with customers, but also other partners that influences value creation as such. Further, relationship marketing emphasizes that value is determined by the extent to which the objectives of both the brand and the customer/other parties are met, implying a mutual relationship as such.

For the purpose of this research, I will adopt the thoughts of both the service-dominant logic and the relationship-marketing perspective in terms of how value is co-created, which implies a mutual relationship between the consumer and the brand. As it is understood that consumers who “likes” a Facebook brand Page may do so to show an affiliation with others, as a means of social enhancement, this aspect will also be included. However, the focus will primarily be on the consumer-brand relationship, where the conceptualization of how value is created will be based on the relationship between the consumer and the brand as such. Thus, in determining how value is created in the context of Facebook brand Pages, a closer look at Keller’s (1993) customer based brand-equity model is relevant.

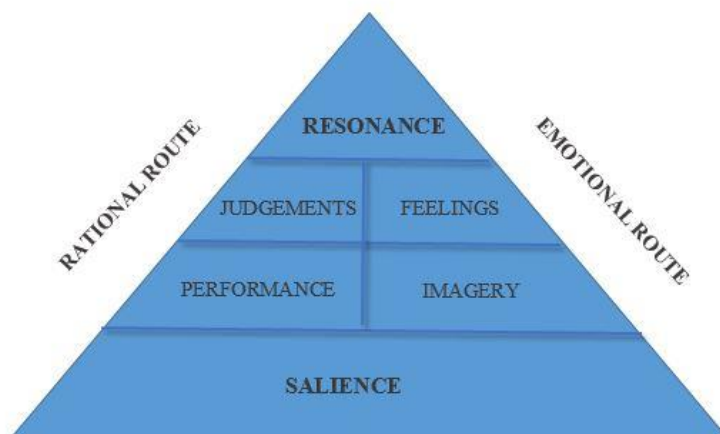
2.6.1. Customer-based brand Equity

Keller (1993) developed the concept of customer-based brand equity (CBBE), which is built by “...*creating the right knowledge structures with the right customers*” (Keller, 2012:143). Moreover, customer-based brand equity is defined as, “...*the differential effect brand knowledge has on consumer response to that of a brand’s marketing*” (141). Some of the benefits of building strong

brands for organizations includes, “*greater customer loyalty, less vulnerability to competitive marketing action and marketing crises, larger margins and favorable customer response to price increases, larger margins as well as more favorable customer response to price increases, increased marketing communication effectiveness*” (Keller, 2001:3). The process of building customer-based brand equity depends on all brand-related contacts (Keller, 2012); including those of Facebook brand Pages. As indicated by its name, the premise of CBBE is that, “*the power of a brand lies in what customers have learned, felt, seen, and heard about the brand over time*” (Keller, 2001:3). This implies that this model assumes that brand value is created between the brand and the consumer where it is crucial that the brand delivers what has been referred to as the brand *promise* to consumers. This thesis will delimit itself from discussing critiques of the CBBE-model, but will adopt this mindset as the intent of this thesis is to investigate how Facebook brand Pages creates brand value from a customers’ perspective as such.

Customer-based brand equity can be conceptualized by the brand resonance pyramid as illustrated below:

Figure 1: Brand Resonance Pyramid



Source: Keller, 2001

This model views brand building as an ascending series of steps, and emphasized the duality of brands; the emotional and the rational route to brand building (Keller, 2012:142). Further, it includes six building blocks, which in turn comprises of four steps in which customer-based brand equity is built. The first and fundamental building block, brand salience, is related to broad and deep brand

awareness i.e. a customer's ability to recognize and recall a brand (Keller, 2001:8). Second, brand meaning implies establishing a brand image – what the brand is characterized by and should stand for in the minds of customers (9). Brand performance refers to *“the ways in which the product or service attempts to meet customers' more functional needs”* (10).

Brand Resonance is the last and final step in building brand equity, and thus signifies the relationship between the customer and the brand (Keller, 2001:15). According to Keller (2001), brand resonance includes behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community and active engagement (15). As the aim of this thesis is to explain how Facebook brand Pages create value for the customer, and ultimately create customer-based brand equity, the last and final step will only be taken into consideration. More specifically, brand attachment and brand loyalty are the two consumer-brand relationship variables of the customer-based brand equity model that will be taken into consideration. As “liking” and interacting with a Facebook brand Page is understood to imply that the Fan has a relationship with the brand, to a lesser or greater extent, it is likely that this kind of engagement can be characterized as “active engagement”, which is stated as one of the criteria for brand resonance as such (Keller, 2001).

2.6.2. Added value on Facebook brand Pages

As the aim of this thesis is to understand how and to what extent brands create value for consumers on Facebook brand Pages, the added value in the context of Facebook brand Pages will be presented. The three categories of added value in the context of Facebook brand Pages that will be investigated in this thesis, and are thought to influence brand attachment and brand loyalty as such, are Facebook users' motivations to “like” a Page, Parasocial Interaction and Facebook dependency. These factors will therefore be elaborated on and defined appropriately for the framework of this thesis. In general terms, value can be defined as, *“...a belief about some desirable end-state that transcends specific situations and guides selection of behavior”* (Solomon et al., 2006:152). Because values drive much of consumer behavior, we might say that virtually all consumer research ultimately is related to the identification and measurement of values (ibid). Thus, it is understood that motivations for “liking” the Page, parasocial interaction and Facebook dependency can be instructive of understanding what drives Facebook users to “like” a Facebook brand Page as such.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will present the conceptual framework that will be used for the analysis of this research. The presentation will begin with the consumer-brand relationship variables, which include brand attachment and brand loyalty. Further, the link between involvement and brand attachment will be presented, followed by the variables that are thought to add value to the consumer brand relationship. These include parasocial interaction, Facebook dependency and motivations for “liking” a Page.

3.1. Brand loyalty

Brand Loyalty, which is the dependent variable in the framework, will now be presented and defined. Together with brand attachment, this variable is thought to be influenced by parasocial interaction and social self-enhancement, which will be elaborated on later in this chapter. Moreover, brand loyalty will be investigated in terms of the overall perceived relationship between the consumer and the brand, and not how Facebook brand Pages directly influences it as such. Marketing theory on brand loyalty and consumer-brand relationships will therefore aid in defining this construct.

Oliver (1999, p. 34) defines brand loyalty as,

A deeply held commitment to rebuy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior (in Chaudhuri & Hoolbrok, 2001).

This definition emphasizes the two aspects of brand loyalty that have been described in previous work on the concept - behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (e.g. Aaker 1991; Assael 1998; Day, 1969; Keller, 2001). Behavioral, or purchase loyalty, consists of repeated purchases of the brand, whereas attitudinal brand loyalty includes a degree of dispositional commitment in terms of some unique values associated with the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Thus, behavioral loyalty implies that the consumer already has purchased the brand, and is therefore a pre-requisite of behavioral brand loyalty. Behavioral and attitudinal loyalty may have different implications in relation to marketing outcomes, such as market share and price premiums. A study by Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001) confirmed this hypothesis, where they found that purchase loyalty explains market share but not the relative price a consumer would pay for the good, whereas attitudinal loyalty explains the relative

price that a consumer would pay for a brand but not market share (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001:89). Thus, it seems fruitful to differentiate these two variables in relation to the construct of brand loyalty. For example, a consumer may hold favorable attitudes towards a brand but may not be able to purchase it due to e.g. lack of financial resources, or access to purchase the brand. On the other hand, a consumer may repurchase a brand because no other brands are available, and thus, not necessarily hold favorable attitudes towards the brand as such.

Keller (2008) has suggested that brand loyalty can be measured by repeat purchase and word of mouth (Keller, 2008). In this thesis, the construct of loyalty will be measured by the intention to re-purchase the brand and intention to provide positive word-of-mouth (WOM) respectively. Word-of-Mouth (WOM) in this context is the intent to pass positive information about the brand from one person to another, either mediated through oral communication or written, both online and offline. Thus, positive word of mouth about a brand implies favorable attitudes towards a brand, and in turn attitudinal brand loyalty. Word-of-mouth is understood to constitute as an important indicator of brand loyalty as consumers who spread positive information about brands often do so because they have positive attitudes towards the brand.

As this thesis will not investigate the Fans' initial loyalty vs. loyalty generated by being a Fan of the Facebook brand Page, it will focus on the expressed perceived consumer-brand relationship on Facebook brand Pages, and not the how interaction on Pages influences the relationship as such.

Brand Loyalty

Repeat purchase intention: *A Fan's expressed intention to purchase the brand "liked" again in the future*

+WOM intention: *A Fan's expressed intention to pass positive information about the brand "liked" to their peers, both offline and online*

Next, a definition of brand attachment will be presented, followed by its relationship with brand loyalty.

3.2. Brand attachment

Brand attachment is understood to be a mediator between involvement and brand loyalty in the research model, and will be investigated in terms of a Fans' perceived brand attachment to the brand they have "liked". Moreover, parasocial interaction, social self-expression and inner self-expression are understood to have an influence on brand attachment, which will be elaborated on later. First, an introduction of brand attachment including a definition will be presented.

Although attachment has typically been researched in interpersonal contexts, research within marketing suggests that consumers may develop attachments to "marketplace entities", including that of brands (e.g. Fournier, 1998; Keller, 2001; Grönroos, 1996). Theory of brand attachment stems from consumer behavior research, where the area of interest is in relation to brand relationships and loyalty (Park et al., 2010).

Bowlby (1979, 1980), who conducted the pioneering work on attachment, defines attachment as *"...an emotion-laden target-specific bond between a person and a specific object"* (Bowlby in Thomson et al., 2005:78). Further, *"...attachments vary in strengths, and stronger attachments are associated with stronger feelings of connection, affection, love and passion"* (ibid). Similarly to the definition provided by Bowlby where attachment is seen as an emotional bond, Park et al. (2010) define brand attachment as, *"...the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self"* (Park et al., 2010:2). According to Park et al. (2010), brand self-connection and brand prominence are two critical factors that reflect the conceptual properties of brand attachment (Park et al., 2010:2). Brand-self connection refers to, *"...the cognitive and emotional connection between the brand and the self"* where it is understood that consumers can perceive the brand as a part of who they are or because it is meaningful in the light of goals, personal concerns, or life projects (Mittal, 2006 in Park et al., 2010:2). The second factor, brand prominence, refers to *"...the extent to which positive feelings and memories about the attachment object are perceived as top of mind also serves an indicator of attachment"* (Park et al., 2010:2). In other words, brand attachment is further determined by the extent to which a consumer's positive feelings about the brand are easily accessible in memory. Park et al. (2010) further suggests that both these factors are important in determining brand attachment, where brand-self connection refers to the bond between the brand and the consumer, whereas brand prominence is an indicator of the strength of this bond as such (1).

With this theoretical understanding, I will adopt Park et al.'s (2010) definition of brand attachment.

Brand attachment: *The perceived cognitive and emotional bond between the brand and the Fan on Facebook brand Pages.*

3.2.1. The relationship between brand attachment and brand loyalty

Thomson et al. (2005) hypothesized that the relationship between brands and consumers can be similar to those between people, where “*Individuals’ emotional attachments to a person predict their commitment to the relationship with this person*” (Thomson et al., 2005:77). Commitment is further defined as “*...the degree to which an individual views the relationship from a long-term perspective and has a willingness to stay with the relationship even when things are difficult*” (Thomson et al., 2005:78), which is understood to be closely related to the definition of brand loyalty. Thomson et al. (2005) found evidence of brand attachment to be a predictor of brand loyalty (e.g. brand commitment). Thus, consumers’ emotional attachments to a brand might predict their commitment to the brand (e.g. brand loyalty) and their willingness to make financial sacrifices in order to obtain it (e.g. to pay a price premium) (Thomson et al., 2005:77). This is also in accordance with Keller’s (2012) CBBE-model, which posits that, “*To create (brand) resonance, behavioral loyalty is not enough...a strong personal attachment is also necessary*” (Keller, 2001:15).

Thus, the following hypotheses are suggested:

H1a: Brand attachment is significantly and positively associated with positive WOM intentions

H1b: Brand attachment is significantly and positively associated with repeat purchase intentions

3.3. Involvement

Involvement in this framework is understood to be influenced by what motivates consumers to “like” a Facebook brand Page, together with Facebook dependency and parasocial interaction. Moreover, involvement with the Page is thought to have an influence on the consumer-brand relationship variable brand attachment. Thus, involvement is understood to have a mediating role between the

independent variables and brand attachment as such. Before an assessment of these relationships will be made, the construct will be defined and evaluated in the context of Facebook brand Pages.

Involvement is understood to be a broad term, and can be applied in various contexts and uses as such (Xu et al., 2009). According to Solomon et al. (2006), involvement is defined as, “...*a person’s perceived relevance of the object based on their inherent needs, values and interests*”, where the word object is used in the generic sense (Solomon et al., 2006:105). Several consumer researchers support this definition, where the perceived personal relevance is seen as the essential characteristic (Celsi & Olson, 1988:211). Further, Celsi & Olson elaborates on this definition by stating that, “...*personal relevance of a product is represented by the perceived linkage between an individual’s needs, goals and values (self-knowledge) and their product knowledge (attributes and benefits)*” (211), which implies that the personal relevance is both self- and brand-referent. Xu et al. provides another definition of involvement in relation to open source projects, which is stated as “*a belief that the open source project in which he or she was participating was both important and personally important*” (Xu et al., 2009:152). Further, Xu et al (2009) separate involvement from participation by referring to involvement as being “*A psychological state while participation refers to actions and individual efforts*” (p.152). When a relevant knowledge-structure is activated in memory, a motivational state is created that drives behavior (Solomon et al., 2006), e.g. shopping, and cognitive behaviors, such as attention and comprehension processes (Celsi & Oslon, 1988:112). Thus, involvement can be viewed as the motivation to process information (Solomon et al., 2006:106).

Various antecedents may trigger involvement as it is understood to be a motivational construct. In the context of this research, the relevance in question is the content that the Facebook brand Pages provides in terms of the value that a Facebook brand Page provides in terms of *information, social self-expression, inner self-expression, empowerment, entertainment, remuneration and parasocial interaction* as previously defined. Further, the link between Facebook dependency and involvement will be investigated in order to determine the extent to which Fans perceive the Facebook brand Page as a primary source of information about the brand. Moreover, as Facebook brand Pages can be seen as an open source project in that anyone with a Facebook account can join and “like” a Facebook brand Page. Thus, returning to the definitions provided by Solomon et al. (2006), Celsi & Olson (1988), and Xu et al. (2009), I define *involvement* as “*A Fans’ belief that the content on the Facebook*

brand Page is perceived as both important and personally relevant, contributing to satisfy the Fan's personal needs, values and interests".

Involvement: *"A Fans' belief that the content on the Facebook brand Page is perceived as both important and personally relevant, contributing to satisfy the Fan's personal needs, values and interests".*

The relationship between involvement and brand attachment will be evaluated next.

3.3.1. The relationship between involvement and brand attachment

We can distinguish the constructs of involvement and attachment by applying the understanding of emotional attachment and cognitive attachment (Thomson et al. (2005). Thomson et al. (2005) clarifies the distinction where, *"...emotional attachment goes beyond mental readiness and resource allocation as it is often beyond one's volitional control"*. Further, *"...emotional attachments to brands are clearly relevant to the realm of emotions, whereas the concept of involvement arguably taps the realm of cognition"* (Thomson et al., 2005:79). This is however somewhat contradictory of Park et al.'s (2010) understanding of brand attachment, which is stated to include both the aspect of cognition and emotion. Therefore, I distinguish between the two in that involvement refers to the content of the Page, whereas attachment refers to the brand.

Through a qualitative research, Gøtzsche & Vang Rasmussen (2010) found that involvement with the Facebook brand Page did have an influence on brand attachment on Facebook brand Pages. Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H2a: Involvement has a significant and positive influence on brand attachment

H2b: Brand attachment has a mediating effect on the relationship between involvement and brand loyalty

3.4. Facebook Dependency

As it is stated that consumers are increasingly relying on social media as one of their primary information sources, this thesis will investigate to what extent consumers are dependent on Facebook

and how it relates with involvement with the Facebook brand Page. This can give us and understanding of the extent to which consumers use Facebook brand Pages as one of the primary sources to obtain information about brands.

Social media dependency is conceptualized as “*a relation reflecting how individuals’ goals are conditional upon the resources media afford*” (Sun, Rubin, and Haridakis 2008:411 in Men & Tsai, 2013). Media system dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976) posit that media usage is a goal-oriented activity, and focuses on how dependent users are on specific medium as a source of goal satisfaction (Men & Tsai, 2013b). As this research specifically addresses consumers dependency on Facebook in relation to their involvement with Facebook brand Pages, I define Facebook dependency as “*a relation reflecting how consumers’ goals in terms of obtaining information are conditional upon the information that Facebook afford*”.

Facebook dependency: “*a relation reflecting how consumers’ goals in terms of obtaining information are conditional upon the information that Facebook afford*”.

3.4.1. The relationship between Facebook Dependency and involvement:

Media research suggests that audience involvement with media influences the viewers’ engagement with the message conveyed by media personae (Rubin and Perse 1987 in Men & Tsai, 2013) or with other media users (Rubin and Step 1997 in Men & Tsai, 2013). Similarly, empirical evidence indicates media dependency influences various attitudinal and behavior outcomes, such as trust (George and Jacob 2010), involvement (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach 1989 in Men & Tsai, 2013), and even purchasing behaviors (Bigne Alcaniz, Blas, and Torres 2006 in Men & Tsai, 2013). Men & Tsai (2013) found social media dependency to be a significant and positive predictor of consumer engagement on Facebook brand Pages (Men & Tsai, 2013:83). As involvement is understood to be an antecedent of engagement (Xu et al., 2009:152), it is likely that Facebook dependency will have an influence on involvement as such. Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H3a: Facebook dependency has a significant and positive influence on involvement

H3b: Involvement has a mediating effect on the relationship between Facebook dependency and brand attachment

3.5. Parasocial Interaction

Initially applied to the relationship between audience members and television characters, parasocial interaction (PSI) refers to “...*the audience’s illusion of having an intimate and personal relationship with media personalities*” (Horton and Whol 1956; Russel and Stern 2006 in Men & Tsai 2013:78). Further, it is stated that “...*parasocial relationships can be thought of as being similar to an interpersonal social interaction or relationship, although they typically consist of a much weaker bond*” (Ballantine, 2005:198). Thus, parasocial interaction is understood as an imagined relationship between the viewer and media personality that can be viewed similarly to social relationships between people, although, weaker than that of attachment as such.

The concept of PSI and identification can be separated in that identification involves sharing a characters’ experiences and a desire to be like them, whereas PSI involves coming to know and imaginatively interacting with characters as if they were present (Men & Tsai, 2013). In other words, PSI and identification may not exist at the same time. While some research presumes PSI is developed through multiple interactions, others provide evidence that the length of the relationship is not directly related to PSI (Perse and Rubin, 1989 in Labrecque, 2014) and that feelings of PSI can arise during initial exposures. However, PSI does imply that a Fan have been exposed to content from brand representatives at least once.

Although PSI has been applied to study audience relationships with traditional media, it can be instructive for studying consumer-brand engagement in a SNS context due to the media’s highly interactive nature (Men & Tsai, 2013). In fact, Labrecque (2014) found perceived interactivity to be a significant predictor of PSI of brand Pages social media networks. Thus, Facebook brand Pages are understood to offer great potential of creating a sense of PSI. Brand representatives may be identifiable or not, but is typically anonymous, leaving a perception that the message comes directly from the brand (Labrecque, 2014:135). Thus, the brand representatives may form the “brand personae” as such. In this context, Men & Tsai’s (2013) redefinition of PSI is relevant, which is stated as, “...*a user’s interpersonal involvement with a media personality (including brands’ representatives on Facebook brand Pages) through mediated communication*” (Men & Tsai, 2013:78). Similarly, in Labrecque (2014) PSI experiences is conceptualized as “...*resembling interpersonal relationships, so much that individuals feel that they know and understand the persona in the same intimate way they know and understand flesh-and-blood friends*” (Labrecque, 2014:137).

With reference to Men and Tsi's (2013) redefinition of PSI, I define PSI as "*A Fan's perceived interpersonal involvement with the brand representative on Facebook brand Pages*"

Parasocial Interaction: *A Fan's perceived interpersonal involvement with the brand representative on Facebook brand Pages*

3.5.1. The relationship between parasocial interaction and involvement

PSI has often been referred to as a motivational construct, for example, in Ballantine (2005) it was suggested that "...the relationship" (between a Fan and a brand representative on Pages) intensifies; viewing may increase in order to maintain the "friendship" (e.g. Rubin, Perse, and Powell, 1985 in Ballantine, 2005:198). Moreover, evidence of favorable consequences of PSI has been found in recent empirical research in the context of Facebook brand Pages. For example, Men & Tsai found PSI to be a significant and positive predictor of engagement on Facebook brand Pages, and as involvement is understood to be an antecedent of engagement on Facebook brand Pages (Xu et al., 2009:152), the following hypothesis is suggested:

H4: PSI has a significant and positive influence on involvement

3.5.2. The relationship between PSI and Brand attachment

Several social media marketing "gurus" claim that one of the great benefits of using Facebook brand Pages as a platform to communicate with stakeholders is that marketers has the ability to provide a more trustworthy and personal interaction with its stakeholders, and thus, provides a great opportunity to influence the brand-consumer relationship (e.g. lousiedigital.com and hanspetter.info). Further, the relationship marketing literature supports the notion that, "...*timely and relevant communication is a major precursor for the development of perceptions of trust and encourages the expansion of committed relationships, which increases both loyalty intentions and cooperation*" (Morgan & Hunt, 1994 in Labrecque, 2014:137). As Facebook brand Pages offer great opportunities to interact with consumers in a timely manner, it is understood that when Facebook brand Pages successfully facilitates for interaction with its consumers on Facebook brand Pages, it should increase the likelihood of positive brand outcomes as such. Antecedents of PSI in the context of Facebook brand Pages includes perceived *interactivity* and *openness* (Labrecque, 2014:136). Further, the perception

of openness in communication is critical for establishing strong relationships (Labrecque, 2014:137), and it is stated that outcomes of PSI experiences should be similar to those of real interpersonal relationships, but weaker (ibid). In accordance with relationship marketing thought and the CBBE-model, brand representatives are understood as important brand value co-creators in terms of affecting the consumer-brand relationship as brand value is not only determined by to the product/service in exchange (e.g. Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Grönroos, 1996). Moreover, as PSI experiences can be viewed similarly as to those of social relationships, it is likely that PSI can enhance brand attachment on Facebook brand Pages. In studying the consequences of PSI in social media, Labrecque (2014) found that PSI is significantly and positively associated with brand loyalty intentions on Facebook brand Pages (Labrecque, 2014). As brand attachment is understood to be a pre-requisite for brand loyalty, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H5a: PSI has a significant and positive influence on brand attachment

As Involvement is understood to mediate the relationship between PSI and involvement, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H5b: Involvement has a mediating effect between PSI and brand attachment

3.5.3. The relationship between PSI and brand loyalty

In Labrecque (2014), brand loyalty included both the intent of positive word of mouth, as well as repeat purchase (Labrecque, 2014:139), and thus, the following hypotheses are therefore suggested:

H6a: The relationship between PSI and +WOM positive and significant

H6b: The relationship between PSI and repeat purchase is positive and significant

3.6. Motivations to “like” a Facebook brand Page

Brands must understand consumers’ motivations for “liking” a Facebook brand Page in order to add value to the consumer-brand relationship. The uses and gratifications paradigm (UGP) can be instructive in understanding users’ motivations to “like” a Facebook brand Page, which was originally

developed an employed by communication researchers to understand people's motivations for using different media (Blumler & Katz, 1974 in Hsin et al., 2014). The UGP posits that people are active and selective in terms of media consumption, and thus that their behavior is goal-directed as such (Muntinga et al., 2011:5). This implies that viewers choose the media based on what they can do with the media source, not the other way around (Solomon, 2006). Based on these assumptions, the UGP is understood to be instructive for investigating social media use, as it compels the active participation of users (5). Based on the UGP, Muntinga et al. (2011) identified six types of users' motivations in relation social media use, including; *information, personal identity, integration and social interaction, entertainment, empowerment and remuneration* (Muntinga et al., 2011:9). As Facebook is characterized as a social media network, it is relevant to use the six social media specific motivations as a basis for how it can apply in the context of Facebook brand Pages. Within each category, there can exist multiple of so-called "sub-motivations" (ibid). These will therefore be discussed and defined appropriately for the context of motivations to "like" Facebook brand Page.

3.6.1. Information

Information has been defined in various ways, depending on the context of the research. For example, in relation to virtual online communities, informational value is stated as one that the participant derives from "*...getting and sharing information in the virtual community, and from knowing what others think*" (Dholakia, 2004: 244). Muntinga et al. (2011) defined information motivation to include several information-related media gratifications, including the sub-motivations of surveying relevant events and conditions taking place in someone's' direct daily environment in a society; seeking advice and opinions; and risk reduction (6). Men & Tsai (2013) provided another definition in the context of Facebook brand Pages, where they state that, "*Information pertains to information seeking, which includes the search for advice, opinions, and information exchange*" (78).

In accordance with Men & Tsi's (2013) definition of *information*, I will define *informational* value for a Fan on a Facebook brand Page in terms of receiving rather than sharing information, as it is understood that Fans of Facebook brand Pages are rather motivated to seek information than to share information. Further, as Facebook brand Pages enables two-way and one-way communication directly with the brand, consumers are likely to obtain information that they perceive as relevant through their Newsfeed to keep themselves up to date on brand related news, or receive answers to

potential brand-related topics/issues. Thus, it is understood that information refers to utilitarian personal needs in relation to external objects or issues, which can be satisfied by for example informative content provided by either other Fans or the brand, including product reviews, product releases, advice and opinions related to the brand. Thus, the foundation to define *informational* value on Facebook brand Pages will be based on this understanding with reference to the definition provided by Men & Tsai (2013). Further, in Men & Tsai's (2013) study, they identified three typical informational sub-motivations to be relevant in the context of "liking" Facebook brand Pages, including that of receiving product reviews, product releases, advice and opinions related to the brand (80). Thus, with this understanding, I define informational value as:

Definition:

Information: *The value of receiving information related to the brand that satisfies the Fans' needs in relation to product reviews, product releases, advice and opinions through content on Facebook brand Pages*

In Men & Tsai (2013), it was found that informational value was an important motivator for consumers to "like" a brand Page. As involvement can be viewed as the motivation to process information (Solomon et al., 2006:106), the following hypothesis is suggested:

H7: Informational value has a significant and positive influence on involvement

3.6.2. Personal identity

According to Muntinga et al. (2011), personal identity motivation refers to gratifications that are related to the self (6). Sub-motivations include "*gaining insight to one's self; reinforcing personal values; and identifying with and gaining recognition from peers*" (ibid). Identity expression is found to be a particularly important motivator in the context of social media (ibid), thus, an evaluation of self-expression motivation in relation to Facebook brand Pages will be made.

3.6.2.1. Self-expression

People strive to enhance their self-esteem, which consists of both person and social identity, and can be enhanced by personal achievements or through affiliation with successful groups (Meister, 2012). Thus, self-expression is related to that of person identity and social identity, where consumers seek

to build their own identity to enhance their self-esteem. In 1988, Belk presented the concept of the extended self, where he states that, “*Knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, we regard our possessions as parts of ourselves*” (Belk, 1988:139). Possessions in the digital era extend to intangible possessions online, such as a Facebook profile, where people may create “avatars” and experiments with various identities (ibid). In an updated version of the extended-self, Belk states that, “*There are to be sure, multiple selves evident in some online activity...*” (Belk, 2013:483). Facebook is now a key part of self-presentation, where people are managing their identity and express themselves to their network of friends online. It is reasonable to assume that “liking” a brand Page on Facebook can be an act of self-expression, and also that it facilitates for further identity construction through “liking” and commenting on *content* on a Facebook brand Page as such. This is more in line with the service-dominant logic of brand value, where it is understood that brand value is not only created between the brand and the Fan, but also that it can be enhanced through a consumers’ feeling of self-enhancement and image building, which is related to both the brand, the self, and others. Wallace et al. (2014b) supports this notion, where they state that “*...there is an immediacy to the act of “liking”, where brands are “consumed” at least in part, for self-presentation*” (Wallace et al., 2014:34). As already elaborated on, it is understood that the social aspect of “liking” a Facebook brand Page is minimal and that the main attachment Fans on Facebook brand Pages has is to the brand. However, this thesis agrees with Wallace et al (2014b) in that “liking” may also be an act self-presentation, and that the brand may symbolize their in-group as such. The brand symbolism is what consumers show an affiliation to as such.

Schau (2003) defines consumer self-expression as “*The manipulation of goods, symbols and services to communicate consumer identities generated within the imagination*” (Schau, 2003: 53). In relation to Facebook brand Pages, the goods, symbols and services refers to the brand “liked”. Similarly, Carol & Ahuvia (2006) defines it as, “*...the customer’s perception of the degree to which the specific brand enhances one’s social self and/or reflects one’s inner self*” (Carol and Ahuvia, 2006:82). Self-expressive brands express a desired, or “true” self or a desired social self (Carroll & Ahuvia in Wallace et al 2014), and consumers might “Like” a brand Page for self-expression and self-image building. Thus, a pre-requisite for self-expression in relation to brands is that a consumer perceives an overlap between his or her own “true” or “desired” identity and the brand. Social self-expression relates to the “desired” identity, whereas inner-self refers to the “true” identity of the consumer. When referring to social self-expression, it is understood that this motivator is not necessarily gratified

within the Facebook brand Page, but rather within the Fan's network of friends as such. To clarify, when "liking" a Page that potentially gives the benefit of social enhancement, I'm referring to the enhancement a Fan may perceive in relations to their own friend-network on Facebook as such. As visibility was identified to be an important characteristic of the Facebook environment, consumers may "like" a Page to enhance their social and inner identity as such. Based on this discussion, it makes sense to provide two definitions of self-expression related to that of social-self expression and inner-self expression to distinguish the two. With reference to Carroll and Ahuvia, (2006:82), I define social and inner self-expression as,

Social-self expression: *"The value of enhancing one's social self by "liking" the Facebook brand Page"*

Inner-self expression: *"The value of expressing one's inner-self by "liking" the Facebook brand Page"*

Findings related to self-expression in previous research of interest is that of Wallace et al. (2014b), who found that people do "like" brands that are self-expressive, and that both social and inner-self expressive brands are positively associated with brand love (Wallace et al., 2014b:37). However, in the case of self-expressive brands that reflects the social-self and its relation to the likelihood of spreading positive word of mouth, the relationship was not statistically supported (ibid). On the other hand, the relationship was significant and positive in the case of inner-self expressive brands (ibid). Moreover, in Men & Tsai (2013) it was found that personal identity construction was not a particularly important motivator to "like" a Facebook brand Page (83). It is therefore understood that consumers may "like" a Page as a means of self-construction and that they actually do like the brand because they perceive an overlap between their own identity and the brand and that the brand enhances their social self. However, it does not necessarily mean that they are involved with the content on the Page as such. Thus, the following hypotheses are therefore suggested:

H8a: Social self-expression value does not influence involvement

H8b: Inner self-expression does not influence involvement

H8c: Social self-expression has a positive and significant influence on brand attachment

H8d: Inner self-expression has a positive and significant influence on brand attachment

H8e: Social self-expression does not have an influence on +WOM

H8f: Inner self-expression has a positive and significant influence on +WOM

3.6.3. Empowerment

Empowerment is understood to be a relatively broad term, and has been applied in various contexts as such. As the term has various uses and intentions, it is necessary to define it with regards to the context in which it is used. Muntinga et al. (2011) defines empowerment in the context of social media use as, “...people using social media to exert their influence or power on other people or companies” (Muntinga et al., 2011:7). In Men & Tsai (2013), it was found that empowerment was not a particularly important motivator to like a Page. Thus, this thesis will delimit itself from analyzing the relationship between empowerment and the other variables suggested in the framework.

3.6.4. Social value

Social value includes two categories; namely maintaining *interpersonal connectivity* and *social enhancement* (Dholakia et al., 2004:244). These two categories both emphasize the social benefits of participation, and are group-referent, meaning the referent of these values is the self in relation to other group members (ibid). As it is understood that there is little social interaction between Fans on Facebook brand Pages, *interpersonal connectivity* is not relevant to investigate. Further, social enhancement is already elaborated on in relation to social- self-expression. Thus, social value will not be evaluated further for the purpose of this research.

3.6.5. Entertainment value

In terms of entertainment as a motivator for social media use, Muntinga et al. (2011) suggest that it covers several media gratifications that are related to “*escaping or being diverted from problems or routine*” (6). Sub-motivations include, “emotional release or relief; relaxation; cultural or aesthetic enjoyment; passing time; and sexual arousal (ibid). Studies have shown that many participants of virtual communities do so for entertainment through exploring different fictional identities (McKenna & Bargh, 1999 in Dholakia et al., 2004). Dholakia et al. (2004) defines it as, “...the value derived from fun and relaxation through playing or otherwise interacting with others”. It is assumed that it is less likely that consumers interact with Facebook brand Pages for *playing* as much, thus,

entertainment value is understood to be different from that of Dholakia (2004) which relates to virtual communities in general. Another definition of *entertainment* value found in the literature which was used by Men & Tsi (2013), where *entertainment* refers to, “...*the relaxation, enjoyment, and emotional relief generated by temporarily escaping from daily routines*” (Park, Kee, and Valenzuela 2009; Shao, 2009 in Men & Tsai, 2013:77).

Based on the definitions provided in previous literature, with some modifications to the context of Facebook brand Pages, the *entertainment* value in Facebook brand Pages is understood to be when a Fan experiences fun, enjoyment and pastime through interacting with the Facebook brand Page.

Entertainment: *The value of experiencing fun, enjoyment and or pastime through the Facebook brand Page.*

In Men & Tsai (2013) it was found that entertainment value was an important motivator for consumers to “like” a brand Page. Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H9: Entertainment value has a significant and positive influence on involvement

3.6.6. Remuneration value

According to Muntinga et al. (2011), remuneration is found to be a key motivator for contributing to online communities (6). They further define remuneration to involve, “people engaging in social media use because they expect to gain some kind of future reward (7). Similarly, in the context of Facebook brand Pages, Men & Tsai (2013) defined remuneration as, “...*participation in online communities where users seek rewards and benefits (e.g. economic incentives such as coupons and promotions) that are constantly shared and distributed through online social networks*” (Nov 2007; Wang & Fesenmaier 2003 in Men & Tsai, 2013:78). As contests and incentives are common tools used by brands for elevating the number of likes on a brand Facebook Page, it is likely that some Fans “like” a page for incentives (Lapointe, 2012; Wong, 2010). As this research aims at investigating the extent to which consumers gain value from interacting with Facebook brand Pages, *Remuneration* is understood to imply that of a utilitarian value, which involves Fans gaining rewards that they can benefit from through interacting with the Facebook brand Page. More specifically, I understand rewards in this context to include promotions, price-discounts, and prizes from contents, which is in

line with the definition of Men & Tsai (2013). Thus, I define remuneration as “*The value of gaining promotions, price-discounts, and prizes from contests that a Fan can benefit from through the Facebook brand Page*”

Remuneration: *The value of gaining promotions, price-discounts, and prizes from contests that a Fan can benefit from through the Facebook brand Page*

In Men & Tsai (2013), it was found that remuneration value was a very important motivator to engage with Facebook brand Pages (83). Thus, the following hypotheses are suggested:

H10: Remuneration value has a significant and positive influence on involvement

As Involvement is understood to have a mediating effect between the motivator variables and brand attachment, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H11: Involvement has a mediating effect on the relationship between information, social and inner self-expression and remuneration, and brand attachment

In Sum

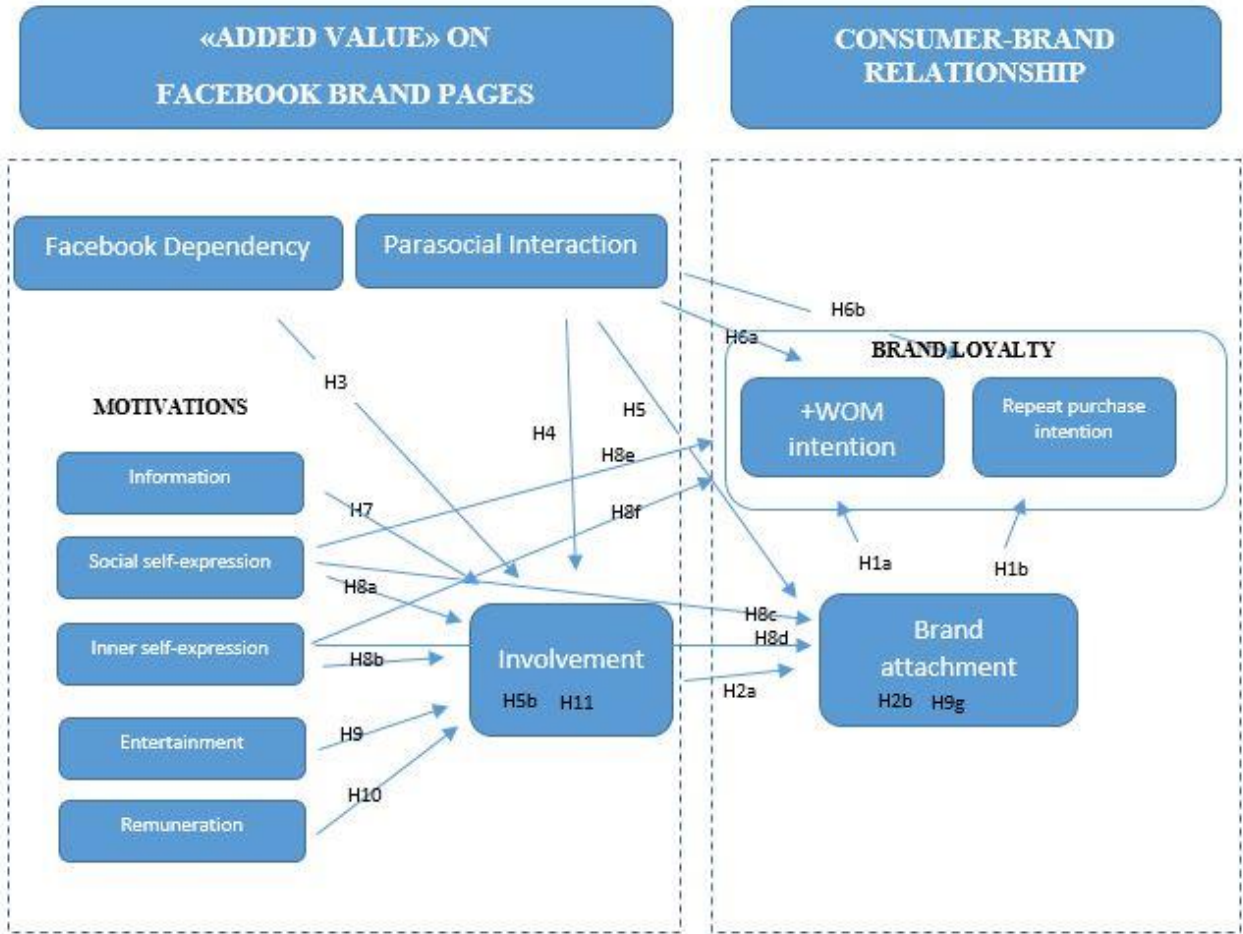
Five Facebook brand Pages specific motivations to “like” a Page has been identified and defined, including that of *informational, social and inner self-expression, entertainment and remuneration*. Information, entertainment and remuneration is thought to have a positive influence on both involvement, as these values are understood to be relevant, and thus, add value to the consumer-brand relationship through involvement with the content on Facebook brand Pages. Moreover, social and inner-self expressive values are thought to have a positive influence on brand attachment. However, they are not understood to have any influence on their involvement with the Page as previous research has found personal identity to not be important motivators of “liking” a brand Page.

Now that all constructs have been identified according to the research objectives and questions at hand, the conceptual model that shows the relationships between the constructs will be presented next.

3.7. Conceptual model:

The theoretical background has now been presented and evaluated, where the different variables in the framework has been presented and defined appropriately for the context of how value can be created on Facebook brand Pages. First, the consumer-brand relationship variables were introduced and defined, referring to brand loyalty (positive word-of-mouth intention and repeat purchase intention) and brand attachment. Involvement was further introduced, which refers to the relevance and importance of the content on the Facebook brand Page. Involvement is understood to be dependent on the extent to which brands can add value to the consumer-brand relationship in terms of their Facebook dependency, parasocial interaction and whether their motivations to “like” a Page. Motivations for “liking” a Page and involvement is further understood to have a positive influence on brand attachment. Moreover, parasocial interaction is understood to have a positive and significant influence on brand attachment and brand loyalty. These relationships are depicted in the model below, which is thus the basis for the analysis of this research.

Figure 2: Conceptual model



Source: Own Creation

3.8. Summary of Hypotheses:

H1a: Brand attachment is significantly and positively associated with positive WOM intentions

H1b: Brand attachment is significantly and positively associated with repeat purchase intentions

H2a: Involvement has a significant and positive influence on brand attachment

H2b: Brand attachment has a mediating effect on the relationship between involvement and brand loyalty

H3a: Facebook dependency has a significant and positive influence on involvement

H3b: Involvement has a mediating effect on the relationship between Facebook dependency and brand attachment

H4: PSI has a significant and positive influence on involvement

H5a: PSI has a significant and positive influence on brand attachment

H5b: Involvement has a mediating effect on the relationship between PSI and brand attachment

H6a: The relationship between PSI and +WOM positive and significant

H6b: The relationship between PSI and repeat purchase is positive and significant

H7: Informational value has a significant and positive influence on involvement

H8a: Social self-expression value does not influence involvement

H8b: Inner self-expression is does not influence involvement

H8c: Social self-expression has a positive and significant influence on brand attachment

H8d: Inner self-expression has a positive and significant influence on brand attachment

H8e: Social self-expression does not have an influence on +WOM

H8f: Inner self-expression has a positive and significant influence on +WOM

H9g: Brand attachment has a mediating effect on the relationship between social self-expression and +WOM

H9: Entertainment value has a significant and positive influence on involvement

H10: Remuneration value has a significant and positive influence on involvement

H11: Involvement has a mediating effect on the relationship between information, social and inner self-expression and remuneration, and brand attachment

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following chapter will present and clarify the scientific approach of the research, the nature between theory and research, the research design, data collection, sampling method, measurements, data analysis method

4.1. Scientific approach

Scientific approaches to research methodology can be addressed by the two main underlying concepts of ontology and epistemology (Bryman & Bell, 2011:15). A short presentation of the underlying ideologies of the two will be presented together with a short review of the main categories within each scientific approach, followed by the reasoning for the approach of this thesis.

4.1.1. Ontology

Questions of social ontology are concerned with the nature of social entities (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 20). The central point of orientation is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors (ibid). These positions are frequently referred to as objectivism and constructionism, respectively (ibid). Objectivism asserts that, *“social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors”* (ibid). This implies that social phenomena and the categories that we use in everyday discourse have an existence that is independent or separate from actors. As a contrast, constructionism takes a position that understands social phenomena to be an, *“emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction”* (ibid).

4.1.1.1. The approach of this thesis:

As the aim of this thesis is to test a model that explains factors that has an influence on involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty on Facebook brand Pages, it takes on an objective approach to understand Facebook brand Pages, consumer behavior and brand value. Through a critical examination of empirical research on the topic, a research model that explains the relationships between variables has been developed. Moreover, data was gathered through an online self-administered survey, which allows me to further analyze the data through structural equation modeling, and thus to explain how the variables influences each other as such. However, it is

recognized that brands and consumers are social constructions and that social actors evidently has an influence of the outcomes as such.

4.1.2. Epistemology:

An epistemological issue concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline (Bryman & Bell, 2012:15). A particularly central issue in this context is the question of whether or not the social world can and should be studied according to the same principles, procedures, and ethos as the natural sciences. The two extremes of epistemological approaches to research is understood to be that of positivism and interpretivism, where positivism is considered to be an approach related to that of the natural sciences (ibid)

4.1.2.1. The approach of this research:

According to the positivistic perspective, the role of research is to test theories and to provide material for the development of laws (Bryman & Bell, 2012:16). Thus, this research leans primarily towards the positivistic approach, in the sense that the aim of the research is to statistically test hypotheses based on empirical research. As there exists various theories available as well as current research specific to the topic of research, it was not necessary to “invent the wheel”, the research bases the theoretical framework on previous research that has sought to understand how and why, whereas this research mainly tries to explain it. By taking this stance, it allows me to collect a larger amount of data, which can be tested statistically as such, explaining the relationships between the variables of the suggested framework. However, the research acknowledges that there are some weaknesses by adopting this stance. Although the research takes on a positivistic and objective approach in explaining how value can be created and creates customer-based brand equity as such, the research acknowledges that bias is inevitable. This is recognized by post-positivism, that views the context of the results as an important aspect to take into consideration (Fox, 2008). Thus, post-positivism views results as relative (Fox, 2008). In this research it is recognized that the results found through the methods of the study are nor absolute or definitely objective, as the hypotheses developed are based on an intersubjective evaluation between prior empirical knowledge in the research stream and an evaluation of relevance. Further, it is acknowledged that the objects of study are themselves engaged in an ongoing project of producing the social world, and therefore that their sense-making must itself become part of the subject-matter of a social science, ruling out a simplistic limitation of study to

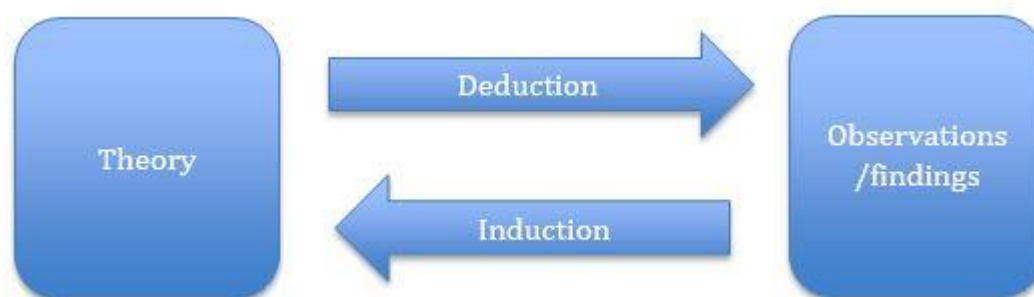
“social facts”, and accepting the context-specificity of knowledge (Fox, 2008:3). Thus, the statistical methods are used in order to evaluate the significance of the hypotheses developed, but cannot be seen as an absolute objective truth as such.

4.2. Relationship between theory and research

This section seeks to explain the nature of the relationship between theory and research applied in this thesis. The deductive approach primarily tests existing theory as opposed to the inductive approach, which primarily generates new theory (Bryman & Bell, 2012:11). The connection between theory and research is reversed between the two approaches as depicted in figure 3.

This research primarily takes on a deductive approach in developing hypotheses based on existing and relevant theory with modification to the context. It will then primarily take on an inductive approach, as the objective of the empirical method (the online surveys) is to gather new knowledge in order to clarify the research questions and test the hypotheses developed.

Figure 3: Deductive and inductive approaches



Source: Bryman & Bell, 2012 p.13

4.3. Research Design

This research adopts a cross-sectional research design, which is defined as *“the collection of data on more than one case and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables, which are then examined to detect patterns of association”* (Bryman & Bell, 2008:53). In order to confirm or reject the hypotheses,

primary data are collected through an online self-administered survey, which has further been analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the method Partial Least Squares (PLS). This allows me to examine the relationships between the variables suggested in the research model. However, this type of research design would require a great amount of data to be considered as generalizable. This research acknowledges this possible weakness. This will be discussed further in Chapter 10 where limitations to the research will be presented.

4.4. Research method

This thesis adopts a quantitative approach, as the aim of this research is to test the developed hypotheses based on existing literature and to understand the relationships between relevant variables.

4.5. Sampling Design:

The sampling method for the research is randomized probability sampling. The sample population that this research aims at investigating is defined as Norwegian Facebook users that has “liked” a Facebook brand Page, which is appropriate for the research as it aims to explain how Facebook brand Pages can create value for consumers, and create customer-based brand equity. The benefit of this method is that it avoids bias in selecting certain samples over others, which in turn increases the likelihood of generalization, which is deemed as preferable as the aim of this research is to test a model. However, due to time and resource restriction in collecting the amount of data required in terms of obtaining generalization as well as some issues in terms of the desirability of generalizing how Facebook brand Pages can create value for consumers are acknowledged. Non-probability sampling could be the better option with regards to selecting specific brands or brand categories for comparison. However, as it was unobtainable to collect a great amount of data within the timeframe of this research with a non-probability sampling method, the selected option is deemed as the best option. To reduce the limitation of few respondents that has “liked” the same brand within a product category, the respondents were asked to indicate what brand they had “liked”. This will be disclosed in the research. Thus, there are some weaknesses related to the chosen sampling method, which in turn has its consequences.

4.6. Questionnaire design

As already mentioned, a self-administered online questionnaire was chosen as a questionnaire design. In terms of how the questionnaire was made and set up, the online survey software and questionnaire tool SurveyMonkey was adopted (www.surveymonkey.com). The questionnaire (Appendix 1) with accompanied post (Appendix 2) was shared directly with my friends on Facebook as well as a post in a Norwegian social media community on Facebook called “Stort og smått om sosiale medier” that has almost 7000 members. It therefore takes form as a self-administered survey. A self-administered survey has many advantages; it can be distributed and returned quickly, which is suitable for this research as time is limited (Bryman & Bell, 2008:239). Further, there are low costs connected to this type of survey, an important advantage due to the lack of financial funds related to this research. As this method provides for fast data-collection it is possible to survey and collect larger samples. Surveying larger samples is desirable in this context as the size of the total population is unknown. Moreover, the sample can be drawn from a wide geographical area, which is desirable as Facebook brand Pages are non-geographically bound and the Fans are scattered. It is also reasonable to post the survey on Facebook as a web-based questionnaire as it is where the Fans communicate with brands. However, this method also has its disadvantages. One of them is that the survey had to be short and simple to complete in order to ensure complete data and to acquire responses. In order to make sure that this disadvantage would not affect the response rate, pre-test was completed. The questionnaire was pre-tested on a total of 7 people. The test population included young and old men and women who use Facebook and that has “liked” a Facebook brand Page. This group of people was chosen due to both convenience, and that it is preferable to pre-test the survey by obtaining responses from respondents that share the same characteristic as the target population, namely consumers that has “liked” a Facebook brand Page. As people in all ages and men and women are possibly a Fan of a Facebook brand Page, it is reasonable to assume that the target population will be both men and women in all ages. After the pre-test, some of the questions were modified as some of them were difficult to understand. Moreover, the questionnaire was kept as short as possible (max 10 minutes) in order to increase the response rate. The data collection ran from mid-July 2015 to mid-August 2015, and a reminder was posted on Facebook through my own wall and the chosen Facebook group as indicated previously three times during the period. This resulted in a total of 125 replies, however only 81 were usable due to non-responses within the samples.

Furthermore, in order to increase the response rate, the possibility to win a gift card from gavekorttorget.no was offered in order to give people an incentive to participate. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

4.7. Measurements

The majority of the questions asked in the survey were adopted from prior empirical research. However, some of the measures are modified to the context of the research. Measurements related to motivations to “like a Page and Facebook Dependency are adopted from Men & Tsai (2013), PSI are adopted from Colliander & Dahlen (2011), items related to involvement are adopted from Xu et al. (2008), items related to brand attachment and brand loyalty are inspired by Keller (2008), and lastly, items related to social and inner self-expression are adopted from Wallace et al (2014b). Demographical data, data about what brand they follow and questions related to their Facebook engagement are self-reported. Two scales of measurement are used in this research – nominal and ordinal scale. The nominal scale is used when asking personal and factual questions such as age and gender. The second type of scale used, namely ordinal scale, is used when asking questions about the respondents’ attitude. Ordinal scales has the property of both identity and magnitude. The ordinal scale used is the Likert scale, which allows respondents to indicate their degree of agreement with a series of statements that together form a multiple-indicator or -item measure (Bryman & Bell, 2008:715). Further, the Likert scale is unique as it is “...*the only summation scale that uses a set of agreement/disagreement descriptors*” (Hair et al., 2009:371). When choosing a scale length, any length between five and eight response options are desirable (Lietz, 2010:256). The chosen length of the Likert scales used in this research are five and seven. For example, the five-point Likert scale used (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither disagree or agree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree). The Likert scale is chosen as it has been used in numerous empirical researches and proven useful for measuring for example attitudes towards a subject and for analysis of relationships between variables. Further, the Likert scale is described as being suitable for research designs that use self-administered surveys or most online methods to collect data (Hair et al., 2009:371).

The full list of measurements and their sources can be found in Appendix 2.

4.8. Data analysis methodology

The primary quantitative data was collected using the software SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey automatically codes the Likert scale questions and enables for conversion to CVS files, which is the appropriate format for using data in the statistical software used. The statistical software used to analyze the data was SmartPLS. In order to check for mediation, the Baron & Kenny (1986) approach was adopted, together with a statistical assessment through the Sobel test. Further, the MS software Excel was used in order to derive descriptive statistics for each measurement item from the data. Lastly, manual coding for the categorization of brands “liked” was undertaken in order to substantiate what kind of brands represented the data. The details of the method chosen will be presented in chapter X.

4.9. Reliability and validity

In order to assess the quality of the research, reliability and validity are evaluated. Reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of the study are repeatable, and can be referred to as “*the consistency of a measure of a concept*” (Bryman & Bell, 2008:158). Closely related, validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated and refers to “*the issue of whether or not an indicator (or set of indicators) that is devised to gauge a concept really measures the concept*” (Bryman & Bell, 2008:159).

4.9.1. Reliability

Regarding *internal reliability*, the key issue is whether the indicators that make up the scale or index are consistent – in other words, whether or not the respondents’ scores on any one indicator tend to be related to their scores on other indicators (Bryman & Bell, 2008:158). In order to ensure, internal reliability, most of the items used in this research was adopted from prior research similar to the context of the current research. A complete overview of the items used can be found in Appendix 3. However, as the items are translated from English to Norwegian, some of the reliability may be lost. Further, due to the lack of developed items in previous research applicable to the constructs in the current research, some of the items are self-developed. Thus, internal consistency have further been assessed through composite reliability and AVE in order to identify how well the items explain their related construct. See Paragraph X for the assessment of composite reliability and AVE.

Individual item reliability is assessed in order to determine how much of the variance in the observed variable is due to the construct (Hulland, 1999:198). The assessment can be found in paragraph x.

4.9.2. Validity

.The purpose of assessing *content validity* is to ensure that the questions are measuring the complete construct (Bryman & Bell, 2008:160). This is also called *face validity*, that is, that the measure apparently reflects the content of the concept in question (Bryman & Bell, 2008:160). The pre-test of the survey was used to ensure this factor, where the test-group was promptly asked to give feedback on whether or not the questions asked were easy to understand or whether there were any uncertainties or difficulties of answering all the questions.

When evaluating *construct validity*, the goal is to secure consistency between the real and the theoretical expected aim (Bryman & Bell, 2008:160). This was evaluated through the assessment of discriminant validity, which represents the extent to which the construct is empirically distinct from other constructs (Hair et al., 2014:112). See paragraph x for the assessment of discriminant validity. However, some caution is required in interpreting the absence of a relationship; first, either the theory or the deduction method that is made from it might be misguided, and secondly, the measure could be an invalid measure of the concept (Bryman & Bell, 2008:160). As some of the measurements are self-developed, and is based on my own evaluation of how the constructs are conceptualized in relation to the context of this research, it is acknowledged that the constructs may not be valid in terms of actually capturing what was intended. This is considered as one of the limitations of this study.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

The following paragraphs will present the results from the online survey. First, characteristics of the respondents will be presented in terms of how long they have been a Fan of the Page they have “liked”, gender, Age, number of friends on Facebook, and how much time they spend on Facebook on average, and engagement behaviors. Further, a presentation of the brands liked in terms of product category will be made in order to get a better understanding of the nature of the brands included in this research. Next, the method of the study will be presented, namely Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), followed by an evaluation of the outer model in terms of its reliability and validity. The inner model will be evaluated using the bootstrap procedure to test the hypotheses. Lastly, the mediation analysis will be the final step in order to determine mediation effects of involvement and brand attachment.

5.1. Characteristics of respondents

Before evaluating the research model, an analysis of the collected data begins with a presentation of descriptive statistics to draw a picture of the survey respondents. The first table presented shows an overview of how long it is since the survey respondents “Liked” the Facebook brand Page, their gender, their age, how many friends they have on Facebook and lastly how much time they spend on Facebook in a day on average.

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents

Time being a "Fan"	% of total respondents
Under 1 year	26 %
1-2 years	21 %
2-3 years	32 %
Longer than 3 years	20 %
Gender	
Female	72 %
Male	28 %
Age	
15 years and younger	0 %
16-18 years	0 %
19-22 years	6 %
23-30 years	37 %

31-40 years	19 %
41-50 years	25 %
50 and older	14 %
Number of friends on Facebook	
1-200	7 %
201-400	26 %
401-500	14 %
501-600	16 %
601-1500	37 %
Time spent on Facebook per day (on average)	
0-1 hours	54 %
2-3 hours	38 %
4 hours or more	7 %

As shown in Table 1, there are no big differences among the Fans in terms of how long they have been a “Fan” of the Facebook brand Page. The majority of the respondents indicated that it is 2-3 years since they “liked” the Facebook brand Page in consideration (32%). Females represent a substantial part of the respondents, where 72% indicated that they are females. Further, the respondents represents a relatively mature population, where only 6% of the respondents indicated that they are under the age of 22. The majority of the respondents are in the ages between 23-30 (37%). Most of the respondents have relatively many friends on Facebook, where 37% reported that the number of friends they have ranges between 601-1500.

5.1.1. Brands “liked”

The brands “liked” among respondents were sorted manually, and categorized based on the categories shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Top 7 Brand Categories “liked”

Category	Percentage
Fashion brands (e.g. H&M, Hermes)	19 %
Sports gear (e.g. Stormberg, G-sport)	9 %
Airlines (e.g. Norwegian, SAS)	7 %
Banks (e.g. DNB, Nordea)	7 %
News agencies (e.g. VG, People)	7 %
Travel agencies (e.g. Ving, Kilroy)	7 %
Telecom providers (e.g. Chess, Telenor)	4 %
Other	40%

Most of the brands “liked” among respondents are categorized as “Fashion brands”, which represents 19% of all brands “liked”. These brands are both international and local brands. Further, 9% of the brands “liked” belongs to the category defined as “Sports gear”, which includes local sports gear retailers. Moreover, the brands within the categories of “Airlines”, “Banks”, “News Agencies” and “Travel Agencies”, which are deemed as “service brands”, represents 7% of the brands “liked” each. Lastly, “Telecom providers” represent 4% of the brands “liked”.

5.1.2. Engagement level on the Facebook Brand Page

The level of engagement is informed by using Muntinga, Moorman and Smit’s (2010) typology of online-engagement, which shows both the level and type of engagement behaviors on Facebook brand Pages. The three levels of engagement is described as consuming (minimal engagement), contributing (moderate engagement) and creating (maximal engagement).

Table 3: Engagement Level and Type (N=81)

<u>Consuming</u>	%
Viewed photos	83 %
Read posts and comments	75 %
<u>Contributing</u>	
Liked content	63 %
Participated in discussions (commented on posts, asked questions and/or answered questions)	17 %
Shared content on my own page	22 %
<u>Creating</u>	
Recommended Page to others	22 %
Uploaded content to Page	2 %
Written posts on Page	14 %
None	10 %

Source: Data collection through Survey Monkey, primary data. % of total, N=81

As shown in the table, most respondents engage in minimal levels of engagement behaviors (consuming). In terms of *consuming*, most of the respondents have at least viewed photos (83%), read posts and comments (75%). Further, in terms of *contribution*, 63% of the respondents have “liked” content on the Facebook brand Pages. However, only 17% have participated in discussions, and 22% have shared content from the Page on their own page. Regarding the highest level of engagement behaviors (creating), only 2% have uploaded content to the Page they have “liked. However, 22% of

the respondents have indicated that they have recommended the Page they have “liked” to others. Lastly, 10% indicated that they had not engaged in any of the aforementioned activities on the Facebook brand Page “liked”.

In sum, most respondents do not seem to engage in the Facebook brand Page they have “liked” on Facebook to a great extent. Thus, the respondents can be characterized as mainly engaging in *consuming* content, and only few actually engages in more meaningful and interactive ways.

5.2. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modeling has gained popularity among researchers, and much of SEM’s success can be attributed to the method’s ability to evaluate the measurement of latent variables, while also testing relationships between latent variables (Hair et al., 2014:106).

The research model developed in section x represents a certain set of theories, simply converting theoretical and derived concepts into unobservable (latent) variables, and empirical concepts into indicators, which are linked by a set of hypotheses.

One has the option of choosing a covariance-based approach and a variance-based partial least squares technique (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2005). The covariance-based approach attempts to minimize the difference between the sample covariances and those predicted by the theoretical model, and thus, the parameter estimation process attempts to reproduce the covariance matrix of the observed measures (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2005:290). Unlike the covariance-based SEM, PLS focuses on maximizing the variance of the dependent variables explained by the independent ones instead of reproducing the empirical covariance matrix (ibid). This research has adopted the latter, namely variance-based partial least squares technique (PLS). A further introduction and rationale for the choice of method is provided next.

5.3. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Partial Least Squares

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Partial Least Squares (PLS) was applied in order to analyze the data, and in turn assess whether the hypotheses developed in the research model could be confirmed or rejected. Originally developed by Wold (1974, 1980, 1982), PLS is a SEM technique

based on an iterative approach that maximizes the explained variance of endogenous constructs (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982 in Hair et al, 2014:106). PLS-SEM operates much like a multiple regression analysis, and this characteristic makes this method particularly valuable for exploratory research purposes (Hair et al., 2014).

According to Hair et al. (2014), PLS-SEM provides numerous advantages, including the possibility of analyzing non-normal data and small sample sizes, which is the main reason why this research has adopted this method. With regards to non-normal data, the variance based approach using PLS-SEM is preferable as the PLS-SEM algorithm transforms non-normal data in accordance with the central limit theorem (Hair et al., 2014:108). As the measurement scales in this research includes both 5- and 7-point scales, the mean variances are different between the constructs, and thus, the PLS-SEM method is considered as the more preferred method (108). Further, in comparison to the covariance-based approach, the variance-based approach using PLS-SEM is understood to handle small sample sizes better than its counterpart (108).

PLS path models are formally defined by two sets of linear equations: the inner model and the outer model (Hensler et al., 2009:284). The inner model specifies the relationships between unobserved or latent variables, whereas the outer model specifies the relationships between a latent variable and its observed or manifest variables (Hensler et al., 2009:284). The unobserved, or latent variables, will be referred to as *constructs*, whereas the manifest variables, will be referred to as *indicators* for simplicity as these terms are common to distinguish the two.

Constructs in the model are considered either exogenous or endogenous. Exogenous constructs acts as independent variables and do not have a pointing arrow at them. Endogenous constructs on the other hand are explained by other constructs. While often considered as dependent constructs, endogenous constructs can also act as independent variables when they are placed between two constructs. The endogenous constructs that are placed between two constructs can be moderating or mediating constructs between an independent and a dependent variable.

The PLS-SEM method is used in a multi stage process (Hair et al., 2014):

1. Model specification
2. Outer model evaluation
3. Inner model evaluation

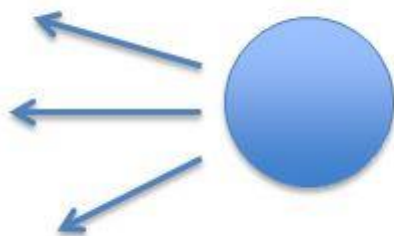
5.3.1. Model specification

The research model is based on the framework specified in chapter X. The inner model refers to the relationships between the constructs, whereas the outer model refers to the relationship between the constructs and its related indicators. The exogenous constructs in the model includes that of *Information*, *Inner-self expression*, *Social self-expression*, *Entertainment*, *Remuneration*, *Parasociial Interaction* and *Facebook Dependency*, whereas the endogenous constructs, which are explained by other constructs, includes *Involvement*, *Brand Attachment*, and the two dependent variables *Repeat Purchase Intention* and *+WOM intention*. Moreover, the mediating effects of involvement and brand attachment will be assessed after the inner direct relationships are assessed. The full model can be found in Appendix 6.

5.3.2. Outer model evaluation – reliability and validity of the construct measures

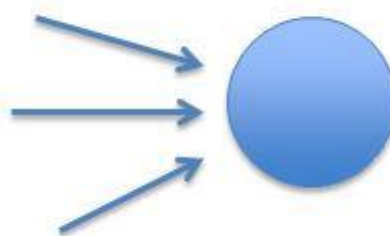
In order to trust that the constructs, which form the basis for the assessment of the inner model relationships, are accurately measured and represented, the researcher must start with the assessment of the outer models (Hair et al., 2014:109). In order to do so, one must distinguish between *reflective* and *formative* indicators as they are based on different concepts and therefore require consideration of different evaluative measures (Hair et al., 2014:109). The difference between the two modes is that reflective indicators are believed to reflect the unobserved, latent construct, whereas formative indicators define the construct (Hulland:1999:201). Put in other words, the indicators give “rise” to the unobserved construct when indicators are reflective (Hulland, 1999:201). An illustration of *reflective* and *formative* indicators are depicted in Figure 4 and 5 below.

Figure 4: Reflective indicators



Source: Hair et al., 2014:211

Figure 5: Formative indicators



Further, reflective indicators should have high correlation (as they all depend on the same latent (unobservable) variable, but formative indicators of the same construct can have positive, negative, or zero correlation with one another (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2005).

In the research model presented in paragraph x, the indicators are reflective, where they are all meant to reflect the associated construct in the model.

Reflective indicators are linked to a construct through loadings, which are bivariate correlations between the indicator and the construct (Hair et al., 2014:109). In order to assess reflective outer models, researchers should verify both the reliability and validity of the constructs. In order to assess the reflective outer model's reliability and validity, the following is looked at:

- Individual item reliability
- Composite reliability
- Convergent validity
- Discriminant validity

5.3.2.1. Individual item reliability

Individual item reliability is assessed by examining the loadings of the measures with their respective construct (Hulland, 1999:198). Loadings of 0.7 or more are accepted as a rule of thumb by many researchers, which imply that there is more shared variance between the construct and its measure than error variance (ibid). It is not unusual that several measurement items in an estimated model have loadings below the 0.7 threshold, especially when new items or newly developed scales are employed (198). This can be due to several reasons, e.g. a poorly worded item, an inappropriate item, or improper transfer of an item from a context to another (198). In general terms, it is stated that loadings of 0.4 or 0.5 should be dropped as they provide little explanatory power to the construct (198). However, it is stated that one should be careful eliminating reflective indicators from measurement models taking PLS' characteristic of consistency at large into account – “...*only if an indicator's reliability is low and eliminating this indicator goes along with substantial increase of composite reliability, it makes sense to discard this indicator*” (Henseler et al., 2009:299).

Looking at the outer loadings, three items were found to be below the threshold of 0.7. These items were related to the construct Information (Info_3), Entertainment (Ent_3) and Facebook Dependency (Dep_1 & Dep_3). (See Appendix 4 for final outer loadings). After removing the poorest loading related to Facebook Dependency (Dep_1), the loading for Dep_3 improved to 0.526. As it is not below 0.5 it was decided to keep the item as it is recommended to not remove items unless there is a substantial increase of composite reliability, which it was not. Further, one item related to *Entertainment* has a loading of 0.69 (Ent_3), but was chosen to be kept in the model as it is close to 0.7. Thus, the individual item reliability in the model is now concluded to be high as most of the other loadings were very close to 1.

5.3.2.2. Composite reliability

In addition to individual item reliability, one should also evaluate the extent to which the measures demonstrate internal consistency reliability when multiple measures are used for an individual construct (Hulland, 1999:199). This assessment is done to evaluate the extent to which a set of indicators represents one and the same underlying construct, which can be demonstrated through their undimensionality (Henseler et al., 2009).

While internal consistency reliability traditionally has been assessed through using Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951 in Hair et al., 2014), composite reliability is stated as a more accurate assessment (Hair et al., 2014:111). It is argued that composite reliability is superior to that of Cronbach's alpha in that, "...it does not assume that all indicator loadings are equal in the population, which is in line with the PLS-SEM algorithm that prioritizes the indicators based on their individual reliabilities during model estimation" (Hair et al., 2014:111). Further, Cronbach's alpha is sensitive to the number of items on the scale and generally tends to underestimate internal consistency reliability (111). Thus, by using composite reliability, PLS-SEM is able to accommodate different indicator reliabilities while also avoiding underestimation associated with Cronbach's alpha (ibid).

Composite reliability above 0.7 in early stages of research and values above 0.8 or 0.9 in more advanced stages of research are regarded as satisfactory (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994 in Henseler et al., 2009), whereas a value below 0.6 indicates a lack of reliability (Henseler et al., 2009:299). Table 4 shows the resulting numbers of composite reliability for each constructs.

Table 4: Composite Reliability

Construct	Composite Reliability
Positive WOM	0.955
Brand Attachment	0.916
Empowerment	0.857
Entertainment	0.912
Facebook Dependency	0.755
Information	0.911
Inner self-expression	0.982
Involvement	0.888
Parasocial interaction	0.924
Remuneration	0.918
Repeat purchase intention	0.896
Social self-expression	0.934

Looking at the numbers for composite reliability, we can see from the table that all constructs can be defined as *good* as all items have values above 0.70. Thus, composite reliability is ensured.

5.3.2.3. Convergent validity

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is assessed in order to ensure convergent validity, which is “...the grand mean value of the squared loadings of a set of indicators and is equivalent to the community of a construct” (Hair et al., 2014:111). An AVE of 0.50 shows that the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators on average (Hair et al., 2014:111). When each construct’s average variance extracted (AVE) is 0.50 or higher, support is provided for convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014:111). Calculation for AVE are presented in table 4.

Table 5: Convergent Validity (AVE)

Construct	AVE
Positive WOM	0.913
Brand Attachment	0.846
Empowerment	0.750
Entertainment	0.780
Facebook Dependency	0.628
Information	0.837
Inner self-expression	0.931
Involvement	0.725
Parasocial interaction	0.708

Remuneration	0.691
Repeat purchase intention	0.812
Social self-expression	0.780

Looking at the values in table 5 for AVE, we can see that all values are above 0.5, which is the threshold for acceptable AVE scores, and thus indicates that the items demonstrate for composite reliability.

5.3.2.4. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity represents the extent to which the construct is empirically distinct from other constructs, more precisely; that the construct measures what it is intended to measure (Hair et al., 2014:112).

In order to assess the existence of discriminant validity, one can use the Fornell & Larcker (1981) criterion, which states that the construct shares more variance with its indicators than with any other construct in a given model (ibid). To test this requirement, the AVE of each construct should be higher than the highest squared correlation with any other construct (ibid). This can be demonstrated in a correlation matrix which includes the correlations between different constructs in the lower left off-diagonal elements of the matrix, and the square roots of the average variance extracted values calculated for each of the constructs along the diagonal (Hulland, 1999). For adequate discriminant validity, the diagonal elements should be significantly greater than the off-diagonal elements in the corresponding rows and columns (ibid). Another way to verify the discriminant validity, is to examine the cross loadings of the indicators. This second option is considered as more liberal as it requires that the loadings of each indicator on its construct are higher than the cross loadings on other constructs (ibid). The current research will take the Fornell & Larcker criterion into consideration when evaluation discriminant validity.

The full overview of the matrix showing values for discriminant validity can be found in Appendix 5. The matrix shows that all AVE of each construct is higher than the highest squared correlation with any other construct, and thus, demonstrate discriminant validity.

Now that the outer model is evaluated in terms of its ability to demonstrate reliability and validity, the inner model can further be analyzed in order to assess the significance of the hypothesized

relationships. This includes an assessment of R-squared and the relationships between the constructs using the bootstrap procedure to confirm or reject hypotheses.

5.3.3. Inner model evaluation

Reliable and valid outer model estimations permit an evaluation of the inner path model estimates (Henseler et al, 2009). The assessment of the model's quality is based on its ability to predict the endogenous constructs. As already stated, the endogenous variables, or the dependent variables, are the variables that might be influenced by other variables in the model. The endogenous variables in this case are Involvement, PSI, Brand Attachment, Repeat Purchase Intention and Positive Word of Mouth.

Path coefficients represent the hypothesized relationships linking the construct. After running a PLS model, estimates are provided for this measure. The individual path coefficients of the PLS structural model can be interpreted as standardized beta coefficients of ordinary least squares regressions (Henseler et al., 2009). Path coefficient values are standardized on a range from -1 to 1, with coefficients closer to 1 representing strong positive relationships and coefficients closer to -1 indicating negative relationships (Hair et al., 2014:113). Values close to 1 or -1 are almost always statistically significant, however, a standard error must be obtained using the bootstrapping to test significance (114). But first, an evaluation of the model's predictive accuracy (coefficient determination) will be presented.

5.3.3.1. Coefficient determination (R-Squared)

The coefficient determination (R-Squared) is a measure of the model's predictive accuracy, which represents the endogenous variables' combined effect on the exogenous variables (Hair et al., 2014:113). More specifically, it describes the fraction of total variance that is explained by the model. The R-Squared ranges from 0 to 1, with 1 representing complete predictive accuracy (ibid). Since R-Squared is embraced by a variety of disciplines, one must rely on a rough rule of thumb regarding acceptable R-Squared with 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 represents substantial, moderate or weak levels of predictive accuracy, respectively (Hair et al., 2014). Chin (1998) on the other hand describes R-Squared values of 0.67, 0.33 and 0.19 as substantial, moderate and weak, respectively (Henseler et

al., 2009). If the endogenous latent variable relies on several exogenous latent variables, the R-Squared value should exhibit at least a substantial level (ibid).

Table 6: R-Squared

Construct	R Squared
Positive WOM	0.271
Brand Attachment	0.372
Involvement	0.448
Repeat purchase intention	0.161

The numbers in table 6 implies that 37,2% of the *Brand Attachment* construct, 44.8% of the *Involvement* construct, 16,1% of the *Repeat Purchase* construct, 27,1% of the *+WOM* construct are explained by the model. This implies that Involvement and Brand Attachment and positive WOM has a moderate predictive accuracy, whereas repeat purchase intention has a relatively weak predictive accuracy.

5.3.3.2. Hypotheses testing using the bootstrap procedure

In order to confirm or reject the remaining suggested hypotheses using SEM-PLS, the bootstrap procedure is undertaken. This procedure provides an estimate of the shape, spread, and bias of the sampling distribution of a specific statistic (Henseler et al., 2009:305). Moreover, “*Bootstrapping treats the observed sample as if it represents the population*” (305), where it “*creates a large, pre-specified number of bootstrap samples*” (305). The number of bootstrap samples used for this research is 500. These samples are created by “*randomly drawing cases with replacement from the original sample*”, where the obtained path model coefficients form a bootstrap distribution (305). This can be seen as an approximation of the sampling distribution (305).

The resulting t-values are assessed in order to evaluate each relationship in the research model in order to confirm or reject the suggested hypotheses, as well as the path coefficients. The path coefficient values are standardized on a range from -1 to +1, where coefficients closer to +1 represents strong positive relationships, whereas coefficients closer to -1 represents strong negative relationships (Hair et al., 2014: 114).

After running the bootstrap procedure, several t-values were found to be below the critical t-value of 1.96 (normal distribution, significance level < 0.05). The insignificant relationships are therefore removed until all relationships in the model were significant. An overview of each significant relationship paired with their t-statistics and path coefficients can be found in the table below:

Table 7: T-values and path coefficients

H	Relationship	Path coefficient	T values
H1a	Brand Attachment -> +WOM	0.303	2.212
H1b	Brand Attachment -> Repeat purchase intention	0.322	2.083
H2	Involvement -> Brand Attachment	-	-
H3	Facebook dependency -> Involvement	-	-
H4	Parasocial interaction -> Involvement	0.260	2.039
H5	Parasocial interaction -> Brand Attachment	0.349	2.939
H6a	Parasocial interaction -> +WOM	-	-
H6b	Parasocial interaction -> Repeat purchase intention	-	-
H7	Information -> Involvement	0.356	2.568
H8a	Social self-expression -> Involvement	-	-
H8b	Inner self-expression -> Involvement	-	-
H8c	Social self-expression -> Brand Attachment	0.378	3.481
H8d	Inner self-expression -> Brand Attachment	-	-
H8e	Social self-expression -> +WOM	-	-
H8f	Inner self-expression -> +WOM	-	-
H9	Entertainment -> Involvement	-	-
H10	Remuneration -> Involvement	-	-

Source: Primary data, calculated by the bootstrapping procedure

*Students t-statistic: acceptable t-values equal/above the threshold of 1.665 is considered as statistically significant with a confidence level of 95%.

The results shows that H1a, H1b, H4, H5, H7 and H8c can be confirmed, whereas H2, H3, H6a, H6b, H8a, H8b, H8d, H8e, H8f, H9 and H10 are rejected. A discussion of the results will be presented in the next chapter. Before that, mediating effects will be analyzed according to Baron & Kenny (1986) as well as the Sobel test.

5.3.3.3. Mediating Effects

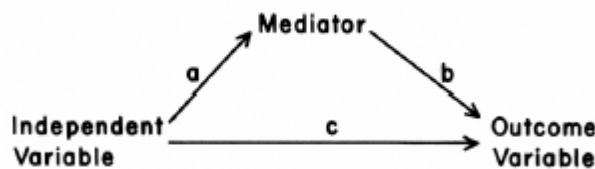
As described in the research model, two of the variables in the framework was thought to have mediating effects between one or more variables. More specifically, involvement was understood to

have a mediating effect between motivations to “like” a Page and Parasocial Interaction, and brand attachment.

According to Hair et al (2014), mediation occurs in a situation in which a mediator variable to some extent absorbs the effect of an exogenous construct on an endogenous construct in the PLS path model (115). The endogenous construct in the case of *involvement* being a mediator is *brand attachment* (dependent variable), whereas the exogenous variables are *motivations for “liking” a Page* including *entertainment, information and remuneration* (independent variables) (H11). The other mediating variable in the framework is *brand attachment*, which is understood to mediate the relationship between *involvement* (exogenous variable) and the two *brand loyalty* constructs repeat purchase intention and positive WOM intention (H2b). Lastly, brand attachment is thought to have a mediating effect on the relationship between social self-expression and +WOM (H8g), and involvement is thought to have a mediating effect on the relationship between Facebook dependency and brand attachment (H3b). By doing a mediation analysis, we can get a better understanding of the indirect effect the independent variables has on the dependent variables, as there is no hypothesized direct link between motivations to “like” a Page and brand attachment, nor between involvement and the brand loyalty constructs.

There has been some controversy surrounding whether and how to check for mediating effects in research literature, where several authors has criticized the neglect of explicitly checking for mediating effects instead of looking at a more realistic view of the indirect relationships in suggested research models (ibid). However, Hair et al. (2014) argue that, “*..a potential reason for the neglect might be that there are still some ambiguity on how to evaluate mediating effects in PLS-SEM*” (ibid). According to Baron (1986), a given variable may be said to function as a mediator to the extent that it accounts for the relation between the predictor and the criterion (Baron, 1986: 1176). This, a mediation analysis is understood to be appropriate according to the conceptual framework at hand, where both involvement and brand attachment are understood to mediate the relationships between the constructs that points at them, as well as those that they point at. Figure 6 gives a conceptualization of the relationships between the independent variable and the outcome variable which thus is mediated by the mediator:

Figure 6: Mediating Relationship



Source: Baron & Kenny (1986:1177)

Moreover, Baron & Kenny (1986) clarifies the definition of a mediator in terms of meeting the following conditions:

- b. Variations in levels of the independent variable significantly account for variation in the presumed mediator (i.e. Path a)
- c. Variations in the mediator significantly account for variations in the dependent variable (i.e. Path b), and
- d. When Paths a and b are controlled, a previous significant relations between the independent and dependent variables is no longer significant, with the strongest demonstration of mediation occurring when path c is zero.

Further, path c may not be completely be reduced, but significant decreases signifies a mediating effect (ibid). To establish mediation, the independent variable in the relationship must affect the mediator in the first equation; second, the independent variable must be shown to affect the dependent variable in the second equation; and third, the mediator must affect the dependent variable in the third equation (ibid). Thus, the effect of the independent variable must be less in the third equation than in the second (ibid). As the resulting t-values from the first path modeling suggests that the relationship between involvement and brand attachment is not significant, we can reject hypotheses H3b, H5b and H11. This further rejects involvement as a mediator between parasocial interaction and brand attachment as a consequence. However, the relationship between parasocial interaction and brand attachment was found to be positive and significant, as well as the relationship between social self-expression and brand attachment. As brand attachment and both brand loyalty variables were found

to be significant, brand attachment's potential mediating effects on the relationship between both parasocial interaction and social self-expression, and brand loyalty will be investigated.

Following Baron & Kenny's (1986) steps in calculating the betas for the direct and indirect paths of the variables in SmartPLS, it was possible to attain the significance of the mediating effects through the Sobel test. The resulting numbers suggests that brand attachment was found to have a significant mediating effect between Parasocial interaction and Repeat Purchase intention (t-value=1.864, 0.062) and between social self-expression and Repeat Purchase Intention (t-value=1.807, 0.070).

Table 8: Brand Attachment Mediation Analysis

Source: Primary data, analyzed in SmartPLS and Sobel test (<http://www.danielsoper.com/>).

The model showing the relationships between the variables can be found in Appendix 7. Descriptive statistics can further be found in Appendix 8. A discussion of the results will be presented in the next chapter.

Relationship	Direct w/o med	Direct w med	IV med beta	->	Med-> DV Beta	IV Med SE	->	Med-> DV SE	Sobel statistic	t-	Path Coefficient
Parasocial interaction -> WOM	0.318	0.195	0.390		0.253	0.095		0.156	1.508		0.131
Parasocial interaction -> Repeat Purchase Intention	0.232	0.087	0.390		0.318	0.095		0.152	1.864		0.062
Social self-expression -> WOM	0.316	0.226	0.348		0.253	0.097		0.156	1.477		0.139
Social self-expression -> Repeat Purchase Intention	0.166	0.058	0.348		0.318	0.097		0.152	1.807		0.070

6. DISCUSSION

In addressing the research questions of what factors influences involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty on Facebook brand Pages, the results from the data analysis will now be discussed.

To recapture what has been done throughout the research, first, a conceptual model was developed based on the theoretical background for defining Facebook brand Pages and Brand Value, as well as empirical research on the topic. Further, through a self-completion questionnaire, data was collected, and finally analyzed, where the hypothesized relationships were statistically tested through structural equation modeling PLS using the bootstrap procedure.

The following main research questions has guided the research:

1. What factors influences involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty on Facebook brand Pages?

Before a discussion of the findings related to the research questions, a short discussion of the characteristics of the respondents and the brands “liked” will be made. This will allow me to provide a more relevant elaboration of the findings, as the brands “liked” and the characteristics of the respondents has important implications for the results, vice versa.

6.1. Characteristics of respondents and brands “liked”

The survey that was distributed on Facebook via SurveyMonkey in order to gather data for this research asked respondents to indicate how long they had been a “Fan” of the Facebook brand Page, their gender, age, number of friends on Facebook, and how much time they spend on Facebook on an average day. Further, it asked the respondents to indicate a specific brand they had “liked” which provides for a better analysis of the results. Lastly, it asked consumers to indicate their engagement behaviors in accordance with Muntinga et al.’s (2011) Consumer Brand Related Activities scheme. The data suggest that the respondents has indicated their ages to be primarily within the span of 23-50, which is understood to be a relatively mature group of people. Further, the majority of the respondents are females (72%), which can explain why most of the brands “liked” are categorized as “Fashion Brands”. There are no big differences in terms of how long they identify themselves as

being a Fan of the Page “liked”. Moreover, they have not indicated that they spend much time on Facebook on an average day, where the majority (54%) indicated that they spend between 1 and 2 hours on Facebook on an average day. As already mentioned, most of the brand “liked” can be understood to belong to the “Fashion brands” category (19%), followed by sports gear brands (9%), Norwegian Airlines (7%), Banks (7%), News Agencies (7%), Travel Agencies (7%) and lastly Telecom providers (4%). 40% of the brands “liked” were not categorized as it was difficult to put them into a specific category. It included everything from fast-moving-consumer-goods, alcoholic beverages, non-profit organizations, gardening, music platforms, festivals. Thus, the brands represents a variety of categories, however, the majority of the brands “liked” are perceived as being somewhat prestigious or being typical brands that offer customer service through Facebook such as banks, airlines, travel agencies and telecom providers. Most brands are Norwegian, except the brands belonging to the fashion category.

In terms of the indicated engagement level on Facebook brand Pages, most of the respondents engages in rather low engagement behaviors such as viewing photos (83%), and reading posts and comments (75%), and “liking” content on the Page (63%).

In sum, the characteristics of the respondents can be said to be relatively mature in general terms, they are primarily females, and do not spend too much time on Facebook on an average day. Further, most of the respondents have indicated that they “like” brands within 7 main categories, namely within fashion, sports, Norwegian Airlines, Banks, News agencies, Travel Agencies and Telecom providers. A relatively big proportion of the brands “liked” has not been categorized, meaning that there is a broad range of brands “liked” that has not been specifically identified. Lastly, the respondents do primarily engage with viewing photos, reading posts and comments and “like” content.

6.2. Factors influencing involvement Facebook brand Pages

In order to answer the research question in terms of what factors influences involvement with a Facebook brand Page, a discussion of the various factors hypothesized to influence involvement will be presented. These include motivations to “like” a Facebook brand Page, Parasocial Interaction and Facebook dependency. As already defined, involvement refers to *“A Fans’ belief that the content on*

the Facebook brand Page is perceived as both important and personally relevant, contributing to satisfy the Fan's personal needs, values and interests".

6.2.1. Motivations for using Facebook brand Pages

Motivations for "liking" Facebook brand Pages has been defined based on Muntinga et al.'s (2011) six social media related uses and gratifications motivations, and adapted to the context of Facebook brand Pages. Five motives for "liking" a Facebook brand Page was identified based on empirical research (Men & Tsai, 2013 & Wallace et al. (2014b).

With regards to how these values are related to involvement with the Facebook brand Page, the results from the bootstrapping procedure suggests that the only value that has an influence on the perceived personal relevance of the content on the Page "liked" is that of information (t -value=2.568, 0,356). This implies that informational content in terms of product reviews, product releases, advice and opinions through content on Facebook brand Pages increases the perceived relevance of the content, and thus increases the likelihood that the Fan processes the information as such (Solomon et al., 2006:106), confirming H7. This is not a very big surprise, as informational value requires cognitive thought, and thus, increases the likelihood of processing the information. As 75% of the respondents indicates that they read comments and posts on the Facebook brand Page "liked", it confirms that seeking for information related to product reviews, product releases, advice and opinions through content on Facebook brand Pages is an important motivator for consumers to "like" a Page. This also confirms that respondents who "likes" self-expressive brands does not necessarily influence involvement with the Page, confirming hypotheses H8a and H8b. On another note, contrary to my expectations, remuneration and entertainment did not have a significant influence on involvement, rejecting hypotheses H9 and H10. Hence, the value of gaining promotions, price-discounts, and prizes from contests as well as experiencing fun, enjoyment and or pastime does not seem to increase the perceived personal importance or relevance of the content on the Facebook brand Page. Thus, informational content on Facebook brand Pages increases the likelihood of a perceived personal relevance among respondents. These findings thus supports previous studies in the literature, where it is found that information is an important motivation for people to consume brand related content, where consumers go online to search for information about the brand (Men & Tsai, 2013 & Muntinga et al., 2011). Moreover, as respondents indicates that they primarily engages with consuming content in terms of viewing photos, reading content and comments, this is line with Muntinga et al.'s study

that found information motives to be associated with consuming engagement as such (Muntinga et al., 2011, 10).

6.2.2. Parasocial Interaction

Looking at the resulting t-values and path coefficients of the relationships between parasocial interaction and its related constructs as suggested in the model, parasocial interaction was positively and significantly associated with involvement ($t\text{-value}=2.039, 0.260$) with the content of the Facebook brand Page, confirming hypothesis H4. This implies that when a Fan perceives a personal and intimate bond with the brand representative on Facebook brand Pages, as if they know the person “behind” the brand, the relevance of the content on the Page increases. This is in line with Men & Tsai’s (2013) findings, where PSI was found to exert a great influence on consuming activities, rather than contributing, (Men & Tsai, 2013:84), which seems to be what respondents primarily are engaged with on Facebook brand Pages in this research. However, as Labrecque (2014) found that antecedents of PSI to include that of interactivity, this should imply higher engagement levels than that of consuming. Further, there is reason to believe that parasocial interaction effects is due to brand’s successfully responding to Fan’s inquiries in a timely and appropriate manner (Labrecque, 2014), which thus should contribute to increase the likelihood of a perceived personal importance and relevance as such. None the less, this research has found support in that when brands successfully creates an impression of an interpersonal relationship with its Fans on Facebook brand Pages, the likelihood that the content is found to be personally important and relevant increases. It must be noted that although significant, the path coefficient value suggests that PSI has a relatively small influence on involvement (0.260).

6.2.3. Facebook dependency:

The resulting t-values and path coefficients of the hypothesized relationship between Facebook Dependency and Involvement (H3) suggests that Facebook is not a primary source of obtaining information about the brand. This may imply that other sources of information about the brand still satisfies consumers’ needs of obtaining information about the brand, and thus rejects H3. Although consumers are evidently turning to Facebook, this does not imply that they could not live without it or that they would miss it if it was gone. Moreover, it does neither imply that Facebook brand Pages is an important source of information about brands for consumers. Ultimately, Facebook brand Pages do not seem to be that important for respondents in general, as most of the respondents have identified

that they only spend between 1-2 hours on Facebook a day. Further, it is important to remember that “liking” a Facebook brand Page is not a primary goal of Facebook use, but rather to connect with their friends typically that they know offline to a lesser or greater extent.

6.3. Factors influencing brand attachment and brand loyalty on Facebook brand Pages

In answering research question 2, the factors that was thought to influence brand attachment and brand loyalty will now be discussed according to the data analysis. The relationship between involvement and brand attachment will first be discussed together with an assessment of the extent to which Facebook brand Pages generates involvement, followed by parasocial interaction, social and inner self-expression and lastly brand attachment’s relationship with brand loyalty. The mediating effects, and lack of, will be discussed at the end.

6.3.1. Involvement

Likely to dismay advertisers of Facebook brand Pages, involvement, which refers to a Fan’s belief that the content is perceived as personally important and relevant, contributing to satisfy the Fan’s personal needs, values and interests, was not found to have significant influence on brand attachment (H2a). This may imply that consumers do not find the content on Facebook brand Pages to be relevant enough to have an impact on the Fans perceived emotional and cognitive bond with the brand. Another explanation could be that the brands “liked” has not established a strong enough foundation for obtaining brand resonance referring to the brand resonance pyramid. Moreover, as Facebook is primarily a friendship-oriented platform where consumers “liking” Pages is not the primary activity, it may be difficult for brands to “break through the clutter” in order to gain sufficient Facebook users’ attention. Thus, content on Facebook brand Pages may rather influence the lower stages of the brand resonance model, i.e. brand awareness, brand image. As the respondents in this study is identified as not spending a lot of time on Facebook on an average day, Facebook brand Pages may not in general be perceived as personally relevant nor important, which is in line with the findings suggested in relation to Facebook dependency.

6.3.2. Parasocial Interaction

In addition to have positive influence on involvement, PSI was further found to be positively and significantly associated with brand attachment (t -value=2.939, 0.349). This then suggest that when a Fan perceives a parasocial relationship with the brand representative on Facebook, it increases the

likelihood that the Fan will have a perceived emotional and cognitive bond with the brand. This confirms H5a. This finding is in line with that of Labrecque (2014), who found that parasocial interaction on social media brand-related pages was positively and significantly associated with brand loyalty. On the other hand, parasocial interaction was not found to be significantly associated with positive WOM, nor repeat purchase intentions, thus rejecting H6a and H6b. As the antecedents and consequences of PSI on Facebook brand pages has not yet been well established in research, it can be various explanations for this finding. Referring to Keller's customer-based brand equity model, this finding may be due that brand attachment is not strong enough in the mind of the consumer to create resonance, i.e. pass positive word of mouth or repurchase the brand in the future.

6.3.3. Social and Inner self-expression

The resulting t-values and path coefficients for social and inner self-expression in relation to brand attachment and brand loyalty suggests that when a Fan "likes" a brand that is social-self expressive, the likelihood of perceiving a strong emotional bond with the brand increases (t-value=3.481, 0.378). Thus, this confirms that brands enhances consumers' social-self through Facebook brand Pages, where consumers may "like" the Page to show an affiliation with the brand to their Facebook friends. Moreover, the consumer's likelihood of having a strong emotional attachment to the brand increases when brands are social self-expressive on Facebook brand Pages. As self-esteem increases, the brand successfully creates the "right" knowledge structures, where the Fan connects the feeling of enhanced self-esteem and the brand, which in turn increases the emotional attachment to the brand as such. Consumers may "like" a Page to show their affiliation with their favored in-group, and at the same time express how they desire to be identified by others. This implies an importance of brands facilitating for the co-creation of value, where brands enhances consumers' self-esteem, and by doing that, increases the likelihood of a stronger consumer-brand relationship as such. Moreover, as hypothesized, the results found no support in that social self-expression value had any association with positive word-of-mouth, referring to a Fan's expressed intention to pass positive information about the brand "liked" to their peers, both offline and online. This may then imply that although they want to show an affiliation towards the brand, and that the brand enhances their self-esteem, they are still not interested in passing positive information about the brand with others. These findings are in line with Wallace et al.'s (2014b) study.

Contrary to my expectations, inner-self expression was not found to be positively related with brand attachment (H8d), nor positive word-of-mouth (H8f). Although consumers perceive that the brand reflects their true inner self, it was not found to be significantly associated with a strong emotional bond with the brand or the respondents expressed intention to pass positive information about the brand “liked” to others. Thus, this is contradictory with Wallace et al.’s (2014b) who found inner-self expressive brands to be positively associated with brand love and positive word-of-mouth intentions.

6.3.4. Brand attachment and Brand loyalty

As hypothesized, respondents that perceive a strong cognitive and emotional bond with the brand “liked” on Facebook increases the likelihood of brand loyalty, both in terms of repeat purchase intentions ($t\text{-value}=2.083, 0.322$) and intent to pass positive word of mouth about the brand to peers ($t\text{-value}=2.212, 0.303$) (H1a & H1b). This is in line with Keller’s (1993) customer-based brand equity model, which posits that in order to achieve brand resonance, a strong personal attachment is also necessary (Keller, 2001:15). Moreover, when a respondent indicates brand attachment, the likelihood of repeat purchase intention has a slightly higher likelihood than passing positive word-of-mouth.

The factors influencing brand attachment are parasocial interaction and social self-expression value. Moreover, the only variable in the framework influencing brand loyalty is brand attachment. However, the mediation analysis suggests that brand attachment has partial mediating effect on the relationship between parasocial interaction and social self-expression, and Repeat Purchase intentions. This implies that the perceived cognitive and emotional bond between the brand and the Fan on Facebook brand Pages accounts for and increases the likelihood of Fan’s “liking” brands that supports their social identity to repurchase the brand in the future. Moreover, it implies that when Fan’s perceives an interpersonal involvement with the brand representative on Facebook brand Pages, it increases the likelihood that the Fan will perceive an emotional and cognitive bond with the brand, as well as increased likelihood of repurchase intention. The findings presented have important managerial implications, which will be discussed after a presentation of the conclusion of this research.

7. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis is to develop a conceptual framework to understand and explain how and to what extent Facebook brand Pages creates value for consumers, and whether involvement and Parasocial interaction can influence the consumer-brand relationship. Thus, the following research question was proposed:

“What factors influences involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty on Facebook brand Pages?”

The customer based brand-equity model (Keller, 1993) together with thoughts within relationship marketing and the service-dominant logic, uses and gratifications theory, media dependency theory, and parasocial interaction theory aided in creating a conceptual model in which the research was built on. This resulted in 22 hypotheses, which shows the suggested relationships between a total of 11 constructs. Data is collected through a self-administered online survey that addressed Norwegian consumers that has “liked” a Facebook brand Page. This resulted in 125 responses, where 81 were complete. The data collected is analyzed by Structural Equation Modeling using the variance based approach, Partial Least Squares. This made it possible to validate or reject the suggested hypotheses at a significance level of 95%. Further, a mediation analysis is made in order to assess the potential mediating effects of involvement and brand attachment and their related constructs. The research objective of testing a model that explains how and to what extent Facebook brand Pages can create value for consumers is therefore met.

In order to present a conclusion to the suggested research questions, the factors influencing involvement are presented first, followed by the factors influencing brand attachment and brand loyalty.

7.1.1. Factors influencing involvement on Facebook brand Pages

The findings in this study suggests that in terms of motivation that influences consumers’ involvement with Facebook brand Pages is that of information. Thus, Fans receiving product reviews, product releases, advice and opinions related to the brand that satisfies the Fans’ needs in relation to his/her brand-related topics/issues through content on Facebook brand Pages find this to be both important and personally relevant. Although previous studies have found entertainment and remuneration to be

important drivers to “like” a Facebook brand Page (e.g. Men & Tsai, 2013), this study found that it did not have a significant influence on the perceived personal importance or relevance of the content as such.

Moreover, a Fan’s perceived interpersonal involvement with the brand representative on Facebook brand Pages is found to have a significant and positive influence on the Fan’s belief that the content on the Facebook brand Page “liked” is both important and personally relevant. Similarly to previous studies that found parasocial interactivity to be a positive and significant predictor of engagement behavior on Facebook brand Pages (Men & Tsai, 2013), this research has found support in that parasocial interaction has a positive and significant influence on involvement with the content on Facebook brand Pages.

Lastly, Facebook dependency is not found to have any significant influence on respondents’ involvement with the content on the Facebook brand Page. Thus, this may suggest that Facebook Dependency does not have an influence on whether a Fan believes that the content on the Facebook brand Page is both important and personally relevant. This is therefore not in line with Men & Tsai’s (2013) study who found Facebook Dependency to be a predictor of consumers Facebook brand Page engagement behaviors.

7.1.2. Factors influencing brand attachment and brand loyalty

Parasocial interaction was found to be significantly and positively associated with brand attachment, which suggests that when respondents perceives an interpersonal involvement with the brand representative on Facebook brand Pages, the likelihood of a perceived cognitive and emotional bond between the Fan and the brand “liked” increases. Hence, Facebook brand Pages do facilitate for interpersonal relationships between brand representatives and consumers, and enhances the likelihood of a stronger consumer-brand relationship as such. This is in line with previous studies, where it has been found that parasocial interactivity is positively and significantly associated with brand loyalty (Labrecque, 2014), which is understood to be a consequence of brand attachment.

Fans that “like” brands that are social self-expressive is found to have a higher likelihood of brand attachment. Thus, Fans who “like” brands that enhances their social self increases the likelihood of

Fans having a cognitively and emotionally bond with the brand as such. Thus, social self-expressive brands increases the likelihood of a strong consumer-brand relationship in terms of brand attachment.

Furthermore, brand attachment is found to have a significant and positive association with brand loyalty, both in terms of repurchase intentions and positive word-of-mouth intentions. When a brand has an emotional and cognitive attachment to the brand “liked” on Facebook, the likelihood of repeat purchase intentions increases, as well as the passing of positive word-of-mouth about the brand (brand loyalty). In other words, A Fan’s expressed intention to purchase the brand “liked” again in the future and a Fan’s expressed intention to pass positive information about the brand “liked” to their peers, both offline and online, is more likely when a perceived cognitive and emotional bond between the brand and the Fan on Facebook brand Pages is present.

Last but not least, the mediation analysis suggests that Fans “liking” a brand that is social self-expressive, i.e. enhances their self in terms of their social desired identity, are more likely to have repeat purchase intentions of the brand “liked”, which is further strengthened by their perceived emotional and cognitive bond with the brand. Similarly, the relationship between a Fan’s perceived interpersonal relationship with the brand representatives on Facebook brand Pages and the Fan’s likelihood of repurchase intentions is enhanced by a perceived emotional and cognitive bond with the brand. Thus, brand attachment is found to have a mediating effect on the relationship between both social self-expression and brand loyalty, as well as the relationship between parasocial interaction and brand loyalty in terms of repeat purchase intentions.

A conclusion of this research has now been made, where the research questions at hand have been addressed. Further, the research have various implications for both practitioners and researchers. These will be presented next, followed by a presentation of limitations of the research.

8. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this research has several important managerial implications for brands. This research investigated what factors influences involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty on Facebook brand Pages. Factors found to influence involvement includes parasocial interaction and informational value. Factors influencing brand attachment includes parasocial interaction and social self-expression, which is further found to be mediated by brand attachment, and thus influences repeat purchase intentions.

It is critical to understand what motivates consumers to “like” a Facebook brand Page in order to address users’ needs, values and interests. By understanding this, brand managers can better facilitate for providing relevant content on Facebook brand Pages. Because information related to product reviews, product releases, advice and opinions related to the brand are found to be personally relevant and important for Fans that has “liked” a Page, brand managers should facilitate for this by updating Facebook brand Pages with such content in order to enhance consumers’ involvement with the Page. Moreover, brands should support consumers’ social self through Facebook brand Pages as it is found that Fans “liking” social self-expressive brands have an increased likelihood of being emotionally attached to the brand and intention to repurchase the brand in the future. Brand managers interested in utilizing Facebook brand Pages as a strategic tool for building strong brands should therefore understand consumers’ desired symbolic world, in order to facilitate for this. By understanding this, brands can facilitate for further social self-expression on Facebook due to the nature of the self-expressive medium. This could be done by encouraging Fans to express themselves, as a means of enhancing their social self, where it is believed that Fans “liking” self-expressive brands uses the brand symbolism to enhance their self-esteem. As this implies an added value for both the Fans and the brand, this could potentially be an effective strategy to co-create brand value.

On another note, by demonstrating that Facebook dependency and involvement is not found to be significantly associated has implications for the extent to which Facebook brand Pages is an effective way to gain consumers’ attention and form relationships with them as such. Although it is stated that consumers are increasingly turning away from traditional media, adopting new channels such as Facebook to search for information about brands, the findings of this research suggests that Facebook is not particularly important to consumers in general. Thus, brand managers should critically examine whether Facebook brand Pages is an appropriate communications tool based on whether consumers

find it relevant or not, and the extent to which this will brand any value to the consumer-brand relationship as such.

Further, brand representatives on Facebook brand Pages should play the role of a caring friend and communicate in a personal and friendly tone in order to enhance consumers' perceived personal relevance and importance of the content through Facebook brand Pages. This research suggests that Facebook brand Pages do facilitate for parasocial interaction effects, which is found to have positive outcomes in terms of enhancing brand attachment and repeat purchase intention. Following Labrecque (2014), brands can create a sense of PSI through crafting messages to include elements that signal that the brand is listening and responding to customers and by creating content that expresses openness in communication. This can increase the connection between the consumer and the brand, and increases the likelihood of repeat purchase intention.

As this research agrees with both the brand resonance model suggested by Keller (1993) and previous research on consumer-brand relationship theory, consumers can form relationships with brands similar to that of interpersonal relationships through Facebook brand Pages. Brand attachment is found to increase the likelihood of brand loyalty in terms of repeat purchase intentions as well as passing positive information about the brand to peers. Thus, companies should put an emphasis on building strong brands and add value to the consumer brand relationship in order to gain a sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace. This is most likely to occur when both the consumers' and the brands' interests, needs and values are satisfied. This emphasizes the importance of understanding consumers' needs, values and interests in relations to that of the brand as such.

9. PERSPECTIVES, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research investigated what factors has an influence on involvement, brand attachment and brand loyalty on Facebook brand Pages among Norwegian consumers. In terms of what motivates consumers to “like” a Page and thus influences involvement as such, some of the findings in this study deviates from previous studies in terms of what motivates consumers to “like” a Page. Future studies should investigate differences in what motivates consumers’ to like a Page in terms of cultural, national and brand/product categorical aspects. There is reason to believe that cultures and nations with individualistic cultures are less likely to “like” pages for social reasons in comparison to collectivistic cultures. Moreover, Facebook use is likely to differ among nationalities, and thus, how and the extent to which Facebook brand Pages can facilitate for co-creating value may vary. Further, brands that are newly established may have different communication needs and objectives than strong well-established iconic brands on Facebook brand Pages. Thus, future studies investigating to what extent Facebook brand Pages enhances brand value should distinguish between such brands.

As parasocial interaction is identified to have a positive influence on consumer-brand relationships on Facebook brand Pages, future studies should investigate its antecedents in order to get a better understanding of how practitioners can facilitate for this. Few studies have shown what the antecedents of such interaction effects on Facebook brand Pages. Labrecque (2014) identified perceived openness and perceived interactivity to be antecedents of parasocial interaction effects on social media. However, most of current research have mainly focused on PSI’s consequences in the social media related literature. To understand how brands can successfully facilitate for such interactions through Facebook brand Pages, more research is needed. Moreover, an inside-out perspective of how brand communicators facilitates for parasocial interaction could be instructive in understanding how brands could successfully facilitate for this.

As motivations to “like” a Facebook brand Page can be instructive of understanding how brands can facilitate for relevant content on Facebook brand Pages, individual and social factors influencing motivations should be investigated to understand the dynamics of what causes different consumer motivations.

Lastly, this research investigated Fans intent of positive brand outcomes on Facebook brand Pages. Future studies should investigate the antecedents and consequences of negative word-of-mouth

intentions. This may help practitioners to get a better understanding of the potential risks of social media networks as a strategic tool to communicate with its stakeholders.

10.LIMITATIONS

Limitations to this research includes that it was a rather small-scale study, with only 81 valid responses, using randomized sampling. Thus, the generalizability of this research is very limited. Moreover, some of the items adopted to measure the concepts of this research were self-developed, which may imply that comparison with previous and future studies cannot be accounted for. Further, as the research does not address specific brand categories, the generalizability of the research is further limited. Although an assessment is made in relation to the characteristics of respondents as well as a categorization of the brands that was “liked”, this study cannot explicitly understand how these factors influences the various variables in the framework. Thus, this further delimits the generalizability of this study. However, the aim of this thesis is not to generalize, but to rather investigate what factors have an influence on involvement, brand loyalty, and brand attachment by testing a conceptual framework for how and to what extent brands can facilitate for enhancing brand value through Facebook brand Pages. Lastly, understanding consumers’ motivations and attitudes may be difficult to capture through an online survey, as respondents may not fully be able to indicate their opinions and attitudes by answering a pre-determined set of questions. Thus, this limits the extent to which we can gain insight to consumers’ attitudes and motives as such. On the other hand, a quantitative study allows this research to investigate the relationships between the variables in the framework. Adopting a combined method by undertaking a qualitative study and combining it with a quantitative study could aid in reducing this issue.

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APPENDICES

1. Questionnaire SurveyMonkey.com

Velkommen til undersøkelsen om merkevarer på Facebook

Denne undersøkelsen handler om ditt forhold til merkevarer på Facebook. Jeg ønsker derfor å samle svar fra deg som har likt en merkevare sin Facebook-side.

Vennligst oppgi så ærlige svar som mulig. Det er viktig at alle spørsmål blir besvart. Undersøkelsen vil ta ca. 5 minutter, og dine besvarelser vil bli behandlet 100% anonymt.

Som takk for hjelpen, kan du bli med i trekningen av et supergavekort på 300 kr fra gavekorttorget.no. Jeg vil trekke den heldige vinneren når undersøkelsen er avsluttet, og sende gavekortet til vinnerens e-postadresse. Om du ønsker å være med i trekningen, vennligst fyll inn din e-postadresse i slutten av undersøkelsen. Jeg vil slette din e-postadresse når vinneren er trukket (senest 25. August), og den vil ikke bli koblet til noen av svarene du har oppgitt. Den vil heller ikke bli sendt videre til en tredjepart.

Tusen takk for at du ønsker å bidra med svar til min masteroppgave!

Med vennlig hilsen,
Mette Storm

Om meg og hensikten med undersøkelsen

Navn: Mette Storm

Studerer: Master i Brand and Communications Management ved Copenhagen Business School.

Hva handler oppgaven om?

Oppgaven handler om merkevarer på Facebook. Besvarelsen din er viktig for masteroppgaven, da jeg ønsker å undersøke konsumenters forhold til merkevarer på Facebook. Jeg tar ditt personvern seriøst, og vil aldri bruke noen av opplysningene du gir fra deg til noe annet enn data til masteroppgaven.

Undersøkelsen er 100% anonym, og dine svar vil ikke kunne spores opp til deg som person. Masteroppgaven vil være offentlig tilgjengelig når den er ferdig. For de som er interresserte er dermed resultatet av denne undersøkelsen tilgjengelig. Om du har spørsmål eller andre kommentarer til undersøkelsen, er du velkommen til å legge igjen en kommentar i slutten av undersøkelsen.

Om deg

Vennligst besvar alle spørsmål så godt du kan. Først vil jeg be deg om å oppgi en merkevare du har nærmest forhold til på Facebook (som du har likt). Resten av spørsmålene i undersøkelsen vil derfor spørre om den spesifikke merkevaren som du oppgir her.

1. Navn på merkevaren du har likt på Facebook

2. Hvor lenge siden er det du likte merkeverens Facebook-side (ca)

- ☐ Under 1 år
- ☐ 1-2 år
- ☐ 2-3 år
- ☐ Lenger enn 3 år

3. Vennligst oppgi hvilket kjønn du identifiserer deg med

- ☐ Mann
- ☐ Kvinne

4. Vennligst indiker hvilken aldersgruppe du tilhører

- ☐ 15 eller yngre
- ☐ 16-18
- ☐ 19-22
- ☐ 23-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 50 eller eldre

5. Hvor mange venner har du på Facebook?

- ☐ 1-200
- ☐ 201-400
- ☐ 401-500
- ☐ 501-600
- ☐ 601-1500
- ☐ 1500 eller fler

6. Hvor mange timer bruker du på Facebook i gjennomsnitt per dag?

- ☐ 0-1
- ☐ 2-3
- ☐ 4 eller mer

Merkevarens Facebook-side							
Vennligst besvar alle spørsmål så godt du kan							
7. Hvor enig er du med følgende påstander							
	Helt uenig	Ganske uenig	Litt uenig	Nøytral	Litt enig	Ganske enig	Helt enig
Merkevarens Facebook-side gir meg informasjon om merkevaren/relaterte emner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Det er lett å holde seg oppdatert på nyheter om denne merkevaren	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informasjon på merkevarens Facebook-side er verdifull for meg	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Merkevarens Facebook-side							
Vennligst besvar alle spørsmål så godt du kan							
8. Hvor enig er du med følgende påstander							
	Helt uenig	Ganske uenig	Litt uenig	Nøytral	Litt enig	Ganske enig	Helt enig
Innholdet på merkevarens Facebook-side opplever jeg som underholdende	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg har det gøy når jeg ser på innholdet på merkevarens Facebook-side	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg besøker denne siden for tidsfordriv	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Merkevarens Facebook-side							
10. Hvor enig er du med følgende påstander							
	Helt uenig	Ganske uenig	Litt uenig	Nøytral	Litt enig	Ganske enig	Helt enig
Jeg utøver min forbrukermakt på denne siden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg har stor innflytelse på hvordan denne merkevaren fremstår på denne siden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Merkevarens Facebook-side							
Vennligst besvar alle spørsmål så godt du kan							
9. Hvor enig er du med følgende påstander							
	Helt uenig	Ganske uenig	Litt uenig	Nøytral	Litt enig	Ganske enig	Helt enig
Det er konkurranser jeg ønsker å delta i på denne siden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Det er bra premier jeg kan vinne på denne siden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg får gode tilbud ved å ha likt denne siden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg har benyttet meg av gode tilbud som legges ut på denne siden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg blir belønnet ved å ha likt denne Facebook-siden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

merkevarens Facebook-side

11. Hvor enig er du med følgende påstander

	Helt uenig	Litt uenig	Nøytral	Litt enig	Helt enig
Jeg betrakter innholdet på merkevarens Facebook-side som viktig for meg	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innholdet på merkevarens Facebook-side er av stor interesse for meg	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg betrakter merkevarens Facebook-side som relevant for meg	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Merkevarens Facebook-side

Vennligst besvar alle spørsmål så godt du kan

12. Hvor enig er du med følgende påstander

	Helt uenig	Ganske uenig	Litt uenig	Nøytral	Litt enig	Ganske enig	Helt enig
Representanter som kommuniserer for merkevaren på denne siden fremstår som en god venn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg føler at jeg har blitt kjent med representanter fra merkevaren på denne siden	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Representanter fra merkevaren kommuniserer på en måte som gjør meg komfortabel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg ønsker å møte representanter som kommuniserer for denne merkevaren	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg sammenlikner mine egne ideer med de som representanter for merkevaren har	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Om deg selv					
13. Hvor enig er du med følgende påstander					
	Helt uenig	Litt uenig	Nøytral	Litt enig	Helt enig
Jeg hadde ikke klart meg uten Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Å være på Facebook er en viktig del av min hverdag	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Å være på Facebook er meningsfullt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Merkevarens Facebook-side	
Vennligst besvar alle spørsmål så godt du kan	
14. Hvilke av følgende aktiviteter har du gjort på merkevarens sin Facebook-side (som du kan huske)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sett på videoer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sett på bilder
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lest innlegg og kommentarer fra merkevaren
<input type="checkbox"/>	Likt innhold på siden
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deltatt i diskusjoner (kommentert, stilt spørsmål og besvart spørsmål)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Delt innlegg på min egen Facebook-side
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anbefalt siden til andre
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lastet opp videoer og bilder
<input type="checkbox"/>	Skrevet innlegg på veggen til siden
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ingen av delene

Dine holdninger til merkevaren du har likt							
15. Hvor enig er du med følgende påstander							
	Helt uenig	Ganske uenig	Litt uenig	Nøytral	Litt enig	Ganske enig	Helt enig
Denne merkevaren bygger mitt image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Denne merkevaren viser hvilken sosial rolle jeg spiller	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Denne merkevaren har en positiv innflytelse på hvordan andre oppfatter meg	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Denne merkevaren forbedrer hvordan andre ser på meg som person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Dine holdninger til merkevaren du har likt							
16. Hvor enig er du med følgende påstander							
	Helt uenig	Ganske uenig	Litt uenig	Nøytral	Litt enig	Ganske enig	Helt enig
Merkevaren symboliserer hvem jeg virkelig er	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Merkevaren reflekterer min personlighet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Merkevaren er en forlengelse av mitt indre jeg	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Merkevaren reflekterer mitt sanne jeg	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Merkevarens Facebook-side							
Vennligst besvar alle spørsmål så godt du kan							
18. Hvor enig er du med følgende påstander							
	Helt uenig	Ganske uenig	Litt uenig	Nøytral	Litt enig	Ganske enig	Helt enig
Denne merkevaren er mitt førstevalg innen produktkategorien	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg anser meg selv som en lojal kunde av merkevaren	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg deler positive kommentarer om denne merkevaren til andre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg anbefaler andre å velge denne merkevaren	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Hvor enig er du med følgende utsagn							
	Helt uenig	Ganske uenig	Litt uenig	Nøytral	Litt enig	Ganske enig	Helt enig
Jeg føler en sterk følelsesmessig tilknytning til merkevaren	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jeg ville savnet merkevaren om den ble borte	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Du er nå ferdig med undersøkelsen

Takk for dine svar! Om du ønsker å delta i trekningen om et supergavekort på 300 kr. til gavekorttorget.no kan du skrive inn din e-postadresse nedenfor. Du vil bli kontaktet når undersøkelsen er avsluttet om du er den heldige vinneren.

Jeg tar ditt personvern seriøst, og din e-postadresse vil IKKE bli sendt videre til en tredjepart. E-postadressen vil bli slettet når undersøkelsen er avsluttet (senest 25. august).

Ha en riktig god sommer videre!

Med vennlig hilsen,
Mette

19. Ja, jeg ønsker å delta i trekningen om et supergavekort på 300 kr. fra gavekorttorget.no. Om jeg er den heldige vinneren, kan gavekortet sendes til e-post:

20. Har du spørsmål/kommentarer til undersøkelsen? Send inn din kommentar nedenfor:

2. Facebook Post



Mette Storm
July 20 · Oslo

Har du tid til å besvare en kort undersøkelse? Jeg er i ferd med å avslutte mine studier ved Copenhagen Business School, og skriver nå masteroppgave om konsumenters forhold til merkevarer på Facebook. Setter stor pris på ditt svar! Link til undersøkelsen:

Ditt forhold til merkevarer på Facebook Survey

Denne undersøkelsen handler om ditt forhold til merkevarer på Facebook. Jeg ønsker derfor å samle svar fra deg som har likt en merkevare sin Facebook-side.

[NO.SURVEYMONKEY.COM](https://no.surveymonkey.com)

2 Likes · 10 Comments

 Like  Comment  Share

3. Measurement Items

Construct	Measures
<p>Information</p> <p>Source: Three items, self-developed inspired by Men & Tsai (2013)</p> <p>All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale.</p>	<p>Merkevarens Facebook-side gir meg informasjon om merkevaren/relaterte emner</p> <p>Det er lett å holde seg oppdatert på nyheter om denne merkevaren</p> <p>Informasjon på merkevarens Facebook-side er verdifull for meg</p>
<p>Entertainment value</p> <p>Source: Men & Tsai (2013)</p> <p>All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale.</p>	<p>Innholdet på merkevarens Facebook-side opplever jeg som underholdende</p> <p>Jeg har det gøy når jeg ser på innholdet på merkevarens Facebook-side</p> <p>Jeg besøker denne siden for tidsfordriv</p>
<p>Remuneration value:</p> <p>Source: Men & Tsai (2013)</p> <p>All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale.</p>	<p>Det er konkurranser jeg ønsker å delta i på denne siden</p> <p>Det er bra premier jeg kan vinne på denne siden</p> <p>Jeg får gode tilbud ved å ha likt denne siden</p> <p>Jeg har benyttet meg av gode tilbud som legges ut på denne siden</p> <p>Jeg blir belønnet ved å ha likt denne Facebook-siden</p>
<p>PSI: Five items adopted from Colliander & Dahlen (2011) to evaluate the parasocial interactions between participants and brands' Facebook representatives on 7-point likert scales (1= strongly agree; 7=strongly disagree)</p>	<p>Representanter som kommuniserer for merkevaren på denne siden fremstår som en god venn</p> <p>Jeg føler at jeg har blitt kjent med representanter fra merkevaren på denne siden</p> <p>Representanter fra merkevaren kommuniserer på en måte som gjør meg komfortabel</p> <p>Jeg ønsker å møte representanter som kommuniserer for denne merkevaren</p> <p>Jeg sammenlikner mine egne ideer med de som representantene for merkevaren har</p>

<p>Level of engagement</p> <p>I adopted 9 items from Muntinga, Moorman, and Smit (2011) to measure consumer engagement with the brand Pages</p>	<p>Consuming: Ser på videoer Ser på bilder Leser innlegg og kommentarer fra merkevaren</p> <p>Contributing Deltar i diskusjoner (kommenterer, stiller spørsmål og besvarer spørsmål) Likt innhold</p> <p>Deler innlegg på min egen Facebook side Anbefaler siden til andre Laster opp videoer og bilder Skriver på veggen til siden</p>
<p>Involvement</p> <p>Three items used to measure involvement are adopted from Xu et al. (2008) using a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree).</p>	<p>Jeg betrakter innholdet på merkevarens Facebook-side som viktig for meg</p> <p>Innholdet på merkevarens Facebook-side er av stor interesse for meg</p> <p>Jeg betrakter innholdet på merkevarens Facebook-side som relevant for meg</p>

<p>Brand attachment</p> <p>Source: Inspired by Keller (2008), Self-developed</p> <p>5-point likert scale</p>	<p>Jeg føler en sterkere følelsesmessig tilknytning til merkevaren</p> <p>Jeg ville savnet merkevaren dersom den ble borte</p>
<p>Brand loyalty</p> <p>Source: self-developed, inspired by Keller (2008)</p> <p>7-point likert scale</p>	<p>Denne merkevaren er mitt førstevalg innen produktkategorien</p> <p>Jeg anser meg selv som en lojal kunde av merkevaren</p> <p>Jeg deler positive kommentarer om denne merkevaren med andre</p>

	Jeg anbefaler andre å velge denne merkevaren
--	--

Construct	Measures
Self-expression	Adopted from Wallace et al's (2014) study. Respondents indicated their level of agreement on five-point likert scales (1=strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree)
Self-construction: Wallace et al 2014 og b	<p>Denne merkevaren bygger mitt image</p> <p>Denne merkevaren viser hvilken sosial rolle jeg spiller</p> <p>Denne merkevaren har en positiv innflytelse på hvordan andre oppfatter meg</p> <p>Denne merkevaren forbedrer hvordan andre ser på meg som person</p> <p>Merkevaren symboliserer hvem jeg virkelig er</p> <p>Merkevaren reflekterer min personlighet</p> <p>Merkevaren er en forlengelse av mitt indre jeg</p> <p>Merkevaren reflekter mitt sanne jeg</p>
Facebook dependency Three measures inspired by Men & Tsi (2013), which was based on Lu's (2008) approach and measures from Runib & Rubin 1982 was used to measure Facebook Dependency. It was revised for Facebook. 5-	<p>Jeg hadde ikke klart meg uten Facebook</p> <p>Å være på Facebook er en viktig del av min hverdag</p> <p>Å være på Facebook er meningsfullt</p>

point likert scales were
used (1=strongly disagree;
5=strongly agree=

4. Outer Loadings, Smart PLS

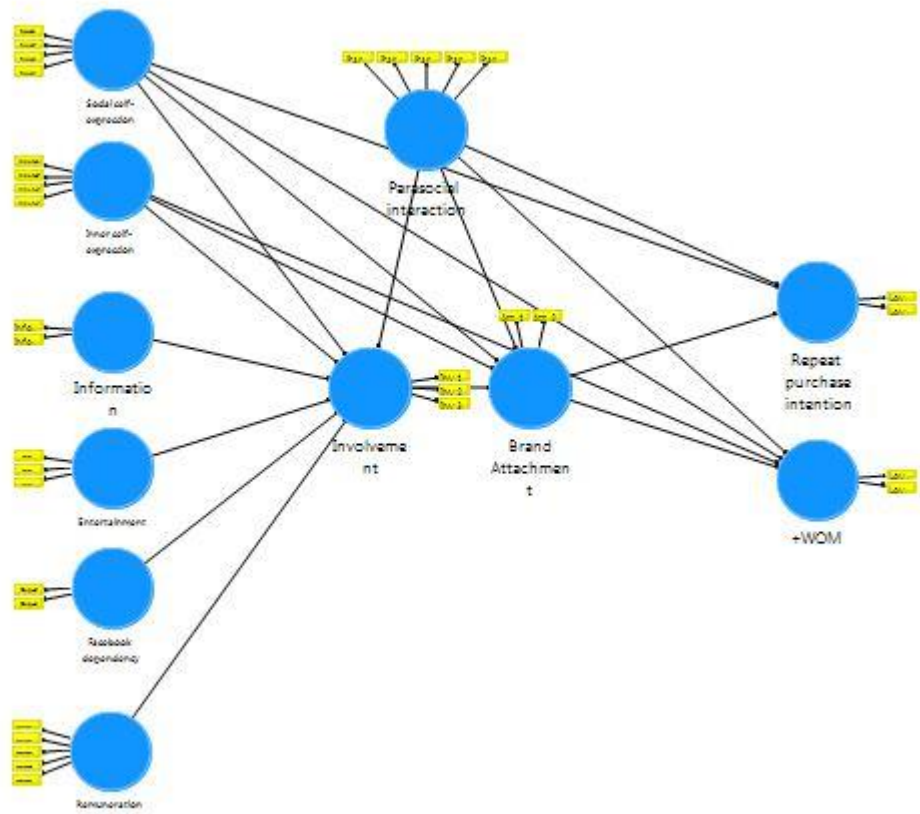
	Positive WOM	Brand Attachment	Empowerment	Entertainment	Facebook Dependency	Information	Inner self-expression	Involvement	Parasocial interaction	Remuneration	Repeat purchase intention	Social self-expression
Att_1		0.949										
Att_2		0.890										
Dep_2					0.990							
Dep_3					0.526							
Emp_1			0.912									
Emp_2			0.817									
Ent_1				0.963								
Ent_2				0.968								
Ent_3				0.690								
Info_1						0.877						
Info_2						0.951						
Inner_1							0.949					
Inner_2							0.980					
Inner_3							0.976					
Inner_4							0.955					
Inv_1								0.826				
Inv_2								0.896				
Inv_3								0.830				
Loy_rep_1											0.831	
Loy_rep_2											0.966	
Loy_wom_1	0.960											
Loy_wom_2	0.951											
Para_1									0.852			
Para_2									0.838			
Para_3									0.814			
Para_4									0.873			
Para_5									0.830			

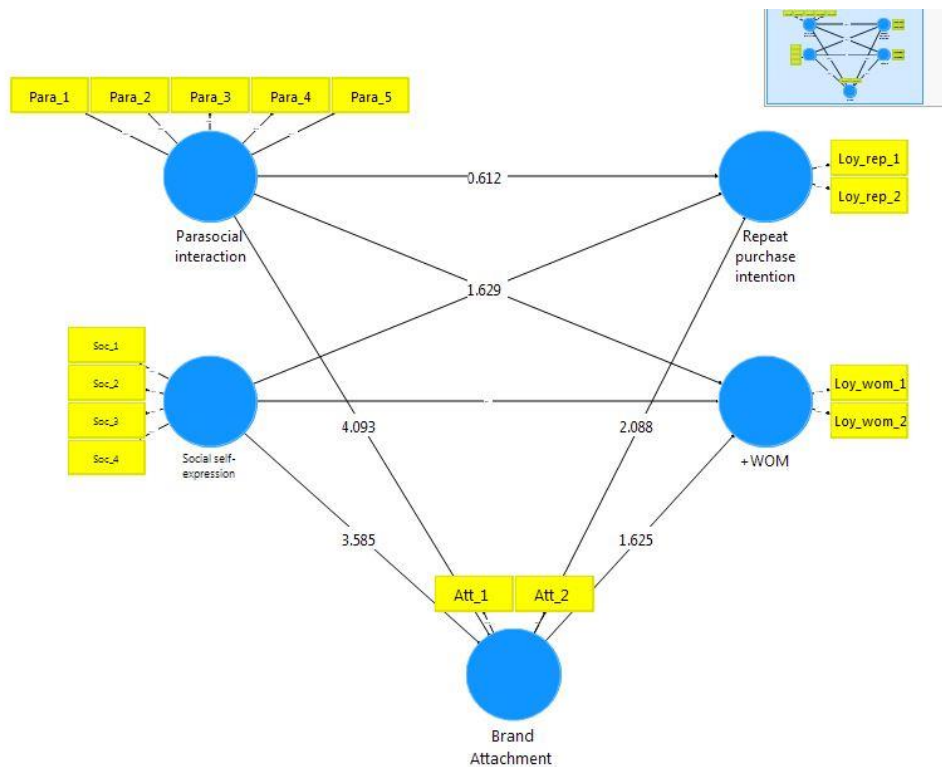
Remun_1									0.890			
Remun_2									0.872			
Remun_3									0.855			
Remun_4									0.727			
Remun_5									0.803			
Soc_1											0.867	
Soc_2											0.861	
Soc_3											0.911	
Soc_4											0.892	

5. Discriminant Validity (AVE)

	Positive WOM	Brand Attachment	Empowerment	Entertainment	Facebook Dependency	Information	Inner self-expression	Involvement	Parasocial interaction	Remuneration	Repeat purchase intention	Social self-expression	
Positive WOM	0.956								0.061				
Brand Attachment	0.462	0.920											
Empowerment	0.215	0.126	0.866										
Entertainment	0.247	0.250	0.207	0.883									
Facebook Dependency	0.265	0.229	0.345	0.279	0.792								
Information	0.411	0.069	0.381	0.337	0.240	0.915							
Inner self-expression	0.310	0.340	0.176	0.261	0.136	0.308	0.965						
Involvement	0.296	0.330	0.446	0.343	0.203	0.554	0.295	0.852					
Parasocial interaction	0.403	0.511	0.463	0.479	0.302	0.352	0.271	0.503	0.841				
Remuneration	0.358	0.213	0.500	0.287	0.148	0.309	0.077	0.365	0.366	0.831			
Repeat purchase intention	0.702	0.393	0.155	0.098	0.165	0.380	0.227	0.291	0.268	0.253	0.901		
Social self-expression	0.408	0.484	0.118	0.289	0.219	0.223	0.715	0.237	0.359	0.058	0.237	0.683	

6. Research Model SmartPLS: Inner Model Evaluation





7. Mediating Effects

8. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of what motivates respondents to “like” a Facebook brand Page have been measured (Table 7), as well as Parasocial Interaction (Table 8), Facebook Dependency (Table 9) and Involvement (Table 10). The means (M) and standard deviation of the results have been calculated for this assessment.

Table 7: Descriptive of Motivations for “liking” a Page

Variable	M	SD
Information	5,69	1,22
Inner self-expression	4,62	1,72
Social self-expression	3,52	1,94
Entertainment	4,47	2,00
Remuneration	3,08	1,97

(7-point likert-scale, 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

The results indicates that informational value is the most important to respondents (M=5,69, SD=1,22), followed by inner-self expression (M=4,62, SD=1,72) and entertainment (M=4.47, SD=2,0). On the other hand, Social self-expression (M=3,52, SD=1,94) and Remuneration (M=3,08, SD=1,97) does not seem to be very important to respondents.

Table 8: Descriptive of Parasocial Interaction

Variable	M	SD
Parasocial Interaction	4,01	2,00

(7-point likert-scale, 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

The results suggest that respondents do perceive a parasocial relationship above neutral with the brand representatives on Facebook brand Pages (M=4,01,SD=2,0).

Table 9: Descriptive of Facebook Dependency

Variable	M	SD
Facebook dependency	3,15	1,38

(5-point likert scale, 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

The results suggest that respondents are not dependent on Facebook, as the average score points to be neutral (M=3,15, SD=1,38)

Table 10: Descriptive of Involvement

Variable	M	SD
Involvement	3,41	1,31

(5-point likert scale, 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

Similarly to Facebook dependency, respondents do not seem to be very involved with the Page (M=3,41, SD=1,31).

9. Individual Items Means

Information			
Info_1	Info_2	Inner_1	Inner_2
5,975309	5,407407	4,617284	4,617284
Empowerment			
Emp_1	Emp_2		
3,049383	4,012346		
Inner self-construction			
Inner_1	Inner_2	Inner_3	Inner_4
4,617284	4,617284	4,604938	4,641975

Social self-construction				
Soc_1	Soc_2	Soc_3	Soc_4	
3,592593	3,814815	3,222222	3,432099	
Entertainment				
Ent_1	Ent_2	Ent_3		
5,098765	4,814815	3,481481		
Remuneration				
Remun_1	Remun_2	Remun_3	Remun_4	Remun_5
3,283951	3,37037	3,197531	2,91358	2,62963
Parasocial Interaction				
Para_1	Para_2	Para_3	Para_4	Para_5
3,604938	3,135802	5	4,024691	4,308642
Involvement				
Inv_1	Inv_2	Inv_3	Att_1	Att_2
2,91358	3,320988	3,987654	3,925926	3,851852
Brand Loyalty				
Loy_rep_1	Loy_rep_2	Loy_wom_1	Loy_wom_2	
5,419753	5,222222	4,567901	5,209877	
Facebook Dependency				
Dep_1	Dep_2	Dep_3		
3	3,530864	2,765432		