

Covert online video marketing: It can't hurt – can it?

- A quantitative study of the possibilities and pitfalls of covert online video marketing -

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Abstract | Marketing that disguises the true source of a commercial message is often referred to as *covert marketing*. Online marketing videos that are uploaded by brands with the purpose of appearing to be made by fans/consumers have been identified; a phenomenon defined as *covert online marketing videos* (COMVs). Their effect on consumers will be investigated through a study on two brands in the apparel industry. The purpose is to see how much of an impact an *indication* of a COMV-activity being undertaken by brands has on consumers. The dimensions of source credibility, level of familiarity with the brand and ethics are analysed.

Our findings show that when participants watch a COMV indicated to be fan-made, their level of perceived trustworthiness, brand attitude and purchase intention are unaffected. However, when it is instead indicated that the COMV is brand-made with the intention of appearing to be fan-made, perceived trustworthiness, brand attitude and purchase intention all decrease. The risks of using COMVs therefore outweigh any potential gains.

Key words: Covert online video marketing, covert marketing, stealth marketing, brand attitude, purchase intention, brand familiarity, trustworthiness

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Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Problem Area: Covert online marketing videos.....	2
1.3 Purpose.....	3
1.4 Delimitations.....	4
1.5 Expected Knowledge Contribution.....	4
1.6 Definitions	4
1.7 Disposition.....	5
2. Theory.....	6
2.1 Fan-made videos (FMVs) and consumer-generated ads (CGAs)	6
2.2 Covert/Stealth marketing and covert online marketing videos (COMVs).....	7
2.3 Market communication model.....	8
2.3.1 The examined variables.....	9
2.4 What is there to gain from covert online marketing videos (COMVs) - if you do not get caught? ...	10
2.4.1 The effects on trustworthiness	10
2.4.2 The effects on brand attitude and purchase intention.....	11
2.5 What is there to lose from doing covert marketing?.....	12
2.5.1 The effect on trustworthiness.....	12
2.5.2 The effect on brand attitude after disclosure of true source	13
2.5.3 The ethical effect on purchase intention after disclosure of true source.....	14
2.5.4 The level of familiarity determines the effect of brand evaluations when it is indicated that COMVs exist.....	15
3. Method.....	16
3.1 Research Design.....	16
3.2 Preparatory Work.....	16
3.2.1 Choice of Brands and Videos	16
3.2.2 Setting up the experiment.....	17
3.2.3 Pre-test.....	18
3.3 Experiment.....	18
3.3.1 Manipulation.....	18
3.3.2 Survey Design.....	19
3.3.2 Scales and Measurements	20
3.5 Collection of Data.....	21

3.5.1 Collection Process	21
3.5.2 Sample.....	21
3.6 Analysis methods	21
3.6.1 Treatment of data	21
3.6.2 Instruments of analysis	22
3.7 Quality of Data.....	23
3.7.1 Reliability	23
3.7.2 Validity.....	23
4. Results and analysis.....	24
4.1 Effects of using COMVs – when they remain covert.....	24
4.1.1 Trustworthiness is not affected by a COMV that is indicated to be fan-made	24
4.1.2 Brand attitude and purchase intention are left unaffected	25
4.2 What is there to lose from using COMVs?.....	25
4.2.1 Trustworthiness of the brand is negatively affected	25
4.2.2 Brand attitude experiences a negative impact	26
4.2.3 People are less inclined to buy the brand when the existence of COMVs is indicated.....	27
5. Discussion and implications.....	30
5.1 Discussion of the findings	30
5.1.1 Successfully disguising COMVs as FMVs/CGAs seems useless.....	30
5.1.2 ...and there are negative outcomes when getting caught	31
5.2 Criticism towards the study.....	34
5.3 Future regulations	34
5.4 Conclusions.....	35
5.5 Suggestions for future research.....	36
6. Reference List	38
6.1 Literature	38
6.2 Articles	38
6.3 Theses	40
6.4 Electronic sources.....	40
7. Appendices.....	42
7.1 Appendix 1: Pre-test [Levi's]	42
7.2 Appendix 2: Texts (manipulations) before each survey.....	44
7.3 Appendix 3: The Baseline Survey.....	45
7.4 Appendix 4: The main survey (version 1).....	47

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Increasing media clutter has diminished the effects of marketing today. The average consumer is estimated to be bombarded with approximately 5 000 explicit marketing communications every day, but only consciously processes 1-2 % of them (Pringle, 2004). In addition, consumers are increasingly growing reluctant to advertising. The possibility to avoid marketing and advertising has increased with the help of TV-recorders and services to which you can subscribe to avoid sales calls in Sweden (Dahlén & Lange, 2009), which makes it harder to reach and influence consumers (Wells, 2004). The need to stand out in the media clutter is therefore prevalent, and brands strive to create marketing that people actually want to watch.

The Internet is now one of the most used and accessible media channels. Statistics of Internet usage show that 72 % of all Swedes use the Internet daily (Internetstatistik, 2012), and out of these, 23 % watch video clips every day (Nordicom, 2011). YouTube is predominant as the most visited video-sharing site online, with one billion unique visitors worldwide every month (YouTube, 2013). YouTube's original idea was to host videos made by regular people, with the slogan "Broadcast Yourself", implying that the consumer becomes the broadcaster (Berthon, Pitt & Campbell, 2008). This statement is agreed upon by several researchers, since the ease of technology and video editing software has enabled consumers to become their own broadcasters (Campbell, Piercy & Heinrich, 2012).

The past decade has experienced a change in the marketing industry with the Internet being a part of every company's market communication. One of the observed developments is consumers who create ads for brands, with or without the interference of the company itself, a phenomenon called consumer-generated ads (CGAs) (Lawrence, Fournier & Brunel, 2013). Some of these videos, often uploaded on YouTube, have gone viral, reaching millions of people (YouTube, 2013). Another form of videos uploaded online is fan-made videos (FMVs) – videos made in tribute to actors, artists or brands. After observing the success of some of these, companies realise the potential of making marketing videos made to look like CGAs/FMVs.

Communicating with consumers without revealing the source (Martin & Smith, 2008) is referred to as stealth marketing, (stealth = sneaky, sly) part of the broader concept of covert (covert = secret, hidden) marketing; a widely debated marketing effort that has ethical issues embedded in

the concept. Producing videos uploaded online that are believed to be made by fans/consumers, when it is not, can be seen as covert marketing. This phenomenon is therefore defined as covert online marketing videos (COMVs).

1.2 Problem Area: Covert online marketing videos

In 2006, a video was uploaded on YouTube called “Famous party trick”, a shaky recording from a house party (YouTube, 2006). The viewer can see a few people sitting around a table, where a man manages to pull off a fun party trick. Afterwards, they all celebrate with a glass of whisky. At first glance, it is just another video uploaded after a party. However, the video is a commercial made by Famous Grouse, a premium whisky brand. This way of masking the true source of the marketing message is regarded as *covert marketing*.

Two famous brands that have been found to employ the marketing practice of COMVs are Levi’s and Ray-Ban, both operating in the apparel industry. When people want to watch videos online on e.g. YouTube, watching funny clips come in second, after news/current events (Jarboe, 2011). With this in mind, the brands Levi’s and Ray-Ban both created entertaining videos based on crazy stunts with their products – “Guys backflip into jeans” and “Sunglass Catch”, respectively. Both were viral successes. However, they were portrayed as being CGAs/FMVs, without revealing their true source. These two videos have been chosen as the material for our research, to which we will refer throughout the thesis.

Obviously, there are advantages of this practice, such as the absence of advertising barriers which makes it possible to persuade consumers without resistance (Dahlén & Lange, 2009). However, the ethical dimension is an issue, with consumers left feeling deceived if they discover the truth (Martin & Smith, 2008). The question is: *is it worth it?*

Previous research on covert marketing is mainly limited to usage in marketing media such as radio, websites and blogs. Existing research all study “revelations” of some sort. The effects of disclosing that a radio show is sponsored by a company before consumers listen to it have been investigated (Wei, Fischer & Main, 2008). Researchers have also studied what happens to consumer-brand relationships when consumers find out that a website is company-made after having believed it was not (Ashley & Leonard, 2009). Studies on disguised product placement, another word for covert marketing, on blogs has been made, where experiments included a third party revelation of the product placement to see the effect on blog attitude and credibility as well

as brand attitude and purchase intention (Erlandsson & Johansson, 2009; Colliander & Erlandsson, 2013).

Studies on covert marketing videos posted on video-sharing websites have however not been extensive. One study partly investigates the effects on consumers when it is revealed that the video they have watched is brand-made, trying to impersonate a consumer (Campbell et al., 2012). The effects on brand evaluation of short video-ads claimed to be based on ideas submitted by consumers (CGAs) have also been investigated (Thompson & Malaviya, 2013). This thesis aims to fill this gap in the research of covert marketing for online videos. In the midst of all the media clutter, if it is merely indicated to consumers that they are subjected to covert online video marketing, what are the effects? Our research question is therefore:

What are the potential gains and risks of covert online marketing videos (COMVs) depending on who is indicated to be the source?

The sub-questions that will help us investigate the potential *gains* of COMVs are:

- How does COMV perceived as a CGA/FMV affect consumers' perceived trustworthiness of the source?
- How does COMV perceived as a CGA/FMV affect consumers' brand attitude?
- How does COMV perceived as a CGA/FMV affect consumers' purchase intention?

The sub-questions that will help us investigate the potential *risks* of COMVs are:

- How does the indication of watching a COMV affect consumers' perceived trustworthiness of the source?
- How does the indication of watching a COMV affect consumers' brand attitude?
- How does the indication of watching a COMV affect the consumers' purchase intention?

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to study the effects of covert online marketing videos to see if the indicated source has an impact on consumers' brand evaluations. Doing this will fill a gap in existing research on covert marketing and educate practitioners, academics and consumers.

1.4 Delimitations

Certain delimitations are made due to constraints in terms of time and area of focus. This thesis will focus on two separate brands in two different product categories, operating in the apparel industry. Therefore this thesis does not extend to make a generalisation spanning over several industries. Another limitation is that the thesis does not consider the *message* of the video at hand, i.e. studying what the performers in the videos are actually saying and doing. Moreover, aspects regarding the *sender* of the video are disregarded, e.g. if it was sent by a friend or by a corporation, since this would have required several dimensions for which there was not sufficient time or space for in the thesis. Furthermore, potential *cultural differences* are overlooked since it is considered irrelevant to the findings of the thesis due to its area of focus. *Long-term effects* and the *level of involvement* are other aspects that lie outside the thesis.

1.5 Expected Knowledge Contribution

There is no reason to believe that practitioners will cease to use covert marketing. Subliminal marketing, the predecessor to covert marketing, has been used in different ways since at least the 1950's (Broyles, 2006), although regulations have altered the way of using this kind of marketing (Martin & Smith, 2008). With more knowledge of potential positive and negative effects of COMVs, practitioners will be able to make better decisions depending on their aim, since according to Rotfeld (2008), the majority of the covert marketing activities are executed with little certainty of their impact. The nature of the activities often makes it difficult for companies to measure the impact practically without revealing their covert activity. The research will especially be of interest to marketers and companies, both those that are currently using COMVs and those that are not. Additionally, the results could be of interest to consumers who get a greater chance to resist COMVs if they are aware of them and their effects.

1.6 Definitions

- 1. Consumer-generated ads (CGAs):** Ads created by consumers with or without involvement of the brand (Thompson & Malaviya, 2013).
- 2. Fan-made videos (FMVs):** Videos made by consumers completely without interference from a brand, portraying an actor/artist/brand in a positive/neutral way.
- 3. Covert marketing:** Hidden/disguised marketing where consumers believe that the activities are not those of the company (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004)

4. **Stealth marketing:** Subtle display or word-of-mouth of a brand without acknowledging or disclosing the company/sponsor behind the marketing activity (Martin & Smith, 2008).
5. **Covert online marketing video (COMV):** A video uploaded online where the true source is undisclosed.
6. **Source:** The producer of the video, for example a company using for marketing purposes.
7. **Persuasion knowledge:** The accumulated knowledge of companies' attempts to persuade consumers (Friestad & Wright, 1994).

1.7 Disposition

The thesis is divided into five main chapters; introduction, theory, method, results and analysis, as well as discussion and implications. The theory covers covert marketing and its effects on brand evaluations based on theories about source credibility, familiarity and ethics. The used method is then discussed, followed by the results and analysis of the conducted study. Finally, the thesis is concluded with a discussion and our summarised conclusions.

2. Theory

The following section will cover the underlying theories behind the existence and effects of covert marketing, and how it can be applied to the observed phenomenon of covert online marketing videos (COMVs). The starting point is fan-made videos (FMVs) and consumer-generated ads (CGAs), which constitute the very possibility of creating COMVs. Covert marketing will thereafter be investigated to see the advantages and disadvantages. But what our theory essentially will study is what effects a COMV has on consumers, when its existence is indicated, and what impact it then has on brand evaluations.

2.1 Fan-made videos (FMVs) and consumer-generated ads (CGAs)

Two similar trends that have emerged during the last decade are fan-made videos (FMVs) and consumer-generated ads (CGAs). They play an increasing role in the marketing hemisphere and their existence enables the use of COMVs as a marketing practice.

When YouTube was launched in 2005, the website enabled regular people to upload and share their own videos. Many amateur videos of different kinds can be found on YouTube's platform, e.g. fan-made videos made in tribute of actors, artists and even brands (YouTube, 2013), which we simply define as *fan-made videos* (FMVs). In addition to these, video adverts which were independently produced by consumers were acknowledged by companies. They saw the potential in these and decided to invite consumers to help them co-create and even solely produce official ads for their brands. This phenomenon is called *consumer-generated ads* (CGAs) (Lawrence, Fournier & Brunel, 2013). The majority of CGAs end up on large video-sharing sites such as YouTube. The reason companies involve consumers in the creation of their marketing activities is because it is believed that more authentic content is generated and that deeper customer insights are gained (Thompson & Malaviya, 2013). Research by Lawrence et al. (2013) suggests that CGAs are beneficial due to the high level of customer engagement. Consumers also activate other evaluation criteria when judging this kind of ad and therefore lower their expectations. CGAs/FMVs are not only positive for a firm though; according to Thompson and Malaviya (2013), there are shortcomings such as less control over content and larger inconsistency of the brand message. However, the constant rise of CGAs implies that they are a successful marketing tactic.

2.2 Covert/Stealth marketing and covert online marketing videos (COMVs)

Marketing that is not disclosed as being marketing, often called “masked-”, “hidden”, “covert-” or “stealth-” marketing, is a practice where the brand fails to disclose/reveal that they are the sponsor behind an advertisement. Both covert and stealth marketing apply the same principle: disguising the true source behind the message. Within the focus of this thesis, we do not consider any significant differences between the two concepts. Instead we will refer to covert marketing throughout the thesis.

Covert marketing is used by many firms today due to increasing media clutter and the many ways consumers can avoid marketing. As previously mentioned, consumers are more reluctant to marketing practices today than before. Concealing the source of a marketing message to reach them can therefore be seen as unethical. Consumers’ attempt to avoid advertising therefore highlights the problems with covert marketing.

Several aspects of covert marketing will be explored. Companies have been found to take advantage of the phenomenon of CGAs and FMVs in order to subject consumers to various marketing tactics (Campbell et al., 2012). We have observed videos on YouTube, where the brands Levi’s and Ray-Ban do this. How does the knowledge of this practice affect consumers? Most research on covert marketing has examined radio, blogs and marketing videos (e.g. Wei et al., 2008; Colliander & Erlandsson, 2013; Campbell et al., 2012). Therefore there is a need to study online video marketing and its covert practices – the COMVs.

The videos “Guys backflip into jeans” and “Sunglass Catch” appear to be entertainment videos. When dealing with COMVs, the question “how far is too far?” arises. There are no clear links to the brands in the videos or on their YouTube accounts, so are customers really affected at all? If not, what is then the harm of these videos? According to Martin and Smith (2008), there are three ethical dimensions to covert marketing: deception, intrusion and exploitativeness. Levi’s and Ray-Ban *deceive* their viewers by omission, a tactic also presented by Grazioli and Jarvenpaa (2003), which means failure to disclose the true source. Neither brand is however explicitly lying - they are just not telling the truth. Moreover, neither brand is *intruding* on their viewers’ lives, due to the nature of being present on YouTube, where people seek out videos themselves. What brands on the other hand appear to be doing is *exploiting* the human good nature of the viewers, who think they are simply watching a fun entertainment video when they are in fact being

subjected to covert marketing (Martin & Smith, 2008). It is important for brand managers to be aware that consumers expect the brands to be honest (Campbell et al., 2012).

There are covert marketing defenders who claim that there really is “no harm done”; meaning that although consumers may initially feel “duped” upon understanding that they have been deceived, there can sometimes be positive outcomes too, e.g. the feeling of being entertained, (Martin & Smith, 2008). This supports why the videos posted by Levi’s and Ray-Ban are of an entertaining nature. It can be seen as a way to minimise the negative effects, should a COMV be perceived as being one.

2.3 Market communication model

The starting point of our investigation of COMVs is the general Micro-goal chain (“Mikromålkedjan”) presented by Dahlén and Lange (2009). It is a market communications model that is applicable to all marketing communication, consisting of four communication goals: category interest, brand knowledge, brand attitude and purchase intention. The Micro-goal chain is an effect hierarchy, meaning that each goal in the process is even more important than the previous (Dahlén & Lange, 2009).

When considering the category interest, statistics show that the apparel industry had global sales of \$ 1 688 billion in 2011 (Euromonitor, 2013), which implies that there is no need to investigate the category interest further. Moreover, we have chosen to define brand knowledge differently than Dahlén and Lange (2009), who divide the goal into recognition and recall. Instead we define it as being the level of familiarity, since “brand familiarity captures the consumers’ brand knowledge structures” according to Campbell and Keller (2003, p.293). Both brands examined in our thesis’ experiment have existed over a longer period of time; Levi’s since 1853 (Levi’s, 2013) and Ray-Ban since 1937 (Urban Optiques, 2013). A long history does however not guarantee high familiarity, so to ensure that this applied to our sample as well, brand familiarity was included in our the pre-tests. They showed that all participants were familiar with the brands (See 3.2.3), meaning there is no need to investigate brand knowledge. Instead, we will study the two latter parts in the model: brand attitude and purchase intention.

Within the micro-goal *brand attitude*, absolute attitude will be studied, which concerns transformative products, i.e. products with high identification and durance, which apparel

consequently is (Dahlén & Lange, 2009). To increase purchase intention, the product needs to be portrayed in a convincing way in order for people to get a more positive image of it. Essentially, purchase intention is the ultimate goal with market communication (Dahlén & Lange, 2009).

2.3.1 The examined variables

Research has shown that brand attitude has a causal effect on purchase intention (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986), which is one of the driving forces of the Micro-goal chain. The effect of three variables on brand attitude and purchase intention will be examined: *source credibility*, *familiarity*, and *ethics*. These variables were chosen based on research on covert marketing, in order to complement the existing findings appropriately.

Source credibility: Essentially, COMVs take advantage of the perceived source, in order to persuade consumers. Research on source credibility states that a source that is considered to be more credible will generate more positive brand evaluations (Pornpitakpan, 2004).

Familiarity: The level of familiarity has been proven to have an impact on the effect of source credibility. Consumers' brand evaluations have been found to be resistant towards the negative effects of disclosed covert marketing activities (Wei et al., 2008).

Ethics: Whether a brand is perceived as being ethical or not impacts the attitude towards the brand as well (Martin & Smith, 2008).

The overall model, based on Dahlén and Lange's (2009) Micro-goal chain is complemented with the examined variables and is presented below:

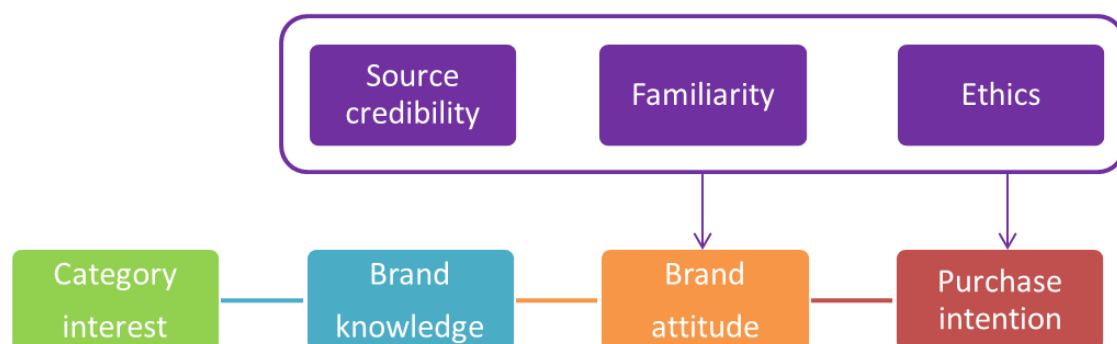


Figure 1: Micro-goal chain (Dahlén & Lange, 2009), complemented with the variables *source credibility*, *familiarity* and *ethics*.

2.4 What is there to gain from covert online marketing videos (COMVs) - if you do not get caught?

Consumers are aware that CGAs exist and there is the possibility that videos posted online without clear ties to the brand itself appear to be made by other consumers. The examined videos are not made to look like marketing videos and it is therefore interesting to learn if they have any positive effects on brand evaluations. The following part of the theory will focus on a scenario where the videos of Levi's and Ray-Ban are indicated to be FMVs/CGAs.

2.4.1 The effects on trustworthiness

Consumers respond differently towards a brand depending on how they perceive its source.

The elaboration likelihood model is relevant (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984) when looking at the source of a message, which is defined as *who* is believed to have created the message of persuasion. The model describes two ways of elaborating on a persuasion message; through the central route (i.e. when the elaboration likelihood is high) and the peripheral route (i.e. when the elaboration likelihood is low). The central route takes the message *content* into consideration, whilst the peripheral route – due to the low likelihood of elaboration – takes the *source* into account (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). The majority of consumers have low elaboration likelihood in a world of increasing media clutter, so the peripheral cue (i.e. the source) helps determine their attitude, which underlines the importance of who the source is perceived to be.

Therefore, the perceived source element in our study is that the video (the ad) is either fan-made or brand-made. The credibility of the source is based on what consumers' think about the credibility of the *message* (Balasubramanian, 1994). However, the message content is disregarded in this thesis. In order to further determine how credible a source is, the identification aspect matters. Since “consumers identify with other consumers” (Campbell et al., 2012), we define the fan-made videos as being of high credibility. The perceived source instantly influences the credibility of the message. How credible consumers then perceive these videos also depends on the perceived trustworthiness of the source of the video (Pornpitakpan, 2004). A FMV/CGA increases the perception of *trustworthiness* since consumers perceive other consumers in the videos as similar to them. Therefore, people who do not see the video are not exposed to this peripheral cue; the feeling of similarity and identification, and the brand simply remains a brand to them.

Perceived trustworthiness of the source affects persuasion. When discussing trustworthiness, it can be argued that *reliable* and *honest* are the equivalents to *trustworthy* (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2013). Therefore, when generating hypotheses, we will use the terms reliable and honest. With this information in mind, the following hypotheses have been generated:

H1. Consumers who watch a COMV and perceive it as fan-made, compared to those who have not seen it, will perceive the brand as...

- a) ... more reliable
- b) ... more honest

2.4.2 The effects on brand attitude and purchase intention

A highly credible source is believed to be evaluated more favourably and activates consumers' persuasion knowledge less than a low credibility source, which make consumers more likely to be persuaded by the message.

The compilation of five decades of source credibility research, presented by Pornpitakpan (2004), shows that the majority of the findings claim that a highly credible source is often found to be more persuasive toward an advocacy than a source of lower credibility. Not only is a source of higher credibility more persuasive, but studies have found them to be given more positive feedback (Albright & Levy, 1995).

After having looked at the source credibility effects, it is of interest to study how the perceived source affects consumers in terms of their persuasion knowledge. As consumers gain knowledge on marketing practices employed by companies, they become better at identifying marketers' attempts to influence and persuade them (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Persuasion knowledge is argued to be a key resource dependent on by consumers when they respond to a persuasion attempt made on them. When covert marketing activities take place successfully, consumers do not recognise the commercial purpose and there is consequently a risk that they will not be able to shield themselves (Friestad & Wright, 1994). According to Rotfeld (2008), even the most desensitized consumers will have difficulties protecting themselves. Furthermore, Dahlén (2003) argues that when consumers do not expect to be subjected to an advertising message, they are more motivated to listen to the message, which in turn increases the chance that they will be persuaded by the advertisement. Laurence et al. (2013) confirm this and claim that it should increase message persuasiveness – resulting in higher purchase intention. This implies that those who see the videos will have higher brand evaluations, since their judgement is believed to be

positively affected after exposure, compared to those who are not exposed to the videos. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been generated:

H2. Consumers who watch a COMV and perceive it as fan-made, compared to those who have not seen it, will have...

- a) ... higher brand attitude
- b) ... higher purchase intention

Having studied the potential advantages of COMVs disguised as CGAs/FMV, it is also interesting to examine the risks of engaging in and getting caught doing covert online marketing.

2.5 What is there to lose from doing covert marketing?

What happens if the online videos are indicated to be covert? It is interesting to learn if this impersonation has any negative effects on brand evaluations. The following part of the theory will focus on a scenario where the videos of Levi's and Ray-Ban are indicated to be brand-made, but appearing to look like they are made by fans/consumers.

2.5.1 The effect on trustworthiness

When indicating to a consumer that a video is brand-made, the consumers perceive the video as being of lower credibility, resulting in lower brand evaluations.

Studies by Hass and Grady (1975) showed that when participants were forewarned of the persuasive intent of the speakers, they appeared to be less trustworthy, which lead to reduced persuasion. Hass and Grady's (1975) word "forewarning" can be compared to Sternthal, Dholakia and Leavitt's (1978) definition of "the message recipient's initial opinion", which they believe is the key determinant to persuasion. By indicating to a consumer who the source is, their initial mind-set is determined.

The reason for creating COMVs is to take advantage of the credibility of the source, since consumers perceive a FMV/CGA as more trustworthy. So what happens when the true source is revealed? Advertising with an identified sponsor (the brand) is more likely to be viewed by scepticism (Balasubramanian, 1994) due to the obvious persuasion tactics, which means that the credibility is instead perceived as low. Consumers grow more resistant to acknowledging and processing a persuasion message (Friestad & Wright, 1994). The hypotheses generated from this knowledge are therefore:

H3. Consumers who watch a COMV and find out that brands produce videos to look like they are fan-made, compared to those who have not seen the video, will perceive the brand as...

- a) ... less reliable
- b) ... less honest

H4. Consumers who watch a COMV and find out that brands produce videos to look like they are fan-made, compared to those to whom it is indicated to be a FMV, will perceive the brand as...

- a) ... less reliable
- b) ... less honest

2.5.2 The effect on brand attitude after disclosure of true source

If a brand is perceived as being less trustworthy, research states that it generally leads to lower brand attitude

The brand attitude index in our thesis is based on how positive consumers assess the brand in question, adapted from MacKenzie & Lutz (1989). When there is a perceived similarity between the source and the recipient, consumers are believed to perceive the marketing activity as more trustworthy (Pornpitakpan, 2004), which in turn affects the attitude towards the brand more positively, i.e. by giving the brand higher ratings (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Therefore, it can be argued that the reverse should occur if the source is perceived as less trustworthy, which is confirmed by Campbell et al. (2012). They state that when consumers are subjected to a covert marketing activity and later find out that the brand impersonated another source, the consumer attitude towards the brand will be negatively affected. However, a study by Colliander and Erlandsson (2013) showed that the revelation of disguised product placement on blogs had no significant impact on brand attitude or purchase intention. But Campbell et al.'s study (2012) emphasizes our conviction of an indication having a negative impact, since their research showed that brand attitude indeed does significantly decrease after the disclosure of a brand's covert marketing practices.

Since we have previously hypothesized that those who watch a COMV and perceive it as fan-made will have more positive brand evaluations, it should make sense that when COMVs are indicated to be brand-made they are perceived as less trustworthy. The result from this should be lower brand attitudes. Therefore, we believe the following will happen:

H5. Consumers who watch a COMV and find out brands produce videos to look like they are fan-made will have a lower brand attitude than...

a) ... those who did not see the video

b) ... those to whom it is indicated to be a FMV

Research has shown that brand attitude influences purchase intention (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984), which makes it interesting to study how purchase intention changes based on the indication of a COMV being brand-made.

2.5.3 The ethical effect on purchase intention after disclosure of true source

An inevitable question that arises when dealing with covert marketing is how unethical the marketing practice is perceived and if that in fact leads to lower purchase intention.

Martin and Smith (2008) argue the importance of ethical dimensions when employing covert marketing. In the cases of Levi's and Ray-Ban, the brands both deceive and exploit the goodness of the potential consumers, which can leave them feeling "duped". Effectiveness of the persuasion message is achieved when consumers do not activate their persuasion knowledge or their scepticism either (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004). If a consumer does find out about a COMV-activity, the theory suggests that scepticism should inevitably affect the purchase intention negatively.

According to Wigley (2008), consumers demand more information on how companies take their corporate social responsibility (CSR). Consumers with high knowledge of a company's CSR-activities show significantly higher purchase intention compared to consumers with low knowledge. CSR-activities can be seen as evidence of a company's ethical standpoint, and covert marketing activities are of opposite nature since it *subliminally* encourages consumption. With this in mind, we hypothesize that finding out that a company has engaged in covert marketing activities will result in lower purchase intention. A study by Ashley and Leonard (2009) confirms this, by showing that after consumers were made aware of a covert marketing action by a brand they use; they had lower purchase intentions than those who had not found out about the action.

Therefore, a lower brand attitude and an unfavourable perception of the ethics of the brand should lead to lower purchase intention, which leads us to the following hypotheses:

H6. Consumers who watch a COMV and find out brands produce videos to look like they are fan-made will have lower purchase intention than...

- a) ... those who did not see the video
- b) ... those to whom it is indicated to be a FMV

2.5.4 The level of familiarity determines the effect of brand evaluations when it is indicated that COMVs exist

When consumers are very familiar with a brand, their brand evaluations are believed to be resistant to the impact of a covert marketing activity being indicated.

The level of familiarity of a brand determines how consumers cope with disclosure of covert marketing. Laroche, Kim and Zhao (1996) state that confidence in a brand, i.e. consumers' personal certainty of their judgement of brand quality (Howard, 1989), is an important determinant of purchase intention, which in turn is influenced by brand familiarity and experience of the brand.

The research of Wei et al. (2008) shows that making consumers aware of the persuasion attempt and thereby triggering persuasion knowledge leads to a varying extent of reduction of the attitude towards the brand depending on brand familiarity and attitude to covert marketing. Consumers who are highly familiar with a brand appear to be resistant to the negative effects of disclosed covert marketing activities, in terms of brand evaluations. This is possibly because consumers already are sympathetic to a brand to the extent that activation of persuasion knowledge cannot significantly impact the existing attitude (Wei et al., 2008).

Since a high level of familiarity leads to consumers being less negatively affected by the indication of the COMVs being brand-made, we believe the following will happen:

H7. Consumers who are *highly familiar* with a brand will be less negatively affected in their brand evaluations after an indication of a COMV being brand-made than those *who are not* highly familiar with the brand, in terms of...

- a) ... brand attitude
- b) ... purchase intention

3. Method

The following section will cover the method used to investigate our research question. It begins by discussing the general research design, followed by discussions on the preparatory work as well as the actual experiment. A description of the data collection process then follows, and then the treatment and analysis of data is described. Lastly, quality of the data is discussed.

3.1 Research Design

The thesis' objective is to reach conclusions regarding the effects on consumers when being exposed to covert online marketing videos. At first, the discovery of these kinds of marketing videos leads us onto the path of covert video marketing. However, our hypotheses are generated based on thorough research. Therefore the overall approach is of deductive nature (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Existing research on covert video marketing is currently scarce, which possibly depends on the relative novelty of this type of video. This aggravates the process of finding generalized, universally acceptable conclusions rather than conclusions about the videos that actually have been 'revealed'.

The experiment aims to examine to what extent the manipulations, i.e. the indications of the source, affect the participants (Söderlund, 2005). The purpose is specific and the data needs are clear. The sample is however not as large as desired (N=276), but this is merely a result of the limitations of time and access to participants. The hypotheses are tested in a quantitative study of primary data collected through an experiment, made with the help of an online survey. The quantitative approach was chosen to get measurable and comparable results (Malhotra, 2010). Moreover, this approach can better complement and contribute to existing research on covert marketing, by drawing more general conclusions on the effects of COMVs.

3.2 Preparatory Work

3.2.1 Choice of Brands and Videos

Levi's and Ray-Ban were chosen for the experiment since both brands have employed covert online video marketing and operate in the same industry, namely apparel. The companies both exist on an international market, and are established and well-known brands, which was

confirmed in our pre-test (See 3.2.3). This reinforces our choice since existing theory is focused on mature and familiar brands.

These covert marketing videos are similar in several aspects. They both use simple storylines consisting of a stunt being repeated in different settings with tunes untimed with action as background music, and simple editing with varying angles and lingering shots showing the men congratulating each other. The “packaging” of both videos is also similar since they were posted by new member accounts on YouTube without previously posted videos (Gawker, 2007). These similarities enable a comparable base.

The Levi’s video shows four men who jumping into a pair of jeans in different settings (YouTube, 2008), while the Ray-Ban video shows two men who throw a pair of sunglasses onto each other’s faces (YouTube, 2007). The Levi’s video is titled “Guys backflip into jeans” and was posted by the user unbuttonedfilms on 5th May 2008. It has since then been viewed around 8.19 million times (YouTube, 2008). The Ray-Ban video is titled “Sunglass Catch” and posted by neverhidefilms on 6th May 2007. Since then it has been viewed 5.24 million times (YouTube, 2007). Both videos can be regarded as successful COMVs due to this wide spread.

The user unbuttonedfilms has afterwards posted three videos of similar nature to that of “Guys backflip into jeans”. The brand name (Levi’s) is still never mentioned in the video information or in the videos. On the contrary, Never Hide Films (the user account neverhidefilms) now openly constitutes a large part of Ray-Bans marketing having posted 69 videos of varying kinds. The brand name Ray-Ban is highly present in the video information and in the videos. Furthermore, there is a link named “Never Hide Stories” on Ray-Ban’s official website displaying the videos (Ray-Ban, 2013).

3.2.2 Setting up the experiment

A YouTube account with the name “VideoExperiments2013” was created and we posted the videos with the names “VidExp2013” and “Vid Exp2013”. By doing this it was made certain that the video name, username and commentaries, among other aspects, would not affect respondents. The videos were then incorporated in the surveys using the online research software “Qualtrics”.

The entire experiment was decided to be communicated in English since this would facilitate a larger sample and an international spread. There is consequently a risk of minor language barriers

since the Swedish participants might misinterpret certain words. The majority of the participants were however expected to be young Swedish natives and considering the high level of English proficiency within this group of people, which is increasingly improving according to the latest European Survey on Language Competence (Skolverket, 2012), this aspect is disregarded.

3.2.3 Pre-test

An online pre-test for each brand was distributed using the social-networking site Facebook and e-mail. The pre-test for Levi's received 20 responses and the pre-test for Ray-Ban received 19 responses. The pre-tests were sent to friends and acquaintances between 18-25 years old, with an even gender distribution. This sample appropriately represented the participants that would later be targeted for the main survey. Participants that participated in the pre-test were not allowed to participate in the main experiment since they would then be familiar with the video and might have guessed the purpose of the experiment.

The pre-tests were conducted to certify that there is a high familiarity (1 = low familiarity, 7 = high familiarity) with the chosen brands among participants ($M_{\text{Levi's}} = 5.45$, $M_{\text{Ray-Ban}} = 5.79$), and since the videos had not been previously seen by any of the participants, the choice of brand and video were confirmed to be appropriate. This was especially important since the presence of "Never Hide Films" has grown since their first video in 2007. Therefore we needed to ensure that no one had seen "Sunglass Catch" before to secure the choice of the video. The pre-test also intended to decide which adjectives were suitable for the texts (the indications) that were later created to be read before watching the video in the main experiment. A list of words (cool, unconventional, amateur, creative, entertaining, real and cheap) was included and participants were asked to assess how suitable the adjectives described the video. All words scored a mean exceeding 4, suggesting they could all be used in the main survey.

3.3 Experiment

3.3.1 Manipulation

For each brand, four versions of the survey were distributed. Therefore, the experiment is a 2x4 design and two additional surveys were also carried out, which we will discuss in section 3.3.2. The participants were exposed to different texts ("forewarnings"), which they were requested to read before watching the video. The texts indicated that the video was either fan-made or brand-made by telling about the existence of fan-made videos displaying a brand's product, or about brand-made videos made to appear fan-made displaying the brand's product (see Appendix 7.2).

In short, indications of whether the video was a FMV/CGA or a COMV. The words in the texts were certified through the pre-tests, making sure we could use the adjectives we had suggested. For example, describing the video as “creative” and “made on a low budget” was supported by the results of the pre-tests. The reason for choosing to have a text to “set the scene” and not an article/e-mail was to avoid the dimension of a customer’s perception and attitude towards the source communicating that information.

The four dimensions of the research question were investigated in the experiment using the following manipulations:

Indication of video being...	Version
1. ... fan-made with the purpose of entertaining	1
2. ... fan-made with the purpose of displaying and marketing the brand	2
3. ... brand-made with the purpose of appearing to be fan-made to increase brand awareness	3
4. ... brand-made with the purpose of appearing to be fan-made to in order to increase sales	4

3.3.2 Survey Design

In order to study the research question on the effects of COMVs depending on who the source is believed to be, an online survey was designed in Qualtrics (see Appendix 7.4). This survey is referred to as the “main survey” and was deliberately not made too long – approximately 5 minutes – in order to increase the response rate. According to Porter, Whitcomb and Weitzer (2004), time is an important issue when dealing with survey responses. Their studies showed that demanding more time resulted in lower response rates.

The main survey began with one of the texts used as manipulation, and then the video was attached in a YouTube-window making the setting realistic since these kinds of videos are normally found on YouTube. The participants were then asked to answer questions on video attitude, brand attitude and brand familiarity (See Appendix 7.4). The questions were identical in all versions of the survey. Furthermore, two manipulation checks were made by asking the participants if they had seen the video before and who they believed had made the video. The survey ended with demographic questions on year of birth, gender and occupation. A question about whether the participant was Swedish or not was also included to determine the international spread. Specific nationality was not found relevant due to the delimitations of the thesis.

Closed questions were used in order to improve the comparability of the answers. Moreover, this structure facilitates the response process for participants since the questions can be answered faster than if they would have been asked to answer in their own words (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The participants were however asked to write their year of birth in an open format.

To be able to compare the response values of the participants that were subjected to different indications of the source of a video, a baseline survey without a video was carried out for each brand; those which will constitute our control group. This survey included the questions from the main survey that concern only the brand itself and not the video.

3.3.2 Scales and Measurements

The different scales and measurements used in the experiment are presented below. All closed questions were measured on a seven-point Likert scale, adapted from Bryman and Bell (2011).

Brand attitude was measured based on the question “What is your impression of the brand [Levi’s/Ray-Ban]?” with a scale of 1 = Do not agree at all, 7 = Agree completely, referring to the items of: “My impression of [Levi’s/Ray-Ban] is good/positive/satisfactory”, adapted from Törn (2009). A Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.904$ made it able to form an index of the statements.

Purchase intention was measured using the three questions: “It is likely/probable/possible that I will buy [Levi’s/Ray-Ban] the next time I buy [jeans/sunglasses]” (Machleit, Allen & Madden, 1993), with the answer being given on a Likert type scale ranging from 1 = Do not agree at all, 7 = Agree completely. The questions could be formed into an index (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.949$).

Brand ethics was measured by asking the question “What is your impression of the brand [Levi’s/Ray-Ban]?” with several adjective pairs as options, on a seven-type Likert scale. *Moral* (immoral), *honest* (dishonest) and *ethical* (unethical) were chosen and formed an index due to the Cronbach’s α being 0.882.

The *familiarity* of the brands was measured by one question, asking “How familiar are you with the brand [Levi’s/Ray-Ban]”, with the answer given on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Not at all” to “Very familiar”.

3.5 Collection of Data

3.5.1 Collection Process

The main survey was distributed through social media, mostly using Facebook, starting on 4th March 2013 and ending on 6th April 2013. The sample is a convenience sample consisting of family, friends, friends of friends and other acquaintances. The method offers many advantages: easy access, less time-consuming and being the least expensive option. However, a drawback is that they are not representative of the population and therefore cannot theoretically be justified to generalise an entire population, (Malhotra, 2010) which we are aware of when analysing the results.

One third of the responses for the baseline surveys (our control group) were collected online between 6th March 2013 and 21st March 2013 and the rest of the responses were collected using a printed version of the survey handed out at Stockholm School of Economics on 22nd March 2013. The “physical” answers were then manually added to the online survey in Qualtrics to get a complete set of data.

3.5.2 Sample

The mean age of the participants was 25.3 years old, with an age span of 50 years – with the youngest participant being 16 years old and the oldest 66 years. The mean age is appropriate considering that they are the most frequent Internet users (Internetstatistik, 2013) and therefore are more likely to be exposed to the videos examined. The gender distribution was 56 % female participants and 44 % male participants. Distributing the surveys online enabled an international spread, with 72 % of participants being Swedish and the remaining 28 % non-Swedes. The different versions were randomly allocated (Söderlund, 2005) among participants. The participants were asked to fill out a survey for a Bachelor’s thesis and got no further information about the area of research. The final number of participants in the experiment (main survey and baseline survey) was 276 people (216 in the main survey and 60 in the baseline survey).

3.6 Analysis methods

3.6.1 Treatment of data

After downloading the data from Qualtrics to SPSS, we adjusted the data by removing participants who had seen the video before, as well as participants who had not been manipulated as intended/not read the text before watching the videos. After these adjustments the number of approved participants was 189.

When looking at the means of the survey answers in survey version 1 and 2, which included a text indicating that the video is fan-made (See 3.3.1), no significant differences between the two were identified and they could therefore be analysed as one group – *Group A*. The means in survey version 3 and 4, which included a text indicating that the video is brand-made (See 3.3.1), did not differ significantly either and we therefore combined these groups into one group – *Group B*. The same applied to the baseline survey, which formed a group referred to as *Control Group*.

Since the ranking of the indexes for the brands showed similar directions, the data did not depend on the brands alone. Levi's and Ray-Ban could consequently be grouped together. The final distribution is therefore:

	Frequency	Percentage
Valid Control Group	60	31,7
Group A	69	36,5
Group B	60	31,7
Total	189	100,0

Table 1: Distribution of participants.

When looking at how the level of familiarity affects consumers' brand attitude when it is indicated to them that a covert marketing activity might take place online, the responses were divided into two groups depending on their stated familiarity with the brands. Since $\text{Median}_{\text{Familiarity}} = 6$, a median-split divided the Control Group and Group B into two groups each. Participants who had answered higher than six formed the group with high familiarity ($N_{\text{Control}} = 26$ and $N_B = 24$) and the remaining respondents formed the group with lower familiarity ($N_{\text{Control}} = 34$ and $N_B = 36$). Two of these groups had less than 30 responses, a number that is normally statistically required (Söderlund, 2005). The analysis can therefore be criticized. However, we are aware of the potential source of error.

3.6.2 Instruments of analysis

Cronbach's α was the main indicator of forming indexes. In order to form an index from two questions, an analysis of the correlation was made. If it was above 0.50, the questions could be formed into an index. The statistical tests that were run on the data were independent t-tests and through the use of descriptives and frequencies tables.

3.7 Quality of Data

3.7.1 Reliability

The dominant approach when dealing with reliability is by using multiple, similar questions and then estimating the reliability by calculating Cronbach's α . (Söderlund 2005). This approach was followed in the experiment, and only results with a Cronbach's α exceeding 0.80 were accepted, in accordance with Bryman and Bell (2011).

The secondary sources used are books, research articles, electronic sources such as websites and data from data-compiling services such as Eurostat. Well-cited articles were used as references, but due to the relative novelty of the research area newer articles were used as well.

3.7.2 Validity

An experiment is considered to be internally valid if the findings are caused by the manipulation (Weber & Cook, 1972). A pre-test was conducted to ensure the questions in the survey were viable. The choice of videos was due to the brands operating in the same industry – apparel – and both producing similar videos when it came to the disposition and performance.

To increase the internal validity, control-questions were used in the main survey (see 3.3.2). The responses of participants who had seen the video before were removed, as well as the responses of participants who had not been affected by the manipulation as desired. Furthermore, only established measures were used in the main survey, based on marketing research questions presented by e.g. Malhotra (2010), Söderlund (2005) and Törn (2009).

External validity refers to the degree to which the experiment findings can be generalized and elongated to other situations (Söderlund, 2005). Although the prior research on COMVs is very scarce, the investigated dimensions are well researched for other subjects within covert marketing and the research can consequently be considered to be compatible with existing research, which enhances the external validity.

Naturally, there is the aspect of the artificial nature of the experiment – since it is a survey – which can be considered (Söderlund, 2005), but the experiment can be argued to fulfil ecological validity since the video in the survey is displayed in a YouTube window, which is where it was originally uploaded. By distributing an online survey, the participants could answer them on a computer/other device, which also enhanced the ecological validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

4. Results and analysis

The following section will present the findings obtained from the experiment, based on the hypotheses generated in the theory section, to see whether they are empirically supported or rejected. First, the findings on the potential gains of using COMVs are presented, followed by the findings on potential risks that follows if a company is revealed to be using them.

4.1 Effects of using COMVs – when they remain covert

4.1.1 Trustworthiness is not affected by a COMV that is indicated to be fan-made

It was hypothesized that consumers who are subjected to a COMV that is indicated to be a FMV/CGA would perceive the brands as more trustworthy compared to consumers who are not subjected to the video. The measure *trustworthiness* was captured by the words *reliable* and *honest*. The low likelihood of elaboration puts more emphasis on the *source* as a peripheral cue (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). The source in this case is supposed to be perceived as more trustworthy, since it is created by another consumer, giving it higher credibility (Campbell et al., 2012). Our findings show the following:

Variable	Control Group	Group A	Difference	Sig (2-tailed)
Reliable	5.33	5.41	0.08	0.702
Honest	4.82	5.03	0.21	0.302

Table 2: Mean comparisons of the dimensions *reliable* and *honest* between Control Group and group A. Independent t-test (scale 1-7). $N_{\text{Control}}=60$, $N_A=69$

Although there is a slight increase in evaluations of trustworthiness, it is not significant ($p = 0.702$ and $p = 0.302$). Therefore we reject our hypotheses at a 5 % level of significance:

H1. Consumers who watch a COMV and perceive it as fan-made, compared to those who have not seen it, will perceive the brand as...

a) ... more reliable **✗ REJECTED** ($p > 0.05$)

b) ... more honest **✗ REJECTED** ($p > 0.05$)

4.1.2 Brand attitude and purchase intention are left unaffected

Since we regard the videos indicated to be fan-made as highly credible, they are hypothesized to be given more positive feedback (Albright & Levy, 1995). It was also hypothesized that consumers who are not aware of that they are being exposed to an advertisement are more motivated to listen to the message. This in turn increases the chance that they will be persuaded by the advertisement (Dahlén, 2003). Essentially, the result is increased purchase intention (Laurence et al., 2013). Our findings show the following:

Variable	Control Group	Group A	Difference	Sig (2-tailed)
Brand attitude	5.36	5.35	- 0.01	0.988
Purchase intention	3.80	3.93	0.13	0.695

Table 3: Mean comparison of *brand attitude* and *purchase intention* between Control Group and Group A. Independent t-test (scale 1-7). $N_{\text{Control}}=60$, $N_A=69$

Despite a slight increase in brand evaluations, there are no significant differences ($p = 0.988$ and $p = 0.695$) between the two groups when it comes to brand attitude and purchase intention, leading us to reject both our hypotheses at a 5 % level of significance.

H2. Consumers who watch a COMV and perceive it as fan-made, compared to those who have not seen it, will have...

a) ... higher brand attitude **✗ REJECTED** ($p > 0.05$)

b) ... higher purchase intention **✗ REJECTED** ($p > 0.05$)

4.2 What is there to lose from using COMVs?

4.2.1 Trustworthiness of the brand is negatively affected

Forewarning of a persuasion attempt makes a source seem less credible and trustworthy (Hass & Grady, 1975), so when indicating that a brand is using COMVs to persuade consumers, by making them appear to be fan-made, lower trustworthiness should be the result. Our findings show the following:

Variable	Control Group	Group B	Difference	Sig (2-tailed)
Reliable	5.33	4.75	- 0.58	0.012
Honest	4.82	4.42	- 0.40	0.085

Table 4: Mean comparison of the dimensions *reliable* and *honest* between Control Group and Group B. Independent t-test (scale 1-7). $N_{\text{Control}}=60$, $N_B=60$

Variable	Group A	Group B	Difference	Sig (2-tailed)
Reliable	5.41	4.75	- 0.66	0.002
Honest	5.03	4.42	- 0.61	0.005

Table 5: Mean comparison of the dimensions *reliable* and *honest* between Group A and Group B. Independent t-test (scale 1-7). $N_A=69$, $N_B=60$

There is empirical support for a decrease in reliability between Control Group and Group B ($\Delta = -0.58$), however not regarding the honesty of the brand ($p = 0.085$). For both dimensions, there was a **significant** ($p = 0.002$ and $p = 0.005$) negative difference between Group A and Group B ($\Delta = -0.66$ and $\Delta = -0.61$, respectively). Three of four hypotheses were supported at a 5 % level of significance:

H3. Consumers who watch a COMV and find out that brands produce videos to look like they are fan-made, compared to those who have not seen the video, will perceive the brand as...

a) ... less reliable ✔ SUPPORTED ($p < 0.05$)

b) ... less honest ✘ REJECTED ($p > 0.05$)

H4. Consumers who watch a COMV and find out that brands produce videos to look like they are fan-made, compared to those to whom it is indicated to be a FMV, will perceive the brand as...

a) ... less reliable ✔ SUPPORTED ($p < 0.05$)

b) ... less honest ✔ SUPPORTED ($p < 0.05$)

4.2.2 Brand attitude experiences a negative impact

If a source is perceived to be more trustworthy, the result is a more positive brand attitude (Pornpitakpan, 2004), meaning that the reverse should occur if a source is perceived to be less trustworthy. This is confirmed by a study showing that when a consumer found out that a brand

impersonated consumers, the brand attitude was negatively affected (Campbell et al., 2012). Our findings show the following:

Variable	Control Group	Group B	Difference	Sig (2-tailed)
Brand attitude	5.36	4.86	- 0.50	0.028

Table 6: Mean comparison of *brand attitude* between Control Group and Group B. Independent t-test (scale 1-7). $N_{\text{Control}}=60$, $N_B=60$

Variable	Group A	Group B	Difference	Sig (2-tailed)
Brand attitude	5.35	4.86	- 0.49	0.021

Table 7: Mean comparison of *brand attitude* between Group A and Group B. Independent t-test (scale 1-7). $N_A=69$, $N_B=60$

There is a **significant** ($p = 0.028$ and $p = 0.021$) drop in brand attitude when comparing Group B with both Control Group and Group A ($\Delta = -0.50$ and $\Delta = -0.49$, respectively). This means that brand attitude *is* negatively affected by COMVs. Our hypotheses are therefore empirically supported at a 5 % level of significance:

H5. Consumers who watch a COMV and find out brands produce videos to look like they are fan-made will have a lower brand attitude than...

a) ... those who did not see the video **✓ SUPPORTED** ($p < 0.05$)

b) ... those to whom it is indicated to be a FMV **✓ SUPPORTED** ($p < 0.05$)

4.2.3 People are less inclined to buy the brand when the existence of COMVs is indicated

Company engagement in CSR-activities has previously been proven to increase purchase intention (Wigley, 2008). Since involvement in covert marketing is not in line with the ethical standpoint of CSR, we assume that knowledge of it will have the opposite effect on consumers, confirmed by Ashley and Leonard (2009). Our findings show the following:

Variable	Control Group	Group B	Difference	Sig (2-tailed)
Purchase intention	3.80	3.06	- 0.74	0.019

Table 8: Mean comparison of *purchase intention* between Control Group and Group B. Independent t-test (scale 1-7). $N_{\text{Control}}=60$, $N_B=60$

Variable	Group A	Group B	Difference	Sig (2-tailed)
Purchase intention	3.93	3.06	- 0.87	0.007

Table 9: Mean comparison of *purchase intention* between Group A and Group B. Independent t-test (scale 1-7). $N_A=69$, $N_B=60$

The results show that there are **significant**, ($p = 0.019$ and $p = 0.007$) negative differences in purchase intention when comparing Group B to both Control Group and Group A ($\Delta = -0.74$ and $\Delta = -0.87$, respectively). This gives empirical support to our hypotheses, at a 5 % level of significance, that the indication of a brand employing covert online practices has a negative impact on purchase intention.

H6. Consumers who watch a COMV and find out brands produce videos to look like they are fan-made will have lower purchase intention than...

a) ... those who did not see the video ✔ SUPPORTED ($p < 0.05$)

b) ... those to whom it is indicated to be a FMV ✔ SUPPORTED ($p < 0.05$)

The research of Wei et al. (2008) shows that consumers who are highly familiar with a brand appear to be resistant in terms of brand attitude to the negative effects of disclosed covert marketing activities. The level of familiarity has also been shown to impact purchase intention, which Laroche et al. (1996) confirm with their research showing how brand familiarity influences brand confidence, which in itself affects purchase intention. Our findings show the following:

Brand attitude

Level of familiarity	Control Group	Group B	Difference	Sig (2-tailed)
Low	5.11	4.54	- 0.57	0.031
High	5.68	5.33	- 0.35	0.069

Table 10: Mean comparison of *brand attitude* change depending on *level of familiarity* between Control Group and Group B. Independent t-test (scale 1-7). High: ($N_{\text{Control}} = 26$ and $N_B = 24$) Low: ($N_{\text{Control}} = 34$ and $N_B = 36$)

Purchase intention

Level of familiarity	Control Group	Group B	Difference	Sig (2-tailed)
Low	3.47	2.70	- 0.77	0.050
High	4.23	3.58	- 0.65	0.201

Table 11: Mean comparison of *purchase intention* change depending on *level of familiarity* between Control Group and Group B. Independent t-test (scale 1-7). High: ($N_{\text{Control}} = 26$ and $N_B = 24$) Low: ($N_{\text{Control}} = 34$ and $N_B = 36$)

When comparing the two groups of familiarity in Control Group and Group B, we see that there is a **significant** ($p = 0.031$) negative difference in *brand attitude* change ($\Delta = -0.57$) when it comes those with lower familiarity. Although there is a negative difference between those who were highly familiar in Control Group and Group B, it is not significant, meaning there are no differences in brand attitude between the two groups.

The results for *purchase intention* are similar to those regarding brand attitude. The participants in Control Group and Group B show a **significant** ($p = 0.05$) negative difference in brand attitude change when it comes to the group of people who have lower familiarity ($\Delta = -0.77$). There are no significant differences between Control Group and Group B among the people with high familiarity ($p = 0.201$). Therefore we can conclude that the hypotheses are empirically supported:

H7. Consumers who are *highly familiar* with a brand will be less negatively affected in their brand evaluations after an indication of a COMV being brand-made than those *who are not* highly familiar with the brand, in terms of...

a) ... brand attitude ✔ SUPPORTED ($p < 0.05$)

b) ... purchase intention ✔ SUPPORTED ($p < 0.05$)

5. Discussion and implications

The following section discusses the advantages and disadvantages found in our research on COMVs. The managerial implications of the use of COMVs are then treated in a discussion on how companies can interpret and use our findings. Criticism towards our study will be presented, followed by our discussion on future regulations, and finally, suggestions on future research that can contribute further to the research on covert online video marketing.

5.1 Discussion of the findings

The backbone for the findings are based on the Micro-goal chain, and its extended dimensions (source credibility, familiarity and ethics), presented in the theory section (See 2.3). The main task was to explain how the use of COMVs affects consumers after an indication of it being either fan-made or brand-made. The effect on the two important variables, brand attitude and purchase intention, were examined.

5.1.1 Successfully disguising COMVs as FMVs/CGAs seems useless...

No gains from using COMVs have been found when looking at trustworthiness, brand attitude and purchase intention.

Our study shows that videos indicated to be FMVs/CGAs do not make a brand appear more reliable or honest, i.e. the trustworthiness was not affected (See Table 2). Although we had hypothesized that both brand attitude and purchase intention would increase, they were not actually affected (See Table 3). This implies that even though the practice of COMVs is inexpensive (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004), both in terms of making and spreading the video, there is not much to gain from engaging in this kind of covert marketing practice since the ultimate goal of increased purchase intention (Dahlén & Lange, 2009) is not accomplished. In addition, it is hard to assess the actual effect of using COMVs and if they contribute fully to a campaign's success (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004, Martin & Smith, 2008). With this knowledge, there are few incentives of using COMVs to improve consumers' perceived trustworthiness, brand attitude and purchase intention.

In short: There are no significant advantages of using COMVs.

5.1.2 ...and there are negative outcomes when getting caught

Using COMVs is shown to decrease trustworthiness, brand attitude and purchase intention when it is indicated to consumers that a company is involved in a covert marketing activity.

Our overall results

There are managers stating that covert marketing activities do not hurt (Rotfeld, 2008), but our research shows that it actually does hurt - at least when COMVs are used. Our thesis' findings reveal that even when it is just indicated to consumers that a video they are about to watch is a COMV, their brand evaluations significantly deteriorate. The trustworthiness in terms of *reliability* decreased when the COMV-activity was indicated (See table 4 and 5). Although the variable *honest* was not fully supported to be affected, it did decrease between Group A and Group B. These aspects of trustworthiness should according to theory by Pornpitakpan (2004) lead to a decrease in source credibility, which in turn leads to less positive evaluations. This was confirmed when comparing the means of brand attitude between Control Group and Group B, which showed a drop of 0.50 ($p < 0.05$). The same happened between Group A and Group B: a negative difference of 0.49 ($p < 0.05$) (See Table 6 and 7). This implies that brand attitude in fact *does* decrease after an indication of a COMV-activity.

Furthermore, purchase intention also decreases. The findings showed a negative drop ($p < 0.05$) between both Control Group and Group B ($\Delta = -0.74$) and Group A and Group B ($\Delta = -0.87$) (See Table 8 and 9). This has its explanation in the Micro-goal chain. A negative effect on brand attitude makes it logical to see a negative effect on purchase intention, a causal effect confirmed by MacKenzie & Lutz (1989). These findings go against the study of Colliander and Erlandsson (2013) on blogs, where they did not find an effect on either brand evaluation variable. However, the results are in line with Campbell et al's (2012) study on covert online videos. The reason for this can be that blogs have a certain person and parasocial interaction connected to it, compared to videos that are watched for entertainment purposes.

COMVs are not justified for marketing purposes

Decreased trustworthiness in brands obviously has negative implications for brands. Martin and Smith (2008) argue that increased consumer distrust requires brands to spend more time and money on creative advertising in order to reach the same effects of advertising as before. Moreover, the purpose of market communication is to increase the four goals found in the general Micro-goal chain (Dahlén & Lange, 2009). Yet the use of COMVs does not increase

brand attitude or purchase intention. Therefore the marketing practice seems like a wasted marketing expense. If this happens after an *indication* of covert marketing is made, what would happen if consumers are forewarned that the video they are about to see in fact *is* brand-made?

COMVs can be damaging to a brand in the long term

One of the goals for this type of communication for brands is to achieve temporary viral attention or free publicity (Campbell et al., 2012). Although this thesis did not investigate these aspects, they seem redundant since the initial brand attitude and purchase intention were both reduced in a short-term perspective. So imagine the long-term damage that COMVs could have? According to Campbell et al. (2012), there is a risk of serious long-term set-backs. News and rumours travel fast online today, and if you are found to have employed covert activities online, it has an impact on your current and potential consumers. Another aspect to consider is the online footprint of activities conducted on the Internet. Not only is the spread faster and vaster, but it also stays in news portals, social media, blogs, forums, etc. forever. Searching for a brand online can lead to searches connected to the negative practices that a brand has been done. The long-term effect should therefore be in every brand's equation of marketing communication.

It may not stop here: the aftermath of COMVs

The sense of feeling deceived and exploited can lead to a consumer feeling “duped” (Martin & Smith, 2008), which in turn can unleash possible backlashes at the brands (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004). Dr. Pepper executed a stealth marketing campaign that was revealed in the blog community, and sparked anger in some of the members. At least one boycott towards the new Dr. Pepper product was made due to the activity (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004). In other words, a PR-nightmare. However, the well-known statement “Any publicity is good publicity” has been debated, and research has even shown that negative press/publicity can lead to increased sales (Berger, Sorensen and Rasmussen, 2010). Whether negative publicity in this case is bad for the brands or not, is therefore hard to foresee. Other aspects need to be taken into account, such as the content of the video and the nature of the word-of-mouth that it can generate. More of this will be discussed in suggestions for future research (See 5.5).

How familiar a brand is to consumers affects a brand's choice of marketing practices

Although not a part of our analysis, the Micro-goal chain's goal *brand knowledge* (here depicted familiarity) needs to be fulfilled before moving on to brand attitude. The level of familiarity has an impact on the effect on brand attitude and purchase intention. Our results support previous

research by Wei et al (2008) that states that a high level of familiarity reduces the negative impact of finding out that a company is involved in covert marketing activities. Regarding both brand attitude and purchase intention, there was no significant change in the evaluations among participants claiming to be highly familiar with the brands. Since a significant change was found among participants with lower brand familiarity, the results showed that involvement in covert marketing activities negatively impacts these consumers. What does this imply? Our findings would argue that a well-known brand can “get away” with an act like this. If a brand is not very familiar among potential consumers, it seems unwise to employ covert marketing activities. However, studies by Berger et al (2010) show that negative publicity in forms of bad reviews for books affected titles by unknown authors positively (increased sales), whilst it hurt the sales of well-known authors. Nevertheless, negative publicity of a brand conducting covert online marketing and negative book reviews are not equivalents to each other - and our results show one thing: if you are not familiar with a brand, you will have an even more negative attitude towards it after the indication of COMV-activity.

The implications for consumers and the alternatives to COMVs

A question that arises is: Will consumers grow to be even more suspicious to advertising and exposure of brands? Consumers are better at identifying marketers' attempts to influence and persuade them today due to their growing understanding of marketing exercises. However, when they do not expect to be subjected to an advertisement, they are more motivated to listen to the message (Dahlén, 2003). Martin and Smith (2008) also argue that stealth marketing eventually will deprive consumers of defence mechanisms that they have built up in order to resist marketing persuasion attempts. But instead of losing hope for consumers' sakes, the increased use of stealth and covert practices by brands may lead to the loss of a practice's “stealthy nature”, will eventually mean that brands need to seek out even more creative strategies to be able to reach consumers' minds surreptitiously (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004). Moreover, when highlighting the ethical aspect, as previously made, it therefore seems necessary to seek alternatives to covert marketing that do not violate consumers' trust, privacy or self-esteem (Martin & Smith, 2008).

In short: Even just the slight indication of brands making online marketing videos, posing as fans, is negative for a brand. So our advice to brands like Levi's and Ray-Ban: **avoid it**.

5.2 Criticism towards the study

Although everyone strives to be perfect, no one is. The same goes for us and our study. We acknowledged a few aspects that could have been done differently and improved.

A larger sample for the whole study ($N = 276$) would have been preferred to get a greater reliability. The majority of the respondents are university students, a convenience sample which is often criticised since they do not fairly represent the population (Malhotra, 2010). However, this choice can be defended since it results in a homogeneity among participants that is believed to increase the possibility to conclude whether a hypothesis is false or not (Söderlund, 2005). There is a risk that the participants might have figured out what the aim with the experiment was and that their reactions therefore were affected. To prevent this as much as possible, we did not talk about the aim or content of the thesis with anyone before finishing the data collection, e.g. in the introduction of the survey we wrote that it was for a “Bachelor Thesis”, without revealing our specialization (marketing).

When looking at the impact of brand familiarity (See 4.2.3), two groups consisted of less than 30. Despite this we did our independent t-tests. This could have affected our results, and it would have been preferred to have more participants for the respective groups.

5.3 Future regulations

When dealing with ethicality, the question of regulation emerges. Regulation aims to protect consumers from being deceived and taken advantage of. For example, advertisements in newspapers and magazines are legally regulated since 1912 in the US to ensure that readers can separate advertisements from editorial content. Similar restrictions exist within the broadcasting industry since 1934 (Rotfeld, 2008). So will covert online video marketing also face restrictions in the future? Naturally, the large playing field of the Internet presents an issue. It is no longer a national problem, and instead it is necessary to think in global terms. Regulating activities on such a large scale can be difficult.

However, since COMVs are found to be harming to brands, it is possible that self-regulation among companies will arise. Perhaps a disclosure that beforehand states that a video is in fact a marketing message can be used (Martin & Smith, 2008). This would to some extent protect consumers in terms of trust and privacy, but it would also remove the word “covert” from covert online marketing. Since many forms of subliminal and covert marketing have been employed for

decades, it seems unlikely that companies would suddenly stop entirely by using disclosures. The actual core issue of covert marketing then remains. Brands need to decide their ethical standpoint - and based on our study, our best advice is to avoid covert marketing all together.

5.4 Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to answer the question: “What are the potential gains and risks of covert online marketing videos (COMVs) depending on who is indicated to be the source?” Our conclusions below will provide a summarised answer to this research question.

Engaging in covert marketing using COMVs that are portrayed to be FMVs/CGAs might be appealing to companies due to the low cost, great potential spread and above all, the chance of avoiding the clutter and getting through to consumers. There does however not appear to be anything of importance to gain from doing so since our study found COMVs to be ineffective. The main goals with market communication, brand attitude and purchase intention, are both unchanged. An important aspect of brand attitude is trustworthiness, which did not increase either. When instead examining the effects of an indication of the COMVs being brand-made with the purpose of appearing to be fan-made, we did however find that both brand attitude and purchase intention suffered significantly. Trustworthiness also decreased, and thereby worsened consumers’ perception of the brands. The disadvantages of using COMVs as a marketing practice can thereby be concluded to be extensive, and there appears to be no valid argument for using COMVs as a method of getting through to consumers. In conclusion, if a company, in spite of our findings, wants to engage in COMVs it should be in their highest interest to not get caught. Although covert marketing defenders might say, “It can’t hurt, can it?”, we can conclude that it in fact does.

A summary of the answers to the sub-questions are presented below:

- A COMV perceived as a CGA/FMV has no significant effect on consumers’ perceived trustworthiness of the source
- A COMV perceived as a CGA/FMV has no significant effect on consumers’ brand attitude
- A COMV perceived as a CGA/FMV has no significant effect on consumers’ purchase intention

- An indication of watching a COMV has a negative impact on consumers' perceived trustworthiness of the source
- An indication of watching a COMV has a negative impact on consumers' brand attitude
- An indication of watching a COMV has a negative impact on consumers' purchase intention

5.5 Suggestions for future research

Our study fills the gap of COMVs in existing research on covert marketing, but there are still many aspects of interest that are yet to be examined.

Other dimensions

Examining the impact of COMVs on dimensions other than those in the Micro-goal chain, such as ad attitude, brand interest, and the likelihood of recommendation, would be of interest. We included these dimensions in our survey but made the decision to only study the variables most relevant to our research question due to the thesis' constraints of time and content.

Video content

Although COMVs portrayed as FMVs/CGAs are now shown to not have positive effects, it is possible that there are gains when the video content is different, e.g. more creative, informative or incongruent. On the other hand, video content that is of a more "pro-brand" nature might generate even worse brand evaluations when it is instead indicated that it might be a COMV due to consumers' perceived appropriateness (Wei et al 2008).

Virality and eWOM

How viral a video becomes might impact consumers positively when they believe it is an FMV/CGA. Alternatively, an indication of the true source might have even worse effects when consumers know that the video has deceived millions of people. Looking at how video commentaries affect consumers who are subjected to a COMV is also of interest. Our research showed that as little as an indication of a video being a COMV affects consumers negatively, so it is possible that the same applies if someone comments a video by stating that it is brand-made.

Forewarning

After having examined the consequences of indications, it would also be interesting to study what would happen if consumers are forewarned that the video they are about to see in fact *is* brand made. We assume that the brand evaluation will decrease even further in that case, which other studies support (e.g. Campbell et al, 2012).

Unfamiliar brands

Our research was limited to two well-known, mature brands and it would be interesting to examine the impact of COMVs when it is indicated that a company that they are less familiar with is engaged in such a marketing practice. Previous research show varying results with some claiming the outcome to be positive (e.g. Berger et al., 2010) while others argue that it is negative (e.g. Wei et al, 2008).

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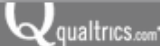
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7. Appendices


7.1 Appendix 1: Pre-test [Levi's]



The following survey is for a Bachelor's Thesis at Stockholm School of Economics. The purpose is to collect information regarding a video displaying the clothing brand Levi's.



Enjoy the video and please answer the questions! The survey is completely anonymous.

>>



Make sure the sound on your computer/device is on!

>>

Click the video to start playing!

If you are unable to see the video, please copy this link into a new tab on your browser, and then continue answering the questions.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_SZAehdN1fU

What did you think of the video? Below you can find seven adjective pairs. Please mark on the scale how suitable they are in describing the video you just watched.

Uncool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Cool
Conventional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Unconventional
Professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Amateur
Plain	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Creative
Boring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Entertaining
Fake	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Real
Expensive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Cheap

How familiar are you with the clothing brand Levi's?

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very familiar
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How well does the video fit with your previous experience with Levi's?

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very well
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>>



Who do you believe made the video?

- ☐ Fans of Levi's
- ☐ Levi's
- ☐ Independent movie company
- ☐ Some guys having fun with the camera
- ☐ Other:

Have you seen this video before?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Did you recognize any of the men in the video? If yes, please specify who.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Thank you for your time!

>>

NB: The main study was identical for Ray-Ban, except for the brand name and the video.

7.2 Appendix 2: Texts (manipulations) before each survey

Text 1:

Fan-made videos of well-known brands circulate the Internet, in particular on YouTube. They are often amateur-looking and made by loving fans on a low budget. Their attempt is to make creative and entertaining videos.

Text 2:

Fan-made videos of well-known brands circulate the Internet, in particular on YouTube. They are often amateur-looking and made by loving fans on a low budget to encourage their friends and **others to buy the brand**. Their attempt is to make creative and entertaining videos.

Text 3:

Fan-made videos of well-known brands circulate the Internet, in particular on YouTube. They are often amateur-looking, yet **are sometimes made by the brands themselves** on a low budget in order to **increase brand awareness**. Their attempt is to make creative and entertaining videos.

Text 4:

Fan-made videos of well-known brands circulate the Internet, in particular on YouTube. They are often amateur-looking, yet **are in fact made by the brands themselves** on a low budget in order to make people believe that they are fan-made, and **thereby increase sales**. Their attempt is to make creative and entertaining videos.

7.3 Appendix 3: The Baseline Survey

The following survey is for a Bachelor's Thesis at Stockholm School of Economics. It is completely anonymous and the purpose is to collect information regarding the [jeans/sunglasses] brand [Levi's/Ray-Ban].

How familiar are you with the [jeans/sunglasses] brand [Levi's/Ray-Ban]?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very familiar

What is your impression of the brand [Levi's/Ray-Ban]? Mark your impression on the scale. (1=Do not agree at all, 7=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My impression of [Levi's/Ray-Ban] is good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My impression of [Levi's/Ray-Ban] is positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My impression of [Levi's/Ray-Ban] is satisfactory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What is your impression of the brand [Levi's/Ray-Ban]? Below you will find seven adjective pairs. Mark your impression on the scale.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Immoral	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Moral
Dishonest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Honest
Boring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Fun
Dislike it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Like it
Unconvincing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Convincing
Unethical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ethical
Unreliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Reliable

How well do you agree/disagree with the following statements? (1=Do not agree at all, 7=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I care about which [jeans/sunglasses] I buy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I put effort into buying [jeans/sunglasses]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to buy a good pair of [jeans/sunglasses]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How well do you agree/disagree with the following statements? (1=Do not agree at all, 7=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is likely that I will buy [Levi's/Ray-Ban] the next time I buy [jeans/sunglasses]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is probable that I will buy [Levi's/Ray-Ban] the next time I buy [jeans/sunglasses]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is possible that I will buy [Levi's/Ray-Ban] the next time I buy [jeans/sunglasses]	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How likely is it that you will recommend the brand [Levi's/Ray-Ban] to a friend? Mark your opinion on the scale.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Very unlikely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very likely

Do you own a pair of [jeans/sunglasses] from [Levi's/Ray-Ban]?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What is your occupation?

- ☐ I am a student
- ☐ I am employed
- ☐ Other

Are you Swedish?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

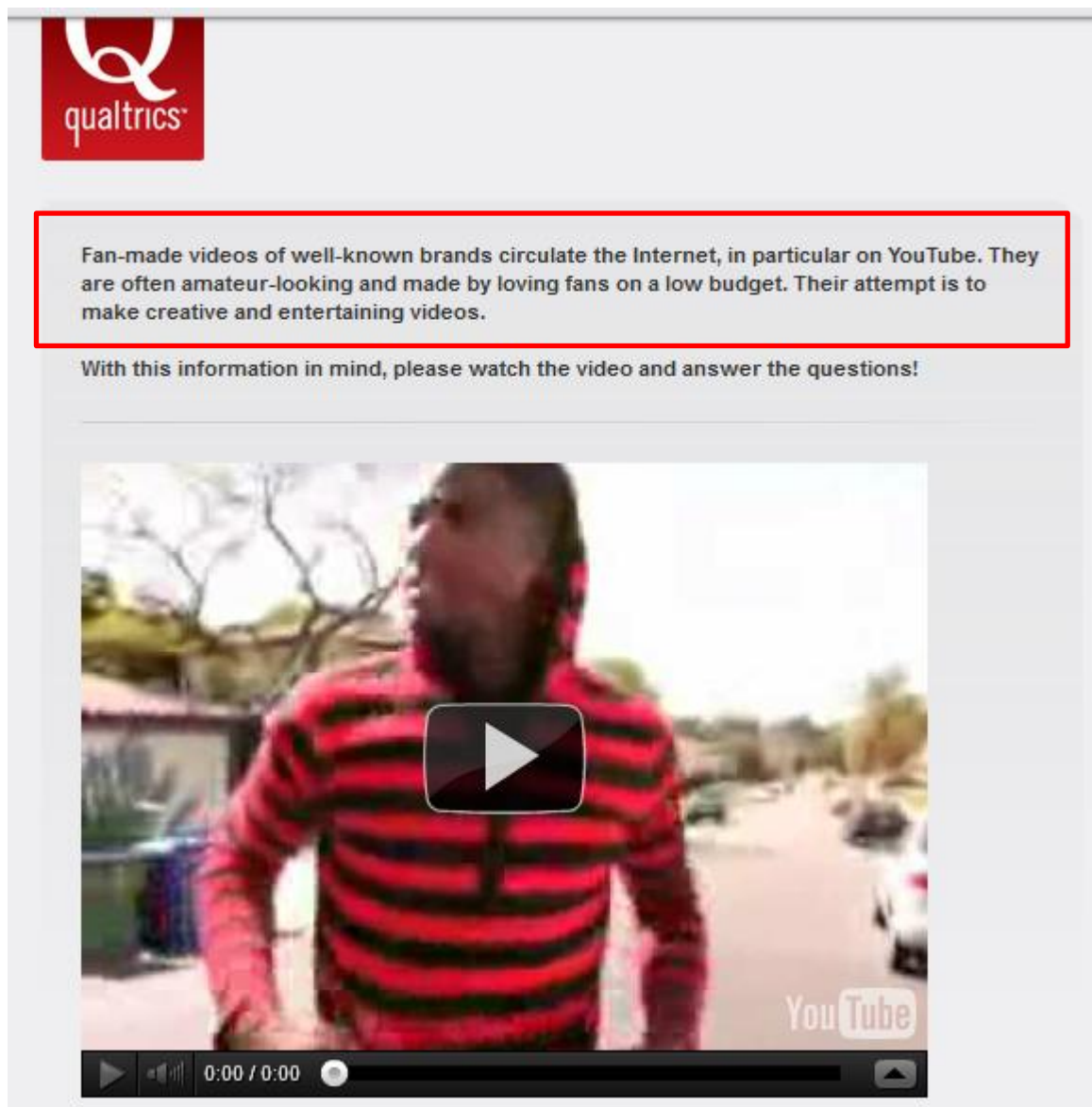
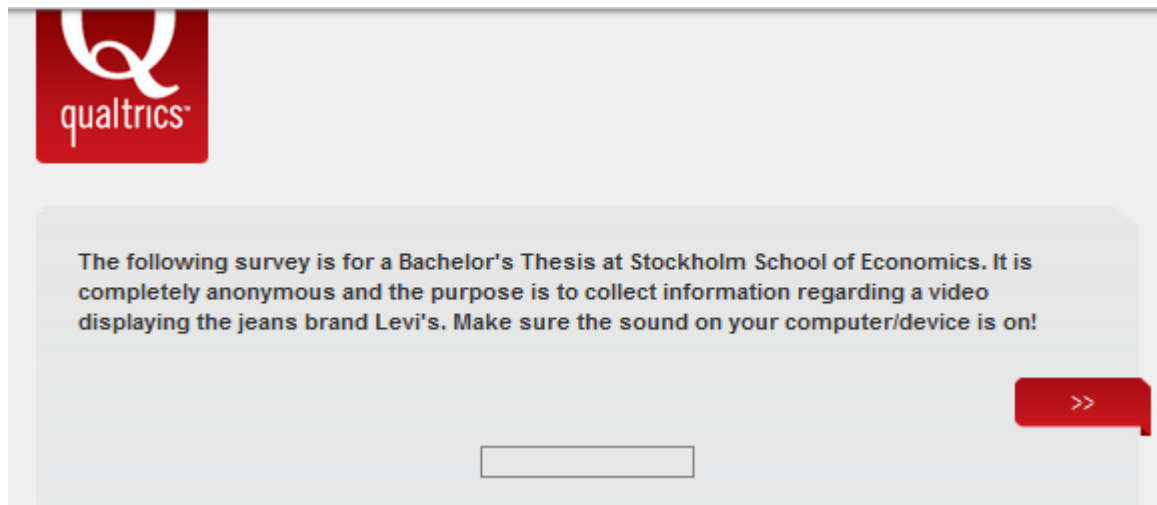
Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Year of birth (XXXX)

Thank you very much for your participation!

7.4 Appendix 4: The main survey (version 1)



NB: This part was manipulated with texts from Appendix 2.

Click the video to start playing!

If you are unable to see the video, please copy this link into a new tab on your browser, and then continue answering the questions.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_SZAehdN1fU

How likely is it that you will tell a friend about the video? Mark your opinion on the scale.

Very unlikely Very likely


☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How likely is it that you will **send the video to friend**? Mark your opinion on the scale.

Very unlikely Very likely

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

>>



What is your impression of the video? Below you will find seven adjective pairs. Mark your impression on the scale.

Immoral	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Moral
Dishonest	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Honest
Boring	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Fun
Unreliable	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Reliable
Unconvincing	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Convincing
Unethical	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Ethical



What did you think of the video? (1=Do not agree at all, 7=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I liked the video	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoyed the video	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I appreciated the video	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What is your impression of the video? Mark your impression on the scale. (1=Do not agree at all, 7=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My impression of the video is good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My impression of the video is favourable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My impression of the video is pleasant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How familiar are you with the *brand* Levi's?

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very familiar
------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	---------------

How well do Levi's and the video *fit*? If you are not familiar with Levi's at all, you do not have to answer this question.

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very well
------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------

How well do Levi's and the video *match*? If you are not familiar with Levi's at all, you do not have to answer this question.

Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very well
------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------

How well do you agree/disagree with the following statements? (1=Do not agree at all, 7=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would like to know more about Levi's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The video made Levi's interesting to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The video made me want to learn more about Levi's	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What is your impression of the brand Levi's? Mark your impression on the scale. (1=Do not agree at all, 7=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My impression of Levi's is good	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My impression of Levi's is positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My impression of Levi's is satisfactory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

>>



What is your impression of the brand Levi's? **Below you will find seven adjective pairs.** Mark your impression on the scale.

Immoral	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Moral
Dishonest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Honest
Boring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Fun
Dislike it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Like it
Unconvincing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Convincing
Unethical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ethical
Unreliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Reliable

How well do you agree/disagree with the following statements? (1=Do not agree at all, 7=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I care about which jeans I buy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I put effort into buying jeans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to buy a good pair of jeans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How well do you agree/disagree with the following statements? (1=Do not agree at all, 7=Agree completely)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is likely that I will buy Levi's the next time I buy jeans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is probable that I will buy Levi's the next time I buy jeans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is possible that I will buy Levi's the next time I buy jeans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How likely is it that you will recommend the brand Levi's to a friend? Mark your opinion on the scale.

Very unlikely

Very likely


<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Do you own a pair of jeans from Levi's?

☐ Yes

☐ No

>>



Have you seen this video before?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Who do you believe made the video?

☐ Fans of Levi's

☐ Independent movie company

☐ Some guys having fun with the camera

☐ Levi's

☐ Other:

What is your occupation?

☐ I am a student

☐ I am employed

☐ Other

Are you Swedish?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

Year of birth (XXXX)

Thank you very much for your participation!

NB: The main study was identical for Ray-Ban, except for the brand name and the video.