

The Importance of Passion

A quantitative examination of cognitive and emotional processes associated with advertiser passion

While it seems common practice today for brands and advertisers to express their love for what they do and use terminology as “We’re passionate about...” in their communication, there is a lack of scientific proof regarding its advertising effects. Research has investigated consumers’ passion for brands and the impact on their behavior, yet no previous studies have investigated the brands’, or advertisers’, own passion for what they do and how it impacts the consumers. This thesis aims to establish the missing link between the passion of brands and the effects on consumers, through two simultaneous processes; a cognitive process grounded in the signal effects of communicating brand passion, and an emotional process based on emotional and mood contagion affecting consumer emotions. Two quantitative, experimental studies based on panel data provide significant proof of the positive outcomes related to communicated advertiser passion; brand passion is found to favorably impact consumers’ evaluations of the brand. However, there is no support for the expected impact of emotional and mood contagion on brand evaluations and extended consumer effects. The results provide important contributions to both academia and practice in regard to exploring the effects of brand passion.

Keywords: Passion, Advertising signal effects, Emotional contagion, Advertiser passion, Extended effects

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Definitions and Clarifications

Advertising	A medium of marketing communication. In this thesis, advertising mainly concerns print advertising depicted in a digital format
Brand, advertiser	The company or organization that provides the product or service that is being marketed through advertising
Receiver, consumer, customer	The individuals that the samples used in this research are to represent, i.e. receivers of the advertising that are consumers and potential customers to the advertiser
Brand effects, perceptions, evaluations	The measures used to evaluate the direct effects of manipulations, i.e. the receiver's perceptions, intentions and attitudes towards the advertiser and its product
Pictorial elements	Elements of the advertisements that include the background and a picture of the product along with the brand and/or product logo
Verbal elements	Elements of the advertisement that are commonly referred to as <i>copy</i> , i.e. actual words and text that communicate a message intended to persuade consumers
Visual elements	Elements of the advertisement that are of a symbolic format. In this research they consist of a red heart symbol and a price splash, i.e. visual elements in the advertisements that are neither pictorial, nor verbal

1. Introduction

This introductory chapter serves the purpose of presenting the research area, as well as a problematization and cause for the present research. This is followed by a review of posed research questions as well as expected knowledge contributions. Next, the delimitations of the thesis are provided along with their motivations, and the section is finished with a brief research outline.

1.1 Background

“The only way to do great work is to love what you do”. Delivered at his Stanford University commencement speech, the famous quote from Steve Jobs went viral and had a major impact on people and institutions worldwide. With no shortage of thoughts on the topic of what people should do and work with, with advice granted by icons ranging from Confucius to Maya Angelou (Sturt, Nordstrom 2015), there is seemingly a great number of brands that have taken it to heart as well. Red Bull has advertised “we love what we do”, together with Pågen, BIM Technologies, Travel Nation along with many different types of business, ranging from fast-food chains to hairdressers to restaurants, wealth management firms and (perhaps expectedly) advertising agencies, which all appear at a simple google search. In addition, the brewing company Heineken advertise their beer as “brewed with passion”, while other brands claim to be passionate about eyewear, plaster, and graphics and web design, amongst many others.

The concept of passion is as old as humankind itself, and throughout history, numerous conceptions of passion have been prevalent. *Oxford Dictionaries online* (2018) defines passion as “strong and barely controllable emotion”, and the *Cambridge English Dictionary online* (2018) defines it as “a very powerful feeling, for example of sexual attraction, love, hate, anger, or other emotion”. Moreover, there is love, for a person, object, or an activity (Vallerand 2015). Ultimately, it seems to be what gets people, and presumably organizations, going – what brings about that extra spice making life worth living. Passion (for the activity) is what makes the soccer player practice for hours every day in the hope of making it big, the Justin Bieber fan who queues for days and sleeps in a tent outside the concert venue to get a glimpse of the star, and the doctor who spends endless nights working to find a cure for cancer. Experiencing strong passion for an activity can not only improve well-being and fuel motivation, but also provide a meaning to life. Hence, the concept of passion concerns us all, and clearly constitutes a state of mind present throughout all stages of life.

In recent years, the topic of passion has seen a rise in popularity within business research. Passion is defined by Vallerand et al. (2003) as “a strong inclination toward an activity that people like, that they find important, and in which they invest time and energy”. Within the marketing research

discipline, the brand-consumer relationship has been discussed focusing solely on consumers' passion for brands. Consumers' passion for a brand has been researched rather extensively, linking antecedents to brand or consumer characteristics (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi 2012, Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence 2013), and describing consequences in the form of e.g. loyalty, willingness to pay a higher price, commitment, and purchase intentions (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence 2013, Bauer, Heinrich & Martin 2007). Additionally, especially popular is research within the field of management; passion has been found to have a positive impact on performance within several different domains. In entrepreneurship, Breugst et al. (2012) showed that the entrepreneur's perceived passion for invention and development have positive effects on employee motivation. In leadership, one example is Marques (2007), arguing passion to be one of two key elements of leadership, that without a leader's passion for what he or she does, there would be no reason for him or her to be leading to begin with.

Given the many documented positive effects of passion on its subjects as well as the people surrounded by it, it is no surprise that the effectiveness of marketing communicating the emotional and cognitive state of passion is almost a truth taken for granted. Yet, there is no solid evidence for the notion of advertising passion being effective.

1.2 Problematization

We experience the world as a global marketplace with an ever-intensifying competition, where a myriad of brands can satisfy the needs of consumers (Swimberghe, Astakhova & Wooldridge 2014). Consequently, advertising and marketing communication is an indispensable resource in combating the war for consumers' attention. An effective ad can not only convert customers but change attitudes and alter behaviors beyond the intended reactions (Dahlén, Lange 2009). Smith (2012) even claims that communication is a receiver phenomenon, and suggest that if no one understands it, communication is not taking place. Thus, the consumers ultimately choose what they want to receive, why truly affecting consumers by speaking to their feelings should be a way of breaking through the noise.

Notably, in the highly competitive market place, creation of highly emotional relationships between a brand and its consumers "is the driving force in consumer marketing" (Swimberghe, Astakhova & Wooldridge 2014). Generating consumer passion for brands is receiving greater focus; it is considered to be the "ultimate emotional connection between a consumer and a brand" (Swimberghe, Astakhova & Wooldridge 2014). While research exists on brand passion, in the sense of how the consumers' passion for the brand is a driving force in marketing and can result in e.g.

consumer's accepting higher prices (Bauer, Heinrich & Martin 2007), there seems to be a missing link to that of the brand's passion about what it does, and the related effects on consumer perceptions and attitudes. This thesis tests the notion that consumers react favorably to brands that communicate passion and love for what they do in their advertising, drawing from two bodies of literature.

Firstly, applying the concepts of advertising signal theory, a brand's communicated passion is expected to function as a signal for the brand's general effort and ability, much like how expense (Ambler, Hollier 2004), creativity (Dahlén, Rosengren & Törn 2008), and media choice (Rosengren, Modig & Dahlén 2015) has been shown to do so. Communicating passion will thus initiate a cognitive process whereby consumers make inferences about aspects of the brand and its business, dependent on the way it advertises.

Secondly, literature and previous research on emotional and mood contagion demonstrate how emotions and moods are contagious, both through in-person interaction but also through text and online. Thus, we expect that a brand's love for what it does should transmit onto consumers, and have them experience passion, more positive emotions, or other states closely connected to passion. While this notion has not previously been tested in advertising, we also expect an emotional process to take place where the brand's passion should influence the consumers by way of more positive perceptions of the advertised brand.

Thirdly, advertising is important in more aspects than in the hunt for customers' attention and for persuasive purposes. While a substantial part of advertising research in the last 35 years has focused on consumer responses and economical effects, about one percent has studied social effects (Kim et al. 2014). Social effects are described as trust in advertising and green or healthy consumption, as well as advertising effects on creativity, social comparison, body ideals and compassionate behaviors (Dahlen, Rosengren 2016). Given the previous research and documented effects, it should be interesting to investigate the social, or extended effects, that a passionate sender could have on its receivers, especially given the many positive effects passion has in other areas.

Thus, the problem area investigated in this thesis will be framed based on the lack of research: the missing link between the brand's passion and love for what it does, and the consumers' passion for what they do and think about the brand.

1.3 Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis is to find support for and investigate the effects of brands claiming to be passionate in marketing communication, through advertising. Passion acting as a signal should result in more positive perceptions of the brand and its effort. Moreover, the purpose is to investigate whether the communicated passion can be transmitted through the phenomena of emotional and mood contagion, and in turn, impacting the receiver's emotional state, resulting in positive brand evaluations and extended effects on the consumers. Consequently, the primary questions this research sets out to answer are the following:

- Will the communicated passion of the advertiser have a positive impact on the receiver's brand and product evaluations?
- Will the communicated passion of the advertiser have extended effects on the receiver?

1.4 Expected Contribution

By answering the aforementioned research questions, we expect this thesis to contribute to advertising academia and practice in several ways. Primarily, the aim is to establish the missing link between a brand's communicated passion and the direct effects it has on consumer brand evaluations as well as extended effects on consumer emotions and cognition. As the studies sets out to explore this relationship by using a representative sample of the Swedish working population and generic, unfamiliar brands in print advertising, we hope to initiate a new area of research by establishing the occurrence in a Swedish context. For academia, the experimental studies will help open a new research area, both expanding on advertising signal effects while also applying the emotional and mood contagion theory in a new setting. The goal of the present research is to accommodate the discussions at the intersection of the different disciplines and set a basis for exploring different scenarios and contexts of the phenomenon. In practice, we expect valid contributions for marketers and advertising strategies, as well as management professionals and organizations. As this thesis sets out to confirm a taken for granted truth, the aim is to explore and illuminate the practices adopted by many organizations in terms of communicating passion and to quantify the actual effects.

1.5 Delimitations

Exploring the advertising effects of passion constitutes a previously unexplored area of advertising research, creating a need for careful delimitation of this study. There are many interesting perspectives when approaching the subject, as well as several potential processes through which passion might influence advertising efficacy and brand evaluations. However, focus of this thesis

is on potential advertising signal effects and emotional and mood contagion of communicated advertiser passion for what they, the advertiser, do. This allows for capture of both cognitive and emotional processes triggered by perceived passion, while delimiting the scope of the study to the examination of previously accepted theories in this novel context.

Brand evaluations are in turn delimited to be measured through self-reported brand and product attitudes, as well as metrics of predictors of future intentions. The study itself is conducted as a controlled, basic experiment using print advertising and a digital panel. Using print advertising allows for simple manipulation of the treatment variable, i.e. perceived advertiser passion. It is additionally the most studied advertising medium, making it a suitable starting point (Kim et al. 2014). The manipulation is limited to solely consisting of changing verbal and visual elements of the communication, contrary to manipulating the advertisement in its entirety, creating a robust test. The drawback is that the advertisement is reduced to a single dimension, meaning that the study will not treat the effect of changing time, environment, or other aspects that reasonably exist in the space habited by advertisement. Furthermore, different mediums such as digital marketing might enjoy other effects of passion than print advertisement. Though arguably of interest, such issues will rather detract from the main purpose of the study and introduce more unwanted uncertainty.

An important delimitation is the use of low-involvement fast-moving consumer goods, chosen due to retail being the largest advertising category and research within this sector is thus of high relevance (Kantar Media. n.d. 2018). Furthermore, the study uses unfamiliar brands to ensure that the results are indicative of communicated passion, rather than pre-existing relationships with the studied brands.

Lastly, the study is delimited to the Swedish context with a national representative sample based on age, gender, and region in ages 18-64.

1.6 Research Outline

This report is divided into five main chapters: Introduction, Theory, Methodology, Results and Analysis, and lastly Discussion and Conclusions.

The above, introductory chapter deals with the subject at large, providing an initial glimpse of the state of research within the subject area, the purpose and aim of the study as well as general delimitations of the conducted research.

Following the introduction to the report, theory and hypothesis generation is presented. A review of existing literature provides the basis for the theoretical framework, in turn created to generate the necessary hypotheses for answering the overall research question.

The chapter on methodology describes the approach taken to test the generated hypotheses. Detailed descriptions of conducted pre-tests as well as the results from them are included, along with an overview of the main study together with all chosen metrics and motivations for their use. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of the reliability and validity of the conducted study, and thereby the general quality of the research.

The fourth chapter contains the results and analysis of generated data. It is presented thematically according to the hypotheses that are tested.

Finally, the report is concluded with a discussion and conclusions drawn from the results and analysis, along with the specific and general implications of the research.

2. Theory

The aim of this chapter is to form a theoretical background constituting a basis for the research in this study. The following sections will present a literature review on the topic of passion in a variety of domains, followed by a presentation of how the phenomenon of passion relates to the two major theoretical pillars this thesis is grounded on: signal theory, and emotional and mood contagion. Based on the synthesis and main conclusions of the theoretical body, hypotheses to be tested in the later studies will be formulated. A brief section on the possible moderating effect of product categories is included before the chapter is finalized by summarizing the hypotheses and connecting them back to the research questions.

2.1 Literature Review of Passion

We previously presented Vallerand's et al. (2003) definition of passion, "a strong inclination toward an activity that people like, that they find important, and in which they invest time and energy". Moreover, Vallerand and colleagues (Vallerand et al. 2003, Carbonneau et al. 2008, Mageau, Vallerand 2003) discuss passion in terms of having the ability to provide a meaningful and balanced life by inducing motivation, well-being and enthusiastic task engagement.

Passion, and a love for what you do, is a discussed topic within management (Curran et al. 2015), and it has been found to have a positive effect on performance in a variety of domains, such as entrepreneurship (Breugst et al. 2012), leadership (Marques 2007), service (Clarysse, Van Boxstael 2015) and teaching (Carbonneau et al. 2008). However, in the field of marketing and specifically advertising, research on the effects of brands' communicated passion is limited. As the hypotheses presented in this chapter are based on an application of the effects of passion in a marketing setting, Curran et al. (2015) meta-analytical review synthesizing more than a decade of passion research, will be used to understand and disseminate the phenomenon of passion. The review largely concerns two types of passion with distinct characters, harmonious and obsessive.

Harmonious passion is derived from a state of full behavioral integration; when an activity and the outcome are socialized as in accord with prevailing values and goals of the individual (Curran et al. 2015), "this passionate activity reflects the qualities I like about myself" (Vallerand et al. 2003). Moreover, Hodgins & Knee (2002) suggest that passion emerges from an autonomous internalization, meaning that an individual freely accepts the activity as personally imperative (Ryan, Deci 2000, Deci, Ryan 1985). In turn, this translates to the absence of uncontrollable inclination to engage in the activity; rather, there is a sense of free choice, i.e. people decide whether or not they want to engage in a certain activity.

Engagement in a harmonious passion-producing activity generates a sense of self-esteem, which in turn strengthens focus. As a result, this minimizes the need to resort to other external distractions, producing an experience of intense flow and concentration. Furthermore, this should foster a kind of motivation leading to better self-regulation such as intrinsic motives and learning goals, as well as an internal locus of control. In addition, if being prevented from partaking in a passionate activity, people should be able to shift the attention and focus onto other tasks and not dwell on the passionate activity (Curran et al. 2015).

While behavioral engagement can be considered optional for harmonious passion, this is not the case for obsessive passion. When an activity and the outcome are not fully integrated into the personal identity and conflicts with pre-existing values and goals, the passion becomes obsessive (Curran et al. 2015).

The authors' findings indicate that passion of the harmonious kind can be an enriching motivational force related to a variety of benefits (Curran et al. 2015). They suggest that the right kind of passion can have positive impact both in and out of activity, such as greater well-being, increased motivation and performance as well as mitigating ill-being and negative cognition. The obsessive kind of passion however, is a different kind of motivational force that can trigger destructive outcomes such as ill-being and negative cognition. The dualistic model of passion containing both harmonious and obsessive dimensions seem to hold across gender and age groups but can vary with regards to culture and domain (Curran et al. 2015).

Given the documented positive effects of (harmonious) passion, research of the phenomenon has become especially popular within the fields of management and leadership, as well as entrepreneurship. Plenty of research supports the findings and demonstrates that passion as a state has many positive effects. In a variety of domains and activities passion impacts the outcome, e.g. within work (Houlfort et al. 2013), use of internet (Seguin-Levesque et al. 2003), gambling (Mageau et al. 2005) and recreational activities as sports (Mageau, Vallerand 2003), music and reading (Vallerand et al. 2003).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Carbonneau et al. (2008) suggests that passion for teaching is a vital concept within educational environments. The results show that harmonious passion for teaching could explain increased work satisfaction and lowered burnout symptoms over time. Moreover, harmonious as well as obsessive passion could have a positive impact on adaptive student behaviors perceived by teachers. This indicates that passion as a concept has a strong

impact on both the experiencer and the people surrounded by it, both during the actual activity and in the long term and is thus considered an interesting topic to further investigate.

The myriad of studies provides solid empirical evidence for the positive impact of harmonious passion in several domains such as education, sports, and professional work. It leads to better performance and enhances positive emotions, vitality, engagement, intrinsic motivation, flow, and learning goals whilst lowering negative effects and burnout rates (Curran et al. 2015). In addition, broader effects than solely in-activity, such as higher life satisfaction and lower activity/life conflict (Carbonneau et al. 2008, Donahue et al. 2012, Lafrenière et al. 2012) have also been found. Thus, passion as an emotional and cognitive process as well a state of mind can have positive impact on the actions and thought of people and should thus be considered relevant and subsequently, important enough to warrant further study.

Clearly an important concept in many areas with proven effects, passion should be interesting to investigate from a marketing point of view. Passion has been studied in consumer contexts, as in their passion for a brand, where Swimberghe, Astakhova & Wooldridge (2014) and Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi (2012) describe antecedents for consumer passion as consumer or brand characteristics and outcomes in the form of loyalty (Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence 2013). While many brands communicate passion for their product or service in their advertising, there have not, to our knowledge, been any prior studies on the passion of the brands and potential bearings on consumers. Thus, this study would set out to question the taken-for-granted world of corporations and advertisers regarding the effects of advertiser passion.

While no prior studies testing the brand's own passion in an advertising setting have been conducted, a link between communicated passion and inferred effort has been established in the relationship between entrepreneurs and investors. An entrepreneur's passionate presentation of their venture results in investors expecting harder work and higher motivation (Chen, Yao & Kotha 2009). Based on their findings, it would be reasonable to assume that this logic would also take place in an advertising context, through signal effects. That is, communicating passion will increase the receivers', i.e. potential customers, perceptions of the effort the brand devotes to the product or service in question, simply by the logic "a brand passionate about its work will devote greater effort and resources to the product". Hence, it would be expected that consumers who are informed that the brand is passionate about what it does would interpret it as that the brand works harder and devotes more effort, and accordingly, the products will be better. Furthermore, the effects of passion are not limited to cognitive processes. Just like the entrepreneur's or manager's passion is not only interpreted as signals, it is also transferred onto the subject through the process

of emotional and mood contagion. The two separate processes of signal effects and emotional and mood contagion will be explored, from the perspective of communicated brand passion, over the following sections. Together, they constitute the core of the conceptual framework on which this thesis is based, depicted in figure 1.

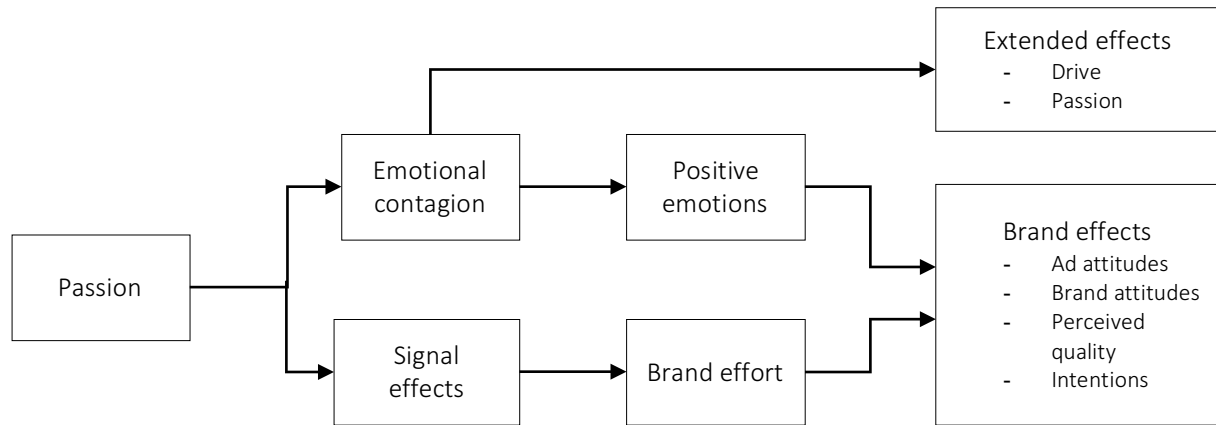


Figure 1 - Theoretical Framework

2.2 Advertising Signaling Theory

Signaling theory is built upon the notion that one party, the agent, sends out information to another party, the principal. The antecedent of the theory is information asymmetry, and Kirmani & Rao (2000) define it as bridging this asymmetry. The parties can circumvent the ambiguity of information asymmetry; one party transmits signals containing some kind of relevant information to the other. Ergo, the receiver infers conclusions about who conveys the information and what is conveyed based on the information available.

In the field of marketing, and notably advertising, signaling theory concerns all the signals being transmitted through the communication that companies and organizations purposely and obviously send to its external environment including potential customers and stakeholders. Advertising is indeed a kind of information flow concerning aspects attributable to the product or service of the company, consequently motivating the formulation and use of communication in the first place, whilst the absence of communication, that is, not communicating any information, might signal something as well; indicating there is something to “hide” (Campbell, Shrives & Bohmbach-Saager 2001). In conclusion, people interpret signals in order to reduce risk (Allison, Uhl 1964, Hoch, Ha 1986). As an example, the aspect of quality is hard to determine beforehand, why a high price can act as a cue for high quality and thus mitigate risk in a transaction (Rao 2005). Since all aspects of communication signal *something*, and in turn, impacts how the offer is perceived,

the choices related to communication and advertising play a significant role in influencing consumer behavior and ultimately, the performance of companies.

Already in 1974, Nelson (1974) studied signals of advertising, concluding that the money spent on advertising works as a signal itself. The perceived spending would act as an information flow from which consumers infer a greater willingness to invest in creating and selling the business. Kirmani & Wright (1989) did find that consumers acknowledge higher versus lower advertising spend. More recent studies have also shown that, subsequently, consumers infer a greater effort put into the products by the company (Modig, Dahlén & Colliander 2014). Modig, Dahlén & Colliander (2014) mean that if consumers realize that more effort put into the advertising equals more money spent and more work, they would consequently believe that the same goes for the actual product, resulting in better products and higher quality.

Whereas the spending on advertising has been shown to act as a signal through means like ad size (Kirmani 1990b), ad repetition (Kirmani 1997), or reproduction quality (Ambler, Hollier 2004), studies have shown that *what* is communicated in the ad can also act as a signal. Several studies have shown that the signals associated with creativity of the advertisement result in consumers inferring the company's willingness to put a greater effort into its products (Dahlén, Rosengren & Törn 2008, Modig, Dahlén & Colliander 2014). In other terms, the process which occurs is that consumers interpret creative messages as requiring more effort in terms of action, time, and thoughts, generating expectations about the brand accordingly, i.e. going the extra mile in creating its products. We expect that communicating brand passion in advertisements falls under the same category, allowing for consumers to interpret passion as a signal for effort.

2.2.1 Advertiser Passion as a Signal for Brand Effort

The findings regarding advertising creativity's effect on consumer perceptions, and applying the same process logic to advertiser passion, constitutes the foundation for the cognitive aspect of the theoretical framework; passion in advertising should, similarly to creativity, act as a signal of a passionate company which in turn translates into increased perceptions of brand effort. As the link between entrepreneurs' communicated passion and inferred investor-perceived effort exist, it is reasonable to believe a similar process would occur within advertising. Just as the passionate entrepreneurs are perceived to be more motivated and work harder (Chen, Yao & Kotha 2009), consumers make similar inferences about companies claiming to be passionate about their work in their advertising.

Moreover, the expectation would be that the brand's advertised love for what it does will convey "soft" information to the consumers, similarly to how advertising signal research shows that spend and creativity convey. Just as signals in terms of invested money, thought and effort, communicating passion should result in consumers inferring it is in the brand's own interest to do a good job. Based on a synthesis of the advertising signal and entrepreneur literatures, a hypothesis is created; communicating passion in advertising should increase consumers' perceptions of the effort that the brand devotes to its products:

H1: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived brand effort.

2.2.2 Advertiser Passion and Brand Evaluations

Within marketing research, a commonly used definition of consumer attitudes is "a person's consistently favorable or unfavorable evaluations, feelings, and tendencies towards an object or idea" (Kotler, Armstrong 2010). Applying the reasoning of Zarantonello & Schmitt (2010), an attitude carries three distinguishing elements; firstly, it refers to an internal, individual state. Secondly, it implies an evaluation, on a cognitive, affective, or conative level. Lastly, it is directed to the idea or object in question.

Having a positive, or favorable view, of a brand, product, or service, is in turn an important contributing factor affecting consumer intentions in terms of both purchase and consumption (Bagozzi 1981, Blackwell, Miniard & Engel 2001, Fishbein, Ajzen 1977). When considering consumer attitudes, a common distinction to make is between brand attitude and attitude towards the advertisement (ad attitude). Brand attitudes concern consumers evaluations of the brand itself, often acting as a direct predictor of consumer behavior (Zarantonello, Schmitt 2010). Conversely, consumers advertisement attitudes concern their feelings, either favorable or unfavorable, toward the ad itself (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch 1986). Ad attitudes are held to affect consumer intentions both directly, and indirectly by mediating brand attitudes (ibid).

Given that consumers perceive the brand communicating their passion as dedicating more time, effort, and resources to their products, we expect this to result in more favorable attitudes toward both the brand and the advertisement. Previous research has shown that perceived brand ability, or effort, increases consumer brand attitudes (Biehal, Sheinin 2007). Furthermore, there has been shown to be a relation between perceived brand effort and perceived advertisement quality (Kirmani 1990a), suggesting that consumer advertisement attitudes are positively influenced by perceived brand effort. We therefore hypothesize that a brand communicating passion in their

advertisement will see a positive effect on consumer brand and ad attitudes, by way of perceived brand effort.

H2a: Communicating passion in advertising enhances consumer ad attitudes.

H2b: Communicating passion in advertising enhances consumer brand attitudes.

Perceived product quality is a result of several factors suggested to ultimately affects intentions, which in turn works as the most effective predictor of future behavior (Gotlieb, Grewal & Brown 1994). Moreover, results from the study by Gotlieb, Grewal & Brown (1994) indicate that perceived quality also affects customer satisfaction, which in turn can also affect future intentions. Hence, it should be out of interest to investigate whether the perceived quality is affected by the signals transmitted through the advertising.

If consumers do infer a higher brand effort from advertising communicating passion, presumably they would expect that the brand makes products of a higher quality. The expected reasoning would be along the lines of “a brand devoting more resources, time and thought, should make better products”. In line with what advertising signal literature has previously suggested with regards to advertising creativity (Dahlén, Rosengren & Törn 2008) and advertising expense (Ambler, Hollier 2004, Modig, Dahlén & Colliander 2014), perceived product quality is increased because of how the consumers perceive the brand effort. Hence, it is hypothesized that communicating passion in advertising will lead consumers to perceive that the brand offers products of higher quality:

H2c: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived product quality.

Under the conditions outlined above, it is also expected that a brand that is perceived to be devoting more resources and effort to its products and work should see a positive effect on consumer intentions in terms of purchase, consumption, and recommendations. Just like the passion of an entrepreneur affects the funding decisions of venture capitalists (Chen, Yao & Kotha 2009), a company communicating their passion, and thereby effort, should see greater consumer intentions.

H2d: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer intentions.

These effects on consumer perceptions are furthermore expected to be affected by consumer-perceived positive emotions. If consumers do experience more positive emotions as a brand advertises its passion, they would also be expected to rate the brand more favorably. Previous advertising research have shown how positive emotions induced by advertising will have a positive impact on brand evaluations, in terms of attitudes and intentions. In their robust structural

modeling study, Morris et al. (2002) established that emotional response (as measured by pleasure, arousal, and dominance) is not only effective as a predictor for conative attitudes, it is more so than cognition (as measured by knowledge and belief).

The process by which positive emotions, amongst others, is expected to occur is thoroughly explored and described in the following section.

2.3 Emotional and Mood Contagion

According to social psychologists, emotions are like packages; comprised of several components, which according to Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson (1993) includes "conscious awareness; facial, vocal and postural expressions; neurophysiological and autonomic nervous system activity; and instrumental activity". Whilst different parts of the brain process different aspects of emotion, the brain integrates the received emotional information and therefore the components simultaneously impact one another (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson 1993), and that whichever manifests first depends on the person and context (Buck 2014). Laird & Bresler (1992) summarize the integrative emotional system by stating that although the different aspects of emotions are independently generated, activation of one can lead to activity of another.

At its core, emotional contagion is held to be the “a process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behavior of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotion states and behavioral attitudes” (Schoenewolf 1990). During this process, mimicry plays an important part, and has been found to be prevalent in studies of infants only days old (Field et al. 1982, Haviland, Lelwica 1987). Results have shown that their behavior of mimicry may come from “an innate human tendency toward mimicking the behavior of others” (Barsade 2002). Moreover, a number of studies revolving facial, postural and vocal feedback have shown that when people start to engage in mimicking behavior, they also start experiencing the emotions leading to the observed behavior (Duclos et al. 1989) – an effect of the physiological feedback from their glandular, muscular and visceral responses (Barsade 2002).

Most studies have focused on the primitive contagion which regards an automatic and subconscious transfer of emotions between people consisting of a spontaneous mimicry of others' facial expressions, body language, speech patterns, and vocal tones (Barsade 2002). More specifically, Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson (1993) believes that emotional contagion is a three-stage process consisting of mimicry, feedback, and contagion and represents a family of phenomena; comprised by behavioral, physiological, cognitive, psychological, and social dimensions as it can take many different manifests. The way it works is that some kind of stimuli takes form at one

individual and is perceived and interpreted by other(s) and in turn, generates congruent or complementary emotions in those people.

In parallel to emotional contagion, which can occur both through a conscious and an unconscious process, there is the process of mood contagion – mostly concerning the unconscious transfer of moods. The phenomenon is described as a process “in which the mood of one person can infect the mood of others interacting with that person” (Hancock et al. 2008). Neumann & Strack (2000) means it can be conceived of as “a mechanism by which affective feelings are transferred between people”. Further, Neumann & Strack (2000) describes it as a mechanism based on two stages; initially, on a person’s “unintentional imitation of another person’s emotional behavior”, followed by an activation of a “congruent mood state in the observer”. As a precondition, the supposedly affected observer is unaware of the origin, which is also what, according to Ortony & Clore (1989) distinguishes the concepts of *moods* and *feelings*; emotions presuppose that the person is aware of the origin of her feelings, whereas moods do not depend on that knowledge. Thus, mood contagion rather results in a global mood state than a specific emotion (Neumann, Strack 2000). In conclusion, mood and emotional contagion are two phenomena that can occur consciously or subconsciously, and while closely linked there are disparate views on the specific mechanisms and the order in which they occur. However, for the purposes of the present research, the general process of emotional and mood contagion is considered in its entirety and will onwards be referred to as emotional contagion.

2.3.1 Transfer of Emotions Through Advertising

Studies have shown that managers’ passion for their jobs (Clarysse, Van Boxtael 2015) as well as entrepreneurs’ passion for their businesses (Breugst et al. 2012), can have an effect on their employees, and in turn make them more passionate. This does not necessarily mean the employees become as passionate, but they can however exhibit more positive emotions. Notably, in a study by Bhullar (2012), it was suggested that even though mood and emotions can take all kinds of shapes and valences, positive states are more contagious than negative states, which would lead us to believe a state like passion, given its positive associations, would be able to be transferred. Additionally, more recent studies have shown how emotional contagion have occurred not just between persons but also through mere observation, without any interaction (Kramer, Guillory & Hancock 2014), meaning that personal contact or connection is not necessary for the phenomenon to take place.

Up until now, the cited studies and research have focused on in-person contagion. Hancock et al. (2008) presents the *social information processing theory*, treating communication via online mediums. The authors argue that people are able to “express their attitudes, thoughts and feelings in text-based interaction with their word choice, punctuation use, and timing” (ibid). Since the dawn of time, writers and poets have possessed the ability to emotionally engage readers, as well as provide empathic insights into the emotions of the characters, merely by the written word (ibid). As emotional engagement is held to be possible in text-based interpersonal communication, we expect it to also work in advertising. Hence, based on previous research demonstrating how emotions and mood states can transfer in many ways, we would expect that similar contagion could occur between an advertising brand and its (potential) customers.

Given that emotional contagion of passion occurs, we would expect the consumers’ emotional state to be affected, giving rise to a plethora of positive emotions. For example, Breugst et al. (2012) showed perceived entrepreneur passion to increase positive affect at work for employees, as measured through the five items “enthusiastic,” “inspired,” “attentive,” “proud,” and “interested”. We therefore hypothesize that passion in advertising would transfer to consumers, so that the ones who are exposed to an advertisement communicating the brand's passion would experience more positive emotions.

H3a: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived positive emotions.

Under the assumptions of emotional contagion, we expect that passion will be transferred as well. In addition to the previously hypothesized positive emotions, the exposure to communication highlighting others’ (the sending brand’s) passion for their occupation and work can result in the respondents experiencing increased levels of passion as well. This assumption is made probable by the previously mentioned findings of Kramer, Guillory & Hancock (2014), showing that emotional contagion occurs when contact is reduced to emotional content consumed via the News Feed function of Facebook¹. Thus, it is hypothesized that consumers exposed to brands communicating passion for their work are in turn rendered more passionate about their occupations.

H3b: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer passion.

One definition of passion is “a psychological state characterized by intense positive emotional arousal, internal drive and full engagement with personally meaningful work activities” (Perttula

¹ The News Feed is the primary manner by which people see content that their friends share on the social network Facebook (Kramer, Guillory & Hancock 2014)

2003), implying that the concepts of internal drive and passion are closely linked. Subsequently, if positive emotions and passion are believed to be transferred when a brand advertises its passion, it is reasonable to assume the same process to occur regarding consumer drive.

H3c: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer drive.

2.4 Product Category as a Moderator

The traditional view on consumption and products is that consumers wish to extract utility from goods, usually attributable to the functional aspects (Hirschman, Holbrook 1982). However, in addition to such, termed rational reasons, consumers can shop to achieve hedonic goals (Westbrook, Black 1985) that are rather based on fulfilling emotional needs (Hirschman, Holbrook 1982). Although the consumption of goods can be defined in many ways, most consumers seem to accordingly characterize certain products as utilitarian and others as hedonic (Batra, Ahtola 1991). Utilitarian product categories are defined by functional and practical attributes (Dhar, Wertenbroch 2000) and are described as more task oriented (Novak, Hoffman & Duhachek 2003), e.g. hand soap. Simultaneously, hedonic goods are defined by Dhar & Wertenbroch (2000) as those “whose consumption is primarily characterized by an affective and sensory experience” and are more connected to enjoyment, such as soft drinks or make-up.

When it comes to shopping motivations, they can also be categorized as utilitarian and hedonic motivation (Babin, Darden & Griffin 1994). For goods falling into the utilitarian category, the motivation is explained as task oriented and rational (Babin, Darden & Griffin 1994). Moreover, Bhatnagar & Ghose (2004) suggest that the motives behind hedonic product purchases are related to emotional needs of consumers. In general, depending on what type of product category is being advertised, different cues are suitable to activate (Percy, Donovan 1991). In the case of hedonic goods, a transformational type of message should be more effective in persuading the receiver, while communicating a more informational type of message for the utilitarian good, describing the attributes and benefits of the products, is more suitable (Puto, Wells 1984). Overall, it has been found that consumers can let emotional desires outweigh utilitarian motives and thus permeate the decision-making process (Hirschman, Holbrook 1982).

As the consumer shopping for the hedonic category is more focused on the emotional value extracted, we assume it to be more important to speak to their feelings and emotions in the marketing communication. With regards to the previously discussed definitions of passion as being related to strong and powerful feelings, we believe it to be reasonable that the anticipated effects

of communicating passion would be stronger in a case that concerns a hedonic good, compared to the effects concerning a utilitarian good. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H4: The effects of advertiser passion on consumer brand evaluations will be greater (lower) for hedonic (utilitarian) goods.

2.5 Summary

The above sections can be summarized into a conceptual model of the theoretical framework, pictured in figure 2.

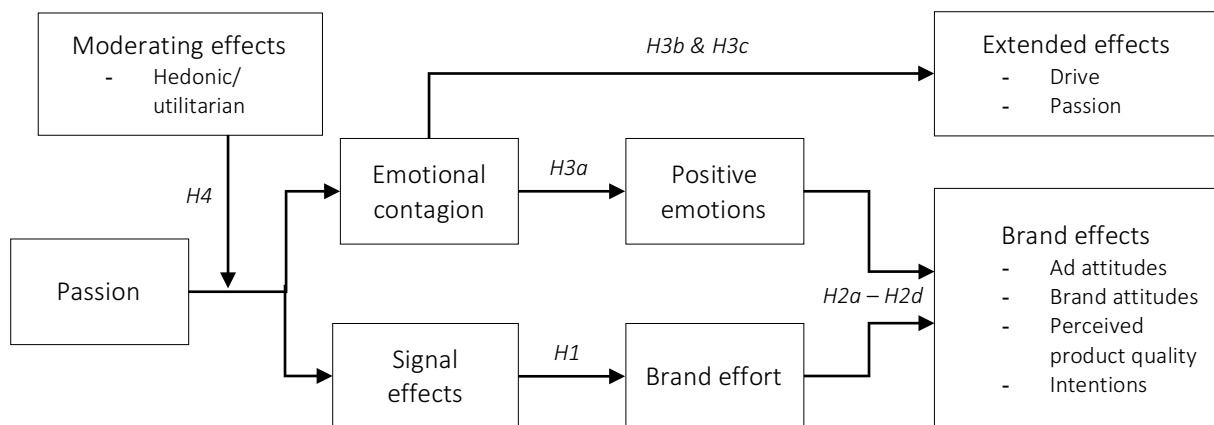


Figure 2 - Theoretical Framework, Revised

Communicated advertiser passion is hypothesized to affect consumers' brand evaluations through two distinct processes; a cognitive process where perceived passion acts as a signal for brand effort (H1), which in turn affects brand evaluations (H2a-H2d), and an emotional process where passion is transmitted through the advertisement to the consumer and gives rise to positive emotions (H3a). As advertisement-induced positive emotions have been shown to lead to more favorable perceptions of the brand, the emotional process will act in parallel to the cognitive one (H2a-H2d). In addition, the emotional process is also hypothesized to give rise to extended effects on consumers, by way of direct transmission of passion and drive (H3b & H3c). Finally, the moderating effects of product category on advertiser passion will be investigated (H4). This framework guides the research and the design of the studies outlined in the following section, and the subsequent analysis and discussion of the results, in order to answer the two stated research questions.

Table 1 - Hypotheses Summary

Hypotheses Summary	
Relationship	Hypothesis
Advertiser passion acts as a signal of brand effort	H1: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived brand effort.
Passion affects ad attitude, brand attitude, perceived product quality, and intentions, mediated by perceived brand effort	<p>H2a: Communicating passion in advertising enhances consumer ad attitudes.</p> <p>H2b: Communicating passion in advertising enhances consumer brand attitudes.</p> <p>H2c: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived product quality.</p> <p>H2d: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer intentions.</p>
Advertiser passion is transmitted through emotional contagion	<p>H3a: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived positive emotions.</p> <p>H3b: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer passion.</p> <p>H3c: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer drive.</p>
The type of product category moderates the effect of advertiser passion	H4: The effects of advertiser passion on consumer brand evaluations will be greater (lower) for hedonic (utilitarian) goods.

3. Methodology

The focus of this chapter is on explaining and motivating the methodology and approach used in the research. Firstly, the choice of topic and the scientific research approach will be discussed. Furthermore, the preparatory work including the choice of stimuli and the numerous pre-tests will be explained along with a discussion of the main studies, the related questionnaire, and the samples. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of the quality of the conducted research.

The research topic was initially suggested by professor Micael Dahlén, following his interest in the subject matter over the last few years. The inspiration for the topic originally arose after observing the phenomenon of brands communicating their love for what they do, or, that they are passionate about what they do. In fact, this seems to have become very common in the past years, permeating many different industries and types of goods and services. Furthermore, despite the abundance of real-world marketing examples, there is a curious lack of scientific proof confirming the benefits of companies communicating love and passion in their advertising. This led to the research question and stated hypotheses of this thesis, which the conducted research aimed to test – will the communicated advertiser passion have a positive impact on the receiver's brand and product evaluations, and will consumers experience extended effects from aforementioned advertiser passion?

A myriad of research has confirmed the significance and benefits of passion in real-life interactions (e.g. Marques 2007, Carboneau et al. 2008, Breugst et al. 2012, Curran et al. 2015, Clarysse, Van Boxstael 2015), and signal theory confirms benefits of creativity, spending, effort, and the like in advertising (e.g. Kirmani & Wright 1989, Ambler, Hollier 2004, Dahlén, Rosengren & Törn 2008, Modig, Dahlén & Colliander 2014). As there has additionally been established that emotional contagion of passion has positive effects, and can be transmitted indirectly through observation, there is a theoretical contribution to be made. The research must therefore be constructed to test both theorized processes, the cognitive process associated with the signaling value of passion, and the emotional process of the transfer of emotions. The choice of topic is deemed relevant and valuable both from a theoretical and practical stand point, as it constitutes both novel research and important insights for practitioners.

To test the hypotheses, two studies were conducted. The first one was designed using the consumer good coffee to test Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3. The second study was designed to replicate the first one, while introducing another dimension; investigating the potential moderating effect related to the type of product advertised, Hypothesis 4.

3.1 Scientific Research Approach

This thesis aims to combine existing research within the marketing domain of signaling theory and the psychological phenomena of emotional contagion. As the stated hypotheses are based on secondary data from existing research and theory and supported or rejected following analyses of collected primary data, a deductive research approach is deemed appropriate and therefore employed (Wilson 2014). In addition, as there is a clear time limit to the research, and a need to mitigate risks to the largest possible extent, a deductive research method is considered the most suitable choice (Dudovskiy 2016).

The studies were designed with the aim of exploring the effects of brands communicating passion through their advertising. Moreover, this thesis sets out to present a summary of individuals' opinions and behaviors. To ensure a methodological fit to the chosen (deductive) approach, a quantitative research design was chosen as the best option for the primary data collection (Bryman, Bell 2015). Using a quantitative approach in addition to the qualitative literature review allows for broadening of the research scope, as well as increasing the generalizability of the results and draw conclusions from the sample to the general population (Malhotra 1999, Jacobsen, Sandin & Hellström 2002).

The experimental research design applied different levels of communicated passion as treatment, manipulated in several ways and explored across product categories. All respondents are randomly assigned to either treatment or control conditions, where the control condition consists of advertisement neutral in brand passion.

3.2 Preparatory Work

The preparatory work of the studies consisted of the steps described in more detail below. After deciding on the manipulation of verbal and visual elements communicating different levels of passion as potential stimuli, quantitative pre-tests were conducted. The aim was to find suitable versions of text for the passionate as well as the non-passionate ads measured through a scale of perceived passion. Secondly, as the intention was to find credible yet unknown brands, a question unveiling whether respondents had any prior knowledge of the brands shown in the ads was asked.

3.2.1. Selection of Stimuli

The product categories were chosen due to their generic nature and the possibility to draw generalizable conclusions from the results, mainly due to their high prevalence in advertising (Kantar Media. n.d. 2018). In the first study, coffee was chosen as the product category. In order to replicate the study and expand the results across categories, a second study was conducted where

two product categories were chosen. The first category was soft drinks, due to its natural existence in the field; a hedonic good and the most commonly used product category for examining effects of advertising. Secondly, in order to generate comparable results across categories, the utilitarian product category hand soap was chosen.

The brands used, *Bushell's*, *Crush*, *Joia*, and *Method*, were not created by the researchers and are thus not fictive, contrary to the method most commonly adopted in the fields of marketing in order to isolate the effects of associations to familiar brands and thus avoid confounding effects (Colliander, Dahlén 2011). Instead, as the indented sample would be Swedish people, brands existing outside of the Swedish market were chosen in order to avoid confounders to the largest possible extent, while at the same time remaining credible, similar to the methodology employed by Ambler & Hollier (2004). Ensuring the level of credibility additionally motivated the choice of using already existing ads. However, the original non-product verbal elements, i.e. the advertising *copy*, were removed and replaced by different variations of verbal elements aimed at creating different variants of stimuli as well as additions of visual elements.

3.2.2 Pre-Tests

The pre-tests were conducted to find out the perceived difference in communicated passion between ads in order to create effective levels of stimuli leading to the intended effects in the main studies. The pre-test questionnaires were conducted through the online survey tool Qualtrics, where each pre-test entailed exposure to one or several ads with an intended control or treatment stimuli, followed by a manipulation check scale item question; “How much do you agree with the following statements?” with the response items “[brand] loves its [product]”, “[brand] makes [its product] out of passion”, “[brand] is passionate”. To ensure there would not be any confounding effects related to previous knowledge of the brands, the question “Do you recognize this brand?” was presented with the following alternatives to answer; “Yes”, “No”, “Not sure”.

For the pre-tests, it was decided together with the supervisor of this thesis, that a sample of at least 20 respondents per stimuli group were sufficient to utilize normal distribution assumptions for the statistical tests. Convenience samples were used consisting of acquaintances and students at the Stockholm School of Economics. To broaden the reach, English was used as the survey language as opposed to the main surveys. Despite the fact that using a convenience sample entails possible bias, the risk is alleviated if the expected variation to the population is relatively low (Saunders, Lewis 2009). It is reasonable to assume that there is a low variance between the sample and the general population in terms of attitudes of what constitutes passion in an advertising context,

especially when considering the widespread nature of fast-moving consumer goods, making us comfortable with the choice of sampling method.

3.2.2.1 Pre-Test 1

The first pre-test aimed to investigate how the communication of high and low passion would be perceived, to reassure that the effects of the stimuli in the main study would befall as intended. More specifically, the purpose was to test several different variations of verbal elements, text, and explore the effects on the manipulation check variable. Initially, the intention was to carry out a robust test by creating differences in perceived advertiser passion through subtle changes in stimuli. The visual backdrop including the picture of the product and its packaging was kept constant, with a slight difference in verbal elements. Within each product category, soft drinks and hand soap, two kinds of treatment stimuli and two kinds of control stimuli were created. This entailed eight different advertisements and as many exposure scenarios. The first control stimuli had the verbal element “Great soda/soap.” and its treatment counterpart “We’re passionate about great soda/soap.” for the soft drink and hand soap categories, respectively. The second control stimuli had the verbal element “With natural ingredients and flavors.”/ “With a great cleansing formula and fresh scent.”, as listing product benefits is frequently used in ads (Jobber, Ellis-Chadwick 2012), and its treatment counterpart “With a passion for great soda/soap.” for the soda and hand soap categories, respectively. Hence, the only difference between the first pair of control and treatment stimuli was the words “we’re passionate”, solely entailing an addition of words, while the second pair of control and treatment stimuli had slightly higher variation.

For efficiency purposes, respondents were grouped together so that each respondent was exposed to two different ads, either one treatment or control stimuli of either the soft drink or the hand soap category, followed by exposure of the same kind of stimuli in the other product category, in order to avoid the contrast effect (Cialdini 2007). As an example, a certain respondent was first exposed the soda control stimuli of “Great soda.”, followed by exposure to the less similar of the hand soap control stimuli, “With a great cleansing formula and fresh scent.”. This resulted in a total of four different respondent groups, requiring a sample size of at least 80 people.

The results of the first pre-test indicated that the pictures which the soft drink ads were based on seemed to generate an exceptionally high perceived level of passion, even for the low passion stimuli; assumed to be caused by a perceived high creativity and aesthetic appeal generating too “high” liking. Hence, even the low passion stimuli were perceived higher than middle on the passion scale continuum, which was not desirable for the main study as the intent was to compare to an ad perceived to be neutral (or low) in passion.

3.2.2.2 *Pre-Test 2*

Given that the first pre-test produced exceptionally high levels of perceived passion for the soft drink, even for the low passion stimuli, we believe this indicates that other elements of the ad than the verbal would have an impact of the overall perceived levels. Thus, the aim of the second pre-test was to explore whether a change in the pictorial elements, that being the backdrop including the background and product, would impact the overall levels of perceived passion. Thus, the pre-work consisted of finding a canvas with more neutral pictorial elements to base the advertisement on. A more generic and less aesthetically appealing picture was chosen for the backdrop, and one control as well as one treatment stimuli were created employing some of the texts used in the former pre-test. This generated two different exposure scenarios, where the picture of a soda can was used as a backdrop together with the control stimuli “With an uplifting and refreshing taste”, as well as the treatment stimuli “We’re passionate about great soda”.

The results from the second pre-test indicated that the less aesthetically pleasing pictorial element produces lower levels of perceived advertiser passion and is thus more suitable to employ in the main studies.

3.2.2.3 *Pre-Test 3*

The aim of the third pre-test was to introduce a visual element in the treatment stimuli, in addition to the verbal elements. To most effectively communicate passion, which in studies can be linked to many emotions (see Philippe, Vallerand & Lavigne 2009), one of them being love, it was decided to use a heart as a visual element in the high passion stimuli in addition to the verbal expression of passion. The reason behind this is to reinforce the passion of the advertiser by employing a red heart, assumed to be a universal symbol of love. In addition, a variety of real-life advertisements depict hearts to communicate love (Smith 2012). This pre-test made use of the ads “We’re passionate about great soda/soap.” created in the previous pre-test but added the visual heart element.

The results of the third pre-test showed that the introduction of a visual element of passion in addition to the verbal element generated higher levels of perceived advertiser passion, providing important data for the development of the stimuli employed in the main studies. The increased levels of perceived passion allowed for using the more robust set of treatment/control ads, with only the addition of a visual and verbal passion element as manipulation. As a result, the tested pair of ads with more heavily altered text was dropped from further studies.

3.2.2.4 Pre-Test 4

In the final pre-test, the aim was to utilize learnings from the previous tests and create more sophisticated, yet realistic, advertisements that could potentially be applied to the main study. The product category was shifted to coffee, but the pictorial elements were still of a similar kind as in the previous tests. In addition, a more implicit way of communicating passion was explored, referring to *love* for the product as opposed to *passion* per se. To make the advertisements more realistic, particularly for the main study sample (Swedish population), a splash with a price point was added to the visual elements, as this constitutes a common practice in Western advertising (Smith 2012). Eight different versions of stimuli were tested, out of which three were directed to control groups and five were treatment stimulus. The verbal elements added into the backdrop were for the control stimuli “Taste our coffee”, “Taste our ground coffee”, and “Try our new coffee”² which also included the price point splash. The treatment stimuli experimented with both the addition of the red heart symbol, as well as the price splash, resulting in the following verbal elements stimuli: “Taste our love for coffee.”, “Taste our love for coffee.” with the heart-symbol, and, translated from Swedish, “We love this! Try our new coffee”³ with a price splash, “This is our passion. Try our new coffee”⁴ with a price splash, and “We love what we do. Try our new coffee”⁵ with a price splash.

The results from the fourth pre-test were positive, as two acceptable pairs of ads were identified. The introduction of the price splash was found to produce satisfactory results and could therefore be used in the main study.

The four pre-tests generated enough data for us to be confident in a successful manipulation of advertiser passion, and the learnings could be used to design the two main studies. Four pairs of ads were found to have the intended effects and were consequently chosen for use in the main studies. The combined results from the pre-tests regarding the ad in questions can be found in table 2. Additionally, all versions of the tested ads can be found in Appendix 1.

² Translated from ”Prova vårt nya kaffe”

³ Translated from “Vi älskar det här! Prova vårt nya kaffe”

⁴ Translated from ”Det här är vår passion. Prova vårt nya kaffe”

⁵ Translated from ”Vi älskar det vi gör. Prova vårt nya kaffe”

Table 2 - Pre-Test Results

Perceived Advertiser Passion, Pre-tests, Mean Comparisons (Standard deviations)			
	Treatment	Control	Planned Comparisons
Soft drink ($n_t=22$, $n_c=30$)	6.85 (1.50)	4.86 (1.85)*	$p<0.01$
Hand soap ($n_t=21$, $n_c=21$)	6.56 (2.01)	4.84 (2.11)	$p<0.01$
Coffee 1 ($n_t=23$, $n_c=20$)	6.62 (1.98)	4.63 (2.34)	$p<0.01$
Coffee 2 ($n_t=22$, $n_c=30$)	6.62 (1.61)	5.14 (1.61)	$p<0.01$

* A different ad was used in the main studies.

3.3 Main Studies

Based on the results from the pre-tests, it was decided two survey-based studies would be carried out simultaneously; one employing coffee as a product category and the other one employing soft drinks and hand soap. As previously mentioned, the studies were conducted using three brands within three different product categories; Crush as soft drink (hedonic), Method (utilitarian) as hand soap and Bushell's as coffee. All brands were tested for familiarity and were unfamiliar to almost all respondents in the pre-tests⁶. In the first study concerning coffee, four different kinds of stimuli were used. In addition, as the manipulation check was placed before the questionnaire, it is possible that the manipulation check itself would act as a primer. To control for this possibility, two of the four different stimulus items, that is one treatment and one control stimulus, were assigned twofold but with the manipulation check at the end, creating two additional exposure scenarios. Thus, four different stimulus items were used in Study 1 entailing a total of six different groups of respondents. For the second study concerning the hedonic soft drinks and utilitarian hand soap, the pre-tests help determine two different kinds of stimuli effective in communicating passion and not. All in all, study 2 used four different stimulus items, resulting in as many groups of respondents.

Except for differences in stimuli, the studies were identical, why the executions are described altogether. The surveys were distributed to the samples (see section 3.3.1) and through the Qualtrics Randomizer, the respondents were randomly assigned to either a control or treatment stimulus. Following exposure to the stimuli, respondents were presented with a short introduction explaining that they should base their answers solely on what they concluded from seeing the advertisement. After that, the manipulation check question was posed followed by the

⁶ Less than 5 % of asked respondents had prior brand knowledge, which included international respondents.

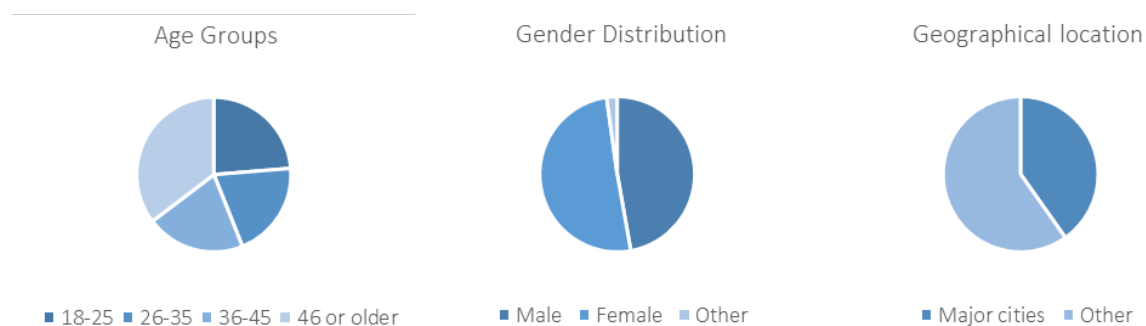
questionnaire measuring the dependent variables (see section 3.3.2.1). The survey was concluded by a set of questions related to background information of the respondent.

3.3.1 Sampling and Sample

As opposed to the pre-tests, the respondent samples for the main studies were carefully chosen by Nepa, a recognized market research agency catering to both academic and corporate clients. Through their established panel data methods, Nepa was able to assure the respondents would constitute a random sample representative of the Swedish working population, in par with academic standards of data quality. Moreover, as Morris et al. (2002) explain, there are benefits of non-student sampling, since they have been shown to produce different results than student samples, making it the superior method.

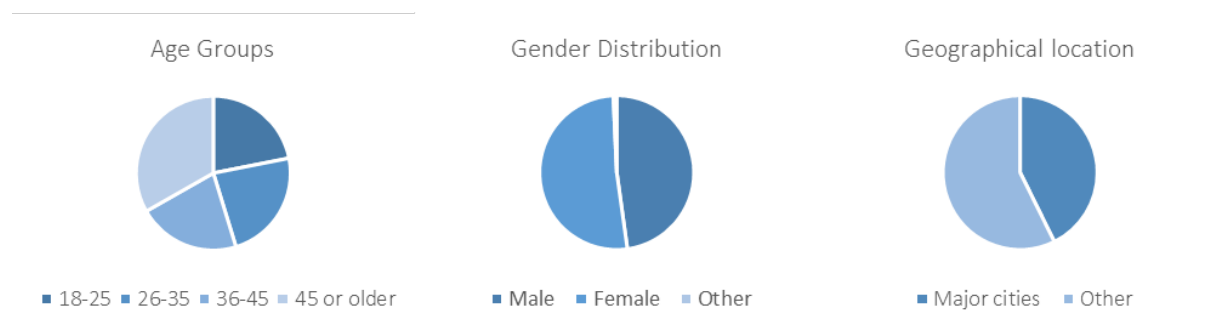
Overall, a total of 781 respondents completed the main surveys, solely online, and responses were collected between the 28th of March 2018 and the 16th of April 2018. According to Newbold, Carlson & Thorne (2012), each sample should have at least 30 participants for the central limit theorem to be established and allow for normal distribution assumptions. However, as Nepa was used and the aim was to reach a higher generalizability as well as stronger results, respondent group sizes of at least 50 people were regarded as desirable and possible to obtain. Given the aforementioned number of stimulus items (six and four groups, respectively), the goal was to reach at least 300 and 200 respondents for Study 1 and at Study 2, respectively. Eventually, each respondent group had between 61 and 77 respondents; the total sample in the first study amounted to 405 respondents and 274 respondents in the second study, after the datasets had been adjusted with regards to the manipulation check (see section 4.1.1). Consequently, the requirements were met with margins.

Study 1.



Out of the 466 respondents in the sample of Study 1, 51% were female, 47% were male, and 2% defined as something else. The age of the respondents ranged from 17 to 63, and 40% lives in a major city (defined as Stockholm, Gothenburg, or Malmö).

Study 2.



In study 2, the total was 315 respondents of which 52% were female, 48% were male, and 1% defined as something else. The age range of the respondents was 17 to 64, and 43% lives in a major city.

3.3.2 Survey Design

Bryman & Bell (2015) holds self-completion surveys to be suitable to employ in quantitative research, but that they could be limited with regards to participant honesty. However, as it is the widely prevailing tool it was therefore used as part of the research method. Using a survey represents a good method for collecting unobservable data types such as consumers' attitudes and opinions, as well as allowing data collection from a large sample (Bhattacharjee 2012).

The questionnaire included a total of 15 questions, of which 12 are a part of the present research⁷. They include metrics of brand evaluations, as well as questions related to positive emotions and extended effects. In addition, there was a manipulation check as well as three demographical questions. Appendix 2 displays an example of the questionnaire.

The questions and scale items used were originally written in English and thus needed to be translated into Swedish, ensuring that the questionnaire was clear and comprehensible to all respondents. The following presentation of the different measures is in English so that the language in the thesis is kept consistent, however, the Swedish translations can be found in Appendix 2.

⁷ Three questions were included as a condition of access to the digital panel

Hence, all questions and items were translated direct and word by word, to the largest possible extent, to ensure reliability (further described in section 3.5.1).

The majority of the questionnaire contained response scales as recommended by Bryman & Bell (2015), and most response options were based on 10-point Likert scales or 10-point semantic differential scales, as employed by Dahlén, Rosengren & Smit (2014). Moreover, in line with what Söderlund (2005) suggests, to increase the comprehensibility, negative items, e.g. “unhappy”, were placed to the left of the scale, and more positive items such as “happy” to the right.

Using a 10-item Likert scale allowed for extracting more subtle differences in the effects created by the different stimulus, as it removed the "neutral" option creating a "forced-choice survey scale" (Allen, Seaman 2007).

3.3.2.1 Measures

Manipulation check. After the respondents were randomly divided in to different groups based on the different treatment conditions, the survey was initiated with the manipulation control measure. To measure advertiser passion, we used measures developed by Micael Dahlén (PhD, Stockholm School of Economics), a professor of marketing at Stockholm School of Economics, as no previously employed measures of advertiser passion exist. The question was placed after the other questions, at the end of the survey, in one third of the sample in study 1. This design was chosen to control for potential priming effects related to exposure to the manipulation check before the measures of our dependent variables.

Advertiser passion was measured with three items on a 10-point Likert scale, through the question “How well do you agree with the following statements?” with the left end-point being “Do not agree at all” and the right end-point being “Completely agree”. The items were “[brand] loves its [product]”, “[brand] makes [product] out of passion”, and “[brand] is passionate”. The items were averaged, and an index was created with a Cronbach's α of 0.896. The first point of the scale was marked with

Perceived brand effort. To measure perceived brand effort, we used a three item, 10-point Likert scale, through the question “How well do you agree with the following statements?” with the left end-point being “Do not agree at all” and the right end-point being “Completely agree”. The items were “[brand] devotes much effort to its [product]”, “[brand] devotes great resources to its [product]”, “[brand] devotes time and energy to its [product]” (Dahlén, Rosengren & Törn 2008). The items were averaged, and an index was created with a Cronbach's α of 0.929.

Perceived product quality. To measure perceived product quality, we used a three item, 10-point Likert scale, through the question “How well do you agree with the following statements?” with the left end-point being “Do not agree at all” and the right end-point being “Completely agree”. The items were “[brand’s] [product] are high quality”, “[brand’s] [product] are better than average”, “[brand’s] [product] are better than the competition”, adapted from Dahlén, Rosengren & Smit (2014). The items were averaged, and an index was created with a Cronbach's α of 0.922.

Positive emotions. To measure the effects of transmission of positive emotions through contagion, new measures had to be created. Using the scale for how the potential ownership of product would make consumers feel, developed by Dahlén, Thorbjørnsen & Sjödin (2011), as a base, we created a four item, 10-point semantic differential scale measuring positive emotions.

The items were “I feel dull/excited”, “sad/happy”, “apathetic/glad”, and “not romantic/romantic”. The items were averaged, and an index was created with a Cronbach's α of 0.851.

Ad attitude. To measure ad attitude, we used a conventional and generally accepted measure. It consisted of a three item, 10-point semantic differential scale, with the questions being “bad/good”, “negative/positive”, and “dislike/like” (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch 1986). The items were averaged, and an index was created with a Cronbach's α of 0.954.

Brand attitude. Similarly, the same type of three item, 10-point semantic differential scale was used to measure brand attitudes. The questions were “bad/good”, “negative/positive”, and “unfavorable/favorable” (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch 1986, Dahlén, Rosengren & Smit 2014). The items were averaged, and an index was created with a Cronbach's α of 0.970.

Intentions. The decision was made to include the same type of intention construct as in previous research investigating similar marketing signal effects (Dahlén, Rosengren & Törn 2008, Dahlén, Rosengren & Smit 2014). To measure consumer intentions, a three item, 10-point Likert scale adapted from Dahlén, Rosengren & Smit (2014) was used; “How well do you agree with the following statements?” with the left end-point being “Do not agree at all” and the right end-point being “Completely agree”.

The items were “I want to try [brand’s] [product]”, “I want to buy [brand’s] [product]”, “I would recommend [brand’s] [product]”. The items were averaged, and an index was created with a Cronbach's α of 0.911.

Drive. Consumer drive was determined using the Behavioural Activation System (BAS) scale developed by Carver & White (1994). Drive was measured using a four item, 10-point Likert scale, through the question “How well do you agree with the following statements?” with the left end-point being “Do not agree at all” and the right end-point being “Completely agree”. The items were "when I want something, I usually go all-out to get it", "I go out of my way to get thing I want", "if I see a chance to get something I want, I move on it right away", and "when I go after something I use a 'no holds barred' approach". The items were averaged, and an index was created with a Cronbach's α of 0.874.

Passion. To measure the potential emotional contagion of passion through exposure to brands communicating passion in their advertising, the same logic governing the development of measures of advertiser passion was employed. The measures were adapted to rather asses a consumer context, assessing passion in one's occupation and level of general passion.

Consumer passion was measured with three items on a 10-point Likert scale, through the question “How well do you agree with the following statements?” with the left end-point being “Do not agree at all” and the right end-point being “Completely agree”. The items were "I love my occupation", "I perform my occupation out of passion", and "I am passionate". The items were averaged, and an index was created with a Cronbach's α of 0.867.

3.4 Analytical Tools

The collected data was analyzed with the statistical analysis computer program SPSS Statistics 25. To minimize inclusion of erroneous responses, the decision to collect only wholly completed surveys was made, meaning that non-complete answers were excluded from the final sample. Moreover, as Nepa distributed the surveys through Qualtrics, combined with the seamless download of data from Qualtrics to SPSS, human errors were minimized in the steps of the data collection. SPSS allowed the multi-item questions to be indexed, and in line with Bearden, Netemeyer & Haws's (2011) suggestions, the indices were deemed sufficient when Cronbach's α exceeded 0.7, a level all indices met. Results were only accepted at the 5% significance level.

3.5 Data Quality

As noted by Bryman & Bell (2015), reliability and validity are imperative concepts in research, and to evaluate the quality of this thesis the concepts will be discussed below.

3.5.1 Reliability

Saunders & Lewis (2009) defines reliability as a consistency in the findings based on the utilized data collection technique and/or analysis procedure. Most of the pre-work for the present research consisted of collecting secondary data comprised of peer-reviewed academic journal articles. Moreover, the primary data collected through the pre-tests and the main studies were mostly questions measuring dependent variables that were translated from established measures from previous studies. The use of manipulation checks and its role in adjusting to how reliably exposed the respondents had been to the stimuli ensured that it would work as anticipated. Moreover, as previously mentioned, all multi-item variables were combined into indices with a Cronbach's α of at least 0.7. Overall, both the secondary and primary data indicate a high reliability of the research.

3.5.2 Validity

Bhattacharjee (2012) explains validity as the extent to which a measure tests what it is supposed to test. The different dimensions of validity will be further discussed below; internal, external, and ecological.

Internal validity. Internal validity is related to causality and the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables (Bryman, Bell 2015), and an experimental research design usually results in high internal validity. Following the basic experimental design, respondents were randomly assigned to conditions thus making internal validity stronger. Moreover, this supports the expectation of differences in responses stemming from exposure to different conditions, ensuring that all potential effects can be attributed to the treatment condition.

External validity. External validity is related to the generalizability of the findings, i.e. how well do the findings extend to the population and across treatments (Saunders, Lewis 2009). As the national sample is constructed to mimic random sampling conditions, and is representative of the population, external validity is considered to be rather high. Furthermore, as this thesis is comprised of two separate studies, employing three products in different product categories across different product types, the generalizability across treatments is also considered sound. Moreover, the visual elements of the different stimulus are expected to be similar to those of many other FMCG product categories.

Another important aspect of external validity is generalizability across settings and situations (Cook, Campbell & Shadish 2002). Albeit, the experimental arrangements of the study, in terms of mimicking a real-life setting through an online questionnaire, certainly limits this aspect of external validity. This is because the situation as such is not particularly realistic, considering the setting and

environment of which respondents are in when they answer the questionnaire. This is also associated to a lower ecological validity, further described below. Moreover, there is a risk of reactive effects, as the respondents may be influenced by the awareness of participating in a study (Bryman, Bell 2015). However, using randomized control groups mitigates this concern as the sample in its entirety should be affected.

Ecological validity. According to Hassmén (2011), while external validity concerns the generalizability of the findings, ecological validity can be defined as whether the experiment setting mimics the real world. In order to obtain higher ecological validity in this experiment, the stimuli could have been more realistic by placing it in a real-life setting. However, due to the time frame and scope it was decided to prioritize and focus on the control of the experiment and reassuring confounding factors were minimized and the internal validity strong. Moreover, the emergent nature of this research led to the decision to prioritize that the internal validity is kept high. Moreover, the studies were conducted using unfamiliar brands, reducing the ecological validity as most consumers already have established relationships with most brands they are exposed to.

Lastly, Söderlund (2018) means that, in general, the validity can be questioned when an experiment involves fictive purchases and hypothetical actions and money. In order to mitigate this risk, the experiment could have been conducted in the field with advertisements either encountered in an outdoor environment, or in an online or offline medium. Albeit, in order to make sure that the independent variable caused the intended effects on the dependent variables, the choice was made to conduct a controlled experiment.

3.5.3 Replicability

As this study was the first of its kind, further research is needed to establish the phenomenon and findings extracted. Thus, in order to enable future research, choices were made to assure the ability to replicate the studies. In this case, the replicability was firstly assured by the fact that two studies were conducted, where the second one successfully replicated the first. Detailed documentation of the study process, in terms of theory, method and empirical findings enables future research to be carried out. In addition, the present research required no special access or the exploitation of a unique situation to be performed, further allowing for ease of replication. Lastly, the majority of the measures used in the questionnaires were based on well-established measures and in the largest possible extent all taken actions were intended to open up for further research.

4. Results and Analysis

In this section, the results of the two conducted studies are presented and analyzed through statistical testing of the posed hypotheses, opening with the data checks conducted on the two studies. The findings are then presented thematically according to the corresponding hypotheses, with the results from study 1 presented first followed by the results from study 2. The section is concluded with a summary of the findings along with the hypotheses.

4.1 Data Checks

4.1.1 Stimuli

The manipulation check, a three-item question coded to the index *perceived advertiser passion*, revealed issues with the collected responses. The extensive pre-testing of the treatment and control stimuli ensured that they would be perceived in the intended fashion, but careful analysis showed several cases of respondents acting irrational in relation to the logic of the experiment, hinting at either fraudulent or inattentive respondents. This constitute an emerging issue within digital research, severely affecting the quality of the data (Jones, House & Gao 2015). Essentially, instead of actively engaging with the surveys, respondents skim through the questions without consideration for the surveys' content.

To rectify this issue, the data sets had to be adjusted for whether the respondents in the two studies had been reliably exposed to the stimuli or not. This was done through selection on the manipulated variable, using one standard deviation as the boundary condition for inclusion. Respondents in the treatment groups were excluded if they had answered below one standard deviation under the mean on the advertiser passion scale, and in the control groups if they had answered above one standard deviation over the mean. The lower/upper boundaries were rounded to the closest index scale level. The results of this procedure can be found in tables 3 and 4. In total, 102 respondents were excluded from all further analysis.⁸

⁸ The boundary levels were chosen after through discussions with our thesis supervisor, Micael Dahlén. The boundary level is essentially deciding the magnitude of the treatment effect, since the boundary condition for inclusion decides at what level a response is accepted. Fewer excluded responses would thus result in a less clear connection between treatment condition and perceived advertiser passion. Out of the 102 excluded respondents, 61 were from study 1 (25 from treatment and 36 from control), and 41 from study 2 (10 from hedonic treatment, 14 from hedonic control, 9 from utilitarian treatment, and 8 from utilitarian control).

Table 3 - Test for Stimuli, Study 1

Results of Test for Stimuli, Study 1

Group	Perceived Advertiser Passion, Mean	Standard Deviation	Lower/Upper Boundary
Treatment	6.13	2.16	4.00
Control	5.75	2.04	7.67

Table 4 - Test for Stimuli, Study 2

Results of Test for Stimuli, Study 2

Group	Perceived Advertiser Passion, Mean	Standard Deviation	Lower/Upper Boundary
Hedonic. treatment	6.13	2.09	4.00
Hedonic. control	5.69	2.13	7.67
Utilitarian. treatment	6.12	2.28	4.00
Utilitarian. control	5.38	2.31	7.67

This constitutes a case of exogenous sample selection, resulting in an unbiased sample and set of results (Wooldridge 2015). The result of this process is that only respondents who have been rightfully exposed to the stimuli, either the treatment or control, are considered for the analysis. As such, all possible measures were taken to ensure as high internal validity of the experiment as possible.

4.1.2 Manipulation Check

After correcting the data sets, the manipulation check was carried out once again. Comparing the groups of more passionate versus less passionate advertiser showed significant differences in perceived advertiser passion. This was the case in both study 1, and study 2, where in study 2 the groups were divided into those who were subjected to an advertisement for a hedonic product, and those who were subjected to an advertisement for a utilitarian product. The results for the two studies are found in tables 5, 6, and 7.

Table 5 - Manipulation Check, Study 1

Manipulation Check, Study 1, Mean Comparisons (Standard deviations)

	More Passionate Advertiser (n=211)	Less Passionate Advertiser (n=194)	Planned Comparisons
Perceived advertiser passion	6.63 (1.64)	5.13 (1.55)	p<0.01

Table 6 - Manipulation Check, Study 2, Hedonic

Manipulation Check, Study 2, **Hedonic**, Mean Comparisons (Standard deviations)

	More Passionate Advertiser (n=72)	Less Passionate Advertiser (n=62)	Planned Comparisons
Perceived advertiser passion	6.62 (1.69)	4.99 (1.66)	p<0.01

Table 7 - Manipulation Check, Study 2, Utilitarian

Manipulation Check, Study 2, **Utilitarian**, Mean Comparisons (Standard deviations)

	More Passionate Advertiser (n=69)	Less Passionate Advertiser (n=71)	Planned Comparisons
Perceived advertiser passion	6.65 (1.82)	4.93 (1.95)	p<0.01

Additionally, the levels of perceived advertiser passion are very even across the samples, indicating at a robustness of the studies.

4.2 Study 1, Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypotheses, we started off by running a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on all dependent variables simultaneously, with the manipulated condition (more or less passionate advertiser) as a fixed factor. The test showed that the manipulation had an overall significant effect on all dependent variables, $F(9, 395) = 10.781, Wilks\ lambda\ 0,803, p < 0.01$. The hypotheses were then tested individually on each dependent variable, comparing the groups of more versus less passionate advertisers. As the research was carried out utilizing planned comparisons, each hypothesis was tested individually through independent samples t-tests, granting additional power to the statistical tests. Independent samples t-tests are used to determine whether

there is statistical evidence of a difference between means attributed to the associated populations. The hypotheses were further tested through the Preacher-Hayes approach (Model 4), to establish mediation effects (Preacher, Hayes 2008).

4.2.1 Advertiser Passion as a Signal for Brand Effort

The first hypothesis, which forms the basis for the cognitive process assumed to occur through passion in advertising, states that perceived advertiser passion increases the perceived brand effort. To test this hypothesis, independent samples t-test were conducted, as it is the preferred method when comparing the same variable between two groups (Newbold, Carlson & Thorne 2012). In study 1, there was a significant difference in perceived brand effort between the two groups ($M_{More\ passionate} = 6.10$ versus $M_{Less\ passionate} = 5.15$, $p < 0.01$), see table 8, indicating that the results are in support of H1. There is thus a difference in how consumers perceive a brand's level of effort, depending on perceived levels of passion communicated by the brand.

Table 8 - Perceived Brand Effort, Study 1

Results of Study 1, Mean Comparisons (Standard deviations)

	More Passionate Advertiser (n=211)	Less Passionate Advertiser (n=194)	Planned Comparisons
Perceived brand effort	6.10 (1.78)	5.15 (1.69)	$p < 0.01$

Hypothesis 1: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived brand effort.

Supported

4.2.2 Effects of Perceived Advertiser Passion on Brand Evaluations

The second hypothesis revolve around the effect of advertiser passion on advertisement efficacy, here measured through ad attitudes, brand attitudes, perceived product quality and intentions. It was tested by the same method as H1, through independent samples t-tests. Ad attitude was found to be significantly higher ($p < 0.01$) amongst consumer exposed to the more passionate advertiser ($M_{More\ passionate} = 5.51$) than the less passionate ($M_{Less\ passionate} = 4.93$), which is in support of H2a. Analysis shows the same results for the other metrics; brand attitude per H2b ($M_{More\ passionate} = 5.42$ versus $M_{Less\ passionate} = 4.76$, $p < 0.01$), perceived product quality per H2c ($M_{More\ passionate} = 5.95$ versus $M_{Less\ passionate} = 5.04$, $p < 0.01$), and intentions per H2d ($M_{More\ passionate} = 5.29$ versus $M_{Less\ passionate} = 4.44$, $p < 0.01$) are all perceived as

higher under the more passionate advertiser condition, see table 9. Overall, all results are in support of H2.

Table 9 - Brand Evaluations, Study 1

Results of Study 1, Mean Comparisons (Standard deviations)

	More Passionate Advertiser (n=211)	Less Passionate Advertiser (n=194)	Planned Comparisons
Ad attitude	5.51 (2.28)	4.93 (1.83)	p<0.01
Brand attitude	5.42 (2.15)	4.76 (1.72)	p<0.01
Perceived product quality	5.95 (1.82)	5.04 (1.72)	p<0.01
Intentions	5.29 (2.32)	4.44 (2.19)	p<0.01

Hypothesis 2a: Communicating passion in advertising enhances consumer ad attitudes.

Supported

Hypothesis 2b: Communicating passion in advertising enhances consumer brand attitudes.

Supported

Hypothesis 2c: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived product quality.

Supported

Hypothesis 2d: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer intentions.

Supported

4.2.3 Perceived Brand Effort as a Mediator

The hypotheses H2a-H2d were all formulated with advertising signaling as theoretical underpinning. The reasoning is that advertising passion acts as a signal for brand effort and will through perceived brand effort influence the variables measuring brand evaluations. Figure 3 shows the direct effect path c of an independent variable, in this context perceived advertiser passion, on the dependent variable, here brand evaluations.

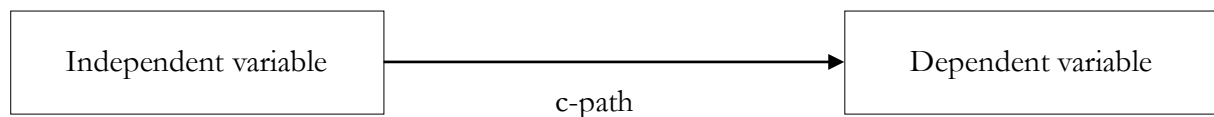


Figure 3 - Direct Effect Path

Figure 4 shows a mediation design, where the independent variable is assumed to affect the dependent variable through a mediator, i.e. perceived advertiser passion on brand evaluations through perceived brand effort.

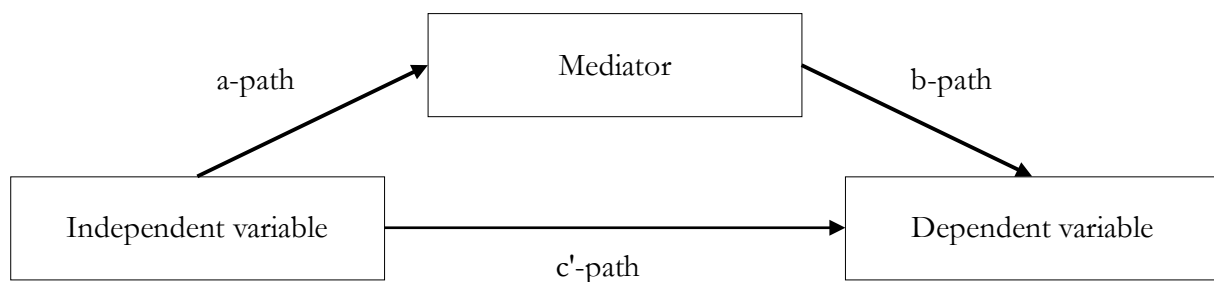


Figure 4 - Direct and Indirect Effect Paths

The indirect effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable can thus be described as the product of a and b , ab , and the direct effect as c' . The total effect is thus $c = c' + ab$ (Preacher, Hayes 2008).

To test this relationship, a mediation test using the Preacher-Hayes approach (Model 4) was employed, based on 5000 bootstrap samples per the recommendation of (Preacher, Hayes 2008). This produced the direct and indirect effects of perceived advertiser passion on our four dependent variables; ad attitude, brand attitude, perceived product quality, and intentions. The results of these tests can be found in table 10.

Table 10 - Mediation Test, Study 1

Mediation effect of Perceived Advertiser Passion on Advertising Outcomes Through Brand Effort						
Dependent variable		Product of coefficients			95 % Confidence Interval	
		Point estimate	SE	t	Lower	Upper
Ad attitude	Indirect effect	0.20	0.08		0.06	0.35
	Direct effect	0.28	0.08	3.32	0.11	0.45
Brand attitude	Indirect effect	0.20	0.07		0.07	0.33
	Direct effect	0.26	0.08	3.31	0.11	0.42
Perceived product quality	Indirect effect	0.44	0.06		0.33	0.57
	Direct effect	0.27	0.05	5.10	0.16	0.37
Intentions	Indirect effect	0.37	0.07		0.22	0.51
	Direct effect	0.28	0.09	3.18	0.11	0.43

The results show a significant indirect effect of perceived advertiser passion on ad attitude (0.20, 95% *CI*: 0.06 – 0.35), brand attitude (0.20, 95% *CI*: 0.07 – 0.33), perceived product quality (0.44, 95% *CI*: 0.33 – 0.57), and intentions (0.44, 95% *CI*: 0.33 – 0.58). However, the direct effects of perceived advertiser passion on all dependent variables are still significant, suggesting that brand effort acts as a *partial* mediator. The direct effect of perceived advertiser passion on ad attitude (0.28, 95% *CI*: 0.11 – 0.45) and brand attitude (0.26, 95% *CI*: 0.11 – 0.42) is larger than the indirect effect, as opposed to the case for perceived product quality (0.27, 95% *CI*: 0.16 – 0.37) and intentions (0.28, 95% *CI*: 0.11 – 0.45), suggesting that brand effort is a more important mediator for the latter pair of dependent variables. This is to be expected, as the signal value of brand effort should logically affect consumer perceptions of the quality of the product, and thus their intentions, rather than attitudes of the ad and brand.

Overall, the results are in support of the Hypotheses H2a-H2d, that brand effort acts as a mediator for the effects of advertiser passion on brand evaluations.

4.2.4 Transmission of Passion Through Emotional Contagion

In parallel to the cognitive process of advertising signal effects, an emotional process where positive emotions, as well as passion and drive, are transferred via advertising is hypothesized to occur. This was tested through independent samples t-tests, much like the other hypotheses, see table 11.

Table 11 - Emotional Contagion, Study 1

Results of Study 1, Mean Comparisons (Standard deviations)

	More Passionate Advertiser (n=211)	Less Passionate Advertiser (n=194)	Planned Comparisons
Positive emotions	4.99 (1.98)	5.06 (1.97)	p=0.36
Passion	6.51 (1.90)	6.39 (1.86)	p=0.27
Drive	6.93 (1.60)	6.72 (1.65)	p=0.10

Contrary to what was expected, there was no significant difference in positive emotions between the two conditions ($M_{More\,passionate} = 4.99$ versus $M_{Less\,passionate} = 5.06$, $p = 0.36$). Likewise, no significant difference was found in consumer passion ($M_{More\,passionate} = 6.51$ versus $M_{Less\,passionate} = 6.39$, $p = 0.27$) nor consumer drive ($M_{More\,passionate} = 6.93$ versus $M_{Less\,passionate} = 6.72$, $p = 0.10$). Thus, no support was found for either H3a, H3b, nor H3c. This implies that there is no support for the theory of emotional contagion of advertiser passion.

Hypothesis 3a: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived positive emotions.

Not supported

Hypothesis 3b: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer passion.

Not supported

Hypothesis 3c: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer drive.

Not supported

4.3 Study 2, Hypothesis Testing

Study 2 was conducted to replicate the results of study 1, and to investigate whether there are interaction effects between communicated advertiser passion and the two product categories hedonic and utilitarian consumer goods, per hypothesis 4, stating that there should be greater effects of advertiser passion on consumer brand evaluations of hedonic goods.

4.3.1 Moderating Effects of Product Category

The effects of perceived advertiser passion on brand evaluations was hypothesized to be moderated by product category. The hypothesis is based on the assumption that different product types are most suitably marketed utilizing different techniques (Percy, Donovan 1991), suggesting that the effectiveness of the use of brand passion in marketing is disproportionate depending on product category. As hedonic products are associated with emotional value, the effects of perceived advertiser passion were hypothesized to be greater for hedonic products.

This hypothesis was tested by conducting a MANOVA on all dependent variables simultaneously to check for interaction effects between more, or less, passionate advertisers and hedonic, or, utilitarian goods. The two variables for the conditions more/less passionate advertisers and hedonic/utilitarian good were used as factors and the manipulation check along with the brand perception and extended effects variables were included as dependent variables.

The manipulation more or less passionate advertisers had a significant overall effect on all dependent variables ($F(9, 262) = 7.887, Wilks\ lambda\ 0.787, p < 0.01$). No significant interaction effects were found for the interaction term between the conditions hedonic or utilitarian and more or less passionate advertiser, *product type * perceived advertiser passion*, ($F(9, 262) = 0.839, Wilks\ lambda\ 0.972, p = 0.58$), suggesting that there is no significant difference in effect size for the manipulation between the two product type conditions. Thus, we found no support for H4.

Hypothesis 4: The effects of advertiser passion on consumer brand evaluations will be greater (lower) for hedonic (utilitarian) goods.

Not supported

As there was no discernable effect depending on the product type, the two product conditions are merged into planned comparisons, allowing for greater simplicity and clarity of results. Following the MANOVA, the variables were tested individually, following the structure of Study 1.

4.3.2 Advertiser Passion as a Signal for Brand Effort

Conducting the same type of independent samples t-tests on the two groups as in Study 1 showed that there is a significant difference in how consumers perceive brand effort depending on the level of advertiser passion ($M_{More\ passionate} = 6.02$ versus $M_{Less\ passionate} = 4.90, p < 0.01$), thereby supporting H1, see table 12.

Table 12 - Perceived Brand Effort, Study 2

Results of Study 2, Mean Comparisons (Standard deviations)

	More Passionate Advertiser (n=141)	Less Passionate Advertiser (n=133)	Planned Comparisons
Perceived brand effort	6.02 (1.90)	4.90 (1.86)	p<0.01

Hypothesis 1: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived brand effort.

Supported

4.3.3 Effects of Perceived Passion on Brand Evaluations

Hypotheses H2a-H2d were tested using independent sample t-tests, following the same logic as in Study 1. The results are found in table 13.

Table 13 - Brand Evaluations, Study 2

Results of Study 2, Mean Comparisons (Standard deviations)

	More Passionate Advertiser (n=141)	Less Passionate Advertiser (n=133)	Planned Comparisons
Ad attitude	5.56 (2.34)	4.73 (2.23)	p<0.01
Brand attitude	5.41 (2.34)	4.87 (1.95)	p<0.05
Perceived product quality	5.41 (1.96)	4.68 (1.75)	p<0.01
Intentions	5.04 (2.60)	4.31 (2.24)	p<0.01

Testing on the variables for brand evaluations shows that perceived advertiser passion was found to significantly influence ad attitude ($M_{More\,passionate} = 5.56$ versus $M_{Less\,passionate} = 4.73$, $p < 0.01$) and brand attitude ($M_{More\,passionate} = 5.41$ versus $M_{Less\,passionate} = 4.87$, $p < 0.05$), in support of H2a and H2b. Furthermore, perceived product quality ($M_{More\,passionate} = 5.41$ versus $M_{Less\,passionate} = 4.68$, $p < 0.01$), and consumer intentions ($M_{More\,passionate} = 5.04$ versus $M_{Less\,passionate} = 4.31$, $p < 0.01$) were found to be significantly influenced as well, supporting H2c and H2d respectively.

Consequently, there is support for H2 in Study 2 as well, reinforcing the overall findings of the present research as the results do not seem to be associated to any specific product type or category, but hold across conditions and treatments.

Hypothesis 2a: Communicating passion in advertising enhances consumer ad attitudes.

Supported

Hypothesis 2b: Communicating passion in advertising enhances consumer brand attitudes.

Supported

Hypothesis 2c: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived product quality.

Supported

Hypothesis 2d: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer intentions.

Supported

4.3.4 Perceived Brand Effort as a Mediator

Following the procedure established in study 1, the results from study 2 were tested for the mediation effects of brand effort on the brand perception variables ad attitude, brand attitude, perceived product quality, and intentions. The test was carried out utilizing the same Preacher-Hayes (Model 4) approach with a bootstrapped sample of 5000, and the results can be found in table 14 below.

Table 14 - Test for Mediation, Study 2

Mediation effect of Perceived Advertiser Passion on Advertising Outcomes Through Brand Effort						
Dependent variable		Product of coefficients			95 % Confidence Interval	
		Point estimate	SE	t	Lower	Upper
Ad attitude	<i>Indirect effect</i>	0.26	0.11		0.05	0.49
	<i>Direct effect</i>	0.31	0.11	2.96	0.11	0.52
Brand attitude	<i>Indirect effect</i>	0.30	0.10		0.10	0.50
	<i>Direct effect</i>	0.25	0.10	2.56	0.06	0.44
Perceived product quality	<i>Indirect effect</i>	0.46	0.08		0.32	0.61
	<i>Direct effect</i>	0.12	0.07	1.65	-0.03	0.26
Intentions	<i>Indirect effect</i>	0.54	0.10		0.35	0.72
	<i>Direct effect</i>	0.10	0.10	0.98	-0.10	0.31

Just like the results from study 1, the results from study 2 show significant indirect effects of perceived advertiser passion on ad attitude (0.26, 95 % *CI*: 0.05 – 0.48), brand attitude (0.30, 95 % *CI*: 0.10 – 0.50), perceived product quality (0.46, 95 % *CI*: 0.32 – 0.61), and intentions (0.54, 95 % *CI*: 0.35 – 0.72), lending further credibility to the present research.

Brand effort is thus found to be a partial mediator of the effects of perceived brand passion on ad attitudes and brand attitudes, but unlike in study 1, there are no significant direct effects of perceived brand effort on perceived product quality (95 % *CI*: (–0.02) – 0.26) or intentions (95 % *CI*: (–0.10) – 0.31), implying full mediation on those variables.

Overall, the results are in support of hypothesis H2a-H2d.

4.3.5 Transmission of Passion Through Emotional Contagion

While Study 1 found no support for H3, the same procedure for testing emotional contagion of passion, hypothesized to increase consumer positive emotions, passion, and drive, was followed in Study 2. The results are found in table 15.

Table 15 - Emotional Contagion, Study 2

Results of Study 2, Mean Comparisons (Standard deviations)			
	More Passionate Advertiser (n=141)	Less Passionate Advertiser (n=133)	Planned Comparisons
Positive emotions	4.91 (1.96)	4.72 (1.94)	p=0.21
Passion	6.39 (2.14)	6.33 (2.08)	p=0.41
Drive	6.68 (1.72)	6.56 (1.80)	p=0.29

The analysis shows that there are no significant different in effect between the two conditions for positive emotions ($M_{More\ passionate} = 4.91$ versus $M_{Less\ passionate} = 4.72$, $p = 0.21$), consumer passion ($M_{More\ passionate} = 6.39$ versus $M_{Less\ passionate} = 6.33$, $p = 0.41$) or consumer drive ($M_{More\ passionate} = 6.68$ versus $M_{Less\ passionate} = 6.56$, $p = 0.29$). Thus, no support was found for either H3a, H3b, nor H3c in Study 2 either.

This further strengthens the results of no significant effect of emotional contagion of advertiser passion found in Study 1.

Hypothesis 3a: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived positive emotions.

Not supported

Hypothesis 3b: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer passion.

Not supported

Hypothesis 3c: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer drive.

Not supported

4.4 Summary of Findings

Table 16 - Summary of Findings

Hypotheses summary			
Relationship	Hypothesis	Study 1	Study 2
Advertiser passion acts as a signal of brand effort	H1: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived brand effort.	Supported	Supported
Passion affects ad attitude, brand attitude, perceived product quality, and intentions, mediated by perceived brand effort	H2a: Communicating passion in advertising enhances consumer ad attitudes.	Supported	Supported
	H2b: Communicating passion in advertising enhances consumer brand attitudes.	Supported	Supported
	H2c: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived product quality.	Supported	Supported
	H2d: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer intentions.	Supported	Supported
Advertiser passion is transmitted through emotional contagion	H3a: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer-perceived positive emotions.	Not supported	Not supported
	H3b: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer passion.	Not supported	Not supported
	H3c: Communicating passion in advertising increases consumer drive.	Not supported	Not supported
The type of product category moderates the effect of advertiser passion	H4: The effects of advertiser passion on consumer brand evaluations will be greater (lower) for hedonic (utilitarian) goods.	N/A	Not supported

5. Discussion and Conclusions

The final section of this thesis will present a discussion based on the results and analysis from the previous section, along with an attempt to answer the posed research questions. Following the discussion, an examination of the theoretical contributions, along with the managerial implications, of the research is presented. The thesis is concluded with general conclusions, in addition to a critical evaluation of the limitations of the thesis and suggestions for future research.

5.1 General Discussion of the Results

Investigating the effects of brands communicating their passion in advertising constitutes an emergent area of research, with this thesis representing the first steps taken to establish the connection between passion in advertising and consumer brand evaluations, attitudes, and intentions. Utilizing previous advertising research on the advertising signal effects of “soft” information, such as expense and creativity, and management and psychological theory on emotional contagion as the theoretical foundation, we set out to investigate whether simple communication of passion would have significant effects on consumers. A two-dimensional research model of advertiser passion acting as a signal of brand effort, and as a vessel for the transmission of positive emotions, was hypothesized to positively affect consumer attitudes and perceptions, and was consequently tested. Furthermore, emotional contagion of passion was expected to give rise to extended effects.

The results from the studies show that communicating passion in advertising may indeed be beneficial for brands, in terms of marketing effectiveness generated by the cognitive process hypothesized to take place. While certainly not surprising, with the practice of brands stating that they are passionate being a widely prevalent phenomenon, establishing concrete scientific evidence of the effect is still an important step in advancing the state of academia. However, the emotional process expected to take place and transmit positive emotions impacting brand evaluations favorably, as well as generating extended effects, does not seem to take place.

5.1.1 Advertising Signal Effects

The results of both Study 1 and Study 2 supported the hypothesis that communicated advertiser passion would act as “soft” information to the consumer, resulting in increased levels of perceived brand effort (H1). This implies that not only do consumers find brand passion communicated through advertising to be genuine, they use this soft information to draw conclusions regarding the efforts brands put into their products, validating the practice of using passion in advertising.

In keeping with prior research, which has shown that signals of brand effort have positive effects on consumers' perceptions of a brand, the results of Study 1, replicated by Study 2, show that increased perceptions of brand effort acts as a mediator for consumer attitudes, perceptions, and intentions. Between the two conditions, there was a significant difference in how consumers rated their attitudes to both the advertisement and the brand, suggesting that consumers evaluate a passionate brand higher than one that is perceived to be neutral. Similarly, consumers with higher perceptions of advertiser passion report increased intentions as well as perceived product quality.

The second study extended the research into testing on two additional product categories, soft drinks, and hand soap, representing hedonic and utilitarian goods. As no significant interaction effect related to product category was found, the effects of brand passion can be assumed to hold, at least over varying types of low-involvement consumer goods. Furthermore, the results were not what was expected in terms of the moderating effect of product categories, as consumers did not respond more favorably to passionate advertising for hedonic products in comparison to utilitarian products. This was hypothesized due to the fact that hedonic products are generally advertised with regards to affect and enjoyment as opposed to the benefits and functional aspects usually found in advertisements for utilitarian goods. The results rather indicate that there are no discernable differences in the effect of perceived advertiser passion depending on product type, implying that passion in marketing is a suitable strategy for both categories.

However, unlike the results of Dahlén, Rosengren & Törn (2008), we find brand effort to be only a partial mediator for the effects of perceived brand passion on brand evaluations in Study 1, albeit Study 2 showed perceived brand effort to be a full mediator for perceived product quality and intentions. Common for both conducted studies were that perceived brand effort was a more important mediator for perceived product quality and intentions. Clearly, the mediating relationship between of brand effort on advertiser passion needs to be more thoroughly explored to determine the order and magnitude of effects.

Furthermore, the fact of perceived brand effort being a partial mediator suggests that perceived advertiser passion has a direct effect on ad and brand attitude, in addition to the hypothesized signal value of brand effort. Moreover, it could also suggest that there are other processes happening in parallel, either cognitive or emotional, when consumers are exposed to advertising communicating brand passion, not controlled for in the present research.

5.1.2 Emotional Contagion

The second aspect of the developed theoretical model for the effect of passion in advertising is emotional contagion. Grounded in the psychological theory showing that moods and emotions can be transferred interpersonally, from leaders to employees in a management context (Marques 2007), and passively through other mediums, e.g. via text on social media networks (Kramer, Guillory & Hancock 2014), it was hypothesized that also advertisements would work as conductors of emotions and moods.

Contrary to what was hypothesized, we found no support for emotional contagion as there was no significant differences in the reported levels of positive emotions, passion, or drive between the two conditions. As such, even though consumer brand attitudes and perceptions were positively affected under the treatment conditions, these changes cannot be held to be due to any contagion of emotions. Rather, the differences are more plausibly explained through the cognitive process of perceiving passion as a signal of brand effort and ability.

As both studies generated results of the same kind, it is a clear indicator that the expected process of emotional contagion is not taking place in the experiment setting. Even though the results are in contrary to expectations based on theory and previous research, a possible interpretation is that the advertising medium used to conduct the research is unsuitable for emotional contagion, i.e. a methodological flaw in the experiment.

The reason for weak effects of contagion is possibly related to the scope of the study, as it was delimited to simple manipulations of verbal and visual communication in print advertisements. Before one rejects the applicability of mood and emotional contagion theory in an advertisement context, further research more thoroughly exploring the concept is necessary.

5.2 Conclusions and Answers to Research Questions

In conclusion, the results provide findings of varied character. While it is clear that, within both studies, results for all parameters regarding passion as a signal showed significance, neither of the studies showed any coherent results regarding the notion that advertiser passion induces positive emotions nor extended effects on the receiver. Thus, the studies provide evidence for the cognitive process expected to take place, but not the emotional process. The present research allows us to confirm the benefits of the taken-for-granted notion of brands advertising a love and passion for what they do. We are however not able to confirm that emotional contagion, in turn giving rise to more positive emotions and extended effects, occurs.

Consequently, with regards to the results presented in Chapter 4 and the discussion provided in the above sections, the research questions can be answered in the following ways:

Will the communicated passion of the advertiser have a positive impact on the receiver's brand and product evaluations?

Yes, both studies provide empirical support for that passion acts as a signal and thus has an effect on all dependent variables. However, the anticipated impact on the same variables due to more positive emotions does not seem to befall as expected.

Will the communicated passion of the advertiser have extended effects on the receiver?

The present research provides no empirical support for the notion that communicated passion is contagious on the receiver and thus do not impact the extended effects in terms of perceived passion and drive.

5.3 Theoretical Implications

This thesis contributes to the academic field by acting as the first step in filling the research gap between consumers' and brands' passion. Brand passion has been held to be the "ultimate emotional connection between a consumer and a brand" (Swimberghe, Astakhova & Wooldridge 2014) and while the topic of consumers' passion for brands has been given attention in research, the topic of brands' passion has not.

The present research found consistent effects, perceptually, in two survey-based experimental studies, resulting in substantial credibility in the effects of a brand's passion on consumers; confirming that the taken-for-granted positive effects of declaring passion for its brand and products do indeed have scientific ground.

Furthermore, the present research constitutes the application of management theory in a new context, paving the way for further research. Passion has long been shown to have positive effects in organizations, and by applying the same logic in an advertising context we have shown passion to be beneficial in advertising as well. While no significant effects of emotional contagion were found, the research still constitute an important theoretical contribution in the field of psychology as well. On the one hand, the consistent results clearly demonstrate that the process of mood and emotional contagion is not taking place in an advertising context, which is a contribution in itself. On the other hand, due to the explorative and ever-evolving nature of research, we still hope that further efforts to examine contagion in advertising will materialize. Consequently, more research

is called for in order to definitively assess whether emotional contagion can occur in an advertisement context or not.

As passion as a multifaceted construct have many proven and interesting ramifications, it should, from a theoretical stand point, be valuable to break it down to its elements to understand what passion really *is*, and in turn, its impact. To better recognize and map the components of passion could also enable and simplify further investigations into what passion can bring in a marketing context and provide an even richer theoretical contribution.

Lastly, given some of the methodological choices of this thesis, samples were grouped together to increase external validity through the variation of treatments. As a result, it has not been possible to utilize the results generated from different versions of advertisements, i.e. the different versions of an advertisement within a specific product type (e.g. coffee) in the same stimuli (e.g. treatment). Thus, the method and presentation of data did not make it possible to discern the different aspects of stimuli and how their effects could differ with regards to impact on the receiver.

5.4 Managerial Implications

In addition to the theoretical implications of the present research, there are clear practical implications as well. Most importantly, the significant results of communicating brand passion in advertising entail meaningful knowledge for advertiser professionals. The robustness of the conducted studies shows that significant effect on consumer attitudes, as well as perceptions of product quality and intentions, can be influenced by exceedingly simple means. Additionally, the results show that these effects extend to both hedonic and utilitarian product categories, with no significant difference in magnitude of effect, implying that the effects of passion in advertising might hold universally positive effects on consumer perceptions and regard for brands.

The results also suggest that to make consumers actually feel the brand's passion, simple slogans and verbal communication might not be sufficient. Reasonably, brands like Red Bull ("we love what we do") aim to give rise to an emotional response in addition to the cognitive process related to the signal value of passion. The present research suggests that only stating the brand's passion in text might be an inadequate method for this end.

Moreover, as the positive effects of passion within organizations has previously been established (Breugst et al. 2012, Carbonneau et al. 2008, Curran et al. 2015, Barsade 2002), the present research provides incentive for organizations to convey their passion to consumers as well, thereby enjoying twofold impact. In other words, working towards creating a passionate environment within the

organization and amongst the employees improves organizational outcomes, and communicating this passion externally subsequently improves market outcomes.

Per the discussions in the above section, some of the decisions made with regards to the methodology and presentation of findings disabled the process of discerning what differences in effects variations in treatment manipulation gives rise to. As an example, two different ads per stimuli (high and low passion) were shown for coffee, employing different elements of passion; such as a variety in choice of words or symbols. For us to provide solid and concrete advice for practitioners it would have been desirable to disentangle the differences in impact of the unique elements.

Even though these initial studies are conducted as controlled experiments and, as previously mentioned, do not concern real money and estimate the investigated variables merely through self-measurements and perceptions, the results have practical value. The employed measures are held to indicate and predict future behaviors, implying increased spending and ultimately resulting in more profitable firms, given that more effective advertising is used. Communicating the brand's passion may indeed constitute such advertising.

5.5 Limitations

Both conducted studies were of a basic experimental design, following a three-stage procedure with random assignment of units, administration of treatment, and a post-test assessment of dependable variables, ensuring high internal validity. Furthermore, the use of a representative sample of the Swedish working population ensured high external validity as well. Nevertheless, there are some important limitations to the conducted research that needs attention.

5.5.1 Research Scope

The results are limited by the scope of the two conducted studies. While both studies were conducted using real brands, they were chosen assumed to be unfamiliar to the respondents, which was also tested in the pre-studies. This acts to ensure that the respondents had no previous relationship to the brands in the studies, thus enabling us to attribute all potential effects to the treatments used in respective study. However, most consumers already have established relationships with many brands, limiting the ecological validity of the study. A previous relationship with a brand could potentially increase the effects of communicated passion. For example, a previously established positive attitude towards a brand might increase the credibility of claims of being passionate, as well as a previous emotional connection with a brand might alleviate emotional contagion. Further research is thus warranted to investigate the potential effects of this kind,

especially as Dahlén, Rosengren & Törn (2008) has shown that marketing signal effects are powerful for familiar brands as well.

The decision to focus on fast-moving consumer goods was a conscious choice of direction, as a first step of examining the phenomena. There are however reasons to believe the results would have taken different forms for other kind of products, such as high-involvement purchases or services.

5.5.2 Methodological Approach

There are limitations associated with the design of the treatment and control stimuli. While extensive pre-tests were conducted to ensure the conditions had the intended effects, and all treatment and control pairs were designed to only differ in terms either included or excluded “passion”-cues, we cannot be sure there are no other factors affecting the results that were not controlled for. Simple things like the graphical layout of the text and word count might be acting to either amplify or reduce the measured effects. While the employed method represents established research procedure, especially considering the emergent nature of the subject area, one can always raise doubts as to its validity.

Drawing conclusions based on an exclusively Swedish sample certainly entails limitations in terms of generalizability. Even if simple advertising used in the context should logically not incur too different outcomes on people in other places, cultural differences might play a part. Whether it be through passion as a construct, what it is constituted of and how it is regarded upon and thus received, or it be because of different connotations or values linked to the word itself.

The use of print advertisement in an online survey context is not representative of how advertisement is usually consumed. While the emergent nature of the research warrants initial studies investigating the effects of passion in a controlled experiment setting, this clearly limits the realism of the research. Likewise, print advertising as a medium is increasingly challenged and replaced by countless alternative mediums and channels. The shift in marketing communication outlets might limit the applicability of this research’s results, as exposure to print advertising may not be the most prevalent and natural situation for consumers.

Lastly, the dependent variables were recorded through self-reported measures, and given today’s access to enormous amounts of market data, a limitation resulting from the choice of research method is a potential discrepancy to actual outcomes. Additionally, while the marketing effects employed in this research are solely momentarily and pre-consumption, there might be potential

for delayed effects not captured by the conducted studies. As an example, emotional contagion might occur at the time of consumption of a product or service, rather than at a consideration or purchase stage.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

The stated purpose of this research was to take the first steps of investigating the effects of advertiser passion on consumers and based on the findings several interesting avenues of further research are identified. Additionally, several variations in methodology and scope are called for to properly provide a full overview of the phenomenon.

Due to the novelty of the research, the scope was limited to test whether expressed brand passion in advertising in reality have positive effects on consumers' attitudes, perceptions and intentions. As the results show that this is the case, a more thorough analysis of what constitutes passion in advertising, and the different dimensions of passion in a brand context, is an interesting avenue of further research.

The second study was conducted focusing on the two different product categories soft drinks and hand soap, generally considered to be hedonic respectively utilitarian. However, both product categories are typically low-involvement consumer goods, as is coffee tested in Study 1. As the introductory section of this thesis showed, brand passion in advertising is not limited to these types of products but is rather prevalent in the marketing communication of brands in many industries and categories. Accordingly, future studies would be advised to delve deeper in the potentially moderating effects of (product) brand and consumer characteristics.

With regards to the limitations of potential advice for practitioners, future research should also focus on discerning differential effects based on what elements of the advertisements that are being manipulated. While we provide solid evidence that advertiser passion is beneficial, we cannot say in what way this should be communicated to maximize the benefits. Whether it is by explicitly expressing the word passion, or implicitly through talking about love, or in a visual fashion by showing a heart remains uncertain. We believe that is an interesting area of research both for theoretical implications but also in guiding practice so that advertising agencies, marketing departments and creatives know where to focus their efforts.

Furthermore, as the two studies have proven the effects of brand passion in marketing to be significant, further studies are recommended to test the phenomenon through different methodologies. Both conducted studies tested passion on consumer perceptions. Establishing

whether there are behavioral effects as well is of interest, through testing consumer actions when exposed to different conditions. Subsequently, conducting field experiments in terms of e.g. A/B tests for online retailers allows for experiencing immediate results of consumer behavior and spending should be an interesting and useful methodology to further test these notions in practice.

While we found no support for the prevalence of emotional contagion of brand passion, this does not necessarily mean it does not occur. Both studies were conducted utilizing small manipulations of verbal and visual communication of brand passion in print advertising, constituting a rather one-dimensional advertisement medium. One could argue that the choice of medium in the conducted studies in of itself account for a limit to the emotional capacity of the ad. More extensive, and emotionally engaging, types of advertisement might trigger a more substantial emotional response and by extension increase the probability of contagion. To further investigate the relationship between brand and consumer passion from a contagion perspective, future research should focus on different types of advertisement mediums and the potentially moderating effects of advertisement type.

In addition to the medium of print advertising being rather one-dimensional, it could be argued that the impersonal nature of print advertising depicting a mere product and a message/slogan through simple texts or symbols results in low or no emotional contagion. Although it has been demonstrated that emotional contagion indeed occurs through interpersonal text-based communication (Hancock et al. 2008, Kramer, Guillory & Hancock 2014), it should be noted that the study objects of e.g. Kramer, Guillory & Hancock (2014) still experienced other people sharing stories and news of different valences. Hence, there was a clear and personal sender of the message compared to the studies of this thesis, with a presumably impersonal sender; both in terms of the absence of any human being as well as a brand lacking any connotations or prior relationships with the receivers. Thus, a form of advertising that is more personal or engaging might incur a significant form of emotional contagion. In today's versatile and increasingly identity-based marketing communication, such as celebrity endorsement, influencer marketing, and relationship management as well as content marketing, this research is able to set a basis and open up for further exploration of the many interesting effects passion can produce. Emotionally, cognitively, and socially – we can see that a passion for life and what you do have many positive effects and impacts the society, changing it for the better.

6. References

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Appendix 1 - Stimuli

Bushell's treatment 1



Bushell's control 1



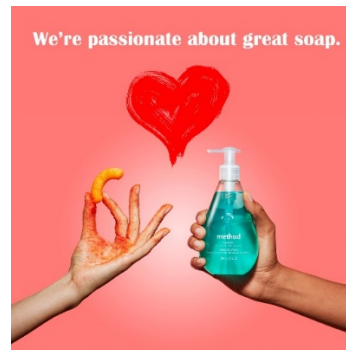
Bushell's treatment 2



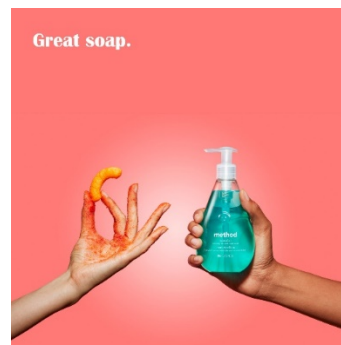
Bushell's control 2



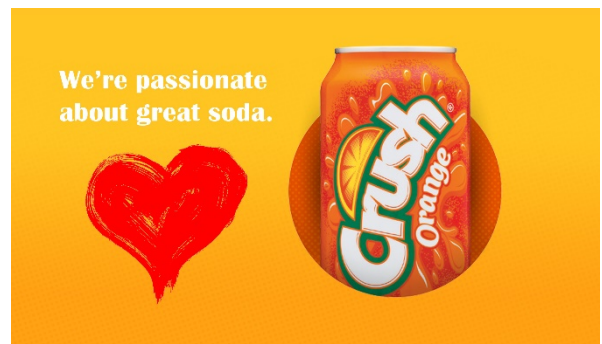
Method treatment



Method control



Crush treatment



Crush control



Appendix 2 – Questionnaire Example

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Hej, tack för att du valt att medverka i vår studie. Vänligen titta på följande annons och svara utifrån dina spontana intryck. Alla svar behandlas anonymt.

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Crush_passion



End of Block: Crush_passion

Start of Block: Crush_manipulation check

Display This Question:

If Crush passion 3 Is Displayed

Or Crush kontroll Is Displayed

Hur väl håller du med om följande påståenden? (gällande varumärket "Crush")

	Instämmer inte alls							Instämmer helt		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Crush älskar sin läskedryck	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crush skapar läskedryck med passion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crush är ett passionerat varumärke	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Crush_manipulation check

Start of Block: Crush_metrics

Hur väl håller du med om följande påståenden?

	Instämmer inte alls					Instämmer helt				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Crush ägnar stor ansträngning åt sin läskedryck	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crush ägnar stora resurser åt sin läskedryck	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crush lägger ner tid och energi på sin läskedryck	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hur väl håller du med om följande påståenden?

	Instämmer inte alls					Instämmer helt				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Crush läskedryck är av hög kvalitet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crush läskedryck är bättre än genomsnittet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crush läskedryck är bättre än konkurrenternas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hur känner du dig just nu?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	--

Uttråkad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exalterad
Olycklig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Lycklig
Ledsen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Glad
Inte romantisk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Romantisk

Vad är din spontana attityd gentemot annonsen för Crush läskedryck?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Dålig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Bra
Negativ	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Positiv
Ogillar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Gillar

Vad är din spontana attityd gentemot varumärket Crush?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	--

Dålig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Bra
Negativ	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Positiv
Ofördelaktig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Fördelaktig

Hur väl håller du med om följande påståenden?

	Instämmer inte alls								Instämmer helt	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jag vill prova Crush läskedryck	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag vill köpa Crush läskedryck	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag skulle rekommendera Crush läskedryck	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden in på dig?

	Instämmer inte alls					Instämmer helt				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jag kan enkelt föreställa mig hur andra känner sig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag bryr mig om andras välmående	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Om jag vore i en konflikt med någon just nu, så skulle jag försöka se saker från både mitt och deras perspektiv	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Om jag vore vittne till någon som far illa, så skulle jag vara väldigt upprörd just nu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden in på dig?

	Instämmer inte alls					Instämmer helt				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jag känner att jag har många goda egenskaper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag har en positiv inställning till mig själv	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
På det hela taget är jag nöjd med mig själv	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Reklam är i allmänhet:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	--

Oärlig	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	Ärlig
Falsk	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	Uppriktig
Farlig	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	Säker

Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden in på dig?

	Instämmer inte alls					Instämmer helt				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
När jag vill uppnå något brukar jag ägna det stor ansträngning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag anstränger mig utöver det vanliga för att få det jag vill ha	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Om jag ser en chans att få något jag vill ha, agerar jag direkt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
När jag åtar mig något så gör jag det utan att kompromissa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hur väl stämmer följande påståenden in på dig?

	Instämmer inte alls							Instämmer helt		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jag älskar min sysselsättning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag utför min sysselsättning med passion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jag är passionerad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Crush_metrics

Start of Block: Demographics

Vilket kön identifierar du dig som?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Kvinna
- ☐ Annat

Hur gammal är du? (Vänligen svara endast med siffror, exempelvis: 29)

Var bor du?

☐ Stockholm, Malmö eller Göteborg

☐ Annat

End of Block: Demographics
