

Brand experiences in engaging marketing campaigns

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Master thesis in marketing and brand management

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This thesis was written as a part of the Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration at NHH. Neither the institution, the advisor, nor the sensors are - through the approval of this thesis - responsible for neither the theories and methods used, nor results and conclusions drawn in this work.

Abstract

This research examines the effects from engaging marketing campaigns on brand experiences and the potential outcome on affective commitment and loyalty. In doing this, it also test the validity of the brand experience scale in a new setting during a short term marketing campaign.

The research was conducted as a natural experiment during a marketing event arranged by Litago. Data were collected from participants and a control group, and the survey was sent out through the online survey tool Qualtrics. After collection, the data were analyzed in the statistics software STATA to reveal effects and explore causal relationships between the various marketing constructs.

The findings lend some support to the suggestion that brand experiences can be enhanced through engaging marketing events. However, the experience construct is multi-dimensional and not all dimensions were significantly affected. This emphasizes the possibility to create events that stimulate specific brand experiences. Engagement in the situation is enhanced by degree of participation, and it is found to be a mediator of the impact from participation on event, on the brand experiences. This point out the importance of creating fun and interesting marketing campaigns, which consumers enjoy and are willing to engage in. The positive effect from engagement to affective commitment and loyalty is found to be mediated by brand experiences. Brand experiences are good predictors of loyalty and it also predicts affective commitment through some dimensions. Marketers should emphasize the affective and sensory experiences, since these have the strongest impact on loyalty and affective commitment. However, they need to be aware of, that even though their campaigns create engagement and strengthen the brand experiences, this does not necessarily translate into effects on the attitudinal and behavioral variables.

Preface

This independent study was written as a part of my Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration at NHH, fall 2012. The thesis is a mandatory part of the master degree and counts for 30 study credits within my main profile of marketing and brand management.

I have conducted my research as a natural experiment during a marketing event, arranged by Litago. I started preparations and communication with Litago already in April 2012 to make sure that everything was ready when the campaign started in August. Unfortunately the campaign did not turn out exactly as planned, as some schools cancelled the event right before the tour started. This affected my research and I did not obtain as many observations as I hoped for, and I only obtained information from two different schools.

I have enjoyed this independent work and the variation throughout the process. I found it interesting to get a hands-on approach on consumer research techniques and it was fun to participate at the events and see how the students enjoyed the activity. I have learned a lot at all stages of the process and I have acquired new knowledge of theories and techniques that hopefully will be relevant for future work situations.

Finally I would like to thank the people that have helped me during this process. First of all, my supervisor: Einar Breivik for his feedback. I would also like to thank Per Egil Pedersen at The Center for Service Innovation at NHH, for his enthusiasm during the early stages of the process that truly inspired me to carry out this research. His helpfulness and quick responses have been of great value to me. I will also thank Birgit Andrine Apenes Solem for her consolidation on the engagement scale. My final appreciations go to Product Manager for Litago: Martina Ohlsson for her positive attitude, and for letting me take part in this fun and engaging marketing campaign.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In the mature markets of today, there is fierce competition, and numerous of producers compete for the same customers. Many produced goods are of similar quality and meet the same needs and a strong brand with high brand equity is crucial to succeed. Traditionally, communication through mass media has been utilized for marketing purposes, but this does no longer seem to be enough. Media overflows with different types of marketing communication, but consumers generally seem to pay less attention to the traditional media channels such as radio and TV (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006). They want to be entertained in more active ways, and new and creative strategies for communicating brand values are aspiring in the marketplace. To be able to differentiate their products and gain competitive advantage, it is essential to deliver unique customer experiences that engage the individuals in long-term relationships (Iglesias, et al., 2011).

Brand experiences are created at any encounter between the customer and the firm, the product or brand representatives (Meyer & Schwager, 2007). Traditionally these encounters have been discussed for service products and during contact with employees in support settings and in usage situations with the product. Research on experiences created during these ongoing customer-brand relationships has found that brand experiences have great impact on satisfaction and loyalty (Brakus, et al., 2009). New research have also emphasized the importance of brand experiences for produced goods and have found the same positive effects on loyalty (Iglesias, et al., 2011).

Even producers of consumables are starting to realize that they might benefit from new marketing strategies that engage the consumers in the brand and develop positive brand experiences. Customer relationships should be built through programs that involve individuals and get them connected with the brand (Vivek, et al., 2012), and many producers have tried new marketing strategies for engaging and involving the customers. Soft drink producers such as Redbull and Litago have attempted to create good brand experiences through interactive and engaging marketing events that stimulate the consumers on more dimensions through different activities.

1.2. Motivation

The brand experience scale has been tested in different settings: in ongoing relationships and for both service brands and produced brands. I aim to expand on this research and examine the development of experiences during a specific marketing campaign. This is important research for many producers that sell their products through mass-outlets and simply do not have an opportunity to keep a continuously close customer-relationship. Low involvement products and consumables might also benefit from committed customers that hold strong and favorable brand experiences. The emerging field of consumer engagement is suggested to be an antecedent to brand experiences (Hollebeek, 2011) and it would be interesting to connect these theories and see how they overlap and complement each other. Engaged consumers that enjoy the brand encounters and willingly participate in brand related activities are beneficial to the firm, but more research is needed on this relationship and how marketers can benefit from enhancing the consumer engagement during campaigns.

1.3. Research objectives

The major purpose of this research is to provide insight into how such engaging marketing campaigns affect consumers' brand experiences. I will attempt to develop our understanding of the relationship between engagement and brand experiences and how engagement in the situation might contribute to development of stronger brand experiences. Finally, I will examine the outcomes of these processes and what influence brand experiences and engagement have on the individuals' affective commitment and their loyalty towards the brand. During this research, the brand experience scale will also be validated in a new setting of a short-term campaign.

Research question

To what extent can consumer engagement in a specific marketing campaign enhance brand experiences, and will it eventually generate affective commitment and loyalty?

2. Theory

2.1. “The experience economy”

Pine and Gilmore (1998) introduced the new “experience economy”, and asserted that goods and services were no longer enough to secure competitive advantage. The idea of value creation through customer experiences was already referred to by Holbrook and Hirschman in 1982, and gained massive interest in the late 1980s (Ismael, et al., 2011). In highly competitive markets, it is challenging for brands to differentiate themselves on product features, and unique customer experiences are necessary to gain competitive advantage (Iglesias, et al., 2011). A service-centered view has emerged, in which customers should be involved in the customization of the products and services to better fit their needs (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Brand experiences engage consumers in the brand and create attachments between the parties rather than focusing on functional benefits (Schmitt, 1999). Relationship marketing relates to being the preferred brand by developing trust and commitment between the consumer and the organization (Doyle & Roth, 1992) and by enhancing experiences, firms can develop and maintain good customer-brand relationships that are beneficial for business (Bowden, 2009).

2.2. Experiential marketing

A commercial experience can be considered as engaging co-creation activities between a provider and a consumer where the consumer perceives value during the encounter and in the memory of this encounter (Poulsson & Kale, 2004). Poulsson and Kale did their research in the entertainment and leisure industries, but the relevance of their findings expands into other industries. They advocated five elements of a successful experience with the potential to differentiate products and to create competitive advantage. It should be of personal relevance, is must be novel and surprising, include some degree of learning and finally it should lead to increased consumer engagement. Personal relevance is important because of its direct effect on the consumer’s involvement in the experience. An experience that a consumer can identify with will be more appealing to that person, and will increase his or her engagement in the situation. The novelty principle is based on the assumption that people are attracted to things that are new and different and they will show great interest in these situations. Also, a surprising and unexpected experience is preferable, since this is will make it more memorable.

Consumers that experience learning will also be more engaged in the situation. And finally, for the consumers to be highly engaged, they should be involved through interactivity during the experience.

Traditionally, research was concerned with the commercial experience during the service or product encounter, but many marketers have realized that consumers also can be engaged in experiences created through communication and marketing campaigns. Sponsorship during different events has been a common practice to develop brand relationships. However, Vivek et al. (2009) emphasize that participation and banners at such events is not enough to involve consumers in their brands. Organizations need to engage the individual and participate in activities to co-create experiences with the individuals.

Consumers should be involved in events as active participants and when they enjoy the activity they will develop emotional attachments to the brand (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006). Four features that differentiate experiential marketing events from simply sponsorship-events are suggested by Whelan and Wohlfeil. Firstly, it should be experience-oriented, in which the consumers are encouraged to experience the brand as an active participant. Secondly, the activity should be self-initiated, but by staging events the marketer is in control of the experience and the way it affects the consumers. There should further be interactivity between participants, spectators and brand representatives. And at last, and in order to engage the consumers emotionally, the marketer should bring a creative and unique story that differs from the consumer's everyday life and captures their imagination.

2.3. Brand experiences

Brand experiences can be defined as: “subjective internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by a brand-related stimuli” (Brakus, et al., 2009, p. 53). These brand-related stimuli are part of the brands' design and identity. It could be slogans, mascots, packaging, brand-identifying colors, ways of communication, or environments where the brand is sold or marketed (Brakus, et al., 2009). Hence, experiences occur whenever consumers interact with the brand. This interaction can be direct when the consumers are in physical contact with the product; when they shop, buy or consume products, or it can be indirect through advertising and marketing communication. The concept of brand experiences was developed and measured by Brakus et al. in 2009,

However, many researchers had already explored the area of experiences. Most of them focused on situations in which product or service experiences arose and not so much on the nature of these experiences (Brakus, et al., 2009). Brakus et al. transferred these theories into brand related situations and developed an official scale for measuring the concept. Their framework presents brand experiences as a four-dimensional concept consisting of a sensory, affective, cognitive and behavioral dimension.

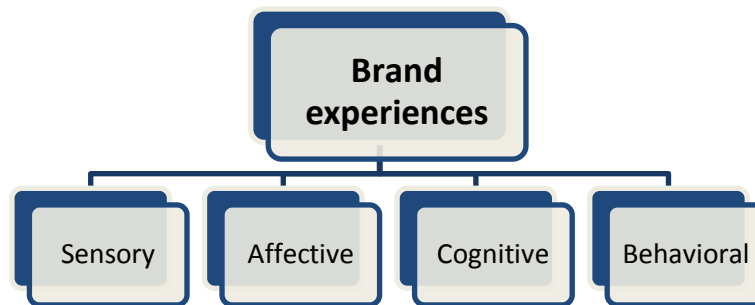


Figure 1: Brand experiences

The four dimensions describe different types of brand experiences that the consumers might hold. The sensory dimension captures to what extent a brand appeals to a consumer's senses and what impressions it makes on his/her senses. The affective dimension relates to in what degree a brand induces feelings and emotions in consumers. The intellectual or cognitive dimension concerns in what ways the brand stimulates consumers' curiosity, thinking and problem solving. And finally the behavioral items account for the brands ability to engage consumers in physical activities. They also tested for a fifth dimension of brand experiences; the social dimension, that was supposed to reflect relationships with others, and the feelings of belonging to a community. However, their research found that the emotional and the social items loaded on the same factor, and they merged these two into the affective dimension. Hence, their studies resulted in a 12-items brand experience scale represented through the four dimensions; sensory, affective, cognitive and behavioral experiences.

They validated the scale on service brands and tested how brand experiences could predict consumer behavior. They found brand experiences to be strong predictors of satisfaction and loyalty, both indirectly and directly through brand personality (Brakus, et al., 2009). Iglesias et al. (2011) validated the same scale on product brands and also found it to be a good

predictor of loyalty; however, they suggested the effect to be fully mediated by affective commitment.

Nysveen et al. (2012) continued to develop the brand experience scale from Brakus et al., and they tested the original five-dimensional concept in service environments. In contrast to the research by Brakus et al., they found that the social items loaded on a separate factor with high discriminant validity from the other dimensions. They expanded the framework to also include a relational dimension, and demonstrated its reliability and prediction validity in service contexts.

Brakus et al. were the first ones to develop a framework for measuring brand experience, but they were not the first ones to highlight the importance of experiences in marketing. Ever since Pine and Gilmore introduced the experience economy in 1998, different researchers have developed frameworks to explain experiences in both marketing, social science and in organizational settings. The following table gives an overview of the different categorizations of experiences that will be elaborated in the following.

	Sensory	Affective	Behavioral	Intellectual	Relational
Brakus et al.	Sensory	Affective (+social)	Behavioral	Cognitive	
Nysveen et al.	Sensory	Affective	Behavioral	Intellectual	Relational
Pine & Gilmore	Esthetic, entertainment		Escapist	Educational	
Schmitt	Sense	Feel	Act	Think	Relate

Figure 2: Dimensions of brand experiences

Pine and Gilmore (1998) studied experiences in retail environments and during events, and classified experiences in a framework according to a consumer's degree of participation, and the connection between the participant and the event, or performance. According to this framework, they grouped experiences in four categories of entertaining, educational, escapist and esthetic experiences. The most common association to an experience is the entertaining one such as concerts and watching TV, where people are absorbed in the situation but they only participate passively. During educational experiences, the individuals participate more actively, but still keep a distance from the event or product. This could be the case when consumers come to learn about how to upgrade their products. During an escapist experience,

the consumers are more involved in the event and participate actively. Pine and Gilmore exemplifies this with acting in a play or playing in an orchestra. Finally during esthetic experiences the individuals are immersed in the situation and activity, but only in a passive way. This might be the case when visiting an art gallery or observing an event from the outside. Their work outlines the nature of customer experiences, but they do not emphasize the multidimensionality of experiences and that the categories might intertwine.

Based on theories from cognitive science, Schmitt (1999) proposed five strategic experiential modules that explain the different types of customer experiences. These modules are sense, feel, think, act, and relate, and they overlap with the four dimensions from Brakus et al. The objective of the sense module is to create sensory experiences through sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. The feel module appeals to the feelings and emotions of the consumer, and creates affective experiences. Think relates to the intellect and creates cognitive, problem-solving experiences that engage consumers creatively. While the act module engages consumers in physical experiences and might enforce consumers to change lifestyle or behavior. Finally, the relate module accounts for the social aspect of the experience; it concerns the individuals desire for self-improvement and positive perception by others. Schmitt categorized the first three dimensions as individual experiences, and the last two as shared experiences.

Gentile et al. (2007) examine the different dimensions of an experience and how the setting of an experience can contribute to the highest value creation for consumers and the company. They find that all modules are connected, and it is hard to distinguish them. In line with previous research they suggest that experiences are most successful when they possess more qualities at the same time.

A recent field of interest within relationship marketing is the engagement concept, and it appears to be closely related to brand experiences. While brand experiences are considered to be enduring over time (Bowden, 2009) the engagement is context specific and occurs during specific interactions between the customer and the brand (Brodie, et al., 2011). Brand experiences are suggested to be consequences of engagement (Hollebeek, 2011), and the more engaged a person is in the situation, the stronger experiences he or she might develop.

2.4. Engagement

Engagement concerns an individual's investment in different situations (Bowden, 2009) and it is based on the individual's motivation to participate in a situation (Hollebeek, 2011). This is in contrast to the brand experiences that develop even though the person is not motivated, or show any interest in the object or situation. The more involved a person is in the situation, the higher engagement this person will exert.

Hollebeek (2011) explains customer engagement as “the level of an individual customer's motivational, brand related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in direct brand interactions.” (Hollebeek, 2011, p. 790). The cognitive dimension is represented through immersion and the level of brand-related concentration of a customer. A customer with high cognitive engagement is very focused on the situation and barely pays attention to anything else. Emotional engagement is expressed in the customer's level of pride and inspiration in particular brand interactions. A person with high affective engagement is emotionally engaged in the situation and feels energetic and enthusiastic. Finally, the behavioral brand-related activity is conceptualized through activation and the informants' willingness to spend time and effort in interacting with specific brands.

Figure 3 portrays Hollebeek's three-dimensional engagement concept.

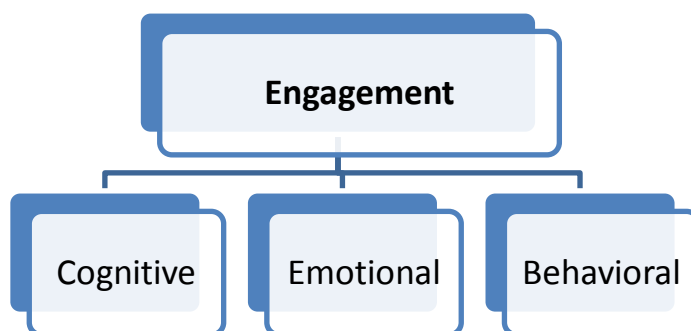


Figure 3: Engagement

Vivek et al. (2012) focus on the broader concept of consumer engagement as the degree of participation in an organizations activity, and the consumer's connection with an organizations offering. They expand the focus of research to also include individuals that not necessarily purchase the products, but that interacts with the brand in other ways. They classify engagement according to whether the interaction is based on activities or offers, and

whether it is initiated by the consumer or the organization. Engagement in their research is presented as cognitive, affective, behavioral, and social elements. The cognitive and affective elements concern the experiences and feelings of the consumers, and the behavioral and social elements concern the degree of participation from the individuals (Vivek, et al., 2012). Their dimensions are overlapping with Hollebeek's, but they also add the social element to it.

Engagement has been conceptualized as the psychological process that explains the underlying mechanism of loyalty formation (Bowden, 2009). Bowden investigated how loyalty is developed for new customers, and maintained for repeat purchase customers of a service brand. Emotionally and rational bonds are suggested to develop from calculative commitment for new customers. Through increased involvement and trust from repeat purchase customers, it will eventually lead to affective commitment and enduring brand loyalty. The emotional and relational bonds are overlapping with Hollebeek's framework, but the behavioral dimension is not emphasized.

Even though the engagement concept is relatively new within the field of marketing, it has already been heavily investigated in other research settings. Schaufeli (2002) investigated engagement in a work context and claimed that engaged workers would enhance an organization's productivity. He described the engaged workers to be highly involved and dedicated in their work, and they feel enthusiastic and inspired. They are also likely to be very concentrated and focused on the situation. This is overlapping with Hollebeek's affective and cognitive state, but also Schaufeli was criticized for not including a behavioral dimension.

Rich et al. (2010) continued to research engagement in work contexts, and he developed a three dimensional scale to measure job engagement. The dimensions were overlapping with Hollebeek's, and reflected the physical, cognitive and affective engagement that were also generally agreed upon by both (Kahn, 1990) and (Patterson, et al., 2006). Solem (forthcoming) adapted the scale of Rich et al. into Norwegian, and transferred it to a marketing setting of an online brand community. Her research could not verify a three-dimensional engagement concept, but focused on the engagement construct as a whole.

Most researchers have explained the engagement concept as a state of mind, but Van Doorn et al. (2010) turn focus to the physical actions that the engaged customers exercise. They developed the construct of customer engagement behaviors (CEB) that capture the actual behaviors of engaged customers, and not only their way of thinking. The consequences of engagement are positive and it is anticipated to make the customers more connected with the

brand and involved in product encounters. This enhances trust and foster affective commitment, that eventually is anticipated to transfer into loyalty (Hollebeek, 2011). Engaged customers are likely to participate in CEB-activities such as word-of-mouth spreading, recommendations, blogging, and so on (van Doorn, et al., 2010) and might help to attract new customers (Vivek, et al., 2012).

2.5. Loyalty

Loyalty concerns a person's commitment to rebuy a preferred product in the future (Oliver, 1999). Traditionally, research has focused on behavioral measures of loyalty such as purchase proportion and purchase sequence of the same brand, as well as probabilities of future purchase (Evanschitzky, et al., 2006). Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) criticized behavioral measures for only capturing the outcome of a dynamic process. These effects could be caused by habits or other situational factors such as price and convenience that could not be discovered in their behavior. They asserted that loyalty consists of both an attitudinal and a behavioral component. When they examined the underlying factors of loyalty, they found commitment to be essential in developing loyalty (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978).

Dick and Basu (1994) also considered loyalty as two-dimensional, and they explained it as the relationship between attitude toward the brand and the behavioral component. They asserted that loyalty are developed from three different types of commitment; cognitive, affective and conative commitment (Dick & Basu, 1994). The cognitive antecedents are associated with brand beliefs and logical reasoning based on information and advantages of a product. The affective component reflects the consumers feelings towards a product, and their satisfaction with it. And finally, the conative part is based on behavioral and economic reasoning of a consumer. Oliver (1999) develops this three-dimensional idea further, and argues that loyalty is build up of different phases, and that the tripartite conceptualization of attitudes constitutes specific sequences in the process of loyalty formation.

Research has found that loyal customers are important for future business and they have the potential to increase the profitability of an organization in many ways. The costs of retaining old customers are substantially smaller than acquiring new ones (Oliver, 1999) and loyal customers might also help to attract new ones by spreading good word-of-mouth about the firm (Vivek, et al., 2012). They are also less price-sensitive and willing to pay a price-

premium for this specific brand (Rowley, 2005). Loyal customers are highly involved with the company and life-long relationships ideally develop between these parties (Rowley, 2005).

There are many suggested reasons as to why customers stay loyal. Satisfaction is a necessary antecedent to loyalty, but there are also many other factors contributing the explanation of why customers choose to stay with a company (Oliver, 1999). The focus of creating consumer relationship also outside product purchase has been emphasized, and in these situations satisfaction might not be a good measurement tool for loyalty. Affective commitment is asserted by Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) as an essential component attitudinal loyalty and it is perhaps a better measurement tool for these purposes.

2.6. Affective commitment

Commitment is an important concept with the relational marketing, and it is a judgment of the brand that is not based on functional attributes but on emotional or psychological bonds (Bowden, 2009). A person that is committed to a brand is willing to make an effort in continuing a relationship with this brand (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Evanschitzky (2006) identified two different types of commitments: affective and continuance commitment (Evanschitzky, et al., 2006). The affective component reflects the individuals' wish to stay with the organization due to positive emotions (Meyer & Schwager, 2007), while continuance commitment concerns a customers need to stay with the organization due to lack of alternatives or high switching costs (Iglesias, et al., 2011). Allen and Meyer (1990) also added a third component; the normative commitment, that is based on the feeling that they ought to stay.

The affective commitment is the most interesting one in this area of research, given that it can be influenced by organizations that aim to enhance customer engagement and brand experiences. Evanschitzky et al. (2006) asserted that affective commitment involves feelings of attachment, trust, and identification. They emphasize the positive nature of affective commitments and that these attachments are based on consumers' free choice. They are important for building good customer relations and these emotional bonds appear to be the most enduring source to loyalty (Evanschitzky, et al., 2006).

Allen and Meyer (1990) studied commitment in an organizational context and suggested affective commitment as the motivation to stay with the organization due to identification

with it, involvement with it, and the liking of the membership or consumption of the brand. Kumar et al. (1995) transferred these components of affective commitment into a customer relationship in the context of a car-dealer. He measured affective commitment on a three-item scale with items reflecting the customers’ trust in the firm, their identification with it, and how they feel an emotional bond with the firm or brand.

Iglesias et al. (2011) found a positive relation between brand experiences and loyalty and concluded that the whole effect could be mediated through affective commitment. They emphasize the need to focus on emotional experiences to enhance the opportunity of increased loyalty. This corresponds to different models of customer engagement suggesting that affective commitment is an important consequence of customer engagement (Brodie, et al., 2011).

3. Conceptual framework

3.1. Conceptual model

The conceptual model presents the proposed relationships between consumer engagement and brand experiences, and the effect of these concepts on attitudinal and behavioral outcomes such as affective commitment and loyalty.

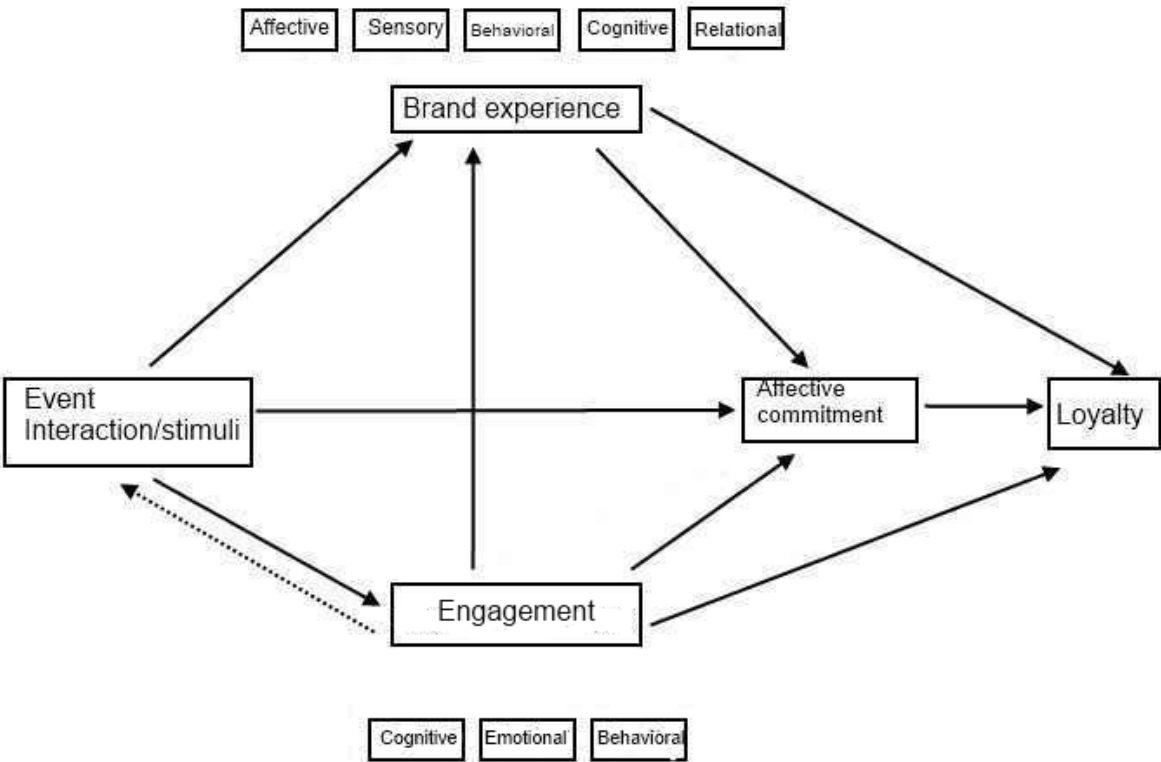


Figure 4: Conceptual model

This model merges three different frameworks from previous research by Hollebeek (2011), Brakus et al. (2009) and Iglesias et al. (2011). Hollebeek's framework suggests engagement to be enhanced by interactions with the brand. Further on, this engagement is supposed to strengthen the customer relationship and lead to affective commitment and loyalty. Brakus et al. (2009) found similar connections for brand experiences and also suggested brand experiences to be strong predictors of loyalty. Iglesias et al. (2011) continued to exploit this relationship, and found that the effect was fully mediated by affective commitment.

When a variable accounts for the relation between an independent and a dependent variable, it is said to be a mediator of the relationship (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Since many variables in the model are closely connected and concern the same ideas, they are highly correlated and mediation relationships are likely to appear. This effect will be more thoroughly explained later on.

3.2. Propositions

The logic behind the conceptual model and the causal relationships are explained and justified in the following. The first propositions relate to the direct effect from the marketing event, and the specific relations are accounted for subsequently. The simple relationships are elaborated on, before the mediation effects are discussed.

Brand experiences are defined as the consumer responses to brand related stimuli (Brakus, et al., 2009). A marketing event attempts to involve the consumers and activate the participants at more levels. They might be stimulated by brand related colors, contact with brand representatives, logo and so on, and this leads to the proposal that such events will create brand experiences. Individuals that participate actively, is likely to experience stronger stimuli, than those just watching. This coincides with Schmitt's (1999) proposals that experiences result from direct observation or participation in events.

The first proposal to test is:

H1: Participation at marketing event strengthens brand experiences

When customers participate actively in brand related activities and are involved at more levels, their engagement will also increase (Hollebeek, 2011). Vivek et al. (2012) emphasize that engagement is not only related to purchase situations, but any brand encounters. It is context specific and occurs within specific situations (Brodie, et al., 2011). Such a situation

could be event marketing where the physical surroundings and the interaction between consumer and brand representatives create impressions in the mind of the consumer. It is also emphasized that participation is a required antecedent to consumer engagement (Brodie, et al., 2011) and the more an individual participates, the higher engagement this person will exert.

H2: Participation at marketing event affects consumer engagement

Since participation is voluntarily, the effect might also go the other way around as spectators or people that pass by find the situation or brand engaging and want to participate more actively.

Hollebeek (2011) implies that brand experiences are consequences of customer engagement. Engagement is expected to increase the quality of the customer-brand relationship, and this is likely to affect the brand experiences in a positive way (Hollebeek, 2011). Brand experiences are responses from stimuli (Brakus, et al., 2009) and the more engaged a person is in the situation, the more and stronger stimuli he or she will be receptive to. They develop more feelings and responses and hence stronger brand experiences.

H3: Consumer engagement affects brand experiences positively

Brand relationships are enhanced by consumers' participation in unique experiences with an organizations offerings and activities (Vivek, et al., 2012). When consumers are involved in events as active participants and they enjoy the activity they will develop emotional attachments and thus: affective commitment towards the brand (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006).

H4: Participation at marketing event influence affective commitment

Loyalty is supposed to be influenced in any product encounter. If a consumer perceives value during the product encounter and in the memory of this encounter they are likely to want to repeat these activities (Poulsson & Kale, 2004). An antecedent to loyalty is the desire to maintain a relationship (Evanschitzky, et al., 2006) and individuals that enjoy this interaction with the brand are more willing to maintain the relationship through other interactions, such as repeat product consumption.

H5: Participation at marketing event influence loyalty

The more experiences a consumer has with a brand, the more emotional responses will be evoked (Brakus, et al., 2009), and the stronger attachments the individuals feels toward the brand. Consumers are committed if they identify with the brand, feel involved with it, and enjoy the consumption activity (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Hence brands that provide strong and superior experiences are likely to gain a higher affective commitment from their consumers toward the brand (Iglesias, et al., 2011).

H6: Brand experiences strengthen affective commitments

Brand experiences are usually responses to stimuli with positive outcomes, and it is likely that the consumers want to repeat these activities and become more loyal (Brakus, et al., 2009). Experiences enhance the emotional tie between a brand and its customers, which leads to higher customer loyalty (Gentile, et al., 2007). Experiences also promote emotional and cognitive responses that lead to more brand related associations and the strengthening of the brand image in the consumer's mind, which eventually increases loyalty (Keller, 1993).

H7: Brand experiences affect loyalty positively

Affective commitment involves feelings of attachment, trust, and identification (Evanschitzky, et al., 2006). Engaged customers take part in activities in an enthusiastic way and they are immersed in the situation (Hollebeek, 2011). When they enjoy the activity they are willing to spend time and energy in a brand encounter. They develop feelings and attachments to the brand which enhance the affective commitment (Hollebeek, 2011).

H8: Consumer engagement strengthen affective commitment

An engaged customer will evidentially have strong connections with the brand which might lead to favorable behavioral responses (Vivek, et al., 2012). When they enjoy the brand encounters, they are likely to want to repeat these activities and become loyal. Engaged customers develop more positive attitudes toward a brand (Vivek, et al., 2012), and thus, will be more loyal (Keller, 1993).

H9: Consumer engagement affects loyalty positively

Loyalty is classified in both a behavioral and an attitudinal part (Dick & Basu, 1994) and customers with positive attitude towards a brand are likely to be loyal (Keller, 1993). The affective commitment reflects the individuals' wish to stay with the organization (Meyer &

Schwager, 2007), and those customers that feel emotional attachments to the brand will have a desire to maintain a continuing relationship and are likely to be loyal customers (Evanschitzky, et al., 2006).

H10: Affective commitment affects loyalty positive

3.2.1. Propositions for the mediation effects

Finally, based on these ten proposals and the reasoning behind them, some proposals for the mediation effects are also suggested.

From proposal 1-3 there is a suggested close relationship between participation on event, engagement and brand experiences. Engagement seems to capture the same effect as degree of participation and the fact that people that participate actively naturally are more engaged in the situation. This appears to be the reason why they are more receptive for different stimuli and develop stronger brand experiences (Brakus, et al., 2009). Hence, the effect from participation seems to be mediated by engagement.

Hm1: Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between participation on event and brand experiences

Affective commitment is developed from the cognitions, behaviors and feelings that the individual develops during engagement in product encounters (Hollebeek, 2011). However, this engagement in the situation does not necessarily evoke lasting emotions and this effect is reinforced by the brand experiences that enhance the emotional tie between a brand and its consumers (Gentile, et al., 2007). The influence on affective commitment from engagement appears through the individuals' development of brand experiences.

Hm2: Brand experiences mediate the relationship between engagement and affective commitment.

With the same reasoning, experiences are also suggested to mediate the relationship from engagement to loyalty. Engaged customers that enjoy the activity will have a desire to repeat the activity and become loyal (Vivek, et al., 2012). The fact that they enjoy the activity

transfers into positive brand experiences and development of loyalty through these mechanisms.

Hm3: Brand experiences mediate the relationship between engagement and loyalty.

Engaged customers will also develop more positive attitudes and emotions toward a brand, and through these emotional attachments, the customer develop loyalty (Evanschitzky, et al., 2006). Hence affective commitment might be mediator of the relationship between engagement and loyalty (Vivek, et al., 2012).

Hm4: Affective commitment mediates the effect from engagement to on loyalty.

Finally, the positive brand experiences also lead to a desire to repeat the activities, and a direct effect on loyalty (Brakus, et al., 2009). However, this influence is largely caused by the positive attitude and emotions that the experiences have triggered, and in that way affective commitment seems to be a mediator of the relationship between brand experiences and loyalty (Iglesias, et al., 2011).

Hm5: Affective commitment mediates the effect from brand experiences on loyalty.

4. Methodology

Methodology is the explanation of how the research was conducted and why specific choices were made, and I will present and justify these choices.

4.1. Design

Research design, is the overall plan for how you will proceed in answering the research question (Saunders, et al., 2009) and it is dependent on what kind of data is needed, how these data could be obtained and how they should be analyzed (Gripsrud, et al., 2010). The three most common purposes of a study are: exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. While the purpose of an exploratory study is to develop a problem further and gain new insight, the descriptive study will describe the problem and delimit it in more sub-problems and categories. Finally the explanatory study seeks to explain relationships between relevant variables. The design of this thesis is explanatory in that it attempts to verify the effect from

this specific event and explain the causal relationships between different concepts of engagement and brand experiences, and their effect on loyalty.

The next step is to choose an approach to the topic. I choose a deductive approach, which means that I base my research on theories and frameworks that already exists (Saunders, et al., 2009), and I want to expand on these theories and test hypotheses on the relationships. Regarding what information should be collected, I choose a quantitative approach because the problem is well defined and the constructs can be quantified on scales. I have clear hypotheses and a quantitative approach allows for empirically testing of the causal relationships and enable generalization of the results. In analyzing quantitative data, statistical software simplifies the process.

4.2. Research strategy: experiment

The research strategy should be chosen based on the objective of the research, existing knowledge and available resources (Saunders, et al., 2009). An experiment, as a strategy, seeks to reveal whether a change in an independent variable causes changes in the dependent variable (Hakim, 2000). I chose experimental design to be able to reveal whether there is an effect of such a marketing event or not. When conducting an experiment, two groups are compared. The test group is exposed to some kind of stimuli, while the control group is exposed to an alternative treatment, or not exposed at all (Saunders, et al., 2009). To demonstrate that the effects are caused by the actual treatment, alternative explanations to differences between the groups should be controlled for (Saunders, et al., 2009). It is crucial that the test and control group are exposed to the same external influences, and are as similar as possible in their mindset, age, direction of study, environment and so on.

4.2.1. Litago Ku-Rodeo

This experiment is conducted in cooperation with the biggest dairy producer in Norway; TINE. They have a product line specifically aiming at the younger consumers in an engaging and entertaining way. The Litago brand is fronted by the Litago-cow and marketed as a fun brand under the slogan: “et lekent friminutt i hverdagen” /”a fun timeout in the everyday life”. They focus on developing unique customer relationships and to create good user experiences by involving consumers in interactive communication, both online and in real life (TINE, 2012).

This experiment took place in August 2012, when Litago was on tour to visit universities all over Norway. The idea was to engage the students in interactions with a mechanical Litago-cow. The event was a rodeo, where the students were supposed to ride the Litago-cow and try to stay on for as long as possible, while the cow twists and turns to make it harder to stay on. In an email sent 14/9-2012, the brand manager of Litago: Martina Ohlsson, stated the goal of the campaign to maintain the open and playful relationship with the consumers, to increase word of mouth and enhance the brand equity.

To attract students, Litago set up their arena at a central place at campus. They played loud music and offered small give-aways for contestants and coupons with 2 for 1 on Litago products. The Ku-rodeo was promoted as a Norwegian championship (NM) and the school that had the best total time to stay on the cow would win a huge pile of Litago chocolate milk. Students passing by were approached by representatives from the event agency: Nova Vista and encouraged to participate. But most importantly, the activity in itself looked fun and attracted both contestants and numerous of curious audiences. 85 students had a go on the cow in Halden and at Ås, 63 tried it out. People were constantly walking by and watching the event and the stipulated numbers of people watching and passing by, is around 2-300 at each university.

The event was chosen to meet certain criteria of an experience, and in line with classification of experimental event marketing. I will evaluate the Litago Ku-Rodeo according to Poulsson and Kale's framework of a successful experience. The personal relevance of this event might be questioned, but for those that wanted some entertainment and fun, the Ku-rodeo was personally relevant to them. It was in some sense novel and surprising as the participants were thrown off when they least expected it, and it was a fun break-away from their school days filled with studies and lectures. The experience did probably not include any learning, since most contestants only participated one time, but it definitely increased customer engagement in the situation with the loud music playing and the fun scene to watch. They were involved in interactions with both the cow and representatives from Litago.

I will also evaluate it according to Whelan and Wohlfeil's features of event marketing. Firstly, it is experience-oriented, and the customers are invited to interact with the cow in an active and behavioral way. Secondly, the activity is self-initiated and all contestants participated because they thought it looked fun and entertaining. There were some interactivity between the representatives from Litago, the audience and the participants. And finally, the event was

unique and different from the students' everyday life at university. According to Pine and Gilmore's classification, this experience is an entertaining one for the spectators that do not participate actively, but are still absorbed in the situation by watching their friends ride the cow. For the participants, the experience might be an escapist one. It is more intense, and they participate actively and are immersed in the activity by intense concentration on staying on the cow. Over all, the Litago Ku-rodeo seems like a suitable event for this research as it facilitates engagement in the situation, with the potential to develop an enhance brand experiences.

4.3. Data collection

Different research strategies are often combined, and in addition to the experiment, a survey was used to collect data.

I wanted to infer something about the populations, but since I was not able to collect information about all cases, samples are used to generalize the results to the whole population (Gripsrud, et al., 2010). By using probability sampling, all cases in the population have a known probability to be chosen, and these chosen cases are representative for the population (Saunders, et al., 2009).

The test group for this thesis was recruited during the events, where the researcher walked around and collected e-mail addresses. Both participants and audiences were approached and all students that were willing to give away their e-mail addresses were sent an email and kindly asked to answer the survey. All together, the test-group consisted of 147 students from Ås and 152 from HIOF.

The control groups were chosen from available e-mail lists at the universities homepages. 250 of the students with last names starting with an A from Halden were chosen, and 300 of the students with "and" somewhere in their names, from Ås, were sent a link to the survey and asked to participate. The response rate for the control group was lower than for the participants, and more students were contacted to make the two groups comparable in size. Another 200 students from HIOF were approached, this time random students with N as first letter in their last names. By using this random sampling technique, students from all age groups, both genders, and all faculties had the same probability of being contacted. However,

since only some individuals chose to answer the survey, the final sampling technique is not perfectly random.

4.4. Survey

The online survey tool; Qualtrics was used to conduct the survey. Respondents were sent a private email and informed about the objective of this thesis and their anonymity. They were then asked to click on a link if they agreed with these terms, and were directed to the online survey. You find the survey in appendix 6.

I chose a survey to be able to collect large amounts of data in a limited time period. Data collected through surveys are standardized and they allow for hypothesis testing of the causal relationships through electronic data tools. The large amount of information, ideally, also enables generalizing the results to the whole population (Saunders, et al., 2009).

However, there are also problems regarding the use of surveys for data collection. There are no opportunities for the researcher to explain the meanings of the questions, and consequently, there might be problems with validity regarding whether the respondents interpreted the questions in the right way. I will elaborate on this in the discussion of validity and reliability later on. There might also be problems with respondents not finishing the survey, for instance if they are interrupted or bored. To avoid these issues, the questions were made easily understandable and the amount of items that respondents had to consider, were kept at a minimum. To further motivate the respondents to finish, there was a chart at the bottom of the page, indicating how much of the survey they had completed at all times.

The survey started with a categorical question that separated the respondents in groups after their degree of participation at the event. Whether they were present or not, and also specified by whether they rode the cow or only observed the event. Attendants at the event were then asked questions of their engagement, while the group that did not participate skipped this part and went straight on to questions of their experiences with Litago.

Respondents were presented statements about their engagement during the event, and their experiences with Litago and were asked to rate their answers on a 7 points likert scale according to how much they agreed with the statements. 7 points were used to have a neutral choice in the middle, and a broad range to be able to separate the responses. They were also asked to rate statements of their affective commitment and loyalty towards the brand on the

same 7 point likert scale. At the end of the survey, data of their previous consumption of Litago, their gender and university were collected.

4.4.1. Measures

The items of brand engagement are adapted from Solem (forthcoming). She transfers the scale by Rich et al. (2010) from a job context, into the field of marketing. The three dimensional scale measures the physical, emotional and cognitive dimensions of engagement and each dimensions is represented by three items. The items are adjusted to the brand Litago and context of the Ku-rodeo.

The 12 items brand experience scale developed by Brakus et al. (2009) measured the cognitive, sensory, affective and behavioral brand experience dimensions. The Center for Service Innovation (CSI), at NHH translated the scale into Norwegian and extended it by including items reflecting the relational dimension (Nysveen, et al., 2012). All items appeared with high loadings on one factor and great prediction validity, and I replicate this 15 items scale and adapt it to this research.

Loyalty was measured through five items representing both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. Items regarding intentions of being loyal in the future and intentions of recommending the brand to others, were originally inspired by the scale of customer-based brand equity developed by Yoo and Donthu in 2001, and also utilized by Brakus et al. in 2009. This is also the case for the item regarding this brand being customers' first choice. The item concerning the degree to which the customers will continue to be a customers for the next three years where inspired from Wagner & Rudolph (2009). And finally, an item for measuring preference to other competing brands was replicated from Evanschitzky, et al. (2006).

The affective commitment is conceptualized in three items of identifying with the product, appreciating the relationship and having positive emotions towards the producer, all three inspired from the work of Kumar et al. (1995) and adapted to this research setting.

4.5. Reliability and validity

Reliability concerns the trustworthiness of the results. The outcomes should not be based on coincidences, but ought to be consistent when repeating the measures several times (Saunders, et al., 2009). To secure reliability, I collect data from two very different schools. Also, to assure that the answers were not affected by the mood or "Litago-spirit" during these specific

events, the survey was sent out subsequent to the events. Balancing the fact that the respondents still had to remember the event, and the fact that they should have some time to elaborate on their experiences, the survey was sent out two weeks after the events. Finally, I used premade scales and attempted to keep the additional formulations neutral, not to influence the respondents' answers.

Validity is related to the accuracy of the measures, and whether findings are reflecting the concept that the researcher is attempting to measure (Gripsrud, et al., 2010).

External validity concerns to the generalizability of the results, and whether the results from one specific research might be applicable in other research settings or on other user groups (Saunders, et al., 2009). In order to increase external validity, I was aiming for a large sample size and attempted to include students with different background and interests.

Content validity relates to the extent in which the scales actually measure what they are supposed to measure (Gripsrud, et al., 2010). To secure content validity I use premade scales that have already been tested, and researchers at the Center of Service Innovation helped me to adapt the items into this specific context. To make sure the questions were interpreted as intended, I did a pilot survey. I asked 7 people to answer the survey while they explained what they inferred from each question. I rephrased some of the items and added introductions, to clarify the intended meaning. Since the items were replicated from previous studies, it was not possible to rephrase them to a large extent. But the language was slightly changed and adapted to this specific setting and the target group.

Construct validity refers to the extent that a particular measure relates to other measures in a consistent way as predicted from theory (Gripsrud, et al., 2010). Construct validity is made up of convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity concerns whether the items within the same construct converge in the same direction and are internal consistent. This can be tested by calculating the Cronbach's alpha for all items within each construct, and for the whole scale, as well as by examining correlation tables. Discriminant validity on the other hand, concerns whether the different constructs deviate from each other and can be clearly distinguished (Gripsrud, et al., 2010). You should expect homogeneity within the construct and heterogeneity among the constructs. Discriminant validity is examined through factor analysis where items are grouped together according to correlations between them.

4.6. Ethics

To secure ethical concerns, personvernombudet was contacted and they approved of the research method. In addition, the respondents were informed of the extent of this research, that information was confidential and that data would be deleted by the end of 2012. Finally they had the choice of answering the survey or not.

5. Statistical techniques

5.1. Factor analysis

After the data have been collected, the information needs to be structured into useful pieces of information. Factor analysis is a technique for data reduction in which items with high correlations are grouped together like one concept. Factor analysis reveals the underlying variance structure of the variables and it is useful for exploring patterns in correlation coefficients (Brown, 2001).

There are different methods to perform a factor analysis, and you can take either an exploratory or a confirmatory approach. An exploratory factor analysis is one where you search for patterns in the data, while a confirmatory factor analysis is suitable when you want to test already known hypotheses about the underlying dimensions in your data (Hair, et al., 2010). In this case I have specific frameworks from previous theory and I want to verify whether these suggested dimensions can explain the variation in my data. Based on this, I choose a confirmatory approach and carry out the analyses with principal factor analyses.

There are also different approaches for deciding how many factors to retain in the analysis, and I tested out many of them. The aim of many studies is to confirm structures that are suggested by existing theory. For this purpose, the numbers of factors to retain ought to be based on suggested frameworks (Hair, et al., 2010). Another approach for deciding how many factors to retain is to extract factors based on their eigenvalues. An eigenvalue is the variance of a factor and in a component analysis each variable will contribute with a value of 1 to the total eigenvalue (Hair, et al., 2010). The technique of extracting all factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 is called the latent root criterion and is based on the idea that all factors should account for the variance of at least one variable. One final approach is to examine the scree

plot. A scree plot graphs eigenvalues against the number of factors and as long as there is a distinct drop in the eigenvalue, the factor should be extracted (Hair, et al., 2010).

When the analysis is performed, the variance is spread out on factors. In an unrotated solution, the first factor account for the largest amount of variance and to get a better understanding of the numbers, a varimax rotation spread the variance on all factors.

The factor loadings are presented in a matrix and the loadings that appear are the correlations of each item with the specific factor. According to Hair et al. (2010) factor loadings should be greater than 0.5 to be significant and for convergent validity to be satisfactory. When higher loadings appear there is a well defined structure in the data. However, also correlations below 0.5 indicate a structure, and items with correlations greater than 0.3 on more than one factor are cross loading and reduce the discriminant validity. I decided on the best factor analyses through trial and fail, and many different techniques were tested before the best analysis, with the highest loadings and clear structure, was decided for.

5.2. Testing the reliability of the scales

After the factor analyses are performed, I test the reliability of the constructs to see if the items converge in the same direction. The Cronbach's alpha value relates to this internal consistency within the constructs. An alpha analysis displays what happens if one item is taken out of the scale. If the alpha value increases considerable, the scale might benefit from excluding this item. All of my constructs and dimensions are represented by at least 3 items, and a reliable scale should have values of Cronbach's alpha at around 0.8. The alpha value is affected by the numbers of items in the scale, and the more items the higher the Cronbach's alpha (Hair, et al., 2010).

5.3. Hypothesis testing

To examine the effects from the experiment, I compare the mean values for the different groups of participants. ANOVA-analyses are used as they allow for testing whether there are significant differences between more groups (Wooldridge, 2009). To examine the pair wise differences between two groups, post-hoc test are performed subsequent to the ANOVA. Post-hoc tests are criticized for being conservative, in that they reduce the likelihood for rejecting the null hypothesis when the null is true. In this thesis, Sidak-tests are utilized, as

this is considered to be the least conservative one (IDRE, 2012).When there are only two groups, t-tests are used to test the differences.

After examining the direct effect of this event, the relationships between the different marketing constructs are explored. Regression analysis is suitable for testing hypotheses and exploring these relationships and how the variables influence each other (Wooldridge, 2009). A regression examines the effect of one or more independent variables, on the dependent variable. The coefficients from the regression output present in what way each variable influence the dependent variable. While the individual t-tests examine whether each effect is different from zero, the F-test relates to the joint effect. P-values clarify whether these effects are significant. Finally, the explanation degree of the regression represents the amount of variance in the exploratory variable than can be explained by the included variables.

5.4. Mediation

When all simple relationships are analyzed, it is also interesting to examine the relationship between more variables, and how they interact with each other. Many of the variables are highly correlated and may explain the same effects. A mediation effect occurs when a variable accounts for the relation between an independent and a dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

The following model portrays this mediation effect. X is the independent variable which predicts Y, Y is the dependent variable, and M is the proposed mediator of the relationship between X and Y.

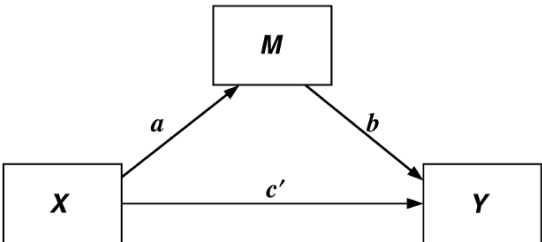


Figure 5: The mediation effect

According to Preacher and Hayes (2004) variable *M* can be considered as a mediator if

- (i) *X* significantly predicts *Y*
- (ii) *X* significantly predicts *M*
- (iii) *M* significantly predicts *Y* controlling for *X*

When the effect of *X* on *Y* diminishes down to zero when variable *M* is controlled for, there is perfect mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). When the effect of *X* on *Y* decreases but not down to zero, the effect is said to be partially mediated by variable *M*.

The mediation effects are tested online through the webpage of Kristopher J. Preacher (Preacher, 2012). Test statistics from regressions of the relationships are entered into a calculator that conducts a Sobel-test. The Sobel-test examines whether the indirect path from *X* to *Y*, when *M* is controlled for, is different from zero. If the null hypothesis is rejected, there is evidence that the relationship between *X* and *Y* is mediated by *M*. If there is full mediation, the effect from *X* disappears. In many cases, partially mediation occurs, and the effect is only reduced. I will use the Aroian test-statistic suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) because this does not make the assumption that the products of the standard errors are diminishingly small (Preacher, 2012)

6. Analysis

From Qualtrics, the data were downloaded to the statistical software program: STATA. To get a quick overview of the data, some descriptive statistics that explain characteristics of the sample group, is presented. Factor analyses are performed to structure the data and reduce the number of variables down to a manageable size. This enables for testing causal relationships between the constructs and statistical tests are performed to reveal these relations and differences between the groups. Finally, the mediation effects are examined before I finish off by presenting some general comments about the findings and implications for managers.

6.1. Preparing for analysis

Qualtrics presents data numeric according to the specific rating on a scale. Respondents were asked to evaluate in what extent they agreed to the statements and the answers were rated 1 if they strongly disagree and 7 if they agree. Also the qualitative questions are coded numeric. Qualitative questions such as their participation during the event were coded from 1-4 according to their degree of participation. 1: rode the cow, 4: have not heard of it before. To make the interpretation easier, the scale was reversed later on. The same was done for questions about their previous consumption.

237 responses were registered, however many respondents gave up after the first few questions, and their data are not taken into account. To secure validity, the surveys that were finished in less than one minute and observations with the same ranking of all items are also deleted from the dataset.

The participation variable is a categorical variable represented by the degree of participation. 56 respondents rode the cow, 69 watched the event, and the control group consisted of 46 students. Only 16 people answered that they passed by/had heard of the event. Unexpectedly, simple calculations of mean values among the groups reveal that these 16 people have stronger brand experiences than all other groups, even those who participated actively. The sample is too small to be considered representative and these 16 observations will be excluded from the rest of the analysis. After this quick filtering, 171 observations were left, in which 152 of them completed the whole survey. I also collected information about their previous consumption activities, gender and what university they study at.

6.2. Descriptive statistic

Descriptive statistics for the respondents are presented in the table below.

	Count	Sample
Gender		
Female	101	66.1%
Male	51	33.9%
University		
UMB	88	58.3%
HIOF	58	38.1%
Other	6	3.6%
Participation		
Never heard of event	46	26.9%
Spectators	69	40.4%
Sat on the cow	56	32.8%
Previous consumption		
Every second week or more often	37	24.3%
Once a month	23	15.1%
Less than once a month	69	45.4%
Never	23	15.1%

Table 1: Descriptive statistic

6.3. Factor analysis

6.3.1. Factoring the brand experience scale

A correlation table gives an overview of the structure in the data, and indicates what items converge in the same direction. After examining the correlation matrix of items from the brand experience scale, it appears that many items are correlated (Appendix 1). Especially the sensory and emotional items are highly correlated, and so are the cognitive and relational ones. Factor analyses are performed to separate the data into different constructs and test the discriminant validity between these.

Brakus et al. (2009) found four brand experience dimensions, and Nysveen et al. (2012) demonstrated loadings on five factors. To be able to confirm the dimensions of these existing frameworks, I start out by extracting five factors from the principal factor analysis.

The expected five-dimensional structure of brand experiences appears to be somehow justified, but the item A1: “Fremkaller følelser” cross loads on factor 2 with 0.56 and factor 3 with 0.65. This reduces the discriminant validity of the whole scale and reduces the loadings of more items. It is deleted before another factor analysis is performed.

Variable	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5
A2: Sterke følelser	0.0906	0.3691	0.1751	0.1283	0.8454
A3: Følelsesmessig engasjert	0.1611	0.1964	0.1367	0.2417	0.8766
S1: Sterkt intrykk på sansene	0.0302	0.7394	0.1901	0.1236	0.3897
S2: Interessante sanseneopplevelser	0.0798	0.7891	0.2288	0.2480	0.2872
S3: Appelerer til sansene	0.1024	0.8908	0.1176	0.0827	0.1503
B1: Aldri passiv	0.1864	0.3652	-0.0880	0.6960	0.1859
B2: Aktiv	0.1503	0.1446	0.1772	0.8687	0.1119
B3: Aktiviserer	0.2452	0.0375	0.2876	0.7318	0.3561
C1: Tenker	0.8474	0.1976	0.2342	0.1690	0.0960
C2: Løser problemer	0.9051	0.0394	0.3087	0.1221	0.1022
C3: Utfordrer	0.8840	-0.0121	0.2885	0.1513	0.0996
R1: Fellesskap	0.3926	0.2110	0.7722	0.1723	0.1619
R2: Familie	0.4232	0.1753	0.7948	0.0942	0.2009
R3: Aldri alene	0.3671	0.1625	0.7959	0.1421	0.1185
Eigenvalue	6.279	2.315	1.250	0.829	0.720
Explained variance	48.06%	16.54%	8.93%	5.92%	5.15%

Table 2: Varimax-rotation with five factors for the brand experiences

This second solution, with only two emotional items, is an improvement. There is a well defined structure in the data and all items load strongly on distinct factors. The classifications in factors are highlighted in bold. In line with framework, factor 1 represents the cognitive dimension, and it is made up of items C1-C3. Factor 2, the sensorial dimension consist of S1-S3. The relational dimension with items R1-R3 is represented by factor 3, and factor 4, with items B1-B3 makes up for behavioral dimension. Finally, factor 5, the affective dimension are made up of item A2 and A3.

I test the reliability of the five-dimensional brand experience scale and calculate the Cronbach's alpha values for each dimension, and for the whole scale.

Dimensions	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Affective	2	0.8986
Sensory	3	0.8751
Behavioral	3	0.8117
Cognitive	3	0.9372
Relational	3	0.9227
Brand experience	5	0.9165

Table 3: Cronbach's alpha values for the five-dimensional brand experience scale

All dimensions results in high alpha values and the scale seems like a reliable measure with great construct and convergent validity. Also the relational dimension, suggested by Nysveen et al. (2012), appears to be a positive contribution to the brand experience scale.

However there are some cross loadings, and all of the relational items appear with significant, but not strong, loadings on the cognitive dimension as well as their "own" dimension. The correlation table of these 5 factors, indicate strong correlations between the dimensions, and thus low discriminant validity.

	Cognitive	Sensory	Relational	Behavioral	Affective
Cognitive	1.0000				
Sensory	0.2722	1.0000			
Relational	0.6938	0.4434	1.0000		
Behavioral	0.4366	0.4655	0.4415	1.0000	
Effective	0.3185	0.6119	0.4442	0.5171	1.0000

Table 4: Correlation matrix with the five brand experience dimensions

The affective and the sensorial dimension, as well as the cognitive and the relational dimensions carry a lot of the same effects, with correlation greater than 0.6. Correlations greater than 0,8 lead to problems of multicollinearity (Berry & Feldmann, 1985) but these

problems might also appear for even lower correlations, when the correlation between the independent and the dependent variable is quite low, and the correlations between the independent variables are higher (Hair, et al., 2010). To avoid problems with multicollinearity, a solution with fewer variables might be preferable (Hair, et al., 2010).

According to the latent root criterion, three factors with eigenvalue greater than one are retained. The three factor solution is also verified from examination of the scree plot (Appendix 2). The rotated three-factor solution spreads variance on the three factors and all items demonstrate significant loadings. However, this time, item A3, “Følelsesmessig engasjert” indicate loadings close to 0.6 on the anticipated factor and loadings greater than 0.4 on factor 3. This item is deleted from the analysis to clarify the structure and improve discriminant validity between the factors. After deleting this item, the structure appears to be good and all items indicate high loadings on distinct factors. Again the classifications are highlighted in bold.

Variable	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3
A1: Fremkaller følelser	0.0352	0.8124	0.1510
A2: Sterke følelser	0.2091	0.7444	0.2385
S1: Sterkt inntrykk på sansene	0.1486	0.8327	0.1559
S2: Interessante sanseopplevelser	0.2094	0.8027	0.2578
S3: Appellerer til sansene	0.1499	0.8042	0.0961
B1: Aldri passiv	0.0860	0.3285	0.7339
B2: Aktiv	0.2217	0.1661	0.8487
B3: Aktiviserer	0.3775	0.2089	0.7556
C1: Tenker	0.8031	0.1145	0.2520
C2: Løser problemer	0.8950	0.0022	0.2012
C3: Utfordrer	0.8685	-0.0523	0.2302
R1: Fellesskap	0.7962	0.3212	0.1231
R2: Familie	0.8359	0.3167	0.0539
R3: Aldri alene	0.7866	0.2842	0.0784
Eigenvalue	6.571	2.515	1.267
Explained variance	46.93%	17.96%	9.05%

Table 5: Varimax-rotation with three factors for the brand experiences

The cognitive and relational items; C1-C3 and R1-R3 all load on factor 1, and for practical reasons, this dimension is named the cogni-relational one. The affective and sensorial items; A1, A2 and S1-S3 all load on factor 2, and this factor is called the affective-sensory one. Finally the behavioral items; B1-B3, are gathered in factor 3. I will continue my analysis with these 3 factors, to avoid problems with multicollinearity.

The Cronbach's alpha values for the three-dimensional construct are high and verify good internal consistency within each dimension. All three dimensions have alpha values greater than 0.8 and excluding any items will not increase the alpha value considerable. Cronbach's alpha for the whole brand experience scale is 0.9124, and it appears to be reliable and a good measurement tool.

Dimensions	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Affective + Sensory	5	0.8940
Behavioral	3	0.8117
Cognitive + Relational	6	0.9313
Brand experience	3	0.9124

Table 6: Cronbach's alpha values for the three-dimensional brand experience scale

6.3.2. Factoring engagement

The correlation table of the engagement scale indicates that many of the items are highly correlated, but the structure is not clear (Appendix 3). According to theory, I attempt to retain 3 factors from the principal component analysis, but this results in cross loadings on many items, low loadings and an unclear structure in the data.

The latent root criterion extracts two factors that explain 67.4% of the total variation. The first factor has an eigenvalue of 4.94, and the second one 1.12. The scree plot also indicates extraction of two factors (Appendix 4). This factor analysis with two factors indicates that the behavioral and the emotional items load on one factor, while the cognitive items load on the other. However some of the loadings are quite low and there are still some items that cross load and reduce the discriminant validity.

The applied scale in this research was adapted from Solem (forthcoming) and her research was not able to verify a multidimensional concept of engagement. In line with Solem's research, I conduct a final factor analysis with extraction of only one factor. This solution indicates the highest loadings on most items and explains 55% of the variance in the data. I carry on the analysis with only one factor for the engagement construct.

Variable	Factor 1
BE1: Myeinnsats	0.7242
BE2: Ytterste	0.8103
BE3: Tidoppmerksomhet	0.6614
AE1: Entusiastisk	0.8123
AE2: Energisk	0.8501
AE3: Engasjert	0.6948
CE1: Fokusert	0.6950
CE2: Oppmerksom	0.6838
CE3: Oppslukt	0.7141
Eigenvalue	4.944
Explained variance	54.94%

Table 7: Varimax-rotation of the engagement scale

The reliability of the one-dimensional engagement scale is good, with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.8954. All items contribute to a higher alpha value and the one dimensional engagement concept appears to be an appropriate measurement tool with great reliability and consistency.

6.3.3. Factoring affective commitment and loyalty

Principal component factoring on the items of affective commitment and loyalty extracts two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. However, theories predict loyalty to be composed of both an attitudinal and a behavioral component. I attempt to extract three factors, but the proposed structure cannot be verified. The third factor tends to divide affective commitment in 2 factors, rather than decomposing the loyalty construct. The three-factor solution also results in strong cross loadings and the two-factor solution is the preferable one. The varimax-rotation displays items with high loadings on the expected two factors, and there is a clear distinction between them.

Variable	Factor1	Factor2
AC1: Assosieres	0.1781	0.7707
AC2: Setterprisp	0.1511	0.8579
AC3: Positivefølelser	0.3444	0.7445
L1: Lojalfremtid	0.7907	0.3774
L2: Tre_aar	0.7876	0.3463
L3: Anbefale	0.7631	0.3981
L4: Foretrekker	0.9087	0.0998
L5: Valg	0.9003	0.0749
Eigenvalue	4.669	1.289
Explained variance	58.36%	16.11%

Table 8: Varimax rotation of affective commitment and loyalty

Factor 1 represents the loyalty, and the construct is composed of 5 items, L1-L5. The alpha value of 0.9196 indicates great cohesion between all items and strong reliability of this scale. Also, all of the three items in factor 2: affective commitment, contributes to an increased alpha value and the final Cronbach's alpha at 0.7716 indicates acceptable reliability also for this scale.

6.4. Hypothesis testing

Now that the data are structured, I continue with analysis of the data through hypothesis testing of the causal relationships.

To avoid problems of multicollinearity in the regressions, the analyses are based on the three-factor solution of the brand experience scale. To verify the choice of using only three factors, I will point out that the five-factor model displays an explanation degree of 31% in a regression on affective commitment, while the three-factor model explain 29% of the variance. In a regression on loyalty, the two models both explain 39%. The three-factor model accounts for the same variance and very little information are lost in this factor reduction.

Within this conceptual model, many of the different marketing constructs also appear to be closely related to each other, and they influence each other in a logical sequence. Again, to

avoid problems with multicollinearity, one relationship at a time is examined, and the mediation effect between more variables will be tested in the end.

In the analyses I accept a significance level of 10%. With approximately 50 observations in each group it is difficult to get significant results, and I might also elaborate on less significant effects.

6.4.1. Hypothesis 1

H1: Participation at marketing event strengthen brand experiences

The participation variable is categorical and separates the groups according to respondents' degree of participation. Mean values for the strength of the total brand experiences for each group indicate that those participating actively have higher means than the spectators and those that did not even know of the event.

Participation	Mean values
1. Not participants	2.589
2. Spectators	2.918
3. Active participants	3.066

Table 9: Mean values of brand experiences between the groups

However, this is not enough to verify statistical differences and ANOVA-analyses with post-hoc-tests are performed to significantly test for differences between the groups.

Total brand experiences

	Not attending	Spectators
Spectators	0.3287 (0.278)	
Active participants	0.4766 (0.072)*	0.1479 (0.839)
		F= 2.70 P(F) = 0.0704

Table 10: ANOVA + post-hoc tests

*: P<0.1

The table displays differences between the groups. Numbers in parentheses are the p-values from each individual test. The F-value relates to differences among all groups, and the P-value of 7.04% is significant at 10% significant level and there appears to be differences between the groups in their total brand experiences. At 10% significance level, we can only argue for differences in the brand experiences between those who participated actively and those who did not attend the event.

However, of greater interest for this research is the effect on the different brand experience dimensions, and all three dimensions from the factor analysis, are examined individually.

Affective-sensory experiences

	Not attending	Spectators
Spectators	0.4098 (0.311)	
Active participants	0.2063 (0.834)	-0.2035 (0.814)
		F=1.25 P(F) = 0.2894

Table 11: ANOVA + post-hoc tests

The P-value from the ANOVA-test of the affective-sensory brand experiences does not allow for rejecting H₀, and no significant differences in this dimension can be asserted between all groups. Neither the pair wise comparisons identify any significant differences. However, it is worth noting, that the coefficient of the spectators appears to be higher and more significant than for the active participants.

Cogni-relational experiences

	Not attending	Spectators
Spectators	-0.0580 (0.994)	
Active participants	0.2413 (0.746)	0.2993 (0.553)
		F=0.77 P(F) = 0.4658

Table 12: ANOVA + post-hoc analysis

There are no significant differences in the cognitive and relational brand experiences among any of the three groups.

Behavioral experiences

	Not attending	Spectators
Spectators	0.6294 (0.029)*	
Active participants	1.0158 (0.000)*	0.3864 (0.282)
		F=8.3 P(F) = 0.0004

Table 13: ANOVA + post-hoc analysis

*: P<0.1

The P-value of the ANOVA-test supports the hypothesis that the behavioral experiences are influenced by this kind of campaign. Also, all the p-values from the pair wise post-hoc analyses point out differences between the groups. The active participants that rode the cow score 1.016 higher on the behavioral dimension than those not being at the event and the audiences score 0.63 higher, both effects are significant. There are, however, not identified any significant differences between the spectators and the riders. Overall, the conclusion gives partially support to the proposal. However, the effects are rather small and participation on this event is not a very strong predictor of the strength in the brand experiences.

6.4.2. Hypothesis 2

H2: Participation at marketing event affects consumer engagement

For the questions of engagement, answers are only registered for two groups and a t-test tells whether there are significant differences in the engagement level of these groups.

Engagement	Coefficient	Effects
Active participants	1.314	t=6.67 p=0.00
Constant	3.47	t=26.67 p=0.00

Table 14: T-test of participation

The spectators' engagement rating is represented as the coefficient for the constant, and it is 3.47. The engagement level for those participating actively, by riding the cow, is 1.31 scale points higher, and the effect is significant. The p-value allows for rejecting H0, and gives support to the hypothesis that active participants have higher engagement in the situation than those just watching. The effects are strong and degree of participation is a good predictor of engagement.

The effect might also go the other way around, in that the students first observe the event, then they feel engaged and want to participate actively, but this effect have not been measured.

6.4.3. Hypothesis 3

H3: Consumer engagement affects brand experiences positively

Affective-sensory experiences

Affective-sensory	Coefficient	Effects		
Engagement	0.281	t=2.91	p=0.004	R2=6.59%

Table 15: T-test of engagement

Cogni-relational experiences

Cogni-relation	Coefficient	Effects		
Engagement	0.230	t= 3.29	p=0.001	R2=8.43%

Table 16: T-test of engagement

Behavioral experiences

Dependent variable	Coefficient	Effects		
Engagement	0.318	t=3.44	p=0.001	R2=9.18%

Table 17: T-test of engagement

All tests result in low p-values and this support the hypothesis that all three dimensions of brand experiences are significantly influenced by the participant’s engagement in the situations. This is interesting since the direct effect from event on brand experiences did not predict any differences between these two groups on the cogni-relational or the affective-sensory dimensions. The coefficients are relatively strong and of similar size for all dimensions. However, the explanation degrees are very low, and engagement only explains a small proportion of the variance in the brand experiences.

Also here, the effect might go the other way around too, as people with stronger brand experiences feel attachments to the brand, and might be more engaged in brand related situations. This effect cannot be examined in this research, since brand experiences prior to the event was not measured.

6.4.4. Hypothesis 4

H4: Participation at marketing event influence affective commitment

	Non participants	Spectators
Spectators	0.251 (0.599)	
Active participants	0.274 (0.564)	0.232 (0.999)
		F=0.86 P(F)= 0.4238

Table 18: ANOVA + post-hoc analysis: Affective commitment

We cannot infer any claim any effect from this campaign on the affective commitment, for either group.

6.4.5. Hypothesis 5

H5: Participation at marketing event influence loyalty

	Non participants	Spectators
Spectators	0.344 (0.542)	
Active participants	0.395 (0.462)	0.051 (0.997)
		F=1.05 P(F)=0.3509

Table 19: ANOVA + post-hoc analysis: Loyalty

From the ANOVA and post-hoc tests we cannot argue for any direct effect of this campaign on loyalty, for either group.

This campaign does not seem to have any direct effects on affective commitment or loyalty. However, it evidently strengthened the brand experiences, more specifically, the behavioral ones. And it led to great engagement from the participants. I will carry on examining the relationships from brand experiences and engagement to these dependent variables.

6.4.6. Hypothesis 6

H6: Brand experiences strengthen affective commitments

Affective commitment	Coefficient	Effects
Affective-sensory	0.354	t=5.19 p=0.000
Cogni-relation	0.085	t= 1.22 p=0.226
Behavioral	0.116	t=1.56 p=0.121
		F= 21.09 P(F) =0.000
		R2=28.67%

Table 20: Regression of brand experiences on affective commitment

The regression of affective commitment with the three brand experience dimensions as explanatory variables, finds a positive and significant total effect. The F-value for the whole model is high and gives support to the hypothesis that respondents with stronger brand experiences also have higher affective commitment towards the brand. However, the individual t-tests indicate variation between the dimensions and we conclude with partial support of the proposal. The cogni-relational dimension has no significant influence on affective commitment, while the behavioral appears to have some influence, however not quite significant at 10% significance level. The joint affective and sensorial dimension have a relatively strong and significant influence on affective commitment with a coefficient of 0.35. The explanatory power is fairly high and brand experiences explains more than 25% percent of the variation in the affective commitment.

6.4.7. Hypothesis 7

H7: Brand experiences affects loyalty positively

Loyalty	Coefficient	Effects	
Affective-sensory	0.357	t= 4.41	p=0.000
Cogni-relation	0.20	t= 2.43	p=0.016
Behavioral	0.319	t= 3.63	p=0.000
		F= 33.52	P(F)= 0.000
		R2=39.41%	

Table 21: Regression of brand experiences on loyalty

The regression of the brand experiences on loyalty returns a P-value for the F-test of 0.00 and the collectively brand experience concept has significant influence on loyalty. The individual t-tests reveal that all coefficients are significant. The strongest impact comes from the joint affective and sensorial dimension, but also the other two dimensions influence loyalty. We conclude that all dimensions of the brand experience scale have a positive effect on loyalty. The explanatory power of the model is also quite high, and brand experiences seem to be important predictors of loyalty.

6.4.8. Hypothesis 8

H8: Consumer engagement strengthens affective commitment

Affective commitment	Coefficient	Effects		
Engagement	0.153	t=1.84	p=0.069	R2=2.22%

Table 22: Regression of engagement on affective commitment

The effect from engagement on affective commitment is rather small, but it is significant at 10% significant level. H0 is rejected and this gives support to the hypothesis that consumer engagement during a specific brand encounter seems to strengthen the affective commitment between the consumer and the brand. However, the explanatory power is low, and engagement only explains very little variance in the affective commitment, other factors appear to be more important in predicting this outcome.

6.4.9. Hypothesis 9

H9: Consumer engagement affects loyalty positively

Loyalty	Coefficient	Effects		
Engagement	0.249	t=2.26	p=0.0257	R2=3.78%

Table 23: Regression of engagement on loyalty

The regression of consumer engagement on loyalty returns a low P-value at 2.57%, and the coefficient of 0.25 is significant and we can infer that engagement during a marketing campaign has an impact on a consumers' loyalty. The explanatory power is very low, also here, and engagement is not a crucial variable in explaining the variation in customer loyalty.

6.4.10. Hypothesis 10

H10: Affective commitment affects loyalty positive

Loyalty	Coefficient	Effects
Affective commitment	0.677	t=7.64 p=0.000 R2=27.52%

Table 24: Regression of affective commitment on loyalty

A simple regression confirms the influence of affective commitment on loyalty, and the coefficient of 0.677 is strong and significant. R2 is also quite strong and indicates that affective commitment explains a lot of the variation in loyalty.

6.5. Mediation effects

Now that all relationships are tested, and many effects are found to be significant, I will analyze the multiple relationships. Some variables account for the same effect on a variable, and one variable might account for the relation between an independent and a dependent variable. The mediation effects are tested online through a tool for performing Sobel-tests. Test statistics from previous regressions are entered into a calculator that conducts the Sobel-test. Input and output from the Sobel-tests are presented and the results are discussed.

Hm1: Engagement mediates the relationship between participation on event and brand experiences

Engagement is evidentially influenced by the degree of participation at the event, and so are some of the brand experience dimensions. However, only two groups answered questions of their engagement, namely the spectators and the active participants, and the mediation effect is only relevant for these two groups. There were little differences in the brand experiences between these two groups, but the difference in the behavioral dimension is almost significant at 10% (Appendix 5.1.a.) and the mediation effect is tested for.

Tested relationship	t-value	Aroian P-value
Participation → engagement	6.67	
Engagement → behavioral exp.	3.44	
		0.0024

Table 25: Sobel-test

T-values from table 14 and 17

The low P-value allows for rejecting H0 and lends support to the proposal that the differences in the behavioral brand experiences between these two groups are mediated by engagement.

When engagement is controlled for in this relation, the differences between the groups are no longer significant, and the engagement variable carries the whole effect (Appendix 5.1.b). The participation variable even turns out with opposite sign, and is no longer significant. Engagement mediates the whole effect from degree of participation, on the behavioral brand experiences. Hence, the reason why the active participants have stronger brand experiences than the spectators appears to be because they put forth higher engagement in the situation.

Hm2: Brand experiences mediate the effect from engagement on affective commitment

The affective-sensory dimension has significant influence on affective commitment, and there also appears to be some effect from the behavioral dimension. Both dimensions are tested to see if they account for a mediation effect from engagement.

Tested relationship	t-value	Aroian P-value
Engagement → affective-sensory exp.	2.91	
Affective-sensory exp. → affective commitment	5.19	
		0.012
Tested relationship	t-value	Aroian P-value
Engagement → behavioral exp.	3.44	
Behavioral exp. → affective commitment	1.56	
		0.17

Table 26: Sobel-test

T-values from table 15, 17 and 20

The p-value Of 0.012 from the first test of the affective-sensory brand experiences allows for rejecting H0. And we argue that this dimension mediates the influence of engagement on affective commitment. However, the mediation effect from the behavioral dimension cannot be asserted at 10% significance level.

When either of the experience dimensions is controlled for in the regression of engagement on affective commitment (Appendix 5.2), the coefficient of engagement is reduced down to zero, and is no longer significant. Hence, brand experiences appear to fully mediate the relationship between engagement and affective commitment.

Hm3: Brand experiences mediate the effect of engagement on loyalty

Tested relationship	t-value	Aroian P-value
Engagement → affective-sensory exp.	2.91	
affective-sensory exp. → loyalty	4.41	
		0.017
Engagement → cogni-relational exp.	3.29	
Cogni-relational exp. → loyalty	2.43	
		0.058
Engagement → behavioral exp.	3.44	
Behavioral exp. → loyalty	3.63	
		0.014

Table 27: Sobel- test

T-values from table 15, 16, 17 and 21

The Sobel tests returns Aroian p-values below 0.06 for all three brand experience dimensions and we can reject H0. We argue that all dimensions contribute to mediate the effect from engagement on loyalty.

In the regression of engagement on loyalty, the effect of engagement is diluted and turns insignificant when any of the brand experience variables are included (Appendix 5.3). The effect is fully mediated by brand experiences.

Hm4: Affective commitment mediates the effect of engagement on loyalty

Tested relationship	t-value	Aroian P-value
Engagement → affective commitment	1.84	
Affective commitment → loyalty	7.64	
		0.076

Table 28: Sobel- test

T-values from table 22 and 24

The mediation effect is significant at 10% level. When affective commitment is controlled for in the regression of engagement on loyalty (Appendix 5.4) the coefficient of engagement decreases and it is only significant at 12.7%. Hence, affective commitment seems to only partly mediate this relationship.

H5m: Affective commitment mediates the effect of brand experience on loyalty

Preacher and Hayes' first criteria of influence from the independent variable on the mediator is fulfilled for the affective-sensory dimension, and almost for the behavioral one. Both dimensions are tested.

Tested relationship	t-value	Aroian P-value
Affective-sensory exp → affective commitment	5.19	
Affective commitment → loyalty	7.64	
		0.000
Tested relationship	t-value	Aroian P-value
Behavioral exp → affective commitment	1.56	
Affective commitment → loyalty	7.64	
		0.13

Table 29: Sobel- test

T-values from table 20 and 24

The low p-value from the test with the affective-sensory brand experience allows for rejecting H0 and we argue that affective commitment mediate the relationship between this dimension

and loyalty. For the behavioral variable the p-value is 0.13 and the mediation effect is not significant at 10% significance level.

In the regression of brand experiences and loyalty, controlling for affective commitment (Appendix 5.5), all brand experience dimensions decrease, but are still significant. There is some mediation, but the relationships are only partially mediated.

6.6. Testing the robustness of the analysis

Finally, I include control variables of previous consumption, gender and university, to test the consistency of my analyses and to reveal other predictors of the dependent variables.

When I include these variables in the three regressions of event on the individual brand experience dimensions, the predicted effect from participation on event are weakened. For the affective-sensory dimension and the cogni-relational one, the effects are even less significant. The regression for the behavioral dimension is representative for changes in all three dimensions.

Behavioral experiences	Coefficient	Effects	
Spectators	0.422	t=1.92	p=0.057
Active participants	0.755	t=3.23	p=0.002
Previous consumption	0.586	t= 6.29	p=0.000
Gender	- 0.376	t= -1.97	p= 0.051
University	- 0.089	t= -0.92	p=0.357
Constant	1.677	t=4.75	p=0.000
		F=12.58	P(F) = 0.000
			R2 = 27.72%

Table 30: Regression of participation on behavioral brand experiences

The explanation degree of the models increases from below 10% up to around 30% and points out that some of the control variables are important predictors of brand experiences. The university variable is not significant, but there seems to be significant differences from gender, and females apparently have weaker brand experiences than the guys.

The biggest effect comes from previous consumption, which seems to be a good predictor of brand experiences. The control variables take away some effect from the participation variables, and the coefficients and significance of these variables decreases. This, points to some limitations in my analysis, and the fact that the discussed effects are rather small and easily affected by other variables that also predict the dependent variables.

I also test the consistency of my analyses with the brand experience scale, and I include control variables in the regressions of affective commitment and loyalty.

Affective commitment	Coefficient	Effects	
Affective-sensory	0.319	t=4.85	p=0.000
Cogni-relation	0.071	t= 1.05	p=0.297
Behavioral	0.031	t=0.41	p=0.683
Previous consumption	0.294	t= 3.23	p=0.002
Gender	0.052	t= 0.31	p=0.757
University	-0.005	t=4.39	p= 0.952
		F= 13.33	F= 0.000
			R2=33.03%

Table 31: Controlling for other variables in regression on affective commitment

Previous purchase has significant effect on affective commitment and increases the explanation degree of the model. University and gender have no influence. When these three control variables are included, the effects from the brand experience dimensions are changed. The effect from the behavioral dimension is totally diluted and not significant anymore. The affective-sensory dimension is reduced, but is still significant, and the cogni-relational dimension is not affected. I do the same control in the regression of loyalty:

Loyalty	Coefficient	Effects	
Emotionsense	0.251	t=3.58	p=0.000
Cognirelation	0.173	t= 2.52	p=0.013
Behavioral	0.111	t=1.44	p=0.152
Previous consumption	0.734	t= 8.00	p=0.000
University	-0.072	t= -0.44	p=0.668
Gender	-0.014	t= -0.17	p=0.865
		F= 36.46	F= 0.000
			R2=58.65%

Table 32: Controlling for other variables in regression on loyalty

Loyalty is often explained by previous purchase, and the strong effect from this variable is not surprising, and it increases the explanation degree of the model. University and gender have no impact on loyalty. Again, the influences from the experience dimensions are reduced and the behavioral coefficient is no longer significant. The impacts from the other two dimensions are still significant.

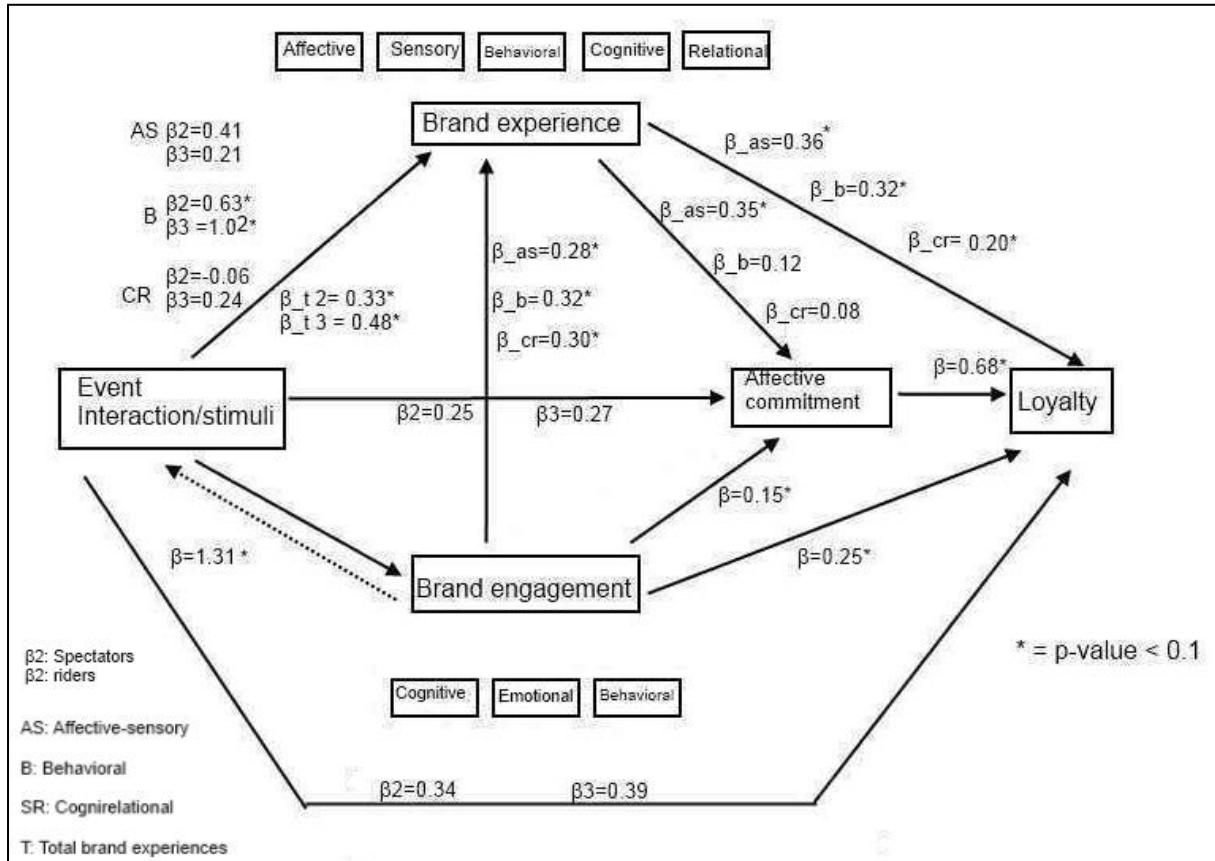
The change in the behavioral experiences in both analyses indicates multicorrelations, and that previous consumption might be correlated with the brand experiences. Especially the behavioral experiences and this might question the reliability and validity of my research. People have possibly interpreted the questions of behavioral experiences as consumption or purchase activities, and did not fully consider other physical brand associated activities, and hence, it explains some of the same effect as the loyalty variable.

Finally, it is evidential from the increased explanation degree in these last analyses, that there are many variables that contribute to predict affective commitment and loyalty, and I have only accounted for a small proportion of them in this thesis.

7. Discussion and implications

7.1. Results

I will sum up all the results to refresh memory and clarify backgrounds for following inferences. Figure 7 presents the strengths and significance of the examined relationships.



Figur 6: Results

First of all, the effect from this event on the total brand experiences is significant. But individually, it is only significant among all three groups, for the behavioral brand experiences. For this dimension, the active participants clearly have stronger brand experiences than both the other two groups. The spectators also appear to score higher on the behavioral experiences, than those that did not go to the event. For the joint affective and sensory dimension, there are indications of an effect between the spectators and those that did not attend the event, but there is no effect for those who participated actively versus the non participants. Even though the effects are not significant, it is an indication worth to note. The cognitive and relational dimension does not seem to be affected by degree of participation.

Engagement is clearly affected by degree of participation, and those that rode the cow scored significantly higher on the engagement scale than those who only watched the event.

Engagement also predicts brand experiences, and those who engage in cognitive, emotional and behavioral ways develop more responses to the various stimuli and strengthen their brand experiences. All brand experience dimensions are affected in a similar way. For the two groups that participated during the event, engagement is a mediator that explains why there are differences in their brand experiences caused by their participation at the event. Engagement actually accounts for the same effects as the participation on event does. People that ride the cow are more engaged in the situation and thus more receptive to the various stimuli, and this is the reason they develop stronger brand experiences.

This marketing campaign did contribute to enhance the behavioral brand experiences and it led to great engagement, but the direct impact on affective commitment and loyalty is not found to be significant. Engagement only explains a very small proportion of the variance in these dependent variables. The brand experiences explain rather lot of the variance, but also other variables come into play when predicting these final outcomes. Evidentially, the measured effects from this campaign were not strong enough to influence affective commitment and loyalty.

However, the causal relationships from brand experiences and engagement on these final outcomes were tested with significant results. The impact from brand experiences on affective commitment was examined, and the joint affective and sensory variable was found to have significant influence on affective commitment. Also the effect from the behavioral dimensions is close to significant, and appears to enhance the emotional attachments. On loyalty, all brand experience dimensions appear with significant effect, the affective and sensory dimensions, followed by the behavioral one, exhibits the strongest impact.

Engagement is also found to predict affective commitment and loyalty. The effect on loyalty is stronger than the effect on affective commitment. However, both effects are rather small and engagement only account for a very small proportion of the variance in loyalty and the emotional connections between the brand and consumer. Brand experiences, on the other hand, explain a large proportion of this variance and seem to be good predictors of consumer behavior. Brand experiences are actually found to mediate the whole effect from engagement on both loyalty and affective commitment.

Finally, the relationship between affective commitment and loyalty were also verified and these constructs are highly correlated. Affective commitment partly mediates the influence

from brand experiences and engagement on loyalty and these effects seems to be reinforced through the emotional attachments that are developed.

7.2. Main contributions

This research examined the influence from an engaging marketing campaign on the development of brand experiences. It was found that consumer engaging marketing campaigns, in some extent, can contribute to enhance brand experiences, and that what type of event is essential for what kinds of brand experiences are strengthened.

The work also connected different theories of engagement and brand experiences and presented a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between these constructs and their relation with other marketing constructs. The relationships were tested and the effect from this marketing event on brand experiences was found to be both direct and indirect through engagement. Higher engagement in the situation will contribute to stronger brand experiences. Brand experiences evidentially fully mediate the effects from engagement on both affective commitment and loyalty.

This research also contributed to development of theory by validating the five-dimensional brand experience scale in a new setting. Also the relational items verify good internal consistency, and to some extent convergent validity. However, the joint relational and cognitive dimension was not affected by this event, and it seems that the supplementary relational items did not provide additional explanation of this kinds of an experiential marketing event.

7.3. Managerial implications

Brand experiences were found to be enhanced through specific consumer engaging marketing campaigns. People that are present during such marketing events seem to generally hold stronger brand experiences than those not attending. This is good news for producers of consumables that are unable to involve the customer in ongoing close relationships during their consumption activities. They can evidentially benefit from enhancing brand experiences through specific campaigns during shorter time periods.

The brand experience construct is a divided construct and the dimensions are not affected in the same way. It seems that only the behavioral brand experiences were strengthened from this campaign. This event was a behavioral one that activated the individuals in a physical way and it is interesting to see that the behavioral dimension was influenced stronger than the other two. This points out that it might be possible to target marketing events to influence specific brand experience dimensions. Managers should put great effort into choosing the right events for their purpose and that will produce the most desirable outcomes.

Indications of stronger affective-sensory brand experiences for spectators than for the active participants, point out that there might be different stages of an event that create stronger brand experiences. The strongest influence might actually not come through the stage of fully immersion. During this event, the riders, perhaps, directed most of their attention and concentration on staying on the cow, and did not reflect that much on the music and the fun of watching others fall off. This indication needs to be investigated further to test if it might be significant, and if so: what degrees of stimuli or interaction are the most effective ones.

The impact from this event on the brand experiences goes both directly and through engagement in the situation. This emphasizes the importance for marketers to engage people in an active way in their marketing campaigns. They need to come up with creative and fun ideas that engage people in cognitive, emotional and physical ways and make them willing to participate and engage in their marketing activities. Apps and interactive online activities are pioneer examples of how to attract consumers willing to spend time and cognitive capacity to interact with the brand.

This research found no direct effect from participation at this event on the affective commitment and loyalty, and evidentially: a firm's passive participation during an event is not enough. To influence these final outcomes, the organization needs to strengthen the right brand experiences in a larger extent and develop higher engagement in the situation.

Brand experiences were found to somehow influence both affective commitment and loyalty. Only the affective-sensorial dimension significantly predicts affective commitment, while all dimensions predict loyalty. It is clear from the analysis that events and brands that strengthen customers' affective and sensorial brand experiences are the most effective ones, but also the behavioral experiences are strong predictors of loyalty. Campaigns should be designed to appeal to the consumers' senses and emotions in a larger extent. Products samples that give the consumers a hands-on approach and a taste and feel of the products are an effective way

of enhancing these brand experiences. Also pleasant music and scents are known to have great effect on brand experiences and should be utilized. Finally, the experiences should make the individuals have fun with the brand and enjoy the activities, so they want to repeat them.

Engagement has stronger effect on loyalty than on affective commitment. The effects on loyalty are however partly mediated by affective commitment and again, this emphasizes the importance of affect and emotions in relationship marketing. Marketers should focus on creating attachments between brand and consumers and make the individual appreciate the relationship and develop positive emotions.

Finally, the influence from brand experiences on the dependent variables is found to be stronger and more significant than the effects from engagement. Brand experiences actually fully mediate the effect of engagement on the dependent variables. Marketers need to keep this in mind and they will benefit most from rememberable marketing campaigns that makes the customer respond to stimuli and develop long lasting brand experiences and not only create engagement solely in the situation. However, even though they succeed in creating engagement and strong brand experiences, this does not necessarily translate into final effects on the attitudinal and behavioral variables immediately. Engagement and brand experiences only explain a proportion of the variance in affective commitment and loyalty, and more variables contribute to explain the effect on these final outcomes. Marketers need to be patient, and aware that they benefit from long term effects through different marketing construct, and that good customer relationships are developed over time.

7.4. Limitations

As all other research projects, this thesis also has limitations to it. First of all, ideally the sample size should have been larger, to be able to generalize the results in a larger extent. Another problem is the fact that the survey takes a retrospective approach. The respondents were asked to look back two weeks in time to recount of the feelings they had in that moment. Engagement is situations specific and experiences are responses to situation specific stimuli. Since memory is weakened by time, answering such questions subsequent to the event might result in weaker effects. For the respondents that were at the rodeo, there is also a risk that the questions of brand experiences might have been interpreted as their impression of the event, and not as desired: their impression of the brand Litago.

I also encountered some problems with the premade scales. Especially the brand experience scale was difficult to translate into meaningful Norwegian items. It is known to be rather floating and this might be the reason why it was challenging to distinguish the different dimensions.

To verify long term effects it would have been interesting to send out a follow-up survey after 1-2 months, to get a more longitudinal approach of the effects. However the respondents' limited interest in the research project would have led to few responses, and also the time limits of this independent work prevented me from taking this approach. Hence, this research does not allow for inference about the long lasting effect of such marketing events.

The final limitation to my analysis is the fact that I did not fully investigate the inter-correlations between the different brand experience dimensions and other constructs. Even though five experience dimensions were isolated in the factor analysis, only three were accounted for in the further analysis. These complex interrelations could have been accounted for with the use of structural equation modeling (SEM). However, due to lack of access and knowledge of the software, and limited time, the analysis was simplified by calculating mediation effects through an online estimator.

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9. Appendices

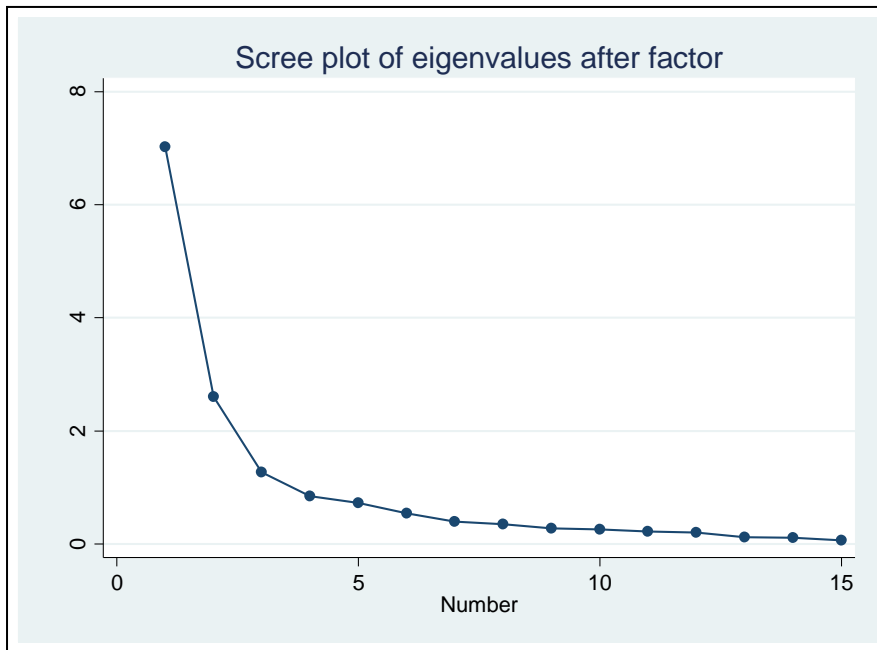
9.1. Appendix 1

Correlation matrix of the brand experience items

	A1	A2	A3	S1	S2	S3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3	R1	R2	R3
A1	1.0000														
A2	0.7014	1.0000													
A3	0.5612	0.8284	1.0000												
S1	0.6344	0.6210	0.5132	1.0000											
S2	0.5989	0.5887	0.5307	0.7704	1.0000										
S3	0.5661	0.5432	0.4035	0.6619	0.7530	1.0000									
B1	0.3833	0.3997	0.4472	0.3557	0.4322	0.4270	1.0000								
B2	0.2772	0.3226	0.3824	0.3243	0.4143	0.2677	0.5852	1.0000							
B3	0.3418	0.4591	0.4868	0.3758	0.4435	0.2714	0.5167	0.6971	1.0000						
C1	0.2087	0.3471	0.3404	0.3196	0.3703	0.3242	0.3626	0.3685	0.4367	1.0000					
C2	0.1601	0.2862	0.3257	0.2294	0.3034	0.2273	0.2670	0.3467	0.4571	0.8428	1.0000				
C3	0.1136	0.2529	0.3387	0.2042	0.2584	0.1981	0.2050	0.3153	0.4610	0.7582	0.8912	1.0000			
R1	0.2839	0.3977	0.4039	0.4114	0.4846	0.3532	0.3395	0.3725	0.4917	0.6474	0.6708	0.5736	1.0000		
R2	0.3041	0.4361	0.4171	0.3998	0.4426	0.3720	0.2867	0.3266	0.4735	0.6363	0.6831	0.6199	0.8742	1.0000	
R3	0.2940	0.4040	0.3733	0.3388	0.4123	0.3648	0.2017	0.3252	0.4523	0.6194	0.6373	0.6357	0.7211	0.7812	1.000

9.2. Appendix 2

Scree plot of the brand experience scale



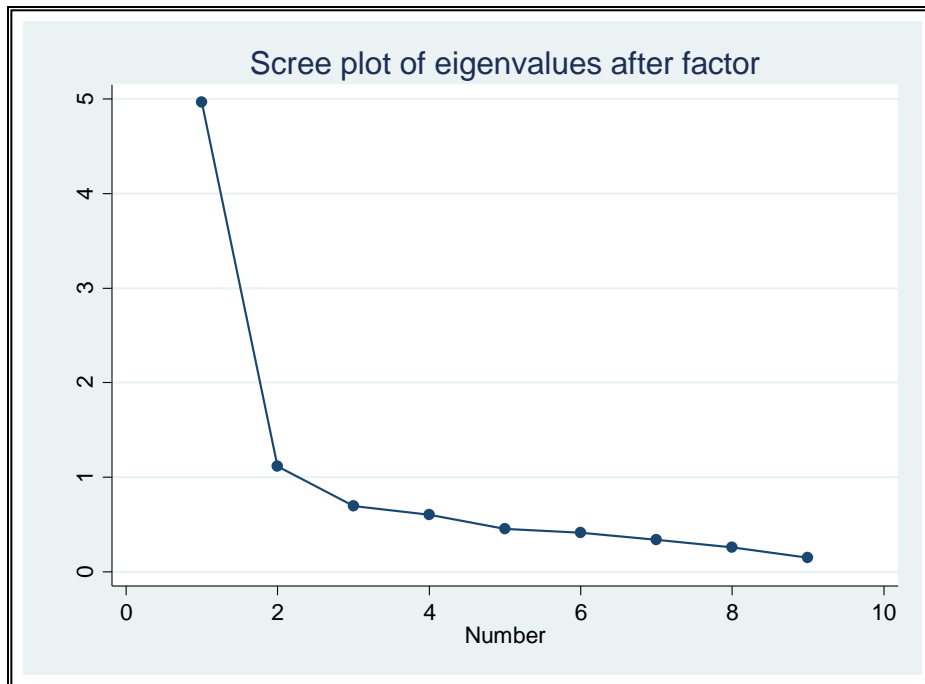
9.3. Appendix 3

Correlation matrix of the engagement items

	BE1	BE2	BE3	AE1	AE2	AE3	CE1	CE2	CE3
BE1	1.0000								
BE2	0.6569	1.0000							
BE3	0.4920	0.4839	1.0000						
AE1	0.5717	0.6052	0.5019	1.0000					
AE2	0.5801	0.7795	0.4232	0.7411	1.0000				
AE3	0.4293	0.5000	0.3862	0.5654	0.6066	1.0000			
CE1	0.3621	0.4927	0.3220	0.4226	0.4682	0.3855	1.0000		
CE2	0.2937	0.4003	0.3996	0.4408	0.4526	0.3379	0.7004	1.0000	
CE3	0.4064	0.3955	0.4587	0.4893	0.5082	0.4131	0.5303	0.6043	1.0000

9.4. Appendix 4

Scree plot of the engagement scale



9.5. Appendix 5

Testing the mediation effects

9.5.1. Appendix 5.1

Hm1: Engagement mediates the relationship between participation on event and brand experiences

Appendix 5.1.a: Regression of participation on behavioral experiences.

Behavioral experience	Coefficient	Effects	
Participation	0.386	t= 1.59	p=0.116

Participation variable only for two groups: spectators and active participants

Appendix 5.1.b: Regression of participation on behavioral experiences. Controlling for engagement

Behavioral experience	Coefficient	Effects	
Participation	-0.130	t= 0.45	p=0.655
Engagement	0.348	t= 3.04	p=0.003
		F=5.97	P(F)=0.0035
			R2= 8.49%

9.5.2. Appendix 5.2

Hm2: Brand experiences mediate the effect from engagement on affective commitment

Affective commitment	Coefficient	Effects	
Engagement	-0.042	t= -0.56	p=0.575
Emotion-sensory	0.342	t= 4.26	p=0.000
Cogni-relational	0.148	t=1.77	p=0.079
Behavioral	0.139	t=1.61	p=0.110
		F= 12.88	P(F) =0.000
			R2=31.35%

9.5.3. Appendix 5.3

Hm3: Brand experiences mediate the effect of engagement on loyalty

Loyalty	Coefficient	Effects	
Engagement	-0.042	t= -0.45	p= 0.653
Emotion-sensory	0.309	t= 3.21	p= 0.002
Cognirelational	0.205	t= 2.00	p= 0.048
Behavioral	0.450	t= 4.23	p= 0.000
		F= 18.24	P(F) =0.000
			R2=24.90%

9.5.4. Appendix 5.4

Hm4: Affective commitment mediates the relationship between engagement and loyalty

Loyalty	Coefficient	Effects	
Engagement	0.152	t=1.54	p=0.127
Affective Commitment	0.636	t=5.57	p=0.000
		F= 18.81	P(F) =0.000
			R2=25.34%

9.5.5. Appendix 5.5

Hm5: Affective commitment mediates the effect of brand experience on loyalty

Loyalty	Coefficient	Effects	
Emotionsense	0.237	t=2.81	p=0.006
Cognirelation	0.171	t= 2.16	p=0.033
Behavioral	0.280	t=3.29	p=0.001
Affectiv commitment	0.337	t=3.60	p=0.095
		F= 30.42	P(F) =0.000
			R2=43.96%

9.6. Appendix 6

Survey

Har du hørt om Litagos Ku-rodeo?

1. Ja, deltok som rytter på kua
 2. Ja, observerte det fra sidelinjen
 3. Ja, observerte det i forbifarten
 4. Ja, har hørt snakk om det
 5. Nei, har ikke hørt om det
-

I can see that you were present during the Litago Cow-rodeo and I am interested in your engagement related to this event.

I kindly ask you to rate the following statements according to whether you agree or disagree with them.

	Svært uenig	Uenig	Delvis uenig	Hverken eller	Delvis enig	Enig	Svært enig
Jeg la ned mye innsats i å delta på Litagos Ku-rodeo							
Jeg gjorde mitt ytterste for å delta på en god måte under Litagos Ku-rodeo							
Jeg brukte mye tid og oppmerksomhet på Litagos Ku-rodeo							
Jeg var entusiastisk under Litagos Ku-rodeo							
Jeg følte meg energisk da jeg deltok på Litagos Ku-rodeo							
Jeg ble følelsesmessig engasjert under Litagos Ku-rodeo							
Under Litagos Ku-rodeo var tankene mine fokusert på aktiviteten							
Under Litagos Ku-rodeo var jeg svært oppmerksom på aktiviteten							
Under Litagos Ku-rodeo var jeg oppslukt av aktiviteten							

Okey, lets forget about the Cow-rodeoen!

Now I am interested in your different encounters and experiences with the brand Litago.

This may be when you drink Litago, see a Litago commercial, hear about Litago in media, from friends and so on.

I kindly ask you to rate these statements according to how well they describe your experiences with Litago.

Firstly I will ask about your feelings. Think about all the different feelings you might experience: happiness, anger, curiosity, stress etc.

	Svært uenig	Uenig	Delvis uenig	Hverken eller	Delvis enig	Enig	Svært enig
Litago fremkaller følelser hos meg							
Jeg har sterke følelser overfor Litago							
Litago får meg ofte følelsesmessig engasjert							

Now, I want to examine your sensations.

This may seem bit floating, but think about what you have touched, tasted, heard, seen or smelled in different situations.

	Svært uenig	Uenig	Delvis uenig	Hverken eller	Delvis enig	Enig	Svært enig
Litago gjør et sterkt inntrykk på sansene mine							
Det å være Litagodrikker gir meg interessante sanseopplevelser							
Litago appellerer i stor grad til mine sanseopplevelser							

The next statements concern your activity in regards to Litago. Whether you have been inspired to undertake different physical activities when you drink products from Litago, hear of the products, or so on.

	Svært uenig	Uenig	Delvis uenig	Hverken eller	Delvis enig	Enig	Svært enig
Som en Litagodrikker forholder jeg meg sjeldent passiv							
Jeg er ofte aktiv og gjør ting når jeg drikker Litagos produkter							
Litago aktiviserer meg rent fysisk							

Further, questions about how Litago might trigger your curiosity, your thoughts and your problem solving abilities.

	Svært uenig	Uenig	Delvis uenig	Hverken eller	Delvis enig	Enig	Svært enig
Jeg tenker mye som en Litagodrikker							
Det å være Litagodrikker får meg til å tenke selv og løse problemer							
Litago utfordrer ofte min måte å tenke på							

Finally, I will ask about your experiences in regards to your relation with Litago or other Litago-consumers.

	Svært uenig	Uenig	Delvis uenig	Hverken eller	Delvis enig	Enig	Svært enig
Som en Litagodrikker føler jeg meg som en del av et større fellesskap							
Jeg føler meg på en måte som en del av Litago-familien							
Som en Litagodrikker, føler jeg meg aldri overlatt til meg selv							

At last, I want to know about your beliefs of Litago and their products.

I kindly ask you to rate the following statements according to whether you agree or disagree with them.

	Svært uenig	Uenig	Delvis uenig	Hverken eller	Delvis enig	Enig	Svært enig
Jeg liker å assosieres med Litago							
Jeg setter pris på forholdet jeg har til Litago							
Jeg har positive følelser overfor Litago							
Jeg liker å assosieres med Litago							
Jeg vil fortsette å kjøpe Litagoprodukter de neste 3 årene							
Jeg vil anbefale Litagoprodukter til							

mine venner og bekjente
Jeg vil foretrekke Litago fremfor
andre produsenter av lignende
drikkevarer

Litago vil være mitt førstevalg i
fremtiden

Hvor ofte drikker du Litago? (sånn circa)

1. Mer enn 3 ganger i uka
2. 1-3 ganger i uka
3. Annenhver uke
4. En gang i måneden
5. Sjeldnere enn en gang i måneden.
6. Aldri

Er du medlem på Litagos facebook side?

1. Ja, har vært med en stund og deltar aktivt
2. Ja, har vært med en stund, men deltar ikke
3. Ja, ble med i sammenheng med Litagos Ku-rodeo
4. Nei

Kjønn

1. Kvinne
2. Mann

Ditt studiested

1. UMBÅs
2. HIOF Halden
3. Annet