

**THE EFFECTS OF BRAND EXPERIENCE AND CONSUMER PERCEPTION ON
MARKETING STRATEGIES WITHIN THE MULTI-CHANNELED FASHION INDUSTRY IN
THE NETHERLANDS**

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ABSTRACT

In order to develop an optimal mix of online and offline services for fashion related products, marketers must determine which attributes are perceived as key attributes by the target market to be delivered better within the online and offline fashion retail channels. In-depth interviews were conducted to assess how brand experience influences the choice of consumers preferring to shop online or offline within the fashion industry in the Netherlands. A Dutch student sample group was asked about their likelihood of shopping online or offline, and according to several brand experience dimension they were asked which attributes within the specific dimension impacts their choice to shop through this this specific retail channel, either online or offline. The weights assigned to each attribute by this sample group favoring online or offline shopping, were used as key predictors of the observed differences in preference of shopping channel.

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Keywords

Brand Experience, Fashion, Brand Identity, Marketing Strategy, Customer-Based Brand Equity, Retail Environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Situation

The worldwide retail landscape looks different today than it did ten years ago. The introduction of online shopping, use of smartphones and involvement of social media altered the way consumers make purchasing decisions. The growing concern with customer value, resulted in a paradigm of brand- and customer experience (Schmitt & Rogers, 2008).

These changes in customer behavior and current marketing suggests that products and services are not the first things that interest the customer. They rather buy the experience around the product or service being sold (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Creating superior brand- and customer experience seems to be one of the central objectives in today's retailing environments (Verhoef et al., 2009). However, this being such an important concept, there are few studies that focus on the customers' perceptions in relation to the brand experience.

Even though 'brand experience' is influenced by the customer perception, it is still unclear for companies how they can use these perceptions and how to incorporate them in their marketing strategy. With the growth of the internet, retailers did not only have to focus on their physical store but instead put more effort in their online presence as well, which makes it even harder to meet customers' expectations.

Within the fashion industry, there has always been the assumption that the younger generation of consumers age 13-19 often defined as 'Generation Z', that grew up with the internet and digital technologies, would prefer to avoid physical buying experiences (Bloomberg, 2019). However, according to a study by the International Council of Shopping Centers, this assumption turns out to be false, three-quarter of the Generation Z consumers in the USA, prefer going to a brick-and-mortar fashion store rather than buying fashion online (Piper Jaffray, 2019). Looking at the Netherlands we see that the fashion industry grew 4.6% in 2017, this growth came mainly from the online segment with an increase of 24.1% (InRetail, 2019).

To stay competitive in this rapidly changing market, fashion brands need to know what their customers want. This raises the question: *"How can the customer's brand experience with on and offline retail environments help organizations within the fashion industry plan their marketing strategy?"* If we know more about the factors that consumers perceive as important during their shopping experience, organizations can use this information to form strategies that can help enhance the consumers shopping experience.

Although, the role of emotions, fun and pleasure in consumer behavior is widely recognized as being of key importance (Scarpi, Pizzi, & Visentin, 2014), there is a surprisingly lack of empirical research on the role of brand experience and consumer perceptions in relation to the online and offline retail channels. Most of the research focuses on the utilitarian product attributes, not the experiences provided by the brand. The construct 'brand experience' has attracted a lot of attention in recent marketing practices, as these marketers noticed that it is critical for developing customer experience strategies (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009).

Current literature lacks information about consumption and experiences across the global fashion market. If more information is provided, research can be done on the intersection of this information across the global fashion market, which enables the creation of tools for predicting, measuring and configuring this uncharted experiential paradigm (Kim, 2012).

This study aims to discover factors that are distinctive to the fashion industry and play an important role according to the perception of customers to buy either online or offline (McCormick, 2012; Kim, 2012). Previous analyses focused on one channel only: either online or offline. Whereas in this paper both channels are being analyzed simultaneously. By doing so this study aims to come up with the best practices on how fashion retail stores can incorporate these industry-specific factors.

Furthermore, due to limited time, this research restricted its focus exclusively to the fashion market in The Netherlands. Because of the differences in cultures worldwide and the given timeframe of twelve weeks it would be impossible to compare all brand experience dimensions in separate countries. The findings of this research will expand current existing literature and provide focus on industry-level concepts.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The purpose of this study is to conduct research concerning the consumer's perceptions on their brand experience within the fashion industry. This is done in order to help organizations within the fashion industry enhance their on- and offline marketing strategy thus creating a better brand experience.

In this section background information on the fashion industry will be given. Furthermore, the factors that customer perceive as important while shopping on- or offline, and how these factors can be assessed will be provided.

2.1 The Fashion Industry

Fashion is related to individual style, culture and taste, while apparel serves as functional clothing, related to basic needs (Britannica, 2019). The fashion industry is composed of a great number of industries and services within the fashion sector that employs millions of people (Britannica, 2019). In more simple terms, it could be described as the business of making clothes, where a distinction is made between apparel and fashion.

The fashion industry is one of the world's most important industries and is projected to reach a value of 2.4 trillion dollar in total in 2016 (McKinsey, 2017). Ranking this alongside individual countries GDP, it would represent the seventh largest economy worldwide. With the growing world population, the industry is forecasted to grow only more.

This growth and evolution particularly happened over the last 30 years due to the expanding boundaries in the industry. (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Dynamics within the fashion industry such as the fading of mass production, expansion of fashion seasons and modified characteristics of the supply chain forced the fashion retailers to desire lower costs and more flexibility (Barnes, Lea-Greenwood, Doyle, Moore, & Morgan, 2006).

With the growth of the internet and the desire within the sector for more flexibility, more fashion stores started using online retail channels. However, many retailers do not know what customers perceive as important when buying from their retail channels and how they can create a better shopping experience for their customers.

2.1.1 Current Situation

The current fashion industry is a product of the modern age. Its purpose is found in the production, promotion, marketing, and conception which are all based on desire.

The traditional view of fashion exists out of four levels. The primary level consists out of textile production, such as mills and yarn makers. The secondary level consists out of manufacturers, designers, vendors, and wholesalers. The third level, also called the 'retail level' consists out of all the types of distribution points and stores. Lastly, the fourth level is 'the auxiliary level' which connects all the levels, think of advertising, agencies, consultants, press, forecasters and more (Stone & Farnan, 2018).

The competitive spirit within the industry created a race for profits and margins, this resulted in tensions between the retailers and manufacturers. The case in recent years is that the retailers even took the manufacturers place, while on the other hand manufacturers became the retailers of their own designs (Encyclopedia, 2005).

With the fast-changing demand, the components within the fashion industry continuously adapt to the changes of the consumers demands. Suit makers changed to offering more separates, and several fashion brands even expanded their scope to 'lifestyle brands' offering more than just fashion alone. These lifestyle brands include, fragrances, accessories, home furnishings, automobiles, jewelry and much more (ibid.).

With fashion brands providing a visual cue that reflects consumers identity, lifestyle and interests (Hameide, 2011), consumers of different cultures are expected to be different in the way of how they perceive brands (Kim, 2012).

Nowadays, customers do not make a distinction between buying in online stores or local stores. Important is the immediate availability of the by the consumer desired good and the way how they perceive their shopping experience (Carmel, 2018).

The interactive nature of the Internet can create opportunities to increase the efficiency of shopping behavior, this can be done by improving on availability of product information, allowing direct comparisons between products and reducing search costs for the buyer (Childers, 2001). Although this may be true, several studies have shown that "high touch" products, such as fashion related products require an offline presence at least in the final purchase stage (Levin, 2005).

To understand the factors that customer perceive as important in shopping online or offline, customer perception will be assessed based on 'brand experience' (Brakus et al., 2009; Nysveen, Pedersen, & Skard, 2013). Furthermore, brand identity will be assessed by looking at the values and identity as described by the concerned company, to see whether the experience is in line with the source focused identity. Lastly, brand equity will be assessed in order to see if customers react favorably or less favorably to an element of the marketing of the brand. If the brand knows how and where it can improve its brand experience, it can improve customers perceptions, which will result in a positive brand equity.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research question has been asked:

How can the customers' brand experience with on and offline retail environments help organizations within the fashion industry plan their marketing strategy?

To answer this, the following sub questions have been asked:

- What influences the customer's brand experience online within the fashion industry?
- What influences the customer's brand experience offline within the fashion industry?

- What is the influence of brand identity on brand experience and how do the different dimensions of brand experience help to convey the brand?

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, an overview of literature will be examined and explained, in which the key concepts of brand experience and brand identity are discussed. Furthermore, literature regarding brand equity will be discussed which will help assessing the positive or negative impact of the brand experience on the brand's marketing strategy. The final section of the literature review will conclude with a model that describes the key elements of brand experience, brand identity and brand equity in relationship with this study.

4.1 The Brand

To distinguish the often-overlapping definitions of branding and brand experience, it is helpful to understand more about the different dimensions within this theme. 'Brand identity', 'brand experience' and 'brand equity' will be discussed, explained, and defined. In this paper branding can be defined as a cornerstone aspect of marketing. This is not only in relation to physical goods, such as products, packages, logo's, and designs, but as much the relevancy of branding for services. The fact that services are intangible doesn't mean that it is less important than the good (Berry, 2000).

One of the main aspects that differs from buying online or in store is the service, in order to understand which aspects are important to consider, more insights will be provided on branding, its identity and experience. When buying something online, you will receive it as a packaged good, in this case the product is the primary brand. However, if you buy something in-store you receive some sort of service, in this case the store is the primary brand.

Although consumers can make the choice to buy fashion online, the service still needs to be experienced offline. Arguably, you could say that when people buy offline, the presence of the influence of the service is greater. However, the actual encounter with the service itself is no different if the same provider for the service and service options are chosen offline or online. The branding of products thus plays an important role within service companies, such as local fashion retailers. Branding enables the consumer to understand and visualize the product in a better manner (Berry, 2000).

4.2 Brand Identity

It is a misconception that brand identity only refers to simply the name of the concerning product or service. It includes many more aspects such as the company's vision in relation to the development and realization of their products and services (Kapferer, 2012). That same vision that includes the fundamental beliefs and essential values of the brand is defined as 'identity' (Kapferer, 2012).

Brand identity originates from the company and is how the company seeks to identify and manifest itself to consumers and other stakeholders (Nandan, 2005). Brand identity are unique brand associations that imply a promise to the customer, the brand identity consists out of a core and extended identity (Ghodeswar, 2008). The core identity can be described as the essence of the brand that remains constant over time. While extended identity is about product attributes, the service, store ambience and the performance of the product (Ghodeswar, 2008). It is important that the brand identity resonates with the

customers, that it differentiates the brand from the competition and that it shows what the brand can and always will offer over time (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Concluding, when there is aggressive competition in the market, the brand identity should always help and distinguish the brand from its competitors. Strong brand experience is understood and experienced by the customers and helps developing trust. A company can create a clear brand identity by creating brand attributes that can be easily understood by the customer.

4.3 Brand Experience

The topic of brand experience in general has gained interest over the past recent years and has been discussed in several papers (Verhoef et al., 2009). Consumer expectations are formed by previous experiences with the concerned company. Each new experience is instinctively compared in a positive or negative way with previous experiences (Meyer & Schwager, 2007). Expectations can also be shaped by the competition, market conditions and the consumers' personal situation.

The term 'brand experience' consists out of the two constructs 'brand' and 'experience'. According to Ghodeswar (2008), "A brand is a distinguishing name and/ or symbol (such as logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services to either one seller or a group of sellers, and differentiate those goods or services from those competitors" (p. 4). In this paper we perceive the brand as *an intangible set of attributes that is connected to the product or service*.

To conceptualize the term 'experience' we need to know more about the use of experience as a concept within consumer marketing.

- *Product Experience*

Product experience for example occurs when consumers interact with the product, they might evaluate or examine the product (Hoch, 2002). This can be indirect in the form of an advertisement or virtual representation or direct when there is physical contact with the product (Hoch & Ha, 1986).

- *Shopping and Service Experience*

Shopping and service experience occurs when the consumer interacts with the physical store environment, the staff and the stores practices and policies (Hui & Bateson, 1991).

- *Consumption Experience*

Consumption experience occurs when consumers consume and make use of the product, the consummation might include fun, fantasies and feelings (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

Summarizing all the aspects of experience within consumer marketing, we can say that experiences occur when consumers shop, buy products or services, and eventually consume these products or services. Brand experience is thus defined using the same description used by Brakus et al. (2009, p.52), "which is that brand experience are the sensations, feelings, cognitions and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of the brand identity".

4.3.1 Measuring Brand Experience

To measure the perceptions and attitudes towards established service brands, Brakus et al. (2009) developed a framework that measures brand experience across products and markets. The framework by Nysveen et al. (2012), adds to Brakus et al. by exploring the individual effects of brand experience dimensions in specifically service organizations. In this research we focus on the service provided by fashion brand within their offline and online retail channels, which is why the framework by Nysveen et al. (2012), will be used to conduct this research. Brand experience can vary in strength and intensity; some might be

more intense, positive or negative and over time, long-lasting brand experience may affect satisfaction and loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009).

According to a literature review, done on the categorization of experiences based on Nysveen et al. (2012), followed by a qualitative study, five dimensions influence the brand experience: 1) a sensory dimension which includes auditory, visual, tactile, olfactory and gustative stimulations provided by the brand; 2) an affective dimension, which refers to the feelings provided by the concerned brand; 3) an intellectual dimension which refers to until which extend the brand engages with consumers thinking and 4) a behavioral dimension which refers to the bodily experiences and interactions with the brand (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). In addition to these four dimension, a fifth dimension is suggested which underscores the importance of relational experience as experiential dimension (Figure 1) (Nysveen et al., 2013).

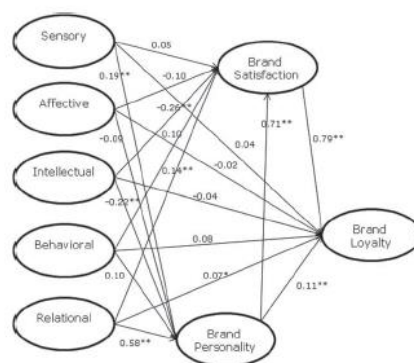


Figure 1. A five factor model including the five dimensions that determine brand experience (Nysveen et al., 2013)

Brand experience can be directly linked to the *brand meaning*, which on its turn refers to the customers' perceptions of the brand (Berry, 2000). The brand meaning on its turn influences the brand equity, which can be positive or negative (Figure 2).

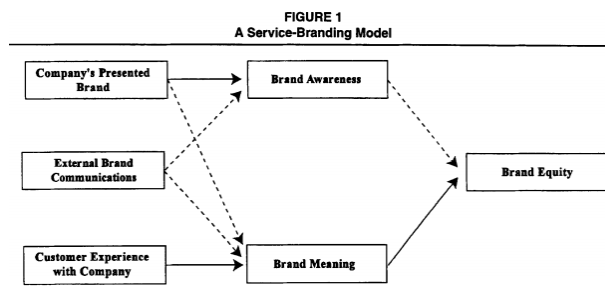


Figure 2. A service-branding model (Berry, 2000)

Brands have financial value because they created value within the customers' minds. This is expressed in the classic definition of a 'brand' by Keller as a "set of mental associations held by the consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service" (Keller, 1998, p.1). Hence, the perceived value of the brand can impact the degree of marketing advantage or disadvantage a specific brand has over its competitors. The brand meaning will help answering the given main research question by providing information on what comes to the consumer's mind when shopping online or offline at a certain brand. This helps us to see how this specific fashion brand could improve its marketing strategy.

4.4 Communications

Berry (2000) mentions two types of communication; those controlled by how the brand wants to present itself worldwide, and which impacts brand awareness directly and brand meaning indirectly; and the external communication, which isn't controlled by the company and indirectly affect the brand awareness and meaning (Figure 2).

Although the brand identity and brand experience have the most influence on the customers perception of the brand, we shouldn't keep out the external brand communications, which is also complemented by how the company want to present itself (Berry, 2000). The most common forms of external brand communication are word-of-mouth and publicity, mostly in the form of advertisements. Consumers may form impressions by sources independent from the company.

Worth-of-mouth is more common with services and can be unbiased, experience-based information (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991). Publicity can also be influential for the development of the brand; this can be positive or negative. It can influence both the brand awareness and meaning.

The purpose of including this into the research is to have a better understanding of the service-model by Berry (2000) and to keep in to account the things that influence the customers' perception.

4.5 Customer-Based Brand Equity

Keller (1993) suggests that there are two general motivations of studying customer-based brand equity. One being related to the financial motivation, which is related to estimating the value of the brand for accounting purposes. The second motivation is more strategy based and has as the purpose to improve the marketing productivity. Kapferer (2011) adds to this topic, by suggesting that within brand equity there is a schism between two paradigms. One is customer-based brand equity, which focuses on the relationship customers have with the brand. In contrast, to the other which aims at producing measures in currency. In a more general sense, we can define brand equity in terms of marketing effects that are uniquely attributable to the brand (Keller, 1993). In this research we use the definition on brand equity provided by Keller (1993, p.1), "customer-based brand equity is defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumers response to the marketing of the brand".

To enhance customer-based brand equity, the brand needs to create favorable, strong, and unique brand associations. Here we see the relevance of brand experience and brand identity with brand equity. It is demonstrated by several scholars that brand experience directly influences some components of brand equity, such as brand resonance and loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009; Chang & Chieng, 2006; Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Fogueat, 2011). Experiences also provide affective, sensory, behavioral, intellectual and relational stimulations that could increase the perceived value of a brand (Nysveen et al., 2013; Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013).

Furthermore, Keller (1993) mentions that building brand equity can also be affected by the initial choice of brand identities, that create a brand that is favorable, strong, and unique. The motivation of including customer-based brand equity in this research is related to its goal, which is helping fashion companies improve their marketing strategies by taking a closer look at customer perceptions on brand experience and brand identity. Customer-based brand equity will not be measured in this research; however, we acknowledge that it is directly related to the customers perception of the brand.

4.6 Model

Based on the literature review on brand experience and its related concepts, a model has been formulated which will serve as a guide through the research process. The model is focused on the concept of brand experience in relation to shopping online and offline within the fashion industry (Figure 3).

We acknowledge that brand identity is important for brand experience as the customers experience is affected by the identity of the brand. However, brand identity is not the main focus of this research, we acknowledge the link between the two but in this research, we segregate what the company want to communicate to their customers and what their customers experience.

The goal of this research is to help companies within the fashion industry to improve their marketing strategies. Brand equity is included in the model as it is based on the customers perceptions, which on their turn are influenced by the brand experience and brand identity. These specific perceptions can be used to improve the brand equity, which will improve the marketing of the brand.

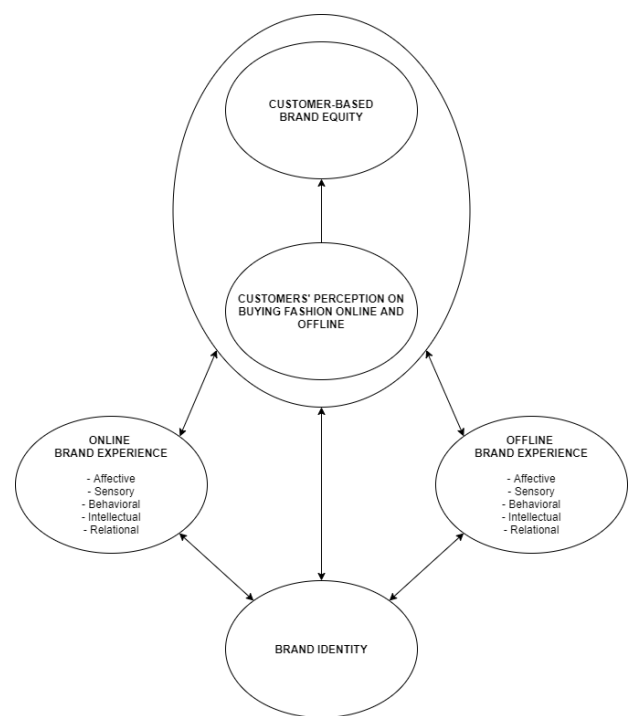


Figure 3. Conceptual model of the brand experience in relation to shopping online and offline within the fashion industry.

5. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the research design will be discussed, and the methodology of the study will be explained. Firstly, the research design of the semi-structured interviews will be presented. Later, the sample selection, the collection of the data and the selection of data will be discussed.

5.1 Research Design

This paper is the result of an extensive literature review on the topics of Brand Experience, Customer Perception and Fashion. In order to understand why consumers rather shop online or offline, qualitative data is needed to understand the effects and different dimensions of brand experience in relation to the

consumers perception. As Wallace (1984, p.182) suggests, “qualitative research provides the flexibility to uncover new issues and insights and to cover those issues broadly. The bottom line is that qualitative research maximizes the value of marketing research”.

In order to maximize value of this marketing research a qualitative research was developed, focused on developing new insights on this topic in order to help organizations within the fashion industry enhance their marketing strategies. Respondents with experience in shopping for fashion, were interviewed on how they experience their favorite fashion brand online and offline.

The first part of the interview is a small discussion, during this discussion the respondent explained about his shopping experiences at his or her favorite shop and some demographics such as age, gender and nationality will be provided by the respondent. Respondents were asked to provide their perception on the meaning of a brand, and what they qualify as an experience.

The research continued by asking questions on how they experience the brand and what kind of experience stimulates them to rather buy online or offline. The second part of the interview focused on discussing the different dimensions of ‘brand experience’. These questions will relate to the sensory, affective, behavioral, intellectual, and relational dimensions of their experience when shopping online or offline. Questions regarding these dimensions are based on the confirmatory factor analysis by Brakus et al. (2009, p.60).

Lastly, brand identity was discussed in order to see how far it influences the respondent’s experiences when shopping. This was done by providing the interviewee context on the definition of brand identity in order to prevent any misconceptions. Through this qualitatively designed research, insights were gained to help classify the important aspects of the respondents’ experiences.

The data retrieved from this research was collected in a qualitative manner. In this case the interview was conducted in an individual face-to-face setting, recorded, and then transcribed. The goal of the semi-structured interview was to *understand* the respondents’ perception and get more understanding on the respondent’s point of view. The interviews and its semi-structured questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

5.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was done through semi-structured qualitative interviews and was based on the information retrieved from the literature review and the conceptual model (Figure 3). In order to guarantee complete answers, depending on the preference of the respondent two language options were given either English or Dutch.

The interviews took place between October and December of 2019. In total eight interviews were conducted, where five conducted personally and three conducted through videoconference. The interviews ranged between forty and sixty minutes each, and the interviewees were all Dutch citizens between the age of twenty and twenty-three, with a history of shopping fashion online and offline. This group was selected in order to guarantee the interviewee’s knowledge and experience around the subject. Collected data includes field notes, recorded and videotaped interviews.

Since this study is exclusive to The Netherlands, interviewees needed to be Dutch. The interviewee may originally be born in another country; however they need to be in possession of the

Dutch nationality and they need to be integrated into the Dutch culture in order for the study to give valid data on the experiences and perception of shoppers in The Netherlands. When the interviewee participated in online and offline shopping, they can respond and give their opinion on the questions of the interview.

All the semi-structured interviews were fully transcribed and analyzed using Atlas.ti, a sophisticated data analyses software provided by the University of Twente. The full transcriptions can be found in Appendix B. All data was then summarized based on the brand experience dimensions by Nysveen (2013), and if what is mentioned formed a reason to buy or not buy fashion online or offline.

Due to time constraints which allowed for a twelve-week timeframe for this research to be conducted, the sample size was set for 8 participants.

6. RESULTS

Due to the methodological approach taken to conduct this research, findings and discussions can be regarded as closely connected. Many of the insights presented here therefore, are the direct result of the semi-structured interviews and associated discussions. Hence, the reflections on the findings of this research and the findings themselves, will be presented together in this section.

6.1.1 Results sub-research question I

- What influences the customer’s brand experience online within the fashion industry?

This section highlights the most significant findings on what influences the customer’s brand experience online, in relation to the respective findings from the literature review.

- *Affective Dimension*

When looking at the affective dimension we notice that the interviewees mostly shop online because they want to feel relaxation and pleasure. Interviewee G talks about the relaxation aspect: “*It’s more like relaxation to me. You’re doing something nice for yourself, so you don’t really have to think too much*”

Interestingly, this feeling is closely connected to the intellectual dimension, where as less thinking creates a better experience. Interviewee H talks about this connection: “*In general, it always does me good and sometimes gives me some peace. You don’t think much.*”

- *Behavioral Dimension*

The behavioral dimensions emphasizes the importance of accessibility (the option to filter, travel time and shopping time). Interviewees D & F mention the importance of accessibility as Interviewee D says: “*I don’t like to engage in physical actions, people for example might prefer the fitting rooms in an offline store. I don’t like this; I want to shop fast. The easier and faster I can get the item I want, the better.*”

As can be seen in the literature, the Internet can create opportunities to increase the efficiency of online shopping behavior, which on its turn influences the search costs positively (Childers, 2001).

- *Intellectual Dimension*

Within the intellectual dimension we see that the participants believe that being in a physical store requires extra thinking. There was common agreement between interviewees that when shopping, they want to be left alone. Interviewee A explains: “*When I shop offline, I don’t like it if employees come ask me questions, in general I don’t like thinking that much about shopping. I feel that if I am in-store I have more things to keep into account then when I shop online.*”

Interviewee D talks about how new experiences and thinking to much can make him feel uncomfortable: *"I prefer to choose the known. I don't really like new experiences and going through a new experience makes me feel uncomfortable."*

- *Sensory Dimension*

Within the sensory dimension we notice that when shopping online, the interviewees can't feel or see the actual product or brand. Interviewee B explains how he notices a direct link between the sensory dimension and the intellectual dimension: *"When I buy online there is less thinking needed for me, which causes me to end up with a lot of unnecessary clothes ... Offline I always need to try the clothing. Which for me is just an extra border to cross before I buy a product."*

Other focus points are the price and whether the brand provides the option to send back products for free. Interviewee A and F talk about these points, interviewee F explains: *"Something else I see is the prices of the brand, this goes for online and offline. I prefer to shop expensive clothing in an offline store, I want to fit it and be sure that what I buy is perfect for me"*

Interviewee continues on this topic and highlights the importance of free delivery and returns and paying afterwards: *"I'll just buy it online in different sizes so that I can fit it at home. A big plus for me is paying afterwards when I buy clothing online ... I choose shops with free shipping and returns."*

As mentioned by Levin (2005, p.282) *"Several studies have shown that "high touch" products that consumers feel they need to touch, smell or try on are those that require an offline presence at least at the final purchase stage"*. According to the earlier mentioned findings we can see that offline presence is of importance for fashion related products, this barrier can be lowered by offering the customer the option to review the product(s) offline, without extra costs.

- *Relational Dimension*

When looking at the relational dimension we notice that the interviewees are divided on how much they value the relational experience. However, we can see a link being made between the relational dimension and the brand identity. Interviewee F talks about this: *"Nike identifies itself as a brand for athletes, I consider myself an athlete so that is where I feel a link. I don't feel part of any Nike community or whatever. This feeling is mainly depended of the brand and not the store environment being offline or online. I have the same feeling at the online store of Nike."*

Furthermore, the customers often don't buy at a specific brand online. They buy at bigger retailers that sell several brands, because of this they feel less of a relation between them and the brand. Interviewee C talks about this: *"Zalando is a big retailer, who sells several different brands. Because of the size of Zalando I don't really feel a link."*

6.1.2 Results sub-research question II

- What influences the customer's brand experience offline within the fashion industry?

This section highlights the most significant findings on what influences the customer's brand experience offline, in relation to the respective findings from the literature review.

- *Affective Dimension*

In terms of the affective dimension, *store environment, trust and mood* are considered important aspects. Interviewee B and F mention this, as Interviewee B says: *"Store environment is everything to me, taking Go Britain for example. I would never*

shop online at Go Britain; the website looks unprofessional in contrast to the physical store that looks professional ... When I walk through a neat store, I feel some sort of satisfactions that increases my willingness to buy clothing there"

Interviewee F talks about his mood affecting his experience: *"If I am in the mood to go outside, I'll just go to the store try things on. However, I dislike people asking me questions in store."*

Notably, within the *"mood"* aspect we see a negative connection between the affective dimension and both the behavioral and intellectual dimension. This connection is also mentioned earlier, whereas in general we notice that contact with store employees is disliked by most of the interviewees. It is considered an extra barrier, as customers can feel *uncomfortable, need to think more and have to follow more steps compared to online to get the product.*

- *Behavioral Dimension*

With the results for the behavioral dimension in regards to online experience in mind, the same factor of importance here is *accessibility*. In contrast to online, where accessibility is the quality of being easy to use. Offline accessibility is important as it represents the quality of being easy to obtain. In other words, there is no waiting process, people can obtain their product directly. Interviewee D talks about this: *"Accessibility is a major determinant during my experience, the big plus while shopping offline is that I immediately have the product that I need."*

Furthermore, a direct link can be seen with the sensory dimension. Where people can directly observe the physical product, which enables them to make an easier buying decision. Interviewee G highlights this observation: *"Me trying to fit the clothing and walking and getting the product immediately are more important than the amount of actions I must take"*

- *Intellectual Dimension*

As mentioned earlier, we see that people might dislike going to a physical store as it requires them to take more steps and think more before buying the product. There is a consideration to be made here, which is directly related to the product accessibility. Do I need the product rightaway? Or can I wait for atleast a day and buy the same product online?

In addition, there is price which also influences this dimension and links it with the sensory dimension. Products within a higher price-range need more thinking time, as customers prefer to approve the physical product before purchase. Interviewee F talks about this: *"The main thing I think about is the price of the brand, if an item is expensive take a winter jacket, I need to check in person. This makes shopping offline favorable for me ... When I am searching for inexpensive clothes, such as tees I prefer shopping at ASOS because I don't need to think at all"*

- *Sensory Dimension*

Within the sensory dimension there are three aspects that play an important role in brand experience. These aspects are; *store environment, price and product sizing/quality*. Firstly, the store environment which needs to be perceived organised and attractive. As mentioned within the affective dimension by Interviewee B, valued is the professionalism of the store. Interviewee A & F talk more about store environment and on which aspects within the sensory dimension, play an important role. Interviewee F says: *"If a store is colorful, it is more likely to go there sooner than, for example, a store that is somewhat darker inside. I also think music in the store has an influence. The nicer the music, the longer you (in my opinion) stay in the store. For example, the Zara. Every Zara store is just clean and sleek. Things are clear, it gives me some peace of mind."*

- *Relational Dimension*

In contrast to online, we see that the relational dimension plays more of a role offline. Important to realize is the access to service in a physical retail environment, which isn't available online. There is a direct link between this dimension and all the other dimensions, as it enables the customer to feel a link with the brand. Interviewee D talks about this; *"In my opinion, it is all about the brand and if you really feel a link. I do think that a brand has a better possibility to create a link between them and the customer in store instead of online. This mainly because of all the extra factors that influence your feelings, such as retail environment."*

Interestingly, it can be observed that the customers in this case don't want to feel part of a brand or community. Interviewee E concludes: *"I never really have the feeling that I belong to any brand when I buy something. I want to feel good in clothing and it has to fit well. I often like it when not many people wear the item, which makes it limited."* The interesting part here is that *scarcity* and *exclusivity*, help create a better experience within the relational dimension. With this in mind a link can be perceived between the relational dimension and the brand identity, as exclusivity is often part of a brand's identity.

6.1.3 Results sub-research question III

- What is the influence of brand identity on brand experience and how do the different dimensions of brand experience help to convey the brand?

This section highlights the most significant findings on how brand identity influences the customer's brand experience and how the different brand experience dimensions help convey the brand. When asking the interviewees about brand identity and on how it affects their experience, we can make a separation between the core identity, extended identity (Nandan, 2005) and the unique brand associations as perceived by the customer (Ghodeswar, 2008).

6.1.3.1 Brand Representation

Most mentioned aspects that fall within brand representation were store environment and product attributes.

- *Store Environment*

Sometimes the first chance for a brand to manifest its identity is the store environment. Interviewees A and B talk about this, as Interviewee A says: *"Zara identifies itself as brand with high-end basics, the store environment is neat, and they have this timeless identity they try to manifest."* As mentioned within the previous dimensions we see that especially the sensory dimension plays a big role as customers can be attracted to several different aspects within this dimension, such as colors, tidiness, music and customer service.

- *Product Attributes*

Another key point regarding brand identity are the product attributes. Points of importance here are the product price, the product quality, and the product sizing. Interviewee A talks about the quality: *"a link between the brand and me is created by the physical attributes of the product. I want to wear quality and the brand provides me this quality, so there's the link"*

Interviewee G highlights the importance of what target audience the brand tries to attract through its identity: *"at the ZARA I know for a fact that they make clothes smaller than usual. It is a Spanish brand and the people from Spain are known to be smaller than people in the Netherlands ... Since I am small, I know they often sell clothes in my size."*

6.1.3.2 Perceived Brand

Equally important to the identity that the brand wants to represent, is the actual perceived brand by the customer. Interviewee B talks about this as he tries to explain what he values as important: *"I don't always care about the brand identity; I value how other people perceive the brand ... Take the North Face which is known to be a brand for hikers. Here in The Netherlands the younger generation of people perceives The North Face as a streetwear brand. This could maybe ruin their identity or the brand they wanted to manifest. However, this identity fits me better as I don't consider myself a hiker"* In this example we see a clear difference between what the brand tries to manifest, and on how it is actually perceived.

6.1.3.3 How do the brand experience dimensions help convey the brand

Comparing the results between the brand experience dimensions online and offline, we see that there are several factors which play an important role regarding experience on both channels and conveying the brand.

When looking at conveying brand identity, we see that the most important points are store environment and brand attributes. The other dimension help convey the brand through several other factors, such as *relaxation, accessibility, mood, price, amount of thinking needed, trust, quality, sizing, and the feel of a direct link with the brand.*

As mentioned earlier we can observe a direct link between the relational dimension and brand identity. What we observe is that brand identity plays a bigger role offline, compared to online. While customers shop online for accessibility and ease, offline focuses on multiple aspects, including store environment, that help form a relation with the brand and benefit the brand identity.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1.1 Integrating on- and off- line experiences

Keller (1993) describes that one of the motivations for studying customer-based brand equity is improving marketing productivity. In order to enhance the customer-based brand equity, a strong and favorable brand needs to be created. This enables us to see the relevance of brand identity and brand experience in relation with brand equity.

It is evident that the interviews regarding the online and offline retail channels create different experiences for the customer. In order to develop an optimal mix of online and offline services for fashion related products, marketers must determine and enhance attributes that are perceived as important by the target market, to be delivered better within the online and offline fashion retail channels.

This discussion will make suggestions on how on- and offline experiences can be integrated, in order to improve marketing actions, supporting cross-channel customer experience.

7.1.2 Brand Experience

Based on the research results key attributes were found that play an important role in the customers' experience with the brand (Figure 4).

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Online</i>	<i>Offline</i>
<i>Affective</i>	Relaxation	Store Environment
	Pleasure	Trust Mood
<i>Behavioral</i>	Accessibility	Accessibility
<i>Sensory</i>	Price	Store Environment
		Price
		Quality
		Sizing
<i>Intellectual</i>	Less Thinking	More Thinking
<i>Relational</i>	Less Relation	More Relation

Figure 4. Key factors influencing the brand experience dimensions in both channels.

To improve the brand experience and develop an optimal mix of the online and offline services, we need to understand which aspects marketing should emphasize or improve on within each channel.

- *Affective*

By analysing the main findings within the affective dimension, we see that there are 5 factors playing an important role *relaxation, pleasure, store environment, trust and mood*. Three of the five mentioned factors are based on what the customer wants to experience. Whereas, *store environment and trust* play more of a role within the extended brand identity as both are perceived as important for the brand, within this dimension.

Looking at what customers want to experience, we see that they want more efficiency within their shopping experience. Overall, the participants within this research displayed favoring the online retail channel, as it enables them to shop whenever they want for as long as they want. *Mood* plays an important role, as it determines if the customer is willing to favour an in-store experience over shopping efficiency. This is where we see brand identity playing a role of importance, as it can support a cross-channel customer experience. To create an optimal mix of both channels within this dimension, the marketing actions of the company should focus on creating a store environment providing customers with an efficient and trusted shopping experience. Equally important, these brands need to design websites that reflect the consumer's social stance and personality, while in-store the focus should be put on removing any extra social barriers between the consumers and employees.

With mood and trust playing such an incremental role within this dimension, the suggestion can be made to review the importance of these factors within the already existing framework by Nysveen et al (2013).

- *Behavioral*

Within the behavioral dimension we see one factor of importance, which is accessibility. In contrast, to the online segment where accessibility means being able to buy the product directly wherever you are; accessibility within the offline channel represents obtaining the product directly.

Looking at what the customers want to experience within this dimension, we see that it again is efficiency. How fast can I get the product and how much effort do I need to put in getting the product. We notice the direct relation with brand identity, as it can positively influence the amount of risk a customer is willing to take. Generally speaking, bigger brands like Zara and H&M display a higher level of trust to their customers by providing

options such as *easy returns, fast shipping and picking products up from their stores*. Smaller brands can learn from this by enabling better accessibility, thus improving the customers' trust in the brand.

Marketing can integrate both channels and enable a cross-channel experience, by providing efficiency and trust. Important within the online channel is that consumers often don't need to move to obtain the product, instead they need to wait. This can be fixed by offering same day delivery or removing risk by allowing afterpayment. On the other hand, the offline channel can use the online channel by allowing consumers to pick the fashion online and having it ready for them in-store, making the shopping experience more efficient.

- *Sensory*

Within the sensory dimension we see four factors of importance *store environment, price, quality and sizing*. All these factors are part of the customer experience, and we see the direct link with the brand identity. All named factors are being perceived as branded by the customer. While, store environment is already discussed in the affective dimension we see that *price, quality and sizing* are part of the core brand identity. As they represent the brands essence that in order to be strong, needs to remain constant over time.

Yang en Young (2009), mention the importance of senses within the fashion shopping experience. Within this specific dimension we can notice one main problem, which is the possible high purchase risk. Customers are less likely to buy expensive clothing online, as they perceive it more risky and less trusted. It is suggested that marketing can be improved by using features that allow consumers to feel as if they are interacting with a product (ibid). As mentioned earlier, this research highlights the importance of *price, product quality and sizing*. Rowley (2009), suggests the possibility of implementing image interactivity technology (IIT) which allows consumers to feel as if they can interact with the product. The results of this research verify the importance IIT, as it can become increasingly more crucial within the brand experience, and shaping the brands identity.

- *Intellectual*

When analysing the intellectual dimension, we observe its direct dependency of the other dimensions. Whereas, in the previous dimensions there are several factors influencing the experience, in the intellectual dimension it is mostly based on the amount of thinking needed when shopping at a specific fashion brand.

In aggressive markets such as the fashion retail market, brand identity should always help distinguish the brand from its competitors. A strong brand is understood and represents trust. The participants within this research mention the enjoyment of thinking less when shopping. Generally, what we notice is that the biggest barrier within this dimension is the social interaction between the customers and employees. Furthermore, accessibility plays a big role as shopping efficiency in general is higher online compared to offline.

Earlier within this discussion section, suggestions were already made on how these specific factors can be enhanced. Hence, we say that by implementing those suggestions within the marketing strategy for offline retail stores, the thinking gap between both channels can be decreased. Equally important, to having a good brand experience is having a identity that helps form a positive experience. The marketing strategy should focus on creating understandable and strong brand that needs almost no thinking.

- Relational

Lastly, when looking at the relational dimension, we see that equal to the intellectual dimension there is one main factor playing a role of importance. In this case it is how much of a relationship does the customer experience with the brand. Based on the conducted interviews, it can be noticed that there is a direct and strong link between brand identity and the relational dimensions.

In highly competitive marketplaces, the success of an online fashion retailer depends on maintaining a positive relationship between their consumer and themselves (Kim et al., 2009). As mentioned in the results, the relational dimension plays more of a role offline. The brand can create a relationship with its customers through the retail environment and social interactions, which both represent the brand identity. Within the results section Interviewee B talks about brand image, and it not always being equal to the brand identity. The North Face is mentioned as a hiker's brand but perceived as a streetwear brand. Berry (2000) mentions these two types of communication; those controlled by how the brand wants to present itself worldwide; and the external communication, which isn't controlled by the company and indirectly affects the brand awareness and meaning (Figure 2). Interestingly, a relationship can be created with the brand, based on brand image regardless of the brand's identity. Communications play a big role and change customers perception, which on its turn influences the brand experience.

While, it still unclear how much communications impact brand image and therefore the brand experience. The results of this research do show us the problem and solution to brands creating a better relationship with their customers, within the online channel. The marketing strategy can be enhanced by already implementing the earlier suggested IIT, and the creation of a web experience that allows the consumer to understand and connect with the brand's identity. As senses play a big role within brand experience, this web experience should focus on allowing clear insights on product attributes, more accessibility and an easy understandable brand identity. McCormick (2012), highlights the importance of regular fashion information, including features such as blogs, styling tips, online magazines and social networking sites that can help emphasize the brands fashion consciousness to the consumer.

8. CONCLUSION

Creating superior brand- and customer experience seems to be one of the central objectives in today's retail environments. With the addition of the online retail channel within this rapidly changing fashion industry, fashion brands need to be even more informed on how they can keep customers satisfied. The goal of this research was to shed light on what factors consumers perceive as important during their fashion shopping experience.

A semi-structured interview was created and conducted among regular fashion shoppers, between the age of 20-22. The interview questions provided the interviewees with room to explain which factors influence their shopping experience, within each specific brand experience dimension. This resulted in several key brand experience factors, within the fashion industry (Figure 4).

Furthermore, brand identity's effect on brand experience was analyzed. This analysis resulted in a clear separation of what the brand wants to represent, and how it is actually perceived. The key factors linked to brand manifestation are store environment and product attributes. Both factors are better achievable in an offline environment, and equally important is that both factors help to create a stronger relationship between the brand and

consumer. Looking at the perceived brand, we see that consumers value this more compared to what the brand wants to manifest. Especially, within the fashion industry we see that consumers base their experiences on local perceptions, and word of mouth on the brand.

Henceforth, to integrate on and offline marketing strategies to improve the brand experience a favorable, strong, and unique brand needs to be created. This can be done by improving on the previously mentioned key brand experience and brand identity factors. Both brand experience and brand identity play an important role in positively influencing customers perception on buying fashion online and offline. This on its turn will positively impact the customer-based brand equity, which will create a better consumer response to the marketing of the brand.

To conclude, we can answer the main question of this research: *"How can the customers' brand experience with on and offline retail environments help organizations within the fashion industry plan their marketing strategy?"*. By doing more research on the key factors that positively influence the brand experience within the fashion industry in the Netherlands and implementing these factors in the marketing strategy. Consumer perceptions on the brand will improve, which will lead to a better brand equity.

8.1.1 Limitations of the Research Methodology.

This research was bound to a twelve-week timeframe, which led to restricting its focus exclusively to the fashion market within the Netherlands.

The methodology during this research was based on the framework by Nysveen (2012) which focuses on the individual effect of brand experience dimension in service organizations. As this framework is tested in an offline environment only, using this framework for an online environment might have resulted in flawed analyzations. Because of the lack of a solid framework this research had to deduct the information and conclusions, presented in the tables and interviews. It remains unclear therefore, how much information and/or factors may have been left unrevealed.

8.1.2 Limitations of the sample group.

The sample size consisted out of eight people, consisting out of five males and three females. This ratio was used as it forms a good representation of the actual gender ratio of students at the University of Twente. Due to this small sample size, the statements made in this paper are based on the consensus amongst these observations. These observations would have been more powerful, had the researcher analyzed a larger sample group.

8.1.3 Limitations of the discussion and conclusion.

As the result of this research using a qualitative methodology, the observations and interpretations retrieved from the semi-structured interviews were used to make conclusions. As the conclusions are based on interpretation, the conclusion can be subject of further discussion. Furthermore, the proposed suggestions made in the discussion are based on the current research conducted; these suggestions and their effects on brand experience have yet to be tested.

8.1.4 Future Research

This research is one of the first studies that examines the key factors of brand experience within the fashion industry, and how to integrate its outcome in on and offline marketing strategies. Since there is a lack of information and limited literature regarding the consumption and experiences across the fashion market, this research is a step in the right direction, as it will add to the information provided across the global fashion market.

This will help to enable the creation of tools for predicting, measuring, and configuring this uncharted paradigm.

Firstly, more research could be done on this topic worldwide. In this research only the Netherlands is covered, which leaves room for brand experience and brand identity in relation to cultural differences. As most brands work on an international basis, implementing different marketing strategies within different countries might be inefficient. By having more information about this, more unexplored key factors may come to light. These factors can help with the creation of a tool that measures effect of brand experience on marketing strategies worldwide.

Secondly, future research should focus on exploring and measuring the effects of (external) communications and brand image on the brand experience and identity. As for now, there is little research done on this topic, which leaves us with no solid argumentation on which factors to focus on.

Thirdly, while this study found important key factors within brand experience, doing a comparable research with a larger sample group, may result in more dependable answers. As this research is focused on Dutch consumers of the age 20-22, there is still a lot to be understood about how age and culture influence brand experience within the fashion industry.

Fourthly, in this research a conceptual model is presented, in relation to shopping online and offline within the fashion industry. More research needs to be done on the direct connection between brand identity and brand experience, and the influence of this connection on one another. While the literature and this research mention the importance of brand identity on brand experience, it is still unclear how the external perceptions influence the brand experience and which, and how much these key factors influence each other.

Lastly, as mentioned in the limitations, this conceptual model and the suggestions made based on this research are not tested yet. This leaves room for future research on the effect of these suggestions on the brand experience and the possible importance of mood and trust on the brand identity.

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11. APPENDICES

11.1 APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW

Semi-structured in-depth interview

Dear participant,

I would like to thank you for participating and taking the time for this interview.

More insights on my research. I am interested in understanding why you would be more interested in buying fashion online or offline. The general idea is that the younger generations prefer shopping online instead of offline, but I am interested in understanding what causes this shift and if this existing idea is actually wrong.

The interview will take about 40-60 minutes of your time, and will greatly help with my research

This interview is conducted by J.N. van der Weijde, at the University of Twente. Data collected through this interview will be treated confidentially and will not be shared to third parties. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. No obvious data breach risks are applicable. Feel free to contact me at any later points if you have any questions.

Control Variables

First, I would like to start with some control variables.

What is your age?

What gender are you?

What is your nationality?

Do you have experience buying fashion online and offline?

What is your favorite shop to buy both offline and online?

Thank you.

Brand Experience

I would like to know your opinion.

When you think of a brand, how would you define it?

When you think of an experience, how would you define that?

So, when you go to shop for new fashion, what would you say is influencing your choice in buying online or offline?

Could you possibly provide me with some experiences with your favorite store, that made you go shop rather offline than online?

Note: the participant might come up with extra perceptions, these cannot be expected in advance.

The following questions will be based on the different dimension of 'brand experience'. The questions will be asked separately on the physical store and online store.

Sensory:

Is your choice for buying in a (offline/online) environment affected by the sensory impression the brand makes, for example the things you see or something that you smell? This could be everything.

Could you explain your answer in relationship to your favorite brand?

Affective:

Is your choice for buying in a (offline/online) environment affected by the affective impression the brand makes, for example do you have specific feelings or sentiments? Or do you have strong emotions when shopping for this specific brand?

Could you explain your answer in relationship to your favorite brand?

Behavioral:

Is your choice for buying in a (offline/online) environment affected by the behavioral impression the brand makes, for example do you have to engage in physical actions, is the bodily experience important or do you prefer no action-oriented brand?

Could you explain your answer in relationship to your favorite brand?

Intellectual:

Is your choice for buying in a (offline/online) environment affected by the intellectual impression the brand makes, for example do you have to think a lot? Or do you prefer to not think as much when shopping?

Could you explain your answer in relationship to your favorite brand?

Thank you. I have two more questions that I would like to ask you.

Brand Identity Part

Brand identity originates from the company and is how the company seeks to identify and manifest itself to consumers and other stakeholders. This could be the company name, the logo and the way they visually want to represent themselves in general.

Is your choice for buying in a (offline/online) environment affected by the brands identity? For example, you like the way of how classy the brand is, or you like to logo.

Could you explain your answer in relationship to your favorite brand?

External Communications Part

External communication is the goodwill created by positive experiences of prospects or clients within the organization and its communication, channels, stores, people and products. The most common forms of external brand communication are word-of-mouth and publicity. External communication is basically you are the impression that your created of the brand, by listening to the outside world only. It is not how the company envisions themselves.

Is your choice for buying in a (offline/online) environment affected by external communications? For example, did you hear or read things about quality or the experience is this specific store.

11.2 Appendix B: Interview Transcriptions

11.2.1 Interview – Interviewee A

Speaker 1: Hello Interviewee A, thank you for participating in this interview. For my research I am interested in understanding why people shop online and offline. The general idea is that younger generations prefer to shop online, I am interested in seeing if that is true and if so, what are determinant factors for this shift to online shopping.

Speaker 1: I would like to let you know that all data retrieved from this interview and the interview itself will not be disclosed to any third parties.

Speaker 1: So, I would like to start with some control variables.

Speaker 1: What is your age?

Speaker 2: 21 Years

Speaker 1: What is your gender?

Speaker 2: Male

Speaker 1: What is your nationality?

Speaker 2: Dutch

Speaker 1: Do you have experience buying fashion online and offline?

Speaker 2: Yeah basically I do both.

Speaker 1: What is your favorite shop to buy offline?

Speaker 2: Zara

Speaker 1: What is your favorite shop to buy online?

Speaker 2: ASOS

Speaker 1: Alright, thank you.

Speaker 1: So, to start off with the idea of brand experience, so what the research is about. I would like to hear your opinion about the following; When you think of a brand, how would you define it?

Speaker 2: The brand needs to show me Uniqueness, a good logo and the company needs to manifest itself in positive manner.

Speaker 1: So, combining brand with experience. When you think of a brand experience, how would you define that?

Speaker 2: I base my experience with a brand mostly on the product such as the price and quality.

Speaker 1: So, mostly related to clothing itself. How do you feel about the surrounding in for example the offline store, does this affect your experience?

Speaker 2: Not really, it does not influence my choice. The store needs to look nice for me if they want me to enter. However, that is the thing with online, I do not need to check the store, I just check for the product.

Speaker 1: So, when you go to shop for new fashion, what would you say is influencing your choice in buying online or offline?

Speaker 2: For me the reason to shop offline is trying on the clothing and if I don't have time, I'll just buy it online in different sizes so that I can fit it at home. A big plus for me is paying afterwards when I buy clothing online.

Speaker 2: Summarizing, shopping online is easy for me, it takes no time and it is often cheaper I choose shops with free shipping and returns. Offline shopping takes a lot of time, moving from store to store.

Speaker 1: Alright, thank you for sharing your experiences with me.

Speaker 1: The following questions will be based on the different dimension of brand experience. The questions will be asked separately on the offline store and online store.

Speaker 1: So, starting with the sensory dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the sensory impression the brand makes? For example, the things you see or something that you smell? If so, please give examples you remember.

Speaker 2: When I enter the Zara, I like the black surroundings in store and the store environment itself. I think my choice for buying offline is affected by the store environment.

Speaker 2: They often showcase the best products at the entrance of the store, this is a trigger for me to enter the store.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 1: And if you look at the online environment? You cannot really touch the website, but do you maybe see something that affects your experience?

Speaker 2: At ASOS I mainly check for discounts, new products and the kind of models they use. The homepage also mentions new stuff coming in. The website needs to look neat and if the first thing I see are free shipping and possibilities to pay afterwards, I prefer buying online.

Speaker 1: So, basically what you like about online are the discounts and availability of the products.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 1: So, the next dimension is the affective dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the affective impression the brand makes? For example, do you have specific feelings or sentiments? Or do you have strong emotions when shopping for this specific brand?

Speaker 1: Could you explain your answer in relationship to Zara.

Speaker 2: I do not think so.

Speaker 2: The main thing that affects my feelings while shopping offline is the price, if the shop looks too expensive, I will probably won't even enter.

Speaker 1: And online?

Speaker 2: I shop online when I am lazy, I also like to think of it as something to kill time.

Speaker 1: Do you see shopping as a fun activity?

Speaker 2: If I can find a nice piece of clothing while doing nothing, I see it as a win-win.

Speaker 1: Alright, so mostly laziness and what is easier for you no other emotions.

Speaker 2: Yes, exactly.

Speaker 1: The next dimension is the behavioral dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the behavioral impression the brand makes? For example, do you have to engage in physical actions, is the bodily experience important or do you prefer no action-oriented brand?

Speaker 2: As mentioned at the previous dimension, I prefer to sit on my couch and do not do anything. However, I do believe that it is important for brand to have some interactions with its customers, it really depends on the kind of brand and how they want to express themselves to the public.

Speaker 1: How do you feel about taking actions?

Speaker 2: When I have time to go shop offline, I like to walk through different stores and check different products. A plus for me is the possibility to try my clothing.

Speaker 2: However, in general I do not have that much time to go out and shop, so I prefer a brand that is less action oriented.

Speaker 2: Another important point is the distance to the shop, when I shop offline you could really see it as a day consuming activity. For the sake of time efficiency, I prefer to stay at home and shop fast.

Speaker 1: And online?

Speaker 2: They can connect with you through chat, it is important for big brand that they have a good customer service. Besides that, I feel I do not need to take a lot of actions.

Speaker 1: And how do you take care of different sizes online if you cannot fit the clothing?

Speaker 2: I do not care, I just order multiple sizes, choose what fits me and return the rest. I just pay afterwards.

Speaker 1: Alright!

Speaker 1: The next dimension is the intellectual dimension.

Speaker 1: So, is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the intellectual impression the brand makes? For example, do you have to think a lot? Or do you prefer not to think that much when shopping?

Speaker 2: I do not want to think that much when I shop.

Speaker 2: When I shop offline, I do not like it if employees come ask me questions, in general I don't like thinking that much about shopping. I feel that if I am in-store I have more things to keep into account than when I shop online.

Speaker 1: What about online?

Speaker 2: When I shop online, I can just relax, take my time and there is no need for me to be worried about being watched or finishing up my purchase. If I have any questions, I will just ask them through their online customer service.

Speaker 1: Would you say you have to think more online or offline?

Speaker 2: I think that I have to think less online. If I think less the chance is bigger that I buy the product.

Speaker 1: So, what I understand is that your thinking is affected by your surroundings. You prefer to think less, so that is why you shop online.

Speaker 2: Yes, true.

Speaker 1: Alright so moving on to the next dimension which is the relational dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the relational aspect of the brand?

Speaker 1: Do you feel a link between the brand and you? To you have the feeling you belong to a community or family? Do you have the feeling of not being left-alone?

Speaker 2: Not really, a link between the brand and me is created by the physical attributes of the product. I want to wear quality and the brand provides me this quality, so there is the link.

Speaker 1: So, you do not feel part of the Zara community?

Speaker 2: I could associate myself with Zara's style and the people representing this style, because I like the style.

Speaker 1: And how about online at ASOS do you feel a link?

Speaker 2: Because of the size of ASOS as a company, I think it is hard to feel part of a community. The variety of people buying there is too big in my eyes to feel any association.

Speaker 2: I do think you force yourself into a specific community through the clothes you buy.

Speaker 1: Is there a difference between online and offline?

Speaker 2: ASOS provides different brand, so it is hard to create link with a specific brand as I do not consider ASOS a brand. With Zara it is easier to feel a link as it is one brand.

Speaker 1: So, the last question is about Brand Identity.

Speaker 1: Brand identity originates from the company and is how the company seeks to identify and manifest itself to consumers and other stakeholders. This could be the company name, the logo and the way they visually want to represent themselves in general.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline or online environment affected by the brands identity? For example, you like the way of how classy the brand is, or you like to logo.

Speaker 2: Zara identifies itself as brand with high-end basics, the store environment is neat, and they have this timeless identity they try to manifest. I think next to the commercials done by Zara, brand identity is something that you see in the store environment and in the actual product.

Speaker 1: Does ASOS's brand identity affect you buying there?

Speaker 2: No, as mentioned before I see ASOS as a bigger platform for many brands. I do not feel a link with ASOS or its identity. I could feel a link with one of the brands on ASOS.

Speaker 1: So, overall does brand identity influence your brand experience?

Speaker 2: Brand identity would be a reason for me to buy a certain brand offline or online, I feel that I have to know the brand before I buy and what better way to know the brand than in the physical store.

Speaker 1: Alright! Thank you for participating in this interview. I have no more questions.

Speaker 1: No problem.

11.2.2 Interview – Interviewee B

Speaker 1: Thank you for participating in this interview, nice that you could take some time to do this for me.

Speaker 1: This interview will be of great value for my research. Basically, I'm interested in understanding why people shop fashion online or offline.

Speaker 1: I would like to let you know that the information will not be disclosed to any third parties.

So, first of I would like to start with some control variables.

Speaker 1: What is your age?

Speaker 2: 21 Years

Speaker 1: What is your gender?

Speaker 2: Male

Speaker 1: Do you have experience with buying fashion offline and online?

Speaker 2: Yes

Speaker 1: What is your favorite store to buy fashion offline?

Speaker 2: Go Britain

Speaker 1: What is your favorite store to buy fashion online?

Speaker 2: ASOS

Speaker 1: I would like to know if you think of a brand, how would you define it?

Speaker 2: When I think of a brand, I think of the market they operate in, if I think of Nike I think of sports.

Speaker 1: And if you think of brand experience how would you define that?

Speaker 2: I don't get the question.

Speaker 1: What pops up in your head if you hear about brand experience?

Speaker 2: The feeling in regards with a specific brand I would say.

Speaker 1: Great! My questions will be asked in relation to your favorite stores. The questions will be asked in relation to your online shopping experience and offline shopping experience, separately.

Speaker 1: So, when you buy fashion, could you tell me what is influencing your choice to buy offline or online?

Speaker 2: I buy offline if I need something very fast, so maybe if I have a party, I don't have nice clothes and I need something at the spot I will just go and buy it offline. However, I live in Enschede and I don't really like the shops here.

Speaker 2: In general, I like online more. However, I prefer to shop offline if I need to fit my clothing. I would probably shop offline a lot more if my favorite stores would be closer to my home. I think the main factor that influence my choice is the distance.

Online there are more products and I have the feeling things sell-out less fast.

Speaker 2: When I shop at ASOS online, sometimes the variety of products keeps you from finding the thing you want. In offline shops they mostly always showcase the best products. I think this also makes a difference.

Speaker 1: I wanted to ask you about your experiences, however you already told me about brand specific experiences, great!

Speaker 1: The following questions will be related to the dimensions of brand experience and as mentioned before will be asked in relation to your favorite online brand ASOS and favorite offline brand Go Britain.

Speaker 1: So, first I would like to start with the sensory aspect of your experience, I don't know if you have heard of that before?

Speaker 2: I think so.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the sensory impression the brand makes? For example, the things you see or something that you smell?

Speaker 2: Store environment is everything to me, taking Go Britain for example. I would never shop online at Go Britain; the website looks unprofessional in contrast to the physical store that looks professional. The physical store gives me a relaxed feeling which makes me feel welcome.

Speaker 1: So, you basically say that if the store looks nice you buy there faster.

Speaker 2: I don't know about buying, but I would enter faster.

Speaker 1: And for online at ASOS, does the sensory impression affect your choice to shop there?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think the main difference is take Zalando they only have pictures of a t-shirt without a model. At ASOS they use models, I can see the fit and feel the essence of the brand.

Speaker 2: And this isn't only a picture, they sometimes even have movie were somebody walks in the t-shirts. Overall, it just gives me a better idea of the fit and the essence of the brand.

Speaker 1: Alright, great!

Speaker 1: The next dimension is the affective dimension. Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the affective impression the brand makes? For example, do you have specific feelings or sentiments? Or do you have strong emotions when shopping for this specific brand?

Speaker 2: I feel that online and offline shops have the same mission. However, offline they have more possibilities to provide you with triggers and feelings.

Speaker 2: I don't know if this answers your question?

Speaker 1: It does answer it partly, could you give me more insights on your emotions when you shop offline?

Speaker 2: When I walk through a neat store, I feel some sort of satisfactions that increases my willingness to buy clothing there.

Speaker 1: And online at ASOS?

Speaker 2: I think the site looks good enough it doesn't look that good. However, it is easy in use. There is no other specific feeling that I get when I shop at ASOS.

Speaker 1: Alright, moving on to the next dimension. Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the behavioral impression the brand makes? For example, do you have to engage in physical actions, is the bodily experience important or do you prefer no action-oriented brand?

Speaker 2: The main drivers for me to shop offline are that I can fit the clothing and that I have it immediately. However, When I go shopping, I prefer no contact with employees, which is my main driver to buy online only.

Speaker 1: And looking at the action aspect?

Speaker 2: I would rather sit at home on my couch while I shop, and I don't like fitting clothing in a physical store.

Speaker 1: What is the reason for that?

Speaker 2: Long shopping trips are nothing for me, I get bored easily.

Speaker 2: It is nice that you have the option to try your clothing, but I just don't like it. In the end if I know my sizes I would most of the time like to buy it online.

Speaker 1: So, summarizing you prefer sitting at home and prevent actions. However, you would go if all stores where in Enschede.

Speaker 2: Yes, exactly.

Speaker 1: Great thanks.

Speaker 1: The next dimension is the intellectual dimension. Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the intellectual impression the brand makes? For example, do you have to think a lot? Or do you prefer not to think that much when shopping?

Speaker 2: Currently, I don't think a lot, but I would like to think more about my buying choices. Especially, when I buy online there is less thinking needed for me, which causes me to end up with a lot of unnecessary clothes. When I buy in a physical store I must think about the product, my surroundings, paying for the clothes and a lot of other aspects.

Speaker 1: So, online there are less steps being made before you decide?

Speaker 2: Yes, for example, offline I always need to try the clothing. Which is for me just an extra border to cross before I buy a product.

Speaker 1: Alright! Great you already covered online and offline.

Speaker 1: So, I will just move on to the last dimension. Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the relational aspect of the brand?

Speaker 1: For example: Do you feel a link between the brand and you? To you have the feeling you belong to a community or family? Do you have the feeling of not being left-alone?

Speaker 2: When I go to the Go Britain which is a small retail store, I feel a direct link with the people working there and I can associate myself with the other customers. I just believe they can provide people with a better brand experience offline then online in their case.

Speaker 1: And when you look at online? Do you maybe feel more left-alone?

Speaker 2: I like to be left alone in the store, if I have questions I just want to go and ask them myself. I hate it when people approach me offline. I personally like to prevent any unnecessary link, which is why I mostly shop online.

Speaker 1: I know that ASOS really tries to build a community, do you feel any sort of link with that community?

Speaker 2: I get what you are saying you mean like their blogs right, but no I don't feel any link. I don't feel a link with ASOS mainly because of the size of the brand, it is way too commercial in my eyes.

Speaker 1: So, if the store is smaller and offline you feel a better relationship with the brand?

Speaker 2: Yes!

Speaker 1: Alright, thank you! So, I will move on to my last questions which is about brand identity.

Speaker 1: I don't know If you heard about that.

Speaker 2: Yes, I do I believe it is closely connected to experience. I think about the people who are using or who are wearing the brand.

Speaker 1: Just to give you an idea about the definition of brand identity that I used for my research. Brand identity originates from the company and is how the company seeks to identify and manifest itself to consumers and other stakeholders. This could be the company name, the logo and the way they visually want to represent themselves in general.

Speaker 1: So, is your choice for buying in an offline or online environment affected by the brands identity? For example, you like the way of how classy the brand is, or you like to logo.

Speaker 2: I don't always care about the brand identity; I value how other people perceive the brand.

Speaker 1: Could you elaborate?

Speaker 2: Take the North Face which is known to be a brand for hikers. Here in The Netherlands the younger generation of people perceives The North Face as a streetwear brand. This could maybe ruin their identity or the brand they wanted to manifest. However, this identity fits me better as I don't consider myself a hiker.

Speaker 2: So, I count on my opinion.

Speaker 1: So, it affects you in no way?

Speaker 2: I can understand that brand identity could influence my choice for buying online or offline. However, in most cases my own or the general opinion about the brand counts for me. This goes for both Go Britain and ASOS.

Speaker 1: Alright! Thank you for taking the time for this interview. It was a pleasure.

Speaker 2: No problem. Any time.

11.2.3 Interview – Interviewee C

Speaker 1: Okay. So, thank you for participating in this interview for him. I'm interested in seeing why you would be more interested in buying fashion online or offline. So, the general idea is that younger generation prefer to shop online instead of offline.

Speaker 1: But I'm interested in understanding what causes the shift. So, if this idea is actually wrong and it will take about 30 minutes and it will greatly help with my research.

Speaker 1: So, regarding privacy this interview won't be shared with third parties. I will start with some control variables.

Speaker 1: What is your age and what is your gender?

Speaker 2: 21 and male.

Speaker 1: what's your nationality?

Speaker 2: Dutch

Speaker 1: And do you have experiences with buying fashion online and offline.

Speaker 2: Yeah. Both.

Speaker 1: So, what is your favorite shop to buy online.

Speaker 2: I don't really have a favorite shop, but I think most of my clothes are from Superdry and Zalando

Speaker 1: OK.

Speaker 1: So, we can use Superdry for offline and Zalando for online.

Speaker 1: So, moving on to some questions related to brand experience which is the subject of my research. So, I would like to know from you when you think of a brand. How would you define it?

Speaker 2: When I think of a brand, I think of something special, in my opinion a brand is something that differentiates clothes from each other. It provides some sort of uniqueness to an item.

Speaker 1: Alright.

Speaker 1: Adding experience to that so, brand experience how would you define that?

Speaker 2: I do look at brands when I buy clothes. So, actually if there is no brand. Most of the time I don't buy the clothes.

Speaker 1: And if you would say you have like this experience with the brand, what would you say defines this experience?

Speaker 2: Only the clothes itself. The experience is mostly defined by what I see, does the product look nice. I don't really focus on the surroundings that much.

Speaker 2: So, the quality is important. When the brand has quality, I buy it.

Speaker 1: OK. So, you look mostly at the physical clothing aspects?

Speaker 1: So, the things you can touch and see?

Speaker 2: Yeah. The price as well

Speaker 1: At Superdry they probably have some experience they want to show you I don't know if you been much attached to that or is it just mostly clothing based.

Speaker 2: No, it's mostly clothing based. An employee could be annoying or something like that but that's not an important thing which I'm looking at.

Speaker 1: OK.

Speaker 1: So, when you go shop for new fashion online or offline. What would you say is it that influences your choice?

Speaker 2: Online. Uh the website doesn't have to be that great, but I must get my clothes easily. I prefer a good accessibility to items, meaning that I want to filter through the products and find what I want and need as fast as possible.

Speaker 2: So that's important.

Speaker 2: Offline, I live in town near Enschede. So, every time in I buy my clothes offline, I have to drive for like 20 minutes. I have to park the car. All these extra things.

Speaker 1: Okay so it's the location that determines if you shop online or offline.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: You also just mentioned accessibility. How easy you can find clothing do you think there's a difference for you when you shop online and offline and how easy you can find the clothes that you want.

Speaker 2: Mm hmm.

Speaker 2: Depends on which shop and which brands. But filtering through clothing online works best for me.

Speaker 2: I think that if I don't necessarily have to buy new clothes and I don't have the time, I just have a quick look on the internet look for some clothes and sometimes I buy directly and sometimes I think OK I will buy it next week something like that.

Speaker 1: So, if you have to go to a physical store. You might push the time to get the new clothes?

Speaker 2: Exactly.

Speaker 1: Okay so the next questions will be based on brand experience dimensions by a paper by Brakus. So, I will ask you some questions that are related to these dimensions to see what dimensions are important for you when shopping online and offline.

Speaker 1: So, starting with the sensory dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the sensory impression that the brand makes? So, for example are there things you see or something that you smell maybe you could give an example.

Speaker 2: For example, if I don't like the music in an offline store, I leave the shop sooner.

Speaker 1: Looking at the general experience not only the clothes. Do you think a good-looking store environment is important?

Speaker 2: Yes of course, I think everyone values that. Being in a nice store environment is nice, but my focus is mostly on the clothing not the surroundings. The surrounding however don't need to disturb my experience.

Speaker 1: So, when you shop online. Same question.

Speaker 1: Is the sensory impression by the brand affecting you buying online?

Speaker 2: Advertisements can be very annoying. Yeah. Just having one pop up in general or something like that.

Speaker 2: Actually, that's the only thing.

Speaker 1: Okay there's nothing else that makes or breaks the experience when you are shopping?

Speaker 2: Mm hmm. No actually not.

Speaker 1: Okay good.

Speaker 1: So, then I move on to the next dimension which is the affective dimension. And the question here is, is your choice for buying in an offline environment so, at Superdry affected by the affective impression compression of the brands make? So, do you have specific feelings or sentiments, or do you have some sort of emotion when you are shopping with this specific brand?

Speaker 2: I wouldn't say that I have specific feeling when shopping online or offline. I am a goal-oriented shopper, I don't shop for the purpose of pleasure. However, when I might see somebody wearing something nice from this specific shop, I might be triggered to buy the same product. I believe I want to feel valued and want people to think that I wear nice clothes. For example, with my favorite brand Superdry, I think their clothing is nice. When I wear Superdry I feel valued.

Speaker 1: So, you are happy when you buy nice clothes.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: So, the same question for online. Do you think your experience is affected by the affective impression of the brand?

Speaker 2: Yeah. Another feeling I have is some sense of urgency, as I mentioned previously, I shop clothing when I need it. So, I want to have it immediately, when I shop online, I have to wait a few days this can frustrate me sometimes.

Speaker 2: But if it's not very necessary for me to have it the same date and I buy it online.

Speaker 1: OK. That's something I hear more often. Interesting.

Okay. So, going on to the next question which is about the behavioral dimension. So, would you say that your choice for buying in an offline environment is affected by the behavioral impression that the brand makes. So, for example do you have to engage in a lot of physical actions and is the bodily experience important to you or do you prefer to not take action at all?

Speaker 2: I don't understand exactly what you mean.

Speaker 1: What I mean is if you prefer to go there engage like search for the clothing, really physical work.

Speaker 2: It is important for me that there isn't a total chaos during my shopping experience, I prefer order. This can speed up my process of buying clothes, if I have to search for a long time, I rather spend my time doing something fun or important.

Speaker 1: Most of the time it's not necessary to buy something. So, I walk in there and then I look for nice clothes and if I don't find anything I would go away. But if I find something, I will go to a dressing room and then look at if it's OK or not.

Speaker 1: Alright. Comparing this to the online environment. Does this behavioral dimension affect your decision?

Speaker 2: Uh, that's why I like shopping online, I can just filter through the products find my product, order it and be done with it. Furthermore, I don't have to travel to the actual store which is a big plus. But then again, the waiting times can be frustrating. And I never know if my ordered size will be correct.

Speaker 2: I prefer sitting on a couch at home.

Speaker 1: So, correct sizes are something that you value when shopping offline. You want to wait, and you have to see if it's the correct size.

Speaker 2: Exactly. I also want to see the colors in real life.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 1: The next dimension is the intellectual dimension which is about the intellectual impression that the brand makes.

Speaker 1: So, would you say that when you buy offline at Superdry you have to think a lot? Or do you not prefer to think that much when you shop.

Speaker 2: I think I don't think that much, the main things that pop up are the price of the product and if it is something necessary. That's why I like to stick to the brand I know, I can trust their quality, know their sizes and they have affordable prices. This basically makes buying clothing there a no-brainer for me.

Speaker 1: Do you think that you have to think more when you buy offline or online?

Speaker 2: I think offline. I have a timeframe of making my choices in store, I can't stay there for multiple hours and I don't want to bring my bought items back. I live far away from the stores, so going back every time isn't an option for me.

Speaker 1: Okay so again location.

Speaker 2: Yeah actually.

Speaker 1: When you shop online it's just like you have to take less steps. That's what you feel?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Okay great.

Speaker 1: OK so moving to the last question of these dimensions, which is the relational dimension.

Speaker 1: Would you say your choice for buying in an online environment is affected by the relational aspect of the brand. For example, do you feel like there's a link between the brand and you, do you have the feeling that you belong to a community?

Speaker 2: I don't really feel a link between the brands and me. When I look at Superdry I could say that I identify myself with their clothing, however I don't have the feeling that I belong to the community of Superdry.

Speaker 2: People in my town don't really care about clothing that much. There are some general small stores, the big stores are in the bigger cities.

Speaker 1: And when you shop at Zalando do you feel a link?

Speaker 2: Mm. No actually not. Zalando is a big retailer, who sells several different brands. Because of the size of Zalando I don't really feel a link, I might identify myself with some of the brand on their website.

Speaker 1: So, thank you. This was my last question regarding the brand experience dimensions. This last question is about brand identity.

Speaker 1: So, did you ever hear about brand identity?

Speaker 2: Mm hmm yeah. But I don't know what you mean with it.

Speaker 1: Yeah. So, it's how the company seeks to identify and manifest itself to consumers and other stakeholders.

Speaker 1: So, it's basically just from the company to the consumer. So, you do not have to consider what the order people think.

Speaker 1: So, this could be the company name and the logo and the way they want to represent themselves in general. For example, if you look at Zara you will feel they always have this really clean high-end look, good prices but a really clean and big business.

Speaker 1: I don't really know Superdry well but just looking at the logo looking at the name and how they represent themselves in store like what they are how do want to make you feel. Would you say that brand identity affects you buying there?

Speaker 2: I think they want to show people that it is a cool brand.

Speaker 2: I think that most of their fashion is for males.

Speaker 2: And it's not always that cheap but the clothes are also not very expensive.

Speaker 1: Does Superdry showing you they're a cool brand affect you buying there?

Speaker 2: Mm hmm. No no no.

Speaker 2: I don't care about brand identity, for me it's all about what I think of the brand. If the brand has a clear visible logo on the clothing and I don't like it, this might influence my choice of buying the product. However, if this specific brand has an ugly logo, the clothing is nice, and the logo isn't visible on the product I would still buy it.

Speaker 1: And taking this same question for online. Would you say that this feeling would be stronger if you buy online or offline regarding brand identity?

Speaker 2: So, I think brand identity shows through store environment. Online it's more a general web page. You only see the things that you want to see because there are filters and. So, it's easy to filter through the things that you want online.

Speaker 1: Good. Great man. Thank you for taking this interview.

Speaker 2: No problem. You're welcome.

11.2.4 Interview -- Interviewee D

Speaker 1: Well thank you man for wanting to be interviewed

Speaker 1: Well this is an interview about brand Experience, and I do this interview because I want to get more insights about this topic and how other people think about it.

Speaker 1: Nowadays the general idea that the younger generations rather buy online than offline, and I am interested to find out why people prefer buying online or offline.

Speaker 1: The interview takes about half an hour and I would also like to inform you that all the data is treated confidentially.

Speaker 1: Well then, I want to start with several control variables.

Speaker 1: What is your age?

Speaker 2: I am 21 years old

Speaker 1: And what is your gender?

Speaker 2: I am a male

Speaker 1: What is your nationality?

Speaker 2: Dutch

Speaker 1: Do you have experience with buying fashion offline and online?

Speaker 2: Yes both

Speaker 1: Could you give me an example of your favorite offline shop?

Speaker 2: I like the H&M

Speaker 1: What is your favorite online shop?

Speaker 2: I think Zalando

Speaker 1: I will start with some introducing questions about the subject brand experience, so I would like to hear your opinion on the following; if you think of a brand how would you define it?

Speaker 2: I think of an organization that sells everything under one name.

Speaker 1: If you think of brand experience how would you define that?

Speaker 2: This differs per brand. For example, when I shop at the H&M I buy basic stuff. My experience tells me that clothing at the H&M has a bad quality and that it breaks faster.

Speaker 2: If I shop online, I shop different brands overall my experience is better with these brands they are mostly a bit more expensive.

Speaker 2: So, looking at the products my experience with shopping online is better but it's solely depends on the brand.

Speaker 1: So, you connect your experience to the physical attributes of the brand.

Speaker 2: Yes, that is right.

Speaker 1: So, you don't really look at surroundings? For example, store environment?

Speaker 2: No, not really, I just look at the physical aspects, if the fit is good, how long it stays good... these kinds of things.

Speaker 2: Personally, I prefer to shop fast, and I don't really like to take time to try the clothing and check for a perfect fit.

Speaker 2: Accessibility is a major determinant during my experience, the big plus while shopping offline is that I immediately have the product that I need.

Speaker 1: So, to be clear you like accessibility and you prefer online shopping.

Speaker 2: Yes, that is right.

Speaker 2: So, I like it when I can filter fast, so I get my product faster.

Speaker 1: So, the only reason for you to go to a physical store is to try the clothing on.

Speaker 2: Yes, that is right and that I can take it with me home immediately.

Speaker 1: OK, thanks.

Speaker 1: So, I wanted to ask you for some experiences with your favorite stores, but you already did tell me some of your experiences, so great.

Speaker 1: Summarizing, you go to the H&M when you need the basics and your expensive clothes you shop online?

Speaker 2: Yes, exactly! That is right.

Speaker 1: Thanks.

Speaker 1: So, I move on to my next questions about brand experience, these questions are based on several dimensions. So, I will ask you some questions with every dimension to see which dimension is important for you when you shop online or offline.

Speaker 1: I do this to measure your experience.

Speaker 1: So, my questions will be split in online and offline and I will use your chosen favorite stores during these questions.

Speaker 1: So, I start with the sensory dimension. The question here is; is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the sensory impression the brand makes? So, for example is there something you see or smell that affects your experience to shop offline?

Speaker 2: Well for me it is important that things are sorted in size and color I don't like much chaos.

Speaker 2: A structured store makes me feel better. Furthermore, if the store plays loud music that I don't like I will leave faster.

Speaker 1: So, asking you the same question but for this sensory dimension... Is it affecting your choice to buy online?

Speaker 2: Well, regarding online shopping I like the advertisements I see. I think when you see discounts, you're more triggered to buy something. Furthermore, my experience is enriched when I received the items, I ordered online in a nice box including a special card or small gift.

Speaker 2: The website needs to be clear and shouldn't be chaotic as well. So, you could say I like it when I can see people put effort in a product I bought.

Speaker 2: And regarding the smell I think it speaks for itself if a store stinks you don't go there.

Speaker 1: OK thank you for your answers.

Speaker 1: So, I will move on to the next dimension which is the affective dimension. Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the affective impression the brand makes? For example, so you have specific feelings or emotions when you shop at the H&M?

Speaker 2: I prefer to choose the known. I don't really like new experiences and going through a new experience makes me feel uncomfortable.

Speaker 2: When I buy my basics at the H&M I feel a trusted atmosphere. For example, I can easily return things I don't like, my feeling tells me that if I buy something it H&M it must be right.

Speaker 1: And regarding shopping online?

Speaker 2: I value a trusted atmosphere, so when I shop online, I want to see a well-organized web shop and some sort of verification of quality. For example, I check reviews before I buy online, if I like the reviews, I will order faster.

Speaker 2: That why I chose Zalando I shop there more often, its trusted and I know I will get something right.

Speaker 1: So, in this case you value trust.

Speaker 2: Yes, I think so, especially online because you can't see the product in real life. So, trust is important.

Speaker 1: Alright thank you.

Speaker 1: So, moving on to the following questions.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the behavioral impression the brand makes? For example, do you have to engage in physical actions, is the bodily experience important or do you prefer no action-oriented brand?

Speaker 1: So, taking H&M for example could you provide me with some experiences?

Speaker 2: I don't like to engage in physical actions, people for example might prefer the fitting rooms in an offline store. I don't like this; I want to shop fast. The easier and faster I can get the item I want the better.

Speaker 2: With action-oriented do you mean there is a limited stock?

Speaker 1: Could be.

Speaker 2: Well yeah no I don't like this, I want my product fast and don't want to spend time on shopping.

Speaker 1: And for online?

Speaker 2: Well as mentioned earlier I like the filters online as they enable me to find products fast.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 1: So next question.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the intellectual impression the brand makes? For example, do you have to think a lot? Or do you prefer not to think that much when shopping?

Speaker 2: I think this connects to the last dimension. I prefer to think a lot before I make a purchase. As mentioned previously; I buy the basics offline and the more expensive brands online.

Speaker 2: So, when I shop offline, I don't think that much because I already know what I need. If I buy online the product often is more expensive, so I open several tabs in my browser and compare different pieces in order to find the best fit for me.

Speaker 2: If the price goes up, I prefer to think longer and to be sure that I have the right product.

Speaker 1: So, would you say that you think more online?

Speaker 2: As mentioned, I buy basic offline, I don't need to think as long. Buying expensive stuff online takes more time.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the relational aspect of the brand?

Speaker 1: For example: Do you feel a link between the brand and you? Do you have the feeling you belong to a community or family? Do you have the feeling of not being left-alone?

Speaker 2: *Laughs* No, not really

Speaker 1: So, you don't associate with people that buy at the H&M.

Speaker 2: No, I just buy the basic and I don't feel a connection with the H&M. Online I do have that this connection, because I buy clothing that shows who I am.

Speaker 2: In my opinion, it is all about the brand and if you really feel a link. I do think that a brand has a better possibility to create a link between them and the customer in store instead of online. This mainly because of all the extra factors that influence your feelings, such as retail environment.

Speaker 2: However, just to be clear I don't buy clothing to feel part of a community.

Speaker 1: Alright thanks for your clear answer.

Speaker 1: So, I have a last question that is about brand identity. Have you ever heard about that?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think so.

Speaker 1: Brand identity originates from the company and is how the company seeks to identify and manifest itself to consumers and other stakeholders. This could be the company name, the logo and the way they visually want to represent themselves in general.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the brands identity? For example, you like the way of how classy the brand is, or you like to logo.

Speaker 2: For example, the H&M provides a real basic or neutral feeling, which is important for me if I want to shop basics. However, I would rather buy a specific brand at Zalando which could help me differentiate from the rest of the people. I like to combine basics with different brands, I don't want to be over the top and I don't want to be too basic. So, I do value brand identity and it does determine if I buy online or offline.

Speaker 1: Alright, yeah this connects to the definition I used in my research.

Speaker 2: I do notice however that I buy more online these days, at this new retailer about you. It looks like Zalando, and they sell different brands. So, I don't really care about the identity of this website, I do however feel some sort of link with some of the brands on the website.

Speaker 1: Alright! Thank you for participating in this interview.

Speaker 1: No problem!

11.2.5 Interview – Interviewee E

Speaker 1: Dear participant, I want to thank you for your participation and for taking the time for this interview. I would like to know why you are more interested in buying fashion online or offline.

Speaker 1: The general idea is that younger generations prefer to shop online rather than offline, but I am interested in understanding the cause of this shift and whether this existing idea is wrong.

Speaker 1: The interview takes about 30 minutes of your time and will greatly help with my research.

Speaker 1: Data collected through this interview will be treated confidentially and will not be shared with third parties.

Speaker 1: First I would like to begin with some simple questions about yourself.

Speaker 1: What is your age?

Speaker 2: I am 21 years old.

Speaker 1: What is your gender?

Speaker 2: Female.

Speaker 1: What is your nationality?

Speaker 2: I am Dutch.

Speaker 1: Do you have any experiences with shopping online and offline? If so, what are your favorite brand to shop?

Speaker 2: H&M offline and ZARA online

Speaker 1: Thank you very much.

Speaker 2: I would like to start with some questions to get a better understanding of your perceptions on brands and experiences.

Speaker 1: So, if you think of a brand, how would you define that?

Speaker 1: First, if you hear the term “Brand” how would you define it?

Speaker 2: When I think of a brand, I often first think about where I have already come across this brand. So, for example in an advertising commercial on television, or promotion of the brand on social media. A brand must have its own recognizable characteristic, I think.

Speaker 1: If you think about experience, how would you define that?

Speaker 2: For example, with the G-star brand. I always buy my jeans at that store.

Speaker 2: Until a few years ago the skinny jeans collection was out of stock and they never sold it again.

Speaker 2: G-star was already familiar to me because many acquaintances wore this brand and had good experiences with it.

Speaker 2: The jeans that I wore from G-star were also always a high-quality as promised by their saleswoman and the right sizes were picked for me while shopping.

Speaker 1: Okay interesting.

Speaker 1: So, when you go shopping for new fashion, what would you think influences your choice to buy online or offline?

Speaker 2: The choice to buy offline is influenced by the fact that you know immediately whether the size is correct because you can try it on in the store.

Speaker 2: This is not possible online. Although I think it is very nice that more and more online shopping websites indicate what the size is, for example, by using a model in the pictures.

Speaker 2: There is also increasingly indicated what length and waist size the model has. Because of this, I think ordering online is more fun, because now you can really see what size you have.

Speaker 1: Alright.

Speaker 1: Could you perhaps give me some experiences with your favorite store which makes you go shopping offline rather than online? Or vice versa

Speaker 2: For example, at H&M I think online shopping is more fun than in the store itself (offline).

Speaker 2: With the H&M app you can save points with every online order which you can use for a discount on your next order.

Speaker 2: You will also receive these points if you buy your clothes in the store, but for this you must be a member, which can only be done online.

Speaker 1: That is very interesting. I did not know about it.

Speaker 1: So, the following questions will be based on the different dimensions of "brand experience". The questions are asked separately about the physical store and the online store.

Speaker 1: I am going to start with the sensory dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an online store influenced by the sensory impression that the brand makes?

Speaker 1: For example, the things you see or something that you smell? If so, please give examples you remember.

Speaker 2: Yes, this is certainly the case. If I want to shop online and the website is messy or things are hard to find which causes me to search a lot, I leave faster.

Speaker 2: When I shop online, I like it if the website is clear and clearly indicated where you can find the things you need, then I also think of return terms and payment terms.

Speaker 2: With offline shopping this is the same. If I come to a store that doesn't smell fresh, is messy or does not have a nice atmosphere, I would probably less quickly buy clothes there compared to store that has a nicer atmosphere.

Speaker 2: First impression is important to me.

Speaker 1: I can really relate to that. Thank you for answering the first dimension. Now I am going to ask you questions about affective dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment influenced by the affective impression that the brand makes? For example, do you have specific feelings when buying there? Or do you have strong emotions when shopping for this specific brand? Please, explain your answer.

Speaker 2: I always go into a store with a feeling that I hope that I will find what I am looking for. If I need something urgently, it is the best if I look calm and focused. Sometimes this can cause frustration if I can't find what I need, but I think it gives a satisfaction and a happy feeling when you find the thing you were looking for.

Speaker 2: This goes for online as well; I can't recall any other feeling.

Speaker 1: Alright, no problem. Let's move on to the next dimension. The behavioral dimension.

Speaker 2: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment influenced by the behavioral impression that the brand makes? Do you have to take physical actions, is the physical experience important or do you prefer brand that isn't action-oriented?

Speaker 2: I don't really prefer an action-oriented brand. I enjoy walking around a spacious store where everything is neat and tidy so that I can search well. I also often like it when a shop has shop windows and mannequins nicely decorated so that it also gives an image of the clothing.

Speaker 1: And looking at online?

Speaker 2: Online has an easy accessibility, however I because of the amount of clothes on online stores my shopping experience can get a bit messy. I prefer to see things with my own eyes.

Speaker 1: But you prefer less action, right?

Speaker 2: Yes, that is true, but having to think a lot also requires some sort of action. So, online I have to think more.

Speaker 1: Alright, this adds to the next dimension which is the intellectual dimension.

Speaker 1: I can relate to that as well. Onto the next dimension and that is about intellectual

Speaker 1: Does your choice get influenced by the intellectual impression that the brand makes for buying in an offline or online environment? Do you have to think a lot while shopping? Or is it the opposite that you would rather think less or not at all? Can you explain your answer relating to your favorite store?

Speaker 2: Of course, I prefer not to think too much during shopping. At H&M and ZARA, I hardly have to think about the size because I often buy clothes there and know what the sizes are and how the clothes fit. I do like to think about where I can combine a new piece of clothing with something new or something that I already have at home.

Speaker 1: Very clear. Thank you.

Speaker 1: How about the Relational dimension? By this I mean is your choice influenced by the relational aspect of the brand. Is there any connection between the brand and you? Any feeling of being not alone?

Speaker 2: I never really have the feeling that I belong to any brand when I buy something. I want to feel good in clothing and it has to fit well. I often like it when not many people wear the item, which makes it limited. For example, many acquaintances have H&M and ZARA clothing in the wardrobe at home, because they are quite popular stores where I live. So, they lack exclusivity.

Speaker 1: Fair enough.

Speaker 1: The last question is about brand identity.

Speaker 1: Ever heard about that before?

Speaker 2: No, not really.

Speaker 1: Brand identity comes from the company and is the way the company tries to identify and manifest itself to consumers and other stakeholders. This can be the company name, the logo and the way in which they want to represent themselves visually in general.

Speaker 1: Is your choice of buying in an offline or online environment influenced by the identity of the brand? For example, do you like how stylish the brand is? Or do you like the logo's?

Speaker 2: Not necessarily that my choice is influenced but I think it is important for a brand if they really stand for something and that you are recognizable. Which makes it important to have a logo and slogan.

Speaker 1: And regarding the style they want to manifest? Do you value that while shopping online or offline?

Speaker 2: No, I think I also mentioned this earlier. I choose clothing based on what I like and how it fits. I don't really care about what the brand wants to manifest.

Speaker 1: This was it. Thank you for participating on this interview.

Speaker 2: No problem.

11.2.6 Interview – Interviewee F

Speaker 1: Well thank for wanting to be interviewed

Speaker 1: Well this is an interview about brand Experience, and I do this interview because I want to get more insights about this topic and how other people think about it.

Speaker 1: Nowadays the general idea that the younger generations rather buy online than offline, and I am interested to find out why people prefer buying online or offline.

Speaker 1: The interview takes about half an hour and I would also like to inform you that all the data is treated confidentially.

Speaker 2: So, do you mean you will save this conversation?

Speaker 1: Yes, exactly.

Speaker 2: Alright that is fine.

Speaker 2: Let's do this then

Speaker 1: Well then, I want to start with several control variables.

Speaker 1: What is your age?

Speaker 2: I am 21 years old

Speaker 1: And what is your gender?

Speaker 2: Male

Speaker 1: What is your nationality?

Speaker 2: Dutch

Speaker 1: Do you have experience with buying fashion offline and online?

Speaker 2: Yes

Speaker 1: Could you give me an example of your favorite offline shop?

Speaker 2: The Nike Store

Speaker 1: Alright and your favorite offline store to shop clothing?

Speaker 2: ASOS

Speaker 1: Alright, something I hear more often.

Speaker 1: So, the research is about brand experience. And to start I would like to know how you would define a brand?

Speaker 2: A brand makes clothing more expensive and it shows quality. I like some brand better than other brand it's about the connection that I have with a brand.

Speaker 1: How would you define brand experience?

Speaker 2: If I think of brand experience, I think of quality, usability of the clothing my overall experience. If I like the brand yes or no.

Speaker 1: So, what I understand it is related to physical attributes.

Speaker 2: Yes, exactly. If I buy something to use during sport, I expect something with more quality from a brand.

Speaker 1: So, a more general question. If you buy fashion, what influences your choice to buy online or offline.

Speaker 2: I buy online, so I can stay inside, I can just check the models. If I am in the mood to go outside, I'll just go to the store try things on. However, I dislike people asking me questions in store.

Speaker 2: So, basically it depends on my mood.

Speaker 1: Alright.

Speaker 1: Could you give me some experiences in relation to your chosen favorite brands?

Speaker 2: I wanted to buy a jacket, so I went to the store to try it on, but it was sold out. So, I needed to buy it online. I wanted to be sure that it looked good on me, that's why I went to the offline store. Price of the product influences me shopping online or offline.

Speaker 1: So, this research is really focused on fashion.

Speaker 2: Yeah, I understand. I don't always know my size, that's why I go in store to try it on.

Speaker 1: So, the following questions will be based on several dimension of brand experience, I will ask questions separately for online and offline shopping and I will use your chosen favorite stores during these questions.

Speaker 2: Alright, that is fine.

Speaker 1: So, I start with the sensory dimension. Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the sensory impression the brand makes? For example, the things you see or something that you smell? If so, please give examples you remember. This could be everything.

Speaker 2: When I go into the Nike store the first things, I see are the athletes on the wall, the sport related articles and a sporty environment, I love sports that is why I would love to be in such an environment.

Speaker 2: Something else I see is the prices of the brand, this goes for online and offline. I prefer to shop expensive clothing in an offline store, I want to fit it and be sure that what I buy is perfect for me.

Speaker 1: And at ASOS online?

Speaker 2: When I shop at ASOS online the first things I see are models wearing the clothes, I click on products based on the association I feel with the person wearing the specific brand.

Speaker 2: I can't think about anything else. I want to let you know however, that my choice to buy online or offline isn't really influenced by me seeing or touching the clothing.

Speaker 1: Alright, fine.

Speaker 1: So, the next dimension is the affective dimension. Is your choice for buying in an (offline/online) environment affected by the affective impression the brand makes? For example, do you have specific feelings or sentiments? Or do you have strong emotions when shopping for this specific brand?

Speaker 2: As I mentioned at the previous dimension, when I enter the Nike store, I feel motivated and I mostly go shopping offline when I am happy. I just like to be in the store.

Speaker 2: Nike overall makes me feel good, so I want to be in an environment that makes me feel good.

Speaker 1: So, in this case your feelings depend on the store environment and the clothing.

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: And at ASOS?

Speaker 2: No. Nothing.

Speaker 1: Really nothing?

Speaker 2: When I shop online, I value the association with the brand and the model, I want to feel some sort of connection before I buy from a brand. I don't have any feelings with the brand ASOS, they have lots of clothing that's why I shop there. If ASOS changed their name to WILLY I wouldn't care. It is just easy for me to buy multiple brands at one place.

Speaker 1: Alright!

Speaker 1: Moving on to the next question.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the behavioral impression the brand makes? For example, do you have to engage in physical actions, is the bodily experience important or do you prefer no action-oriented brand?

Speaker 1: So, if you buy at the Nike store do you like the physical actions you have to undertake in store?

Speaker 2: Depends of my mood, if I am happy, I don't mind some action. If I am in a bad mood I like to stay at home.

Speaker 2: At ASOS I can just filter my way through all items till I find what I want. I do this when I want don't feel like going outside.

Speaker 2: I am a sporty person, so mostly I prefer a brand that is action oriented. Personally, I feel that most action-oriented brands are offline stores.

Speaker 2: I would also say that it depends on the urgency of needing the clothes. So, if I need something, I just go to the offline store, so I have my product immediately.

Speaker 1: Alright, I like that you answer that fast. You know what you want.

Speaker 2: Thanks, do your other interviews take a longer time?

Speaker 1: Some interviews take more time some don't. Feel free to answer whatever you like.

Speaker 2: Will do.

Speaker 1: Alright so the next dimension is the intellectual dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the intellectual impression the brand makes? For example, do you have to think a lot? Or do you prefer not to think that much when shopping?

Speaker 2: Most of the time I prefer to don't think and go with my gut.

Speaker 1: So, you don't think you just go with your gut every time?

Speaker 2: Well, yeah most of the time. What should I think about? If I like the products?

Speaker 1: Could be.

Speaker 2: The main thing I think about is the price of the brand, if an item is expensive take a winter jacket, I need to check in person. This makes shopping offline favorable for me.

Speaker 2: When I am searching for inexpensive clothes, such as tees I prefer shopping at ASOS because I don't need to think at all.

Speaker 2: To give another example, I need sports clothes, I think about what I need I search online, I know what I want then I go in store and buy it. Or I just order it online.

Speaker 1: So, what I take from your experience, you value price.

Speaker 2: Yes, that is true.

Speaker 1: Alright, so the last questions regarding brand experience dimensions.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline affected by the relational aspect of the brand?

Speaker 1: For example: Do you feel a link between the brand and you? Do you have the feeling you belong to a community or family? Do you have the feeling of not being left-alone?

Speaker 2: No.

Speaker 1: Could you think about your experience with the Nike store?

Speaker 2: What do you mean? Like that I am part of the Nike gang?

Speaker 1: You explained to me at the beginning of the interview you kind of associate with Nike.

Speaker 2: Yeah, with Nike but not with the people who wear it.

Speaker 1: It is about your relationship with the brand not only about the people who wear it.

Speaker 2: Nike identifies itself as a brand for athletes, I consider myself an athlete so that is where I feel a link. I don't feel part of any Nike community or whatever. This feeling is mainly depended of the brand and not the store environment being offline or online. I have the same feeling at the online store of Nike.

Speaker 1: And with ASOS do you feel a link there?

Speaker 2: Since, ASOS is a seller of various brands it is hard to feel a direct link with ASOS. I could feel a link with a specific brand on ASOS. I noticed ASOS does try to create some sort community of people, but I don't feel any link or association with that group of people.

Speaker 1: Great! That is clear to me.

Speaker 1: The last question of this interview is about brand identity.

Speaker 1: Brand identity originates from the company and is how the company seeks to identify and manifest itself to consumers and other stakeholders. This could be the company name, the logo and the way they visually want to represent themselves in general.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment affected by the brands identity? For example, you like the way of how classy the brand is, or you like to logo.

Speaker 2: Yes, brand identity affects if I buy online or offline. When I shop at Nike, I want to feel the sporty environment, this feeling is stronger offline than online. There are way more factors in the offline Nike store that display me their brand identity.

Speaker 2: At ASOS I don't feel any vibe at all. Just a real neutral feeling. I could feel a connection with the brands on ASOS.

Speaker 2: But in general, I don't care about the brand identity that much, it is about what do I need, what is the price, is it necessary. That's it.

Speaker 1: Alright thanks!

Speaker 1: That was the interview.

Speaker 2: No problem!

11.2.7 Interview – Interviewee G

Speaker 1: Dear participant, I want to thank you for your participation and for taking the time for this interview.

Speaker 1: I would like to know why you are more interested in buying fashion online or offline.

Speaker 1: The general idea is that younger generations prefer to shop online rather than offline, but I am interested in understanding the cause of this shift and if this assumption is true.

Speaker 1: The interview takes about 30 minutes of your time and will greatly help my research.

Speaker 1: I would like to add that Data collected through this interview will be treated confidentially and will not be shared with third parties.

Speaker 2: Fine.

Speaker 1: First, I would like to begin with some simple questions about yourself.

Speaker 1: What is your age?

Speaker 2: I am 20 years old.

Speaker 1: What is your gender?

Speaker 2: Female.

Speaker 1: What is your nationality?

Speaker 2: I am Dutch.

Speaker 1: Do you have any experiences with shopping online and offline?

Speaker 2: Yes

Speaker 1: What is your favorite brand to shop online?

Speaker 2: My favorite online store is ASOS

Speaker 1: What is your favorite brand to shop offline?

Speaker 2: My favorite offline store is ZARA.

Speaker 1: Thank you for answering these questions.

Speaker 1: The following questions that are about to be asked will be based on brand experience

Speaker 2: Alright, I think I heard about that before.

Speaker 1: So, if you hear the term ‘Brand’ how would you define it?

Speaker 2: I think brands are dynamic.

Speaker 2: They can play a different role depending on who they interact with and when. Most of the time it is a name/design that identifies one seller’s goods.

Speaker 1: Alright, interesting.

Speaker 1: If you think about “Experience” how would you definite that?

Speaker 2: In relation to fashion?

Speaker 1: Could be, or how you feel about experiences in general.

Speaker 2: I mostly shop at a store that is familiar to me.

Speaker 2: This way, I know for sure that the brand is precisely in my size and my length.

Speaker 2: For example: H&M. I always buy my T-shirts and dresses there because I know that they would really fit me well.

Speaker 2: Sale workers at the H&M are not always that friendly so this is something they could work on, I think.

Speaker 1: So, for you experience is in relation to fashion is about the sizing of the clothing and the attitude of the employees.

Speaker 2: Yes, don’t forget the trustworthiness of the brand.

Speaker 1: Alright.

Speaker 1: So, when you go shopping for new fashion what influences your choice to buy online or offline?

Speaker 2: Shopping offline for a new fashion is easier than shopping online.

Speaker 2: If I shop offline, I can directly just get a pair of jeans and just fit it in the changing room.

Speaker 2: So, trying the clothes on is a big plus.

Speaker 2: Online shopping takes a week of shipping before you receive the product and you just never know if it is your actual size.

Speaker 1: Could you perhaps give me some experiences with your favorite store which makes you go shopping offline rather than online? Or vice versa.

Speaker 2: Offline at the ZARA I know for a fact that they make clothes smaller than usual. It is a Spanish brand and the people from Spain are known to be smaller than people in the Netherlands.

Speaker 2: Since I am small, I know they often sell clothes in my size.

Speaker 1: And with ASOS?

Speaker 2: When you shop online you never know if the clothes have a perfect fit or look. You need to wait for clothes to arrive which can take up more time than a week.

Speaker 1: Okay, thank you for answering.

Speaker 1: So, the following questions will be based on the different dimensions of "brand experience". The questions will be asked separately on your chosen physical store and online store.

Speaker 1: So, starting with the sensory dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline store environment influenced by the sensory impression that the brand makes? For example, the things you see or something that you smell?

Speaker 2: If were to shop offline, I would rather go to a store that is neat and well organized than a store that has no life in it.

Speaker 2: I think good music helps as well. It makes you feel relaxed and keeps you in the store for a longer amount of time. If a song is sad or noisy, I would just go and leave.

Speaker 1: And when you look at online shopping?

Speaker 2: I think this also applies to online shopping. It's the same. If a website is very unclear and just not well-ordered then I would just stop looking any further.

Speaker 1: Okay, interesting answer. So, you are really focused on store environment?

Speaker 2: Yeah, you could say that.

Speaker 1: Moving on to the affective dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment influenced by the affective impression that the brand makes? For example, do you have specific feelings or feelings? Or do you have strong emotions when shopping for this specific brand?

Speaker 2: I really don't have or get any specific feelings while shopping.

Speaker 2: It's more like relaxation to me. You're doing something nice for yourself, so you don't really have to think too much.

Speaker 2: Sometimes when in need, I do get stressed or frustrated when I they don't have the product I want.

Speaker 1: And in when you shop at ASOS does this affective dimension influence you?

Speaker 2: I would say in the same way. When I am at home, I just browse my ASOS app, try to find nice clothes and add them to my cart of Wishlist. I do it to kill time.

Speaker 1: Fair enough. Moving on to the next dimension which is the behavioral dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment influenced by the behavioral impression that the brand makes? Do you for example have to take physical actions, is the physical experience important or do you prefer a brand that is not action-oriented?

Speaker 2: I would rather move less of take less actions.

Speaker 2: For example, when I shop offline, if a store is very well-ordered then I wouldn't have to search a lot.

Speaker 2: Another thing are the signs which help find my way through the store.

Speaker 2: But once again, I get my stuff at familiar stores and brands, so I wouldn't have to take that much action I know where to find what I want.

Speaker 1: And this is the same for online?

Speaker 2: I would say online is even easier, as I can just filter through the clothes and search for whatever I want.

Speaker 2: Since, I can shop on my couch at home I would say that this even takes less action.

Speaker 1: Alright, so in this case you prefer to shop online as you mentioned that you prefer less actions.

Speaker 2: Me trying to fit the clothing and walking and getting the product immediately are more important than the amount of actions I must take.

Speaker 1: Alright, thank you.

Speaker 1: The next dimension is the intellectual dimension.

Speaker 1: Does your choice get influenced by the intellectual impression that the brand makes? Do you have to think a lot while shopping? Or is it the opposite and would you rather think less or not at all?

Speaker 2: I think this complements the previous dimension, as the more you need to think the more actions it takes.

Speaker 2: However, I would say that I don't like to think that much.

Speaker 2: As I mentioned earlier, I go shopping because I want to feel relaxed or because I really need something. So, thinking a lot doesn't make me feel that relaxed and I need something I already figured what I want, so I don't have to check anymore.

Speaker 1: Alright and for online?

Speaker 2: I don't have anything to add for online.

Speaker 1: Alright, moving on to the next dimension which is the relational dimension. Is your choice influenced by the relational aspect of the brand? Is there any connection between the brand and you? Any feeling of not being alone?

Speaker 1: Let's start with the Zara, do you feel your choice to buy there is affected by this relational dimension?

Speaker 2: At ZARA as I said before they produce clothes smaller than normal. Me as a smaller than average person belongs to their target audience, because their clothes really do fit me well rather than for example H&M which is known for its bigger sizes.

Speaker 2: On the other hand, looking at ASOS I wouldn't say that I belong to their target group because it is a website which has so much different brands.

Speaker 1: Alright, so you don't feel a connection with ASOS because they sell a lot of different brands.

Speaker 2: Yes, I think connections are easier to make between me and a brand that sells specific clothes, such as the ZARA

Speaker 1: Alright.

Speaker 1: Thank you for answering these questions on the different dimensions of brand experience.

Speaker 1: My last question is about brand identity.

Speaker 1: Brand identity comes from the company and is the way the company tries to identify and manifest itself to consumers and other stakeholders. This can be the company name, the logo and the way in which they want to represent themselves visually in general.

Speaker 1: So, knowing this.

Speaker 1: Is your choice of buying in an offline environment influenced by the identity of the brand? For example, do you like how stylish the brand is or do you like the logo's?

Speaker 2: Yes. Most of the time I do like the logos and like how some brands can be so stylish. If a brand has a product that can relate or is almost like my style, I just have to get it. No matter what brand it is, if I like its identity, I buy it.

Speaker 1: So, brand identity is influencing your choice in buying offline or online?

Speaker 2: Yes, but it doesn't really matter if it's online or offline, I just check if the brand identity complements my own identity, if that is the case, I buy the product.

Speaker 1: Thank you for you taking your time for this interview. This is it. No further questions.

Speaker 2: No problem. I really do like the topic. It is very interesting.

11.2.8 Interview – Interviewee H

Speaker 1: Dear participant, I want to thank you for your participation and for taking the time for this interview. I would like to know why you are more interested in buying fashion online or offline.

Speaker 1: The general idea is that younger generations prefer to shop online rather than offline, but I am interested in understanding the cause of this shift and whether this existing idea is wrong.

Speaker 1: The interview takes about 30 minutes of your time and will greatly help with my research.

Speaker 1: Data collected through this interview will be treated confidentially and will not be shared with third parties.

Speaker 2: Alright, that is great to know.

Speaker 1: First I would like to begin with some simple questions about yourself.

Speaker 1: What is your age?

Speaker 2: I am 22 years old.

Speaker 1: What is your gender?

Speaker 2: Female.

Speaker 1: What is your nationality?

Speaker 2: I am Dutch.

Speaker 1: What is your favorite brand to shop at online and offline?

Speaker 2: My online store is Bershka and offline store is H&M.

Speaker 1: Thank you very much.

Speaker 2: I would like to start with some questions to get a better understanding of your perceptions on brands and experiences.

Speaker 1: So, if you think of a brand, how would you define that?

Speaker 2: As an identifier. Is a kind of a distinctive feature of a product. There are fixed brands that I use or wear anyway. This is because I know that their products fit me well and that the quality is good.

Speaker 1: And if you think of experience how would you define that?

Speaker 2: Basically, my experience with this brand. So, do I like the fit? Do I like the quality? These are questions I ask myself before I shop a certain brand.

Speaker 1: So, when you go to shop for new fashion, what would you say is influencing your choice in buying online or offline? Could you possibly provide me with some experiences with your favorite store, that made you go shop rather offline than online?

Speaker 2: Online they increasingly have new things that are not available offline. It has been noted to me that if you walk past a store, they usually try to make the newest collection as visible as possible which triggers you to eventually walk into the store.

Speaker 1: Interesting, how about online?

Speaker 2: Same goes for online, where I think most of the time, they showcase the newest and most popular products on the frontpage.

Speaker 1: The following questions that are about to be asked will be based on the dimensions of brand experience.

Speaker 1: I'm going to start with the sensory dimension.

Speaker 2: Alright what does that mean?

Speaker 1: So, is your choice for buying in an offline store influenced by the sensory impression that the brand makes? For example, the things you see or something that you smell? If so, please give examples you remember. This could be everything.

Speaker 2: If a store is colorful, it is more likely to go there sooner than, for example, a store that is somewhat darker inside. I also think music in the store has an influence. The nicer the music, the longer you (in my opinion) stay in the store. For example, the Zara. Every Zara store is just clean and sleek. Things are clear, it gives me some peace of mind.

Speaker 1: How about shopping online?

Speaker 1: Does the sensory impression by the brand affects you buying online?

Speaker 2: Shopping online can be tricky. The first thing that you will see online are the things that are on sale, mostly more than 50% off. Because of that I often click on that sale page. If an online shopping page is very well arranged and very clear, it's something that keeps me on the brands website.

Speaker 1: Alright. That makes sense.

Speaker 1: I am now going to ask you about the affective dimension. Affective dimension is about feelings and moods.

Speaker 1: So, is your choice for buying in an offline environment influenced by the affective impression that the brand makes?

Speaker 1: For example, do you have any specific feeling or mood? Do you have any strong emotions when shopping at this specific brand?

Speaker 2: I really don't have any specific feeling when I am shopping offline. It depends on my mood, if you're in a good mood you just take the time to look at every piece of things they sell.

Speaker 1: So, you would say your mood affects your choice?

Speaker 2: Well not only that.

Speaker 2: I shop online when I need a specific thing. For example: Winter coats. I mostly buy them online because there they have so much more options than offline.

Speaker 1: So, you prefer enough choice.

Speaker 2: Yes, exactly.

Speaker 2: In general, it always does me good and sometimes gives me some peace. You don't think much. For many women it is also a distraction. You are busy for yourself.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 1: Moving on to the next dimension, the behavioral dimension.

Speaker 1: Is your choice for buying in an offline environment influenced by the behavioral impression that the brand makes?

Speaker 1: For example, do you have to take physical actions, is the physical experience important or do you prefer not an action-oriented brand?

Speaker 2: I prefer less action. For example, offline I like a store that's very well-ordered and clear. So, I don't have to search the entire store, signs everywhere would be very handy.

Speaker 1: Alright, so a neat store is must for you. How about online?

Speaker 2: Online shopping is different. It's just about scrolling and clicking but if you get a wrong order or something that doesn't fit you, it takes some actions to send it back. Something I dislike.

Speaker 1: So, the website layout doesn't bother you?

Speaker 2: Yeah, a bit, it needs to be clear. I don't care that much about web design.

Speaker 1: And you just mentioned returns, do you dislike that?

Speaker 2: Yeah just packing up your stuff again, putting it in a box and bringing it to the post office is so much work. I really don't have the time for it.

Speaker 1: Alright, good to know.

Speaker 1: The next dimension is the intellectual dimension.

Speaker 1: Does your choice get influenced by the intellectual impression that the brand makes? Do you have to think a lot while shopping? Or is it the opposite and would you rather think less or not at all?

Speaker 2: It depends. When I enter an unknown store or order something online from an unknown website, I need to think a lot about if I actually will buy there. You don't know if they have exactly your size, it differs per brand or store. For example, I always buy my trousers at the ZARA, because I know they are my size and I don't have to look and think that much.

Speaker 1: How about online?

Speaker 2: Online shopping is the opposite, you think more. You need to check the size, length, imagine myself in the clothes and I have to think about my surroundings.

Speaker 1: So, you would say there are more factors you have to consider while shopping online?

Speaker 2: Yes, exactly. I'm already thinking about returning the products that I don't need.

Speaker 1: How about the relational dimension. By this I mean Is your choice influenced by the relational aspect of the brand. Do you feel a link between you and the brand?

Speaker 2: I don't want to say that I belong somewhere. But that I belong to the target group of a certain brand, that I can agree with. For example: the ZARA is a Spanish brand or company. People in Spain are small, so they make products that are somewhat smaller than normal (e.g. with the H&M other size much larger). In this sense I feel part of the Zara community.

Speaker 1: The last questions of this interview will be about brand experience.

Speaker 1: Brand identity comes from the company and is the way the company tries to identify and manifest itself to consumers and other stakeholders. This can be the company name, the logo and the way in which they want to represent themselves visually in general.

Speaker 1: Is your choice of buying in an offline or online environment influenced by the identity of the brand? For example, do you like how stylish the brand is or do you like the logo?

Speaker 2: Every brand has its own Identity. For example, Zara does not have a brand logo on a shirt, but in general their clothes are very stylish.

Speaker 2: So, I do value the identity that the brand wants to manifest. I don't really value the logo, but rather the essence of the brand.

Speaker 1: That was it. Thank you for taking your time for this interview.