FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY IN A STORYTELLING CONTEXT:

A quantitative study demonstrating that traditional marketing needs more narrative

Oliver Chicaiza, Carl Fredrik Somp

Department of Business Administration
Civilekononprogrammet
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Supervisor: Galina Biedenbach
ABSTRACT

Corporate storytelling is what happens when brands are telling their stakeholders stories. These stories can carry a vast array of messages, but in many cases, they are just stories. Stories of founders, stories of people in the history of a company, stories of the heritage that a particular brand carries and has carried for centuries. We have decided to focus this thesis on brand heritage. Additionally, we have included brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility. The main purpose of this thesis is to examine the effects of brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility on the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity. In order to fulfill this purpose, brand equity is conceptualised by four fundamental dimensions; brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality (Aaker, 1991).

When reviewing previous research, we discovered a research gap when it comes to storytelling in a corporate marketing context. There have been previous studies conducted, but none of them with a quantitative approach. Further, there has never been any research conducted with brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency, brand credibility, brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality in the same context. And certainly not within the framework of corporate storytelling.

The main population of respondents in our study consisted of residents in Umeå Municipality with a majority being female and between 21 and 50 years of age. The respondents were asked to answer questions measuring their perceptions of IKEA’s brand equity, brand heritage, brand consistency and brand credibility. The questionnaire was distributed in two groups on Facebook with an aggregated amount of about 15 000 members. The total number of respondents landed on 144 people and these answers were further analysed by using Cronbach’s alpha, descriptive statistics, Pearson’s correlation and multiple regression analyses.

When assessing the results in our study, we could determine from our regression analyses that the constructs brand heritage, brand utility and brand credibility had a positive effect on brand associations. We could also conclude that brand utility had a positive effect on brand loyalty and perceived quality. We further determined that corporate storytelling, anchored in theory, should be emphasising heritage while delivering utility to the intended audience in a credible way.

As for our practical recommendations, we advise practitioners of brand management to clearly identify and state their brand heritage by searching for stories internally, conduct surveys to identify the perceived utilities being held by their consumers and finally make efforts for being credible in all promises of quality delivery.
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“Tell me the facts and I’ll learn. Tell me the truth and I’ll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.”

– Native American proverb

Oliver Chicaiza                                Carl Fredrik Somp
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 1
   1.1 Choice of Subject ........................................................................................................... 1
   1.2 Problem Background ..................................................................................................... 2
   1.3 Theoretical Background ............................................................................................... 3
   1.4 Research Question ........................................................................................................ 6
   1.5 Thesis Purpose ............................................................................................................. 6

2. SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGY ......................................................................................... 8
   2.1 Ontology ..................................................................................................................... 8
   2.2 Epistemology ............................................................................................................... 8
   2.3 Research approach ...................................................................................................... 9
   2.4 Research Design ......................................................................................................... 9
   2.5 Pre-understandings ..................................................................................................... 10
   2.6 Literature Search ....................................................................................................... 11
   2.7 Choice of Theories .................................................................................................... 12

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ..................................................................................... 14
   3.1 Corporate Storytelling ................................................................................................. 14
   3.2 Consumer-Based Brand Equity .................................................................................. 17
      3.2.1 Brand Associations ............................................................................................. 18
      3.2.2 Brand Awareness ............................................................................................... 19
      3.2.3 Brand Loyalty .................................................................................................... 19
      3.2.4 Perceived Quality ............................................................................................... 20
      3.2.5 Brand Equity Measurements ............................................................................ 21
   3.3 Brand Heritage ........................................................................................................... 23
   3.4 Brand Utility ............................................................................................................... 25
   3.5 Brand Consistency ..................................................................................................... 27
   3.6 Brand Credibility ....................................................................................................... 28
   3.7 Conceptual Model ..................................................................................................... 28

4. PRACTICAL METHOD .................................................................................................... 31
   4.1 Data Collection ........................................................................................................... 31
      4.1.1 Survey Construction ........................................................................................... 32
      4.1.2 Sampling Technique .......................................................................................... 34
   4.2 Data Analysis .............................................................................................................. 35
      4.2.1 Cronbach’s alpha .............................................................................................. 35
      4.2.2 Descriptive Statistics ......................................................................................... 35
LIST OF TABLES
TABLE 1: HYPOTHESIS 1 ........................................................................................................... 25
TABLE 2: HYPOTHESIS 2 ........................................................................................................... 27
TABLE 3: HYPOTHESIS 3 ........................................................................................................... 28
TABLE 4: HYPOTHESIS 4 ........................................................................................................... 28
TABLE 5. CRONBACH’S ALPHA ............................................................................................... 41
TABLE 6. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ....................................................................................... 41
TABLE 7. PEARSON’S CORRELATION ....................................................................................... 42
TABLE 8. REGRESSION 1: BRAND ASSOCIATIONS AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE ...... 43
TABLE 9. REGRESSION 2: BRAND AWARENESS AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE .... 44
TABLE 10. REGRESSION 3: BRAND LOYALTY AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE .......... 44
TABLE 11. REGRESSION 4: PERCEIVED QUALITY AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE . 45
TABLE 12. RESULTS OF HYPOTHESES TESTING ............................................................... 45

LIST OF FIGURES
FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL MODEL ............................................................................................. 30
FIGURE 2. GENDER OF RESPONDENTS ............................................................................... 38
FIGURE 3. AGE OF RESPONDENTS ...................................................................................... 39
FIGURE 4. PLACE OF RESIDENCE ......................................................................................... 39
FIGURE 5. IKEA FAMILY MEMBERSHIP .................................................................................. 40
FIGURE 6. REVISED CONCEPTUAL MODEL .......................................................................... 47
1. INTRODUCTION

In the introduction of this thesis we start with introducing why we have selected the area of research that we have. Continuing with the background of our research question, through a formulation of the problem- and theoretical background. The chapter ends by stating the research question and the purpose of the study that has worked as guidelines during the whole of our degree project.

1.1 Choice of Subject

We are two marketing students enrolled in business administration at Umeå School of Business, Economics and Statistics. When facing the selection of subject for our thesis, focus was put on storytelling. Ever since we have developed further understandings of the world of marketing, the art of creating advertising that is capturing and persuasive towards consumers has become a growing interest for both of us. More accurately, we enjoy observing both current and former advertising campaigns from an analytical point of view in order to try and understand the story behind it. Hence, the rather comprehensive subject of storytelling in general was narrowed down to corporate storytelling in a marketing context with the focus on brands abilities to deliver stories in an interesting and captivating way. For some time, storytelling has been seen as one of the most successful instruments when it comes to a brands’ ability to persuade consumers into buying their product or service (McKee, 2003). The fact that external communication from brands can take many shapes and sizes, with entirely different outcomes fascinates us, and lays the foundation to why we want to investigate this subject further.

Further on, we realised that corporate storytelling is a research area which is rather intangible and our wish to investigate it in a quantitative way proved to be an obstacle. To overcome this obstacle, we proceeded with how storytelling can be used and to what extent. That is when we encountered brand heritage. Brand Heritage is a brand’s background, traditions and future that can be used in internal as well as external communication for people to relate to (Urde et al., 2007; Wiedmann et al., 2011; Wuestefeld et al., 2012). “A brand with a heritage has a story to tell” (Urde et al., 2007, p. 17), is a phrase that symbolise what we are investigating. We are researching brand heritage and its effect on consumer-based brand equity in terms of brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand associations and perceived quality (Aaker, 1991), from a storytelling perspective.

We believe that there are connections between how a company decides to present their heritage and consumers overall perception of a brand. A well-constructed story might result in potential consumers remembering it and therefore, create their own perceptions of the product/service and create images that they can associate with the brand in the future. Loyalty is something that we see as an outcome of positive experiences, therefore, it might be an indirect result of heritage presented in an effective way. The fact that the dimensions of brand equity are somewhat linked together, and one affects the other, fascinates us. For example when high loyalty among consumers can be explained with strong associations and high perceived quality of a brand (Aaker, 1991). During our literature review we have discovered that all the four dimensions of brand equity are either directly or indirectly correlated with each other and that is something that we, from a marketing point of view, see as an interesting factor to consider during our research.
In order to expand our research and add more depth to it, we decided to include other factors that we came across during certain steps of the research. We discussed important considerations for delivering messages from brand to consumers and discovered that certain authors highlighted the importance of consistency (Erdem & Swait, 1998), credibility (Erdem & Swait, 1998), and utility (Vázquez et al., 2002). Consistency, in the way of how the advertising reflects the initial intentions each and every time (Erdem & Swait, 1998). Credibility, that can be seen as one of the most important characteristics of a marketing message and indicate truthful and dependable information (Erdem & Swait, 1998). Finally, utility, that is an important factor to consider when it comes to satisfying the needs of the consumers (Vázquez et al., 2002). The three concepts above have been used as complementary factors when explaining how brands can increase their brand equity by targeted efforts in the mentioned areas.

1.2 Problem Background
A good story is something that people in all ages, across cultures, in every era throughout the history of time can relate to. A quotation that endorse the importance of stories, both on an individual- and organisational level, is: “Every society needs myths - simple stories that help people deal with tensions in their lives. Today's most potent brands succeed by providing them.” (Holt, 2003, p. 43). In the pre-modern world, our great ancestors gathered around open fires in caves and listened enthusiastically to the stories of the elders who had lived lives full of remarkable things. Surviving against the odds out in the hostile wilderness, hunters tracking mammoths or tales of what lies hidden beyond the stars. All cultures have their own legends, myths and stories, and it does not matter whether they are true or not (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008, p. 13). What is of importance is rather how or what they make people feel, learn, believe or simply enjoy (Richins, 1997; Forman, 2013, pp. 31-32).

Since our forerunners sat there around the warmth of the fire, time has passed by and a lot has changed, but our penchant for a good story has remained the same. And for most people, it starts at an early age. We are being told stories at bedtime and maybe this sparks our fascination for mesmerising stories or maybe we carry it with us since birth. Forman (2013) has similar thoughts on that stories are embedded in people’s minds from an early age. In the prologue of her book, she shares anecdotes from her own encounters with storytelling, both in her childhood and as an adult.

Appealing stories are powerful (Denning, 2005 p. xvii). Narratives that we are being told by brands, we share with our family, friends, coworkers and most of all - ourselves. Something that correlates well with the story that is being presented, is the promise that goes along with it (Denning, 2005). The promise of what the brand can give consumers in return for buying their product/service (Denning, 2005, pp. 102-104). Authors are stating that one of the key elements in marketing is to keep the promises that are made from brand to consumer (Grönroos, 1998; Denning, 2005, Kotler et al., 2016).

As a result of society being subject to an informational overflow, consumers have developed an ability to ignore advertisements that fail to produce interest, which has proven itself problematic to digital marketing (Denning, 2005, p. 102). To solve this problem, marketers need to figure out a way to capture the consumers in a more efficient way and make sure that the information presented stays top-of-mind among consumers. We believe that storytelling plays a part in making current advertising more memorable. Since storytelling is described as something that awakens emotions within the listener.
(Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Denning, 2005; Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008; Sinek, 2009; Forman, 2013), one can argue that emotions could lead to the creation of perceptions about the brand or organisation that evokes these emotions. Sinek (2009, pp. 61-63) continues with adding that emotions trigger decision-making within consumers and in addition to this, increased memorability. Therefore, we argue that companies can achieve top-of-mind awareness in today's crowded markets through the creation of an emotional appealing story.

The sort of stories that will be emphasised in this thesis are, as mentioned, the ones about a brand’s heritage. Balmer (2013) stated that the concept of corporate heritage is gaining more and more interest within the fields of marketing and communication. He continues with highlighting the fact that organisations are beginning to realise the potential of their own unique heritage and that it is meaningful for consumers and other stakeholders as well (Balmer, 2013). Our study will be built upon this statement and continue with examining the actual impact of brand heritage on the dimensions of brand equity. Therefore, brands can, if proven statistically significant, use our findings to justify their own unique heritage in their marketing campaigns.

1.3 Theoretical Background

With the technological development in mind, stories are no longer limited to the face-to-face interactions around an open fire in a cave (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014). One story can now reach people all around the world within seconds and therefore the content of a story should be well aligned with the purpose of what brands want in return. What storytelling is losing through digitalisation is credibility (Denning, 2005, pp. 104-105). The receivers are nowadays limited to what is given to them on a pre-recorded message. Hence, the opportunity to build strong, lasting relationships with brands is not possible until they choose to interact directly with them (Denning, 2005, p. 105). From a consumer perspective, Tiago and Verissimo (2014) argue that it is not a question of if people decide to interact with a brand, but rather Where and Why they decide to do so. Consumers nowadays have the benefit of information and communication technologies at their disposal during decision-making. This kind of technology gives the consumer a better opportunity to make convenient comparisons as well as being more time efficient (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014). In other words, consumers can now e.g. compare prices between many alternatives in a more efficient way than before and they can do so whenever they feel like it via the internet.

As mentioned before, storytelling today is something that enables information to spread fast, both internally and externally. It is argued for that a good story should; reflect the organisation in a way that is aligned with its values, be structured in a sense that keeps the listener interested from start to finish, and finally, give both customers and employees the possibility to easily relate to the company as a whole (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008, pp. 53-58). Other authors, like Forman (2013, p. 18) highlights the importance of authenticity. Meaning, that the appearance should match reality and to strive for the creation of stories that are credible, realistic and tangible. Forman (2013, p. 19) also mentions that a story should be told in the right way. The right way is described with the word fluency, which address the storyteller’s capabilities and the story’s qualities. According to Forman (2013) as well as other authors (Sinek, 2009; Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008; Denning, 2005), engaging emotions and the intellect of the listener are valuable considerations when crafting stories and ways to tell them. Further on, by engaging consumers emotions one can trigger the
decision-making part of the brain (Sinek, 2009, pp. 61-63). What this author is contributing with, is that he combines the studies of consumer behaviour with biology. Sinek (2009, pp. 61-63) is highlighting the fact that the limbic brain (the inner part of the brain) is responsible for people's feelings, memory and behaviour. Therefore, Sinek (2009, pp. 61-63) proves that emotional appeals in marketing can contribute to increased memorability and consumer decision-making.

A problematic situation, when it comes to marketing, is that of product-attribute fixation mentioned by both Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000, p. 51) and Sinek (2009). This phenomenon refers to when a company lays too much emphasis on presenting the attributes of a certain product. Thus, the company hopes to convince potential customers with their attributes, instead of presenting the identity of the company for consumers to relate to. When facing the problem of product-attribute fixation, companies realise that all brands need to have personality, organisational associations, symbols (slogans, logos, packaging, etc.) and emotional connections to be successful in terms of strong relationship building and being memorable (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, pp. 52-54). When assessing the stability of memorability, one can look at the level of abstractness of information when it comes to the amount of details. In this kind of measuring technique, factual details are defined as the lowest level of abstractness and these details are forgotten fast, hence implying low memorability (Chattopadhyay & Alba, 1988).

Traditional ways of competing with competitors is to compare prices, products, places to sell and ways to promote yourself, the so called 4P:s (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 58). Price advantages can be seen as something that is relatively easy to achieve, as long as the costs allow it (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 58). Comparing products can result in a product-attribute fixation as we mentioned earlier (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Sinek, 2009). Places to sell and distribute are often based on where the company is active and the financial capabilities of each specific brand (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 58). Promotion is the area where we decide to put the most emphasis on. This area is where we see opportunities for creating 'reasons to buy' that surely differentiate one brand from its competitors. It is argued that brands should focus to inspire and captivate consumers through stories (Roberts, 2005, p. 43). Since emotions are seen as an unlimited resource, it can be used more frequently to give people new ideas and encourage people to try something new. Brands need to present themselves as something that can enrich consumers’ lifestyles and contribute with something that they do not already have (Roberts, 2005, p. 43).

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000, p. 54) wrote “Just as a person cannot be described in one or two words, neither can a brand.”. We believe that this phrase presents a relevant view of a potential gap that the concept of storytelling can fill. Therefore, the use of corporate storytelling can capture consumers and make them aware of the brands’ identity and value in a way that they can relate to. In other words, create their own brand image. The brand image can be explained with what consumers currently associate with the brand, while brand identity is how the organisation would like the brand to be perceived (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 40). Therefore, brand identity is aspirational while brand image is actual (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 40). Something that involves both brand identity and brand image is the brand heritage (Urde et al., 2007). Brand heritage can be defined as where a brands’ history and experiences are gathered to form what the organisation, as a whole, represents and believes in (Urde et al., 2007). A various number of previous researchers have highlighted the benefit of taking advantage of a brands heritage in the external communication and they also mention that every brand
consists of their own individual story (Denning, 2005; Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008; Forman, 2013; Lehman et al., 2008).

When thinking about brand heritage, it is easy to lay focus on the past. Urde et al. (2007), as well as Wiedmann et al. (2011), also includes the present and the future when they explain brand heritage. What the brand represents today and what it will be representing in the future. This is something that we believe is a great argument for why brand heritage is relevant today and will continue to be so. Brand heritage opens up an opportunity for differentiation for the brands that are established and actually have a heritage to present, in contrast to the newly developed brands that do not have anything to look back on (Lehman et al., 2008). The challenge is to take advantage of ones brands’ heritage without having to look too old-fashioned about it (Lehman et al., 2008).

Brands are something that have been used for centuries and as time went on, the importance of brand building increased simultaneously (Aaker, 1991, p. 7). In a literature review by Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010), various views on the concept of consumer-based brand equity are presented. Authors from all over the world have reached consensus that this area of research is rather complex (Christodoulides & de Chernatony, 2010).

Aaker (1991, p. 16) is one of the pioneers when it comes to presenting and defining consumer-based brand equity. He initially grouped the concept into five fundamental dimensions:

1. Brand Associations
2. Brand Awareness
3. Brand Loyalty
4. Perceived Quality
5. Other Proprietary Brand Assets (patents, trademarks, relationships)

The five dimensions above have been used frequently among researchers, even though the fifth and final one often gets ignored since it is considered to be an aspect that is difficult to compare between organisations (Christodoulides & de Chernatony, 2010). Due to this fact, we have also decided to exclude the fifth dimension from our research and we are from now on describing the concept of consumer-based brand equity with the remaining four.

One way of building a strong brand is, according to Farquhar (1989), to strive for a consistent brand image. Meaning, a brand should decide what image it want to emit and then stand by the chosen image for as long as possible (Farquhar, 1989). Erdem and Swait (1998) supports this claim by stating that marketing messages should be consistent over time and that the more consistent a message is, the more credibility it has. Credibility is something that we can relate back to what we previously wrote about how corporate storytelling is losing credibility through digitalisation (Denning, 2005, pp. 104-105). Onwards, on how credibility is a part of making a story authentic (Forman, 2013, p. 18). These research findings merged together, creates an issue on how corporate storytelling could struggle with the creation credibility now and in the future. When the importance of being credible is high, according to Forman (2013) and the issue of remaining credible in today's storytelling is problematic, according to Denning (2005). Therefore,
investigating credibility, in relation to storytelling, and its effects on brand equity is a relevant approach in order to advance the current state of knowledge.

Since brand consistency is often mentioned, in relation to brand credibility (Erdem & Swait, 1998), it seems only logical to include that factor in our research as well. It would be interesting to investigate if brand consistency affect brand equity on a direct level or if it only influences it indirectly through brand credibility. The current knowledge of brand consistency usually draw parallels to marketing communication and delivering marketing messages (Erdem & Swait, 1998). This study is embracing this knowledge and develops it further by examining brand consistency's effect on the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity, in a context that according to our knowledge have not been seen before.

Brand utility is added for the interest of researching if a brands functional- and symbolic values towards both the products/services provided as well as the brand name could influence brand equity. It can be about the attributes and design of a product but also the way a brand makes the individual feel in terms of social identification and opinions towards a brands offerings such as guarantees etc. (Vázquez et al., 2002). An interesting factor to examine is if brand utility have an effect on consumer-based brand equity and at the same time have the product-attribute fixation (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 51; Sinek, 2009) taken into consideration. Brand utility and its focus on attributes and values of a product/service can be seen as contradicting to the product-attribute fixation that mentions that a brand should not lay too much emphasis on presenting attributes in their marketing messages. Therefore, the results of this investigation could lead to an interesting discussion between the two concepts.

To summarise the above mentioned, corporate storytelling can be used as a powerful tool to deliver marketing messages (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008). Further on, brand heritage opens up an opportunity for differentiation from competitors since every brand has their own unique background (Balmer, 2013). Therefore, we are combining these research streams and focus on presenting a brands’ heritage through storytelling. Brand utility ads the dimension of involving the product/service that the brand actually sell to the consumers and brand consistency and brand credibility is added for the purpose that these factors is said to contribute to the strengthening of a marketing message (Erdem & Swait, 1998). The gap that will we filled with this study is to investigate corporate storytelling in relation to brand heritage and its effect on brand equity. Neither of these concepts has, according to our knowledge, been researched together before and we believe that the current knowledge could reach progress by examining them together.

1.4 Research Question

What are the effects of brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility on consumer-based brand equity?

1.5 Thesis Purpose

The main purpose of this thesis is to examine the effects of brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility on the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity. In order to fulfill this purpose, brand equity is conceptualised by four fundamental dimensions; brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality (Aaker, 1991). Further on, storytelling is integrated from a theoretical perspective. Brand heritage is approached as a storytelling-tool that brands can use to demonstrate their
identity and core values (Urde et al., 2007). Brand utility is based on the findings of Vázquez et al. (2002), in order to examine consumers perceptions about the functional-and symbolic values of a brand name and its products/services. Brand consistency and brand credibility are used in relation to delivering marketing messages (Erdem & Swait, 1998) and therefore, parallels can be drawn to storytelling based on what authors such as Forman (2013) is mentioning about it.

We expect that the factors above mentioned can provide us with the necessary means to draw conclusions about the impact that storytelling can have, if a brand wants to increase their brand equity. Turning potential customers into actual customers through the creation of a story that reflects the brand in a credible and consistent way with consumers perceptions about the brands utility taken in consideration is something that we see as a possible reality. Moreover, at the same time, having the brands heritage as the integrator of all the factors by building the story around it, could be an interesting factor to investigate.

The study has used the case of IKEA, as the ideal example of a brand using corporate storytelling. Our perception, which we believe that we share with the majority of the swedish population, is that IKEA has used its storytelling to reach out to the many people. With storytelling as a contributing factor, IKEA has managed to occupy a special place in the hearts of people across the globe. This has been accomplished by using stories that illustrate situations from the everyday lives of ordinary people that are highly relatable.

We have located elements and measurements for each factor that can be put together with the dimensions of brand equity in a conceptual model. A quantitative study is possible to conduct with the purpose of collecting empirical data that can be used for testing the effects between the chosen measures. The result of the study can be compiled and analysed so that the initial conceptual model can be tested and modified to the outcomes of the study. From a practical point-of-view, our thesis could highlight the importance of a brands’ heritage and raise awareness on the fact that corporate storytelling is a useful tool for carrying and delivering marketing messages. Our research can contribute to the already existing research by incorporating concepts of storytelling, brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility together with brand equity in a way that has not been located in previous studies. Through the above mentioned, we can answer and discuss our research question further.
2. SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGY

The following chapter consists of clarifications for the different philosophical stances that a thesis can take. We will further motivate our chosen stance and explain how we view the nature of science and social entities. Then, our research approach and design of this degree project will be presented, followed by introducing how pre-understandings can affect a study. Finally, a motivation for the chosen theories will be declared.

2.1 Ontology

The word ontology refers to how an author choose to observe reality (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 52; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 130). One can choose to adapt objectivism or constructionism. Objectivism is described by Bryman and Bell (2017, pp. 52-53) as when social phenomenon and their meanings are external to the individual and independent from social actors. Therefore, everyone sees the reality in the same way. A similar explanation is given by Saunders et al. (2012, p. 131). As goes for constructionism, social phenomenon are instead created by the actions of the social actor and are under constant development (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 132). The knowledge and experience that the researchers carries with them, are the factors that constructs and modifies perceptions of the reality around the individual (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 53).

To put this in relation with this thesis, we have decided to go with the objectivism part of ontology in our research. This because of our way of investigating the effect of our chosen independent variables on brand equity in a quantitative way. The results from the study are more of a verdict of where our respondents perceptions lay and mitigates the possibility for interpretations. Therefore, our research question will be stated in a sense that symbolise that we are examining the effects of our independent variables on the dependent variable. If we instead would have chosen a qualitative research method the answers would be more open for interpretations and the final result would be based on our interpretations of the results and the research question would instead consist of how our independent variable affect our dependent variable.

2.2 Epistemology

The main argument in epistemology is if the social reality can be explored in the same way as the natural science or not (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 47). Saunders et al., (2012, p. 132) is explaining epistemology as what can be considered to be acceptable knowledge in a specific research area. The viewpoint that highlights the importance of approaching social science in the same way as natural science is called positivism (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 47; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 134). Here, researchers remain objective, works as observers of its surroundings and testing of hypotheses are key when coming up with final conclusions and explanations (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 47). Realism is a standpoint that are quite similar to positivism, as they are both approaching knowledge from an external, objective perspective (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 48). The sole difference is that the realist accepts that complete objectivity is hard to achieve and therefore the natural science cannot be applied completely (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 48; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 136). The remaining branch of epistemology mentioned by Bryman and Bell (2017) is interpretivism. This perspective focuses on interpretations and understandings and are more appropriate if a researcher is focused on investigating something on a deeper level (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 49). Some consider the ability to see differences among humans as one of the key factors within interpretivism (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 137).
Since the goal is to generalise in what way a brands’ heritage, utility, consistency and credibility affect brand equity, the positivist viewpoint is embraced. We find inspiration from previous research on storytelling and the other independent variables as well as brand equity in order to make our study credible and reliable. If we take our questionnaire as an example, the questions we use are entirely based on previous research as they are already proven to be reliable in similar contexts. Therefore, we are embracing these questions and strive to make them aligned with our choice of subject. Due to this, we find no reason not to see the natural science as something that can guide us when explaining our research question.

2.3 Research approach
There are two common and frequently used ways of approaching a research, deductive- and inductive way of reasoning (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 143). In recent years a third way called abduction has also been introduced and has increased in popularity (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 47). Deduction is when theories are the supporting pillars of the coming research (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 23). When researchers are trying to prove and describe a phenomenon with the facts that are already known and all this through testing theory-based hypotheses with empirical findings. Due to the results, the hypotheses will either stand or be discarded and eventually the author can reconstruct the theory in order to make everything come together (Bryman & Bell, 2017, pp. 42-44). The second approach, induction, can be seen as the opposite of deduction. Here, the theoretical base is of less importance and instead has its foundation in the empirical findings that can result in a new theory/discovery (Patel & Davidson, 2011, pp. 23-24). The word discovery, meaning that a deeper understanding and the question Why is significant for induction (Bryman & Bell, 2017, pp. 45-47). A smaller sample is argued to be more appropriate when using the inductive approach and further on, a qualitative data collection process is more commonly used among researcher that embrace induction (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 146). The third and final way is abduction. Abduction is placed somewhere in between the previous approaches and the user applies both deduction and induction into their study (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 46). At first, the inductive way of reasoning is applied when hypotheses are formulated to explain a scenario. Later on, the deductive way of reasoning is involved when the previous hypotheses are tested in other scenarios as well (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 24).

Since this thesis is based on already existing theories and research, we have chosen to lean towards the deductive way of reasoning as our research approach. As mentioned before, a quantitative study is developed based on the chosen theories. In the end, the result can provide us with data that explains to what extent the chosen variables can contribute to greater brand equity. This process coordinates well with how a deductive approach is explained and therefore the suitable choice is deduction. If an inductive way of reasoning would have been applied, a qualitative study would have been more appropriate and since we already decided to conduct a quantitative study, induction were excluded.

2.4 Research Design
The design of a study acts as a guide for how researchers will go about in order to answer their research question (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 159). By having a thorough research design, researchers can mitigate problematic situations for themselves during the whole process, according to Churchill and Iacobucci (2005, p. 74). The same authors are comparing a research design for researchers with the blueprint of a house for an architect.
It is possible to build a house without a blueprint, but the final result will most definitely differ from the image that you had in mind at the beginning (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005, p.74). Therefore, we took our time to create a research design that enabled us to investigate the number of concepts that were relevant for this thesis.

Furthermore, Bryman and Bell (2017, p. 58) together with other authors (Saunders et al., 2012, pp. 162-163; Patel & Davidson, 2011, pp. 13-14) are presenting two traditional ways of conducting a study, a quantitative way or in a qualitative way. Qualitative studies are described as a research that can generate new theories through understandings and interpretations of the collected data (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 372; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 163). Quantitative studies, on the contrary, are more of a structured process based on previous research with testing of self-created hypotheses that can result to generalisation of certain populations (Bryman & Bell, 2017, pp. 166-167; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 162).

The logical direction for us to take is the quantitative way, since theories and previous studies on corporate storytelling, brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency, brand credibility and brand equity lays the foundation for our research. These are well studied areas and therefore we have a wide range of information to take into consideration when making each variable applicable for our questionnaire.

To conclude the above, we are adapting the objectivists way of observing reality with a positivists view on previous knowledge. The data is gathered in a quantitative questionnaire and reasoned from a deductive perspective. Through this design, it will guide us in the right direction and hopefully reach a result that contributes to the already existing research in the same area.

2.5 Pre-understandings
Pre-understandings are something that everyone has (Gilje & Grimen, 2007, p. 179). When approaching something new, one always engage previous experiences and knowledge into their judgements (Gilje & Grimen, 2007, p. 183). Therefore, the same experience can be received differently from person to person depending on background and the individual characteristics (Gilje & Grimen, 2007, p. 183).

The pre-understandings that a researcher possess can for example be: thoughts, experiences, feelings and knowledge about a subject (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 29). In a subjective matter, these can be seen as an asset, instead of an obstacle, when understanding something (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 29). If we look at it from an objective point-of-view, the pre-understanding should instead be kept aside and not in any way affect the final result of the study (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 27). Authors like Laverty (2003), mistrust the objective viewpoint and states that pre-understandings are something that a person can not put aside. Which draws similarities from the thoughts of Gilje and Grimen (2007) as we mentioned above.

The pre-understandings that we carry with us into this subject, besides general interest, is the fact that we both have working experience from the retail industry. We believe that we have been using a kind of storytelling when presenting products during customer encounters. A method that we both have used is to build up a story around how a certain product is produced and how it can fit in the customer’s everyday life. The result of this is often positive and this experience could be a reason for why we both are interested in the concept of storytelling. Though, the fact that we both see storytelling as a powerful tool of convincing could, in a way, affect our judgements during the literature search.
Other pre-understandings is the fact that we have come across some of the mentioned concepts before, during our time as students. As a result of that, we have developed an advanced understanding of fundamental business terminology and increased our ability to grasp scientific literature in a time-efficient way.

Consistently during our work on this thesis, we have tried to keep our possible subjective pre-understandings in mind, with the purpose of not letting them affect the process and therefore the final outcome of the study. We have discussed important parts thoroughly to avoid misinterpretations and as the process moved on we have learned more and more about the different views on the concept of storytelling, brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility in relation to the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity. This, and our previous, knowledge gave us the possibilities to move forward and we did not let it affect our theoretical framework, data analysis or final conclusion of the actual results.

2.6 Literature Search
The literature search is useful because it helps the researcher to develop an insight and increased understanding of previous research (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 82). What is of importance is that the material gathered, not only supports the own ideas, but also facts that contradicts the same ideas are of value (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 69). By making this section more comprehensive the final result will be more credible and is more likely to end up closer to reality (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 69).

Our choice of subject has proven to be a well studied area among previous researchers. Consumer-based brand equity, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility are areas that researchers have approached on many levels. Even though brand heritage and corporate storytelling are not as explored as the other concepts, they are still highly present in several marketing areas of research. Examples of important authors in the each specific area are: Aaker (1996) within brand equity, Lehmann et al. (2008) within brand heritage, Vázquez et al. (2002) within brand utility and Erdem and Swait (1998) within brand consistency and brand credibility, to mention a few. Furthermore, the research surrounding storytelling consists of numerous case- and qualitative studies but lacks quantitative evidence. In order to process and evaluate relevant literature, we have used different search engines and sources with the purpose of gaining input from as many perspectives as possible. As we mentioned in the earlier part, we adapted a critical way of thinking and thorough discussions on each reference has been applied in order to keep our own opinions and pre-understandings away from our final judgements. The critical way of thinking approves by Patel and Davidson (2011, p. 68), when they mention that it is necessary in order to validate if a document is trustworthy or not.

The majority of our literature search has been on databases such as Google Scholar and the library of Umeå University. From these databases, we have found a great amount of books and articles that we have considered relevant for our research. Key words that have helped us during our search are for example; Brand Equity, Awareness, Loyalty, Associations, Perceived Quality, Storytelling, Corporate Storytelling, Advertising, Brand Heritage, Consistency, Credibility, Brand Identity and Brand Building along with many others. These are words that have been used in combination with each other as well as independently with the sole purpose of widening our search so that we could grasp each relevant area on the subject.
Another method we used, were to evaluate previous researchers’ reference lists. This is an effective method to gather information according to Ejvegård (2003, p. 45). Further on, we encountered what proved to be one of the pioneers of the research regarding brand equity, David Aaker. After seeing his name in nearly every article on the subject we decided to look deeper into his previous research and those, later on, worked as a base for our thesis.

Our goal, from the start, has been to only use original sources and avoid secondary sources as far as possible. Since secondary sources are hard to interpret to its original meaning it is easy to make misinterpretations. Ejvegård (2003, p. 63) also supports the fact that information could lose its original meaning when extracted from its original source. Therefore, we always aimed to go back to the original source, so that we could make the correct assumption of what the initial author is trying to state.

2.7 Choice of Theories
The literature review is a valuable step for the researchers since it allows them to widen context of the study (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 603). It allows us to combine our research topic with the studies that has been done earlier. Furthermore, it gives us an opportunity to argument why we have chosen the specific theories that we have and why the theories contributes with value to our study.

The specific research area of corporate storytelling represents the foundation for our thesis and can be defined as narrating from organisations and businesses to internal and external stakeholders (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008, p. 12). The same author also describes the concept as stories used educationally to sell an organisation's goals or visions to others. While more emphasis were assigned, the literature search provided us with similar definitions.

The knowledge about storytelling is mostly taken from authors such as Dennisdotter and Axenbrant (2008), Denning (2005) and Forman (2013). The combination of the findings from these authors provides us with a broad range of knowledge about storytelling in a corporate and marketing context. The information on storytelling works as a base for the other variables (brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility). Storytelling represents a powerful tool to use when delivering marketing messages and we want to connect that to the other variables in the end. The reason why storytelling only have a theoretical part in our thesis is because we realised that no previous author has quantified the concept to this day.

In order to measure such an intangible subject in a quantitative way, we started to direct more focus towards what type of stories brands usually choose to present. Brand heritage is a concept that was mentioned more frequently in relation to storytelling and as the search continued, attention were transferred to this research area. Brand Heritage is described by Urde et al. (2007), Wuestefeld et al. (2012) and Wiedmann et al. (2011) as something that symbolises a brands past, present and future and Hudson (2011) explains a clear correlation between older companies historical status and their brand identity. Therefore, one can argue that brand heritage contains various important elements that can be worthy of mentioning in a story. Items to measure brand heritage were found through Lehmann et al. (2008) and the findings of Balmer (2013) can also be of significant value to our research. The field of brand heritage have proven to be a rather restrained research area. Since the first studies concerning brand heritage were conducted in 2006 (Balmer,
2017), which was further developed by Urde et al. (2007). Therefore, the primary emphasis can be put on the studies of Urde et al. (2007) and Balmer (2013).

Brand utility has been added for the purpose of investigating consumers perception of both the products/services provided by the brand, as well as the brand name itself. Vázquez et al. (2002) provides us with the knowledge of separating brand utility into two basic dimensions: functional value and symbolic value. These two dimensions can then be applied to both the product/service and the brand name. Measurements and other perspectives are also presented by Vázquez et al. (2002) so that is why they lay the foundation for this theory-part. Vázquez et al. (2002) have found inspiration from Sheth et al. (1991) that has an scientific article with over 3000 citations, making it a credible source. Due to this, we decided to also include Sheth et al. (1991) and their discussions about different types of consumption values in our discussion about brand utility.

Brand consistency is seen to be an important element when building strong brands (Farquhar, 1989), because it influence the consumers perceptions of a brand (Erdem & Swait, 1998). These statements have been taken into consideration when discussed whether consistency should be a part of our thesis or not. We argued whether or not consistency could be connected to storytelling and since authors such as Farquhar (1989) is stating that consistency is important in advertising we could draw a parallel between the two concepts. Since the fact that we see storytelling as an advertising tool (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008). Erdem and Swait (1998) and Farquhar (1989) provides us with the fundamental measurements and knowledge so that we can investigate further in what way consistency affects the dimensions of brand equity.

Forman (2013, p. 18) states that credibility is an important factor when creating stories. Furthermore, Erdem and Swait (1998) continues with mentioning that the more consistent a marketing message is, the more credibility it has. In additional research from Erdem and Swait (2004), they divide credibility into two components: trustworthiness and expertise. Trustworthiness symbolise the believability of what the brand is communicating, while expertise represents the consumers perception of the brands ability to deliver what is promised (Erdem & Swait, 2004). Both of the articles by Erdem and Swait (1998; 2004) can be used when investigating credibility and its effect on brand equity. Further on, we hope to use the findings of Forman (2013) in order to connect the result back to storytelling.

With emphasis on storytelling and the strategy of presenting ones brand heritage through a story with consistency, credibility and the factors of utility in mind, we decided to investigate in what way this can affect a brand. The previous knowledge from our time at the university guided us towards brand equity and more accurately, consumer-based brand equity. This chosen concept are, as mentioned before, divided into four dimensions that clarifies consumers perception of Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, Brand Associations and Perceived Quality (Aaker, 1991).
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter contains an overview of what previous authors, on the chosen topics, have researched and it have been thoroughly analysed to fit the purpose of this thesis. The chapter starts with the explanations of corporate storytelling and consumer-based brand equity, that can be seen as each of the two ends of this thesis. Then, presentations of the concepts of brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility are made with the purpose of working as factors to combine storytelling with consumer-based brand equity. After each theory, a hypothesis is stated and the chapter ends with the conceptual model that will set the basis for our statistical analysis.

3.1 Corporate Storytelling

Corporate storytelling is a marketing concept that refers to the narrative used to create stories in a corporate context, both internally and externally (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008, p. 12). Continuing during the 2000s, the concept gained momentum and became a well-used tool for management consultants realising it’s value (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008, p. 10). In modern time, authors such as Gamble et al. (2011) explain that contemporary digital storytelling has been added to the collection of marketing concepts.

Corporate storytelling is considered to be an efficient engine to drive the creation of brands and a sense of togetherness in organisations (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008, p. 10). The usage of narrative in marketing is noticeably effective since it possesses both powerful- and penetrating communicative features. A story can carry and deliver a message of identity and portrayal of a company’s vision that in the same context is emotionally charged (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008, p. 10). McLellan (2006) adds that stories portray patterns, helps people draw connections between these patterns, empower and finally make people feel as if they have participated in a satisfying experience. Additionally, it is argued for that the goal is to place facts into stories that make sense, inspire and give political advantages (Boje, 1991). McLellan (2006) also states that the use of stories is an effective way for remembering and integrating knowledge. Despite this, a majority of managers communicate their messages using bullet points and lists, which are considered not as compelling. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 77).

Furthermore, it is argued for that stories needs to have emotions attached. This is because the people constructing the brand must be aware of- and care about the elements that the brand stands for; the brand identity (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 76). A brand can be defined as everything that the product, service, individual, company or employee means to a consumer (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 447). To add an additional dimension, stories does not only serve as a representation of the brand, but it does also influence the company culture. A powerful method for establishing brand identity amongst employees is the usage of internal role models. These are stories, people, programs or events that completely represents the brand identity. Stories can communicate the brand identity and also attach emotions and endeavor to the brand. These stories can be narratives or legends about happenings or scenarios throughout the history of the company with people that accurately personify the values that the brand is built upon (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 76). In other words, a brands heritage.

Forman (2013, p. 22) has created a storytelling framework called “Framework for Organisational Storytelling”, which is based on analysis and primary research. The content of the framework has been created through several site visits to best-practice
companies, interviews with over 140 professionals with expertise in organisational storytelling and review of relevant company documents and literature across different fields (Forman, 2013, p. 22). In describing her model, Forman (2013, p. 22) explains that for organisational storytelling to be successful, it needs to have a base that is authentic in terms of being credible, realistic, tangible, and intended to be truthful. This is well aligned with the arguments of Erdem and Swait (1998) saying that brand equity is based on the credibility in the claims from the company regarding the quality of its product or service. Brand equity is defined as the added value that a brand provides its products (Farquhar, 1989) and will be presented further on in this thesis. Forman (2013, p. 22) continues by stating that organisational storytelling also needs to be fluent in a sense that it should attract stakeholders attention by stimulating their emotions and their intellect. Appealing to individuals emotions is an aspect that Sinek (2009) also agrees with, since he states that it for example enhances the memorability of companies. Attention is attracted by using the craft that makes this kind of communication compelling. In certain cases, one can also use technology stretching from photographs to social media. Fluent storytelling is characterised by these capabilities mentioned above (Forman, 2013, p. 22).

Continuing, stories in a business context have practical purposes. Essentially, this implies the attaining or strengthening of trust of a brand’s intended audience(s) and following this to inform, persuade and inspire them (Forman, 2013, p. 22). Additionally, Connell (2006) concludes that organisational stories carry large potential for highlighting an organisation’s characteristics. Further on, Gilliam and Zablah (2013) discusses about storytelling during sales encounters and they state that stories that have a personal standpoint are more likely to affect purchase intention via the attitude towards the salesperson. While stories that are created from a business point-of-view are more likely to affect purchase intention through a created attitude towards the product (Gilliam & Zablah, 2013).

When having interviewed experts within the field of organisational storytelling for the basis of her book, Forman (2013, p. 23) explains that the interviewees argue that the primary ethical criterion when assessing stories is authenticity (Forman, 2013, p. 23). Guber (2007, p. 3) adds that “...great storytelling does not conflict with truth” and continues by explaining that storytelling in business and in other contexts is always reliant on the integrity of the story and the individual telling it. If a story does not fulfil the characteristics of being credible, realistic, and tangible it may not be realistically aspirational. These three characteristics are common for judging authenticity in an organisational storytelling context at the best-practice firms. Further on, organisations must ask themselves whether or not their stories support their strategy, culture and brand. It is also important that a story does not become a monolithic displayal of the organisation’s leadership but rather portray the reality and opinions of employees, customers, communities and significant others (Forman, 2013, p. 23).

Moving onto the next level in the organisational storytelling framework, arriving at fluency in storytelling for business. Authenticity is not the only characteristic needed for organisations to succeed with their stories (Forman, 2013, p. 31). For a story to carve itself through the busyness, distractions and competing demands that work life constitutes of, storytellers need to be fluent (Forman, 2013, p. 31). This implies that stories need to stimulate the listeners’ emotions (Sinek, 2009) and intellect, take an active position in their memory and imagination and then make them interact with the company in a manner that the storyteller intends. Forman (2013, p. 31) explains that in order to become fluent,
an organisation’s storytellers need to attain competence in storytelling and the use of communication technology. In this area, best-practice companies provide workshops, guidelines and professional help to aid their employees in the development of their capabilities (Forman, 2013, p. 31) and also encourage their employees to tell stories (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008, p. 98). Further, companies need to identify their story material, identify this with the company’s core values and then communicate the story to its consumers (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008, p. 54).

When going deeper into the concept of engaging emotions and intellect, Forman (2013, p. 31) returns to the results from her interviews with storytelling experts. Here, these experts claim that organisational stories are successful when they “touch people's hearts as well as their minds” (Forman, 2013, p. 31), referring to the engagement of both emotions and intellect. But on the other hand, Lundqvist et al. (2013) concludes from their study that even though a story lacks emotional intensity, it can still be an effective tool for communicating brand values. Nevertheless, Forman (2013, p. 32) continues to explain that the ability to stimulate hearts and minds is the primary focus of storytelling in several different areas, even though probably most in narrative medicine, literature, psychology and film. Additionally, both novelists and neurologists argue that it is in the nature of human beings to find stories appealing and thus storytelling is a powerful tool to reach peoples’ core humanity (Denning, 2005 p. xvii).

Holt (2003) claims that people have always had a need for myths. By myths, he means simple stories with fascinating characters and profound plots. Myths are of importance because they help people make sense of the world. They deliver the ideals of how life should be lived and they pursues any possible explanation of the big and hard questions in life (Holt, 2003). Patterson and Brown (2005) also states that humans are storytelling animals and that everybody enjoy good stories, under the one condition that they are well told. Further, Lundqvist et al. (2013) adds that people have always been fascinated by stories and that stories are remembered to a larger extent than facts. Lundqvist et al. (2013) have also conducted a study presenting results showing that storytelling can create positive brand associations and hence increase consumers’ willingness to buy it.

When determining how stories appeal to emotions and intellect, one can look at how reading and listening to stories triggers mental processes. For example, in the beginning of a story, people may experience a substantial psychological shift of attention towards the environment in which the story is depicted; its characters, its setting and conflicts (Forman, 2013, pp. 32-33). Once people are going further into a story, they start to picture its environment in their imagination (Forman, 2013, pp. 32-33). If people are instead listening to a story, they are likely to lay their focus on the voice and presence of the storyteller and the emotional mood that the performance creates (Forman, 2013, pp. 32-33). While focused on the speaker, with the story world constructed in their minds, images and other emotionally rich memories displaying stories from their own lives can emerge. (Forman, 2013, pp. 32-33). These stories can be very similar to- or very different from the constructed story world, in either case our hearts and minds are engaged on a high level (Forman, 2013, pp. 32-33).

In terms of crafting the story, Forman (2013, p. 33) explains that even though there are no fixed blueprints for storytelling, the craft of it requires the making of good choices regarding an array of story elements. She continues to highlight what experts in storytelling in a business context and filmmakers claims as important factors in crafting
storytelling in business. These factors are The Right Purpose, Audience, Moment, Storyteller and Characters (Forman, 2013 p. 33; Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008). Woodside et al. (2008) explains that if a story illustrates the brand supporting the main character to reach his or her goals, it is highly probable that it builds a strong consumer-brand relationship. Furthermore, Forman (2013, p. 33) adds that by putting extensive care in responding to the following questions, these can enable a good selection of the story elements mentioned above.

➢ What purpose do you want to achieve in story form?
➢ With whom?
➢ Why now?
➢ Who should tell the story?
➢ Who should be included in the story?

Forman (2013, pp.33-34) elaborates that an organisation may put together purpose, audience and moment in a dramatic way when they are in a chaotic situation, for example when a company needs to tell a variety of turnaround stories to all of its stakeholders to get out of the troubled context. The goal may be to deliver news that are important to the organisation and its stakeholders. But, the issue here is that the importance of the news may not be obvious for all stakeholders unless there are distinct connections made to their needs and interests in the story (Forman, 2013, pp. 33-34). As previously mentioned, the best-practice organisations often provides their storytellers with workshops, coaching and supplementary material to improve their skills. This can provide the organisations storytellers with the necessary tools to assess stakeholders’ needs, which is one of the fundamental concepts within marketing (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 11). This can connect the storyteller to the purpose of an essential organisational purpose such as fortifying corporate strategy, culture or brand (Forman, 2013, pp. 33-34).

3.2 Consumer-Based Brand Equity
In a general sense, brand equity is defined as the added value that a brand gives its products and/or services (Farquhar, 1989). Srinivasan et al (2005, p. 1433) argue that “brand equity is defined as the incremental contribution ($) per year obtained by the brand in comparison to the underlying product (or service) with no brand-building efforts”. Another view can be the one of Yoo and Donthu (2001, p. 1), that defines brand equity as “consumers different response between a focal brand and an unbranded product when both have the same level of marketing stimuli and product attributes”. In addition, brand equity can also be defined as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller, 1993, p. 1).

To understand where a company's brand equity originates from, Park and Srinivasan (1994) argue that brand equity can be divided into attribute-based and non-attribute based components. The attribute-based component highlights the difference between subjectively perceived and objectively measured levels of attributes (Park & Srinivasan, 1994). On the other hand, the non attribute-based part focus on associations that are not related to the attributes of the product (Park & Srinivasan, 1994).

Furthermore, brand equity can be defined as the assets connected to a brand’s name and symbol that contributes to a product or service. Hence, brand equity can be divided into the four dimensions presented by Aaker (1991): brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality. These four aspects handle brand development,
management and measurement (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 17). As mentioned before, initial research by Aaker (1991) presents five dimensions. With other proprietary brand assets (patents, trademarks, relationships) added together with the previously mentioned four. But, even though the five dimensions are common and frequently used, the fifth and final one often gets ignored since it is considered to be an aspect that is difficult to compare between organisations (Christodoulides & de Chernatony, 2010). Due to this fact, we have also decided to exclude the fifth dimension from our research and we decided only describe the concept of consumer-based brand equity with the remaining four: brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality.

3.2.1 Brand Associations
Brand associations can consist of anything that builds a relationship between the customer and the brand. It can be constructed by user imagery, product attributes, use situations, organisational associations, brand personality and symbols (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 17). A comprehensive part of brand management is determining what associations a company should develop and how to create programs that can connect these associations to the brand (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 17). The same way people have personalities, so does brands and hence it is of importance to understand brand personality since consumers use it for self expression (Gill & Darwa, 2010). Highlighting the importance of brand personality are the findings of Sirgy (1982), which shows that the greater the congruity between the brand personality and the consumers self-image, the greater can the consumers preference be for the brand.

Keller (1993) is defining brand associations as informational nodes that are linked to the brand node in memory. These nodes carry the meaning of the brand for consumers (Keller, 1993). He further argues that the favorability, strength and uniqueness of brand associations are the three main elements for characterising brand knowledge which constitutes an essential component when it comes to determining the differential response that creates brand equity. Brand knowledge is consisting of brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). Brand awareness is connected to the recall of a brand and recognition performance by consumers (Keller, 1993). Brand image is based on the array of associations that consumers have related to the brand in their memory (Keller, 1993).

Favorability of brand associations refers to the fact that associations differ in accordance with how favorably they are when they are evaluated (Keller, 1993). So, when creating marketing programs the goal is to create favorable brand associations because these can make the marketing program successful (Keller, 1993). Favorable brand associations hence are attributes and benefits linked to the brand that satisfies the consumers needs (Keller, 1993).

Aaker (1991) argues that it is the brand associations that constitute the underlying value of a brand since it symbolises meaning to consumers. Brand associations does also deliver foundations for purchase decisions and for brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991). There are many different associations and many different ways that they can create value for a brand and for its customers (Aaker, 1991). These contributions are: helping to process/retrieve information, differentiating the brand, generating a “reason-to-buy”, creating positive attitudes/feelings and providing a basis for extensions (Aaker, 1991).
3.2.2 Brand Awareness

Awareness is in many cases an undervalued asset but it is nonetheless an influential factor when related to perceptions and taste (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 17). People enjoy things that are familiar and are willing to offer an array of good attitudes towards these things (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 17).

Brand awareness can be seen as the most important dimension of brand equity, since that if the consumer are not aware of the brand, it has no equity and therefore the remaining three dimensions has no meaning (Shimp, 2010, cited in Hakala et al., 2012). Aaker (1991, p. 62) is presenting different levels of awareness, these are: unaware of brand, brand recognition, brand recall and top-of-mind. Where being unaware of the brand is the worst and top-of-mind is the preferred level where the brand want their awareness to lay (Aaker, 1991). Brand recognition is when consumers get help when recalling brands, for example, when they are asked to identify brands that they have heard of in an assembly of brands (Aaker, 1991, p. 62). Further on, the next level becomes brand recall, that also can be called “unaided recall”. This is when the consumer can name brands within a certain industry without any aid (Aaker, 1991, p. 62). The first brand that is mentioned during the brand recall-level has achieved the top-of-mind stage within that individual consumer. In other words, the brand that comes first to mind when thinking about a certain product- or service group (Aaker, 1991, p. 62).

Furthermore, Keller (1993) highlights the fact that great awareness, preferably top-of-mind awareness, is essential when it comes to affecting consumers purchase intention in a positive matter. The author continues with drawing further links between high awareness and increased brand loyalty, that also gets support from Bohrer and Gibsons doctoral dissertation (2007). The bond between brand awareness and brand loyalty strengthens the reasons why we want to add both factors, and not one of them, into our study. We do this, in order for us to examine in what way both of them are affected by brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility.

An important aspect to consider is the fact that high brand awareness does not automatically result in greater sales (Aaker, 1991, p. 69). The awareness itself rarely generates a “reason-to-buy”, which is mentioned alongside brand associations, so concentrating too much on increasing only awareness is not recommended (Aaker, 1991, p. 69). Another caution to consider is where the awareness is focused (Aaker, 1996). If the awareness is guided only towards the brand name or its symbol, it can create a false picture of the brand as a whole (Aaker, 1996). Therefore, it might be of value to go beyond trying to make the name or symbol visible and lay more emphasis of what the name or symbol actually reflects (Aaker, 1996).

3.2.3 Brand Loyalty

Loyalty is at the core of any brands’ equity (Aaker, 1996). If a company has a loyal customer base, it displays a barrier to entry, a basis for a price premium, time to respond to competitor innovations and protection towards harmful price competition (Aaker, 1996). The main idea is to enhance the size and intensity of every loyalty segment (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 17). This implies that even though a brand is small, it can still have significant brand equity if it has a intensely loyal customer base (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 17). Brand loyalty can be defined as repeated buying behaviour for something that the consumer has positive beliefs and attitudes towards, does not necessarily need to be towards any certain product or service, but also a brand (Keller,
Brand loyalty is a well-known concept within marketing and it essentially measures the level of attachment a consumer has to a brand (Aaker, 1991, p. 39). Brand loyalty can also be defined as “an attained state of enduring preference to the point of determined defense” (Oliver, 1999, pp. 41-42). Enduring preference refers to when a consumer buys the same product multiple times (Oliver, 1999, pp. 41-42). Determined defense implies that the consumers defends him- or herself against the efforts of competitors to win him or her as a customer (Oliver, 1999). Continuing, Sheth (1968) has designed a model with the purpose of identifying individual-level of brand loyalty. This model considers brand loyalty as a combination of the frequency- and pattern of purchases made by the consumer (Sheth, 1968).

By summarising these definitions by Oliver (1999) and Sheth (1968), Gill and Dawra (2010) argue that brand loyalty is based on both behavioural and attitudinal dimensions. Within this area, behavioural loyalty refers to repeated purchase by the consumers. Attitudinal loyalty lays its focus on the attitudes, beliefs and intentions that the consumer has towards the brand (Gill & Dawra, 2010).

Further on, strong brand loyalty among consumers develop when they do not require incentives or a reason to stay loyal (Bohrer & Gibson, 2007). It is about getting familiar with the brand on a deeper level so that consumers becomes dependent on a brand and therefore develops a repurchasing behaviour (Bohrer & Gibson, 2007). Familiar consumer are also aware of the existing products within a brand and are therefore less likely to search for other alternatives (Johnson & Russo, 1984). This level of brand loyalty is labeled “Committed Buyer” by Aaker (1991, p. 40) and is further described as someone with positive experience, high perceived quality and strong associations with a brand.

Aaker (1991, p. 47) continues with presenting some strategic values of brand loyalty. First of all, it helps to reduce marketing costs since already loyal customers do not need constant reminders of their favorite brands updates. The frequently used phrase “it is simply much less costly to retain customers than to get new ones” (Aaker, 1991, p. 46) represents this positive outcome of high brand loyalty. Another aspect is that greater loyalty among consumers might lead to the attraction of new customers. Satisfied customers are more likely to spread the word through positive word-of-mouth (Athanassopoulos et al., 2001), which is personal communication about a product/service between two individuals (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 452). Therefore, the awareness increases and the amount of potential customers enlarges as well (Aaker, 1991, p. 48). Other additional strategic values that can come from growing brand loyalty is extended breathing room from competitive threats and stronger bargaining power (Aaker, 1991, pp. 48-49).

3.2.4 Perceived Quality
Perceived quality is a certain kind of association, on the one side because it is influential of brand associations in many different areas and on the other side because there is empirical evidence that shows perceived quality having a direct effect on profitability measured in both return-on-investment and stock return (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 17). This dimension of brand equity can be described as the customers’ quality perception of the characteristics and attributes of a certain product or service, in comparison with alternatives (Aaker, 1991, p. 85). Consumers perception of quality tend to transform over time, and that is as a consequence of added information, changed expectations and competitive movements (Zeithaml, 1988). Therefore, previous
researches highlights the importance of tracking the development of the perceptions among the segments, in order to be able to deliver the quality that the market expects and demands (Zeithaml, 1988; Aaker, 1991, pp. 94-95; Kotler et al., 2016, p. 11).

What considerable perceived quality generates in terms of value, as brand associations does as well, is a “reason-to-buy”. With expanding perceived quality, the chances of considering that brand as a possible purchase increases simultaneously (Aaker, 1991, p. 87). Furthermore, Aaker (1991, pp. 87-88) discusses how perceived quality can be used by brands when they are; positioning themselves, constructing a price strategy, draw attention to themselves and introducing brand extensions.

3.2.5 Brand Equity Measurements
Aakers’ (1996) study provides researchers with measurements for consumer based brand equity. Further on, Aaker (1996) argues that when aspiring to measure and identify brand equity across products and market one should look at what he calls “the brand equity ten”. This concept refers to ten different measures that are divided into five groups: Brand loyalty, brand associations, brand awareness, perceived quality and the fifth group consists of behaviour measures focused on market based information (Aaker, 1996). The fifth group contains analysis of market share, that is received from additional research and pricing and distribution indicators that is out of our reach. Therefore, the fifth and final category is excluded from our thesis since it do not fit into our choice of study. To provide further understanding of these measures, Aaker (1996) continues by explaining four criterias to consider when measuring brand equity. Primarily, the measures need to reflect brand equity since it is what is being measured. The foundation of the concept of brand equity should be the guiding factor in creating the layout for the measure set. One of the main goals should be to measure the wide range of brand equity as a concept built upon brand loyalty, brand associations, brand awareness and perceived quality.

Notably, it is of importance that measures reflect the asset value of the brand being measured and that they also emphasises advantages that can not be duplicated by competitors easily (Aaker, 1996). Moreover, one is advised to avoid measures that could be considered as tactical indicators. Examples of tactical indicators could be marketing mix descriptors or how much money a company is spending on advertising. These tactics are copied easily by competitors and does not portray assets in a fair sense (Aaker, 1996).

Additionally, measures needs to be sensitive in a way that they notice the change in a situation where brand equity changes (Aaker, 1996). For example, if a company makes a mistake or if a competitor conducts some kind of action and this causes the brand equity to fall, the measures ought to illustrate this drop (Aaker, 1996). Or if the brand equity is steady on a fixed level, measures should represent this stability (Aaker, 1996). The brands value should in this case neither be portrayed unjust by external factors (Aaker, 1996). Even though our study only aspire to measure the brand equity of IKEA at a certain moment in time, this pillar in guidance is still of importance for the accuracy of the study.

Ultimately, measures should be applicable for several different brands, products categories and markets (Aaker, 1996). Measurements that fulfill this requirement are more general than measurements that are developed for a single brand (Aaker, 1996). In a case where measuring brand equity for an individual brand, the measures are more likely to be unique in a sense that they are specific when it comes to functional benefits and brand personality (Aaker, 1996). But on the other hand, measures developed for several different
products and markets should also be applicable for measuring brand equity for individual brands (Aaker, 1996).

Brand associations should, according to Aaker (1996), be measured with the aspects; value, brand personality and organisational associations taken into consideration. Firstly, value refers to a brand’s value proposition, often in terms of functional benefits. It can be measured with questions regarding if a brand provides good value for money and if there is a certain reason for buying a specific brand over a competitor (Aaker, 1996). Secondly, brand personality refers to the brand-as-person perspective which emphasises the brands emotional and self-expressive traits. To measure brand personality, the scales should focus on if the brand have personality-traits and if it have a clear image of what type of person who would use the brand (Aaker, 1996). Lastly, the final dimension of brand associations is the brand-as-organisation perspective which highlights the people, values and programs that constitutes the organisation behind the brand (Aaker, 1996). Measuring this type of associations can be done with questions about trust, admiration and credibility but since we have credibility in a category of its own, we choose to exclude the questions about organisational associations (Aaker, 1996).

All of the above mentioned, measures different kinds of brand associations and all contributes to the differentiation of a brand (Aaker, 1996). Due to this, to ask supplementary questions regarding a company’s differentiation can be beneficial for any study that are touching on the subject (Aaker, 1996). Examples could be questions about if the respondent perceive the brand to be different from competitors or if they are perceived as basically the same (Aaker, 1996).

Brand awareness can be measured through perceptions and attitudes and can per se affect brand choice and loyalty (Aaker, 1996). Therefore, one can ask questions regarding the general awareness of a brand, deeper meanings of a brand and if any opinions is directed towards a brand (Aaker, 1996).

Measurements regarding perceived quality aims to explain respondents interpretations of a specific brands quality (Aaker, 1996). Questions in this category could be comparisons between brands, in term of quality (Aaker, 1996). Others could be regarding consistency of the quality delivered and if the brand is considered to have a leading position in its industry (Aaker, 1996). Something that is of importance is to clarify the questions for the respondent by giving them a point of reference to relate to (Aaker, 1996).

When discussing brand loyalty one can initially look at something that Aaker (1996) calls price premium. The term refers to when and how much consumers are willing to pay for the product or service of a brand compared to another brand that is offering similar benefits (Aaker, 1996). But, since our questionnaire are based on one brand only, no comparison with competing brands are applied. The reason for this is because we wish to put equal emphasis on all the different variables. But, if the study would have been more guided towards brand loyalty, rather than the other dimensions of consumer based brand equity, a comparison of price premiums would be of greater interest.

An additional way of measuring loyalty is by asking questions concerning customer satisfaction (Aaker, 1996). For example, the respondents can be asked whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the product or service during their last user experience (Aaker, 1996). Customer satisfaction can also indicate the level of loyalty for companies.
with products that are purchased as part of a habitual behaviour, for example soap or milk (Aaker, 1996). In this case, questions concerning intention-to-buy can be asked. Such as, if the respondent intend to purchase from the same brand again or if they would consider to recommend the brand to others (Aaker, 1996).

3.3 Brand Heritage
According to Urde et al. (2007), brand heritage is a dimension of a brand’s identity. This dimension can be identified in a brand’s track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and most of all in its organisational belief that the history of the brand is of importance (Urde et al. 2007). Further, Urde et al. (2007) continue by defining a “heritage brand” as a brand that have its positioning and value proposition based on its heritage. The difference, however, between a heritage brand and a “brand with heritage” is that the heritage brand has made a strategic decision to emphasise its history as a fundamental component of its brand identity and positioning (Urde et al., 2007). Moreover, Urde et al. (2007) mentions that brand heritage is a strategic tool to build a good reputation and brand image. Iglesias et al. (2017) provides evidence that this is not the case, but they later on argue that their research lacks a long-term perspective and that brands with a long history have the tendency to build strong relationships which contributes to greater image and reputation. This argument is well aligned with those of Urde et al. (2007) and one can therefore draw the conclusion that brand heritage need to be approached from a long-term perspective to be justified.

Further on, both Urde et al. (2007) and Wuestefeld et al. (2012) explains that one of the main differences between history- and heritage perspectives in corporate branding contexts is the concept of time. They mean that where a historical perspective focuses on the past, corporate heritage brands emphasises three time-frames: the past, the present and the future. Urde et al. (2007) then continues to point out that when defining the core of a heritage brand, it is the brand’s distinctive- and historical traits that have been invested with meaning and value that delivers benefits to brand communities. Urde et al. (2007) explains that these brand communities are the same today and tomorrow as they were decades or even centuries ago. This implies that the history of a brand has an influence on the present in a sense that value is being invested in the brand and also extracted from it (Urde et al., 2007). Here is where we believe corporate storytelling can be applied. To use corporate storytelling as a tool to present the history and extract the value from present times could be a wise idea in order to transfer the value from before and turn it into the value of today. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000, p. 76) also drew a similar parallel when they mentioned that stories can be used to personify fundamental values of a brand and deliver them to both internal and external stakeholders.

Urde et al. (2007) uses the “heritage quotient” or HQ to measure whether a brand has high or low brand heritage. Based on case studies of both companies and industries, they have identified five elements that are indicators on level of heritage. These are: track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and history important to identity (Urde et al., 2007).

Track record refers to companies with a track record of delivering value to stakeholders over a long period of time (Urde et al., 2007). An example of a company that does this is Volvo due to its synomity with safety (Urde et al., 2007). Companies like Volvo create and confirm expectations that various stakeholders may have about the future (Urde et al., 2007). This implies that credibility and trust accumulated over time are often part of a heritage brand (Urde et al., 2007).
Longevity is not the single contributing factor to a heritage brand but it is certainly a key element (Urde et al., 2007). Arguably, this is often the case for large multi-generational family-owned corporations that goes by the same name as the family (Urde et al., 2007). When looking at heritage brands, most of them have a history that goes back several years (Urde et al. 2007). Even though this is the case, research has shown that it is not impossible for a company to gain the proper qualifications for a heritage brand within the relatively short time period of a generation or two (Urde et al., 2007). Seen from another perspective, longevity can be difficult to measure in a precise way (Urde et al., 2007). But one definition argued for, is that longevity portrays a consistent demonstration of other heritage elements under several CEOs to an extent that the perception is that the heritage elements are deeply rooted in the organisational culture of the company (Urde et al., 2007). Here, it is also important to point out that even though a brand has existed for many years, it does not automatically create brand heritage (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2013).

Core values, if they are well communicated, can act as a guide for a company’s corporate behaviour and its decisions when it comes to policies and actions (Urde et al., 2007). By emphasising continuity and consistency of their core values, certain companies can use them to define their corporate strategy and hence it can become a component of the heritage (Urde et al., 2007). Macdonald (2006) does further state that there is a clear connection between aspects of identity in terms of continuity, persistence and substantiality and heritage. Berry (2000) does also emphasise the importance of core values in a sense that when brands reflect consumers’ core values, they also connect with the consumers’ emotions.

The use of symbols can express the past of a company in its communication. For example, Nike and its “Swoosh”-logo has become a symbol that is recognised all over the world (Urde et al., 2007). The “Swoosh”-logo does not only identify Nike as a company but also implies what the brand stands for (Urde et al., 2007). If companies use symbols with meaning in their communication, they can add dimension to their heritage (Urde et al., 2007). These symbols in the shape of logos or design can sometimes, for brands with high HQ, get their own identity and represent the brand (Urde et al., 2007). An example of this is the five rings of the Olympic Games (Urde et al., 2007). Dennisdotter and Axenbrant (2008) argue that stories and myths also can be used as symbols in a sense that the stories are based on ideas, attitudes, assessments and beliefs. Hence, these stories emphasise certain traits that are contributing to the company's identity (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008).

That the history of a company is important to its identity can be the case in some companies (Urde et al., 2007). Who and what they are, is determined by their history (Urde et al., 2007). It affects how the organisation works today and how it will work tomorrow (Urde et al., 2007). An example of a company where this is important is IKEA since they put a lot of emphasis on their history internally (Urde et al, 2007).

Balmer (2013) has created a framework for corporate heritage marketing that is consists of eight key dimensions: character, communication, covenant, conceptualisation, culture, constituencies, custodianship and context. Character refers to the organisation’s continuous identity traits and communication is referring to the continuous communication of these traits (Balmer, 2013). Covenant can be explained as the continuous covenant that constitutes the foundation of the heritage brand (Balmer, 2013).
Conceptualisations emphasises the continuous images/reputations that several consumers and stakeholders across generations have of the organisation (Balmer, 2013). Culture refers to the continuous perception of the organisation’s cultural identity across several generations (Balmer, 2013). Constituencies emphasises consistency in terms of satisfying the needs of several generations of consumers and stakeholders (Balmer, 2013). Custodianship is referring to the overall collective custodianship of a brand’s heritage (Balmer, 2013). Finally, context implies that the organisation ought to have knowledge of political, economic, ethical, social and technological aspects in their environment and make sure that the brand heritage is aligned with these aspects (Balmer, 2013).

Within the field of brand heritage, it could be argued for that research is rather restrained but this is because the first studies concerning corporate heritage were conducted in 2006 (Balmer, 2017), which was later further developed by Urde et al. (2007). Hence, Balmer (2013) and some of his previous work (see: Balmer et al., 2006) and Urde et al. (2007) can be seen as the pioneers on the subject of brand heritage.

When talking about the value of brand heritage, Blombäck and Brunninge (2013) argue that it can be derived from a various array of stakeholder perspectives. Mentioned are the perspectives from stakeholders such as consumers, financers and potential- and current employees. Continuing, the three groups of potential benefits of brand heritage are explained. Blombäck and Brunninge (2009), Hudson (2011) and Urde et al., (2007) do all say that the two main outcomes of brand heritage are distinctiveness and differentiation. Urde et al., (2007) continues to explain that when a brand use their heritage to clarify its past and make it relevant for the present they become perceived as credible and authentic and can hence position themselves in a strong way. Urde et al., (2007) further argue that a brands heritage can lay the foundation for strong and long-lasting brand relationships. Rose et al. (2015) have conducted a study in which they find that the use of brand heritage enhances trust and brings out positive emotions which in turn affect commitment and brand attachment.

Due to the above, brand heritage is examined in a way that puts it against the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity. Therefore, the hypothesis is stated as in Table 1. This hypothesis is created with the purpose of enabling us to answer our research question and based on the statistical analysis, we can either support or discard this hypothesis. The reason why we are testing it towards each dimension is because we want to examine if a brands’ heritage contributes to: what consumers associate with the brand, how aware they are of the brand, if they are loyal to the brand because of its heritage and how they perceive the quality of the what the brand is offering.

### Table 1: Hypothesis 1

| H1 | Brand Heritage have a positive effect on (a) Brand Associations, (b) Brand Awareness, (c) Brand Loyalty and (d) Perceived Quality. |

#### 3.4 Brand Utility

Vázquez et al. (2002) explains that brand utility, as perceived by the customers, can be divided into two dimensions: the functional value and the symbolic value. To define functional value, Sheth et al. (1991) argue that it can be seen as the perceived utility that is attained from a brands capacity for functional, utilitarian or physical performance. Further, the brand itself attains functional value by possessing salient functional,
utilitarian or physical attributes (Sheth et al., 1991). Continuing, Vázquez et al. (2002) argue that the symbolic value is centered around an individual's need to manage his or hers social and psychological environment. This view is similar to that of Sheth et al. (2001), which defines social value as the social value that an individual receives from association with positively or negatively stereotyped demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural-ethnic groups. This does thus allow the consumer to receive positive emotions and to transmit his or hers connection to social groups, values and personal features (Vázquez et al., 2002). To awaken these emotions and to give the consumer an opportunity to connect to the brand, one can align the research of Vázquez et al. (2002) with what is previously mentioned about corporate storytelling. Corporate storytelling is presented by many authors as a successful tool to awaken emotions (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Denning, 2005; Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008; Sinek, 2009; Forman, 2013) and therefore one can argue that storytelling can contribute to making it easier for consumers to connect to social groups, values or personal features, as is mentioned by Vázquez et al. (2002).

When Vázquez et al. (2002) propose a scale for measuring brand utility, they are pursuing an answer to whether or not consumers perceive functional- and symbolic utilities from both a brand’s name and its product. Furthermore, they elaborate that the value that companies are offering their consumers constitutes of the tangible attributes of the product. Additionally, the intangible attributes of the brand name also represents value but in terms of the associations that the consumer has with the product as a result of the brand name that the product is marketed under (Vázquez et al., 2002). Sheth et al. (2001) does also mention emotional value, epistemic value and conditional value as dimensions of brand utility. These values puts emphasis on feelings and affective states, level of curiosity and the specific situation that the consumer finds him- or herself in (Sheth et al., 2001).

Taking a stand in the previous literature, Vázquez et al. (2002) illustrates four dimensions of brand utility. Firstly, functional utility associated with the product which focuses on the utilities that are connected to the tangible attributes of the brand offer that satisfies the consumer’s need for his or hers physical environment, such as comfort, resistance and performance (Vázquez et al., 2002). Secondly, symbolic utility associated with the product which highlights the utilities that are obtained. These utilities are also connected to the tangible attributes of the brand offer but are derived from the consumer’s need of the psychological and social environment such as style, colour and design (Vázquez et al., 2002). One researcher argue that when conducting marketing approaches for brand purchase, one should use economic utilitarianism, socio-cultural symbolism and emotional approaches with an equal balance between the three (Tsai, 2005). Thirdly, Vázquez et al. (2002) elaborates functional utility associated with the brand name which refers to the functional or practical needs of the consumer as an individual. For example, this could be guarantees. Some of these utilities can be connected to tangible attributes of a product or service, such as duration, but it is argued that the consumer finds value in this kind of utility due to the fact that the brand name of the product provides identification for the individual (Vázquez et al., 2002). Finally, symbolic value associated with the brand name refers to the utilities that satisfies the needs concerning the psychological and social environment such as for example communicating ideal impressions of oneself and aiding the consumer to actualise his or hers self-concept (Vázquez et al., 2002). Continuing in the field of utility, Ambler (1997) discusses the concept of trustworthiness
utility which refers to the relationship between a brand and its consumer, stating that trust is part of this relationship does hence imply that trust also is part of brand equity.

If brand utility affects what consumers associate with the brand, the brand awareness, consumers loyalty and how they perceive its quality is examined through the hypothesis stated in Table 2. The hypothesis is stated as such because we want to have an overview of brand utility and its effect on consumer-based brand equity. Each letter, a, b, c and d symbolise each of the four dimensions and all are tested statistically in order to be supported or discarded depending on the results.

**TABLE 2: HYPOTHESIS 2**

| H2 | Brand Utility have a positive effect on (a) Brand Associations, (b) Brand Awareness, (c) Brand Loyalty and (d) Perceived Quality. |

3.5 **Brand Consistency**
Brand consistency in a marketing context emphasises the degree of harmony and convergence regarding the marketing mix aspects and the stability of marketing mix strategies and attribute levels over a period of time (Erdem & Swait, 2004). Erdem and Swait (1998, p. 137) defines brand consistency as “the degree to which each mix component or decision reflects the intendent whole”. When marketing messages are the same over time, they can be referred to as being part of the temporal dimension of consistency, for example if a brand has had the same slogan for several years (Erdem & Swait, 1998). An additional aspect of consistency is a low change of brand attributes over time, for example that Mercedes-Benz always manufacture cars of high quality (Erdem & Swait, 1998).

Farquhar (1989) states that consistency of a brands image is one of the key elements for building a strong brand and that it refers to the management of the relationship between the brand and the consumer. This relationship must be analysed, nurtured and reinforced and it is the consistency in this relationship that is of importance, hence if one of them changes, the other one must do so as well (Farquhar, 1989).

Nandan (2005) argues that companies need to emphasise consistency when it comes to their brand concept, otherwise their consumer can not understand the brand image. If a company has a consistent brand concept, they can use it across several various promotional strategies and consumers can still recognise and recall the brand even though it is found amongst several competing brands (Nandan, 2005). Furthermore, a brand concept should be consistent over a long period of time since the time aspect can strengthen the connection between identity and image (Nandan, 2005). Nandan (2005) additionally highlights the importance of also including consistency for brand extensions and not merely at the core brand.

Brand consistency is believed to be a key factor in order to create a strong brand (Farquhar, 1989). Therefore, it will be interesting to examine brand consistency's effect on the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity in a way that is stated in Table 3. Farquhar (1989) continues to argue that it is consistency within the relationship between the two part that is of importance and to test brand consistency towards each dimension, we can examine where consistency affects a brand the most.
3.6 Brand Credibility

Forman (2013, p. 18) highlights the importance of authenticity in storytelling, meaning that the appearance should match reality and to strive for credibility, being realistic and creating a tangible story. Erdem and Swait (2004, p. 192) explains that credibility can be defined as “the believability of an entity’s intentions at a particular time”. Continuing, credibility is built on two components: trustworthiness and expertise (Erdem & Swait, 2004). Hence, credibility is based on the believability of the product information that a brand holds (Erdem & Swait, 2004). This requires that consumers has the perception of the brand as having the ability (expertise) and the willingness (trustworthiness) to deliver in accordance with their brand promises (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

Furthermore, in their research, Erdem and Swait (1998) illustrates an economic framework that argue that brand equity is not only associated with products of high quality, but rather based on the credibility of the quality claims of the brand. Continuing, as stated by Papadatos (2006), brands are no longer centered around words and pictures, but rather about the full delivery of a promise to its consumers. 

Cappannelli and Cappannelli (2004) explains that the word authentic is a combination of the latin and greek words *authenticus* and *authentikos*, meaning trustworthy, not imaginary nor false or imitation. Which can be linked back to trustworthiness that Erdem and Swait (2004) are mentioning to be one of the components in brand credibility. As mentioned before, Forman (2013, p. 18) states that there is a relationship between authenticity and credibility. With the studies of Cappannelli and Cappannelli (2004) together with Erdem and Swait (2004), we find another connection between the two concepts and therefore we draw the conclusion that authenticity and credibility are closely related.

Distinguishing brand authenticity from other concepts in the area of branding is, amongst other aspects, the fact that brand authenticity does not include a motivational variable (Bruhn et al., 2012). This implies that consumers does not need to be motivated to own a brand’s products or services or drawing a connection between them and the brand in order to perceive the brand as authentic (Bruhn et al., 2012).

The above mentioned is summarised with that brand credibility is all about delivering on the promise from brand to consumer and doing so in a rightful way. Therefore, we are examining to what extent brand credibility will affect the four dimensions of consumer-based brand equity, according to the hypothesis in Table 4.

| H4 | Brand Credibility have a positive effect on (a) Brand Associations, (b) Brand Awareness, (c) Brand Loyalty and (d) Perceived Quality. |

3.7 Conceptual Model

The following is based on the core concepts presented in this theoretical framework. First of all, we have highlighted the fact that corporate storytelling is a powerful tool when
used in a marketing context (Dennisdotter & Axenbrant, 2008; Denning, 2005). As mentioned before, the lack of previous quantitative studies on the subject resulted in that storytelling is used only from a theoretical perspective in this thesis. We have taken inspiration from the knowledge of storytelling and turned our heads towards what kind of stories brands usually present. That is when we encountered that brands with heritage often has a story to tell (Urde et al., 2007). Urde et al. (2007) and Wuestefeld et al. (2012) describes the three time-frames; the past, the present and the future. These perspectives are developed to highlight that brand heritage is something from the past that is of high importance when it comes to the present and the future as well (Urde et al., 2007; Wuestefeld et al., 2012).

Later on, the concept of brand utility is introduced through the dimensions of functional- and symbolic value presented by Sheth et al. (1991) and Vázquez et al. (2002). These two dimensions are explained as how the functional, as well as the symbolic, aspects of a brand name and its products/services are perceived by the consumers. How does this product/service fit into my social environment?, Does the attributes of this product/service fit my functional needs and demands?, are some questions that consumers can ask themselves when evaluating a brands utility (Vázquez et al., 2002).

Brand consistency and brand credibility are factors to consider when delivering marketing messages, such as e.g. telling stories (Forman, 2013, p. 18). Farquhar (1989) mentions that consistency within a brand is key in order to build a strong brand and Erdem and Swait (1998) states that consistent messages contributes to more credible messages. Therefore, both consistency and credibility are worthy of laying emphasis on if you want to build a strong brand, according to Erdem and Swait (1998) and Farquhar (1989).

The variables mentioned above are all be tested towards how they individually affect the consumer-based brand equity of a brand. Consumer-based brand equity, as mentioned in previous part, is conceptualised by using the four dimensions: brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality (Aaker, 1991). The reason for this is that we are keen on knowing to what extent the chosen variables affect each and every dimension of consumer-based brand equity. Through this, it enables us to examine our research question and justify this thesis purpose.

We have chosen to present four main hypotheses based on each of the independent variables. Furthermore, every hypotheses stated contains of four alternative hypotheses that assess if the independent variable have a positive effect on (a) Brand Associations, (b) Brand Awareness, (c) Brand Loyalty, and (d) Perceived Quality. As a result of this, a total of 16 hypotheses are tested in this study.

To bring together all the aspects in our study and to illustrate what we are researching, we have developed a conceptual model based on the theoretical framework (Figure 1). Each and every independent variable are linked with all of the four dimensions of consumer-based brand equity and this model are working as a basis for our coming statistical analysis. This model will later on be modified based on the results of the study.
FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL MODEL
4. PRACTICAL METHOD

The practical method contains information on how we have conducted our study and how our data was collected. A logical order for how we approached the data collection is presented, following a description of how we analysed our data. The chapter ends with arguments and discussions about the ethical considerations involved in this study.

4.1 Data Collection

When collecting data, researchers can either collect their own primary data or look at already existing secondary data (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 304). Primary data is the kind of data that is collected for the purpose of a specific research (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 678). Further on, secondary data can be explained as data that has been collected for other research purposes (Bryman, 2012, p. 312; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 681). Secondary data can be both qualitative, such as previous interview transcripts, as well as quantitative data, e.g. former questionnaire-answers or publications (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 307). Furthermore, secondary data is seen to be more cost- and time efficient without having any negative impact on the quality, secondary data is often of higher quality than what students can manage to collect themselves (Bryman, 2012, pp. 312-313; Saunders et al., 2012, pp. 317-318). Unfortunately, there are some disadvantages with secondary data as well. As mentioned before, primary data is collected with a specific purpose in mind (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 678). While secondary data is most likely to differ from the purpose that one can have (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 319). This creates a problematic situation to find the most suitable secondary data alternatives to use in a research (Bryman, 2012, p. 315; Saunders et al., 2012, pp. 319-320).

Since we seem to be the first to combine the previous research of corporate storytelling, brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility with the research of consumer-based brand equity, we find it necessary to collect our own primary data in order to answer our research question. The research areas chosen, are well established and provides us with plenty of information to move forward. Therefore, we have chosen to design a questionnaire based on measurements provided by respected authors in each research area. By building a questionnaire based on measurements that are well used and that fits the purpose of our study, we strengthen the reliability and validity of the study according to Bryman (2012, p. 169:171).

When questionnaires are used, one collect data by asking respondents the same set of questions, in the same order, to as many that fits the sample as possible (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 416). This method is argued to be efficient when it comes to reaching out to large samples, but the questionnaire need to be thoroughly produced so that it actually provides the answers you need in order to answer the stated research question (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 417). There are several ways to design a questionnaire and the way that the researcher finally choose need to be closely related to the research question and the purpose of it all (Bryman, 2012, p. 254; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 420).

Firstly, one can take the direction of interviewer-completed questionnaires (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 420). They are interviews that records the answer from the respondent and could be either through telephone or in the shape of structured interviews face to face (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 420). The most important thing is that the questions are defined and asked in the way and order to each of the respondents so that the interview deviate as little as possible from each other (Bryman, 2012, p. 210; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 420).
The other direction a questionnaire can take is the self-completed kind of questionnaire (Bryman, 2012, p. 232; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 419). Here, the respondents complete the questionnaire themselves and to come in contact with the respondents, researchers reach out through three different methods; web-based, postal or delivery and collection (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 419). Web-based questionnaires are delivered by e-mail or by link to a specific web-address and the ability to reach large samples with a wide geographic spread is therefore high (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 421). Questionnaires delivered by post are then returned the same way (if completed), contact information and printed versions of the questionnaire are needed for this and are therefore time consuming (Bryman, 2012, p. 232; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 421). Lastly, we have the delivery and collection way of distributing a questionnaire. Here, the researcher hand out the printed versions personally and then gather them at a later occasion (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 421). As with postal delivery, this also requires specific contact information in order to perform this way of collecting primary data (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 421).

Our choice of questionnaire and how it is distributed lands on a self-completed web-based questionnaire. Due to the fact that we are investigating consumers of IKEA, we believe that a web-based approach is more beneficial than the other two options, since this approach provides us with the opportunity to reach a wide range of respondents within a reasonable time-frame. We located a website called survio.com that offers free, as well as, premium services for conducting surveys online. We chose to upgrade our membership for a small fee, so that we get access to additional features that we can use when analysing the results of the study. We decided not to conduct any interviewer-completed questionnaires, hence to the fact that a self-completed questionnaire is seen to be more time efficient (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 421). All the information gathered on the concepts gave us the opportunity to assemble a well-structured survey that we believed would give the most honest answers from anonymous respondents, instead of face to face interviews.

4.1.1 Survey Construction

When constructing our survey, we beared in mind that we only get one chance to ask the questions to the respondent (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 423). Therefore, we made sure to follow Bryman’s (2012, p. 254) general rules of thumb when designing questions. First of all, a researcher always need to bear in mind the research question. Meaning, relate every question to the research question so that all the information gathered are of value (Bryman, 2012, p. 254). Secondly, have a clear view of what it is that you want to know. All the questions should give the intended result in return (Bryman, 2012, p. 254). Last but not least, the researchers should put themselves in the position of the respondent and ask oneself ‘how would I answer this question?’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 254).

For our questionnaire, we chose to investigate our main variables: brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility. As mentioned before, we intended to include corporate storytelling among these variables. However, the lack of previous quantitative measurements on the subject eliminated the option to include it in our questionnaire and storytelling remained only from a theoretical perspective in our study. We used the knowledge that relate storytelling to the independent variables and by doing so, storytelling still had a significant value to our study. Furthermore, previous research have used industry- or brand specific questions in order for the respondents to have something to relate to. Therefore, we felt the need to do the same. Since we are investigating the consumers of IKEA, we decided to use the same company as a point of
reference. The reason for choosing IKEA above other alternatives is because we believe that IKEA is a good example of an organisation that is using corporate storytelling in a successful way, also supported by Herlitz (2013). Another factor is that IKEA is striving for providing "a better everyday life for the many people" (IKEA, 2018) and could therefore be easily recognisable for a larger crowd.

The majority of the questions contains of statements where the respondent can choose to either strongly disagree or strongly agree. Authors such as Patel and Davidson (2011, p. 88) and Saunder et al. (2012, p. 436) mentions that this rating/attitude kind of questions often have these agree or disagree answer-alternatives and we have chosen a scale from 1-6 where 1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree. It is called a likert-scale and can contain of different rating scales. Four, Five, Six or Seven rating scales are most commonly used but other scales can be used as well, according to Saunder et al. (2012, p. 436). The reason for why we used a 6-point rating scale is because we wanted to eliminate the respondents ability to place themselves in the middle and therefore being neutral. A study on whether a 5-point scale (with a neutral option) or a 6-point scale (without a neutral option) is better, states that sincere neutral opinions are rare among respondents, because those who chose to participate in a study often has a positive or negative opinion on the subject (Gwinner, 2011). Other questions that the questionnaire contains is demographic ones, such as questions about gender, age, city of residence, and membership. We chose to put question 1-4 as mandatory, because they are questions that everybody can answer (see appendix 1). The reason for having question 4 as the last mandatory question is because it points out if the respondent have heard about IKEA or not. If a respondent answer ‘No’ on this question, they are asked to move to the final page and hand in the answers. We are only interested in gathering answers from the consumers that have heard about IKEA before and have created their own perception of the brand.

Question 1 to 3 and number 5 are demographic questions that provides us with the opportunity to measure the deviation of the sample and assess its repetitiveness. Further on, we have 15 question that concerns consumer-based brand equity (Appendix 2, question 4 & 6-19). These question are divided as in where: 3 items to measure brand awareness, 4 items to measure brand loyalty, 3 items to measure perceived quality and additional 5 items that measures brand associations. All of these questions are based on Aakers’ (1996) previous work that provides us with measurements on how to assess brand equity across different products and markets. Further on, 3 questions on brand heritage follows (Appendix 2, question 20-22). These are based on the measurements found in the research by Lehmann et al. (2008). To measure the consumers perception of IKEA's brand utility, we have 12 question based on Vázquez et al. (2002) and their provided measurements (Appendix 2, question 23-34). The following 4 questions found inspiration from Erdem and Swait (1998) and concerns brand consistency (Appendix 2, question 35-38). Erdem and Swait (1998) also lays the foundation for the last 4 questions regarding brand credibility (Appendix 2, question 39-42).

When using Likert-scales in questionnaires, Patel and Davidson (2011, p. 89) suggests that having around 40-50 statements is preferable. We ended up with 42 questions in total when carefully handpicking the most relevant ones from previous research, which means that we followed the recommendations from Patel and Davidson (2011, p. 89). Another input that we took into consideration was, to use the word consider, as in “I consider that…”, in the statements. Patel and Davidson (2011, p. 88) argue that it is a preferred choice of word when analysing respondents attitudes towards something. Due to that the
word *consider* is not a demanding word that could affect the respondents’ judgements (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 88).

### 4.1.2 Sampling Technique

Sampling techniques are used so that the researcher can reduce the amount of data that needs to be collected, and still have the sufficient data for a possible generalisation of the population (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 112; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 258). In some cases, managing the whole population is needed but to do so, it need to be of a manageable size (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 260). If it turn out to be unrealistic- or a matter of time and budget limitations, a sample that represent the complete population can be sufficient (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 260). Some researchers argue that sampling could even provide a higher accuracy, since it leaves more time for designing and monitoring the process of collecting the data (Barnett, 2002, cited in Saunders et al., 2012, p. 261).

There are two types of sampling techniques that one can use: probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 261; Kotler et al., 2016, p. 112). Probability sampling is used when each individual of a population has the same chance of being involved in the sample (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 262; Kotler et al., 2016, p. 112). As goes for non-probability sampling, it is when researchers choose participants based on convenience or their own subjective judgements (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 281; Kotler et al., 2016, p. 113). In this thesis, we have chosen to go with a non-probability sampling method called convenience sampling. It is when researchers chose the most available individuals that fits the population well (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 291; Kotler et al., 2016, p. 113). What we did, were to browse through different facebook-groups to see if any particular site would match our population of consumers of IKEA. We found two relevant groups that accepted our will of posting the questionnaire so every member of the group could see. One were a buy and sell site for IKEA products that was available only for the Umeå locals. The other one was a site where people could post tips and recommendations for others to be a part of. Both of the groups contained approximately 7,500 members which provided us with a possible sample of around 15,000 participants. Although, we cannot guarantee that our questionnaire have reached every member of the facebook-groups. Before launching the questionnaire in the facebook groups, we decided to do a pilot-test by sending it to a couple of colleagues at Umeå University. Saunders et al. (2012, p. 451) are mentioning that a pilot-test before the actual release are beneficial because it give the researchers an opportunity to receive feedback and adjust any uncertainties in the questionnaire. After the pilot-test a few corrections were made and then the questionnaire were ready for distribution.

We received a total of 148 respondents during a two week period, before closing the questionnaire. After looking over the answers we could see that some of them were incomplete and therefore the number of measurable respondents landed on 144. To calculate the response-rate, we follow Saunders et al. (2012, p. 268) and their guidelines on how to do so. By taking the number of responses divided with the total number in the sample (144/15094), we reached a total response-rate of approximately 1%. As mentioned before, this number can be deceiving as it is not realistic that every member of the facebook groups saw our posts in the first place. Therefore, we also considered the number of people that completed our questionnaire versus the total amount of visitors of the URL-link (144/217). The website that we used to construct our questionnaire automatically calculated this completion-rate and it provided us with a final result of 66%.
Indicating that out of the total amount of people that opened our questionnaire, 66% of these people completed it.

4.2 Data Analysis
After completing the data collection, we proceeded with the data analysis. The data were exported from survio.com into a pdf-file and a microsoft excel document. The pdf provided us with an overview of the results from the study with diagrams and tables. While the excel spreadsheet was analysed and then exported into the statistical analysing program SPSS, which is an action supported by Saunders et al. (2012, p. 473). Through the analysing possibilities provided via SPSS, we are able to calculate the effects of brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility on the four dimensions of consumer-based brand equity. We performed statistical tests such as: cronbach’s alpha, descriptive statistics, Pearson’s correlation and multiple regression analyses.

4.2.1 Cronbach’s alpha
In order for the measurements to have high validity, they must be reliable (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 430; Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 102). To test the actual reliability we calculated a cronbach’s alpha (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 430). It is a statistical approach that calculates a coefficient between different variables, in order to see if they are measuring what is aligned with the initial purpose (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 430). The value is between 0-1 and according to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 430) it should be above 0.7. If the value is 0.7 or higher, it means that the variables used in the test are correlated and measures the initial factor that it is supposed to do (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 430). In other words, a high coefficient in this test can be seen as a good measure for reliability while a coefficient closer to 0 can be explained with low reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 175).

4.2.2 Descriptive Statistics
When obtaining descriptive statistics, it gives the opportunity to analyse the collected data numerically and comparisons can be made more efficiently (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 502). One of the most useful types of descriptive analyses is called central tendency (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 503; Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 335). Central tendencies can be measured in: the most frequent values, the midpoint of the data and the mean of all the values (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 503; Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 336). The most commonly used way of explaining data descriptively is with the mean (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 504). The mean includes all the usable values in a calculation and is calculated by adding them together then dividing the answer with the number of values used. By doing this, one can obtain a value that can symbolise the respondents average answer in that specific category and is further explained as the building block when investigating relationships through statistical tests (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 506).

Just as the mean is considered to be fundamental for further analysing, it is important not to forget about the values that deviate from the average (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 506; Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 336). A, so called, dispersion measure is the standard deviation and explains to what extent the collected data deviate from the mean and is therefore a relevant value to present together with the mean (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 506; Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 336).

Due to the above, we have provided the reader with the mean and the standard deviation of all the investigated variables. The mean, so that a general overview of where the
average among the respondents lay and the standard deviation, so that the reader can see how the respondents tend to deviate from the average.

4.2.3 Pearson’s Correlation

Pearson’s correlation is a correlation analysis tool that estimate the strength of a relationship between variables (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 521; Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 338). This method can only be used when the values are numerical, which all values of the variables used in the regression analysis are, and therefore, it is appropriate for us to perform a Pearson’s correlation test. The result provides us with a coefficient between -1 and 1, where the closer to 1 the coefficient is, the stronger the positive relationship is between the variables in question (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 338). Meaning, if one of the variables increases, so does the other one (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 340). If, on the contrary, the result shows a coefficient closer to -1, it means that there is a negative relationships between the two variables and if one variable increase, the other one decrease simultaneously (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 340). What is of importance here is that the independent variables does not have too much of a correlation between each other, so that they are kept separate in the analysis. A correlation below 0.9 and above 0 is considered to be an acceptable positive relationship between the independent variables (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 524). In statistics, one can talk about the confidence level and it can vary depending on type of research (Moore et al., 2016, p. 313). We have chosen to go with a confidence level of 95% and 99% in this test which means that in order for a result to be statistically significant, the so called p-value need to be below 5% (0,05) or below 1% (0,01) in order to show even stronger significance (Moore et al., 2016, p. 313).

4.2.4 Multiple Regression Analyses

To test the actual research question of this study, we are using a method called multiple regression analysis (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 523). Through this method, we can analyse the effects of the chosen independent variables; brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility on the dependent variable of brand equity and its dimensions; brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality. In order for the multiple regression analysis to work, the researcher need to make sure that the dependent and the independent variables have a linear relationship (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 524). Meaning, that a change in the independent variable affects the dependent variable. Helping us to assure this, are the Pearson’s correlation analysis.

When a multiple regression analysis is performed, one will obtain a coefficient of determination, also called R-square (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 523). R-square represents the variation ratio, from 0-1, of the dependent variable that can be statistically clarified by the independent variable (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 523). To put it in context with our thesis, if the total variation in brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality can be explained by brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility the R-square ratio will be 1. Furthermore, a 95% confidence interval is applied, which means that a p-value below 0,05 is enough for clarifying the result to be statistically significant. Further on, other values that will be taken into consideration are the unstandardised beta (B) and a value that is called variance inflation factor (VIF). The unstandardised beta indicated the influence that the chosen independent variable have on the dependent variable tested against, taken that the other independent variables stays constant (Saunders et al., 2012, pp. 523-24). The VIF value measures the multicollinearity within the regression analysis, meaning that the variables involved have too much of a relationship with each other and therefore prevent the analysis from being legitimate.
(Moore et al., 2016, p. 570). It is argued that a study of this size should have a VIF value below 10 in order to mitigate a possible multicollinearity (Moore et al., 2016, p. 570).

4.3 Ethical Considerations
Ethical considerations within the research of business administration is an important factor to take into consideration, according to Bryman and Bell (2017, p. 140). First of all, the researchers need to communicate the purpose of the study to the respondents so that they can, based on the purpose, determine if they want to participate or not (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 141). The purpose of our study is mentioned on the front page of our questionnaire and we also included it the facebook-posts so that potential respondents were informed. Therefore, our respondents could make a decision regarding their participation in accordance with the stated purpose.

Secondly, information about that the participation is voluntary is necessary in order to follow the ethical rules presented by Bryman and Bell (2017, p. 141). In addition to this, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 237) claims that when conducting a study, respondents should not be forced and/or pressured to participate and additionally their privacy should be respected. We believe that our respondents were aware of these ethical considerations before answering the questionnaire and to ensure this, we also stated it in the instructions on the first page of our questionnaire.

The third rule regards confidentiality and the respondents need to be ensured that their participation remains anonymous (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 141). To ensure that the respondent are aware of that their participation is based on their own will and that their answers remain undisclosed, we held dialogue with the administrators of the facebook groups before our questionnaire was distributed. To make sure that it would be acceptable and comply with the groups legal framework to post our questionnaire in these groups. Together with the posts, we had information that highlighted the anonymous and voluntary participation. Further on, we did not offer any compensation, e.g. a gift, for the participation in our study and therefore we did not ask for any personal information from our respondents. Due to this, our respondents remained anonymous.

The fourth rule of the ethical considerations is that the information gathered, is not shared with any third party (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 141). We ensured this by stating it in the beginning of our questionnaire and we have handled the information with strict precaution in order for the data to stay within our possession. Further, we have not included any other individual when discussing and handling our results.

The last two rules that we followed are stating that the information presented to the potential respondents should to no extent be misleading or false and that the respondent should not come to harm during the process (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 141). Since we have conducted a comprehensive literature review and from this review, collected the questions for our measures. All questions used has been tested before by renowned authors in their previous research. Hence, we find it to be trustwhorthy and not decieving. Furthermore, the translation of the questions from english to swedish has been done with minimun changes to stay as close the the original as possible.
This chapter presents the empirical findings. First of all, we present the demographics of our study followed by the Cronbach’s alpha. Further on, the descriptive statistics and Pearson’s correlation is displayed. Finally, the multiple regression analyses are accounted for in this section.

5.1 Demographics
Our questionnaire gathered information concerning the demographics of the respondents. These questions consisted of gender, age, residence in Umeå municipality or not and membership in IKEA’s loyalty program IKEA FAMILY or not (Appendix 1).

As shown in Figure 2, the results here show that 77,1 % of our respondents were female, 21,5 % were male and 1,4 % identified themselves as other. Notably, it can be argued for that this is a rather uneven gender distribution. However, we argue that this will not have any severe implications on the analysis of our results because we do not aim to compare perceptions between female and male consumers of IKEA. Therefore, this sample is acceptable for testing the hypothesized effects.
Figure 3 illustrates that the majority of our respondents (61.8%) were between 21 and 35 years of age. The second largest group were respondents aged between 36-50 (21.5%). Thirdly, were respondents between 51 and 65 years old. Our two outlying groups of age were respondents under 20 years old and respondents 66 years of age or older. We believe that the age is distributed this way since young adults and middle aged consumers may be more active on Facebook were our data was collected and that they also have a closer relation to IKEA due to interest, buying power and needs. It could be argued that respondents under 20 lack interest, buying power and needs and that respondents 66 years or older lacks similar or simply does not have the technical savviness to the same extent as younger generations. We believe that this distribution is relevant for our study since that people above 21, which is 97.9% of our sample, have had time to build up their own perceptions of IKEA and therefore can give us more accurate answers to the majority of our questions.

Figure 4. Place of Residence

- Resident of Umeå municipality
- Non-resident of Umeå municipality
As displayed by Figure 4, 92.4% of our respondents were living in Umeå municipality and 7.6% were not. As a result of our main population being IKEA consumers and that we have conducted the study with a convenience sampling in Umeå, a large proportion of our respondents were residents of Umeå municipality.

Finally, Figure 5 shows that 74.8% of our respondents stated that they were members in IKEA’s loyalty program IKEA FAMILY and 25.2% that they were not. We believe that the result shown have high possibility of being representative for the IKEA consumers since being a member of IKEA FAMILY is free of charge and includes several benefits without any effort.

5.2 Cronbach’s Alpha
In table 5 we have presented the Cronbach’s alpha values for each of our constructs. As the table illustrates, all of the constructs apart from brand awareness have a cronbach’s alpha value above 0.7, which according to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 430) indicates that the measures are reliable for measuring constructs. Even though brand awareness has a value far below 0.7, we decided to keep it in the table highlighted in red to emphasise its low reliability. Further on, both of our questions for measuring brand awareness are considered unreliable when used together, as we can see on the Cronbach’s alpha value (0.257). Therefore, we have hence decided to divide them and only include the one that is closest to the definition of brand awareness. We decided to use the question “I know what IKEA stands for”, since we believe that the respondents that have an understanding of what the brand stands for also possesses a level of awareness of the brand.

When we first conducted the cronbach’s alpha calculation we included all of our questions from each variable from our survey, like with brand awareness. Then added a function that can show if we get a higher or lower cronbach’s alpha if we remove a certain question. As a result, we removed the following questions: For brand loyalty, we removed question number nine, also a non-numerical question, “When I buy furnishings, I do that - only at IKEA vs IKEA and one other company vs IKEA and two other companies vs IKEA and
three or more other companies”. For brand associations, we removed question number 19 “I have a clear image of the type of person who would use IKEA”. For perceived quality, we removed question number 14 “I consider IKEA to have a leading position in its industry”. For brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility we kept all questions since they showed an acceptable alpha value from the start. Without the removal of any question, none of the Cronbach’s alpha value of brand associations, brand loyalty and perceived quality were above the acceptable level of 0,7. Therefore, the removal of question 9, 14, 19 can be considered necessary.

### TABLE 5. CRONBACH’S ALPHA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct (with questions deleted)</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha (with questions deleted)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td>0,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>0,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>0,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality</td>
<td>0,769</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brand Heritage</td>
<td>0,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Utility</td>
<td>0,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Consistency</td>
<td>0,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Credibility</td>
<td>0,858</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.3 Descriptive Statistics

In table 6 we have illustrated the means and standard deviation for each of our constructs. The means have similar values, with brand loyalty and brand heritage having the highest and perceived quality and brand consistency having the lowest. The standard deviations are rather similar except from brand awareness that has 1,47 followed by perceived quality having the second highest and brand awareness the lowest. In summary, one may argue that the respondents have a positive perception of IKEA when it comes to all constructs measured since they are all above 3,5 which is the middle value of our likert scale of 1-6.

### TABLE 6. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
<td>4,72</td>
<td>0,85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>4,11</td>
<td>1,47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>5,45</td>
<td>0,64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Quality</td>
<td>3,84</td>
<td>0,90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Heritage</td>
<td>5,07</td>
<td>0,85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 Pearson's Correlation

As seen in table 7, all of the constructs have a positive correlation to each other except brand consistency which is only correlated with brand associations and brand heritage. The highest correlation is between brand credibility and brand utility. The correlation between brand loyalty and brand utility, brand credibility and brand heritage, brand utility and brand associations is also strong. The weakest correlation that is significant can be found between brand loyalty and brand awareness, perceived quality and brand awareness and between brand awareness and brand associations. Out of all the constructs that had significant correlations, the correlation between brand awareness and brand associations, brand loyalty and brand awareness, and between perceived quality and brand awareness was significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). The remaining constructs were significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). As previously mentioned, both of these significance levels are indicators of reliable constructs. Looking only at the independent variables, we can see that neither of them have a combined correlation above 0.8, which means that they are kept separate from each other and do not correlate too much. Meaning that they do not affect each other to an extent which is considered problematic.

TABLE 7. PEARSON’S CORRELATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand Utility</strong></td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brand Consistency</strong></td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.74</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brand Credibility</strong></td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>0.86</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5.5 Multiple Regression Analysis
As the final part of statistical analysis, we conducted four multiple regression analyses to measure the contribution of brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility on brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality.

5.5.1 Regression 1: Brand Associations as dependent variable
Our first regression had brand associations as the dependent variable. First of all, we identified the adjusted R-square for this regression at 0.415. This means that 41.5% of the variance in brand associations can be directly explained by the independent variables brand credibility, brand consistency, brand utility and brand heritage all together. When looking at each of the independent variables separately in table 8, focusing on the unstandardised coefficient beta (B), we can see that brand credibility (B=0.257) has the weakest effect, while brand utility (B=0.295) has the strongest effect on brand associations, closely followed by brand heritage (B=0.281). They are also significant since all of their p-values are <0.05. When it comes to brand consistency, we can see that it is not significant since its p-value is >0.05. This means that the variance in the dependent variable brand associations can be explained by brand credibility, brand utility and brand heritage respectively but not by brand consistency. Concerning the collinearity statistics, VIF-values below 10 indicate that our independent variables do not correlate with each other and hence we do not have a problem with multicollinearity.

**TABLE 8. REGRESSION 1: BRAND ASSOCIATIONS AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>0.925</td>
<td>0.474</td>
<td>1.951</td>
<td>0.054</td>
<td>0.465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND CREDIBILITY</td>
<td>0.257</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.248</td>
<td>2.357</td>
<td>0.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND CONSISTENCY</td>
<td>-0.020</td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>-0.218</td>
<td>0.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND UTILITY</td>
<td>0.295</td>
<td>0.110</td>
<td>0.254</td>
<td>2.673</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND HERITAGE</td>
<td>0.281</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>0.286</td>
<td>3.151</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.2 Regression 2: Brand Awareness as dependent variable
Our second regression tested brand awareness as the dependent variable. The adjusted R-square in this case was 0.106, indicating that 10.6% of the variance in brand awareness can be explained by the independent variables brand credibility, brand consistency, brand utility and brand heritage all together. When assessing the independent variables individually we can see in table 9 that brand credibility, brand utility and brand heritage have a positive effect on brand awareness and brand consistency does not because it has a negative beta value. But, none of the beta values does matter because none of the independent variables are significant since all of their p-values are >0.05. We believe that the insignificance occured as a result of that our questions were not extensive enough.

We do not believe that there is no relationship between brand awareness and the independent variables brand credibility, brand consistency, brand utility and brand heritage but we cannot prove it statistically. But, we would like to argue that the non-significance is due to flaws in the construction of the part of our study concerning brand
5.5.3 Regression 3: Brand Loyalty as dependent variable

Our third regression had brand loyalty as the dependent variable. The adjusted R-square was 0.402, so 40.2% of the variance in brand loyalty can hence be explained by brand credibility, brand consistency, brand utility and brand heritage. But in this regression, as we can see in table 10, it is only brand utility that has a significant positive relationship (P-value < 0.05) with brand loyalty. Brand utility does also have the highest beta value (β = 0.460), whereas brand credibility have a beta value of 0.115, brand consistency -0.001 and brand heritage 0.106. Here, yet again brand consistency is the weakest, but due to brand utility being the only independent variable being significant, it is also the only variable affecting brand loyalty. As for the collinearity statistics we find good results, where they are all well below 10 illustrating that the risk of multicollinearity is low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>0.759</td>
<td>1.048</td>
<td>0.724</td>
<td>0.471</td>
<td>0.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND CREDIBILITY</td>
<td>0.367</td>
<td>0.242</td>
<td>0.199</td>
<td>1.521</td>
<td>0.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND CONSISTENCY</td>
<td>-0.160</td>
<td>0.202</td>
<td>-0.077</td>
<td>-0.792</td>
<td>0.430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND UTILITY</td>
<td>0.299</td>
<td>0.246</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>1.214</td>
<td>0.227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND HERITAGE</td>
<td>0.196</td>
<td>0.199</td>
<td>0.112</td>
<td>0.985</td>
<td>0.327</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.4 Regression 4: Perceived Quality as dependent variable

In our fourth and final multiple regression analysis we tested perceived quality as the dependent variable. Here, the adjusted R-square is 0.276, stating that 27.6% of the variance in perceived quality can be explained by brand credibility, brand consistency,
brand utility and brand heritage. But, as portrayed in table 11 the significance levels for brand credibility (0.093), brand consistency (0.872) and brand heritage (0.549) are all $p>0.05$. This means that they do not have a significant positive relationship with perceived quality. Brand utility has a significance level of 0.000 which is $<0.05$ and hence it is the only independent variable that is significant and has a positive relationship with brand loyalty. As for the VIF-values, we believe to have acceptable results with no indication of multicollinearity.

**TABLE 11. REGRESSION 4: PERCEIVED QUALITY AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients*</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Unstandardized Coefficients</td>
<td>Standardized Coefficients</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>Collinearity Statistics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>VIF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>0.778</td>
<td>0.568</td>
<td>1.370</td>
<td>0.174</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND CREDIBILITY</td>
<td>0.222</td>
<td>0.131</td>
<td>0.200</td>
<td>1.694</td>
<td>0.093</td>
<td>0.458</td>
<td>2.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND CONSISTENCY</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.162</td>
<td>0.872</td>
<td>0.816</td>
<td>1.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND UTILITY</td>
<td>0.535</td>
<td>0.132</td>
<td>0.430</td>
<td>4.040</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.565</td>
<td>1.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND HERITAGE</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td>-0.061</td>
<td>-0.602</td>
<td>0.549</td>
<td>0.614</td>
<td>1.628</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6 Revised Conceptual Model
We conducted four regression analyses to test whether or not brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility have significant positive effects on brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality, respectively. In our theoretical framework, our conceptual model before it was tested, can be found. Our conceptual model will now be revised in accordance with the results that we received from the regression analyses.

As illustrated in table 12, we can see that out of 16 hypotheses, five are supported and 11 are unsupported statistically. The supported hypotheses are H1a, H2a, H2c, H2d and H4a. Given the results shown, a good basis for the discussion is provided. The supported-, as well as the unsupported, hypotheses are further considered in the discussion.

**TABLE 12. RESULTS OF HYPOTHESES TESTING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shortening</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1a</td>
<td>Brand Heritage have a positive effect on Brand Associations.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1b</td>
<td>Brand Heritage have a positive effect on Brand Awareness.</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1c</td>
<td>Brand Heritage have a positive effect on Brand Loyalty.</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1d</td>
<td>Brand Heritage have a positive effect on Perceived Quality.</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2a</td>
<td>Brand Utility have a positive effect on Brand Associations.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2b</td>
<td>Brand Utility have a positive effect on Brand Awareness.</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2c</td>
<td>Brand Utility have a positive effect on Brand Loyalty.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2d</td>
<td>Brand Utility have a positive effect on Perceived Quality.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3a</td>
<td>Brand Consistency have a positive effect on Brand Associations.</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3b</td>
<td>Brand Consistency have a positive effect on Brand Awareness.</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3c</td>
<td>Brand Consistency have a positive effect on Brand Loyalty.</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3d</td>
<td>Brand Consistency have a positive effect on Perceived Quality.</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4a</td>
<td>Brand Credibility have a positive effect on Brand Associations.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4b</td>
<td>Brand Credibility have a positive effect on Brand Awareness.</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4c</td>
<td>Brand Credibility have a positive effect on Brand Loyalty.</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4d</td>
<td>Brand Credibility have a positive effect on Perceived Quality.</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a result of brand consistency not having any significant positive effect on any of the four dimensions of consumer-based brand equity, we have decided to display its insignificance in the revised conceptual model (figure 6). Primarily, it is covered by a red line and secondarily, it does not have any arrows that illustrates a significant effect on any of the dependent variables. Further, as none of the independent variables had any significant effect on brand awareness, its insignificance has also been highlighted in the revised conceptual model.

The supported relationships based on the empirical evidence from our regression analyses are illustrated in figure 6 below. It displays that brand heritage, brand utility and brand credibility has a significant positive effect on brand associations and that brand utility also has a significant positive effect on brand loyalty and perceived quality. The significant effect, with a 95% confidence interval, is illustrated with black arrows connecting independent variables and dependent variables.

FIGURE 6. REVISED CONCEPTUAL MODEL
6. DISCUSSION

In this discussion chapter, our findings are discussed in relation to the purpose and theoretical framework of this study. Parallels are drawn to corporate storytelling so that the theoretical perspective of that research area is discussed in relation to our findings.

The Cronbach’s alpha analysis provided us with the reliability that our chosen measurements actually measured what they were intended to measure. We struggled with the measurements of brand awareness. Despite this, 100% of our respondents answered that they know about IKEA, which indicates that the brand awareness can be considered high among the sample. Hence, we can argue, in accordance with Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000, p. 17), that our respondents simply enjoy visiting IKEA since it is familiar and thus, they have positive attitudes towards the brand. To draw further connections to the theoretical framework, we would like to highlight the fact that this awareness does not necessarily result in greater sales since awareness itself rarely generates a reason-to-buy (Aaker, 1991, p. 69). Although, research have shown that high brand awareness contributes with other positive factors such as positive attitudes towards a brand, as mentioned above (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 17).

When analysing the descriptive statistics, we can see that brand loyalty receives the highest mean (5.45) and the lowest standard deviation (0.64). Which describes that the average among the respondents is perceived to have great loyalty towards IKEA and that few deviate much from this level of loyalty. We believe that the result could be an indication that IKEA is successful with their intention of providing “a better everyday life for the many people” (IKEA, 2018). Therefore, people might recognise themselves in IKEA and be more loyal to the brand. In our questionnaire, we received strong indication that the respondents were likely to shop at IKEA again. These repurchasing intentions are used as a definition for brand loyalty by Bohrer and Gibson (2007) and it indicates loyalty on a deep level between consumers and brand. Therefore, we conclude that our respondents have high loyalty towards IKEA.

Further, we can see that the variable that received the lowest mean and second highest standard deviation is perceived quality. One can argue that the respondents are not homogenous about the perceived quality of IKEAs products. Since the mean ended up on 3,84 which is just above the middle point of 3,5 and that they tend to deviate 0,90 from this mean. It explains that the respondents are divided between perceiving the quality to be above average or below average. The difference in perceived quality can be considered as a problematic situation for IKEA since perceived quality has a direct effect on profitability, according to Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000, p. 17). Zeithaml (1988) continues with stating that consumers perception of a brands quality tend to change over time. Therefore, it is important for IKEA to follow the development of their consumers perceptions in order to adapt the changes in the consumer demanded quality (Zeithaml, 1988; Aaker, 1991, pp. 94-95; Kotler et al., 2016, p. 11).

In our results, we can see that brand heritage has a significant positive effect on brand associations. The Pearson’s correlation analysis showed a positive linear relationship between the two, with no other variables taken into consideration. Further on, considering the other independent variables in the equation of the multiple regression analysis, it continued to show a positive relationship between brand heritage and brand associations. Brand heritage showed a relatively high mean (5.07), which symbolise that the respondents perceive IKEA to have served them well during a long period of time,
according to our questionnaire. The connection to associations can be drawn here as well, since one can argue that if a consumer consider a brand to have served them well during a long period of time, they most certainly associate the brand with something positive. Aaker (1991) argues that brand associations constitutes the underlying value of a brand because of its way of symbolising meaning to consumers. In addition to that, brand associations also deliver a basis for purchase decisions and for brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991).

We believe that the relationship between brand heritage and brand associations is based on a connection between the communication of brands core values in brand heritage and the brand personality in brand associations. Further, that a comprehensive brand heritage also contributes to extensive and strong brand associations. Urde et al., (2007), Macdonald (2006) and Berry (2000) do all argue that core values constitutes an important part of brand heritage and the emotional connection that it creates with a brands consumers. Balmer (2013) is stating that out of eight components for brand heritage marketing, two of them are character and communication, where character refers to an organisations continuous identity traits and communication is the delivery of these traits. To look at this from a storytelling point of view, Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000, p. 76) claims that the usage of storytelling in a brand heritage context can personify fundamental values of a brand and deliver these values to stakeholders, which we can expect to enhance brand associations. Our findings are proven to be aligned with the findings of previous studies (Urde et al., 2007; Macdonald, 2006; Berry, 2000; Balmer, 2013). With the fact that emphasis on brand heritage can be a powerful tool for establish and develop brand associations.

Additionally, our findings showed that brand utility had a significant positive effect on brand associations, brand loyalty and perceived quality. If we look deeper into each of the multiple regression analyses we can see that brand utility also have the most impact on the dependent variables mentioned, in comparison to the other independent variables. A possible discussion for why it is displayed like this, can be located in our theoretical framework. We lay forward the arguments from Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000, p. 17), stating that brand personality is part of brand associations. We continued by linking this to the arguments of Gill and Dawra (2010) which are claiming that there is a connection between a brands personality and the self-image of its consumers. This was further emphasised by the findings of Sirgy (1982), which are showing that the stronger the relationship is between the brand personality and the consumers self-image, the stronger can the consumers preference be for the brand. Our results show that the independent variable brand utility has the strongest effect on perceived quality, second strongest on brand loyalty and third strongest on brand associations. Here in our discussion, we would nonetheless like to believe that brand utility has a considerable impact on brand associations when also including the facts that the correlation between brand associations and brand utility, according to Pearson’s correlation, is considered to be high. Our argument here is that there is a strong relationship between the symbolic utility part, which according to Vázquez et al., (2002) refers to a consumers social and psychological environment, of brand utility and the brand personality of brand associations. We also believe that functional utility e.g. a products attributes (Vázquez et al., 2002) has an effect but we are aware of the so called product-attribute fixation which is referring to situations when brands put too much emphasis on the physical attributes of their products (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Sinek, 2009).
When assessing the relationship between brand utility and brand loyalty, we first assess brand loyalty considering previous studies by Keller (1993), Oliver (1999) and Sheth (1968) which are all stating that brand loyalty refers to either repeated purchase behaviour of a product/service or having positive attitudes towards a brand. Considering the findings from our study, we argue that if a consumer finds utility in a product or service or brand, it is likely that the consumer will purchase this product or service or brand again which can lead to increased brand loyalty. The findings regarding brand utility and brand loyalty are well coordinated with what other studies on the subject are presenting. If the consumers finds value in the functional- or symbolic aspects of a product/service, they are likely to have a stronger preference for the brand and hence a higher brand loyalty (Vázquez et al., 2002).

Continuing with brand utility’s effect on perceived quality, we refer to Aaker (1991, p. 85) and his definition of perceived quality where he states that it is a customer’s quality perception of the characteristics and attributes of a certain product or service in comparison with alternatives. Here, we can conclude that if a consumer finds utility in a product/service or brand, it is most likely that the consumer also has a perceived quality that is considerable. We cannot see any clear similarities between our conclusion and what previous studies have presented, but it is likely that if a brand promises high utility in their marketing messages, the consumers will perceive the quality as high.

Our results did also show that there was a positive relationship between brand credibility and brand associations. The values of brand credibility provided a high alpha in the Cronbach’s alpha test (0,858) which indicates that the measures used is reliable and adopted well in its context. Further on, the descriptive statistics showed a rather high average that can be interpreted as that the respondents perceive IKEA to be credible. One can therefore argue that if respondents perceive IKEA as credible, they might also associate the brand with being a brand that they can trust. Trusting a brand is considered fundamental according to Erdem and Swait (2004) and even though the multiple regression analysis does not show the strongest effect of brand credibility on brand associations, the smallest level of trust can be a decisive factor when choosing which brand to purchase. Erdem and Swait (2004, p. 192) explains that brand credibility is based on trustworthiness and expertise, which implies that credibility is based on the believability of product-, service-, and brand information. It is also essential that consumers perceive the brand as having the necessary expertise and trustworthiness to deliver in accordance with their brand promises (Erdem and Swait, 2004; 1998). Hence, we argue that if a brand both communicates and demonstrates credibility, trust and authenticity it creates strong brand associations for being credible. Even though we did not test any potential connections between brand credibility and brand heritage, we found several connections in the theory: Urde et al., (2007) claims that when a brand is using its heritage to clarify its past and make it relevant for the future they become credible and authentic. Further, Rose et al., (2015) conducted a study showing that brand heritage enhances trust. It is also interesting to put brand credibility in a storytelling context, since authors like Forman (2013) and Guber (2007) argue that the most important aspect of storytelling is the credibility and truthfulness of the stories being told. At the same time, other authors like Dennisdotter and Axenbrant (2008) explain that even though a story is fictional, it should not be discarded as non-efficient marketing material. We see a plausible relationship between that if a brand is perceived as credible, the other aspects of a brand are also likely to be perceived as credible. This is something that is aligned with
what Erdem and Swait (1998) argue for, and thus our findings are aligned with the findings from previous research.

When it comes to brand consistency, the results from the descriptive statistics and Cronbach’s alpha showed positive conditions. When Pearson’s correlation was performed, we discovered that there is a significant positive relationship between brand consistency and brand associations. Later on, the multiple regression analysis showed that brand consistency had no significant effect on any of the four dimensions of consumer-based brand equity. It came as a surprising result to us when we did not manage to prove any relationship at all between brand consistency and any of the dependent values. We had strong beliefs that brand consistency would have a significant effect on all the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity and primarily on brand associations and brand awareness. These beliefs were partly based on the arguments of Farquhar (1989) saying that consistency of a brand’s image is quintessential for the building of a strong brand and strong relationships between a brand and its consumers. Also partly because Nandan (2005) says that if brands have consistent brand concepts, they can use them in different promotional strategies and consumers can still recognise and recall the brand even though there are several competing brands present. These are clearly implying an effect on brand awareness and Nandan (2005) does continue by stating that consistency also enhances the relationship between identity and image, which both are brand associations. On the other side, we argue that brand consistency is beneficial to a certain level but too much of the same thing is never a good idea. Imagine if a brand continues to promote the same message over and over again. We believe that some respondents might see IKEA as a brand that has been the same since the start and therefore the excitement is not there anymore.

Continuing, our findings demonstrate that brand heritage and brand credibility did not have any effect on any of the other dependent variables except brand associations. However, Iglesias et al., (2017) argue that brands with a long history have a tendency to build strong relationships and Urde et al., (2007) claims that credibility and trust accumulated over time often constitutes a part in heritage brands. Taking this into consideration, we argue that both credibility and trust are cornerstones of long lasting relationships and hence these variables should have an effect on brand loyalty, but based on the results from our study we cannot confirm this assumption. We also hypothesised that brand credibility would contribute to both brand loyalty as loyalty also is built on trust, and that if a brand is credible, so is its perceived quality. Urde et al., (2007) does further argue that longevity is a key contributing factor to brand heritage and that if companies are portraying their heritage elements with consistency across time, even with changes in management, their heritage elements are firmly rooted in the organisational culture. This is an aspect that we see several similarities with brand consistency, and hence we thought that it would have an effect on both brand loyalty and perceived quality since brands that consistently show high quality or good service over time should have loyal customers that perceives the brands quality as high.
7. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, we conclude the findings and discussions of the thesis and use them to answer the research question and purpose of our study. Theoretical contributions are addressed, as well as practical recommendations. Followed by discussions about the limitations of our study and inspiration for future research on the concepts in question.

7.1 Conclusions

The main purpose of this thesis was to examine the effects of brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility on the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity. In order to fulfill this purpose, brand equity is conceptualised by four fundamental dimensions; brand associations, brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality (Aaker, 1991). Further on, we have integrated corporate storytelling from a theoretical perspective with the aim of adding a contemporary marketing tool that do not only reach out to the many people, but do so in a modern and efficient way. In order to fulfill the purpose, we have conducted a quantitative study where we examine the respondents perception of all the chosen variables with IKEA as point of reference. Moving on from there, the results from the questionnaire has been statistically analysed and significant findings were composed. These findings has been applied in the context of our thesis purpose and has guided us when answering our research question which was:

**What are the effects of brand heritage, brand utility, brand consistency and brand credibility on consumer-based brand equity?**

The findings from the study showed significant evidence that brand heritage, brand utility and brand credibility affect brand equity in a positive way. This is leaving brand consistency without any evidence of affecting any of the dimensions of brand equity. The three independent variables that kept their relevance in the study all showed a positive effect on the dimension brand associations while brand utility showed some additional evidence of contributing to increased brand loyalty and perceived quality.

Furthermore, we have found that brand utility is the independent variable that has the most influence on brand equity, considering that it has a positive effect on three out of four variables. In this context, we conclude that storytelling can carry and deliver the core values of a brand to its consumers and hence declare the symbolic value that the consumers are perceiving as a contributor to their self-image. Further, we also conclude that brand credibility, through its significant positive effect on brand associations, have a strong effect on total brand equity. Brand credibility defined as both the keeping of promises regarding quality and in terms of truthfulness in marketing efforts concerning heritage.

Additionally, since brand heritage also have a positive effect on brand associations, we state that brand heritage has a positive effect on total brand equity. Our reasoning here is that, for instance, if a brands heritage is characterised by trustworthiness, craftsmanship, high quality and family, the overall brand (total brand equity) will be associated with these features. These characteristics will parallelly also influence the other dimensions of brand equity such as perceived quality since consumers associations will have an effect on their experience with the brand. Following, in this context, based on the results from our study, we determine that brand heritage constitutes an impactful part of the content in storytelling with a marketing purpose.
We believe that the theoretical framework has given us incentives to connect the knowledge on storytelling with the findings of the study. We argue that storytelling becomes a practical method to enhance a brand's equity through leveraging the aspects of a brand's own unique heritage. Instead of using traditional marketing methods, a story that represents yesterday's history of a brand with the functional and symbolic utilities of today in a way that is trustworthy and embraceable can be a more efficient way to deliver tomorrow's marketing messages. Hence, these stories can stand out from the occupied world of constant communication between brands and consumers.

7.2 Theoretical Contributions
One area of previous research has put brand heritage in the perspective of motivating internal stakeholders and that storytelling can be used to enhance this internal motivation (Urde et al., 2007; Dennisdotter & Axanbrant, 2008). What we have contributed with is to widen the spectrum and highlight what effect brand heritage can have on external stakeholders as well. Our quantitative study provided evidence on this matter and therefore we could draw parallels to storytelling and its relation to external marketing messages. Furthermore, brand heritage in a marketing context is, as previously mentioned, a relatively restrained research area since the initial research on the subject was conducted around 2006 (Balmer, 2017). We have therefore contributed additionally to an already narrow research area by adding dimensions that no other researcher has investigated before.

Further on, we have conceptualised brand utility in a brand equity context and delivered evidence showing that brand utility is a relevant concept to take into consideration when brands are striving to increase their consumer-based brand equity. To our knowledge, brand utility has never before been put in relation to storytelling and we have provided theoretical arguments on why emotionally appealing stories can help potential consumers to feel more attached to a brand and therefore develop into actual consumers.

We believe that the concept of brand equity is comprehensive and in some sense rather abstract. Hence, we would like to argue that our conceptual model contributes with a framework that has created a more comprehensive theoretical foundation that future researchers can continue to build on. We are aware of that there are many contributing factors to brand equity but considering our chosen independent variables, we provide a unique mix of constructs that illustrates brand equity in a way that, within the frame of our literature review, has never been done before.

7.3 Practical Recommendations
We have been using IKEA as a point of reference for our study, yet we wish to clarify again that we have not been writing on commission for IKEA. As a result of this, our recommendations will be for companies and organisations that are big and small, national and international and for overall practitioners of brand management.

In alignment with the findings of our study and our theoretical point of departure, we advocate that companies and organisations should target brand management efforts towards brand heritage, brand utility and brand credibility since these have a considerable effect on brand equity. Actions for increasing brand heritage could include searching for stories of a company's history and heritage internally and then taking a more active role in communicating these stories to the stakeholders of the brand. When the desire is to increase brand utility we believe that the first step to be taken is to identify what functional
and symbolic utilities that the consumers perceives when interacting with the brand. This is easily conducted by asking consumers to participate in a survey asking about the utilities that they get from the brand. When they have been identified, the brand can make efforts to either improve and/or retain these utilities. In terms of having strong brand credibility, we believe that the proper approach is to assure in every step, big or small, that the promised quality of the brand is delivered.

As for the marketing concept of storytelling, the literature review in this thesis has provided us with the strong and certain opinion that storytelling is a powerful tool in comparison to its more conventional counterparts. Due to this perception, alongside with our view that storytelling is a somewhat underestimated marketing tool, we strongly believe that it has a lot of potential and hence we recommend practitioners to use it to a larger extent than what can be seen today.

When considering societal implications, one may discuss the potential areas in which our thesis could be misused. It should be considered that our thesis could be subject to misconduct, for example if someone would use our arguments for the fact that storytelling does not need to be true in a marketing context and angle it in a different and unethical sense. An untrue story can be deceiving for consumers and affect their behaviour into buying a product/service under false intentions. Encouraging unnecessary consumption is not aligned with society’s perception of responsible consumer behaviour and therefore, this should be avoided.

**7.4 Limitations and Future Research**

Worthy of considering is the fact that our study is centered around IKEA and hence our results may be limited to the industry that IKEA is active within. But, even though this might be the case we would still like to argue that the findings from our study can be applied to other companies and organisations than IKEA due to the truth criteria of our study.

Another issue that arose was the fact that the participants in our study were roughly 75% female and 25% male, which may imply that our sample is not representative for our population in terms of having an equal gender distribution but rather representative for a female population of IKEA’s consumers. Worthy of mentioning is the fact that we do not aim to compare perceptions between the genders of our respondents. Therefore, we consider our sample to be acceptable.

Additionally, the difference in the amount of questions asked per variable was somewhat uneven in a sense that there were between three and five questions per variable and then there were 11 questions for brand utility. For future research we recommend consistency in the measures, both in terms of quantity and measurement scale. We also recommend to conduct a more thorough pilot study, before sending out the final questionnaire, to identify potential misunderstandings. Furthermore, we have a wish that future researchers will be able to use our theoretical foundation to develop more direct- and reliable measures to quantify storytelling as a marketing concept and use it in future studies to measure its potential as a corporate tool and hence its direct effect on consumer-based brand equity.

Another limitation of this thesis is the absence of significant questions for measuring brand awareness. We believe that this is reason that we could not statistically prove any
significant positive effects from any of the independent variables on brand awareness as a dependent variable. One of the potential misunderstandings in our questions for measuring brand awareness is concerning the question “I know what IKEA stands for”. This question was thought to measure to what extent respondents were aware of the values that IKEA stands for, but we suspect here that respondents has interpreted the question as to what extent they know what the acronym IKEA (Ingvar Kamprad Elmtaryd Agunnaryd) stands for. We also had a question where respondents were asked to answer either Yes or No if they have heard of IKEA. Afterwards, we realised that we should have given this question a numerical scale of 1-6 just as with the other questions. This would have simplified our statistical analysis and potentially enabled us to show additional findings.
8. TRUTH CRITERIA

This final chapter provides discussions about the quality of our degree project. We have considered criteria that are suggested in order for a study to meet the demands for quality and criteria concerning reliability, validity and replicability are therefore discussed.

8.1 Reliability
Reliability refers to whether the results of the study would be the same if the study would be conducted again or by another researcher (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 192; Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 68). We argue that since this study is based on well cited authors that are considered pioneers in their specific research area, the reliability of the results is strong and that other studies based on the same methods would show similar answers. Further contributing factors to this thesis reliability is the conducted cronbach's alpha test. In that test we could find that all concepts except brand awareness were above the minimum value of 0.7. Meaning that those that are above, is considered reliable (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 430). Therefore, we can conclude that our findings have an acceptable level of reliability.

8.2 Validity
The validity of a study works as a complement to the reliability, when ensuring the quality of a research (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 193). To ensure the internal validity of the study, we can rely on the statistical findings and see that the positive relationships proved are statistically significant. Therefore, the findings are strengthened through science and other possible influences can be excluded (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 69). The external validity concerns whether the results of a study is generalisable to other populations or not (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 194; Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 69). To strengthen the external validity, research need to be thorough when analysing which sample to conduct the study on (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 69). In this thesis, a convenience sample method has been used so the sample may not be completely generalisable to the total population. In order to surely determine the external validity, our research need to be applied to other contexts and be replicated (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 194). If similar findings are provided from this, we can state that our external validity is at an acceptable level.

8.3 Replicability
Replicability refers to whether a study can be replicated by others and still provide the same answers (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 68). In order for this to be achievable, the researchers must provide detailed explanations of the methods used so that others can follow the procedure and replicate the study (Bryman & Bell, 2017, p. 69). We believe that our theoretical framework together with our practical methodology is thoroughly explained and presented in a logical order that is easy to understand. Our table of the references and questions used in appendix 2 give the reader an overview of what our questionnaire is based on and therefore, we argue that our study is replicable and easily adjustable if required.
REFERENCES


IKEA (2018), About the IKEA Group [Retrieved 2018-04-24].


APPENDIX 1, THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Konsumenters uppfattning om IKEA

Hej!


Denna enkät utgör en viktig del av vårt arbete och kommer att förse oss med den data som krävs för att vi ska kunna göra en analys inom vårt valda ämne. För att ha ett varumärke att relatera till har vi valt IKEA. Genom att fylla i denna 5-10 minuters enkät hjälper du oss nå bästa möjliga resultat.

Ditt svar kommer att förblå anonymt.

Vid frågor eller funderingar så kan ni nå oss på: Chicoza@live.se

Stort tack!

Hälsningar,

Oliver Chicoza & Carl Fredrik Somp

1. Kön?
   ○ Man  ○ Kvinnra  ○ Annat  ○  ○  ○  ○

2. Ålder?
   Frågesturen: Vålen åldersgrupp tillhör du?
   ○ under 20
   ○ 21-35
   ○ 36-50
   ○ 51-65
   ○ 66+

3. Bor du i Umeå Kommun?
   Frågesturen: Välj ett svar
   ○ Ja
   ○ Nej

4. Känner du till IKEA?
   Frågesturen: Om nej länkar in enkäten och tack för din medverkan.
   ○ Ja
   ○ Nej

5. Är du medlem i IKEA Family?
   ○ Ja
   ○ Nej
6. "Jag vet vad IKEA Står för"
Frågestructioner: Växlig av svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Lämna INTE markören i ruten.

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7. "Jag har en åsikt om IKEA"
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8. "Jag är nöjd med mina senaste inköp från IKEA"
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9. "När jag ska handla inredning så handlar jag..."
- "bara på IKEA"
- "på IKEA och på ett annat företag som också säljer inredning"
- "på IKEA och på två andra företag som också säljer inredning"
- "på IKEA och på tre eller fler företag som också säljer inredning"

10. "Jag kan tänka mig att handla på IKEA igen"
Frågestructioner: Växlig av svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Lämna INTE markören i mitten.

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11. "Jag skulle rekommendera andra att handla på IKEA"
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12. "I förhållande till konkurrerande varumärken, skulle jag säga att IKEA har högre kvalitet"
Frågestructioner: Växlig av svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Lämna INTE markören i mitten.

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13. "Jag anser att IKEA har genomgående bra kvalitet"
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14. "Jag anser att IKEA har en ledande position inom sin bransch"  
Frågeställning: Välj igen 1, 2, 3, 4 eller 5. Lämna INTE markören i mitten.

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15. "Jag anser att IKEA erbjuder bra värde för pengarna"  
Frågeställning: Välj igen 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Lämna INTE markören i mitten.

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16. "Jag anser att IKEA som varumärke har en personlighet"  
Frågeställning: Välj igen 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Lämna INTE markören i mitten.

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17. "Jag anser att IKEA tydligt skiller sig från sina konkurrenter"  
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18. "Jag anser att det finns anledningar att handla hos IKEA istället för hos IKEAs konkurrenter"  
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19. "Jag har en tydlig bild av vilken typ av person som handlar på IKEA"  
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20. "Jag anser att IKEA har funnits länge"  
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21. "Jag anser att IKEA har en lång historia"  
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22. "Jag anser att IKEA generellt har tjänat mig väl genom tiderna"
Frågeställning: Värdgivna swar är 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Lägg inte INTE markören i mitten.

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23. "Jag anser att IKEA:s produkter är lätthanterliga"
Frågeställning: Värdgivna swar är 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Lägg inte INTE markören i mitten.

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24. "Jag anser att IKEA:s möbler är komfortabla"
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25. "Jag anser att IKEA:s produkter är säkra"
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26. "Jag anser att IKEA:s produkter håller länge"
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27. "Jag anser att IKEA:s produkter utseendemässigt tilltalande"
Frågeställning: Värdgivna swar är 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Lägg inte INTE markören i mitten.

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28. "Jag anser att IKEA erbjuder bra garantier"
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29. "Jag anser att IKEA:s produkter är av hög kvalitet"
Frågeställning: Värdgivna swar är 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Lägg inte INTE markören i mitten.

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30. "Jag anser att IKEA är ett företag som är trendigt"
Frågeinstruktioner: Väljigen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Länya INTE markören i mitten.

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31. "Mina vänner handlar på IKEA"
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32. "Jag anser att IKEA har ett gott rykte"
Frågeinstruktioner: Väljigen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Länya INTE markören i mitten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instämmer inte alls</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>Instämmer helt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33. "Jag anser att det föremål har hög status att handla på IKEA"
Frågeinstruktioner: Väljigen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Länya INTE markören i mitten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>Instämmer inte alls</td>
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<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>Instämmer helt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34. "Jag anser att IKEA passar bra in i min livstil"
Frågeinstruktioner: Väljigen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Länya INTE markören i mitten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Instämmer inte alls</td>
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<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>Instämmer helt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. "Jag anser att bilden av IKEA (i reklamer etc.) alltid varit densamma"
Frågeinstruktioner: Väljigen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Länya INTE markören i mitten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>Instämmer helt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36. Jag anser att IKEA:s kvalitet alltid varit densamma"
Frågeinstruktioner: Väljigen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Länya INTE markören i mitten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>o</td>
<td>Instämmer helt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. "Jag anser att IKEA:s priser och produkter speglar bilden av företaget"
Frågeinstruktioner: Väljigen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Länya INTE markören i mitten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Instämmer helt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38. "Jag anser att IKEA är samma idag som det varit tidigare"
Frågeinstruktioner: Väljigen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Länya INTE markören i mitten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>o</td>
<td>Instämmer helt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
39. "Jag anser att IKEA håller sina löften till kunden"
Frågeinstruktioner: Vänligen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Läsarna INTE markera i rätten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>5</th>
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<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40. "Jag kan lita på IKEA"
Frågeinstruktioner: Vänligen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Läsarna INTE markera i rätten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41. "Jag anser att IKEA vet vad de håller på med"
Frågeinstruktioner: Vänligen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Läsarna INTE markera i rätten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42. "Jag litar på det som IKEA förmedlar i sina reklamer"
Frågeinstruktioner: Vänligen ange svar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 eller 6. Läsarna INTE markera i rätten.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 2, TABLE OF QUESTIONS, WHAT THEY MEASURE AND SOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION:</th>
<th>CONSTRUCT:</th>
<th>SOURCE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you live in Umeå</td>
<td>Demographic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Have you heard of IKEA</td>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td>(Aaker, 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are you a member of IKEA Family</td>
<td>Demographic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. “I know what IKEA stands for”</td>
<td>Brand Awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. “I have an opinion about IKEA”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. “I am satisfied with my latest purchases from IKEA”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. “When I buy furnishings, I do that - only at IKEA vs IKEA and one other company vs IKEA and two other companies vs IKEA and three or more other companies”</td>
<td>Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>(Aaker, 1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. “I would shop at IKEA again”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. “I would recommend IKEA to others”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. “In comparison to alternative brands, I would say that IKEA has higher quality”</td>
<td>Perceived Quality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. “I consider IKEA to have consistent good quality”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. “I consider IKEA to have a leading...”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>“I consider IKEA to provide good value for the money”</td>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>“I consider IKEA, as a brand, to have personality”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>“I consider IKEA to be different from competing brands”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>“There are reasons to buy IKEA over competitors”</td>
<td>Brand Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>“I have a clear image of the type of person who would use IKEA”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>“I consider IKEA to have been around for a long time”</td>
<td>Brand Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>“I consider IKEA to have a long history”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>“I consider IKEA to have served me well”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>“I consider IKEAs product to be easily handled”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>“I consider IKEAs furniture to be comfortable”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>“I consider IKEAs products to be safe”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>“I consider IKEAs products to be durable”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>“I consider IKEAs products to be aesthetically appealing”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>“My opinion is that IKEA offer good guarantees”</td>
<td>Brand Utility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>“I consider IKEAs products to have excellent quality”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>“I consider IKEA to be a trendy brand”</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. “My friends shop at IKEA”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. “I consider IKEA to have good reputation”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. “I consider it to be prestigious to shop at IKEA”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. “I consider IKEA to be aligned with my lifestyle”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. “I consider that IKEA’s image in commercials and ads has been consistent for many years”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. “I consider that the quality of IKEA has been consistent for many years”</td>
<td>Brand Consistency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. “I consider IKEA’s prices and products to match its overall image”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. “I consider IKEA to be consistent over time”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. “I consider IKEA to deliver what it promises”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. “I believe that I can trust IKEA”</td>
<td>Brand Credibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. “I believe that IKEA knows what they are doing”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. “I believe in what IKEA conveys in their advertising”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>