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Authors: Eriksson, Mathilda 21932@student.hhs.se | Hedlund, Kristin 21990@student.hhs.se
Tutor: Söderlund, Magnus | *Examinator:* Modig, Erik | *Presentation:* 15 Dec 2014

AN UNEXPECTED TALE

A STUDY OF INCONGRUITY EFFECTS ON STORYTELLING IN ADVERTISING

KEYWORDS: ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS, STORYTELLING, INCONGRUITY, BRANDING

ABSTRACT:

This thesis investigates the effects brand incongruity has on advertising effectiveness for story-based communication. The role of ad-brand incongruity has been tested for argumentative advertising before. However, there still exist some knowledge gaps, one of them being how incongruity relates to corporate storytelling.

Through combining theory from these two research areas in a quantitative study, it is shown that stories' previously proven effect on moderating variables like credibility, memorability and emotional engagement – sometimes seem to be cancelled out when combined with unexpected, brand-incongruent plots in the ad. It is further discovered that product-involvement plays a crucial role in how the incongruent story is evaluated. This make low-involvement products like fast moving consumer goods more open to incongruent element - whereas in involvement-heavy categories like durables and lifestyle brands - ad attitude, brand attitude and brand intention are affected negatively. For marketers, there may however be other brand considerations that are prioritized in storytelling, making brand incongruent plots an exciting tool.

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Mathilda Eriksson



Kristin Hedlund

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1. Introduction

"Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is, I don't know which half."

- John Wanamaker, American businessman

1.1 Background

1.1.2 Effective advertising and storytelling

Marketing communication is the primary resource for companies to attract consumers to their product or service offering, according to a large number of academics (Dahlén and Lange 2009) and marketers are increasingly seeking to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their marketing expenses (Keller 1993; Shaw 1998). With advertising being the leading way of delivering the correct message of the company image or a product to consumers (Shaw 1998) it is astounding that around 37% of all advertising is wasted. This as it does not correctly tailor for example content, message or medium to the target audience (Briggs and Stuart 2006).

The information clutter the average consumer is exposed to daily is astonishing, approximated at around 5000 advertising messages a day (CBS News 2006). This implies that companies must find new ways to reach out and communicate their brands and offerings.

The efficiency of telling stories to communicate a message is indisputable according to previous research (e.g. Mattila 2000; Escalas 2004). This had lead to a growing number of organisations starting to implement this "new" tool as it is increasing in popularity. With entire agencies dedicated to storytelling for companies and brands (e.g. Aesopagency.com), there is no denying the hypnotizing effect the tool has also on marketers.

Stories are used to communicate values and build a connection between the brand and the consumer. Many of the world's biggest brands are often praised for their use of the technique and the concept is claimed to play a central role in creating a brand identity (Bacon 2013). The correlation between storytelling and big brands is therefore given but some still debate the causality (Albrighton 2013). This in part stems from the very unclear definition of storytelling used by marketing practitioners. As the latest buzzword, storytelling seems to be used to cover many things. It is often touted as something innovative even though it may be used in the same sense as that of narratives, which has been a central part of advertising, and society for a long time. It is often used in close relation to content marketing, brands as publishers and user generated content. Especially when getting into 'brand storytelling' the definition of the concept gets complicated and varies between different actors (Albrighton 2013).

While practitioners' use tends to be undefined, academic theory from several different

fields poses very clear guidelines on what is to be deemed a story and much research has proven the effects of stories on how people process information. The increasing need of effectiveness in marketing communication has highlighted this research and made stories a favoured tool of marketers. However, the theory on storytelling best practice is somewhat lacking. With the starting point of previous research having repeatedly proven the effectiveness of using stories in brand communication, because of its effect on memorability (Shank and Abelson 1995; Swap et al. 2001), comprehension (Rosa 1999; Lee and Thorson 2008; Fog 2010) and emotional involvement (Gabriel 2000; Escalas 2003; McKee 2003), more research needs to be done on the building blocks of stories and how variations within them affects the overall outcome.

1.1.3 Stories and incongruity

A second, very current marketing and advertising concept is incongruity. When used in ads, it refers to elements that are inconsistent or incompatible with the normative expectations of the receiver. Whether or not alignment with consumer perception is preferable in advertising is hotly debated, as many ads have gained unforeseen amounts of attention through the use of unexpected features.

Researchers disagree on whether incongruity in an ad is positive or not for the brand evaluation. On one hand, it has been shown that the attitude towards an ad and a brand is more positive when the ad consists of incongruent elements (Lee and Mason 1999; Lee 2000). However, other researchers have found that incongruity within an ad can lead to negative brand attitudes (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Czellar, 2003) depending on how the information is processed.

Storytelling and incongruity affect consumers through a number of similar areas, but in different ways. Among these, which are further deliberated in the theoretical part of this thesis, are aspects that affect comprehension (Lee and Thorson, 2008) and emotional involvement (Gabriel, 2000). How the two concepts interrelate has however not been studied.

1.2 Purpose

The aim of this study is to decrease the gap between theory and practice of corporate storytelling, focusing on its effective execution. It is meant to explore the effects of using brand-incongruent plots in corporate storytelling for familiar consumer brands, or more specifically: how it affects ad and brand attitude as well as brand intention.

In short, the purpose is to answer the research question “What are the effects of brand-incongruent plots on the effectiveness for advertising that tells a story?”

1.3 Delimitations

There are several delimitations to the study worth mentioning, due to restrictions in time and scope.

Brand incongruity in storytelling could be investigated from different starting points and it is possible to manipulate different story components. Others have previously studied for example effects of using different characters in storytelling – without explicitly discussing it in relation to congruity. This study solely studied the effect of storytelling incongruity in one of the storytelling components, namely the plot.

Further, to avoid biases, the aim has been to make the congruent and incongruent ads as similar as possible in terms of format and media. The plot was communicated through a text the length of half-page, where the respondents were asked to imagine the storyline as if it had been a TV-commercial and it can therefore not be claimed to be a completely genuine setting.

To investigate the effect of incongruity in advertising that tells a story, it is favourable to look at companies with a strong and coherent brand image in the minds of consumers. This since the effects of incongruity only tend to be significant when applied to familiar brands that the consumers already have an established relationship to. Research in the area often uses fictional brands to control for prior learning in an experiment setting. However, the research will be more relevant for practitioners by using real brands. Because of this, the study was only made on familiar brands. To make the results more generalizable three separate studies were done on three different brands, with different characteristics. To facilitate comparisons, all three brands were Swedish and well known on the Swedish market.

Further, the study is focused on goods aimed at consumers; products that are purchased for consumption or use by the end consumer and thus generalizations to other categories may be a far stretch.

The respondents were people living in Sweden who were either Swedish citizens or had lived in the country for a sufficient time to have a deep knowledge of the tested brands making generalizations more difficult for a global setting.

Given the stated limitations, the conclusions drawn from the study are primarily applicable to well-known Swedish consumer brands.

1.4 Expected Contribution

Through theoretical and empirical research the thesis aims to contribute to the existing

literature on storytelling and brand communication as well as to help the understanding of consumer perceptions regarding established brands that use this type of communication. As most of the previous research regarding incongruity has been conducted for argumentative advertising, a theoretical gap remains regarding advertising that tells a story. Varying advertising that contains stories may be more complicated as several elements come into play at once. If this in any way affects advertising effectiveness it is useful to know for storytelling practitioners. This is certainly in their interest as accountability in regards to advertising is considered as increasingly important by company management, as this in the end can affect the value of a company (Verhoef and Leeflang 2009).

This thesis is expected to take a prescriptive stance and serve as input regarding the how-to of storytelling for familiar brands for decision-makers at companies and agencies. This while building upon previous, and opening up for further, research on the topic of storytelling in brand communications.

1.5 Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 includes an introduction to the research area, including background, purpose, delimitations and expected contributions. It is followed by Chapter 2, where the theoretical background is presented. In Chapter 3 a description of the methodology for conducting the study is described, including a discussion of the reliability and validity of the thesis. Chapter 4 comprises the analysis and the results from the study. This is followed by a discussion and implications of the presented results in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 contains the list of references used in the thesis and is followed by an appendix.

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter lays out the theoretical foundation of the thesis. It is divided into three main subjects: brands, storytelling and incongruity. When combining the two latter, seven hypotheses are derived, and at the end of the chapter the theory is summarized.

2.1 Brands

The individual identity of a product or company, the brand, lets consumers develop associations to the brand, which facilitates the purchase decision. One cannot deny the importance of a strong and favourable brand in today's global world where it can contribute to overall success through adding value to companies, positively affect consumer perception and act as a barrier to competition among many other things (Jobber 2007).

Strong brands and good stories are all derived from the same foundation: emotions and values. Clearly defined values are the basis of a strong brand, and good storytelling communicates these values (Fog et al. 2010). People think in a story-like form (Bruner 1986), and thus much information about brands may be stored in a story-like form (Koll, Walpach and Kreuzer 2010).

2.1.1 Brand schema

The schema theory proposes that human memory consists of nodes and links between the nodes; that together form our belief system. The network of the nodes is called a schema. The schema is thus a mental representation of how people interpret and categorize the world (Fiske and Taylor 1991).

The schemas can origin from different places (Törn, 2009); but it has been showed that product information is more often organised by brand names rather than by product attributes (Johnson and Russo 1984). The associations that consumers have to a brand are stored in a brand schema (Keller 1993; Kent and Allen 1994). For well-known brands most people have formed brand schemas, given that the more available information a person has regarding a product, the more likely it is that a brand schema is formed (Johnson and Russo 1984).

The brand schema facilitates the processing of new information regarding the brand and the recall of previous information about the brand (Alba and Hutchinson 1987). The brand schema grows as a consumer acquires more information about a brand and once established it is not easy to change (Macrae and Bodenhausen 2000). When new information about a brand is encountered, the brand schema gets activated and through this lens the input is interpreted (Braun 1999).

2.1.2 Brand personality

Brand personality has been discussed by practitioners in marketing for over 50 years, long before it was adapted by academics (Azoulay and Kapferer 2003). In the 70's, King wrote "people choose their brands the same way they choose their friends; in addition to the skills and physical characteristics, they simply like them as people" (King 1970).

The brand personality can be defined as the human traits associated with a brand (Aaker 1997). It has been said to be a key way to differentiate a brand in a product category and is an important factor in driving consumers' preferences and usage (Biel 1993). The brand personality is the perceived personality of a brand, in the eyes of the consumer (Azoulay and Kapferer 2003), and consequently the brand personality differs among consumers. However, some brand associations are shared by a majority of consumers and this is especially likely for mature brands (Törn 2009). This brand personality is reflected in the brand's values and often demonstrated through advertising.

2.1.3 The relationship between Ad Attitude, Brand Attitude and Brand Intention

The consumers' attitudes towards the ad, the ad attitude, are important for marketers to understand, as they are reflections of the consumers' evaluation of the product, brand and company. The attitudes and beliefs about the advertising of a brand affect how the consumer sees the brand and are predictors of the consumers' future behavioural intentions (Belch and Belch 2003). The attitudes towards a brand directly influence the brand intentions and the willingness to use a brand (Mitchel and Olson 1981). The latter refers to the likelihood of a respondent to engage with the brand by for example looking up, purchasing or recommending the brand.

For a more structured view on things, brand attitude can be viewed as a mediator of the effects of a brand's advertising on the brand outcomes, such as a consumer's purchase intentions, which transforms into brand outcomes such as sales (Chadhuri 2002). They are all however all measured as dependent variables in this study to facilitate a good structure and understanding for how practitioners often use all three as set goals.

2.2 Storytelling

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a story as, "a narrative, true or presumed to be true, relating to important events and celebrated persons of a more or less remote past; a historical relation or anecdote." In relation to marketing, the concept however takes on a somewhat different meaning.

When studying persuasion, a distinction is often made between reasoned arguments and narrative dramas, as these different forms of coaxing leads to claims being processed

differently by the recipient of the communication (Deighton, Romer and Goodstein 2001). This distinction exists within a lot of different fields of research, such as psychology, literature, theology, law, communication, history and economics (Deighton, Romer and Goodstein 2001). In recent time, scholars have also started to relate this to “narrative features of branding” (Jensen 1999). Brands are here seen as stories about values.

When applied to advertising, the argumentative format means the use of rational arguments to convince the consumer the superiority of a good (Escalas 1998; Lien and Chen 2013), something that often leads to argumentative forms of thinking. A more narrative form of advertising, on the other hand, tells a story about the good and its uses (Escalas 2004) and is much more likely to make the consumer feel involved. This is central to understanding consumer psychology, as the human mind functions more narratively than argumentatively (McKee 2003).

2.2.1 Storytelling effects

There is much previous research showing how superior narrative storytelling can be in corporate communications (Mattila 2000; Escalas 2004). When using storytelling in advertising a consumer is more likely to comprehend (Rosa, Runser-Spanjol and Saxon 1999; Fog 2010), get emotionally involved with (McKee 2003; Escalas 2004) and remember an ad (Shank and Abelson 1995).

Comprehension

Stories are a critical sense-making tool and help people understand a product by explaining the connections between the product, its benefits and how it can be used to add meaning to a person’s life (Rosa, Runser-Spanjol and Saxon 1999). Comprehension is an important factor when communicating to consumers, as they tend to focus on what they understand (Shank and Abelson 1995).

The structure of a story makes the communication and its message easier to process. This as people in their day-to-day lives imposes narrative structures on the things that happen to them to facilitate understanding. Meaning arises from how the narrative is structured and consumers attribute causality relationships to the product (Escalas 2004).

Emotional involvement

Storytelling evokes feelings to a larger extent than other types of communication (Gabriel 2000). It helps consumers make sense of life and while reading an effective story the reader connects the story to his or her own personal experiences, empathizing, creating a stronger emotional bond (McKee 2003).

Memorability

When stories connect to consumers' personal experiences, or stimulate visual images in the consumers' mind, the message will be more memorable than listed information. (Swap et al. 2001). This again is due to the narrative processing of the human mind. Two cognitive learning mechanisms help make stories memorable: Availability Heuristics and Elaboration.

Availability Heuristics

Behavioural economists, such as Kahneman, have made the concept of heuristics popular. Kahneman (2011) defines a heuristic as "a simple procedure that helps find adequate, though often imperfect, answers to difficult questions". This works like mental bookmarks for experiences. All human experiences are stored and categorized by indexes in our memory. As stories are rich in information, they generate more indexes than pure facts and are thus more memorable (Schank and Abelson, 1995).

Elaboration

Information relatable to earlier experiences and knowledge; that we can elaborate on, is more memorable (Swap et al. 2001). As a story stimulates visual images, it becomes easier to remember.

2.2.2 Storytelling components

A brand story in essence consists of the same structure as a traditional story. It contains a message, characters, a conflict, and a plot (Fog et al. 2010). They all contribute to creating the story effects.

The message

The story is often used as a tool to communicate the message the company wishes to tell its audience. The message is the general point and is used to show the receiver a "truth", and what is right (Fog et al. 2010).

The conflict

The core of the story should be a conflict and its resolution. Without the conflict component, the story becomes predictable and uninteresting (Fog et al. 2010). According to Fog (2010) the driving force of a story is the conflict, and the imbalance this creates makes the reader/viewer more involved in the story. However, when composing stories for a brand, the conflict should be clearly separated from brand itself (Mathews and Wacker 2008).

The character

A story is usually initiated by a main character pursuing a goal (Mathews and Wacker 2008; Fog et al. 2010). To be considered a character and not a narrator, the character should act as if unaware of acting in a story (Deighton, Romer and McQueen 1989). Characters can also be supporting as well as the reason for the conflict.

The plot

The story plot is a cause-and-effect sequence of events and includes the settings of the story (Dibell 1988). The plot is the theme of the story and how it is designed shapes what type of story it is perceived to be (Gabriel 2000). It sets the scene and moves the story line forward. The user experience is heavily dependant on the story flow, and the sequence of events needs careful consideration to maintain audience interest (Fog et al. 2010). It is often varied based on the stage in which the company is currently in (Mathews and Wacker 2008). The classical story plots re-occur over time, since it is easier for the audience to understand, being already familiar with the overall concept (Mathews and Wacker 2008). Mathews and Wacker even discuss how there seems to be a finite number of potential story-lines and that corporate storytelling only needs adapt a "few new details to a time-honoured plot."

2.3 Incongruity

Another widespread, concept within marketing and advertising today is incongruity. When used in ads, it refers to elements that are inconsistent or incompatible with the normative expectations of the receiver. Whether or not correspondence with consumer perception is preferable in advertising is hotly debated, as many ads have gained surprising amounts of attention through the use of unexpected features.

To define incongruity it is easiest to define congruity, as a starting point. According to the Oxford dictionary congruence means agreement or harmony. Thus, incongruity is something that is not agreeing with expectations. Theory is indecisive on whether incongruity in relation to advertising poses a positive or negative effect on consumers' perceptions.

2.3.1 Information incongruity

Incongruent information in an ad is unexpected (Heckler and Childers 1992; Lee and Mason 1999). The incongruity appears due a discrepancy with an existing schema in a persons' mind (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989).

In their research, Meyers-Levy and Tybout show that information incongruity can generate positive emotional effects (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989). Further research has shown that incongruent ads appeal to peoples' problem-solving mind (McQuarrie

and Mick 1992; Phillips 2000), and ads that consist of incongruent components make the consumers want to solve the problem. Solving the problem creates a sense of achievement, which rubs off on their attitudes towards the ad and the brand (Phillips 2000).

However, it has been shown that incongruity is not always preferred. When elaboration is unwelcome and congruence is an easier way to go, consumers prefer a congruent ad (Goodstein 1993). Further, when external factors make it hard to resolve the incongruity and a strong cognitive effort is required, the consumers' prefer congruity (Sengupta and Johar 2002). Perceived risk is another factor determining whether congruity or incongruity is favoured. It has been showed that congruity is always preferred when there is risk involved in a decision, and incongruity is more desirable in low-risk situations (Campbell and Goodstein 2001).

2.3.2 Schema incongruity

The schema congruity theory framework states that when finding new information regarding a brand that is congruent with the established brand schema, there is little need to process the information thoroughly (Kent and Allen 1994). However, if the information deviates from the brand schema, an uncomfortable tension will follow, which makes people want to resolve the incongruity somehow (Festinger 1957; Mandler 1982). It has been shown that the schemas are resistant to change, and thus people will try to maintain the current schema and try to explain the new information through the already established schema (Festinger 1957). Dealing with incongruent information can be done through assimilation, alternative schema or accommodation.

Assimilation

When assimilation is used to deal with incongruent information the new information gets included in the established schema without significant changes of the overall structure of the schema (Mandler, 1982). An example of assimilation could be when consumers for the first time encounter a cronut, a pastry that is a combination of a croissant and a doughnut (CNBC 2013). Since the "doughnut" is not the same as what the consumer is used to, consumers might at first have a difficulty placing it in the "doughnut schema". However, since they have tried doughnuts before, the cronut will be included in the doughnut schema.

Alternative schema

When consumers have a problem fitting the information into the existing schema, they may try to solve the incongruity by using another schema. Using the cronut example, people who do not perceive the cronut to be a proper doughnut may use the croissant schema instead (Lee and Schumann 2004). Thus, alternative schema is a delayed finding of a schema, but it does not alter the overall structure of the schema (Mandler 1982).

Accommodation

When either assimilation or alternative schema works in order to get the information into a schema, people need to make adjustments to the established schema. One way of doing this is through “subtyping” (Taylor and Crocker 1981). This model means adding new nodes to the previous schema structure, and make the new information an exception to the rule. In the cronut example, they might think of the doughnut as a special doughnut that has other characteristics than the normal doughnut. If subtyping is not possible a new schema has to be created (Mandler 1982), but since this requires a lot of emotional and cognitive effort, it is likely that the consumer will not resolve the incongruity at all (Lee and Schumann 2004).

2.3.3 Incongruity effects between ad and brand

Information incongruity has been the main area of focus for previous research of incongruent advertising (Alden et al. 2000; Phillips 2000). There are several studies that have shown the benefits of incongruity within the ad such as a mismatch between pictures and copy as well as situation incongruity, but much less research exist on incongruity between the ad and the brand. Dahlén and Lange studied this by looking at what happens when “the ad is incongruent with the brand and the associations consumers hold with it, that is, the brand schema” (Dahlén and Lange 2004). Further, in their study “Effects of Brand Incongruent Advertising in Competitive Settings” Dahlén and Törn showed that ads incongruent with the established brand schema can lead to higher attention, a more detailed focus of the brand associations, a higher memorability of ad and brand as well as enhanced ad attitudes. However, this is only true when the consumer succeeds in solving the incongruity.

When looking at familiar brands in particular, Dahlén and Lange (2004) prove that the incongruity is perceived as more severe when the brand schema is very solid. In the case of their study, the incongruent ad was evaluated more negatively than the congruent ad, but the brand attitude did in this case show an opposite effect, the incongruity in the ad enhanced the overall perception of the brand. They argue that the ad-brand incongruity is divided into two parts; the ad message and the brand message and that these two do not always correlate.

According to Mandler (1982), how a human being evaluates new facts partly depends on how easy it is to comprehend the new facts. When the facts are congruent with the existing schema, comprehension is higher, while incongruent facts are harder to comprehend, since it is not consistent with the schema. It has been shown that when the plot is changed for each ad in a campaign, consumers find it more difficult to understand since they have to develop a new situation model for each individual ad. The decreased comprehension leads to more negative ad-attitudes and thereby more negative brand attitudes (Chang, 2009).

2.4 Combined effects and hypothesis generation

Researchers are disagreeing on whether incongruity in an ad is positive or not for the brand evaluation. On the one hand, it has been shown that the attitude towards an ad and a brand is higher when the ad consists of incongruent elements (Lee and Mason 1999; Lee 2000). However, other researchers have found that incongruity within an ad can lead to negative brand attitudes (Aaker and Keller, 1990; Czellar, 2003) depending on how the information is processed. Ads that are formatted as a story also affect the processing. It may cause the receiver to think in a narrative form and to a lesser extent focus on the brand attributes, shifting the focus to the elements of the story (Escalas, 2004).

It is hypothesized that when combining the effects of storytelling and incongruity, several variables come into play. Effects on similar, but not identical, variables that according to theory affect brand outcomes are noted in both storytelling and incongruity theory. It is therefore interesting to closer examine several potentially mediating variables to better explain possible deviations in the dependent variables. Three of these shared areas have been singled out for deeper exploration.

The following hypothesis generation emphasizes the theoretical background of effects caused by incongruity, as it is the main area of investigation whereas the storytelling serves as a backdrop that the incongruity interoperates with.

2.4.1 Credibility

Ad credibility is found to be an important element in the evaluation of brands (MacKenzie and Lutz 1989). The high level of engagement related to storytelling as compared to argumentative advertising has repeatedly been shown to increase ad credibility since the narrative processing of information decreases the consumer's likelihood of questioning the message and content. This is however in strong contrast to the effects of brand-incongruent elements of advertising. When information is encountered that does not fit an existing schema, it takes a lot of cognitive effort to make it aligned with the schema. When the information differs too much from the established schema, the schema is incongruent (Törn 2009). Therefore, theory suggests that if there is a discrepancy between the consumers' perception of the brand and the communicated values in the advertising of the brand, it is not consistent with the consumers' existing brand schema and thus the response from the consumer will be that they evaluate the ad and the brand as less credible (Dahlén et al. 2005).

*H1: Ad credibility for stories with brand-incongruent plots will be **lower** than ad credibility for stories with brand-congruent plots.*

2.4.2 Memorability

Storytelling theory is clear on the positive effects on memorability of a narrative account. Through stimulating visual images in the consumers' mind, they will be more memorable than listed information. (Swap et al. 2001).

Also advertising incongruity can induce positive effect, such as surprise and excitement on the receiver of the ad (Lee and Mason 1999; Alden Mukherjee and Hoyer 2000), which makes them react more positively to the advertised message (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989) and can thereby contribute a positive effect on the memory of an ad (Ambler 2000). On the other hand, processing the new information requires a lot of emotional and cognitive effort, which makes it somewhat likely that the consumer will not resolve the incongruity at all (Lee and Schumann 2004) which ought to lead to decreased memorability.

It has been shown that when adding conflicting components to advertisements, it can improve memorability as well as enhance brand attitudes, due to the increased message processing necessary when categorizing the message (Heckler and Childers 1992; Lee, 2000). This is due to the information incongruity and its bad fit with the established brand schema (Törn 2009); encountering information that contradicts one's expectations triggers the brain to think harder and concentrate more on the information provided, as opposed to encountering information that is consistent with one's expectations (Fiske, Kinder and Larter 1983).

The increased attention on the provided information has been showed to affect brand responses positively (Heckler and Childers 1992; Lee 2000) and to create a greater number of associative paths in memory than if the information had been congruent (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989). The increased number of associative pathways derived from the incongruent information expands the number of possible associations and thus facilitates the possibility of remembering incongruent information (Lee and Schulman 2004). This in turn leads to a better memory of the incongruent element as well as the brand. An additional effect may be that the salience of the brand in the future is increased (Alba and Chattopadhyay 1986) which leads to a better brand attitude (Holden and Vanhuele 1999).

*H2: Ad memorability for stories with brand-incongruent plots will be **higher** than memorability for stories with brand-congruent plots.*

2.4.3 Emotional involvement

A third, commonly identified aspect of both incongruity and storytelling, is increased emotional involvement. Stories help the consumer relate the content to his or her own personal experiences, creating a stronger emotional bond (McKee 2003).

Also incongruity has been proven to increase message involvement (Lee 2000). The increased involvement leads to more cognitive processing and assessing of the brand (Heckler and Childers 1992; McQuarrie and Mick 1992) Further, the surprise element associated with incongruity may lead to increased attention (Fiske and Taylor 1991; Goodstein 1993).

Incongruity may lead to emotions like surprise and laughter, since the divergence from peoples' expectations can be a humorous element (Alden, Mukherjee, and Hoyer 2000). Surprise gets humans intrinsically aroused, which may imply that an incongruent ad leads to a stronger emotional reaction than a congruent ad (Törn 2009). The availability heuristic predicts that stories that are memorable will be more thoroughly processed (Swap et al. 2001) and thus, is predicted, more engaging.

*H3: Ad involvement for stories with brand-incongruent plots will be **higher** than ad involvement for stories with brand-congruent plots.*

2.4.4 Ad and brand effects

Previous research has found several mediating variables affecting whether consumers prefer a congruent or an incongruent ad. Adding the story component will further have an affect on the evaluation.

On one hand, it has been suggested that too much consistency when communicating a brand can reduce the interest in the brand (Alden et al 2000). Since the congruent ad is consistent with most respondents' brand schema, it will typically not lead to a cognitive elaboration and as a result the evaluation of the ad and brand will be trivial (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989). The incongruent ad, where the cognitive evaluation is triggered, leads to an evaluation of the ad as more challenging and interesting (Alwitt 2000). Mandler (1982) states that if the incongruity is solvable in relation to the brand schema, this is preferred by the consumer due to the feelings of success when solving the incongruity puzzle (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989). This will then positively affect the ad attitude (Lee and Mason 1999) and the purchase intention. Furthermore, the increased salience caused by the ad incongruity has a positive effect on brand attitude.

One the other hand, consumers tend to prefer congruity when the situation they are in constrains the possibility to find a resolution or when they need to use strong cognitive processing to fit the incongruent information in an existing brand schema (Sengupta and Johar 2002). Thus previous theory argues that congruency is evaluated more positively since this is easier to solve, when elaboration is unwelcome. Further, external factors such as limited time may lead to consumers not succeeding in solving the incongruity (Srull 1981), leading to negative effects on the ad and the brand (Mandler 1982; Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989).

It has been shown that the ad attitude has a direct affect on the brand attitude (Belch and Belch 2003) and the purchase intentions (Mitchell and Olson 1981). Thus, the three measures' results should correlate. However, when dealing with incongruity the results between the ad attitude and the brand attitude may differ (Dahlén and Lange 2004), and consequently the hypotheses are measured separately.

As the prior results of research is not clear on whether ad incongruity will have a positive or negative effect, it is hypothesized that there will be a main effect, but with an unknown direction, on ad attitude, brand attitude and brand intention between the congruent and the incongruent versions of the ad.

H4: Ad attitude for stories with brand-incongruent plots differs from ad attitude for stories with brand-congruent plots.

H5: Brand attitude for stories with brand-incongruent plots differs from brand attitude for stories with brand-congruent plots.

H6: Brand intention for stories with brand-incongruent plots differs from brand intention for stories with brand-congruent plots.

2.4.5 Impact of product involvement

The focus of this thesis is on the dependent variables presented in the previous section. But for further explanation value, another layer is then added to brand intention. Again, previous theory fails to agree on the effects of the variables.

For high-involvement products, where the purchase is defined as inferring a high-perceived risk; socially, financially or personally (Rossiter, Percy and Donovan 1991), it has been shown that consumers prefer a congruent version of communication (Campbell and Goodstein 2001; Maoz and Tybout 2002). It is according to a similar line of reasoning also argued that when dealing with a low-involvement product, consumers are expected to better accept incongruity (Campbell and Goodstein 2001).

Conversely, since a high-involvement product has the characteristics of being processed more thoroughly by the consumers, incongruent communication may be more favourable (Maoz and Tybout 2002) since this allows for a better chance at mentally solving the conflict.

Further, personal relevance is an important factor when speaking of product-involvement. This is when communication personally affects the receiver of the message (Eagly and Chaiken 1993). In regards to stories, a consumer may become more absorbed in the communication if it is in line with their personal values – thereby increasing the story effects.

High-product-involvement indicates an element of high risk for the consumer connected to the purchase. This can lead to positive or negative effects on brand intention. As a result of the higher level of processing of the story when adding the incongruity element it may be that the incongruent story reflects positively on brand intention. On the other hand, it is suggested that the consumer may prefer the congruent and safer alternative when dealing with a high-involvement product. The positive or negative effects of this preference are expected to directly influence brand intention. If and how product-involvement is a mediating variable for story effects remains unknown. Thus, it is hypothesized that the brand intention when encountering an ad incongruent with the brand in storytelling will differ between high levels of product involvement from when lower levels of product involvement.

*H7: Effects of ad-brand incongruity in storytelling on brand intention will **differ** for high levels of product involvement compared to lower levels of product involvement.*

2.5 Theory overview

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the effects that brand-incongruity has on advertising effectiveness for story-based communication. This has been tested for argumentative advertising before. However, since the effects of advertising incongruity is still a relatively new research area there still exist some knowledge gaps, one of them being how incongruity relates to corporate storytelling. This combination is especially interesting due to storytelling's strong proven effect of absorption and emotional outcomes on the consumer. Also incongruity is a popular research topic for advertising scholars and the effects of using it in different forms is hotly debated. Through combining theory from both research areas the aim is to shed some light on how corporate storytelling should be used to provide the best effect possible. This is measured by three potentially mediating variables related to the effects of storytelling and incongruity (credibility, memorability and emotional involvement) and three dependent variables (ad-attitude, brand-attitude and brand-intention). On top of this, product-involvement is expected to provide a further dimension to brand intention.

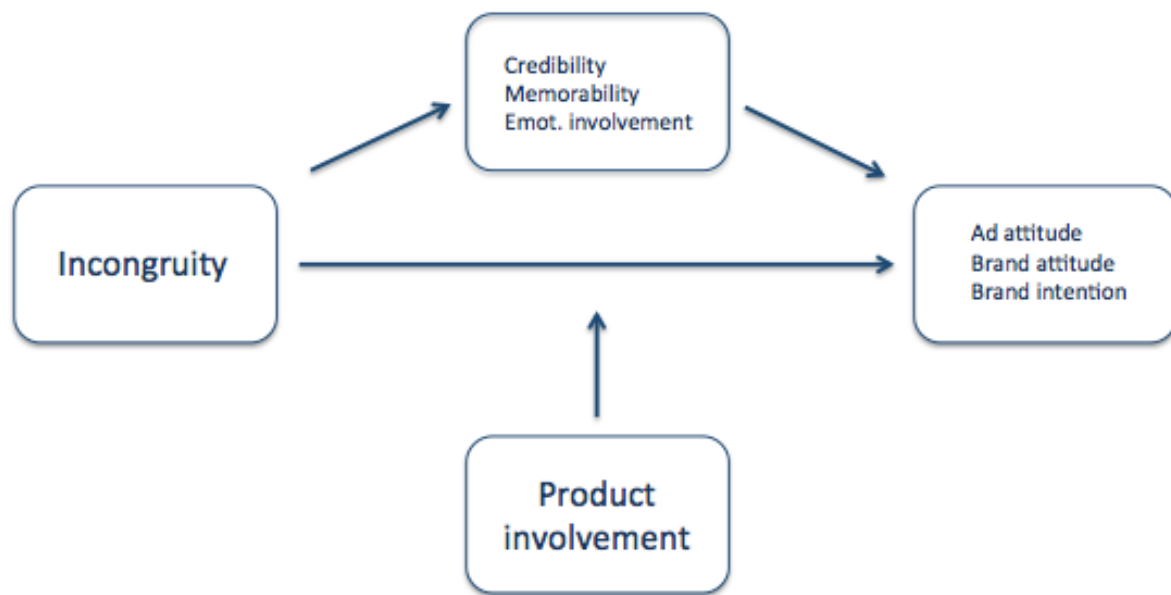


Figure 1. Theoretical overview.

The above Figure 1 gives an overview of the study, its measured potentially mediating and dependent variables as well as how they are interconnected. The storytelling and incongruity effects interrelate and affect the potentially mediating variables and in turn, the ad and brand effects. Product-involvement is added as a potentially moderating variable that affects the mediating-variables as well as brand intention.

3. Methodology

This chapter describes the chosen scientific approach, starting from the idea generation, followed by a description of the research design, the preparatory work and the main study. The chapter finishes with a discussion of the reliability and validity of the study.

3.1 Topic/Idea

The idea for the thesis subject stemmed from an interest in branding and a fascination for the captivating effects of storytelling, which has increasingly been used in marketing for established, well-known brands. The topic is perceived to be very up-to-date with what is currently being scrutinized by researchers and PR firms, implying that the subject is worth investigating further.

To get a better understanding of why companies are using stories as a part of their communication strategy the thesis writing process began with interviewing professionals from companies that are specialised in different types of communication. The companies interviewed were **LynxEye**, a management consultancy firm focused on branding, and **King**, an advertising agency known for having successfully implemented a lot of storytelling in communication for their clients. The interviews were conducted to get a deeper understanding and background of the chosen topic.

They clearly showed that storytelling is widely used in a number of communication and branding industries, but a knowledge gap in academia. It was noticed that there exists a lot of information about the effectiveness of storytelling as a concept. Nonetheless, too few have looked into how it practically should be conducted to achieve the best possible results – what happens when different parameters of a story are changed?

A similarly popular area of advertising elements is current research on incongruity theory. The doctoral thesis by Fredrik Törn, discusses the concept of incongruity in advertising communication, implying that the subject is highly topical. Whether or not correspondence with consumer perception is preferable in advertising is hotly debated, as many ads have gained unexpected amounts of attention through the use of unexpected features.

A theoretical review indicated that there are a number of similar aspects in which both concepts affect consumers; such as aspects that affect comprehension (Lee and Thorson, 2008) and emotional involvement (Gabriel 2000). However, how the two concepts interrelate has not previously been studied.

3.2 Scientific approach

While the thesis idea was born from an interest in the practical applications of storytelling by companies and agencies, the research is based on existing theory and is therefore of deductive nature. Research questions and hypotheses were drawn from storytelling, congruity and branding literature as a gap in the storytelling theory on executional best practice in regards to effectiveness could be identified.

These hypotheses are then tested through data sampling with a quantitative approach to make broader generalizations of the results possible (Bryman and Bell 2007). Also a qualitative research approach was included in the pre-study phase, where further understanding of the subject was gathered through unstructured interviews with practitioners at ad agency King and brand agency LynxEye, who use it as a communications tool. The interviews were structured around a number of theme questions that were adapted to the situation and aimed to provide a background understanding of the practical use of storytelling (Bryman and Bell 2007). As these interviews are not used explicitly in the thesis but rather in the idea generation phase, transcripts of them are not included in the appendix.

As this thesis also tries to broaden the theoretical framework of storytelling through combining it with incongruity theory, it employs some integrative reasoning (MacInnis 2011).

3.3 Preparatory work

The preparations for this research were divided into several steps to ensure the quality of the main study.

3.3.1 Selecting brands and product categories

If an experiment only tests one single stimulus, it does not allow for variation within the research batch and the experiments results are not generalizable. To make the research generalizable, this experiment followed the recommendation of academics (Vaux, Fidler and Cumming 2012) and included different stimulus leading to the survey questionnaire being distributed for three different brands, with dissimilar and distinctive characteristics. The total number of stories used was six, to ensure that the results were replicable and not specific for one particular brand. The primary purpose was not to compare different brands to each other but to replicate the results within the framework of the study. As the purpose of the different brands is to act as an example, they will be analysed separately.

The known effects of incongruity only tend to be significant to familiar brands, as for the unfamiliar ones the consumer lacks pre-existing perceptions, and research also shows

how the relationship between ad-attitude and brand attitude is weaker for familiar brands than for unfamiliar brands, making brand familiarity an important moderator of advertising effectiveness (Dahlén and Lange 2009; Campbell and Keller 2003). Therefore, the study is limited to well-established ones of high familiarity with the sample groups.

The chosen brands were selected to fulfil both the criteria of being well known by the sample population as well as to differ in relation to each other; in regard to typical category involvement, ways of use and external communication. The choice therefore fell on well-known Swedish consumer brands in different product categories, namely the personal vehicle category, the spirits category and the crisps category – specifically Volvo, Absolut Vodka and OLW. Volvo is a brand of personal vehicles that represents durable goods, purchased seldom and used over a long period of time – making it a big investment for most people. This in contrast to the crisps of OLW, a consumer good with low financial as well as generally low social impact and a more often repeated purchase that assumedly represents a more low-product-involvement purchase for the consumer, though this has also been tested for in the survey. Absolut Vodka on the other hand is deemed to be placed somewhere in between the two extremes and is more of a lifestyle product associated with values that are quite the opposite of Volvo and OLW.

Table 1. The chosen brands and their characteristics.

Volvo	Absolut	OLW
High-involvement, durable good, seldom purchased	Medium-involvement, consumer good, lifestyle product	Low-involvement, consumer good, frequent purchase

3.3.2 Pre-study one

With the purpose to determine what values and personalities the stories should communicate for each brand, the first pre-study aimed to identify brand schemas perceived externally by consumers and other stakeholders, instead of what is rooted internally within an organisation. This as the brand schema is the perception and consequent associations that the consumer holds for a brand, rather than the associations a company wishes to be related to (Hoyer, MacInnis and Pieters 2008).

To determine what associations were or were not consistent with the selected brands' schemas the 42 brand personality traits developed by Aaker (1997) were used. A sample of 14 respondents were asked to rate 42 brand associations that were quantified with 7-point Likert scale ranging from "Not at all" to "Very well" in response to the question "How well do you think the following words describe the brand?"

These respondents' descriptives match the ones of the main study fairly well and can be found in table 2 below. The applied research strategy was a digital survey distributed through personal networks, and the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of Pre-Study I respondents.

Age of respondents(μ)	29.71		
Number of respondents	14		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Other</i>
Gender of respondents	43%	57%	0%

Table 3 below presents the summarised results from the first pre-study; the numbers reported are the mean values and standard deviations of all responses.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of Pre-Study I.

Volvo Top 5	Mean (μ)	Std.dev. (σ)	Absolut Top 5	Mean (μ)	Std.dev. (σ)	OLW Top 5	Mean (μ)	Std.dev. (σ)
Family-oriented	6.45	0.97	Trendy	5.89	0.78	Family-oriented	6.78	0.44
Secure	6.41	0.95	Exciting	5.78	0.83	Cheerful	6.01	0.71
Reliable	6.41	0.99	Cool	5.44	0.88	Friendly	5.89	1.62
Real	5.48	1.07	Successful	5.33	0.87	Real	5.67	1.22
Honest	5.30	1.06	Imaginative	5.22	0.67	Small-town	5.56	1.24
Volvo Bottom 5	Mean (μ)	Std.dev. (σ)	Absolut Bottom 5	Mean (μ)	Std.dev. (σ)	OLW Bottom 5	Mean (μ)	Std.dev. (σ)
Young	2.17	1.10	Family-oriented	1.67	1.41	Glamorous	1.44	0.73
Cool	2.32	1.06	Technical	1.89	1.36	Smooth	1.78	1.30
Exciting	2.40	1.07	Small-town	2.22	1.48	Upper class	1.78	1.39
Trendy	2.42	0.97	Outdoorsy	2.44	1.51	Technical	1.89	1.36
Glamorous	2.57	1.61	Rugged	2.56	1.51	Unique	2.11	1.17

From this it was concluded that family-oriented was the most common association for both Volvo ($\mu = 6,45$) and OLW ($\mu = 6,78$). For Volvo this was further explained by the values of security, reliability, realness and honesty – procuring the image of a brand that values being responsible and caring for the family. OLW on the other hand was perceived as a cheerful, friendly and small-town brand and not in any way associated with glamour, uniqueness or the upper class. This conjures up the image of a brand that cherishes values such as joyful and sociable moments shared with the family. Volvo, the trustworthy brand, had low association scores for being young, cool, exiting, trendy and glamorous.

Absolut was in this sense very differently perceived than the other brands. Family-oriented was not at all an association that the consumers held for Absolut and neither was technical, small-town, outdoorsy or rugged. The respondents' top associations for the brand Absolut was trendy, exciting, cool, successful and imaginative - implying a perception of a hip and innovative lifestyle brand.

The top and bottom five ranked associations for each brand were singled out and used in the next step of the process.

3.3.3 Formulating the stories

As the story plots were the manipulated stimuli they were the most critical part of the survey. With the results of Pre-Study I as the starting point for brand associations and personalities, stimuli stories were created as congruent or incongruent based on four theoretical elements of a story. These are the message, the conflict, the character and the plot (Fog et al. 2010).

Message – The message was held alike for the two versions. The stories' stimuli messages were created by slightly adapting the brands' core messages found on their respective websites. OLW is part of a larger corporation, Orkla, and has no individually, clearly defined brand message. In this case the "Fredagsmys" message, emphasized repetitively in all of their marketing, was used instead. While it could be argued that the phrase in Swedish may confuse non-native speaking respondents, it is such a well-established concept that this was not a problem.

Conflict – The conflict was held as alike as possible for the two versions. This was intentionally kept away from being negative for the brand and strived to let the brand's product help solve it whenever possible.

Characters – The characters were held as alike as possible for the two versions, with emphasis on the main character being identical for both stories. For all three brands, a male at around 35 years old was used as the main character.

Plot – The plot was the manipulated variable. The plot of the story was the main investigative variable, congruent or not, and therefore kept as similar as possible between the two versions while being adapted to reflect the values extracted from Pre-Study I. This was done for the incongruent by combining both the inverse of the top five associations as well as including the bottom five ones. The associations were conveyed through the setting, story line and to a large extent – the resolution of the plot.

As the plot is the only manipulated variable, the others will be left out of further discussion but are kept as similar as possible in the stories to facilitate comparison of the manipulated plots. The stories can be found in Appendix 2.

3.3.4 Pre-study two

With the six different stimuli formulated, they were tested with a smaller sample to determine brand-plot congruency and quality. The purpose was to examine reactions to the constructed stories before launching the big questionnaire.

A new sample of 19 respondents were asked to on a scale from one to seven rate the constructed stories on perceived brand fit and how they believed other people would perceive the brand fit. While not tested for statistical significance, these measures, presented in table 5 below, indicate a large difference between the two versions.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of Pre-Study II respondents.

Age of respondents(μ)	33.16			
Number of respondents	19			
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Other</i>	
Gender of respondents	37%	63%	0%	

Table 5 below presents the summarised results from the second pre-study; the numbers reported are the mean values and standard deviations of all responses.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of Pre-Study II.

	Volvo		Absolut		OLW	
	Incongruent	Congruent	Incongruent	Congruent	Incongruent	Congruent
Perceived brand fit						
- <i>Mean (μ)</i>	2.52	5.13	1.86	4.93	2.43	4.93
- <i>Std.dev. (σ)</i>	1.19	1.77	0.77	1.82	1.45	1.77
Perceived fit by OTHERS						
- <i>Mean (μ)</i>	2.67	5.20	2.14	5.57	2.57	5.21
- <i>Std.dev. (σ)</i>	1.11	1.66	0.77	1.45	1.34	1.58

The results show that the perceived brand-plot fit is significantly higher for the congruent ads than the incongruent ads for all the three brands. For the Volvo ad the mean for the perceived ad-brand fit was 5.13 for the congruent ad and 2.52 for the incongruent ad. The Absolut ad had a perceived brand-plot fit of 4.93 for the congruent ad and 1.86 for the incongruent ad. In the case of OLW the respondents reported a 4.93 perceived brand-plot fit for the congruent ad and 2.43 for the incongruent ad.

When asked “How well do you think OTHER PEOPLE perceive that the plot of the ad fits to their perception of the Absolut Vodka brand?” the results showed similar results. The Volvo ad got a mean value of perceived brand fit of 5.20 for the congruent ad and 2.67 for the incongruent ad. The Absolut brand had a perceived ad-brand fit of 5.57 for the congruent ad and 2.14 for the incongruent ad. For OLW the perceived ad-brand fit for other people were 5.21 for the congruent ad and 2.57 for the incongruent ad.

3.4 The main study

After extensive pre-testing, the main study was designed and launched to a small number of respondents that were asked for feedback. Once this came back clear, the survey was rolled out to a large number of potential respondents.

3.4.1 Experimental design

The experiment design was configured using six different manipulations. A total of three brands were tested, and each brand had one version of a story plot that was congruent with the brand and one that was incongruent with the brand associations.

Since part of the research desired to study potentially mediating variables effects on consumers' attitudes and intentions, the thesis is concerned with causality (Bryman and Bell 2007). Thus, an experimental design was chosen, since this method is most often used in causal research (Malhotra 2010).

To ensure a high level of internal validity a between-subject experimental design was employed, where respondents were assigned one of the six stories in a random manner, where the manipulation variable 'incongruity' where employed in half of the groups, one for each brand tested.

The reason for not including a control group is that a control group implies a neutral group not exposed to the manipulated variable (Bryman and Bell 2007). In this study the aim was not to study the absolute effects of storytelling, as this has been shown in several other studies, but instead to study relative effects between groups, where one that was exposed to incongruity and one that was not, and thus a control group was not needed.

Manipulation variables

The manipulated object in the study is the plot, and the six versions differ, apart from brand, in how this is constructed. All the stories where written as a half-page text, with the brand logo displayed at the top of each story, and the brand message at the bottom. This was made in order to make the stimulus as similar as possible in terms of media type and format.

3.4.2 Sampling and data collection

The questionnaire was entirely conducted online with the use of Qualtrics Survey Software and distributed through personal networks. This resulted in 382 respondents, of which 364 were valid, and used, for final analysis.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of the main survey respondents.

Age of respondents(μ)	26.66		
Number of respondents	364		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Other</i>
Gender of respondents	51.6%	48.4%	0%

Without regard for demographic representation, this implies that the data is a convenience sample (Bryman and Bell 2007). However, when testing theory through an experimental design, a representative sample is of less importance (Calder, Phillips and Tybout 1981).

For the experimental method chosen, a completely independent random sample is the most critical aspect of the collected data. To fulfil this, respondents were through the software randomly allocated to the six different blocks of questions, creating a somewhat differing number of respondents in each group – which is inevitable when going for complete randomization.

3.4.3 The questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to be in English, although the market studied was the Swedish one. The reason for this was to allow for non-native speakers, who have been in Sweden for a long time and knows the brands well, to understand the questions completely and be able to participate, as they would make up a big group of potential respondents. Further, it was done to avoid the possibility of making mistakes in the translation of the questions and results from Swedish back to English. The questionnaire comprised 17 questions and the estimated time to finish was between 5-10 minutes.

All six versions of the survey contained identical questions, independent of the stimuli, except for the brand names and the product category. Each factor was measured using more than one measurement, to increase the reliability of the answers (Söderlund 2005). The design was as a texted script for a TV-spot, for several reasons. The first was time and scope constraints that did not allow for creating video commercials and using existing ones would lower the possibility of keeping other components than the one tested for intact. The script was used, as it is similar to print advertising in the way it is processed while adding to the credibility of the advertisement itself. This is positive as this form of media is reader-paced and suitable for research involving information incongruity (Lee 2000).

Further, the questions were divided into control questions, dependent variables, potentially mediating variables and other questions. The choice of dependent variables results from the theoretical discussion as seen in the method chapter.

As the purpose of the thesis was to determine the effectiveness of advertising on ad perception as well as ad and brand effects, some variables from the questionnaire were not used for the analysis, as they were not compatible with the primary purpose of the thesis.

For the variables consisting of more than one measurement, an analysis was done using either Cronbach's alpha for variables consisting of three measurements and correlation for two measurements. As all were deemed high enough according to rules-of-thumb, these were computed into a single variable. To increase validity, all measurements were according to best-practice borrowed from previous studies which is why some of them consist of three items and some other of only two as well as differing on the choice of Likert and semantic differential scales.

Control measurements

To ensure the data quality, questions were included to control brand awareness as well as perceived ad-brand incongruity. To test for brand awareness two control questions were used, both measured using a 1-7 Likert-scale. The first question was "How well do you know this brand?" followed by the second question asked, "Have you seen ads by this brand before?" This was based on the assumption that if the brands were well known to the respondents, they should have seen commercial from the brands previously and also share the brand associations of the pre-test-group. However, when seeing that the two correlated very well the decision was made to simplify and only go with the explicitly stated brand familiarity question.

To control for perceived ad-brand congruity two control questions were asked, measured using the 1-7 Likert-scale. The first question was (in the Absolut case): "How well do you perceive that the plot of the ad fits to your perception of the Absolut Vodka brand?" followed by: "How well do you think other people perceive that the plot of the ad fits to their perception of the Absolut Vodka brand?" This assuming that if the congruity were perceived low/high to the consumer they would estimate the perceived congruity of their peers approximately the same. Also here the second question was excluded from the analysis. Peer assessment showed a slight exaggeration towards the direction (either positive or negative) of the respondent's answer.

Potentially mediating measurements

Ad credibility was measured with a three-item semantic differential scale (1-7). The following items were used: convincing/unconvincing, believable/unbelievable and biased/unbiased. Averaging the points given by the respondents produced an index with a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$.

Memorability was measured with a two-item Likert scale (1-7). Memorability was measured with "I remember a lot about the ad" and "The ad was easy to learn and remember". The correlation between the two items was 0.78.

Emotional involvement was measured with a two-item Likert scale (1-7). Involvement was measured with "Watching the ad would affect me emotionally" and "I would enjoy watching the ad". The correlation between the two items was 0.80.

Dependent measurements

The attitude questions involved the dependent variables of ad and brand attitude as well as brand intention. The first two variables were tested on a three-item scale and the third was tested using a two-item scale.

Ad attitude was measured on a seven-point semantic differential scale consisting of three items. The following items were used: good/bad, pleasant/unpleasant and favourable/unfavourable. Averaging the points given by the respondents produced an index. The average index had a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$.

Brand attitude was measured on a seven-point semantic differential scale consisting of three items. The following items were used: good/bad, negative/positive and satisfactory/unsatisfactory. Averaging the points given by the respondents produced an index with a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.95$.

Brand intention was measured on a seven-point Likert scale consisting of two items. Purchase intentions were measured with "After reading the script, how likely is it that you would choose Absolut (Volvo, OLW) the next time you buy Vodka (a car, crisps)?" and word-of-mouth-intention measured with "After reading the script, how likely is it that you would recommend Absolut (Volvo, OLW) to a friend?" The correlation between the two items was 0.84.

Other measurements

The questionnaire contained several more measurements than the ones utilized in the main analysis and are not presented to facilitate reading of the thesis. The full questionnaire, exemplified by the Congruent Absolut version, can be found in Appendix 3.

Some of the variables not focused on can provide further insight to reasons for the results and are therefore presented here.

The demographic variables gender and age were measured to give an overview of the sample respondents and measured on with three options (male, female and other) for gender and a text entry box was used asking for the respondents' age in years. As these have previously been presented they will not be repeated here.

Product-Involvement level was measured instead of assuming a level for each product category, since this can vary from person to person. It was measured on a seven-point Likert scale by asking, "How much effort would you put into the decision of which brand to buy when purchasing [product category: a car, vodka, crisps]?" To allow for analysis

of variance, the responses were then binned in SPSS into three categories; low, medium and high. The results are presented in Chapter 4.

Probability to recommend ad will not be a question in focus until the discussion. It was however measured on a seven-point Likert scale by asking “After reading the script, how likely is it that you would recommend this ad to a friend?” The results are presented below in table 7.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of intention to recommend ad to a friend.

	Intention to recommend ad		
	Incongruent	Congruent	Diff
Volvo			
- Mean (μ)	3.30	3.81	-0,51
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.93	1.78	
Absolut			
- Mean (μ)	3.62	3.40	0,22
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.75	2.10	
OLW			
- Mean (μ)	3.54	2.30	1,24
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.68	1.43	

3.5 Data Quality

A common way to evaluate measures of concepts is through discussing a quantitative method's reliability and validity that are important parts of a trustworthy quantitative study.

3.5.1 Reliability

Reliability is all about the consistency of measure and is concerned with making results that are replicable by a second study. It can be divided into two different constructs: internal and external (Bryman and Bell 2007).

Internal

Internal validity means the match of theoretical development with the researcher's findings, also the strength of the study. It covers whether scales or indexes in the study are interrelated, and is often very closely connected to Cronbach's alpha, which is a measure of “the average of all possible split-half reliability coefficients” (Bryman and Bell 2007).

To check for this, Cronbach's alpha (or correlation when the number of measurements were less than three) has been employed to investigate the possibilities of combining to indices. To achieve reliable internal consistency, values at or over 0,7 were accepted and combined indices deemed to be good measurements (Bryman and Bell 2007).

With generally high results (Cronbach's alpha = 0,70) of the study that allowed for computing multiple-item measures into new, averaged ones, the measurement reliability of the experiment should be considered good.

External

For samples collected at two different points in time to have high correlation, for the study to achieve similar results when replicated, implies external reliability. Due to time restrictions, this study could not be replicated at a second occasion. The use of standardized questions in the survey as well as the pre-tests carried out before the main experiment allow for relatively high reliability when it comes to replication by strengthening the stability of the measures.

Further, to ensure reliability researchers should replicate the experiment independently several times using different stimulus (Vaux, Fidler and Cumming 2012). To make the research generalizable, this experiment included different stimulus and the survey questionnaire was conducted for three different brands, with dissimilar and distinctive characteristics. The total number of stories used was six, to ensure that the results were replicable and not specific for one particular brand.

3.5.2 Validity

Validity refers to how well a measurement reflects the reality of what it is supposed to measure (Bryman and Bell 2007), which has been taken into consideration through the use of commonly applied and well-established questions in the surveys. Also this construct can be divided into internal and external components.

Internal

The internal validity concept refers to how well conclusions on causality hold up. While there may be correlation, there is not always a causal relationship, which could give a test low validity (Bryman and Bell 2007).

The experimental design of the research ensures that exposure to stimuli is followed by the measurement of dependent variables which warrants high levels of internal reliability. Many of the responses in the main study were measured on a 7-point Semantic differential scale with bipolar labels, which increases validity (Bryman and Bell 2007).

In previous studies on the subject, the potentially mediating variables used have been shown to influence the dependent variables. Thus, the variation in the dependent variables may be a result of the variation in the potentially mediating variables.

External

External validity is concerned with possibilities of generalising the findings of the research to other contexts (Bryman and Bell 2007). While representative samples are commonly used as the best way to ensure external validity, this does not apply for experimental testing of theory, where a homogenous sample is preferable and the random assignation of stimuli is of outmost importance. (Calder, Phillips and Tybout 1981) The similar distribution of age and gender over all groups indicate this.

As the study includes three different brands and stimuli, the results are already checked to be generalizable in a wider context.

3.6 Data analysis

The collected data was analysed using the statistical computer program IBM SPSS Statistics.

A significance level of 10% was used for all tests (unless otherwise indicated), given the relatively small sample size. This was done to account for all possible differences in the sample and to not risk missing out on important connections. The p-values are however stated for the individual results to allow for further interpretation of the results.

For the t-tests, all dependent variables were measured on a continuous scale and the explanatory variables measuring incongruity consisted of two categorical, independent groups with independent observations. The assumption of normality was accepted since the size of each group exceeded 30 respondents (Sirkin 1995).

For brands that showed a significant impact of incongruity, mediator tests were carried out to check for the variables' influence on the outcome. Linear regression was applied for the mediator tests.

In the ANOVA-analysis employed for H7, the variable product-involvement was binned into three categories to facilitate analysis.

3.6.1 Manipulation check

A manipulation check of the data was used to see whether the chosen brands and stimuli scored on familiarity and level of incongruity as presumed. While this was done already in pre-test II it was also included in the main test to increase validity further. Descriptive

values for familiarity of the respective brands and level of incongruity of the stimuli are presented in table 9 below.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of respondent brand familiarity of main study.

	Brand Familiarity		
	Incongruent	Congruent	Diff
Volvo			
- Mean (μ)	6.03	6.33	-0.3
- Std.dev. (σ)	0.88	0.91	
Absolut			
- Mean (μ)	6.22	6.17	0.05
- Std.dev. (σ)	0.91	1.07	
OLW			
- Mean (μ)	5.90	5.87	0.03
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.31	1.26	

The results show very high levels of familiarity for all brands used in the study, for both the congruent and the incongruent groups.

The results also confirm the results of Pre-Test II, namely that the stories differ significantly on their levels of congruity. Descriptives of this are presented below.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics of perceived brand-plot fit of main study.

	Perceived Brand-Plot Fit		
	Incongruent	Congruent	Diff
Volvo			
- Mean (μ)	4.13	5.90	-1.77
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.70	1.26	
Absolut			
- Mean (μ)	2.68	4.33	-1.65
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.63	1.77	
OLW			
- Mean (μ)	3.12	5.18	-2.06
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.78	1.61	

3.6.2 Main tests

For the analysis of ad attitude, brand attitude and brand intention, independent samples

t-tests have been performed per each brand separately for each variable and the results are presented in the following chapter.

To support the theoretical framework, mediator tests were carried out for variables that showcased significant differences between the two groups. Given the suggested relationship between credibility, memorability and emotional involvement to ad and brand effects there should be a mediation effect between the responses to the potentially mediating variables and the variables ad attitude, brand attitude and purchase intentions. These are reported in Chapter 5 where significant effects on the variables were first tested.

To test the last hypothesis of product-involvement level and incongruity on the dependent variables brand intention, a two-way ANOVA was performed to evaluate the differences between the groups on an overall level as well as Scheffe's post hoc test. The latter was to understand between what levels of product-involvement differences might be significant.

4. Results and analysis

In this chapter the results of the data analysis are presented. The chapter follows the structure of the hypotheses as previously laid out. It starts off with a summary of the data for all brands, followed by an analysis of the overall reported results and thereafter an analysis of the individually reported results on a more detailed level.

4.1 Summary of data

Table 10. Descriptive statistics of the main survey's focus variables.

	Incongruent	Congruent	Diff	p-value		Incongruent	Congruent	Diff	p-value		Incongruent	Congruent	Diff	p-value
Volvo					Absolut					OLW				
Credibility					Credibility					Credibility				
- Mean	3.55	4.06	-0.51	0.032	- Mean	3.92	4.86	-0.94	0.000	- Mean	3.64	4.79	-1.14	0.000
- Std.dev.	1.25	1.33			- Std.dev.	1.14	1.08			- Std.dev.	0.96	1.01		
Memorability					Memorability					Memorability				
- Mean	5.21	5.08	0.13	0.602	- Mean	5.73	5.93	-0.2	0.283	- Mean	5.07	5.35	-0.28	0.164
- Std.dev.	1.41	1.25			- Std.dev.	1.08	0.98			- Std.dev.	1.15	1.07		
Involvement					Involvement					Involvement				
- Mean	4.59	4.61	-0.02	0.937	- Mean	4.32	4.98	-0.66	0.006	- Mean	4.15	4.05	0.10	0.676
- Std.dev.	1.28	1.51			- Std.dev.	1.31	1.31			- Std.dev.	1.19	1.3		
Ad Attitude					Ad Attitude					Ad Attitude				
- Mean	4.01	4.71	-0.70	0.008	- Mean	4.29	5.16	-0.87	0.000	- Mean	4.68	4.55	0.12	0.581
- Std.dev.	1.55	1.32			- Std.dev.	1.39	1.09			- Std.dev.	1.29	1.12		
Brand Attitude					Brand Attitude					Brand Attitude				
- Mean	4.08	4.84	-0.76	0.003	- Mean	4.54	5.42	-0.88	0.000	- Mean	4.41	4.72	-0.31	0.160
- Std.dev.	1.43	1.33			- Std.dev.	1.41	1.07			- Std.dev.	1.39	0.98		
Brand Intention					Brand Intention					Brand Intention				
- Mean	3.61	4.12	-0.51	0.076	- Mean	3.48	4.82	-1.34	0.000	- Mean	3.52	3.10	0.42	0.108
- Std.dev.	1.37	1.72			- Std.dev.	1.42	1.02			- Std.dev.	1.34	1.47		
Product Involvement					Product Involvement					Product Involvement				
- Mean	6.27	6.54			- Mean	3.87	3.80			- Mean	3.20	3.26		
- Std.dev.	0.82	0.67			- Std.dev.	1.35	1.71			- Std.dev.	1.69	1.49		

4.2 Reported results

4.2.1 Incongruity effects on ad credibility

The results support that there is a significant difference in ad credibility between ads with brand-incongruent plots and brand-congruent plots for all three brands (mean diff: Volvo = -0.51; Absolut = -0.94, OLW = -1.14). Thus H1, *Ad credibility for stories with brand-incongruent plots is **lower** than ad credibility for stories with brand-congruent plots*, is supported.

4.2.2 Incongruity effects on ad memorability

The results do not show that there is a significant difference in ad memorability between ads with brand-incongruent plots and brand-congruent plots for any of the three brands. Thus H2, *Ad memorability for stories with brand-incongruent plots will be **higher** than memorability for stories with brand-congruent plots*, is not supported.

4.2.3 Incongruity effects on ad emotional involvement

The results support that there is a significant difference in ad involvement between ads with brand-incongruent plots and brand-congruent plots, for the Absolut ad (diff = 0.66) ad but not for the other two brands. Thus H3, *Ad involvement for stories with brand-incongruent plots will be **higher** than ad involvement for stories with brand-congruent plots*, is partly supported.

4.2.4 Incongruity effects on ad attitude

The results support that there is a significant difference in ad attitude between ads with brand-incongruent plots and brand-congruent plots, for the Volvo (diff = -0.70) and the Absolut (diff = -0.87) ad. Thus H4, *Ad attitude for stories with brand-incongruent plots differs from ad attitude for stories with brand-congruent plots*, is partly supported.

4.2.5 Incongruity effects on brand attitude

The results support that there is a significant difference in ad attitude between ads with brand-incongruent plots and brand-congruent plots, for the Volvo (diff = -0.76) and the Absolut (diff = - 0.88) ad. Thus H5, *Brand attitude for stories with brand-incongruent plots differs from brand attitude for stories with brand-congruent plots*, is partly supported.

4.2.6 Incongruity effects on brand intention

The results support that there is a significant difference in brand intention between ads with brand-incongruent plots and brand-congruent plots, for the Volvo (diff = -0.51) and the Absolut (diff = - 1.34) ad. Thus H6, *Brand intention for stories with brand-incongruent plots differs from brand intention for stories with brand-congruent plots*, is partly supported.

4.3 Individually reported results

4.3.1 Brand 1 – Volvo

Potentially mediating variables

Table 11. Descriptive statistics of potentially mediating variables for Volvo.

	Incongruent	Congruent	Diff	p-value
Volvo				
Credibility				
- Mean (μ)	3.55	4.06	-0.51	0.032
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.25	1.33		
Memorability				
- Mean (μ)	5.21	5.08	0.13	0.602
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.41	1.25		
Involvement				
- Mean (μ)	4.59	4.61	-0.02	0.937
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.28	1.51		

For the Volvo case, ad credibility was as expected affected negatively by plot incongruity with statistically significant results (diff = -0.51, $p = 0.03$). This implies that H1 is supported for the Volvo case and ad credibility is different for ads with brand-incongruent plots and ads with brand-congruent plots.

No significant support could be found for differences in ad memorability (diff = 0.13) or emotional involvement (diff = -0.02) between the ad featuring the brand-congruent plot and the one featuring the brand-incongruent one. This implies that H2 and H3 are not supported in the Volvo case and that ad memorability as well as emotional involvement are unaffected by brand-plot incongruity.

Dependent variables

Table 12. Descriptive statistics of dependent variables for Volvo.

	Incongruent	Congruent	Diff	p-value
Volvo				
Ad Attitude				
- Mean (μ)	4.01	4.71	-0.70	0.008
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.55	1.32		
Brand Attitude				
- Mean (μ)	4.08	4.84	-0.76	0.003
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.43	1.33		
Brand Intention				
- Mean (μ)	3.61	4.12	-0.51	0.076
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.37	1.72		

Further, for the Volvo experiment, ad attitude was affected negatively by plot incongruity with statistically significant results (diff = -0.70, $p = 0.01$). This implies that H1 is supported for the Volvo case and ad attitude is different for ads with brand-incongruent plots than ads with brand-congruent plots. The same goes for brand attitude (diff= -0.76, $p = 0.00$) and brand intention (diff= -0.51, $p = 0.08$), where hypotheses H2 and H3 is supported, implying that brand attitude and intention are indeed affected negatively by incongruity.

As the “end variables” all showed significant differences for the Volvo brand and a significant difference in credibility a mediator test was carried out. Since the effect on, and of, credibility was confirmed, the tests focused on the variable’s mediating effect on the end outcome.

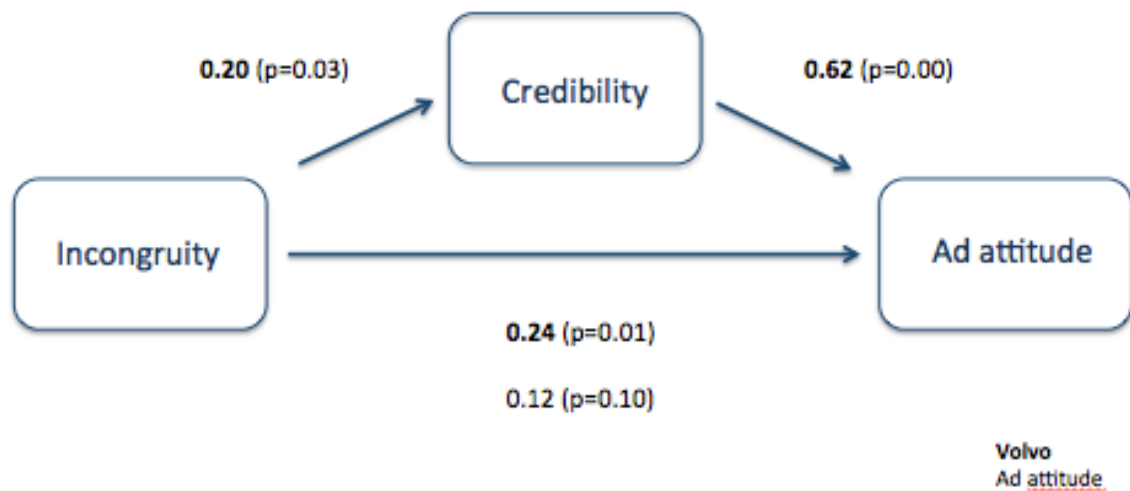


Figure 2. Mediation analysis for Volvo's ad attitude.

The incongruity effect on ad attitude decreased dramatically (from 0.24 to 0.12) when taking credibility into account. The remaining effect of incongruity is however on the border of significance and the variable credibility is therefore deemed to be partly mediating for ad attitude for the Volvo brand.

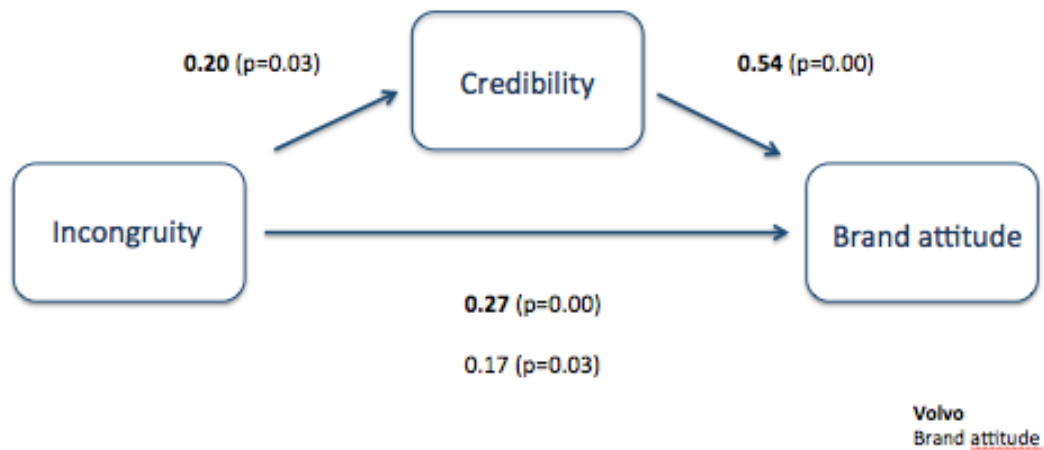


Figure 3. Mediation analysis for Volvo's brand attitude.

Also for brand attitude, the effect decreased (from 0.27 to 0.17), but here the remaining effect is definitely significant. The credibility variable is deemed to be partly mediating for brand attitude.

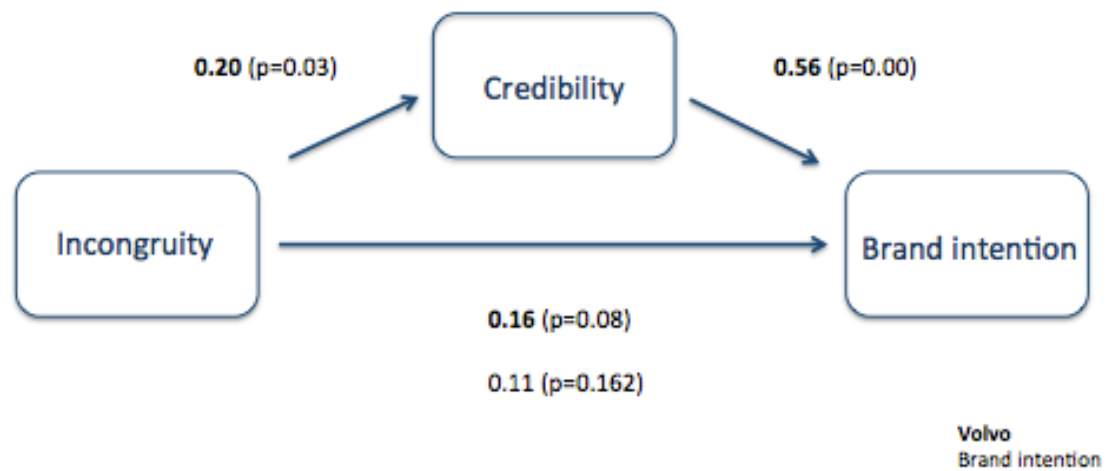


Figure 4. Mediation analysis for Volvo's brand intention.

For brand intention, the remaining effect when taking credibility into account was not significant ($p=0.162$) and thus, the effect is wholly mediated by credibility.

4.3.2 Brand 2 – Absolut

Potentially mediating variables

Table 13. Descriptive statistics of potentially mediating variables for Absolut.

	Incongruent	Congruent	Diff	p-value
Absolut				
Credibility				
- Mean (μ)	3.92	4.86	-0.94	0,000
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.14	1.08		
Memorability				
- Mean (μ)	5.73	5.93	-0.2	0.283
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.08	0.98		
Involvement				
- Mean (μ)	4.32	4.98	-0.66	0.006
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.31	1.31		

For the Absolut ads, ad credibility (diff = -0.94, p = 0.00) was statistically significantly affected negatively by the brand incongruity, whereas memorability (diff = -0.20, p = 0.28) was not. Emotional involvement (diff = -0.66, p = 0.01) showed a significant, negative, difference for the incongruent ad.

Dependent variables

Table 14. Descriptive statistics of dependent variables for Absolut.

	Incongruent	Congruent	Diff	p-value
Absolut				
Ad Attitude				
- Mean (μ)	4.29	5.16	-0.87	0.000
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.39	1.09		
Brand Attitude				
- Mean (μ)	4.54	5.42	-0.88	0.000
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.41	1.07		
Brand Intention				
- Mean (μ)	3.48	4.82	-1.34	0.000
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.42	1.02		

In the case of Absolut, all dependent variables turned out to be negatively affected by brand-plot incongruity. The independent sample t-tests showed that ad attitude (diff = -

0,87, $p = 0,00$), brand attitude (diff = -0,88, $p = 0,00$) and brand intention (diff = -1.34, $p = 0.00$) all significantly differ for the congruent and incongruent versions of the ad.

As the “end variables” all showed significant differences for the Absolut brand and a significant difference in credibility as well as emotional involvement a mediator test was carried out. Since the effect on, and of, credibility as well as emotional involvement was confirmed, the tests focused on the variables’ mediating effect on the end outcomes.

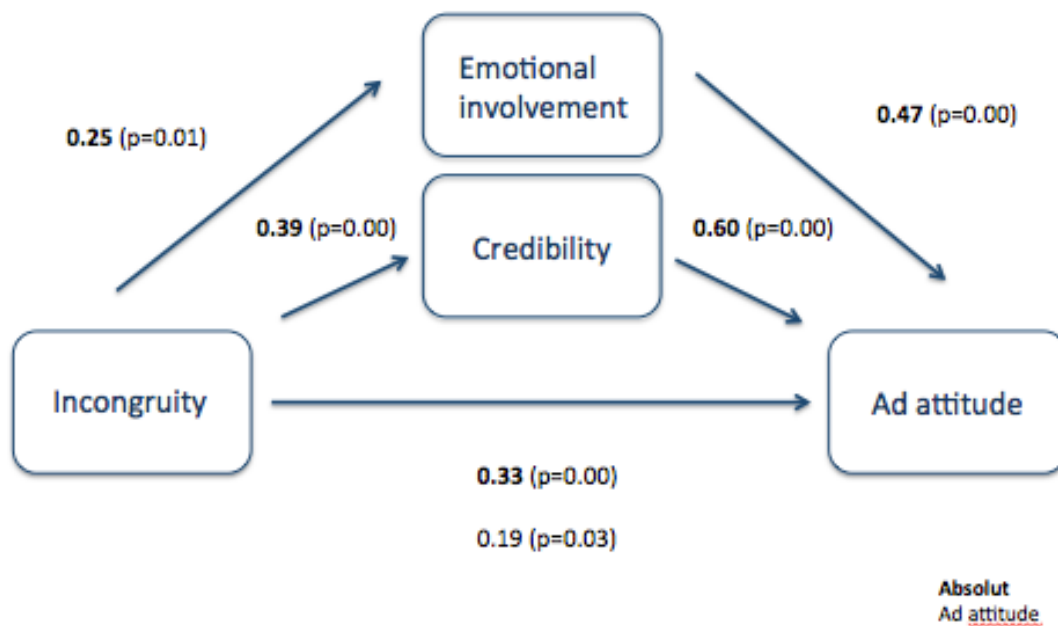


Figure 5. Mediation analysis for Absolut's ad attitude.

The incongruity effect on ad attitude decreased noticeably (from 0.33 to 0.19) when taking credibility and emotional involvement into account. The remaining effect is however significant and the variables credibility and emotional involvement are therefore deemed to be partly mediating for ad attitude, for the Absolut brand.

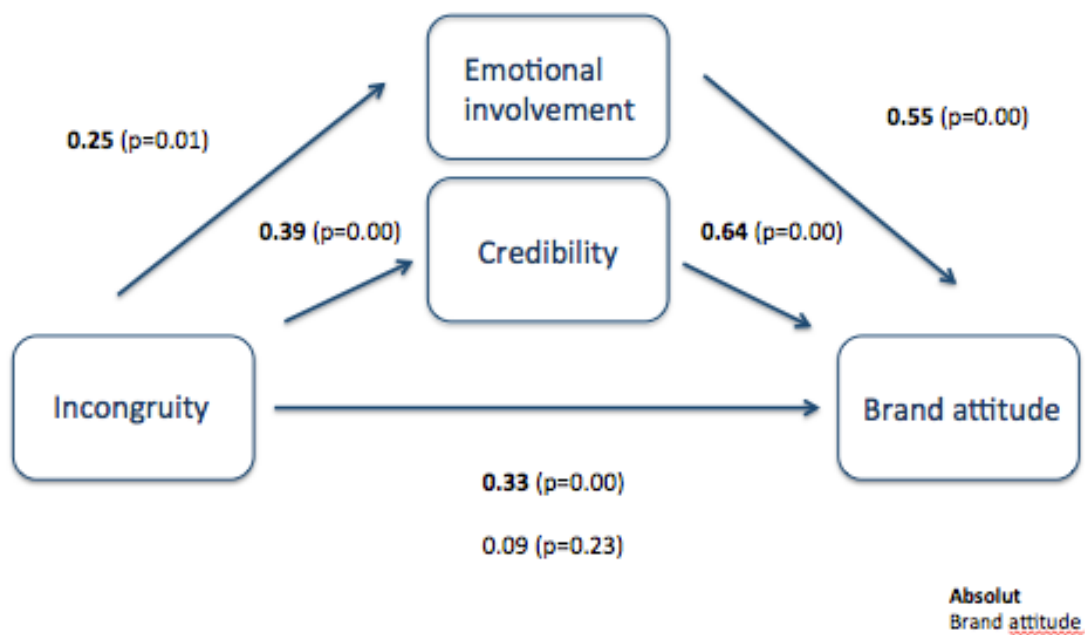


Figure 6. Mediation analysis for Absolut's brand attitude.

For brand attitude, the remaining effect when taking credibility and emotional involvement into account was not significant (p=0.23) and the effect is therefore wholly mediated by credibility.

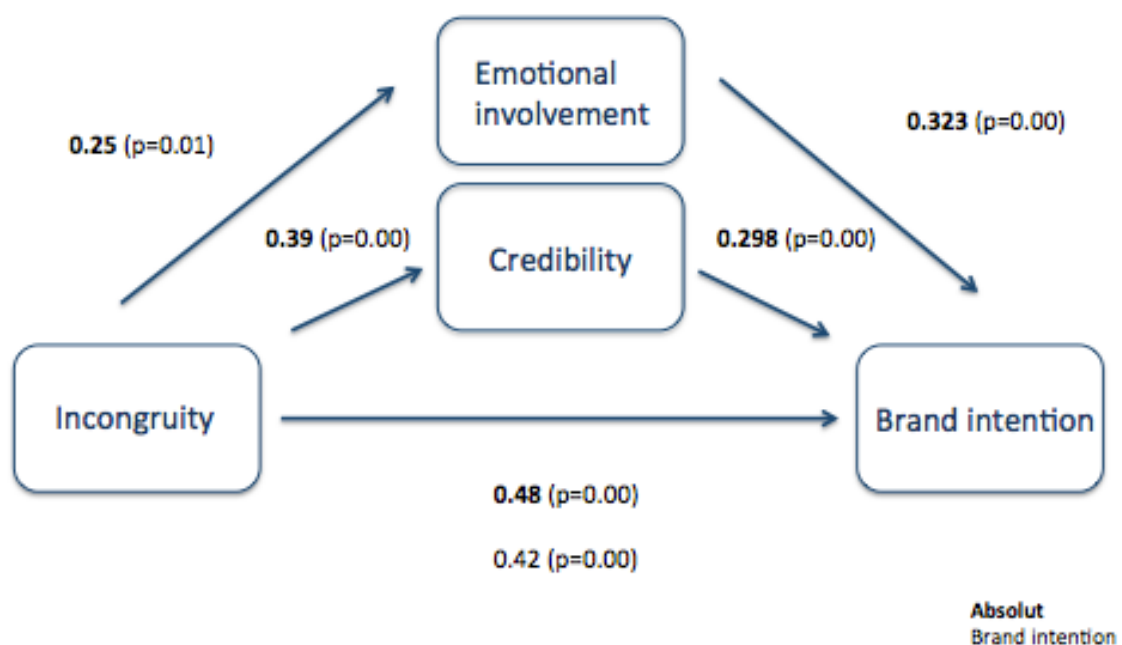


Figure 7. Mediation analysis for Absolut's brand intention.

Also for brand intention a small decrease in the effect of incongruity (0.48 to 0.42) is noticeable when taking the two variables into consideration. It is however a small one, and the remaining effect is significant, meaning that brand intention is partly mediated by the two variables.

4.3.3 Brand 3 - OLW

Potentially mediating variables

Table 15. Descriptive statistics of potentially mediating variables for OLW.

	Incongruent	Congruent	Diff	p-value
OLW				
Credibility				
- Mean (μ)	3.64	4.79	-1.14	0.000
- Std.dev. (σ)	0.96	1.01		
Memorability				
- Mean (μ)	5.07	5.35	-0.28	0.164
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.15	1.07		
Involvement				
- Mean (μ)	4.15	4.05	0.10	0.676
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.19	1.3		

The results for ad credibility (diff = -1,14, p = 0,00) show a statistically significant negative difference for the brand incongruent plot. Memorability (diff = -0,28, p = 0,16) and involvement (diff = -0,24, p = 0,68) does not but memorability is somewhat close to the cut off point with a significance level of 0.10.

Dependent variables

Table 16. Descriptive statistics of dependent variables for OLW.

OLW				
Ad Attitude				
- Mean (μ)	4.68	4.55	0.12	0.581
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.29	1.12		
Brand Attitude				
- Mean (μ)	4.41	4.72	-0.31	0.160
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.39	0.98		
Brand Intention				
- Mean (μ)	3.52	3.10	0.42	0.108
- Std.dev. (σ)	1.34	1.47		

Interestingly, in the OLW-experiment none of the dependent variables ad attitude (diff = 0,12, $p = 0.58$), brand attitude (diff = -0.31, $p = 0.16$) and brand intention (diff = 0.42, $p = 0,10$) could be supported with statistical significance. However, brand attitude and brand intention came in close with p-values only slightly over 0.10.

As none of the “end variables” showed significant differences for the OLW brand no mediator test was carried out.

4.4 Effects of product involvement

To test the last hypothesis of product-involvement level and incongruity on the dependent variables brand intention, a two-way ANOVA was performed with brand intention as the dependent variable and congruity and level of product-involvement as the two factors. Further, a Scheffe’s post hoc-test was applied. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 18 below.

Table 17. Descriptive statistics of brand intention divided by congruity and product-involvement level.

		Brand Intentions		
Congruity	Product Involvement	Mean (μ)	Std.dev. (σ)	N
Incongruent	Low	3.96	0.80	28
	Medium	3.39	1.36	88
	High	3.56	1.55	66
Congruent	Low	3.05	1.41	40
	Medium	4.12	1.68	74
	High	4.48	1.33	68

The overall results show a significant main effect of congruity ($F = 4.81$, $p = 0.00$, partial

$\eta^2 = 0.06$), and a significant main effect of level of product-involvement ($F = 6.31$, $p = 0.04$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.02$) as well as a significant interaction effect ($F = 9.98$, $p = 0.00$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.05$).

Scheffe's post hoc test was also performed to test the hypothesis that incongruity effects on brand intention differ depending on level of product-involvement. The results showed a significant difference between the high and low product-involvement groups ($p = 0.020$). There was however no significant difference between the high-medium ($p = 0.188$) or medium-low ($p = 0.363$) levels. Since the difference between the high and low levels could be observed, the hypothesis *H7, Effects of ad-brand incongruity in storytelling on brand intention will differ for high levels of product-involvement compared to lower levels of product-involvement* is supported.

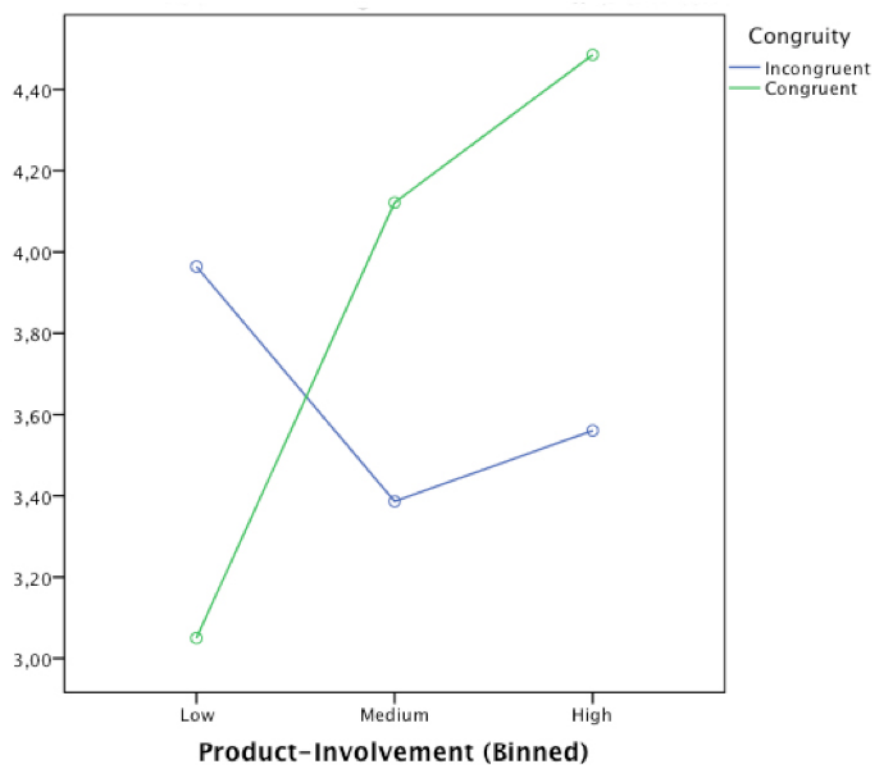


Figure 8. Plot of product-involvement and incongruity effects on estimated marginal means of brand intention.

4.5 Summary of results

Table 18. Summary of results presented on hypothesis-level.

	Hypothesis	Result
H1	<i>Ad credibility for stories with brand-incongruent plots is lower than ad credibility for stories with brand-congruent plots</i>	Supported
Volvo		Supported
Absolut		Supported
OLW		Supported
H2	<i>Ad memorability for stories with brand-incongruent plots will be higher than memorability for stories with brand-congruent plots</i>	Not supported
Volvo		Not supported
Absolut		Not supported
OLW		Not supported
H3	<i>Ad involvement for stories with brand-incongruent plots will be higher than ad involvement for stories with brand-congruent plots</i>	Partly supported
Volvo		Not supported
Absolut		Supported
OLW		Not supported
H4	<i>Ad attitude for stories with brand-incongruent plots differs from ad attitude for stories with brand-congruent plots</i>	Partly supported
Volvo		Supported
Absolut		Supported
OLW		Not supported
H5	<i>Brand attitude for stories with brand-incongruent plots differs from brand attitude for stories with brand-congruent plots</i>	Partly supported
Volvo		Supported
Absolut		Supported
OLW		Not supported
H6	<i>Brand intention for stories with brand-incongruent plots differs from brand intention for stories with brand-congruent plots</i>	Partly supported
Volvo		Supported
Absolut		Supported
OLW		Not supported
H7	<i>Effects of ad-brand incongruity in storytelling on brand intentions will differ for high levels of product-involvement compared to lower levels of product-involvement</i>	Supported

5. Discussion

This chapter begins with discussing the discovered effects of incongruity in combination with storytelling. It is divided by the potentially mediating variables and dependent variables. This is followed with a reflection over the thesis' limitations and its implications for academia and business.

5.1 Effects of incongruity in storytelling

This study examined the effects of brand-incongruent advertising when the ad is telling a story. While the effectiveness of storytelling has been previously proven to affect things like comprehension, credibility, memorability and emotional engagement – some of these effects seem to be cancelled out when combined with unexpected, brand-incongruent elements in the ad.

5.1.1 Incongruity effects on potentially mediating variables

The results showed that storytelling ads that are incongruent with established brand associations tend to lead to negative effects on the potentially mediating variable ad credibility. This implies that the incongruity over-rules the hypnotizing effects of storytelling that would otherwise impact in the other direction to decrease questioning.

Credibility was in all cases negatively affected by the incongruent plots and for both Volvo and Absolut deemed to be partly or wholly mediating all “end variables”. The effects were also visible for one of the cases regarding the variable ad engagement, Absolut, where the effect in combination with credibility was deemed to be partly or wholly mediating all “end variables”. The incongruent Absolut commercial conjured stronger emotional involvement than the congruent version but it was not an effect significant for the other two brands. This may be explained by certain elements of the story that for other reasons resonate with the respondent. The Absolut ads linked to Swedish heritage, which may be emotionally coded for some. Worth mentioning is that a similar effect from the incongruent Volvo ad was expected as some respondents indicated that it appeared somewhat sexist which often is experienced negatively. This, however, did not show up in the results.

For ad memorability there was no significant effects from the incongruity on any of the brands.

A possible explanation to why the potentially mediating variables did not strongly display the expected results is the exposure time. In this case, the communicated story was kept brief to increase readability, and thus may not have had a large effect on the respondents. Research has shown that if the communicated message is short, there is a

risk that the target audience does not register the incongruity in the message (Houston, Heckler and Childers 1987). However, this does not explain the significant results in the dependent variables. If all three potentially mediating variables showed significant effect, as compared to only credibility in this case, the effects on the dependent variables might be even higher.

Therefore, the most likely explanation is that the respondents were asked to self-assess the potentially mediating variables ad credibility, ad engagement and ad memorability. People have a tendency to present themselves in a positive or socially desirable way when asked a question about a trait that the respondent wishes to be associated with, for example to be a person with a good memory, may lead to exaggeration when answering the question on how much they remember of the story (Crowne and Marlow 1960). Further, this question is quite subjective and hard to put in relation when lacking something else to compare it and benchmark with. Thirdly, it would have been interesting to measure the longer-term remembrance of the story, as this is most interesting for the long-term brand interest.

5.1.2 Incongruity effects on dependent variables

The results showed that storytelling ads that are incongruent with established brand associations, in some cases leads to a significant lowering of the variables ad attitude, brand attitude and brand intention. This was true for the Volvo and the Absolut brand but not the OLW one.

When a consumer has established a solid brand schema this is not easy to change (Macrae and Bodenhausen 2000). As the brands were well-known Swedish brands with a long legacy, the brand schema is solid and might thus not be flexible for change. This since it has been showed that incongruity is uncomfortable for consumers and that they wish to resolve it (Mandler 1982) and also, that when dealing with new information about a brand the brand schema gets activated (Braun 1999). For interpreting the new information consumers need to use assimilation, an alternative schema or accommodation. In the study, the respondents were exposed to the manipulated variable, the plot, featuring the associations that the respondents *least* connected with the brand. Thus, it may have been difficult for the respondents to use assimilation or an alternative schema to solve the incongruity, and they may have had to use accommodation in order to solve the incongruity. However, since this requires a lot of cognitive effort (Lee and Schumann 2004) it is likely that the respondents chose to not solve the incongruity at all, and therefore they pose a negative attitude towards the incongruent ad. Further, as the story component causes the viewer to think in a narrative form and focus more on the story than the surrounding factors (Escalas 2004), this may lead the brain to be more lazy and not put in the cognitive effort necessary to solve the puzzle.

While this study did not include a control group in the truest sense it is especially interesting to take a closer look at the levels of the responses. The levels of the dependent variables generally achieved above neutral results (scoring usually around 4.5 to 5.5) for the more positively viewed, congruent version. This indicates that the storytelling ads achieved a positive effect, in accordance with previous theory.

Possible impact of personal relevance is also worth mentioning. This is when communication personally affects the receiver of the message and is an important factor to consider when communicating an ad (Eagly and Chaiken 1993). After the main test was carried out, several respondents commented on the incongruent Volvo commercial, finding the story to be somewhat sexist. Since the aim was to make the story as incongruent with the associated brand values as possible, the depicted story seemed suitable. The respondents may therefore have been influenced to rate the commercial more negatively, especially if they already sympathized with Volvo's established values of family-friendliness. If not, the deviation may have been evaluated as a positive change. This brings up an interesting detail of the study, namely the brand value focus of the incongruity. What value associations a brand has established makes the evaluation of ad-brand incongruity call for a case-by case basis.

5.1.2 The impact of involvement: Implications depending on type of brand and product

Previous research has shown that when dealing with high involvement and thus more risk involved, consumers may to a larger extent prefer a congruent option (Campbell and Goodstein 2001; Maoz and Tybout 2002). Campbell and Goodstein (2001) found that the positive effects of incongruity did not occur when there the consumer perceived a risk. Their research showed that only under conditions posing no real risk, the positive effect of incongruity could appear. When consumers experience a situation of high risk, they tend to rely on a safe alternative, which congruity is an example of.

This thesis somewhat supports the previous results. Also for ads that tell a story, the level of product-involvement affects how negatively an incongruent ad is perceived.

Absolut experienced the biggest negative effects of the incongruity element in the storytelling and was also the only brand where the respondents showed an emotional effect by the brand story. A possible explanation for this can be that for lifestyle brands closely connected to self-perception, the consumer experiences a greater risk, which leads to negative evaluation than for other brands when applying incongruity in the advertising.

In the case of the brand OLW, the three dependent variables showed no significant differences between the congruent and the incongruent ad. This may be a result of the higher involvement associated with a car or vodka purchase as compared to snacks. The results showed that the consumers in the both other cases experienced an involvement

that was considerably higher (Volvo=6.27 and 6.54, Absolut=3.87 and 3.80), compared to the case of OLW (OLW=3.20 and 3.26). In this case, the lower perceived risk seems to have allowed for a more humorous attitude in the interpretation of the story – countering the negative effects discovered amongst the other two brands.

5.2 Limitations

Pre-test one and two were made in order to reduce potential problems with the study. In spite of this there were limitations to it, first and foremost time and scope constraints. This implied that it was not possible to draw conclusions on the long-term effects of the exposition of the stories.

One limitation regards previous findings on incongruity. Because of the story format of the ad, only two levels of ad-brand incongruity were included, whereas previous research has been more generous and also included moderate levels of incongruity as well as high levels of incongruity (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989). The theory of the moderate incongruity effects states that when consumers encounter a product that is somewhat incongruent with their existing schema, they will evaluate the product more favourably than a congruent product or an extremely incongruent product. Extreme incongruity does however generally not provide positive effects (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989). Since this level of incongruity has not been included in the study, it may be something for future research to investigate further.

A limitation may also be the format of the ad since the variation of advertising that revolves around a plot is more complicated than changing other parts of the story, like the character. The plot is more complex and changing it involves altering a lot of components at once.

Also given the limitations stated in chapter 1, the conclusions drawn from the study are primarily applicable to well-known Swedish consumer brands.

5.3 Academic and managerial implications

This study provides a framework for combining the two highly contemporary concepts of storytelling and incongruity in advertising, suggesting that the two make up a combination that is best to avoid for marketers seeking to improve ad and brand attitudes. This leads to implications for both scholars and practitioners. In the wider context, the results help bridge the gap between the two when it comes to storytelling know-how.

Since this study only investigated congruity on a bipolar scale, as previously discussed, further and broader research on the matter would be highly interesting for both groups.

The lack of explanation provided by the potentially mediating variables also opens up the possibility to in the future research the fundamentals behind the observed effects.

Further pursuing this topic might seem gainless given the thesis's results. However it is not. This because while the thesis finds the combination of storytelling and incongruity inadvisable, it only applies to a set number of ad and brand outcomes.

Perceived congruity is an important factor to consider when attempting to change existing structures in industries and society at large. An example of this is the work of Rättviseförmedlingen in Sweden that strive for achieving representational balance of gender and race in among many things, the media. Another is the fashion industry, that over time has seen the appearance of models used in advertising become more and more alike (Jones 2010) and the many question the impact being exposed to these beauty standards have on people's self esteem. While these examples to a large extent focus on the character or person involved, the plot also plays an important role in changing norms and the way we behave. Similar movements are constantly popping up, pushing the message of how important representation can be to change norms in society. Many companies have tried to piggy-back on this in their communication to appear responsible and innovative, and it is important to note that, from this theoretical standpoint, such acts would not be perceived as incongruent if it reasons with the companies' already established values. This thesis argues that when combined with storytelling, incongruity tends to lead to negative attitudes towards both ad and brand. It is important to keep in mind for practitioners when making decisions related to these topics.

There are however also further implications that due to the scope of this thesis have not been thoroughly researched. Marketers sometimes look for other outcomes and measurements. This includes other positive effects that may outweigh the negative impact on ad and brand attitudes, such as the role of the hero when accepting the "burden" of deviating for the greater good. Another one is how increasingly important it is how an ad is spreading and the probability of it going viral. Literature on humour, argues that incongruity such as this can cause smiling and laughter (Alden, Mukherjee and Hoyer 2000) and can thus lead to wanting to share the joy with friends, creating a viral spread for the ad. This was also indicated in the results, from the OLW advertisement. The OLW brand showcased the biggest discrepancy between the perceived ad-brand fit when comparing the congruent and the incongruent commercial, (mean incongruent = 2.43, mean congruent = 4.93), and also showed a large difference in probability of recommending a friend to watch the ad (mean incongruent = 3.54, mean congruent = 2.30) – a measurement included in the survey but not discussed further in this thesis apart from the method chapter. To encourage sharing of ads, for a person to ask others to spend time on watching an ad, the communication needs to offer something extraordinary. This extraordinary element could very well be brand-plot incongruent stories. Unexpected elements relating to a product that requires low

personal involvement makes it easier to focus on the somewhat humoristic clashes of values, which increases the intention to share with friends. This implies two things – firstly that there are some positive effects of ad-brand incongruity in storytelling and the second, more interesting one, that marketers focusing on viral spread would do well to broaden their view to see whether the communication actually hurts their brand.

Incongruity might not be the death of great stories, but it is worth to keep in mind when deciding on what marketing goals to pursue.

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Personal Communication

Arvius, Fredrik; Partner at LynxEye Brand Consultants. 2014. Interview 15 September.

Gäfvert, Adam; Art Director at King and Sööder, Martin; Copywriter at King. Interview 22 September.

7. Appendix

The following pages include the *Pre-Study I Questionnaire*, the *stimuli stories* and the *Main Study Questionnaire*.

Appendix 1. Pre-Study I Questionnaire

Default Question Block

Hi and thank you for participating in our survey!

Please fill out how well you think that the adjectives describe each of the three Swedish brands.

There are no right or wrong answers: simply state your initial thoughts on the different terms and alternatives.

/Mathilda and Kristin



How well do you think the following words describe the brand Volvo?

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Very well
Down-to-earth	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family-oriented	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Small-town	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Honest	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sincere	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Real	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wholesome	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Original	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cheerful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sentimental	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friendly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Daring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trendy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Exciting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spirited	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cool	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Young	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Imaginative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unique	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Up-to-date	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Independent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Contemporary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reliable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hard working	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Secure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Intelligent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technical	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Corporate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Successful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leader	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Confident	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Upper class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Glamorous	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good looking	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Charming	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feminine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Smooth	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Outdoorsy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Masculine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Western	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tough	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rugged	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



How well do you think the following words describe the brand Absolut Vodka?

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Very well
Down-to-earth	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family-oriented	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Small-town	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Honest	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sincere	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Real	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wholesome	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Original	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cheerful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sentimental	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friendly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Daring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trendy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Exciting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spirited	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cool	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Young	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Imaginative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unique	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Up-to-date	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Independent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Contemporary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reliable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hard working	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Secure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Intelligent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technical	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Corporate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Successful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leader	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Confident	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Upper class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Glamorous	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good looking	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Charming	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feminine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Smooth	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Outdoorsy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Masculine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Western	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tough	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rugged	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



How well do you think the following words describe the brand OLW?

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Very well
Down-to-earth	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Family-oriented	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Small-town	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Honest	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sincere	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Real	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wholesome	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Original	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cheerful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sentimental	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friendly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Daring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trendy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Exciting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Spirited	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cool	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Young	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Imaginative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unique	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Up-to-date	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Independent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Contemporary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reliable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hard working	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Secure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Intelligent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technical	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Corporate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Successful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leader	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Confident	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Upper class	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Glamorous	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good looking	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Charming	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feminine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Smooth	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Outdoorsy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Masculine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Western	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tough	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rugged	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix 2. Stimuli stories

Volvo Congruent

Please read the following **script for a TV-ad** for a Swedish brand and answer the subsequent questions.

It is late afternoon on a weekday and Martin, 35, is in a hurry. There is somewhere else he really wants to be right now. He grabs the car keys from the cabinet and rushes out of the house to a grey Volvo. He slides into the driver's seat and speeds out from the driveway. He is happy and expectant and drives fast yet secure to make sure he will be on time.

When he reaches a longer stretch of road and begins to rev the engine, a deer suddenly jumps out in front of the car, just a few feet ahead from the Volvo. Martin stands on the brakes to avoid a collision. Time is of the essence here; it is critical that the brakes do not let him down for him not to hit the deer.

The brakes hold up and the Volvo stops right in front of the deer. Though apparently agitated, the deer gives Martin a grateful look, before it continues across the road. With his heart pumping against his ribcage, Martin again sets the car in motion and sharply takes the next turn to the right where he stops at a parking lot outside a kindergarten. A five-year old girl with golden locks and huge blue eyes runs out to his car and happily yells "Daddy! Daddy!". Martin gets down on his knees and smiles as he hugs her.

Volvo - Keeps you safe until you get there

Volvo Incongruent

Please read the following **script for a TV-ad** for a Swedish brand and answer the subsequent questions.

It is Saturday evening and Martin, 35, is in a hurry. There is somewhere else he really wants to be right now. He grabs the car keys from the cabinet and rushes out of the house to a grey Volvo. He slides into the driver's seat and speeds out from the driveway. He is excited and drives fast.

When he reaches a longer stretch of road and begins to rev the engine, a deer suddenly jumps out in front of the car, just a few feet ahead from the Volvo. Martin stands on the brakes to avoid a collision. Time is of the essence here; it is critical that the brakes do not let him down for him not to hit the deer.

The brakes hold up and the Volvo stops right in front of the deer. Though apparently agitated, the deer gives Martin a grateful look, before it continues across the road. Martin again sets the car in motion and sharply takes the next turn to the right where he stops at a large townhouse in an trendy neighborhood. He turns off the engine and looks eagerly towards the backlit doorway as he closes the car door behind him. In it stands a sultry brunette with big brown eyes wearing nothing but a tiny nightdress with laces and smiles seductively.

Volvo - Keeps you safe until you get there

Absolut Congruent

Please read the following **script for a TV-ad** for a Swedish brand and answer the subsequent questions.

Since his last year as a 34-year old is drawing to a close, Martin has been looking forward to his birthday party at the rooftop bar of the Wythe Hotel in Williamsburg for a long time. Is has been arranged by his two closest friends and they have invited all of his acquaintances to celebrate his birthday. At the hippest bar in town, with his best friends, on a hot late summer night. It must be the party of the year. What could possibly be better?

When he in high hopes enters the rooftop he notices that people are hanging out in small clusters and are talking quietly amongst themselves. Generally the atmosphere is not very upbeat nor party-like. Martin had pictured a sense of community among his friends. He panics as he feel responsible for the dampened mood. He closes his eyes for a moment to calm down.

With his eyes closed, he hears a low rumbling underneath him. He opens his eyes and realises that the floor at the center of the area has opened up and a music stage is emerging from beneath. In the middle of it stands Lykke Li and Kleerup, playing the opening notes to their famously remixed party anthem. The crowd starts cheering and goes crazy, dancing and laughing with joy. Martin smiles contently as he hears someone yelling "This is the best party ever". The mood is sky high and Martin is sure that the party will go to history.

Absolut Vodka - Elevate social moments... Add a drop of Sweden

Absolut Incongruent

Please read the following **script for a TV-ad** for a Swedish brand and answer the subsequent questions.

Since Martin moved from the rural areas of Småland to a larger city he has not been able to meet his relatives as much as he would wish to and his bad conscience about this is ever growing. On this late summer's day it is finally time to see them all again as he has arranged a large family gathering inviting everyone from grandma to his second cousins and their children into his parents' backyard. He expects everyone to gather and hang out just like the old times and feels very excited about this.

Half an hour into the party Martin notices that the gathering is nothing like what he has anticipated it to be. The smallest kids are running around like savages on the grass while grandma has fallen asleep in a wooden rocking chair in a corner. He panics as he feels responsible for throwing the get-together and the disappointment is undeniable. He closes his eyes to calm down.

While his eyes are closed, he hears some familiar tunes. When he opens his eyes a large maypole has appeared in the center of the yard and ABBA songs are playing on his old speaker system. The whole family is dancing together around the maypole to Martin's great surprise and joy. Grandma has a wreath of flowers in her hair and his 7-year-old nephew happily yells: "Uncle Martin! Come join us! This is the best family party ever!"

Absolut Vodka - Elevate social moments... Add a drop of Sweden

OLW Congruent

Please read the following **script for a TV-ad** for a Swedish brand and answer the subsequent questions.

Picking up the kids from school in the late afternoon, taking them to soccer practice and confirming the family's Saturday night plans, all while trying to remotely meet a deadline at work. This Friday is challenging for Martin as he absentmindedly turns into the parking lot of the local supermarket. With the kids, aged 7 and 13 in his trail, he hastens to collect the stuff needed for the upcoming weekend. He is unable to ignore the intrusive pleas from the 7 year old of buying the far more expensive juice box with cartoon drawings on the packaging. With a sigh he adds it to the basket.

They head home and reach the front door just in time to be greeted by the kids' mother who ushers them into the house and towards the kitchen table. What follows is a somewhat non-harmonious dinner before the entire family gathers around the living-room TV. The eldest sibling reaches for the remote control and turns on the regular Friday evening programming as they all simultaneously reach for the big bowl of OLW crisps placed in the middle of the sofa table. With a feeling of finally being able to relax, Martin grabs another handful of the crisps and enjoys the moment.

OLW - Leve Fredagsmyset

OLW Incongruent

Please read the following **script for a TV-ad** for a Swedish brand and answer the subsequent questions.

With the yearly pheasant hunt coming to a close, total focus is required for Martin and his shooting team. This Friday marks the end of the season and quotas have far from been filled, which tugs at Martin's feelings of prestige. They trudge through swampland as a fine rain slowly begins to fall from the sky. Time is going by way too fast and with the dogs barking combined with the loud noises from their rifles, Martin can feel his head spinning. But luck is on their side. A large flock of pheasants appears and the hunting party goes in for the kill.

Exhausted but satisfied, they head back towards the manor where they kick off their wellington boots before entering the dining area where the butler greets them. The warmth from the fireplace slowly begins to thaw their cold and weary feet. After sitting down around the heavy oak table the group raises their pre-filled champagne glasses to a toast for a successful hunt and digs into their individual bowls of OLW crisps strategically placed around the table. Martin catches a glimpse of the portrait of his ancestor hanging on the opposite wall and knows he would have been proud. With a feeling of finally being able to relax, Martin grabs another handful of the crisps and enjoys the moment.

OLW – Leve Fredagsmyset

Appendix 3. Main Study Questionnaire

My impression of the ad is

Bad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Good
Unpleasant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Pleasant
Unfavourable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Favourable

I believe the ad is

Unconvincing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Convincing
Unbelievable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Believable
Biased	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Unbiased

My general impression of Absolut Vodka after reading the script is

Bad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Good
Negative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Positive
Unsatisfactory	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Satisfactory

How well do you perceive that the plot of the ad fits to your perception of the Absolut Vodka brand?

Not at all	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very well
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How well do you think OTHER PEOPLE perceive that the plot of the ad fits to their perception of the Absolut Vodka brand?

Not at all	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very well
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My general impression of Absolut Vodka after reading the script is

Bad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Good
Negative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Positive
Unsatisfactory	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Satisfactory

How well do you perceive that the plot of the ad fits to your perception of the Absolut Vodka brand?

Not at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very well

How well do you think OTHER PEOPLE perceive that the plot of the ad fits to their perception of the Absolut Vodka brand?

Not at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very well

Please indicate how much you *agree* with each of the following *statements*

	1 - Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Strongly agree
It is easy to understand the ad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The ad is comprehensible	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I remember a lot about the ad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The ad was easy to learn and remember	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Watching the ad would affect me emotionally	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would enjoy watching the ad	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

After reading the script, how likely is it that

	1 - Very unlikely	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Very likely
... you would choose Absolut the next time you buy vodka?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... you would recommend this brand to someone?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
... you would recommend someone to see this ad?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How much effort would you put into the decision of which brand to buy when purchasing vodka?

Very little effort ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very much effort

How well do you know this brand?

Not at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very well

Have you seen ads by this brand before?

Not at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ A lot

While I was reading the story

	1 - Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Agree
...I could easily picture the events in it taking place	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
...I was mentally involved in it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
...I wanted to learn how it ended	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

My age, in years

I am