

How to Strike a Viral Video Success: A Study on the Influence of the Emotional Tone on Consumer Intentions and Attitudes

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AFFIDAVIT

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ABSTRACT

In the past few years social media has become a powerful channel for companies to convey their brand image and create strong customer relationships. Already many companies have understood the benefits of using social media and have implemented it into their marketing strategies. Recently, online marketing videos have gained great popularity among brands and consumers. Creating a video which strikes an extraordinary success and “goes viral” has become the ultimate goal for marketers. Experts have given advice on how to use emotions to make consumers identify with a brand and in turn, share the video on social media. However, there has still been relatively little research on how to create a video that goes viral and which emotions play an important role. The aim of this study is to determine the influence of the emotional tone of online marketing videos on consumers’ intentions to share the video or buy the advertised product/service. Through the use of an experiment, participants viewed six very popular marketing videos. Their intentions and attitudes towards them were measured while controlling for the emotional tone in the videos. The study found significant differences between the two groups of emotional tone. Based on the results, it is suggested for marketers to use content with a pleasant emotional tone, as this shows to increase the probability of striking a viral video success more than an unpleasant toned video.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context and relevance of this thesis

In today's business environment it is no longer enough for a company to sell a product or service. Instead, consumers expect to buy a whole pleasurable experience around the product or service (Morrison & Crane, 2007) and as Gobé (2009) states, this is often related to emotions. Given the mass of different options and choices consumers have, firms need to put major efforts on the overall experience including emotions, in order to distinguish their products and/or services from the competition. Following the line of reasoning of the theory of affective decision making (Solomon, 2009), Gobé (2009) states that people are listening more to their hearts and pleasurable feelings than to their heads when they make product decisions. Therefore, he posits that companies should enter the relatively new world of emotions in business.

Also, from the consumer side we see new developments. For example, nowadays, consumers expect that brands have knowledge about them on an intimate and personal level. This in fact gives companies the ability to understand and in turn cater to the consumer's individual needs and cultural orientations. However, in times when there is an increasingly growing amount of different social identities and through the fact that consumers are enjoying the variability of the globally connected market, it is not easy for businesses to meet the expectations of these varying and diverse consumers. One way of overcoming this is to find ways of creating a dialogue with consumers to find out what is really important to them. In order to be able to do so, companies are advised to build deep connections with their potential and existing customers (Akgün et al, 2013). Morrison and Crane (2007) state that by understanding and using customers' emotions, marketers can build strong brands. Furthermore, building a relationship with consumers will form a solid basis for the development of new marketing strategies, business opportunities and growth (Schaefer, 2014). Hence, for businesses the most favourable outcome is not only to win new customers, but also to create positive brand perceptions to develop their customers into brand ambassadors.

Literature suggests that the key to creating such a strong bond with consumers are emotions (Schäfer, 2014; Libert & Tynski, 2013). In other words, marketers should know how to manage the consumers' emotional brand experience (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Gobé (2009) refers to the potential of *emotional branding* as very important for marketers (Gobé, 2009) since it can be used to build strong and meaningful emotional bonds, which proactively enhance

customers' lives. Furthermore, it can be seen as a tool to make brands become part of people's lives by staying in their memories and being involved in their social networks (Thompson, 2006). In fact, the ultimate goal should be that customers identify themselves through the brand, so that they would stand with it no matter what happens (e.g. brand ambassadors) (Goldner, 2012). In the commercial world brands like Harley Davidson and Apple Inc. are great examples for such brand identifications (Morrison& Crane, 2007). In these cases, emotional branding has made some of their "followers" incorporate the brand as part of their lifestyles (Goldner, 2012).

In the recent years, new channels of social media have opened up powerful opportunities for brands. Social media has somewhat exploded in the past few years, for example in 2018 more than 3 billion social media users were reported (Smith, 2018). Most brands have acknowledged the emerging importance of this technology and already 91% of retail brands are using at least two different social media networks for their marketing purposes (Smith, 2018). Through this development and the great popularity of the different social media platforms, companies have not only gained new means to market their products and services, but also the way how they can communicate with their customers has changed completely (Wang et al., 2012). Furthermore, social media facilitated conveying companies' emotional branding strategy by publishing content which triggers people's feelings and makes them attached to the brand. Through the creation of social online communities, consumers can even become brand ambassadors and express their emotional bond to the brands. In doing so, they would be willing to engage with the brand and share the digital marketing content with their friends on their social media profiles. This can be a real treasure for marketers (Schaefer, 2014) because consumers tend to trust their peers more than official sources like the company itself. When consumers are seeking for experiences for making purchase decisions, they often perceive other consumers or friends as a reliable source. This is because when people share a brand post publically with their social media community, it is often perceived as that they stand behind or agree with the content and want other people to see it as well. Therefore, it is of greatest value when consumers share a company's social media posts. However, as most of the companies are already using social media to post their content, it has become difficult for brands to stand out of the clutter of the overcrowded social online market place and be recognized by consumers. Actually, Libert and Tynski (2013) state that companies are no longer able to really control what people see in their social media feeds. Therefore, they suggest that if companies want to attract the attention of users, they need to create content

which is perceived to be worth watching because it adds something valuable to their lives and returns the invested time and emotional investment (Libert & Tynski, 2013).

Recently the use of brand videos has become one of the most popular and widely perceived as most effective tool to convey engaging messages to consumers. As a result those online marketing videos have drastically increased in popularity over the past few years, and many companies are rapidly adapting to the trend of using videos for their online and social media marketing. Where in 2008 72.1% of brands working with an U.S. marketing agency had indicated their interest in using video as a part of their marketing plan and worldwide one third of brands had tried this strategy (Eckler & Bolls, 2011), the effective use has grown much by 2018. In 2018, 81 percent of the businesses asked, indicated that they were using video for their marketing purposes. This was a 17% increase compared to 63% in 2017. Out of the 19 remaining percent which have not used online video by now, nearly two thirds, 65%, stated that they were planning on implementing it already still in 2018. In 2017 the same indication was only at 34%. Out of the brands which were already using videos, 82% agreed that videos were a significant addition to their marketing strategy. 78% admitted that the use of video online profited them with a respectable return on investment. 76% of the businesses found that through the implementation of online videos their sales increased. Therefore, 82% of the companies are planning to invest more money into online video marketing in the forthcoming year (Wyzowl, 2018).

Looking at the relevance of online videos from a consumer side, it can be said that on average a person spends one and a half hours watching videos online per day (Wyzowl, 2018). This number represents any kind of videos, meaning not necessarily branded ones (Wyzowl, 2018). Therefore, the developments that companies are adopting online video into their strategy seem to be a good choice, because 95% of people asked have indicated that they have watched branded online videos. Out of those, 81% stated that videos encouraged them in buying the product or service.

Also, companies should consider that young adults from 18-34 years are the consumer group that has been most active on social media in 2015 (MarketingSherpa, 2015). Therefore, this group has been most likely to follow a brand on a social network page. Out of this age group 95% of the respondents indicated that they were in fact following some brand online. The older generations are a bit less active on social media. For example 74% of the 55-64 year olds indicated that they were still using social media. However, at this age only 35% of the people asked stated that they were following brands online (MarketingSherpa, 2015). This should be kept in mind by marketers in order to make sure to find their target group on the right social networking page. It is also interesting to know that according to the survey by Wyzowl (2018)

85% of the respondents claimed that they would share a video with their friends if they liked it.

Thus, having looked at the current situation and relevance of branded online videos for consumers and marketers, it gets relatively obvious that this field is no more just a trend, but has already become a major part of the online word and marketing practices. Therefore, marketers need to consider how they can make their branded online videos special enough to stand out of the mass of content that users are being confronted with every day on the web, social media and real life. The ultimate optimum would be that a video posted by a brand becomes so popular, that users voluntarily share it with their social media community, so that it spreads in an exponentially growing way (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). This highly sought after phenomenon is called '*viral video marketing*'.

Viral marketing is a valuable tool for marketers as it not only can spread information and brand images in an enormously rapid manner, but also is very cost effective compared to traditional marketing campaigns (Dobele et al, 2005). Therefore, creating such a viral video to strike a viral video success has become a new challenge for marketers. Thus, understanding how to create videos that are likely to become popular and how to encourage people to share them to make that content go viral can be of great interest to businesses. However, only little research has yet been done in this field. Some researchers suggested that emotions can trigger high levels of engagement and in turn encourage users to share the video (Escalas et al., 2009; Eckler & Bools, 2011). The question that arises is which emotions should be used in online videos. The reason for this is that marketers would want to know which emotions elicit which kinds of behavior and how likely they make consumers to share a video (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Some researchers based on their studies suggest that positive emotions in online marketing videos are more likely to create positive sharing behavior than negative ones. However, there has only been little research on how the overall emotional tone of the content of online marketing videos influences the attitudes of consumers towards the advertisement video or the advertised brand and in turn their intentions to share the video or purchase from the brand.

Therefore, giving suggestions on how to find the right content for an online marketing video in order to make it go viral is part of the research aims of this study. The next section will address this in more details.

1.2 Research aims and hypothesis

The aim of this thesis is to determine whether the use of different emotional tones in online marketing videos has an effect on the attitudes and intentions of consumers. The goal is to investigate which emotional tone should be applied to increase the chance of creating a video which goes viral online and in turn improve the consumers' overall attitude towards the advertised brand. Therefore, for this study the following research questions will be addressed:

RQ1: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the attitude towards the advertisements?

RQ2: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the intention to share the videos?

RQ3: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the attitude towards the advertised brands?

RQ4: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the intention to purchase from the advertised brands?

Based on theories and findings of other researchers who have performed studies with similar research questions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011; Berger, 2013; Eckler & Bolls, 2011), which are going to be presented in the literature review, a hypothesis for this study was derived. It is assumed that there is a significant difference between how the two groups of emotional tone – pleasant and unpleasant – influence the attitudes and intentions towards online marketing videos and brands. To be more specific it is expected that a pleasant emotional tone will have a more positive effect on the attitudes and intentions of viewers than an unpleasant one. To answer those research questions, an experiment will be conducted in which participants will be shown viral marketing videos from the different groups of emotional tone and subsequently answer questions relating to their attitude towards the advertisement, their intention to share the video, their attitude towards the advertised brand and their intention to purchase from the brand after watching the video. Statistical inferential tests will be used to search for differences among the central tendencies of their indicated answers.

1.3 Structure of thesis

After this introduction including the relevance of the topic, framing of the context of the study and presentation of the research aims, a review of existing literature will give an insight into

the main topics related to this thesis. Those include emotions, emotions in consumer decision making, emotional branding and viral marketing.

Then, in the chapter Methodology, the specific research design will be presented and discussed, but also it will be explained how the collected data will be analyzed. In the following chapter, Results, the results of the experiment will be presented in descriptive tables and figures and inferential statistics. Finally, in the last chapter Conclusion, the research questions will be answered and the contribution to knowledge and the implications for businesses on how to make beneficial use of the findings will be suggested, as well as recommendations for future research will be given. In the appendix, supportive material can be found related to the experiments.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will discuss the most important literature related to the four components central in this thesis i) emotions, ii) consumer decision making and emotions, iii) emotional branding and iv) viral marketing.

2.1 Emotions

Definition

Robert Plutchik (2001), whose theory of emotions is one of the main contributions to the field of emotional psychology, noted that emotions belong to the most complex fields of psychology. He estimated that only in the 20th century there were about 90 different definitions suggested. Therefore, not only one definition is presented here, but a few approaches which comprise different aspects of the field.

The first definition presented is a concept which conceptualizes different characteristics of emotions. It was proposed by Meyer, Reisenzein and Schützwohl (2001). According to them emotions have three main features. First, emotions have *quality* (such as fear, joy or surprise), *intensity* (like weak or strong fear) and *durations* (which can range from short emotional episodes to lasting emotional dispositions). The second characteristic the authors Meyer et al. (2001) refer to is that emotions are *object-related*. This means that emotions occur in relation to a specific trigger. Furthermore, a third feature is defined which relates to the effect of emotions. Given the fact that emotions are subjectively felt, they can cause psychological changes with physical body reactions, like increased pulse rate, blushing or transpiration as well as affect human behavior such as facial expressions, posture or gestures (Meyer et al. 2001).

Morrison and Crane (2007) use a similar definition for their paper. According to them, emotions are “*a state of physical and mental readiness that involves valence (directional force), evaluative appraisal, a target (or object or stimulus) and behavioural tendencies*”(Morrison & Crane, 2007).

Another definition that is relatively comprehensive is based on the definition that can be found in the Oxford English Dictionary which states that an emotion is a “*strong feeling deriving from one’s circumstances, mood, or relationships with others*“. Ian Burkitt (2014) used that one to build his definition. The dictionary definition includes a few elements which Burkitt (2014) agrees on. First of all, he mentions that in common language often emotions are being linked to the verb “feel”, like for example “I feel angry“. According to Burkitt (2014) it does not

matter how strong a feeling is to be an emotion. Besides the fact that Burkitt (2014) agrees that all emotions are feelings he distinguishes that not all feelings are emotions. For example, feeling hungry or feeling pain are not emotions, but he refers to them as 'extra-emotional feelings'.

Another important aspect Burkitt (2014) takes into consideration for his definition is that he sees emotions to be relational. This means that emotions are no isolated concepts by themselves and are not like they are often mistakenly assumed "private entities that originate in our bodies or minds" (Burkitt, 2014). Rather, emotions can only develop, and therefore be studied, in connection with relationships; for example, the way people see and perceive the world and interact with other humans. Through that, people can develop patterns of behavior which can become dispositions. Dispositions mean that in certain situations individuals may act in ways which might to some extent be performed unconsciously and therefore somehow not voluntarily (Burkitt, 2014). This also is an aspect which distinguishes emotions from some feelings, namely the social meaning.

A definition which coincides with Burkitt's (2014) assumption is that emotions can be processed also subconsciously, stated by Heath and Nairn (2005). According to them, "*feelings and emotions have primacy over thoughts, and emotional responses can be created even when we have no awareness of the stimulus that causes them.*" Staying with the stimuli of emotions, the theory by Martin and Morich (2011) assumes that emotions act like filters that determine which stimuli we attend to or ignore and in turn which affect our behavior and also have an effect on what we remember.

2.1.1 Plutchik's basic emotions

One main approach to define emotions was to find primary human emotions. Robert Plutchik (1980a) contributed one of the most widely accepted theories of emotion in his "general psychoevolutionary theory of emotion". He defined eight basic emotions. Those are based on eight adaptive reactions which are prototypes of all emotions. They are built on the observation of early evolutionary behavior which animals and humans needed to survive. The eight basic emotions that are derived from the prototypes are: joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness disgust, anger and anticipation (Plutchik, 1980a).

To underline and further explain his understanding of this field the psychologist called ten postulates of the theory of emotion, which are as follows:

"Postulate 1. The concept of emotion is applicable to all evolutionary levels and applies to animals as well as to humans.

Postulate 2. Emotions have an evolutionary history and have evolved various forms of expression in different species.

Postulate 3. Emotions serve an adaptive role in helping organisms deal with key survival issues posted by the environment.

Postulate 4. Despite different forms of expression of emotions in different species, there are certain common elements, or prototype patterns, that can be identified.

Postulate 5. There is a small number of basic, primary, or prototype emotions.

Postulate 6. All other emotions are mixed or derivate states; that is, they occur as combinations, mixtures, or compounds of the primary emotions.

Postulate 7. Primary emotions are hypothetical constructs or idealized states whose properties and characteristics can only be inferred from various kinds of evidence.

Postulate 8. Primary emotions can be conceptualized in terms of polar opposites.

Postulate 9. All emotions vary in their degree of similarity to one another.

Postulate 10. Each emotion can exist in varying degrees of intensity or levels of arousal."

(Plutchik, 1980a)

Plutchik (1980b) developed a structural model that demonstrates many of the postulates. It can be seen in a three dimensional cone-shaped model or in an exploded flat form which is often referred to as the "wheel of eight basic emotions" which can be seen in Figure 1.

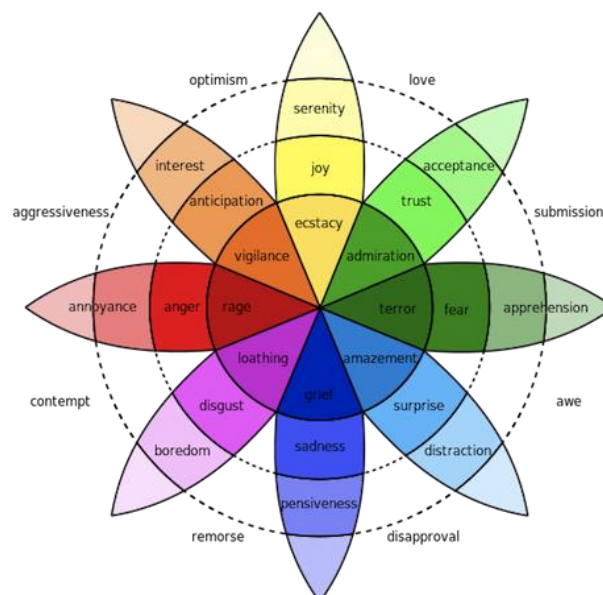


Figure 1 Wheel of Emotions (Plutchik, 1980b)

Two postulates are critical to be considered for this structured model, namely postulate five and six. It is important to understand that there are some primary emotions which are fundamental and that all other emotions can be derived by combining primary ones. Considering this, Plutchik (1980b) suggests comparing the model with a wheel of colors. Similarly there are three primary colors and all other shades can be derived by mixing them. Looking at the model in Figure 1, the words outside are the secondary emotions. When two primary emotions which are situated directly next to each other are combined, Plutchik (1980b) speaks of primary dyads. So for example, the combination of trust and joy would result in love. Mixing two emotions which lay two sections apart would be called secondary dyads. Emotions that lay four sections apart are not similar but actually opposites to each other and represent the eighth postulate which states that emotions come in bi-polar pairs. These would be joy-sadness, trust-disgust, fear-anger and surprise-anticipation.

Another feature of the model that is similar to the theory of colors is that the further outside, likewise the weaker the intensity of one color, the weaker gets the intensity of the emotion in each slice. This was presented in postulate ten. So for example in the very center of the model the highest level of arousal of one primary emotion slice is rage, in the first circle is the moderate, basic emotion anger and most outside comes the lowest intensity level annoyance. Another postulate that is depicted especially in the cone-shaped model Figure 2 is the ninth.

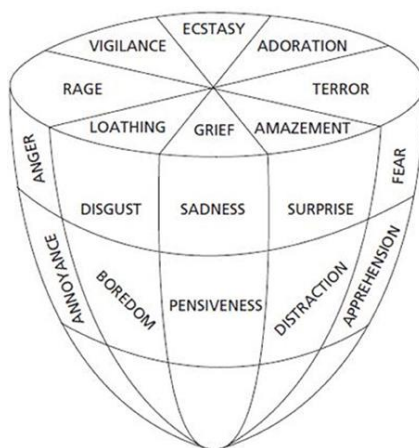


Figure 2 Cone of Emotions (Plutchik, 1980b)

The similarity of the emotions is shown on the circular levels of the models. The closer two emotions are situated next to each other, the more similar they are to each other. Looking at the model it can also be seen that the weaker the intensity gets, the closer the emotions are placed to each other and therefore the similarity between them gets higher and they become less distinguishable (Plutchik, 1980b). Besides Plutchik (1980) stating that emotions are based

in evolutionary history, so far the definitions and specifications did not include how emotions actually evolve. This is going to be discussed in the next section.

2.1.2 Evolvement of emotions

The majority of social scientists confirm the assumption that emotions have a strong impact on cognition, action and social behavior. However, there are many theorists who have different approaches of explaining the nature and evolvement of emotions. These can be grouped into two main streams of science (Bagozzi, 1999). The first one sees emotions from a *cognitive processing view*. These theorists state that an emotion results from the cognitive evaluation of a stimulus which is based on a person's history and cognitive mind set (Lazarus, 1984). According to that set of theories pre-conscious cognition or appraisal is the necessary base for emotions to evolve, where appraisal interprets useful stimuli based in relation to their relevance for personal wellbeing.

The second stream of theorists suggests that emotions are solely *physiological*. According to them, emotions, besides resulting in some cognition, work completely without a cognitive process. Instead they are the physiological response to a stimulus (Zajonc, 1980). Those scientists assert that diffuse physiological arousal caused by a stimulus accelerates cognitive interpretation. However, no emotions are conveyed by cognitions or appraisals (Schlachter & Singer, 1962). Aspects that support the physiological views are for example that only looking at an object can already create positive emotions (Zajonc, 1968) and that LeDoux (2003) found that emotions and cognitions are being processed in different areas of the brain. Lang and Bradley (2010) view emotions and cognition to be interdependent. Like that they are serving the brain's main function which is to evaluate the motivational significance of stimuli that are experienced. Morrison and Crane (2007) do not distinguish much between emotions as primarily physical responses or primarily pre-conscious cognitive evaluations that result in a physical response, but rather focus on the fact that emotions exist and how emotions have an influence on how people perceive the environment and their behavior. The concept of affect will be discussed in the next section.

2.1.3 Emotions and affect

Often the terms emotion and affect are substituted for each other. However, Burkitt (2014) points out that the two concepts should not be mixed, although they are to some extent related. The concept of affect has become increasingly popular in social and psychological sciences. The meaning of the word and in turn the meaning of the concept can be seen from

different points of view. First, there is the meaning by the dictionary which is that “to affect” means that “*something has an effect on something*”. In other words, something had an influence on something. An example for this could be emotions, so that something triggered feelings or “moved emotionally” (Burkitt, 2014). In this connection affect again points out one aspect of Burkitt’s (2014) definition of emotions, namely that they are relational. Looking at the concept one can only be affected by someone or something else - a person, animal or an object. Eckler and Bolls (2011) describe affective feelings to be particular cognitive interpretations of emotions. Solomon (2016) refers to affect when he talks about raw reactions which let consumers make decisions for products which are purely driven by emotions. He thinks that these are the reasons why marketers can and should design their marketing actions and messages in a way that they change the consumer’s emotions. This can be achieved by connecting the product with an affective response. Affect can often be the motivational driver for behavior. The connection between emotions and motivation is described in the following section.

2.1.4 Emotions and motivations

Considering the view of Lang and Bradley (2010) on the nature of emotions in the previous section on the evolvement of emotion, what stands out is the motivational significance it takes into account. The two researchers (Lang & Bradley, 2010) assume that the affective evaluations which represent emotions are based on underlying motivational systems, which stem from early evolutionary physical survival behavior. These systems can be separated into two groups – *appetitive and aversive responses*.

The appetitive motivational system is triggered as a response to pleasant external stimuli. The appetitive system is responsible for motivating approach-related behavior, such as caring, enjoying, loving and consuming. It is activated by attractive stimuli and causes positive affective behavior. On the other hand the aversive motivational system is related to defensive behavior. This system is triggered by unpleasant stimuli such as threat, fear, disgust or pain. Therefore, the aversive motivational system causes negative affect, or in other words, defensive behavior, such as withdrawal, flight or attack (Lang et al., 2001). Relating to this significant and widely accepted assumption that emotions affect behavior, the next chapter will look into how people make decisions on how to behave, especially motivated by emotions.

2.2 Consumer decision making

Many marketers have a dominant focus on their customers and are trying to understand how and why people are making their decision on what to buy or not. According to some researchers many of such decisions are based on emotions (Bagozzi, 1999; Solomon, 2014). In order to get an insight into this field, this chapter will present theories of consumer behavior with a special focus on emotions.

2.2.1 Affective decision making

According to Solomon (2016) there are three types of decision making, which are cognitive, habitual and affective. First, *cognitive decision making* relies on profound evaluations of alternatives in a multiple-stage process. *Habitual decisions* are made by consumers because they are already used to a product and buying the product has become a part of their routine. Such decisions are often made quickly and with very little or totally without conscious effort. Finally, there is *affective decision making*. In this case, people make decisions based on emotional reactions instead of undergoing rational thought processes. This kind of decision making is often used in situations where choices are made immediately rather than spreading over a long period (Solomon, 2016). As described in the previous chapter, affect plays an important role in this type of decision making.

According to Lerner et al (2014), emotions in decision theory have long been ignored by researchers. Only since the very end of the 20th century emotions have been considered as an important element in decision making processes. Lerner et al. (2014) found that in the more recent years this field has drastically grown in importance and interest to research, so that the number of “yearly scholarly papers on emotion and decision making doubled from 2004 to 2007 and again from 2007 to 2011” (Lerner et al., 2014). By now a lot of scientists in the field of psychology agree that emotions play a dominant role and are “powerful, pervasive, and predictable drivers” (Lerner et al., 2014). Bagozzi (1999), like many other scientists as well as many marketers, assumes that emotions strongly influence human cognition, action and social behaviors. O’Shaughnessy and O’Shaughnessy (2003) suggest that emotions help consumers in decision making situations in which choices cannot be differentiated upon logic or information or because of a lack of other reasons for a decision. Moreover, often for consumers emotions are the decisive factor that makes the difference when product options are otherwise equal in other decision criteria. For example, in decision situations with choices between various brands, the one which conveys emotions from for example past experiences,

memories and awareness from prior exposures to marketing activities and the environment in which the product is presented, is likely to be chosen over others which do not trigger on such emotional levels (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2003). According to Packard, (1957) who performed research in the field of motivation and how people make decisions based on marketing, most decisions are made unconsciously. This means that the consumer is influenced by factors that he is unaware of. Based on his theory such unconsciously made decisions are usually influenced by emotions. Therefore, Packard (1957) states that people in purchase situations are often behaving emotionally by reacting to the images and designs which they subconsciously connect to the product or service on an emotional level.

Using emotions in advertisement and marketing communications to influence consumer decision making

Marketers in advertising and other marketing activities are using emotional triggers to alter the moods of consumers and provide products that match exactly in such states of mind (Solomon, 2016). Morris et al.'s (2002) study related to the impact of affect on the reactions to advertising found that emotions show to make a difference in the reactions of consumers to marketing messages. Thus, when advertising creates some form of affect it is a strong sign for buying intentions. These can be even stronger than cognition or brand interest. According to Haley and Baldinger (1991) already only liking an advertisement can stimulate the intention to buy the product or service.

Therefore, the question that arises relates to the fact of which features of decision making marketers should focus on when creating their advertisement - information on hard facts (which can be evaluated rationally) or emotions (which help to make decisions in situations where no rational decision is possible). According to Nevett (1982), the role of advertising was solely to deliver information about facts of the product. This for a long time was held to be true as it coincided with the belief that it takes a rational thinking activity to make a decision (Elliot, 1998). In that assumption former marketers created advertisings which mainly tried to persuade customers by conveying a message which changed their beliefs (Jones, 1990). Further, there have been numerous theorists claiming that the cognitive information processing is more important than any affective or emotional component. Emotional elements were seen to only be a possible addition to informational main components (Holbrook & Hirschmann, 1982). These authors supposed that leaving out the informational would not be advisable but they already accepted that supplementing it with some emotional hints could be highly beneficial and profitable (Holbrook & Hirschmann, 1982).

Morrison and Crane (2007) suggest that feelings generated from an advertisement do also significantly affect the attitude towards the advertising and the brand itself. According to Edell and Bruke (1987) this is much more effective when the ad conveys the experience of consuming the brand than when the message is only informational. From that it can be supposed that messages in marketing should be designed individually in relation to the desired emotional state which is likely to create a purchasing desire (Morrison & Crane, 2007).

Riesenbeck and Perrey (2009) claim that in order to build a strong brand companies need to have great content which does not only increase demand but also triggers the consumers' emotions so that the brand seems attractive. Also the authors (Riesenbeck & Perrey, 2009) think that the claims of a brand need to be trustworthy. Now the question they pose is whether a brand should concentrate on rational elements or rather choose emotional components which address the consumers. Their answer here is that most successful brands use a combination of both those elements. In order to be able to compete with other similar products of course the rational elements have to be at least as good or optimally better in some features. However, the real strong brands comprise some emotional components besides the rational elements as well (Riesenbeck & Perrey, 2009). Positioning a brand in an emotional manner can create and support building a consistent brand identity. This for example can be achieved with photos and well-chosen images which closely relate to the values of a brand. According to Riesenbeck and Perrey (2009) by combining both elements – rational and emotional – a brand can gain true competitive advantages.

Riesenbeck and Perrey (2009) present that luxury brands are often mastering the combination of rational and emotional appeals. It might at the first look seem that people only buy for example luxury handbags mainly for emotional reasons, namely for the self-profiling and the feeling of prestige of owning such a product. Some might claim that this is the only justification for paying a much higher price than for competitors' products. However, what should not be forgotten are the high quality of the material used, the hand-made production and the advanced techniques used. Therefore, it is actually the mix of quality and prestige which builds the strong and successful brand. Riesenbeck and Perrey (2009) point out that appealing on an emotional level alone is very likely not sufficient enough to be a strong brand. If the rational elements do not exist, customers might be interested in buying the product because they felt attracted by for example an emotional advertising that captured their heart, but they might end up being disappointed if the quality of the product, so the rational element, does not meet the expectations. Also if one emotional element is promising, like a commercial, but another,

like the store experience is much below expectations, the overall perception of the consumers can still be disappointed. Riesenbeck and Perrey (2009) compare such emotional advertising which does not have the rational element in the fundamentals with a holiday catalogue with misleading pictures that are much more beautiful than reality. Such advertising is prone to create a negative impact. Förster (2014) has a similar opinion. She further adds that the rational elements of brands, on which still too many companies focus, are limited and suggests involving more emotional image characteristics in order to appeal to the emotional nature of human beings.

Packard (1957) mentioned one marketing advisor he admired, Dr. Dichter, who insisted that marketers must not overlook the importance of emotions in sales. This early marketing consultant already suggested that products should not only appeal through technical or physical features which can be evaluated rationally but also need to trigger the feelings of the consumers – even if only unconsciously. He went as far as to say that a campaign which did not contain at least a notion of pursuing emotions would have no chance to become successful.

Leaning closest to the side of irrational, affective decision making, Heath et al. (2006) suggested that it is indeed possible to advertise a brand successfully even without any informational elements. Such advertisements could work only by forming some emotional relationship between the consumer and the brand. They for example claim that the appearance of a cute puppy in an advertising video could make people associate the brand with values of love and family. After having looked into consumer decision making and understanding that emotions have a strong impact on consumption behavior, it is important for marketers to learn how they can effectively integrate emotions into their marketing efforts and strategy. The next chapter will present a method that has been widely accepted as a possible solution for this.

2.3 Emotional branding

2.3.1 Introduction

An approach, which emerged in the 1990s and was presented to improve a company's branding and therewith create stronger connections with the customers, is emotional branding (Thompson et al, 2006). According to Gobé (2009) to create an emotional branding experience an elaborated and well-coordinated organizational effort is needed. Therefore, the following chapter will give an insight into this field and will suggest how it can be used to tie strong bonds with consumers by triggering their emotions.

2.3.2 Definition

Different researchers have suggested various definitions and aspects of emotional branding. Rossiter and Bellman (2012) define emotional branding simply as *“consumer’s attachment of a strong, specific, usage-relevant emotion - such as bonding, companionship, or love - to the brand”*.

Gobé (2009) presents emotional branding to offer *“the means and methodology for connecting products to the consumer in an emotionally profound way”*. Such connections can also be built subliminally. This is achieved by meeting one of the most human needs which is to go from material satisfaction to experiencing emotional fulfilment. According to him (Gobé, 2009) a brand should achieve this because by doing so it can stimulate *“the aspirational drives that underlie human motivation”*. Roberts (2004) describes emotional branding to be a consumer-focused, relational, story-based method to create profound and lasting affective bonds between customers and brands. Gobé (2009) thinks that the way to create a unique product that can attract new customers and that maintains existing ones despite the extremely competitive market situation, is to detect and enhance the emotional aspect of the products and the way they are distributed. This may then have a significantly positive effect on consumers’ choices and the price they are willing to pay. When Gobé (2009) talks about *“emotional”* he means *“how a brand engages consumers on the level of the senses and emotions; how a brand comes to life for people and forges a deeper, lasting connection”*. In summary, most definitions have in common that emotional branding is a tool for forging a deep connections with the consumers by bonding on an emotional level. This lets consumers choose the specific products over other competing ones. The next section will provide suggestions on how to transform a brand into an emotional brand.

2.3.3 From branding to emotional branding

Gobé (2009) states that initial step towards bringing a brand to life for consumers lies in the personality of the company behind it and how committed it is to engage customers on an emotional basis. This can take an effort which should not be underestimated. However, Gobé (2009) proclaims that establishing the specific significant emotion is the most valuable investment a brand can make. Also a large-scale study by Rossiter and Belman (2012) found that putting in the effort to build real emotional attachment to the brand results in great returns through significantly increased numbers of sales. Like that brands can give their customer a promise that they can hold on, telling them that they are able to indulge in the

whole experience of the brand. According to the theory of Gobé (2009) successful brands reach consumers by touching their imaginations and by prospecting dreams on uncharted territory. The reason why such strategies work lies within the nature of humans. People respond emotionally to most of their life experiences and also instinctively attach emotional values to objects that surround them. Therefore, Gobé (2009) suggests that the base of the future in branding lies in carefully listening to consumers. The goal should be to find ways into their emotional systems in order to be able to form a unique connection. One way would be to provide pleasurable options to their lives that increase their desired quality of living.

In order to transform a brand into an emotional brand that can be more successful through a competitive advantage, Marc Gobé (2009) suggests ten commandments of emotional branding which demonstrate the difference between usual brand awareness and the improved version which includes the emotional elements that make the brand preferred and stand out in the competitive marketplace.

10 commandments for emotional branding

1. From consumers to people

The first commandment suggests shifting from seeing “consumers” to rather viewing them as “people”. This is because “consumers buy, people live”. Gobé (2009) thinks and from his experiences knows that marketers and sales people often wrongly view consumers as “enemies” that need to be attacked. It still seems that retailers are against their customers and trying to “win a battle against them”. Instead Gobé (2009) claims that marketers could also make people want their products through more positive methods which do not include harassing them. For example companies could try establishing win-win relationships which are formed on mutual respect.

2. From product to experience

The philosophy behind this commandment is that “products fulfil needs, experiences fulfil desires (Gobé, 2009). When people are buying just out of need they make their decision usually only based on price and convenience. However, if consumers are having a special shopping or product experience, like for example extraordinary and inspiring store environments, this will create an added value for them and is likely to stay in their emotional memory as a connection formed on a level way beyond a need. Here it should be considered that for existing products which already have attained their position, to attract and maintain the interest of consumers, it is important that retailing, advertising

and new product releases are designed in an innovative manner which catches the imagination of the consumers on that emotional level (Gobé, 2009).

3. From honesty to trust

Here Gobé (2009) states that, “Honesty is expected. Trust is engaging and intimate. It needs to be earned.” Companies nowadays need to be honest as there are strict regulations concerning for example environment protection and quality. Such standards are not only imposed by the authorities but also by consumer groups. Therefore, companies are required to honestly inform about their actions. Trust on the other hand is a highly valuable and fundamental asset for a brand. It has to be earned with a lot of effort from the company. Customers gain trust when their decisions are made easier and when they feel to have the ability to make free choices, through for example easy return policies (Gobé, 2009).

4. From quality to preference

“Quality for the right price is a given today. Preference creates the sale” (Gobé, 2009). Quality has become an expected necessity. It is something you need to deliver or otherwise you would go out of business. This means that it is often no more a sufficient factor that can ultimately make a product successful. What needs to be obtained is consumers’ preference to the brand. A brand can be of highest quality, but if it is not preferred the products will not sell anyways. A method to gain such preference is by building an emotional connection with the consumers. If a brand is preferred, it is relatively unstoppable.

5. From notoriety to aspiration

Gobé (2009) states that “being known does not mean that you are also loved”. This explains very well, that it needs more than people being aware of the brand to be successful. In order to also get into people’s hearts a company must deliver something that creates an inner felt desire. In many cases consumers are probably aware of other options but still according to Gobé (2009) because of emotional branding and the connection on the emotional level they choose the well-known brand.

6. From identity to personality

For this commandment the statement is, “Identity is recognition. Personality is about character and charisma” (Gobé, 2009). It is a good start to have a well-defined brand

identity as it makes a brand unique and differentiable from others. However, in the method of emotional branding companies should try to achieve a brand personality. The difference to an identity is that they have a charismatic character which can trigger an emotional response from the consumers.

7. From function to feel

“The functionality of a product is about practical and superficial qualities only. Sensorial design is about experiences” (Gobé, 2009). There is a high chance that functionality at some point will no more be sufficient. Rather a product also needs to be optically and functionally designed that it appeals the senses. The experience of the consumer should be the overall focus. Innovation can for example help to provide new sensory and subconscious experiences which are memorable and exciting to the people who use it. Only then it makes sense to present new product benefits. In other words, even if a product might have a great functionality, only through emotional branding it will likely give the user a profound pleasurable emotional experience.

8. From ubiquity to presence

Gobé (2009) states that, “Ubiquity is seen. Emotional presence is felt.” If brands are present to people they can have an emotional impact on their lives. This is advisable because it can build a permanent connection with them. Now one might think that it is useful to have advertisings and brand promotions as much and as omnipresent as possible. However, Gobé (2009) suggests that in today’s clutter of brand commercials, which people are exposed to nearly all the time and everywhere, it is more effective to shift away from the common strategy of quantity to fewer but higher quality promotions. Companies should try to invent extraordinary ways to promote their brand which make a lasting connection because they are pleasurable and inspiring for people.

9. From communication to dialogue

The statement of this commandment is that, “Communication is telling. Dialogue is sharing” (Gobé, 2009). According to the author many companies are seeing communication as a one-way stream which only informs consumers. However, the goal in emotional branding should be to deepen a win-win relationship between consumers and companies. This would better be achieved through a two-way dialogue in which, instead of only being flooded with information, people can also give feedback and express their feelings and concerns. Through that, advertising can submit personalized and better

targeted messages that address the consumer. The development of social branding and social media has paved the way to such bonding conversations.

10. *From service to relationship*

The final commandment by Gobé (2009) follows the philosophy that, “Service is selling. Relationship is acknowledgement.” Service only determines whether or not a sale can take place. On the contrary a relationship would require sales people to actually understand and appreciate who their clients are. The relationship is basically the ground breaking element of emotional branding as it comprises the experience a buyer has when he gets into the store, the trust he has into the brand and the choices made, and the sales assistants who address them in a personal and understanding manner. Unfortunately most companies have still not understood the importance of such emotional components and the beneficial effects it can have on building a true relationship.

Besides the ten commandments of emotional branding there are more strategies on how to implement emotional branding. Those and the benefits of implementing them are going to be described in the next section.

2.3.4 Strategies and benefits

According to Gobé (2009) an emotional connection is the ultimate method to differentiate a brand’s product from the overflow of other similar options. He states that the emotional component forms not only the foundation, but also the ongoing motion towards successful future consumer-driven strategies. Given that consumers today are feeling more empowered than ever and that they are strongly connected with others in the whole world and believe in themselves being able to influence the world with their beliefs (Gobé, 2009), firms need to consider how to communicate with their consumers in order to find a way to allow them to express their beliefs and needs through emotional components. Where branding closes the gap between the provider and the receiver and is about trust and dialogue, powerful emotional branding stems from partnership and communication. It is often perceived as a technique to form a personal dialogue with consumers. Emotional branding can help brands by giving the opportunity to create a personal dialogue with consumers to find out what is most relevant for them. The technique works by “connecting with innovative products that are culturally relevant, socially sensitive, and that have the presence at all points of contact in people’s lives” (Gobé, 2009). What is most important to consider here is that emotional branding is not about market share but much more about “mind and emotions share”.

Emotional branding will also play an important role in the way products are being distributed in the future. Many major shopping malls have suffered from an over-availability of similar shops on a small area. Standing out in this situation can be very difficult. Therefore, considering the strategy of offering a personal experience to customers will be, according to Gobé (2009), the future of branding. Malls are changing from being pure shopping areas to rather becoming centers for entertainment and enjoying. Gobé (2009) predicts that retail shops like in malls will shift away from being the form of distribution where people will buy the product. Rather they will serve as a form of demonstration room where consumers can explore and experience the products in a physical setting. The actual purchase will mostly happen online. Considering this it is critical for marketers to understand that the stores are the place to build and foster brand images. This will require brands to emotionally connect with customers by designing the store experience and merchandising strategies in a way that they cover imaginative features that offer entertainment and sensory components which cannot be transferred on the internet (Gobé, 2009). However, Pullman and Gross (2004) point out that conveying the emotional theme only through the physical environment is not enough. Instead they suggest that an extensive amount of effort should be invested into the training and management of the service staff. This is because the two authors (Pullman & Gross, 2004) view the relational aspect of a brand experience to be essential for building powerful emotional bonds. This might be one element which could keep traditional retail shops alive, as often in online shopping the personal direct interactions with the staff are missing. However, in one of the following chapters it will be discussed that marketers could also create personal emotional bonds on the internet.

Another important question that has to be answered as part of the branding strategy is what marketers should focus their brand message on. Traditional branding experts were usually driven by benefits. They always pointed out the importance of focussing on positioning the brand with a distinctive, clear and consistent message of benefit in the mind of the consumer (Ries and Trout 1981).

Benefits

Emotional branding evolved by challenging this traditional approach by claiming that building only on benefits cannot assure a long-lasting competitive advantage. This is because especially when the benefit is related to technical or design features of a product, other companies have an easy chance to copy those benefits and take away the advantage. Furthermore, advocates

of the emotional branding point claim, that building a brand on common benefits is unlikely to be special enough to stand out from the mass of the cluttered and hypercompetitive market. Emotional branding can overcome those problems of branding by building stronger and more enduring connections. Marketers should revise their strategy from a benefit-driven approach to a more personal and emotional one (Thompson et al., 2006). It is suggested that companies should try to create stories around their products and services which inspire and attract consumers. Like that marketers can convey the feeling that they understand the individual's lifestyle and dreams, goals and wishes of their life (Roberts, 2004). Through this the ultimate goal of connecting emotionally with the brand and becoming a significant part of the life of consumers will build a much stronger connection (Thompson et al., 2006). This would result in a much greater consumer loyalty which is harder to be copied by competitors.

Emotional branding should serve as the mutually beneficial bridge between brands and people. Through this "consumers can experience brands as relationship partners" (Thompson et al. 2006) which become a significant role in their life, memories and social circles (Atkin, 2004). This would go as far as that brands could enrich consumers' lives by supporting them in overcoming dramas and reaching personal goals. According to Fournier (1998) such relationships can only be established when companies invest into identity projects to allow consumers to find features which find their way into their emotional inner self. A development which has opened new opportunities to build such bonds is the emergence of social media. The next chapter is going to discuss how emotional branding can make its way into the new social market world of the internet.

2.4 Emotional branding in social media

2.4.1 Introduction

Along with many other researchers and marketing experts Vries et al. (2012) agree that social media websites are perfect platforms for deepening relationships with consumers. Gobé (2009) views the emergence of the internet and the possibilities it opens for business as a great advantage for both consumers and businesses, because it helps to form new and strong partnerships between them. According to him, the advancement will bring new opportunities of reaching a much wider range of people. Gobé (2009) calls social media the most emotional media of all. It is a place where users are displaying and experiencing a lot of emotions. In other words social media is somewhat the mirror of humans. But also businesses can greatly

convey their emotional branding strategy by publishing content which triggers people's feelings and makes them attached to the brand on an emotional level.

Social media is a great platform to implement emotional branding because it comprises some of the features relevant for the theory. So for example emotional branding assumes that the brand meanings are not controlled by the marketers but much more co-created with the consumers as they interact and communicate with the brand and other users (Fournier, 1998). This is very similar to the concept of social media. The social networks actually live from the engagement and co-creation of users. The communication between the users is the main driver of most social media websites.

Looking at the theory of emotional branding there are a couple more elements which are very similar to the characteristics of social media. Consumers are often viewed as enthusiastic partners that are happy to participate in personal dialogues with other consumers and also the brand. The goal in both concepts would be to create content which is a win-win situation for both partners, as it can create community, build long-term loyalty and shape their identity in optimally positive manners (Roberts, 2004).

Nonetheless, it is not an easy task for marketers to implement and trigger emotions in their social media advertising. Brands will need to learn how to adapt to the changes imposed by the fact that in social media they are no longer under sole control of their content. Instead, consumers have the power to co-create. They can express their opinion, experiences and attitudes towards and about the brand. Thus, they are able to influence and redesign a brand message and meaning to other users (Gobé, 2009).

Furthermore, brands need to understand that in social media the strategy of one-way interruptive marketing like in newspapers, billboards or television ads cannot really be used (Libert & Tysnki, 2013). Instead, social branding efforts need to be tailored in a way that they fit the interactive, engaging and two-way communicative nature of social media. This is because in social networks, besides through paid advertising that shows in their feeds, users have the power to decide on their own, which brands they follow and which content they actively consume. A positive effect of this development is that, as Libert and Tysnik (2013) found, consumers tend to show more engagement towards content or brands in general when they deliberately choose them, compared to when they are unsolicitedly exposed to them.

Gobé (2009) points out that “with these new media, advertising is becoming the multidimensional ‘push and pull’ communication tool everyone in the business was looking for all along”. With this he means that social media allows for transforming the one-way communication into an interactive, possibly immediate dialogue between people and brands. This perfectly meets one of his commandments of emotional branding.

In order to implement emotional branding in social media, Schaefer (2014) advises brands to post honest content through which consumers can build trust. Saying so, he postulates that companies should be more human, because human engagement is what people can build relations on. Somehow coinciding with Gobé’s (2009) belief that emotional branding starts with the commitment of the whole company, Schaefer (2014) suggests that employers should encourage their employees to act as proponents of their brand on social media. He thinks that a brand should rather invest into establishing true personal connections between customers and employees on social media, than into a short television advertisement clip. In that way, instead of gathering a mass of likely resultless impressions, they would be using the advancement of technology to create probably a smaller, but much more reliable amount of personal emotional connections (Schaefer, 2014).

There is another important element of emotional branding which is facilitated by social media. It is that through the presence in the social networks, brands have improved positions for becoming a significant part of consumers’ lives. As Thompson et al. (2006) stated, the ultimate goal of emotional branding would be that consumers bond with brands on such an emotional level, that they become relevant in their memories and social circles. Wang et al. (2012) claim that many users have integrated social media into their daily life routines. With that also brand pages are being constantly available. This very well coincides with Schaefer’s (2014) assumption that people build relationships to brands similarly as they do with their friends, meaning that it requires a series of positive interactions. Social media therefore is a perfect environment where marketers can post content every now and then. In doing so, brands can first build strong bonds and then, through continuous reinforcement, stay in the mind of a consumer (Goldner, 2012).

According to Libert and Tynski (2013), it is advisable to post a lot of content, because even if it might not be extremely engaging, it can help growing new and most of all maintaining existing audiences to strengthen loyalty. Furthermore, Schaefer is sure that real long-term brand loyalty cannot be established without emotional interaction (2014).

Talking about brand loyalty, Goldner (2012) claims that emotional branding in social media can go beyond loyalty. He sees the possibility that consumers can follow brands online as a new way of expressing their emotional attachment. People can not only follow the updates brands posts on their social media network pages, but in the best way contribute content to the pages themselves. Like that they can become advocates of the brand and act as ambassadors for it by sharing their experiences with the brand with other users. They might even voluntarily become spokespersons for the brand by giving advice to users who have problems with the brand and very likely influence the purchase decisions of others who came to seek information in their decision making process. Like that Goldner (2012) has experienced people acting in what he calls an irrational manner. Such emotional brand attachment could in the optimal way go as far as consumers would publically state that live like “I am with the brand – no matter what”, meaning they would even protect and speak for the brand in case other people talked negatively about it (Goldner, 2012).

The somehow public nature of social media further deepens the significance of the emotional attachment of loyal customers and brands. By publicly sharing a post of a brand with one’s social media community, users in some way express their self-identity. Like in the theory of emotional branding, in that way brands are such a strong part of their life that they openly state “I believe in this”. Some brand users might also share brand post because they think “this content is smart ... I am sharing it ... Therefore I am smart” (Schaefer, 2014). He calls such behavior “wearing the content”, just like wearing a t-shirt with a big logo of one’s preferred football team. According to the author, brands can achieve such high levels of loyalty by creating content that aligns with their customers’ values, interests and needs that shape their identity (Schaefer, 2014).

Gobé (2009) postulates that the brands and products that will succeed in social media will be the ones which have had a strong emotional connection or are convincing enough through innovative technologies which improve the online experience itself. Compared to that, he thinks that traditional brands will likely have a hard time surviving in the new era. He suggests that brands need to get into the conversation in order to be able to survive in the new business environment. Therefore, the next section will describe how social media eases the way for companies to spread their marketing messages and to communicate with customers in order to be able to foster emotional connections.

2.4.2 The role of electronic word-of-mouth

Solomon (2016) defines Word-of-mouth (WoM) as product information that people tell to other people. Because of the fact that such information is transmitted by other users it is often perceived to be more trustworthy and true than descriptions from the brand itself or other more formal sources. Therefore, according to Solomon (2016), WoM has proven to be more powerful than for example other common advertising practices.

With the rapid expansion of the internet and the evolution of social media the way in which companies communicate and interact with customers has changed. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2011), compared to traditional WoM, the electronic advancement has two main advantages. First, electronic WoM has an extremely faster potential speed of spreading the information. Therefore, it can reach a much wider range of people. The second advantage is that the results and reach of electronic WoM is considerably easier to be monitored than in traditional WoM. With the help of various tools for analytics and monitoring, the responses to a social media post can be measured in terms of for example reach, visibility, likeability, sentiments and rate of sharing. This also allows marketers to conclude the impact of the social media activities on tangible business like for example number of sales, subscriptions or profit (Kaplan& Haenlein, 2011).

Looking at social media what should be seen as the prevalent feature is the community. It is all about the collective power and knowledge that build and maintain content and pages of the web (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). The goal of electronic word-of-mouth would be that consumers do not only follow a brand on social media but also become active and engaged themselves, or even have them acting as so-called brand advocates or brand missionaries (Solomon, 2016; Gladwell, 2000). By giving feedback and sharing their opinion and experiences with the product or service, those users can for example serve as a powerful source of trustworthy information for other people who are collecting information for their purchase decision. Acknowledging such engagement of consumers can not only create even stronger loyalty among those existing ones, but very importantly this unsolicited electronic WoM is a valuable form of marketing for winning new customers (Solomon, 2016) . Therefore, also emotional branding experts are recommending that companies should include this great potential into their strategies and allow their consumers to build communities online (Gladwell, 2000). An extreme form of electronic WoM, which has become a major goal to be achieved by marketers, is viral marketing. The next section will explain this in more details.

2.4.3 Viral marketing

Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) define viral marketing as *“electronic word-of-mouth whereby some form of marketing message related to a company, brand, or product is transmitted in an exponentially growing way, often through the use of social media applications.”*

This means that the post or video is being transmitted like a virus, as every next person to share it is likely to share it with more than one friend, just like the development and spreading of a virus. Dobele et al. (2005) add that the message should encourage people to forward *“favourable or compelling marketing information”*. Brand posts can be designed in such a way, but could also happen to be engaging by accident. According to De Bruyn and Lilien (2008), *“the key driver in viral marketing is the effectiveness of unsolicited, electronic referrals to create awareness, trigger interest, and generate sales or product adoption”*. The term viral marketing has been known already since 1996. At that time it was related to emails or text messages being distributed by people forwarding it to friends or people they thought would be interested. Through the development and expansion of social media, this phenomenon has grown in importance and reached new dimension of potential power (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011).

Viral marketing is a powerful tool for brands which do not yet have a big active audience following their brand pages (Libert & Tynski, 2013). This is because through the peer-to-peer sharing behavior people, who might have naturally never seen it, are being exposed to the content. Usually a video or post is called to be a viral success when it reaches more than one million views. Some videos have already reached about hundred times that number (Libert & Tynski, 2013). Some marketing managers argued that for them already videos with around 500 000 views were a viral success. According to Feed Company (2008) *“the benchmark of success for viral video depends on the campaign creative and brand goals. Of course everyone wants more views and reach, but the quality of engagement and conversation matter too.”* Usually these numbers of impressions are reached within a few days or weeks. Besides, the great speed and reach of spreading a marketing message, viral marketing holds other valuable advantages. It is a very cost effective form of marketing compared to traditional ones (De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008). Instead of having to invest enormous marketing money, it *“allows firms to promote their products and services with very low budgets and still reach the same levels of awareness that are usually only achievable with high-frequency TV advertising”* (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). This is because the cost of transmitting the content of the post is carried by the individual user (Dobele et al., 2005). Another positive factor Dobele et al. (2005) point out is that the forwarding of the brand content which contains advertising is on voluntary basis for the consumer. Because of that, the person who receives it is likely to accept the brand content

more positively than an unaddressed mass advertising campaign. A reason for this might also be that the recipient most likely personally knows the sender and therefore the message holds a higher level of trustworthiness and credibility, than for example if it came from a paid testimonial. However, De Bruyn and Lilien (2008) have a slightly different view on this matter, and express some doubts about peer-to-peer referrals. They refer to such transmissions as being unsolicited, meaning that the receiver did not actively ask for the message and therefore might not willingly accept it. Thus, the attention to it can be very low (De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008). Interestingly, Dobele et al. (2005) have a counterargument for this doubt, which they in fact see as another advantage of viral marketing. Namely according to them, users who forward a brand message which they found on social media are likely to know who have similar interests and therefore would only send it to members of their social circle who would probably appreciate such contents. This means that brands can, without their own effort, achieve very accurate targeting (Dobele et al., 2005). This of course only works when people forward brand posts in private messages compared to sharing a post publically on their social media page. In that case though, there is still a high probability that there are a number of people who share similar interests within the social community of the user. Knowing about the advantages and potentials viral marketing holds, companies would probably seek to know how they can achieve it. The next section will give some hints related to this.

Suggestions for success online

Dobele et al. (2005) state that marketers have only little control over whether or not a post goes viral. However, within their same research they name a few points that marketers should consider when designing their content which they hope to go viral. The authors describe the key element of a viral marketing success to be the creation *“of an engaging campaign that encourages consumers to pass the message along”*. To become engaging brands, they advise that social media campaigns should include fun, interactivity and rewards (Dobele et al., 2005). Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) also gave some suggestions on how to create a campaign which is likely to go viral. First of all, what has to be pointed out is that besides all planning, it needs a good amount of luck and intuition to catch the right time and situation to strike a viral success. This implies that a campaign that was a great one once, does not necessarily work as well in a similar manner in another situation. Also, too much planning and exaggerated attempts to seed the campaign by asking consumers, who would not on their own do so, to share the video is prognosticated to make the attempt fail. This is because the researchers think that once out

in the field “a truly compelling viral marketing campaign needs to stand on its own feet and develop its own dynamics (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011).

In order to hit such a successful campaign the two authors claim that three elements need be in place: “*the right people need to get the right message under the right circumstances*” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011, p. 256). In other words it includes the *messengers, the message and the environment*. First the *messengers*, hence the people who share the video are important. As discussed in the previous section, one advantage of viral marketing is that often the senders are within the social circle of the receiver. Therefore, from knowing and trusting the person, the message is likely to be perceived more trustworthy, reliable and in turn interesting than if it was shared by a stranger or paid testimonial (Dobele et al., 2005). In public social media communities, such as brand pages, people such as influences and leaders of social groups are best to be triggered, because when they share the video they often have a strong credibility due to their social power and wide reach because of their great number of followers. *The message*, according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2011), should be interesting and easy to memorize. Also the content has to be interesting not only for a few moments but long enough to be spread, because otherwise the video will die out before it can become a real virus. Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) suggest that marketers should choose “true stories about real people”, because they are usually more compelling than bare product advertising, as they are much more likely to trigger emotional responses from the viewer. This is seen to be the actual driver for affective sharing behavior (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). Verhaeghe et al. (2007) shows that there are several reasons for which respondents reported to have forwarded or posted online videos. The most popular one, with 44% of the respondents stating it, was when the video was funny. Further mentioned reasons were excitement for the message (22%), positive involvement with the brand (25%) and the assumption that the receiver would be interested into the message (26%). What has to be kept in mind about those reasons stated by Verhaeghe et al. (2007), is that they were not searched for in relation to viral success.

Another fact about the message which should be considered by marketers is related to the type of media; namely, the visual content. We can see that visual content has forty times more chance to get shared on social media than any other types of content (Mawhinney, 2017). Especially videos have recently become a very important tool for brands to communicate their messages in social media (Mawhinney, 2017; Wyzowl, 2018). As described earlier, already 81% of all businesses use videos as a major part of their online marketing mix. Whereof, 82% of those companies are planning to invest more into online video marketing in the next year (Wyzowl, 2018). This could be useful because 83% of the consumers, who

watched a branded online video which they enjoyed, stated that they intended to share it with their friends. Even better, 85% of the viewers reported that they would like to watch more online marketing videos in the forthcoming year (Wyzowl, 2018). So it could be advisable for a brand to create online videos in case it wants to hit a viral success.

Therefore finally, it is also very important to consider the *environment* where videos are posted to boot their viral success. The environment should be seen as many platforms in which initial seeds for the spreading and growth of the message can be placed (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). Here having a look at the different statistics and trends of the various social media platforms can be beneficial.

YouTube is by far the most used social media channel for posting videos. 85% of the responding companies have uploaded a marketing video on *YouTube*. Marketers view it as the most successful platform. Therefore, 87% of them plan to use it in 2018 (Wyzowl, 2018). *YouTube* published that in the year 2015, there were 40 billion views of branded videos. This means that since then online video marketing has moved from being a trend, to no longer being just an option but actually somehow being a must-have for brands (Wallace, 2016).

Second most important for businesses in relation to video postings is *Facebook*, with 68% of the marketers reporting to have published moving visual content on. A total of 90% found this to be an effective marketing strategy and 70% of companies are planning to use *Facebook* for posting videos in 2018.

Finally, *Instagram* is growing in importance in terms of video marketing. Although yet only 41% of the responding brands have indicated to have used this social media platform for posting video content, 78% of those are sure that this strategy was bringing them positive returns (Wyzowl, 2018). What has to be considered here is that 90% of the users are below the age of 35 (Science Daily, 2015). Therefore, it is the perfect platform to target Millennials, as they consider it to be the most important social network.

Looking again at what content a post should have in order to strike a viral success, it can be said that according to Lindgreen and Vanhamme (2005) “emotions are key drivers of viral video campaigns”. Therefore, the next section will present some findings and opinions of research on how emotions should be implemented into online marketing videos to become successful.

2.4.4 Emotions in videos that go viral

Eckler and Bolls (2011) posit that often marketers are trying to stand out by creating video content that is sensational. However, they point out that there is a risk that videos become so

unconventional that they actually evoke negative feelings. Still, Lindstrom (2009) stated that online marketing videos, in the hope to go viral, are often designed in a way that they should be more provocative than traditional advertisements would be if they were shown on television. Actually Lindstrom (2009) thinks that viral videos best show “things you can’t see on TV”. Therefore, viral ads have often relied on intense content such as nudity, sexuality, violence or extreme humor. Eckler and Bolls (2011) state that a widely accepted belief is that videos which are created to become viral often contain “more emotionally intense content than their television counterparts to motivate forwarding behavior”. The problem here is that research has found that “edgier, highly emotional content, such as sex appeal and more extreme humor in television ads often collided with the intended brand communication”(Eckler & Bolls, 2011). Considering this, Eckler and Bolls (2011) suggest that finding a middle way through extravagant, emotionally engaging messages and the effective brand communication could be even more important when designing viral videos than for traditional TV commercials.

Libert and Tynski (2013) also advise to concentrate on content that is in line with the intended brand message. They suggest to first of all consider how the brand’s product or service could be related to topics which could trigger “deep-seated human emotions” within their target group. There should be an either direct or somehow indirect link between the product and the topic, which touches consumers emotionally. This issue should however be positively related to the brand (Libert & Tynski, 2013). Next, they also suggest that marketers should use strong emotional drivers to catch viewers and encourage them to get engaged. They point out that maximal emotional excitement should be established rapidly within the beginning sequences of the video. This should be done in order to capture them fast and build up strong emotionality. However, the extreme emotionality should not be kept up the whole video, because it would risk that viewers get overwhelmed by continuous emotional overflow or in turn get bored by monotony. Instead, viral videos should take viewers on an “emotional roller coaster”. This can be achieved by mixing emotional peaks with more quiet phases. Such breaks of lower emotional activation create important contrast which makes the emotionally strongly triggering sequences seem even more engaging (Libert & Tynski, 2013).

Another important point Libert and Tynski (2013) are advising is that marketers should not over-brand their online marketing videos. This is because too much branding can easily distract the viewers and make them perceive the video as “spammy and salesy”. Through that it is likely that consumers disregard the video and not only lose interest, but possibly even

generate a negative image of the brand. This should be avoided in order to not create unwanted backlashes (Libert & Tynski, 2013).

Escalas et al. (2004) postulate that what precedes any emotional feeling is the level of attention a viewer pays towards an advertisement. With this, they claim to have found a reason for why people show varying reactions to advertising videos in different situations. They found that before any emotional response can be detected, viewers have to first be attracted, or as they call it “hooked” by the advertisement. When a person is being hooked, the level of emotional arousal is likely to be much higher than when the video did not catch the viewer’s attention (Escalas et al., 2004).

Now finally there is still the question which emotions should be used for viral video content. While most researchers agree that strong emotions are the driver for user engagement like sharing the video, there are only few suggestions on which emotions exactly strike best to have the greatest chance of it to go viral (Libert & Tynski, 2013).

Berger (2013) states that not all emotions give the same likelihood of sharing. Most studies show that videos with content that trigger positive emotions are on average being shared most often and more likely than those with negative emotions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011; Berger, 2013; Eckler & Bolls, 2011). Berger (2013) assumes that the reason for this could be that people might think that sharing positive stories “makes us look good and smart”, whereas sharing negatives is rather unpopular, because people do not want to get their friends in a bad mood. Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) suggest that the messages sent out should be fun, humorous or even hilarious. Eckler and Bolls (2011) found that positive emotions in an online marketing video have a simple linear relationship with the attitudes towards the ad and the advertised brand and also towards the intentions of affective sharing behavior.

Although videos with negative emotions are on average being shared less, it does not necessarily mean that they cannot be successful. For example, Libert and Tynski (2013) found that when negative emotions are paired with anticipation or surprise in online marketing videos, they can also become popular. In general they noticed that anticipation and surprise were unexpectedly often reported by their respondents in their analysis of viral content. Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) also assert that in order to succeed in creating affective messages they should contain an element of surprise. This then can not only be connected with positive emotions such as joy, but also with rather negative ones such as disgust or fear.

However, Berger (2013) states that concentrating on the tone of emotions is not enough. Instead he suggests that it is the level of arousal of emotions that activates viewers and in turn encourages them to share the video. This means that no matter whether they are positive or negative, emotions need to arouse consumers (Berger, 2013). For example, negative emotions, such as anger or anxiety, increase the likelihood of forwarding the content. This is because they involve high levels of the arousal dimension. Berger (2013) explains that people in this emotional state want to shout out and are driven to action, which in this case is sharing the video with others; whereas, sadness for example decreases sharing, because in that state people usually want to sob lonely and do nothing (Berger, 2013). An example Berger (2013) refers to as a positive emotion with a high degree of arousal is excitement, which gets people activated.

2.5 Conclusion

Overall it can be said that emotions seem to play an important role in fostering a lasting bond between brands and consumers. The literature showed that emotions already have an influence on how people make decisions and therefore marketers have started to understand the beneficial potential of implementing emotions into their branding strategy. Making use of the social power of the internet and the communities on social media, marketers can enter new ways in reaching their customers and transmitting their messages. Research indicates that also in social media incorporating emotional elements into marketing campaigns can help building strong and loyal relationships with consumers. Looking into the reports of online marketing it could be detected that social media posts including videos are most likely to gain great popularity and therefore many brand marketers are already, and if not yet should definitely be, implementing them into their online marketing activities.

For this thesis the question posed is whether the tone of the emotions triggered in such video advertisements has an effect on the attitudes and intentions of the viewers. The following chapters will describe and analyze the empirical research that was conducted for this study to answer the research questions.

3 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the methods used for the empirical research of this study are going to be presented. First, the experimental design will be presented and it will be explained why the specific methods were chosen. After looking into how the sample and the used stimuli were derived, the independent and dependent variables used are presented. Finally it will be described how the collected data was analyzed using appropriate statistical analysis tools.

To recall the aims of the study, the following research questions were presented in the introduction to be answered by the means of empirical research:

RQ1: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the attitude towards the advertisements?

RQ2: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the intention to share the videos?

RQ3: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the attitude towards the advertised brands?

RQ4: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the intention to purchase from the advertised brands?

Based on existing literature (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011; Berger, 2013; Eckler & Bolls, 2011) a hypothesis was derived that there is a significant difference between how the two groups of emotional tone – pleasant and unpleasant – influence the attitudes and intentions towards the online marketing videos and brands. It is assumed that the pleasant group creates more positive intentions and attitudes than the unpleasant.

3.1 Experimental Design

3.1.1 Selection of method

The aim of this thesis was to analyze responses many people gave to the same questions under the same circumstances. The results should objectively quantify the effect of the emotional tone of online marketing videos on the intentions and attitudes of consumers. Therefore, it was chosen to use quantitative research, because these methods focus on objective measurements which are to find relationships between two variables, usually one independent and one dependent (Muijs, 2011a). Quantitative methods, such as questionnaires, polls or surveys are used to collect numerical data from representative samples which should allow

generalizing the results to bigger populations to explain specific phenomena (Yilmaz, 2013). Quantitative research by definition collects numerical data which can be analyzed in mathematical terms. Now thinking of attitudes and intentions one might not assume, that such information naturally appears in numerical forms. However, it can be transformed into quantitative data which can be used to perform statistical testing.

For this study it was decided to make use of an experimental research design in which mostly quantitative data was collected; mostly quantitative, because besides the main focus on quantitative research, qualitative research can help getting a deeper insight into such complex topics like social media video sharing (Muijs, 2011). According to Muijs (2011) experimental design is a common practice in social sciences. It is defined as “a test under controlled conditions that is made to demonstrate a known truth, or examine the validity of a hypothesis” (Muijs, 2011). Compared to the other main quantitative research design - descriptive measures, which only test associations between variables by measuring them once - experimental designs, which measure responses after a specific controlled treatment, are used to be able to explain causality between two variables (Muijs, 2011a). Therefore, it is assumed that with such a method the effect of the emotional tone of online marketing videos on the different behavioral variables can be determined.

As one of the characteristic elements of experimental design is the control of stimuli and in order to be able to analyze the effect of the different contents of the overall emotional messages on the different dependent variables, first of all the videos had to be analyzed and grouped into categories based on their emotional tone. Only with this information the actual research questions could be answered and possible causality could be derived. Therefore, it was concluded that the best method would be to use a two stages design.

In this case, in order to answer the proposed research questions an experiment which included a 2 (emotional tone) x 3 (video) within-subjects repeated measures design was performed. Instead of single positive or negative emotions for the purpose of this thesis, it was decided to use the general emotional tone as a base of analysis. This view represents the overall emotional message of an online marketing video more. Reasons for this were the multidimensional nature of emotions (Eckler & Bolls, 2011) and the commandment that emotions usually do not appear in pure state but in combinations and mixtures (Plutchik, 1980a). The basis for grouping emotional tone into pleasant and unpleasant lies in the assumption that people process media messages, thus also online marketing videos, by relating to the presence or absence of appetitive (pleasant) or aversive (unpleasant) emotional stimuli (Lang et al. 2007). This is connected to the theory, which was presented in the literature review, that such motivational systems – appetitive and aversive – underlie

emotions (Lang & Bradley, 2010). According to that theory the videos would either trigger behavior of approach (in this case sharing the video or purchasing the advertised product), because they contain pleasant stimuli, or on the contrary, they would lead to defensive behavior (like ignoring them or disliking the advertised product or brand) because of unpleasant stimuli. Eckler and Bolls (2011) performed a similar study as in this thesis and also used these assumptions for grouping the emotional tone into pleasant and unpleasant, based on the either appetitive or aversive content of viral videos respectively.

3.1.2 Two stages design

In the first stage, *the pre-test*, in total six videos should be determined out of originally 13 different popular online marketing videos on the basis of their level of emotional tone. The videos were chosen from lists by industry websites rating the most popular advertisements. The result should be the three most pleasant and the three most unpleasant viral online marketing videos. The process of this determination in the pre-test is described in one of the following section.

The second step, *the actual experiment*, was chosen to be performed with two groups of Bachelor students in the computer lab of Modul University Vienna. The experiment was part of one of their courses and students were promised candy in gratitude for their participation. In the experiment all students were informed about the testing procedure and that their answers were going to be treated anonymously. They were not informed about the relevance of emotions for the study and did also not know which videos belonged to which group of emotional tone.

In the experiment all respondents should watch in total six viral online marketing videos, three videos with pleasant emotional tone and three with unpleasant, and should indicate their intentions and attitudes triggered by them. For posing the questions, an online survey was set up with the free scientific survey tool SoSci Survey. A summary of the questions posed in the experiment survey can be found in Appendix 1. The online link to this survey was distributed and all participating students opened it on their computers in front of them.

In the beginning of the experiment the students were first asked to answer questions regarding their general tendencies related to watching online marketing videos. Then, prior to every video the respondents were asked to answer questions relating to the brand that would be advertised in the next video. The videos were shown on the big presentation screen in the front of the class. All respondents watched the videos at the same time and subsequently answered the questions relating to the just watched video on their computer in the online survey. This procedure was repeated for all six online marketing videos. The videos were

shown in alphabetical order of the featured brands. Like that a random mix of pleasant and unpleasant videos was created. After the last video and the relating questions regarding their intentions and attitudes towards it, the students were asked to indicate their gender, age and nationality. Finally they were thanked and offered candy. The reasons for which the specific research methods were chosen were described in the previous two sections. However, there might have also been other possibilities to solve the research gap. Some of those are described in the following section.

3.1.3 Stimuli selection (pre-test)

For the experiment online marketing videos were selected as the relevant stimuli. 13 real-life marketing videos from 12 different brands of various industries were selected. Among them were advertisements for industries such as food, sports gear, household, retail, automobile, hospitality and electronics. As the goal was to determine whether the use of emotions could have an effect on the social sharing behavior and possibly even make the videos go viral, it was decided to choose videos which could be seen as best practice examples and have in reality shown a great popularity and likelihood for being shared. Therefore, only videos were chosen which were listed on rankings of most popular viral videos by industry publications and review websites (AdWeek, 2016; AdAge, 2017). The videos were published in 2016 and 2017 in various countries worldwide. For the rankings only videos which were published by brands and publicly available were considered (AdAge, 2017). The rankings by AdAge (2017) are based on brand-driven and audience-driven social video clicks. This means that they considered views from both, clicks through paid postings by the brand and unsolicited sharing among consumers. Compared to that, the videos awarded a spot on the list of most viral ads by AdWeek (2016) were ranked based on their number of shares. It was taken care to only choose videos in either English language or at least with English subtitles. Furthermore, it was tried to choose videos which were about the same length. The videos ranged from 35 to 115 seconds. However, according to the findings of Bardzell et al. (2008) no significant correlation between the length and the attitude and intentions towards videos could be detected.

Due to the fact, that the advertisements were real life examples and had already been published for one or two years, there was a probability that some respondents would have already seen some of them. To lower this possibility it was tried to choose international brand videos from not only one country. In the actual experiment all respondents were asked to indicate whether they had been familiar with the video before. Although, as can be seen in Table 1, a few respondents indicated to have seen some videos before, no significant

differences could be detected between the answers towards any of the variables of the participants who were familiar with the video or not.

Have you seen the video before?	YES		NO		I don't remember
	Frequency	In %	Frequency	In %	Frequency
Mentos	5	9.26	49	90.74	1
Airbnb	1	1.82	54	98.18	
Canadian Tire	4	7.41	50	92.59	1
Knorr	1	1.82	54	98.18	
Mc Donald's	2	3.70	52	96.30	1
Samsung	0	0.00	54	100.0	1

Table 1 Video Seen

Despite considering that literature states that emotions have a great effect on consumers' decisions (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2003; Packard, 1957), which most marketers should have accepted by now (Harman, 2014), there was a chance that the videos, which were ranked as most viral by the marketing industry rating websites, did not contain emotional components. Therefore, the author of this study previewed the videos and chose appropriate examples. In fact though, it really seemed to be already widely known that emotions should be used in advertisements as most of the top viral rated videos were found to be suitable for the study. In order to determine the most emotional videos of the larger set of the 13 videos a pre-test was performed. This is going to be presented in the next section.

3.1.4 Pre-test – independent variables

The emotional tone of the online advertising videos was chosen as the independent variable for this study. According to Eckler and Bolls (2011) it is a critical feature of message content that demonstrates the emotional valence of viral videos. In order to manipulate the emotional tone of the online marketing videos a pre-test was conducted. The goal was to sort the videos by their level of pleasantness and determine each three videos which were perceived the most pleasant and unpleasant respectively. For this an online survey was created with the free scientific survey tool SoSci Survey. A summary of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2. The survey was sent out via email and online messenger services to friends, colleagues and relatives of the author. Those people were not going to participate in the main experiment.

The survey started with a welcome screen on which the reason for the study was introduced and respondents were asked to activate sound on their screening device as they were going to watch videos. In the survey tool all of the 13 videos were presented and after each of them the respondents were asked to answer two questions.

First, they should rate the pleasantness of the video on a seven point semantic scale. It ranged from “*very unpleasant*” to “*very pleasant*”. The respondents were instructed to not rate how much they liked the video or the brand shown, but only how they felt while watching.

Secondly, the respondents were asked to identify which emotions they experienced while watching the videos. Here they were given the option to choose one or multiple emotions. As predefined options the eight basic emotions from Plutchik (1980) were used. For better clarity, the emotions were presented in an active personal statement of feelings, such as “I felt angry”. This was based on Burkitt’s (2004) assumption that emotions are most often best expressed in connection with the verb “feel”. An option “none of these” was provided. In the end of the survey the respondents were asked to indicate their gender, age and nationality. A final page expressed the gratitude for their participation and effort.

Results pre-test

The results of the pre-test were analyzed with the statistical analysis program SPSS. After two weeks with the link to the online survey being active, a total of 44 respondents had completed the survey. Around 64 % of them were female and 36 % male. The great majority of the respondents were Austrian, with other nationalities represented being German, US American, Norwegian, Ukrainian and Iranian.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of the respondents among age groups. It can be seen that most respondents were in the age group between 21 and 30 years, but also members of most of the other age groups were represented.

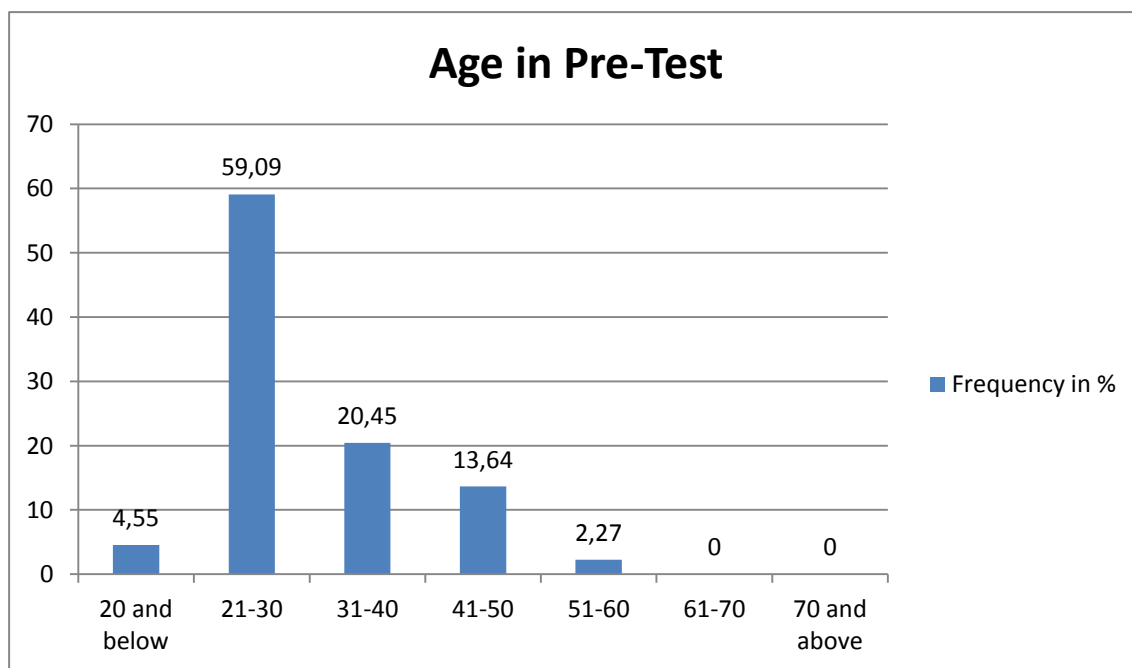


Figure 3 Age in Pre-Test

Table 2 summarizes the results from the first question of the pre-test relating to the level of pleasantness. The brands which were featured in the online marketing videos are sorted alphabetically, which was also the order in which they were presented in the pre-test. The mean rank of pleasantness was chosen as the selection criterion. The questions were formed on a seven point Likert scale with the positive option being located on the maximum level of points and the negative ratings on the minimum. Therefore, videos with a high value in the mean were perceived as most pleasant and videos with low mean scores were rated less pleasant. Table 2 shows the ranks of the videos with the most pleasant video ranked as 1 and graduating to the one with the lowest score ranked as 13. The online marketing video with the highest mean of 6.14 was by Mentos. This was followed by Airbnb with 6.00 and Canadian Tire with 5.96. The three top pleasant video brands are marked in green. The video with the lowest mean and therefore being rated as the most unpleasant was by Samsung, with a mean of only 3.27. A bit less unpleasantly perceived was the video by Mc Donald's with a mean level of perceived pleasantness of 4.00. Finally, the video from Knorr was rated the third most unpleasant video with a mean of 4.11. The three top unpleasant videos are marked in red. Those six videos of the two groups were chosen to be featured in the actual experiment.

LEVEL OF PLEASANTNESS	Mean	Std. Div.	Rank
Airbnb	6.00	1.01	2
Alibaba	5.64	0.97	7
Ariel	4.91	1.57	10
Canadian Tire	5.96	1.22	3
Knorr	4.11	1.53	11
Mc Donald's	4.00	1.20	12
Mentos	6.14	1.15	1
Nike	5.82	1.19	5
P&G	5.57	1.44	8
Samsung Cares for India	3.27	1.56	13
Samsung dads	5.86	1.21	4
Turkish Airlines	5.80	1.42	6
Volkswagen	5.36	1.30	9

Table 2 Level of Pleasantness

Looking at Table 3 one might assume that it could be concluded why the videos were rated as pleasant or unpleasant; namely through analysing which emotions were present in them or not. Indeed, with the pleasant online marketing videos respondents often indicated to have felt joy and with the unpleasant ones sadness. However, taking for example the video from Canadian Tire, with 34.09% respondents also relatively often stated to have felt sad. Therefore, it is not as easy as to say that pleasantly perceived videos contained only positive emotions and unpleasant videos only negative ones. Rather, as stated by Gobé (2009)

emotions come in mixtures. Therefore, as explained in the first section of this chapter, instead of single emotions, the general overall emotional tone – pleasant and unpleasant - was decided to be taken as a grouping variable for this study.

EMOTIONS IN %	Joy	Trust	Fear	Surprise	Sadness	Disgust	Anger	Anticipation
Mentos	90.91	22.73	0.00	29.55	2.27	0.00	2.27	13.64
Airbnb	84.09	59.09	2.27	9.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	13.64
Canadian Tire	59.09	43.18	0.00	29.55	34.09	0.00	4.55	22.73
Mc Donald's	11.36	2.27	0.00	11.36	34.09	13.64	6.82	11.36
Knorr	20.45	18.18	2.27	29.55	56.82	6.82	27.27	13.64
Samsung	2.27	4.55	20.45	11.36	61.36	18.18	25.00	6.82

Table 3 Emotions Pre-Test

Short descriptions of the six videos, which were determined to be used as the stimuli representing the independent variables for the further statistical testing, can be found in Appendix 3.

3.1.5 Dependent variables (actual experiment)

This section describes how the variables for answering the research questions regarding the intentions and attitudes influenced by watching the online marketing videos were collected in the survey which was part of the experiments. The different dependent variables are presented in the order of the research questions, which was the same as the relating questions were posed in the survey.

Attitude towards advertisement

The first dependent variable was related to the first research question. The respondents were asked to indicate their attitude towards the advertising video they just watched. This question was presented to be answered on a seven point semantic differential scale anchored with four different pairs: “*bad-good*”, “*negative-positive*”, “*unfavorable-favorable*” and “*dislike-like*”. The middle point was labeled as neutral. For the analysis the negative ends were given low values starting with 1 and the positive ones high values ending with 7. This coding of negative/disagreement values being low and positive/agreement ones being high was kept consistent without the whole empirical research.

Intention to share the online marketing video

The next set of questions was posed to be able to answer the second research question. To determine the likelihood of forwarding the advertising video, respondents were asked what they would do after watching the video. They should indicate how much they agreed to the following statements on a five point Likert scale ranging from “I strongly disagree” to “I strongly agree”: “I would recommend others to watch the video”, “I think this video is worth sharing” and “I would share this video with my social media community”. The three statements differ in the degree of public self-identification with the video. This is because as Schaefer (2014) stated, when people publically share a post with their social media community, it can be seen as a sign of identification with the content or brand. Besides the quantifiable closed ended questions, in relation to this variable, participants were asked to answer, in an open ended question manner, why they would or would not share the specific video with their social media community. Although the main focus of this study was the quantitative analysis of relationships between values, this qualitative question was decided to be involved to see whether useful insights into their intentions for engagement could be gained from more open thoughts of the respondents.

Attitude towards the brand

The variable of attitude towards the brand was asked to be indicated twice for each advertising video in the survey. Once before watching the video, for determining the general existing attitude, and once after watching in order to see whether the emotional tone of the video had an effect on the attitude towards the brand; meaning whether the attitude towards the brand was changed by the emotional marketing video. Like the first question on attitude towards the ad, for this question answer options were given on a seven point semantic differential scale ranging from “*bad-good*”, “*negative-positive*”, “*unfavorable-favorable*” and “*dislike-like*”.

Intention to purchase

The variable, which was to determine the intention of respondents to purchase from the advertised brand after watching the video, was also chosen to be differentiated into several statements towards which participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement. The answers were, like the other variable related to intention, asked to be given on five point Likert scales anchored by “*strongly disagree*” and “*strongly agree*”. The statements were as follows: “I would purchase from the brand.” “I felt stimulated by the video to purchase from the

brand". "After watching the video I would purchase more from the brand than before." "After watching the video I would purchase less from the brand than before."

3.1.6 Additional variables

Besides the questions relating to the dependent variables of the research questions, a few additional questions were posed in the survey. In the very beginning of the questionnaire a set of questions related to the general online behavior relating to online marketing videos were asked. These included how much the respondents enjoyed watching such videos, how often they watched them and why they would watch them. Then, Muijs (2011) suggests that using quantitative methods in support with qualitative parts can create helpful information. Therefore, one open ended question was decided to be posed in the section on intentions to share viral videos.

Furthermore, the general likelihood of the respondents to share an online marketing video with their social media community was retrieved. After having looked at all relevant components of the experimental design, in the next section will comprise of how the collected data was analyzed to answer the research questions.

3.2 Data analysis

As the first step of the analysis the descriptive statistics for all variables were computed. Those included the mean and the standard deviation of the different variables. For the analysis of the research questions relating to the effect of the emotional tone of the online marketing videos on the intentions and attitudes of viewers, the goal was to detect whether there were significant differences in the central tendencies between the two related groups - pleasant and unpleasant. Therefore, the differences in the means of the groups were chosen to be the applicable measurement. For this the relevant variables from the six videos, collected from the answers to the specific questions, were sorted into the two groups of emotional tone. The average level of pleasantness, which was calculated from the results of the pre-test, served as a basis for distinction. Each of the groups consisted of the values of three videos. In order to be able to calculate the differences between the two groups, first the averages of the values of the three videos of each group had to be identified. This was performed by using the data transformation function of the statistical analysis program SPSS. The averages of the relevant variables from the three videos of each emotional tone for every respondent were calculated by using the function for calculating means. This resulted in new variables which were named meaningfully for further statistical testing. For these new variables of the two emotional groups the descriptive statistics were also calculated first. With the new variables the

inferential statistical analysis for comparing means could be conducted. In order to find the appropriate statistical testing tool, the data had to be tested for various criteria. First, it could be said that the data came from related samples. This is because the data in the variables to be compared stemmed from one respondent each giving answers related to videos from both emotional tones. Furthermore, the data was tested on not more than two groups - pleasant and unpleasant. Finally, another crucial question was whether the data was parametric or non-parametric. Considering that all data came from Likert or semantic scales, which are ordinal scaled (Frost, 2017) it was assumed that the data was not parametric, meaning that the collected values were not normally distributed. Looking at the histograms this assumption was confirmed. Therefore, a test for 2 related non-parametric samples was needed. The method that meets those criteria is Wilcoxon signed-rank test. This test is the alternative to paired samples t-test with non-parametric data (Frost, 2017).

As a significance level for the testing of all hypothesis $\alpha=0.05$ was chosen. This means that there is a 5 % probability that a null hypothesis is rejected although in fact it is true (Lavrakas, 2008).

Besides the main focus on the quantitative statistical testing, in the section on intention to share the videos, the only qualitative research part was implemented. The results from this question were analyzed by reading all written answers and sorting them into groups of similar content and opinions. Like that a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the given quantitative statistics could be given. Some answers will be presented in the form of quotations in the following chapter of results and discussion.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter it was explained that for this study a two stages experimental design was most suitable to answer all research questions. The results from the first step, the pre-test, were already needed to be able to conduct the actual experiment with the chosen testing stimuli; the six appropriate videos of the two groups of the emotional tone. Knowing how the experiment was conducted, in the next chapter the results which were gained are going to be presented.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the results of the statistical analysis of the data sets collected from the experiment will be presented in descriptive tables and discussed. First, the questions asked to get an insight into the respondent's habits of watching and sharing online marketing videos will be analyzed. This will be followed by the presentation of the inferential results, which help answering the research questions.

4.1 Sample

After conducting the experiment in two groups, the total number of participants was 61. However, after inspecting the data sets, a few cases had to be eliminated. The reason for this was that based on the total time spent on the survey it could be assumed that some participants could not have thoughtfully answered all the questions, as in that time they would not have even been able to watch all the videos required to have had seen before answering the related questions. This resulted in a final data set of 55 cases.

As can be seen in Figure 4, with 35 (63.64%) respondents being female and only 20 (36.36) male, there was a slight overrepresentation of women.

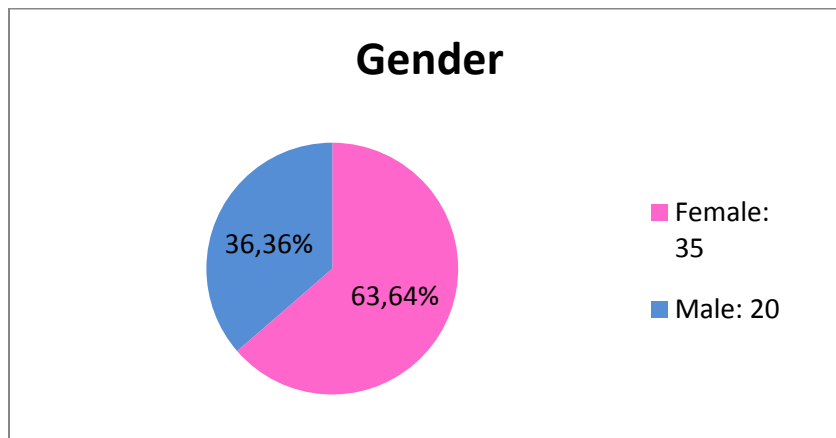


Figure 4 Gender

The main experiment was conducted with students from two classes at the Modul University Vienna. This sample was chosen because the students were assumed to well represent one of the main target groups for online marketing videos. This was assumed for various reasons. First of all, as can be seen in Table 4, the students were all between the age of 18 and 30 years, with an average of 22.25 years.

AGE	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Value in years	18	30	22.25

Table 4 Age

This means that they perfectly match the age group which is most likely to be viewing branded videos in reality. Statistics showed that people who are between 18 and 34 years old are the generation to be most likely to follow a brand online; 95% of the interviewed people indicated that they actually followed at least one brand on social media (LaMontagne, 2015). The same age group is also most active in social media in general (95%) (LaMontagne, 2015) and makes up the largest user group of the most popular social video sharing platform *YouTube* (Youtube, 2018).

Furthermore, the sample consisted of people from 17 different countries from all around the world. The majority of them came from China and Austria. This means that the results are likely to represent different views from various cultures. This is interesting as online marketing videos are a global phenomenon and marketers from different countries could be interested in the results of this study. Having looked into who participated in the experiment, the next section will explain which videos were chosen to be featured as stimuli in the experiment.

4.2 General online marketing video sharing habits

First, the results of the questions related to the general sharing tendencies of online marketing videos give interesting insights into how the results from the main research questions can be viewed in context. Figure 5 shows that with 50.91% most of the respondents experience a neutral level of enjoyment from watching online marketing videos. None of them indicated that he does not enjoy it at all, but also only two people responded that they enjoyed watching them very much.

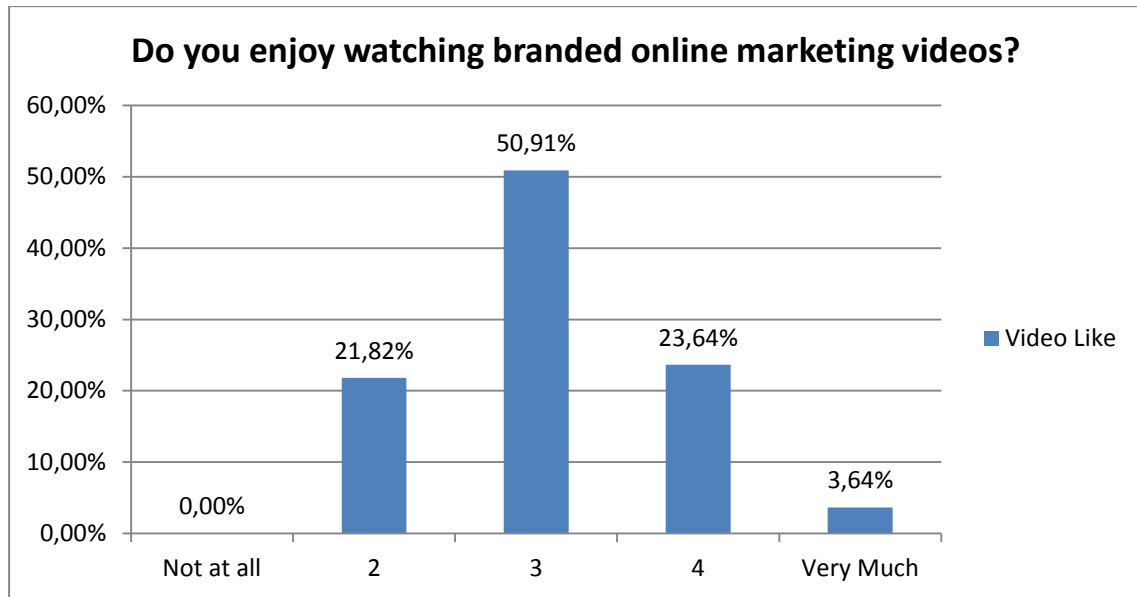


Figure 5 Enjoyment of Watching Videos

Figure 6 presents how often the respondents tend to watch online marketing videos. It can be seen that many of the respondents watch branded videos multiple times a week (30.91%). Only a few people answered that they never watched online marketing videos (5.45%).

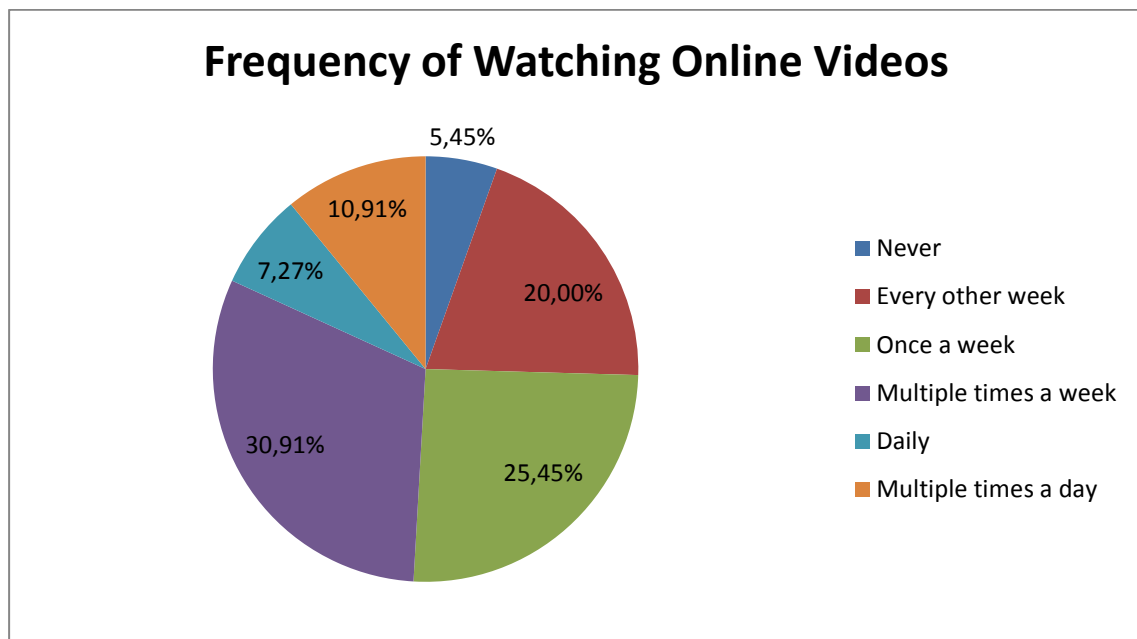


Figure 6 Frequency of Watching Online Videos

It might be especially interesting for marketers to find out why people watch online marketing videos. Figure 7 shows the reasons for which people indicated that they do so. It is informing to see that the majority of people (76.4%) stated that they would watch a branded advertising video if it came up in their social media feed. This allows pointing out the importance of videos

getting viral and being publically shared by consumers so that they show in other people's feeds. However, many respondents (41.8%) also indicated that they would actually watch an online marketing video to get information about a product. This means that they would probably actively search for such a video and be really interested in watching it. Interestingly, only 16.4 % of the respondents said that they would only watch an online marketing video to be entertained.

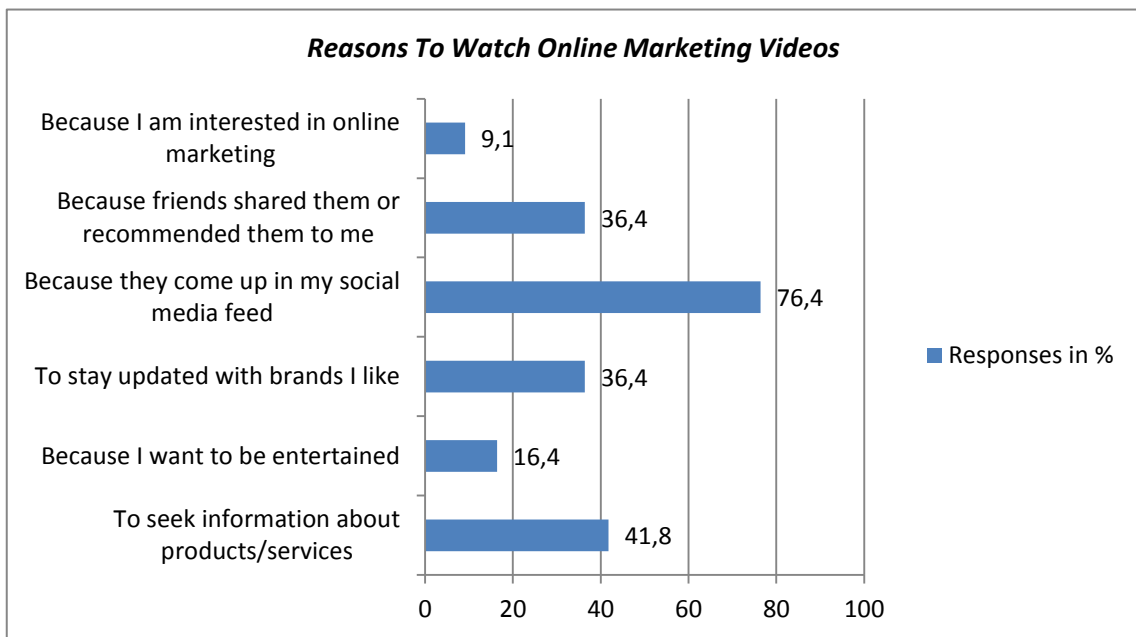


Figure 7 Reasons to Watch Online Marketing Videos

Finally, Figure 8 gives an insight into how often people tend to share online marketing videos. A relatively striking result is that the biggest group of the people (43.4%) indicated that they never share online marketing videos. This is followed by 34.55 % who only seldom share such videos. The %ages of people who sometimes or even often share branded advertising videos are much lower with 16.36% and 3.64%, respectively. Only 1 single respondent, meaning 1.82% of the whole sample, said that he would always share online marketing videos.

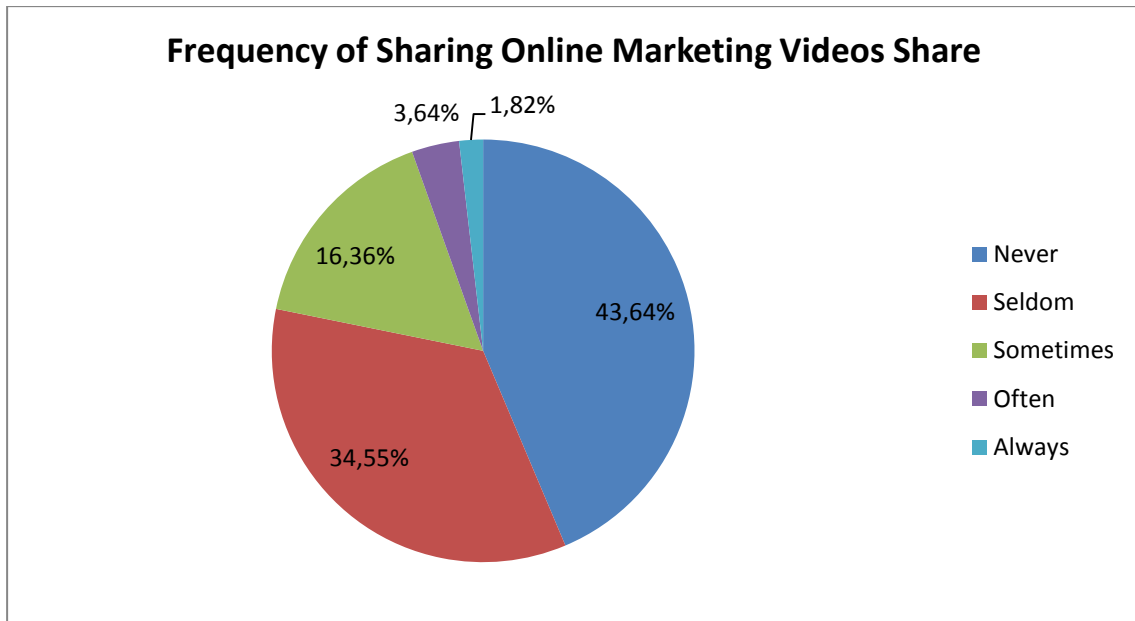


Figure 8 Frequency of Sharing Online Marketing Videos Share

The numbers presented in this section build a context which needs to be kept in mind when analyzing the results of the research questions, which are going to be presented in the next section.

4.3 Attitude towards advertisement

The first results that can be analyzed are the attitudes towards the advertising videos. In Table 5 the descriptive statistics of the answers towards the question regarding the attitude towards the online marketing video are presented. The brands are ordered based on their rank of pleasantness from the pre-test. The pleasant video brands are marked in green and the unpleasant ones in red. In this case, the means of the answers related to the attitude of the pleasant videos are in general higher than the ones of the unpleasant videos. Even within the groups the degree of the values coincides with the level of pleasantness. This means that for example, Mentos was rated as the most pleasant video in the pre-test and has also got the highest mean values in the statements about the attitude towards the online marketing video. The same goes for Samsung. It was rated the most unpleasant and has also got the lowest mean values in terms of attitude towards the ad.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS AD	Scale: 1-7	Mean	Std. Dev.
Mentos	Bad - good	6.42	0.85
	Negative – positive	6.40	0.91
	Unfavorable - favorable	6.33	0.96
	Dislike - like	6.42	0.96
Airbnb	Bad - good	5.56	1.29
	Negative – positive	5.64	1.27
	Unfavorable - favorable	5.35	1.53
	Dislike - like	5.47	1.50
Canadian Tire	Bad - good	5.82	1.45
	Negative – positive	6.09	1.40
	Unfavorable - favorable	5.91	1.40
	Dislike - like	6.05	1.37
Knorr	Bad - good	5.07	1.63
	Negative – positive	5.16	1.61
	Unfavorable - favorable	4.93	1.53
	Dislike - like	4.93	1.71
Mc Donald's	Bad - good	4.51	1.67
	Negative – positive	4.47	1.57
	Unfavorable - favorable	4.20	1.60
	Dislike - like	4.45	1.78
Samsung	Bad - good	3.91	1.86
	Negative – positive	4.00	1.76
	Unfavorable - favorable	3.76	1.74
	Dislike - like	3.62	1.80

Table 5 Attitude Ad (Descriptives)

Table 6 is present to be able to answer the first research question, which relates to the effect of the emotional tone of the online marketing videos on the attitude towards the advertisement. It shows the differences between the averages of the two emotional groups calculated in the Wilcoxon signed rank test. The results show that a significant difference could be detected in all four semantic pairs, because all p-values were lower than the significance threshold of 0.05. Looking closer it can be seen that in all four items the pleasant videos gathered higher means and therefore more positive attitude.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS AD (1-7)	Emotional tone	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.
bad - good	Pleasant	5.93	0.82	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	4.50	0.89	
negative - positive	Pleasant	6.04	0.86	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	4.55	0.87	
unfavorable - favorable	Pleasant	5.86	0.88	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	4.30	0.87	
dislike - like	Pleasant	5.98	0.84	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	4.33	0.90	

Table 6 Attitude Ad Results (Wilcoxon test)

4.4 Intention to share

To answer the next research question, which was concerned with the influence of the emotional tone of online marketing videos on the intention to share the videos, three different questions were posed in the survey. Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics of all three variables relating to all six videos. What can be seen is that the third variable on the intention to share the video with one’s social media community has got the lowest mean values with all brands, compared to the other two variables. A possible reason for this might be that, as explained in the previous chapter, sharing the video in social media would require high commitment to the content. In the unpleasant video group the results show that the lower the pleasantness of the videos, the lower the mean values in all variables for this research question. The highest mean values in all variables are found at the video of Mentos, which is also the video which was rated with the most pleasant emotional tone. However, for the two other brand videos of the pleasant group, the mean values do not coincide with the levels of pleasantness. For the online marketing video of Airbnb the respondents indicated a relatively low intention to share – even lower than the mean values of the unpleasantly rated video from Knorr.

INTENTION TO SHARE	Scale: 1-5	Mean	Std. Dev.
Mentos	I would recommend others to watch the video.	4.02	1.16
	I think this video is worth sharing with others.	3.76	1.30
	I would share this video with my social media community.	3.13	1.39
Airbnb	I would recommend others to watch the video.	2.80	1.28
	I think this video is worth sharing with others.	2.89	1.30
	I would share this video with my social media community.	2.18	1.07
Canadian Tire	I would recommend others to watch the video.	3.47	1.29
	I think this video is worth sharing with others.	3.51	1.39
	I would share this video with my social media community.	2.84	1.42
Knorr	I would recommend others to watch the video.	3.07	1.30
	I think this video is worth sharing with others.	3.04	1.35
	I would share this video with my social media community.	2.55	1.40
Mc Donald’s	I would recommend others to watch the video.	2.64	1.28
	I think this video is worth sharing with others.	2.47	1.23
	I would share this video with my social media community.	2.11	1.17
Samsung	I would recommend others to watch the video.	2.64	1.48
	I think this video is worth sharing with others.	2.60	1.41
	I would share this video with my social media community.	2.31	1.35

Table 7 Intention to Share (Descriptives)

Looking at Table 8 which presents the results from the comparison of the two groups based on emotional tone, it can be seen that the data shows that there is a significant effect of the emotional tone on the intention to share an online marketing video in all three variables. The

higher mean values relating to all three statements are found within the pleasant emotional tone. This could be interpreted as that respondents were stronger triggered to engage by the positive emotional tone in online marketing videos.

INTENTION TO SHARE (1-5)	Emotional tone	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.
I would recommend others to watch the video.	Pleasant	3.43	0.88	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	2.78	0.91	
I think this video is worth sharing with others.	Pleasant	3.39	0.97	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	2.70	0.88	
I would share this video with my social media community.	Pleasant	2.71	0.97	0.001
	Unpleasant	2.32	0.82	

Table 8 Intention to Share Results (Wilcoxon test)

In order to find out whether the general likelihood of respondents sharing online marketing videos, which was collected from the general questions presented in the beginning of this chapter, has an effect on the different variables of the intention to share a viral video, correlations between the different variables were calculated. For this the statistical testing method for finding correlations between two non-parametric groups, Spearman correlation was applied.

The Table 9 shows the first correlation between the general likelihood of sharing and the variable *“I would share this video with my social media community”*. What can be seen is that with three of the six videos a significant relationship between the general frequency of sharing videos on social media and the likeliness to share the specific video with the respondent’s social media community could be detected under the assumption of a 0.05 significance level. The three videos that showed a significant result in the Spearman correlation were Airbnb, Knorr and Mentos. All of them were positively correlated. The two first ones show a moderate correlation, whereas the latter one, the video of Mentos, shows a relatively high positive correlation. This could be interpreted that there is in fact a relationship between the general tendencies of respondents to share videos and the answers given on the intent to share the videos of Airbnb, Canadian Tire and Mentos. To be more specific, the higher the general frequency was the higher was the indicated intention to share the individual videos. As the general frequency of sharing in the public social media community was rather low, it should actually be seen the other way. Namely, the lower the general frequency of sharing viral videos was, also the lower the intention to share one of the videos from Mentos, Airbnb or Knorr.

CORRELATION	Sig.	Correlation Coefficient
Mentos	<0.0001	0.564
Airbnb	0.010	0.346
Canadian Tire	0.413	0.113
Knorr	0.006	0.367
Mc Donald's	0.673	0.058
Samsung	0.272	0.151

Table 9 Correlation Video Share/I would share (Spearman correlation)

The other two variables collected about the sharing intentions, “I would recommend others to watch this video” (Table 10) and “I think this video is worth sharing” (Table 11) both only in one brand video showed a significant correlation with the general frequency of respondents sharing branded videos. From the data a weak positive correlation can be detected only for Knorr between the variables of general frequency of sharing online marketing videos and the agreement to whether the respondent thinks the brand video is worth sharing as well as the variable on whether the respondent would recommend others to watch the video.

Therefore, it can be assumed that for most of the videos, the general frequency of sharing does not really have an effect on the two variables of only recommending the video or theoretically thinking that the video would be worth sharing. But, for actually publically sharing an online marketing video on social media the general reluctance to sharing videos does play a significant effect on the intentions for at least some brands.

CORRELATION	Sig.	Correlation Coefficient
Mentos	0.071	0.245
Airbnb	0.148	0.197
Canadian Tire	0.384	-0.120
Knorr	0.029	0.295
Mc Donald's	0.898	0.018
Samsung	0.770	0.040

Table 10 Video Share/I would recommend (Spearman correlation)

CORRELATION	Sig.	Correlation Coefficient
Mentos	0.118	0.213
Airbnb	0.136	0.203
Canadian Tire	0.470	-0.099
Knorr	0.043	0.274
Mc Donald's	0.792	0.036
Samsung	0.434	0.108

Table 11 Video Share/I think it is worth sharing (Spearman correlation)

To get an even better understanding of why respondents would or would not share the specific videos, in the following section some of the open ended comments provided with this question will be quoted.

Open ended questions (qualitative analysis)

Mentos

Looking first at the video which was not only rated as most pleasant in emotional tone, but also shows the highest means in the likelihood of being recommended or shared in social media, it can be said that also the comments relating to the reasons why respondents would share the video are very positive. The main reasons for the high likelihood for engagement were because it was funny and cute. Furthermore, some people mentioned that they liked that the video sent a very positive message. The following quotes represent this well:

- *“I would share it because it is funny.”*
- *“This video is funny and can share the idea of Mentos.”*
- *“It was very cute and funny. I would share it with my friends because of the content and because it actually sends a message.”*
- *“I think the message from the video is inspiring and heart-warming. Also, it would always be nice to spread a little positive content on social media community.”*
- *“This is simply a sweet reminder that we shouldn’t be so shy and to ourselves.”*

Airbnb

To the online marketing video of Airbnb respondents had diverging views. Some found that it was an inspiring video, which wanted them to go travel.

- *“Because it is the truth and I know that because I had the same wonderful experiences throughout my journey with Airbnb. It is a wonderful way of getting to know people and their lives from all around the world.”*
- *“Makes me happy. Now I want to make a journey. Good feeling”*

However, there were actually more rather negative comments to this video. Many respondents thought it was quite the contrary to what the previous quotations said and apparently from their experience they could tell that what was shown in the video was not according to their real image of Airbnb. This might be one of the reasons why, compared to the other videos of the pleasant group, the means of this one were relatively lower.

- *“Because this is not at all how an Airbnb stay looks like. This video is over romanticized and does not give a true picture of what the service of Airbnb is/ it would create falls expectations.”*
- *“This video is not giving the same message that I received personally from staying in an Airbnb.”*

- *“I would not share because it is made too ‘fairytale’ and to my mind it is not realistic. In every your way you can have positive experiences like in this video, but there would be problems, challenges and disappointments sometimes as well.”*
- *“The reason is that the real situation is not the same as the video when you are staying with Airbnb.”*

Furthermore, some respondents indicated that just being a nice to watch video would not be enough for them to share it. Rather, this would require it to be more funny, probably like the video from Mentos, and interesting.

- *“It is nice to watch but not exciting, funny or anything I want to show to my friends.”*
- *“The video is beautiful but not funny or interesting enough to share.”*
- *“Good commercial, but it's neither funny nor interesting enough to share.”*

Canadian Tire

From the comments given in the question for why respondents would or would not share the online marketing video from Canadian Tire it seemed as if many would be eager to share it with their social media community. What stands out in the comments is that they liked that it conveyed a meaningful and important message. This seemed to be a reason why many people wanted to share the ad to also remind their friends of the social message.

- *“I would, because it is nice, humanly and stands for the nice values in life.”*
- *“It encourages people to engage with those who are disabled and to include them into one’s daily activities and hobbies.”*
- *“I will share this video because the content is meaningful.”*
- *“Now this was a great advertisement. A simple topic about friendship, touching, very well done.”*

What has to be said though is that some respondents indicated that they did not like that no evidence or connection was built on to what the brand actually sells.

- *“I would not (share it) because from the video I didn’t understand what this brand is doing.”*
- *“I would share this video with my friends only because of the emotional aspect. It was very sad and then got very sweet. It didn’t really tell me anything about the brand.”*
- *“I would share this video because I think the message behind it is very strong and powerful but for me it didn't really show what the brand is all about. Or maybe I just didn't get it but for me it should have been more focused on what the brand is made of so that people who have never heard of it know what it is all about.”*

Knorr

Although the video from Knorr belongs to the group of videos which was perceived as unpleasant and also had lower means in the questions relating to the probability of recommending or sharing, similarly to the video from Canadian Tire, respondents indicated that they liked the social meaning of the video and that it raised awareness.

- “It raises awareness and it is also charitable, so other people can contribute as well, therefore the message should be spread.”
- “Because it shows people how to be nice to other even if they are from other religion or places.....”
- “I would share it with others since it would teach many people a lesson.”

Besides the positive attitudes about the meaningful message of the video, some respondents expressed doubt that the portrayed image corresponds to the actual brand and its products, as can be read in the following three quotes:

- “I feel like the message of the video and the product itself portrays a paradox, before watching I was expecting something much more predominantly culinary-based.”
- “It’s great that they provide water for people in the Middle East, but that has nothing to do with their product.”
- “It’s a greenwashing video; everybody knows Knorr is a somewhat unhealthy product that has its flair sometimes on a long day. What does it have to do with fasting people?”

Interestingly, one respondent even indicated in his answer, that he did not like the video because he thought it was too emotional:

- “This video just seems too exaggerated and is trying to pull on your emotions too much and it doesn’t seem genuine.”

Mc Donald’s

From the comments towards the intention to share the video from Mc Donald’s it could be concluded that this online marketing video was probably not understood or perceived the way it was intended. It was rated as being one of the videos with unpleasant emotional tone. Nonetheless, many respondents of the experiment indicated that they might share it because they thought it was funny, but in a bad way - basically ridiculous. The main reason for which most respondents said they would not share the video was that they did not find it appropriate for a food chain to associate with such an unpleasant scene of a breakup. Furthermore, somehow similar to the comments on Airbnb, they also criticized that the message of the

video did not represent the true meaning and standing of the brand Mc Donald's and its products. All this can be read in the following quotes:

- *"No, it's nothing special. In fact a little 'cringy' that it links breakups with the fast food chain."*
- *I would share it because it's so bad.*
- *If I was to share it, I would because it's funny. I am very likely to send it to a friend who has just broken up with her boyfriend though."*
- *"This video is hilariously meaningless, and I did not find any connection between the love story and the products they are trying to promote."*
- *"It does not relate to the products of Mc Donald's. I would only share to show how ridiculous commercial the brand makes."*

Samsung

The comments on why respondents would or would not share the video from Samsung were widely negative. Here the major problem seemed to be that participants thought that the video was badly made, hard to understand and not able to convey the message well enough and therefore they did not like it at all. This can be read in the following quotes:

- *"No, the message of the video is a little confusing and it's probably better with English subtitles, because the Indian accent is a little difficult to follow."*
- *"It is somewhat abrupt and a bit too much about the message. The message itself is quite important though so it is the case of a strong message in a bad video."*
- *"I would not share it even though it has a good message, but the problem is that the video is confused and the message is not simple to understand by all the generations."*

4.5 Attitude towards brand

The descriptive statistics of the next variable, the attitude towards the brands, are presented in Table 12. This variable was collected twice for every brand in the survey – once before watching the video, to get a general insight into the attitude towards the brands and once after watching the video, to see whether the online marketing video changed the attitude. What can be seen is that not between all brands a significant difference between the attitude from before and after watching the video could be detected. However, it is interesting to see into which directions the attitude changed with the values that were significant. The brands with significant differences in the group of pleasant emotional tone (Mentos and Canadian Tire), show a positive change in the mean levels of attitude. On the other hand the significant

values in the group of brands with unpleasant emotional tone (Mc Donald's and Samsung), the mean ratings of attitude were lowered after watching the videos.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS BRAND	Scale: 1-7	Before Watching		After Watching		Difference
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.
Mentos	Bad - good	5.50	1.30	6.09	1.09	0.001
	Negative – positive	5.48	1.30	6.09	1.09	0.001
	Unfavorable - favorable	5.48	1.31	6.07	1.09	<0.0001
	Dislike - like	5.56	1.31	6.09	1.06	0.001
Airbnb	Bad - good	5.66	1.09	5.60	1.27	0.691
	Negative – positive	5.64	1.23	5.64	1.31	0.924
	Unfavorable - favorable	5.34	1.24	5.55	1.24	0.129
	Dislike - like	5.64	1.23	5.64	1.25	0.982
Canadian Tire	Bad - good	4.33	1.30	5.55	1.42	0.034
	Negative – positive	4.92	1.62	5.69	1.37	0.234
	Unfavorable - favorable	4.67	1.50	5.53	1.40	0.083
	Dislike - like	4.50	1.38	5.49	1.45	0.131
Knorr	Bad - good	5.10	1.39	5.15	1.53	0.237
	Negative – positive	5.12	1.47	5.11	1.49	0.236
	Unfavorable - favorable	5.17	1.36	4.91	1.39	0.685
	Dislike - like	5.21	1.39	4.98	1.50	0.905
Mc Donald's	Bad - good	4.95	1.42	4.53	1.56	0.048
	Negative – positive	4.87	1.45	4.44	1.50	0.028
	Unfavorable - favorable	5.04	1.40	4.49	1.49	0.008
	Dislike - like	5.27	1.24	4.56	1.51	0.002
Samsung	Bad - good	5.13	1.45	4.49	1.62	0.002
	Negative – positive	5.04	1.50	4.51	1.62	0.024
	Unfavorable - favorable	4.96	1.53	4.47	1.67	0.029
	Dislike - like	5.00	1.55	4.45	1.69	0.020

Table 12 Attitude Brand (Descriptives)

To see whether there were significant differences between the groups of emotional tone, the results from the inferential statistical testing in Table 13 can be analyzed. From the table it can be seen that in the collected data within all four semantic pairs a significant difference between the pleasant and unpleasant groups could be found. From this it could be assumed that the emotional tone of the online marketing videos had an effect on the change of attitude towards the brand. Namely, positive emotional tone triggered a more positive attitude towards the brand than the negative.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS BRAND (1-7)	Emotional tone	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.
bad - good	Pleasant	5.75	0.80	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	4.72	0.82	
negative - positive	Pleasant	5.81	0.86	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	4.69	0.80	
unfavorable - favorable	Pleasant	5.72	0.84	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	4.62	0.75	
dislike - like	Pleasant	5.98	0.86	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	4.67	0.81	

Table 13 Attitude Brand Results (Wilcoxon test)

4.6 Intention to purchase

This set of questions was asked to determine the influence of the emotional tone of online marketing videos on the intention to purchase from the advertised brand. Just like the research question relating to the intention to share, also this one was tried to be answered by three variables in the survey. As can be seen in Table 14 the first variable, “I would purchase from the brand.” got the highest means with all brands. The averages do not show any pattern relating to the emotional tone. What has to be kept in mind though, is that respondents might have understood and answered this question in no relation to the online marketing video, but in general terms.

Compared to that, the second variable, “I felt stimulated by the video to purchase from the brand” can definitely be associated with the advertising videos and in turn with the emotional tone. Here it can be seen, that Mentos got the highest mean value of this variable. The mean values of the other brands get lower the lower the level of pleasantness of the videos get.

The third variable “After watching the video I would purchase more from the brand” shows a similar scheme. The highest mean value is again found with Mentos, the brand from the most pleasantly perceived online marketing video. These values graduate down the lower the level of pleasantness of the videos gets. In the last variable a similar result was detected; with the difference, that in this variable the lowest value is most desirable, because in this case for a positive rating a strong disagreement would be appreciable. This is because that would mean that the video did not have a negative effect on the intention to purchase from the brand. Mentos again showed the lowest value here with a mean of 2.07. The remaining values get gradually higher relating to the level of emotional tone, ending with Samsung showing a value 2.36.

INTENTION TO PURCHASE	Scale: 1-5	Mean	Std. Dev.
Mentos	I would purchase from the brand.	4.16	1.03
	I felt stimulated by the video to purchase from the brand.	3.85	1.13
	After watching the video I would purchase more from the brand.	3.40	1.26
	After watching the video I would purchase less from the brand.	2.07	1.14
Airbnb	I would purchase from the brand.	3.85	0.93
	I felt stimulated by the video to purchase from the brand.	3.42	1.08
	After watching the video I would purchase more from the brand.	3.09	1.19
	After watching the video I would purchase less from the brand.	2.25	1.19
Canadian Tire	I would purchase from the brand.	3.16	1.00
	I felt stimulated by the video to purchase from the brand.	3.15	1.08
	After watching the video I would purchase more from the brand.	2.98	1.11
	After watching the video I would purchase less from the brand.	2.27	1.08
Knorr	I would purchase from the brand.	3.42	1.12
	I felt stimulated by the video to purchase from the brand.	3.00	1.31
	After watching the video I would purchase more from the brand.	2.78	1.24
	After watching the video I would purchase less from the brand.	2.31	1.22
Mc Donald's	I would purchase from the brand.	3.45	1.18
	I felt stimulated by the video to purchase from the brand.	2.76	1.23
	After watching the video I would purchase more from the brand.	2.29	1.17
	After watching the video I would purchase less from the brand.	2.36	1.11
Samsung	I would purchase from the brand.	3.09	1.22
	I felt stimulated by the video to purchase from the brand.	2.18	1.12
	After watching the video I would purchase more from the brand.	2.22	1.05
	After watching the video I would purchase less from the brand.	2.36	1.21

Table 14 Intention to Purchase (Descriptives)

The results shown in Table 15 allow answering the research question in statistical significance term. It can be seen that according to the data there is a significant difference between the two groups of emotional tone – pleasant and unpleasant – in three of the four variables. The difference in means between the two groups in the first variable is not that big, but still significant. The reason for this might be, as explained in the previous paragraph, that respondents only rated their general purchase behavior of the brands, not related to the video. The second and third variables show higher means with the group of pleasant emotional tone. Only the last variable, which was to determine whether because of the videos respondents would buy less from the brands, did not show a significant main effect of the emotional tone on the likelihood of behavior.

INTENTION TO PURCHASE (1-5)	Emotional tone	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig.
I would purchase from the brand.	Pleasant	3.73	0.71	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	3.32	0.77	
I felt stimulated by the video to purchase from the brand.	Pleasant	3.47	0.76	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	2.65	0.87	
After watching the video I would purchase more from the brand than before.	Pleasant	3.16	0.91	<0.0001
	Unpleasant	2.43	0.84	
After watching the video I would purchase less from the brand than before.	Pleasant	2.18	0.90	0.184
	Unpleasant	2.35	0.87	

Table 15 Intention to Purchase Results (Wilcoxon test)

4.7 Conclusion

The result shown in this chapter demonstrated that for most of the research questions significant differences between the two groups of the emotional tone could be detected. This allows answering all research questions in the final chapter.

5 CONCLUSION

In the end of this study, after having looked at the existing literature and having conducted the empirical research, it is finally possible to draw conclusions and answer all research questions. In this chapter first the findings from the study will be summarized and compared with the existing research and literature and the contribution to knowledge will be discussed. Then some limitations of the study and critical thoughts which were raised during the analysis will be presented. Then a set of recommendations are given for future research. Finally, the impact of the study of this thesis for potential shareholders will be stated.

5.1 Findings and contribution to knowledge

5.1.1 Answering the research questions

In general it can be said, that the inferential part of the empirical research for this thesis was able to detect significant difference between the effects of the two emotional tones on the attitudes and intentions of viewers. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which assumed that there was no difference between the two groups, could be rejected and the postulated alternative hypothesis, that there is a significant difference between how the two groups of emotional tone – pleasant and unpleasant – influence the attitudes and intentions towards the online marketing videos and brands, can be kept and through statistical testing be held true.

Now looking at each of the research questions in detail, they can be answered in the following.

RQ1: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the attitude towards the advertisement?

For the first research question it was found that the attitudes towards the advertisements are significantly influenced differently by whether the online marketing video contains a pleasant or unpleasant emotional tone. More specifically, a positive linear relationship between the emotional tone and the attitude towards the ads could be found. This means that a higher level of pleasantness of the emotional tone leads to higher attitudes towards the online advertising video. On the other side, the more unpleasant the content of the video, also the more negative the attitude towards the advertisement gets. Therefore, it can be concluded that in order to create positive and favorable attitudes towards an online marketing video, marketers should try to create them in a way that the overall emotional content is perceived as pleasant.

RQ2: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the intention to share the videos?

Here it can be said, that in fact a significant difference between the influences of the two emotional tones could be detected. It was found that the presence of pleasant emotional tone in online marketing videos much increases the likelihood of people's intention of sharing and recommending them. The answers from the experiment indicate though, that people agree more to just recommending watching the videos to others or in theory thinking that they are worth sharing, than actually sharing it with their own social media community. The statement to publically share an online marketing video found relatively low agreement with both groups of emotional tone, but it was still more confirmed with the group of videos that contained a pleasant overall emotional content. Therefore, it can be concluded, that publishing a video with pleasant overall emotional tone could increase the likelihood of it to go viral.

RQ3: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the attitude towards the advertised brands?

This research question could be answered in two ways; first, by analyzing how the attitude towards the brands changed through watching the specific emotional viral videos and second by comparing the attitudes towards the brands from the two groups of emotional tone after watching.

First, it was found that the attitude of the participants in the experiment towards four out of the six brands that were featured in the videos of the experiment changed from before to after watching. More specifically, for the videos which were perceived as pleasant, the attitude towards the advertised brands was improved from watching. On the contrary, the attitude towards the brands in the group of videos with unpleasant emotional tone was negatively impaired just by watching the videos. From those findings it can be assumed that it is advisable to post videos with pleasantly perceived content as it can positively affect the attitude towards a brand.

Second, the assumption from the first option can be supported. This is because from the results of the experiment it can be derived that pleasant videos generate a more positive and favorable attitude towards a brand than unpleasant ones.

RQ4: In which way does the emotional tone of online marketing videos influence the intention to purchase from the advertised brands?

Finally, in the answer to the last research question it is again the pleasant emotional tone in online marketing videos which increases the intention of consumers to purchase from the advertised brand more than the unpleasant emotional tone.

This study found that consumers are more likely to feel stimulated by a viral video to purchase from a brand in general or even buy more because of it, when it contains content that generates a pleasant emotional tone. As this is assumed to be appreciated, it is advised that marketers consider exactly implementing an overall pleasant emotional tone when creating their online brand advertising videos which they hope to go viral, because then the virality will probably also have the most positive return on investment and increase the number of sales.

The answers derived from the empirical research of this study to some extent coincide with the findings from existing research and statements in the literature. In the next section they will be discussed relating to those theories.

5.1.2 Theoretical implication

First of all the comparison of the two groups of emotional tone found that there is a significant difference of the influence of them on the intentions and attitudes of consumers. This matches with Berger's (2013) theory, that the use of different emotions in online content does not result in the same likelihood of being shared.

The findings of this study closely relate to the findings of the similar study by Eckler and Bolls (2011). Those two authors also found that there is a linear relationship between the emotional tone and the attitude towards the viral video itself as well as the brand that was advertised in it and also towards the intentions of sharing the video (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). However, their research did not find answers on the intentions towards purchasing from the brand influenced by the emotional tone of online marketing videos.

When looking at which emotions trigger the highest likelihood of a video being shared in social media and in turn going viral, the findings from the study of the thesis coincide with the ones of many of the researchers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011; Berger, 2013; Eckler & Bolls, 2011) who have already stated that videos with positive emotions are on average being shared more often than with negative emotions. Only this study focused not on single positive emotions, but on an overall pleasant emotional tone of the content of the videos. The reason for this was that it was found in the pre-test that most of the videos did not only contain purely positive emotions or only negative emotions, but rather showed a mixture of each of them. This

corresponds with the theory of Gobé (2009) who commanded that emotions are likely to occur in exactly such combinations.

Despite the just mentioned grouping into overall emotional tone, from the findings in the pre-test on which emotions were experienced in which online marketing videos, a few other existing research theories can be considered for comparison.

The results from the pre-test demonstrated that in the videos that were rated as most pleasant, the most frequently found emotions were joy, followed by trust. Those videos were in the pleasant emotional tone group which was found to have the strongest positive influence on the level of engagement. This partly concurs with the statement of Kaplan and Haenlein (2011), stating that videos should be fun and humorous and trigger positive emotions in order to be shared often. Another theory for which similarities can be found to in this study is the one from Libert and Tynski (2013). It assumes that despite the fact that videos with negative emotions are on average less likely to be shared, there is still a chance for them to be popular and to go viral. Based on their theory, to increase this chance videos need to contain emotions such as surprise or anticipation (Libert & Tynski, 2013). Now taking for example the video from Canadian Tire, despite 34.09% of the respondents indicating that they felt sad while watching it, the video was overall perceived as pleasant and found to be intended to be shared relatively often. Relating to the theory of Libert and Tynski (2013) a reason for this might be the relatively high indications of the feelings of surprise (29.55%) and anticipation (22.73%) in this video.

From the qualitative analysis on the intention of sharing, a few suggestions which could enhance the likelihood for a video to be shared and in turn go viral could be given. Those also coincide with existing theory. It could be concluded that in order to be popular an online marketing video should be funny and appeal to the heart of the viewers, which is similar to what Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) found. To be shared and become viral a video should furthermore convey an important and meaningful message, which makes people think and be reminded of a social problem or issue. Through that they might want to share these thoughts with their friends to spread the message. Moreover, it seems very important that the message or image created and conveyed in an online marketing video should represent the real image of a brand and have a meaningful connection to it. This coincides with the suggestion that Libert & Tynski (2013) gave when saying that companies need to find content that relates to the intended brand message in a positive way and at the same triggers deep emotions and encourage further thinking.

Learned from the literature of emotional branding, it is advisable that companies shift away from mass advertising more towards creating special outstanding content which really catches the attention of consumers (Gobé, 2009). Looking at the statements of Eckler and Bolls (2013) it was suggested that to stand out and increase the likelihood of them to become viral, online marketing videos should contain more emotionally intense content than advertising videos for traditional television. It is difficult to verify whether the videos chosen to be used in the experiment were more emotional than they would have been if they were designed to be aired on television instead of the internet. However, what can be said though, is that most of the videos which were found in the ranking lists of most popular and viral rated videos (AdWeek, 2016; AdAge, 2017) from which the specific potential videos for this study were chosen, actually did contain a high degree of emotionality. Notwithstanding, one related assumption that can be disproved from looking at the characteristics of the viral videos in the experiment, is the one from Lindstrom (2009) who stated that viral videos should contain content which would not be appropriate to be shown on traditional television. None of the six videos in the experiment for this study contained neither nudity, sexuality, violence, nor extreme humor, which were the elements suggested by Lindstrom (2009) to be used to shock and attract viewers attention. In the eye of the author of this thesis all of the featured videos could have well been shown on television as well. Still all of them were ranked among the top of the lists of viral videos of the industry rating websites (AdWeek, 2016; AdAge, 2017) and, depending on their emotional tone, were found to trigger relatively high intentions for sharing among consumers.

For one more suggestion, which was previously given by Libert and Tynski (2013), support was found in the characteristics of the six viral videos chosen and analyzed in the course of the study for this thesis. The authors advised that when designing their online marketing video, marketers should not too heavily brand their content. The reason they gave for this was that otherwise a video could quickly be perceived as annoying and therefore be ignored (Libert & Tynski, 2013). Most of the videos in the study followed this scheme and only in the very end of the videos showed the brand logo or hinted towards a connection between the content of the video and the brand message. It could be guessed that they were successful and became viral probably also because of that, but such assumptions would need further research and testing. More limitations of the study and suggestions for future research will be presented later. The next section will summarize the implications derived from this study for stakeholders.

5.2 Implications for relevant stakeholders

The stakeholders for whom the findings of this study could be especially interesting and relevant for, are marketers who are trying to improve their online marketing video activities and are wishing to strike a viral video success which lets their brand stand out of the mass of competing online marketing campaigns. Creating and obtaining such a viral video in social media can be very beneficial for companies, as such a form of emotional branding is likely to create a competitive advantage with if implemented correctly can deepen the relationship between companies and brands and might even allow consumers to publically identify with the brand. Summarizing the findings of the study for this thesis it can be said that the emotional tone that is triggered by online marketing videos does have an effect on the intentions and attitudes of consumers. To be more specific, it was found that content which triggers a pleasant overall emotional tone creates a more positive attitude towards the advertisement and the featured brand. Furthermore, a pleasant emotional tone positively affects the intentions to purchase from the advertised brand and increases the likelihood of people to share the online marketing video, more than a negative emotional tone. Thus, pleasant emotional tone is much more likely to increase the chance of a video to go viral than an unpleasant one. This means, that marketers should design their online marketing videos that they are funny, light-hearted and touching in a positive way. Of course it is, even with the knowledge gained from this thesis, still difficult to predict which contents exactly create such an emotional tone. Even obeying all findings of this study is no guarantee for striking a viral video success. This is because, as already stated by Kaplan ad Haenlin (2011), even with the best emotional design, it needs a lot of luck and intuition to meet the right time and reach the right people in the perfect situation to really let a video go viral. However, with the findings from this study and marketers learning to concentrate on the pleasurable side of contents, the chances will be much increased.

The results of this thesis were also able to refute the widespread assumption that viral marketing video need to contain shocking elements like sexual appeals, violence or extreme humor in order to attract consumers' attention (Lindstrom, 2009). Marketers need to be aware that posting one video which goes viral can not only create an attitude towards the advertisement, but also, probably more important for the company, might have a significant influence on the overall attitude towards the brand. Therefore, they should wisely consider and choose the appropriate content that creates the right emotional tone; from this research this would be a pleasant one, as it is assumed that brands would appreciate a viral video to positively influence consumers' attitude towards the brand. It has to be kept in mind that if the

content of the online marketing video is for some reason being perceived unpleasantly, such a video could still go viral, for example for being so bad, and strongly backfire at a brand and even harm the brand by deteriorating the overall attitude towards it. Content that is extreme is much more likely to create controversial and negative thoughts towards the ad and the brand. Therefore, it is suggested that marketers rather focus on light-hearted pleasant content, which positively connects to the intended message of a brand.

The results from the question on the general questions relating to the common social media video sharing behavior of the respondent might signal an alert for attention for marketers when designing their online video marketing campaigns. Regarding what was found, it is suggested that marketers thoroughly consider how they can reach their target markets on the different social media platforms. Although it was found that pleasant videos are more likely to be shared than videos with overall unpleasant emotional tone, the likelihood that people would share any video is still relatively low. Considering that most respondents indicated that they would watch online marketing videos when they come up in their social media feeds, marketers should advisably concentrate on investing into paid social media marketing. This does not quite accord with the assumption of Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) who thought that a good campaign would need to find its own way to go viral. However, in the opinion of the author of this thesis, considering the rather low indications of consumer for sharing branded content voluntarily, improving the seeding of a video through paid social media placements, could allow brands to spread their online marketing video and also increase the chance that it in fact reaches people who voluntarily share it with their social media community.

Finally, despite all the encouragement for and strong effects of using pleasant emotional tone for viral videos, marketers should keep in mind that too much of a good thing can also overkill. Many consumers are well aware of the marketing strategies and tricks of brands and if they are too obvious and exaggerated, people might feel pulled on their emotions too hard and instead of bonding on an emotional level, rather back off from feeling fooled and not being treated genuinely. Therefore, finding the right content and amount of pleasant emotional tone for an online marketing video can not only increase its probability to go viral, but also to foster emotional bonds and build valuable loyal relationships with consumer.

Besides the useful findings and implications this thesis found for stakeholders, there are a few limitations which were faced by the scope of this study. Those are presented in the next section and related recommendations for future research will be given.

5.3 Limitations and future research

First of all what has to be mentioned is that the sample size of the study was relatively limited. Therefore, it is not sure whether the findings are to be generalized for the whole population. Furthermore, one could argue that the sample for the experiment only consisted of people from one age group, ranging from 18 to 30 years. However, this sample was chosen because it represents the age group which was found to have the highest popularity of social media use (MarketingSherpa, 2015). Therefore, it makes the largest group of people that could get in touch with online marketing videos. For companies which have a specific target group which differs significantly in age, it might be recommendable to perform a similar study with respondents from the relevant age range. It has to be mentioned that many of the results of the data analysis, despite most of them showing significant differences, were relatively close to the means and had only little mean differences.

The data collected in the experiment showed that only few respondents in general often or regularly share content on their social media pages. The data analysis in some of the videos also found, that the results to the questions regarding the intention to share are likely to be biased by the general social media sharing habits of the sample. From that it can be assumed that the average rating in the questions on sharing intention was therefore lower than it would have been if respondents would have stated a higher general sharing behavior. Due to this it cannot be guaranteed that the intention to share a video with the social media community was caused by the emotional tone of the video only, as it might be biased by a general reluctance. Therefore, the author of this thesis suggests that a similar study to this one could be performed with only people who state to generally enjoy sharing online marketing videos. Like that the confounding factor could be limited.

Another element which might be interesting for marketers to consider, resulting from the data collected on general sharing behavior, is the general reluctance towards sharing videos on social media. It could be advisable for marketers to not only focus on the number of public shares as a measure for success of a video. This is because as the data shows people seem to in general not like to share branded content in their social media communities. This means that even though someone might really like an online marketing video, he would probably still not share the video because he in general does not do that. First, marketers should not forget that, for example on *Facebook*, also when a user only hits the "Like"-button the video would appear in the feeds of his friends. Watson (2014) pointed out that only 28 % of all sharing happens publically on social media pages. The remaining 78 % actually is shared in what she calls "Dark

Social". This means that the majority of users does not share videos or other content on their social media walls for everyone, but rather sends it to friends who they think it might be interesting for on private messaging tools. These for example include messenger services, chats and email (Watson, 2014). A reason for this might be that they do not want to openly demonstrate their connection to the branded content and somehow openly "wear the content", as Schäfer (2014) called the expressive public self-identification with brands possible in social media. Knowing about this hidden sharing behavior and customer engagement, marketers should be working on methods to identify and capture also this traffic. Watson (2014) thinks that finding intelligent sharing tools which are capable of tracking the sharing in the Dark Social will be the future of marketing. In general, marketers are still complaining about a lack of effective tools for tracking and reporting the success of a marketing campaign (Feed Company, 2008). This is because only then marketers can get a true insight about what is attractive and engaging and also which emotions or emotional tones make people enjoy sharing, even if not publically. With that information, finally marketers would be able to alter the content of their online marketing videos and other content of social media posts by the needs and interests of their audience (Watson, 2014). Until such intelligent tracking tools are in place, counting view as a measure of success is probably a better measure of success than public shares.

This study grouped the effect of emotions by their general tone of being either pleasant or unpleasant. This information already gave a great indication for marketers, but it was not tested which emotions specifically cause a significant difference in the level of engagement. In this study with the results only suggestions could be given based on which emotions the respondents in the pre-test indicated to have experienced in the top videos of each tone. Thus, it might be interesting to conduct further research on which emotions have which effects on viewers' behavior. With this marketers could even more precisely design their videos to be most likely to become viral strikes. However, the author of this thesis has doubts that such research will be easy to conduct, as, like Gobé (2009) found, emotions usually do not come in pure state. So it could be difficult to find videos which can distinctively be grouped by single emotions.

For this study it was chosen to use mainly quantitative research because the main aim of the thesis was to determine countable relationships between different variables. This gave a useful insight into the general benefit of using one emotional tone over the other. However, in the short part of the study in which qualitative research was applied by using an open ended

question to find out about reasons why respondents would share the various online marketing video, interesting more underlying insights into their standards and demands for sharing videos were found. Therefore, future research could focus on using more qualitative research methods, such as interviews, to gain deeper insights into what and specifically which emotions or emotional tone would encourage people to share online marketing videos.

Looking at different studies which had been conducted around similar research questions, some other research methods which could have possibly been applied were thought through. For example it would have been possible to conduct an online content analysis. Berger (2013) used this method to analyze thousands of pictures and other contents posted online and the relating popularity. For this he researched whether those pieces were frequently shared or were ranked as most emailed. Finally he measured the emotions that were triggered by them in viewers (Berger, 2013). For the study of this thesis it was considered to use such a fully qualitative design by searching for online marketing videos which were ranked as most viewed or shared on a social media video sharing platform such as *YouTube*. To determine the emotional reactions the comments towards the videos could have been analyzed, either manually or with the help of a semantic or linguistic diagnostic tool. However, this method was not chosen because only a very limited amount of viewers leaves comments after watching videos. Also it would have been very unlikely to be able to detect the emotional effects on the overall perception and intention of purchasing or sharing. Another possible method that could have been used to find out whether emotions affect the level of consumer engagement, could have been interviewing people. However, although this qualitative method would have probably given an in-depth insight into the underlying reasons for which people share videos, only a limited amount of respondents could have possibly been reached, which would have given a relatively small sample. Moreover, a bias might have occurred by people not answering honestly and having a problem with expressing their emotions publically, due to the fear of social pressure and sticking to socially expected answers. Escalas et al. (2004) performed a study on the effect of attention towards an ad on the extent and types of feelings evoked. Their study design was similar to the one chosen for this thesis, as it included a two stages experimental design. In the first experiment the tendency towards affective behavior was determined. This was then used to conclude relations with the data collected in the second experiment. Here the same respondents participated in both stages of the study. In the experiment questions had to be filled out prior and after watching the videos. The experiment was performed at a university via showing the videos to all respondents at a time in a classroom theatre-style. Many aspects of the study by Escalas et al. (2004) were similar to this

one, but for the study of this thesis it would not have been possible to use the same sample for participating in both stages of the experiment. This is because if done so, the respondents would have probably already been biased from being primed towards the emotional tone of the online marketing videos. Therefore, for the current study, it was taken care, that only people who had not taken the pre-test were participating in the actual experiment.

Finally, within the scope of this thesis only the theoretical intention of respondents to share the viewed videos or purchase from the advertised brands was measured. This implies that there is a possibility that the true behavior is likely to differ from the stated intentions. Therefore, it could be advisable for the use of marketers to gain knowledge from future research which tries to capture and analyze actual consumer behavior. This would mean that brands or researchers would need to publish online marketing videos with pleasant and unpleasant emotional content and in turn track consumers who reportedly watched the video. Then researchers could compare them based on the real conversion rates of actual shares or purchases stimulated by the videos.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of questions asked in the experiment survey

General questions

1. Do you enjoy watching branded online marketing videos?

Answers: not at all ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... very much / I don't use social media

2. How often do you watch online marketing videos?

Answers: never / every other week / once a week / multiple times a week / daily / multiple times daily

3. Why do you watch online marketing videos?

Answers (multiple choices possible):

- To seek information about product/services
- Because I want to be entertained
- To stay updated with brands I like
- Because they come up in my social media feed
- Because friends shared them or recommended them to me
- Because I am interested in online marketing
- Other (please specify)

4. How often do you share online marketing videos with your social media community?

Answers: never / seldom / sometimes / often / always / I don't use social media

Pre-video questions

1. Do you know the brand XY

Answers: Yes / No

2. Have you ever purchased or consumed any of XY's product or services?

Answers: never / once / a few times / often

3. What is your attitude towards the brand XY?

Answers:

- bad ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... good / I don't know the brand
- negative ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... positive / I don't know the brand
- unfavorable ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... favorable / I don't know the brand
- like ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... dislike / I don't know the brand

Post-video questions

1. Have you seen this advertisement before

Answers: Yes / No

2. What is your attitude towards the advertising video

Answers:

- bad ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... good
- negative ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... positive
- unfavorable ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... favorable
- like ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... dislike

3. What would you do?

I would recommend others to watch the video.

I think this video is worth sharing with others.

I would share this video with my social media community.

Answers: I strongly disagree ... X ... X ... X ... I strongly agree

4. Why would you share or not share this video with your social media community?

Answer: open ended

5. After watching the video, what is your attitude towards the brand XY?

Answers:

- bad ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... good
- negative ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... positive
- unfavorable ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... favorable
- like ... X ... X ... neutral ... X ... X ... dislike

6. After watching the video, would you purchase the products/services of XY?

I would purchase from the brand.

I felt stimulated by the video to purchase from the brand.

After watching the video I would purchase more from the brand than before.

After watching the video I would purchase less from the brand than before.

Answers: I strongly disagree ... X ... X ... X ... I strongly agree

Demographical questions

1. Gender

Answers: Female / Make

2. How old are you

Answer: open ended

3. What is your nationality?

Answer: open ended

Appendix 2: Summary of questions asked in the pre-test survey

Post-video questions:

1. How unpleasant or pleasant was the video for you?

(Please indicate on the following scale how you perceived the emotions that were conveyed in the video. Please do not rate how much you liked the video, brand or product but only how the video made you feel.)

Answers: very unpleasant ... X ... X ... X ... X ... X ... X ... X ... very pleasant

2. Which emotions did you experience while watching the video?

(Please tick the emotions that apply! Multiple choices are possible.)

Answers:

- I felt joyful
- I felt trust
- I felt fearful
- I felt surprised
- I felt sad
- I felt disgusted
- I felt angry
- I felt anticipation
- None of these

Demographical questions:

1. Gender

Answers: Female / Male

2. How old are you

Answers:

- 20 and below
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61-70
- 70 and above

3. What is your nationality?

Answer: open ended

Appendix 3: Description of digital marketing videos showed in the experiment

Pleasant videos:

Mentos – Mentors, It's easy to connect with a little help

60 seconds - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rT8Ro2MOcnA>

On screen: "When did we stop talking to each other?" Kids who sit in a room watching adults live on screen give them instructions through invisible ear pieces on what to do and say to strangers those adults meet on the street. The kids tell the adults to make compliments, tell stories, ask for cuddles, start dancing with each other and even ask the stranger to be friends. The strangers first react bewildered but then all smile and happily join in the interactions. On screen: "Connecting with people is simple." Finally the adults all offer the strangers a Mentos candy drop and all of them accept gratefully. In the end a voice sings the slogan "Who says no to Mentos."

Airbnb – Never A Stranger

60 seconds - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4WVhcXogGk>

A woman talks from the off. She addresses the stranger who has let her stay in his/her house. On screen a woman travelling by herself in various destinations, meeting and partying with people, smiling to strangers and relaxing on the beach can be seen. She talks about how her friends said she was crazy for staying in someone else's house but then she explains the great experiences she had. She almost felt home as she was welcomed by the stranger, the neighbors, his/her friends and the home was perfect. Finally, she thanks the stranger for sharing the world with her. It felt like home to her.

Canadian Tire – Wheels:

60 seconds - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFuwUiHo-WI>

A group of young boys are playing basketball in a backyard. When one of them runs to get the ball that rolled out, he faces another boy in a wheelchair on a porch. They look at each other and each waves a "Hey!" and the first boy runs back. An acoustic guitar song starts to play. In a new scene the boy in the wheelchair rolls to the door and finds a basketball on his porch. When he rolls to the backyard with the ball he finds the group of boys playing basketball, but all sitting on rolling chairs or tricycles so that they are in a similar condition like he is. The boy from the first scene invites him to play and he joins with a big smile. A voice from the off says "when the best of us steps up, our nation stands a little taller. We all play for Canada."

Unpleasant

Samsung – Samsung cares for a Safe India

35 seconds - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZdP-G-F0a8>

Indian instrumental music plays. A man is lying in his blood on the ground right after an accident with his moped. Beautiful memories like the birth of his daughter, her first steps and his wife holding her waving, come to his mind. Then his phone can be seen with a cracked screen showing a selfie of him that he apparently took right before the crash while driving. White font on black ground calls to not risk one's beautiful life and stay safe on the road by not taking silly selfies while driving. Finally a man sitting behind a desk explains that India accounts for 50 per cent of all selfie deaths and asks people to use their mobile phones responsibly.

Knorr – Spread the true Spirit of Ramadan

109 seconds - Bengali language with English subtitles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Upmab1GvTg0>

A mother with her young son sits in the back of a rickshaw. It is the boy's first time fasting and she is worried about him being alright. She buys pizza and groceries for the celebration of breaking fasting. The obviously exhausted old man who pulls the rickshaw watches all that. When the mother is back in the back of the rickshaw she explains the meaning of "roza" to her boy as not only being about fasting but about self-control, understanding others' suffering and treating others nicely. Then she shouts at the old man to ride faster. He gasps that he has been fasting all day pulling the rickshaw and is feeling weak. The woman seems to feel bad for shouting at him. In the final scene the boy brings the old man some food as his mother told him to. The old man is positively surprised and gratefully smiles at the woman who looks relieved. A male voice from the off calls for food-donations for the poor in the fasting time.

Mc Donald's – Tuloy Pa Rin

60 seconds - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnY3Cl1BBpw>

A young woman walks towards a table in a Mc Donald's restaurant. She has a tray with a burger in her hands. Then the scene switches to what is apparently her memory of her boyfriend breaking up with her right at that table. She was crying hard then.

The woman looks like she is still thinking sadly about that. The music beats up and the woman walks to the table, sits down and takes a bite of her burger. Through that she starts smiling, looks content and relaxes in her chair. A female voice from the off: "Welcome change with a new burger McDo!"