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**UNDERSTANDING CONSUMERS' BRAND EXPERIENCE CREATED WITH
CROSS-MEDIA MARKETING CAMPAIGNS WITHIN THE FIELD OF
FAST-MOVING CONSUMER GOODS**

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this qualitative study is to offer insights on consumers' brand experience in the field of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). The focus is on a FMCG brand's cross-media marketing campaign. In this study cross-media marketing campaigns are considered including offline and digital touchpoints which are under scrutiny. A nationally known Finnish FMCG brand was chosen for this research. Single embedded case study design was chosen as the research method. The study was conducted by interviewing a representative of the case company to provide valuable information on the brand's marketing campaigns, however, the main empirical data was gathered by interviewing nine consumers. The results suggest that brand experience is evident in the field of FMCG and it encompasses four dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral. However, the sensory dimension is dominating in this context. Also, the findings indicate that brand experience is mainly created with the marketing actions taken in offline touchpoints. This research provides both theoretical contributions to the existing literature, as well as managerial implications on critical things FMCG brands should pay attention to from the perspective of the consumer.

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Tämän kvalitatiivisen tutkielman tavoitteena on syventää ymmärrystä kuluttajan brändikokemuksesta päivittäistavarabrändistä. Tutkimuskohteena on päivittäistavarabrändin monimediallinen markkinointikampanja. Tässä tutkielmassa monimediallisen markkinointikampanjan katsotaan muodostuvan offline ja digitaalisista kohtaamispisteistä, joita tarkastustellaan brändikokemuksen näkökulmasta. Tarkastelukohteena on valtakunnallisesti tunnettu suomalainen päivittäistavarabrändi. Tutkimusmenetelmäksi valittiin yksittäistapaustutkimus, joka sisältää useita erilaisia osia. Tutkimus toteutettiin haastattelemalla ensin edustajaa case-yrityksestä, mikä antoi arvokasta tietoa brändin markkinointikampanjoista. Primaaridata kerättiin kuitenkin haastattelemalla yhdeksää kuluttajaa. Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että brändikokemus on todellinen ilmiö myös päivittäistavarakontekstissa ja se muodostuu neljästä dimensiosta: aisti-, tunne-, älykkyyss- ja käyttäytymisdimensioista. Tulosten mukaan aistikokemus on dominoivin tässä kontekstissa. Tämän lisäksi tulokset viittaavat siihen, että brändikokemus on suurimmalta osin saatu aikaiseksi erilaisilla markkinointitoimenpiteillä offline kohtaamispisteissä. Tämä tutkimus tarjoaa kontribuutiota sekä teoriaan että käytännölle erityisesti keskittyen niihin kriittisiin tekijöihin, joihin päivittäistavarabrändien tulisi kiinnittää huomiota kuluttajan näkökulmasta.

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WOW. It's over.

It's been quite an experience. Not only writing this thesis, but the five years spent at LUT overall. Without any hesitation can I say these past five years have been best ones so far. I've learned more than I could ever express and created friendships that will last forever.

The process of writing this thesis was everything else than easy. I faced some motivational challenges, as well as, difficulties in choosing the direction of the topic. Now, that I am close to the finish line, I have a rewarding feeling and can be proud of my accomplishment.

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Although I am facing an identity crisis of not being a student anymore, I am excited to see what future holds for me. I aim to keep the same open-minded attitude as I had when first entering LUT in 2011. I will always look back at the memories with the biggest smile, but I am ready to create some new, unforgettable experiences.

Right now, it's time to say goodbye to a wonderful era and hello to the unknown, exciting future.

Helsinki, 5.12.2016

Krista Keinonen

Table of contents

1	INTRODUCTION	8
1.1	Research questions and objectives of the study	10
1.2	Literature review	11
1.3	Theoretical framework	15
1.4	Key concepts and terms	17
1.5	Delimitations	18
1.6	Research methodology	19
1.7	Structure of the thesis	19
2	FROM EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING TO BRAND EXPERIENCE	21
2.1	Understanding experiences	21
2.2	Categorization of experiences	22
2.3	Experiential marketing	24
2.4	The strategic experiential modules.....	25
2.5	Consumer and customer experience.....	27
2.6	Brand experience.....	31
2.7	Brand Experience and its influence on other brand constructs	32
3	TOUCHPOINTS AND COMMUNICATIONS	35
3.1	Digital touchpoints	36
3.2	Elements of touchpoints	38
3.3	Brand-related clues.....	40
3.4	Marketing communications.....	41
3.5	Touchpoint design.....	43
4	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	46
4.1	Qualitative research.....	46

4.2	Embedded single case study design and unit of analysis	47
4.3	Data collection	49
4.3.1	Company interview	50
4.3.2	Consumer interviews	51
4.4	Data analysis	52
4.5	Reliability and validity	53
5	EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND FINDINGS: PROFEEL BRAND EXPERIENCE	55
5.1	Overview of PROfeel, marketing campaigns and consumers.....	55
5.2	Experience and brand experience.....	60
5.3	PROfeel marketing communications and consumer experiences	65
5.3.1	The message in PROfeel marketing communications	66
5.3.2	Experiencing PROfeel in different situations	67
5.4	Experiences of PROfeel on different touchpoints.....	70
5.4.1	Offline touchpoints	72
5.4.2	Digital touchpoints.....	76
5.5	Brand experience of PROfeel.....	82
6	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	88
6.1	Conclusions.....	88
6.2	Theoretical contributions	93
6.3	Managerial implications.....	96
6.4	Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.....	98
	REFERENCES	100
	APPENDICES	
	Appendix 1. The interview questions	
	Appendix 2. Company interview	

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The theoretical framework of the thesis

Figure 2. Layers of unit of analysis

Figure 3. PROfeel product families

Figure 4. PROfeel touchpoints

Figure 5. The four typologies of digital touchpoints. Adopted from Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015)

Figure 6. The process of touchpoints of a cross-media marketing campaign creating brand experience

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. The different depictions of elements of BE and CE

Table 2. The results of Cleff, Lin and Walters' (2014) research on the impact of brand experience on brand equity

Table 3. Description of interviewees

Table 4. Elements of experience identified by interviewees

Table 5. Situations in which experiences with PROfeel have occurred

Table 6. Summary of the interviewees' encounters in different touchpoints

Table 7. The brand experience dimensions stressed the most by interviewees

Table 8. Brand experience dimensions and touchpoints of PROfeel

Table 9. Elements of the touchpoints

1 INTRODUCTION

Customers always have experiences when purchasing products or services. These experiences can be good, bad, or indifferent. (Berry & Carbone 2007) Companies have come to realize the importance of shifting the focus from traditional marketing means to delivering experiences to customers (Berry, Carbone & Haeckel 2002; Pine and Gilmore 1998; Shaw and Ivens 2005 in Gentile, Noci & Spiller 2007). Schmitt (2011, p.56) supports this view as well as stating that experience marketing is important for differentiating offerings and it has become critical for all companies regardless of the industry.

Shaw and Ivens (2005 in Gentile et al. 2007) state that the traditional ways of differentiation, such as the price or quality of a product or service are not sustainable ways to compete with in the long run. In addition, products and services are rather easy to imitate. In order to tackle this challenge and developing a sustainable differentiator, a new source of competitive advantage is seen in the concept of customer experience. Pine and Gilmore (1998) argue that creating distinctive customer experiences can provide enormous economic value for firms.

Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) mention that the increase of online review websites, social networks, and mobile web access have enabled customers to access information on products, services, competitors, and pricing. Also, Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) state that due to the ever increasing number of digital touchpoints customers have the chance to engage and share their own experiences via social networks. Thus, customers have become more demanding and have a lot of power. The number of alternatives that consumers have today is greater than ever before, and also there are more channels - or touchpoints as referred to in this study - through which to pursue them (Edelman 2010; Meyer & Schwager 2007). On top of this, as Edelman (2010) note, the nature of the touchpoints have changed which again has had an effect on when to influence consumers and at which touchpoints. Furthermore, Keller (2009) mention that consumers are in control as they make the final decision on what media they choose to use. Therefore, the importance of touchpoint planning has increased (Jenkinson 2007).

Several authors note that customer experience is regarded significant amongst practitioners; however, the academic marketing literature on customer experience is still in its infancy (Homburg, Jozić & Kuehnl 2015; Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros & Schlesinger 2009). Many of the publications approach the topic with a managerial focus or are conceptual in nature (e.g. Berry, Carbone & Haeckel 2002, Homburg et al. 2015; Meyer & Schwager 2007; Schmitt 2011). However, in the past couple of years there has also been scientific studies published on customer experience or related topics, such as brand experience, most of which are quantitative (e.g. Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello 2009; Gentile et al. 2007; Verhoef et al. 2009). Khan and Rahman (2015a) published a review article of brand experience in which it is mentioned that brand experience is lacking of qualitative studies as most of the studies are quantitative. Furthermore, they continue that in order to obtain more in-depth understanding on the phenomenon, qualitative research is needed.

Gentile et al. (2007) mention that the scientific literature on customer experience lacks precise terminology and structured, standardized approaches to the subject. Even though customer experience as a concept is appealing and offers a lot of potential, many companies have not been able to adopt the concept (Gentile et al. 2007). Gentile et al. (2007) suggest there are a couple of reasons why this is happening: first of all, there is a lack of models, interpretation and conceptualization offering a common terminology and a shared mindset in the existing literature. Second of all, there are only few structured managerial approaches (Gentile et al. 2007).

Grewal, Levy and Kumar (2009) mention that understanding and enhancing the customer experience is a priority of most marketing and chief executives' agendas, in the field of both fast-moving consumer goods and retailing. Furthermore, it is stated that these areas remains critical for academic research.

Brakus et al. (2009) state that experiences occur in different kinds of settings. The authors summarize that for the most part experiences occur directly when consumers shop, purchase, and consume products, but they also suggest that experiences can occur indirectly. For instance, consumers being exposed to advertising and marketing communications would be considered as indirect experiences. Brand experience is not only the interest of fields, such as retailing, but

also fast-moving consumer goods. For example, stated by Pepsi “consumers are not interested in individual products, rather in the experiences around those products” (Cooper 2016).

1.1 Research questions and objectives of the study

In the past decade, customer experience has been the interest of many researchers. There are several contributions found in the academic marketing literature on this emerging topic. However, as Gentile et al. (2007) note customer experience (CE), and moreover customer experience management (CEM) lacks standardized foundations and models. Furthermore, the customer experience models that exist are mainly developed in the context of experience-centric fields (e.g. Zomerdijk & Voss 2008). Noted by several authors, experiences, occur within all industries (see e.g. Gentile et al. 2007; Schmitt 2011). Therefore, the author of this study will focus on researching experience on a field typically considered as non-experience-centric, the field of fast-moving consumer goods, hereafter referred as FMCG.

It is the interest of the researcher of this study to understand consumers’ brand experience created with cross-media marketing campaigns within the field of FMCG. The touchpoints are ever increasing, and therefore it is intriguing to examine the touchpoints chosen for a brand’s marketing campaign, and how the messages through those are conveyed by consumers which have led to different kinds of brand experiences.

Marketing activities of FMCG brands rarely include direct consumer contact and customer service situations, and thus brand experience is studied by examining how the marketing campaigns revolving around a FMCG brand form the brand experience. In order to plan and implement successful marketing campaigns, it should be the interest of a company’s management to understand consumers’ brand experience, and moreover the marketing campaigns built to create those experiences.

The objective of this research is to add to the existing knowledge on brand experience literature in the context of FMCG and focus on touchpoints included in the marketing campaigns. The managerial purpose of this study is to provide useful information for FMCG brands on consumers’ brand experience. In addition, this study will provide insight on touchpoint planning in a cross-media marketing campaign of a FMCG brand.

To the knowledge of the researcher, no previous study has solely focused on making connections on cross-media marketing campaigns and brand experience in the field of FMCG. Therefore, the main research question is:

How do consumers experience a FMCG brand’s cross-media marketing campaign?

The main research question is rather broad as the nature of the studied phenomenon, brand experience, is. In order to clarify the main objectives of the research and tackling the vagueness of this subject, the main research question is further divided into three sub-research questions. The aim of these sub-questions is to give specificity to the main research question, as well as support it. The sub-questions are following:

What kinds of experiences do FMCG brand’s cross-media marketing campaigns create?

How do consumers experience FMCG brand’s cross-media marketing campaigns in offline touchpoints?

How do consumers experience a FMCG brand’ cross-media marketing campaigns in digital touchpoints?

Together these sub-questions and the main research question will form an in-depth comprehension of consumers’ brand experience created with a cross-media marketing campaign in the field of FMCG.

The research was conducted in three phases: first, an extensive literature review of experience marketing, and specifically brand experience, touchpoints, as well as marketing communications was performed. Secondly, an interview was conducted with a representative of a leading FMCG –company in Finland to provide some insight on marketing campaigns, the touchpoints included in those and the objectives of the company. Thirdly, nine consumer interviews were conducted which provided answers to the research questions.

1.2 Literature review

In this sub-chapter an overview of the academic research on experience marketing, brand experience, touchpoints, and marketing communication is presented. There is not one research

that combines all these three topics, so therefore at this stage these subjects have to be scrutinized as individual entities to a certain degree. The aim is to provide an understanding on what has been studied of these topics in the past and what are the suggestions for future research. Also, the recognition of research lacking to combine these three subjects is seen as a research gap. Therefore, the literature review will support the identified void.

Experiential consumption was first theorized by Holbrook and Hirschmann in 1982. However, Pine and Gilmore (1998) elaborated on “staging experiences” and introduced the four realms of experiences. At that same time, Schmitt (1999) introduced the framework of the five strategic experiential modules and introduced the experiential marketing paradigm. The customer experience components and brand experience dimensions of Gentile et al. (2007) and Brakus et al. (2009), respectively, are derived from Schmitt’s (1999) framework.

The research on both customer experience (Verhoef et al. 2009) and brand experience (Brakus et al. 2009) is still nascent, but is considered important in marketing literature. The studies of Frow and Payne (2007); Gentile et al. (2007); Grewal et al. (2009); Homburg et al. (2015) and Verhoef et al. (2009) have an emphasis on customer experience. Brakus et al. (2009); Cleff, Lin and Walters (2014); Huang, Lee, Kim and Evans (2015); Iglesias, Singh and Batista-foguet (2011); Ishida and Taylor (2012); Khan and Rahman (2015ab); Roswinanto and Strutton (2014); Zarantonello and Schmitt (2010) focus on brand experience. All of these above mentioned studies are conducted in various contexts. Khan and Rahman (2015a) performed a review article on brand experience, and suggest there are still much to research on brand experience.

The conceptual paper of Homburg et al. (2015) attempts to understand CEM as a marketing concept as a whole. Frow and Payne (2007) concentrate on examining customer experience with the aim of understanding what constitutes an outstanding or perfect customer experience. They provide a list of things organizations should focus on if having the desire of delivering a perfect experience.

Verhoef et al. (2009) discuss the customer experience construct in the context of retail and the research builds a conceptual model of antecedents to and moderators of customer experience, as well as examines the need for customer experience management strategies to take these

elements into account. Furthermore, the study explores five specific aspects of the conceptual model of customer experience creation. These are social environment, service interface, retail brand, customer experience dynamics, and customer experience management strategies (Verhoef et al. 2009). Grewal et al. (2009) concentrate on researching the macro factors in retail environment (promotion, price, merchandise, supply chain and location) and how they can influence customer experiences).

Brakus et al. (2009) introduce the term brand experience and present the brand experience scale. The brand experience scale was further utilized by Ishida and Taylor (2012); Iglesias et al. (2011); Nysveen, Pedersen and Skard (2013); Zarantonello and Schmitt (2010). The study of Zarantonello & Schmitt (2010) aims at profiling consumers in different typologies based on what kinds of experiential aspects they prefer. Also, the dimensions of brand experience identified by Brakus et al. (2009) are examined in the study of Ishida and Taylor (2012) and Iglesias et al. (2011). Iglesias et al. (2011) verify dimensions for different kinds of products, such as cars and sneakers, and explained their impact on brand loyalty through affective commitment. Then again, Ishida and Taylor (2012) verify three of the four dimensions; sensory, behavioral and affective. They also suggest exploration of additional experiential attributes from retailing literature. Ishida and Taylor (2012) focus on retailing context, which is also the context of the research of Khan and Rahman (2015b). Khan and Rahman (2015b) attempt in explaining the anatomy of brand experience, but do not approach the phenomenon with dimensions (Brakus et al. 2009), rather by modeling the interrelationships among retail brand variables. Numerous variables are identified, including brand name; packaging; customer billing, order, and applications forms; mass media; point-of-sales; recommendation by a salesperson; event marketing, storytelling; customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Nysven et al. (2013) take a different standpoint on brand experience, as they test the brand experience scale with focusing on services and suggest adding another dimension, relational experience.

Brand experience is related to many other brand constructs, such as brand loyalty, brand equity and brand resonance and its impact on the different brand constructs have been studied by several authors (see Brakus et al. 2009; Cleff, Lin & Walters 2014; Huang et al. 2015; Iglesias et al. (2011). The study of Cleff, Lin and Walters (2014) analyzes the effect of the strategic

experiential modules (Schmitt 1999) on brand equity which is further broken into brand awareness (recall and recognition) and brand image (attributes, benefits and attitudes). Huang et al. (2015) research the influence of brand experience on brand resonance.

The study of Roswinanto and Strutton (2014) also utilizes brand experience construct. They revealed four important, brand controlled antecedents to favorable brand experience. These are attitude towards the brand name, connectedness to celebrity endorser, visual imaging, and message fit which are regarded as marketer-controlled antecedents.

It is stated that customer touchpoints create customer experience (see Homburg et al. 2015; Meyer and Schwager 2007). Also, Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) contribute to the customer experience literature by identifying, categorizing and defining the distinct elements that occur during customer experiences at different touchpoints. Baxendale et al. (2015) researched the impact of different touchpoints. The researchers found that find that in-store communications are most influential, followed by peer observation and brand advertising.

The study of Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) has the objective of understanding better the design of digital channels. They create four typologies of digital touchpoints and research how these are used by companies across different industries. Jenkinson (2007) on the other hand has the objective of further improve the touchpoint planning of companies by providing CODAR model.

Keller (2009, 2010) discuss marketing communications impact on brand building and, moreover, view interactive marketing communications important. Keller (2009; 2010) justified the importance of marketing communication on brand building. The study of Roswinanto and Strutton (2014) demonstrate that brand experience can be influenced by intentional manipulation of strategic advertising efforts. In addition, the researchers suggest that improvement of brand experiences has a positive impact on consumers' attitudes toward the brand while simultaneously increasing the distinctiveness of that brand.

The subjects of brand experience, touchpoints, and marketing communications have been studied separately quite extensively. Also, some research have combined some of these, but not all of these, especially focusing solely on the context of FMCG. Hence, there is a research gap

on the how consumers experience brands' marketing campaigns, and especially those of fast-moving consumer goods.

1.3 Theoretical framework

Figure 1 is the theoretical framework of this study. It is an illustration of the key concepts focused on. The aim of the framework is to express the theory behind this topic in an easy and understandable way. As figure 1 illustrates, the main focus is on brand experience in the perspective of a consumer, to be specific. Brand experience is the focal phenomenon of this research. It is also the result of actions taken in different touchpoints that comprise the cross-media marketing campaign. Brand experience is the combination four dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral. The brand experience dimensions are adopted from Brakus et al. (2009) framework. The dimensions of brand experience impact one another, and furthermore brand experience should be viewed holistically, rather being formed of four individual dimensions. Hence, the dimensions overlap each other.

In this study the objective is to specifically focus on brand experience of a FMCG brand. That being said, FMCG is the context of this research. In order to analyze brand experience of FMCG brand, something concrete that create the experience for a consumer had to be concentrated on. Therefore, in this study marketing campaigns are seen as the vehicle in creating the brand experience to consumers.

A marketing campaign is viewed to include all the touchpoints, direct and indirect ones, which a company strives to have interaction with a consumer. These can be further categorized into offline and digital touchpoints which include numerous of touchpoints, or marketing channels as they often are referred to in marketing communications literature. Touchpoints are categorized for a reason; offline touchpoints are often considered as traditional means of communication, whereas most of the digital touchpoints are perceived as "new media". The nature of offline and digital touchpoints differ to that extent that it is logical to make a distinction between these two. Despite the differences, these two have to be aligned and have a connection in order to create a coherent experience. The message that is presented in offline touchpoints, must be aligned with the one presented in online touchpoints even though the means of doing that may be different.

The marketing actions taken in different touchpoints are perceived in various ways depending on the consumer. Consumers are individuals and therefore different things resonate with them. One marketing action may evoke strong feelings in one consumer whereas the other consumer won't even be aware of that action. Different touchpoints have different strengths and weaknesses, and therefore they may have an impact on one or more dimensions of brand experience. And again, it depends on the consumer how responsive he or she is, and what is regarded important or interesting.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to build a comprehensive understanding on how consumers' experience a FMCG brand's marketing campaign.

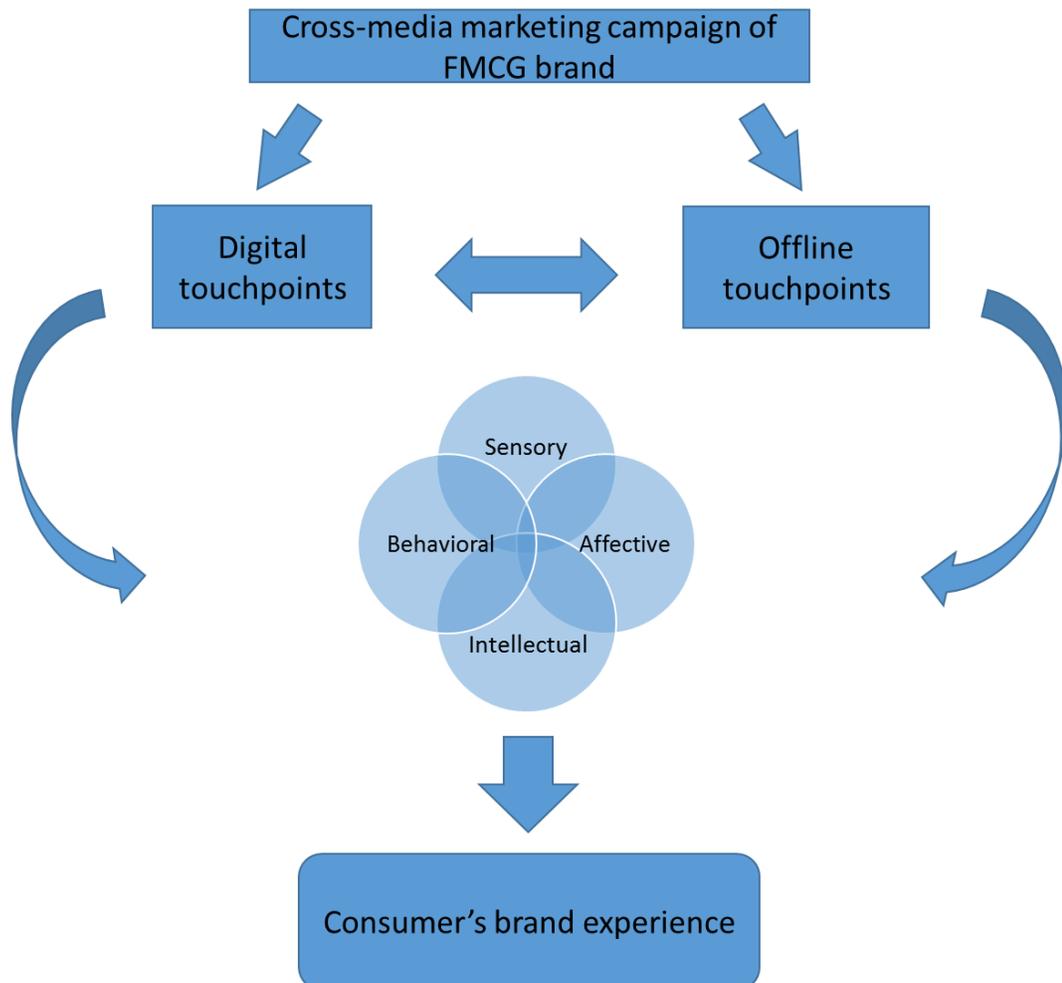


Figure 1. The theoretical framework of this study

1.4 Key concepts and terms

The key concepts and terms are briefly defined in this sub-chapter. This will help the reader to keep up with the study. Key concepts will be discussed more in-depth in the upcoming chapters.

Experience: An experience is an integration of perceptions, feelings and thoughts that consumers have as interacting with products and brands, as well as take part in consumption activities. Also, the memory of the experience is part of it. (Schmitt 2011)

Brand experience: “A subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) as well as behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications and environments.” (Brakus et al. 2009)

Touchpoint: All interaction between the any part of a firm and customer; planned or unplanned; direct or indirect (Meyer & Schwager 2007)

Offline touchpoint: Traditional ways of communication, or interacting with consumer. Mass media, such as television and print advertising include in this category. Also, customer service encounters are considered as offline touchpoints.

Digital touchpoint: The 34 digital touchpoints identified by Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) including website, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and mobile applications. These digital touchpoints are specifically focused on this study.

Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG): Frequently purchased essential or non-essential goods such as food, toiletries, soft drinks, disposable diapers (Business dictionary 2016).

Cross-media: Cross-media is a strategy used by brands for marketing purposes by using various types of media. Different media types can be used individually or as a combination of several mediums to create a cohesive marketing campaign (Small Business 2012)

Marketing campaign: A marketing campaign consist of specific activities designed to promote a product, service or business. A marketing campaign is a system of planned steps that may include promotion of a product through different mediums (television, radio, print, online) using

different kinds of advertisements. The campaign doesn't have to strictly depend on advertising, as it can also include demonstrations, word of mouth and other interactive techniques. (Investopedia 2016)

Marketing communications: Marketing communications include variety of means attempting to inform, persuade, and remind consumers, directly and indirectly consumers of brands and products. (Kotler 1999; Keller 2009)

1.5 Delimitations

The delimitations of the study are discussed in this sub-chapter. Nine interviews were conducted for this study which as the intention was to gather data from consumer at a deeper level. Therefore, this study is limited on the insights of nine consumers. The research being a qualitative one, causalities or correlations are not studied. The purpose is to get insight on consumers' brand experience on a deeper level and understand the nature of the experiences, rather than examining e.g. what action has an impact on a certain brand experience dimension. However, some pondering around the previous example is made, but it is not the objective or focus of this study.

The study is delimited on a specific context, which is FMCG. In addition, it much be kept in mind that FMCG brands include products from toilet paper to beverages which makes the industry very broad. In other words, the chosen brand examined closer in this study represents only specific products, and similar marketing actions taken may not be appropriate for another FMCG brand that have different kinds of products.

The touchpoints included in this study is limited on the basis what were relevant for the selected brand, and regarded important according to the representative of the FMCG company interviewed. Another delimitation is that the study is geographically limited to one country, Finland. Culture may have an impact on how consumers experience brands.

Many brand experience studies have studied its impact on other brands constructs, such as brand loyalty or brand equity. This is left out from this study.

1.6 Research methodology

The aim of this study is to provide insight on consumers' brand experience and understand the phenomenon in the field of FMCG. Prior to this research brand experience literature only few studies have focused on FMCG brands. Qualitative methods were chosen for this study as Khan & Rahman (2015a) stated in their future research suggestions that qualitative research methods should be used to generate in-depth and contextual understanding on brand experience. The method chosen for this study is an embedded single case study design (Yin 2003). The objective is to provide valuable insights of the phenomenon by interviewing consumers. Also a company interview was conducted to have a firm perspective as well. The research methodology will be explained more thoroughly in chapter 4.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organized in two main sections; theoretical and empirical sections. The theoretical section is formed of chapters two and three, and the empirical section includes chapters four and five. In the final chapter (6), conclusions are given.

The first chapter begins with giving the reader an introduction of the topic and justification of the topic is provided, too. Thereafter, a literature review is presented to give the reader an overview on what has been studied of the topic in the past. Also, the research gap is identified. Next, the main research question and the supporting sub-questions are defined. The theoretical framework is presented, as well as the main key concepts and terms. The chapter ends with covering the delimitations of the study.

Chapters two and three presents the theoretical part of this study. Chapter two focus on discussing the phenomenon of experience thoroughly. After that, the elements of experience are presented. This will be continued by introducing the concept customer experience which is followed by brand experience. The third chapter revolves around touchpoints, the elements of touchpoints, as well as, brand-related stimuli. Also, marketing communications is briefly discussed. Lastly in this chapter the design of touchpoints is presented.

The fourth chapter presents the research methodology and explains in detail how the study has been conducted. The chapter begins with a short insight to qualitative methods after which the data gathering and analysis of this study are examined meticulously.

The fifth chapter discusses the results of the qualitative research. The findings are analyzed by attempting to identify connections between the topics covered in the theoretical part. Finally, chapter six concludes the thesis. First, conclusions are given, thereafter theoretical contributions as well as managerial implications are presented. The chapter ends by identifying the limitations of the study and suggesting future research directions.

2 FROM EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING TO BRAND EXPERIENCE

This chapter is divided into seven sub-chapters, beginning with the concept of experience and experiential marketing and step-by-step going in more in-depth in brand experience. The idea is to build a solid theoretical foundation on the closely related topic before introducing brand experience. The reason for giving the foundation such a great emphasis is because brand experience is based on experiential marketing. So, in order to create a coherent comprehension of brand experience, the ideology behind that must be understood.

In the first sub-chapter the beginnings of the academic research on experience is presented and the concept of *experience* is described. Next, the categorizations of experience are discussed in order to help the reader to understand the vague and broad nature of experience. After that, *experiential marketing* and the strategic framework of strategic experiential modules are introduced. This is could be seen the core of brand experience as that specific framework is the single most important to brand experience, and therefore it is given more attention. Next, the focus will shift to *customer experience*, and finally the focal theoretical concept is examined in-depth, that is *brand experience*. Also, brand experience effect on other brand constructs is discussed in order to justify the importance of the phenomenon.

2.1 Understanding experiences

Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) began the academic research stream on experience and experiential marketing. Their revolutionary paper titled as “The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun” was the first one to conceptualize experiential consumption. The authors recognized the importance of the experiential aspects of consumption and criticized the traditional information-processing perspective for not considering the experiential nature of consumer behavior to be important. Overall, Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) attempted to make a statement that experiential consumption includes fantasies, feelings, and fun which the information-processing perspective did not take into account.

Bernd Schmitt, who has been regarded as the pioneer of experiential marketing define experience as follows: “perceptions, feelings, and thoughts that consumers have when they encounter products and brands in the marketplace and engage in consumption activities — as

well as the memory of such experiences”. (Schmitt 2011, p.60) Although the definition is simple, it still is rather broad. This could be explained by the fact that concept of experience is not as well-established as some other marketing concepts, for example consumer choice, attitudes, satisfaction, or brand equity (Schmitt & Zarantonello 2013).

Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) published a review paper on experience in which it is summarized that experiences may occur either online or offline. According to the authors, an example of the first would be online shopping and of the latter shopping in retail stores. It is mentioned by them that studies on offline experiences are in the most cases connected with retailing literature. They further state that these studies focus on consumers’ experience in different kinds of shopping environments, e.g. stores, boutiques, supermarkets, or megamarkets. These studies research for example various environmental elements such as music, lighting and scents impact on consumer perception, attitudes, and behavior in the store (Schmitt & Zarantonello 2013). Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) describe that online experiences, on the other hand, have become the center of focus in today’s digital world. In today’s digital world there are numerous of digital channels which marketers can also influence consumers’ experiences. Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) point out that new media is creating consumer experiences before and after the purchase. In addition, the authors suggest that having an understanding of online experiences and the interactions with, as well as the consumption of these touchpoints is vital.

2.2 Categorization of experiences

There exists not only one type of experience, but infinite amount of different kinds of experiences as the given definition of experience by Schmitt implies. Depending on the object of the experience, the meaning of it may slightly vary. In this sub-chapter, the aim is to present a few categorizations of experience. These examples are not exhaustive, rather they represent the endless possibilities for categorizing experiences. The following categorizations were chosen because earlier experiential marketing studies have acknowledged these and therefore seen appropriate for this study.

Consumer and marketing research has shown that experiences occur when consumers search for products, when they shop for them, when they receive service, and when they consume them

(Brakus et al. 2009). In other words, experiences can be categorized into *product experience* (Hoch 2002), *shopping and service experience* (Grace and O’Cass 2004), and *consumption experience* (Holbrook and Hirschmann 1982).

Brakus et al. (2009) conceptualization of brand experience is derived from Pine & Gilmore’s (1998) “four realms of an experience” and Schmitt’s (1999) “strategic experiential modules”, which are fundamental in order to understand brand experience. The first one of these is presented next.

Experiences can be broadly categorized on four realms depending on where they would fall along a spectra of two dimensions. The first dimension has the focus on customer participation. On one end of the spectrum lies passive participation and on the other end lies active participation. This dimension describes the degree of how much the customer takes part in creating the performance or event that yields the experience. The second dimension is called connection spectrum, on which one end is absorption, and on the other end is immersion. The connection dimension describes the connection that unites customers with the event or performance. The four realms are entertainment, education, escapist and esthetic. (Pine and Gilmore 1998)

According to this categorization, customers tend to participate passively in *entertainment* type of experiences, such as watching television, and their connection to that specific event is more absorptive than immersive. *Educational* experiences tend to involve customers actively, for example attending a ski lesson. *Escapist* experiences can be educational or entertaining but these type of experiences have greater customer immersion than entertainment or educational experiences and require active customer participation. An example of acting in a play is given for an escapist experience. The fourth and final type of experience are *esthetic* experiences which are immersive but customers don’t actively participate in the experience. For example, an esthetic experience would be a visit to art gallery. It is explained that the richest experiences include aspects of all of these four above mentioned realms, and form a “sweet spot”. (Pine & Gilmore 1998)

2.3 Experiential marketing

Recently, consumer experiences have become the interest of academics, as well as, marketing practitioners. There is a consensus that understanding how consumers experience products and brands is crucial information for companies in order to successfully position and differentiate their offerings in the competitive environment (Schmitt & Zarantonello 2013). This has been the starting point for a new area marketing management – experiential marketing, also referred to as experience marketing (Schmitt 1999). These terms will be used interchangeably in this study.

Pine & Gilmore's (1998) view of “experiences” as the new economic offering led to the creation of the concept of experience marketing. According to Pine and Gilmore (1998) the stage of experiences is the next step after commodities, goods, and services in what they call the progression of economic value. Schmitt (1999) has explored how companies create experiential marketing by having customers sense, feel, think, act and relate to a company and its brands. Experience marketing can be defined in a broad or narrow manner. According to Schmitt (2011, p.63) the broad definition views that experiences may be evoked by products, packaging, communications, in-store interactions, sales relationships, and such. Schmitt (2011, p.63) continue, that these may occur in both online and offline activities. The concept of experience can also be viewed narrowly and applied only to interactions, relationships, or event contexts. In this case, the following definition of Lasalle and Britton (2002, p.30 in Schmitt 2011, p. 63) is suitable: “an interaction, or series of interactions, between a customer and a product, a company or its representative that lead to a reaction.”

One of the basic premise of experiential marketing is the idea of value does not only come from the products or services purchased and their utilitarian and functional benefits, but also from the hedonic and experiential elements surrounding the products (or services), and in the experience of the consumption, too (Schmitt & Zarantonello 2013).

Experiential marketing is an alternative approach to traditional marketing. It contrasts traditional marketing which views consumers as rational decision makers who make decisions based on functional features and benefits. Then again, experiential marketers view consumers not only as

rational and analytical human beings, but also takes in account the emotional side that includes the importance of having pleasurable experiences. (Schmitt 1999)

2.4 The strategic experiential modules

Brakus et al. (2009) model is based mainly on “the four reals of experience” (Pine & Gilmore 1998) and “strategic experiential modules” (Schmitt 1999); first of which was explained in sub-chapter 2.2 and the latter one is presented here. It will be examined later how the different models overlap each other. The modules will be introduced by describing them individually by following the framework of Schmitt (1999).

According to Schmitt (1999) mentions that experiences provide sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational values which replace functional values. That being said, the framework introduces marketing strategies in which emotions and experiences play a significant role. In Schmitt’s (1999) framework five different types of experiences, or in other words, *strategic experiential modules (SEMs)*, are distinguished. The modules are the following: sense, feel, think, act, and relate. Schmitt (1999) mentions that these experiences are implemented through experience providers (ExPros), such as communications, visual and verbal identity, people, and electronic media, to name a few. Even though a distinction of the five different experiences is made and they are presented individually, the ultimate goal of experiential marketing is to create a holistic experience that integrates the individual experiences (Schmitt 1999).

The first of the five modules is **sense**. Marketers can create experiences through appealing to the five human senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. (Schmitt 1999) According to Schmitt (1999) there are several reasons for a company to use sensory strategies, for example, they can be used to differentiate products, to motivate customers and to add value to products through aesthetics or excitement. Sensory stimulations are not limited to “offline” contexts as sensory clues are widely used in online advertising as well (Huang et al. 2015). Sensory marketing has received more attention in the past years, for instance Hulten (2011) has researched sensory-marketing thoroughly and its importance to brand experience.

Feel is the second module. The goal of feel marketing is to appeal to customers' inner feelings and emotions. Affective experiences can vary from mildly positive moods linked to a brand, for example a nondurable grocery brand to strong emotions, for example a social marketing campaign. (Schmitt 1999) Related to feel marketing Berry & Carbone (2007) emphasize the importance of establishing strong emotional bonds with customers. They further state that emotional connectivity with customers decommunitizes a business, elevates a brand beyond price and features to a higher level of meaning and commitment for customers. For companies be able to emotionally bond with customers, it requires a cohesive, authentic, and sensory-stimulating holistic customers experience (Berry & Carbone 2007). Again, it cannot be stressed enough that the modules should be viewed integrated and as a whole.

Schmitt (1999) mentions that in order for feel marketing to be successful two critical points have to be focused on. First of all, it is crucial to understand what stimuli can trigger certain emotions. Second of all, the willingness of the consumer to engage in perspective taking, and also empathy has to be taken into account. Schmitt (1999) further states that this is tough for standard emotional advertising as the above mentioned points are missing. Firstly, emotional advertising does not target feelings during consumption and secondly, it is a challenging task to create international campaigns as cultural differences have an influence on customers willingness to empathize.

Think module is the third one introduced. Think marketing aims at influencing by intellectual ways to the cognitive aspects of consumers. In other words, experiences that would be described as problem-solving experiences that require consumers to engage in creatively. The means of appealing to the target customers are through surprise, intrigue, and provocation as the objective is to stimulate their convergent and divergent thinking. Marketing campaigns highlighting this module are typical new technology products, however, it is not only limited to that context. (Schmitt 1999)

The fourth module is called **act** module which has the objective of showing the customer alternative ways of doing things, giving options for lifestyles and interactions. Act marketing targets foremost customers' physical experiences. The objective of inspiring and motivating customers to make a change in their lifestyle, influencing the behavior. This is often done by

using role models, such as movie stars or athletes in marketing campaigns. The example of Nike's "Just do it" campaign of act marketing is given. (Schmitt 1999)

The final type of experience that marketers can create revolves around the concept of social-identity that stems from relating to a reference group or culture. Therefore, the fifth module is called **relate** and it includes aspects of the other four modules. However, the four other modules are rather personal in nature, whereas this module takes one step further as it goes beyond individual's personal feelings. The core idea is that individual relate to something outside of one's personal state. The campaigns that emphasize relate marketing aim at bringing customers to the state of awareness to realizing rooms for improvement in themselves. This means inspiring individuals to recognize spots for self-improvement in the future. This is linked to people's core need to be views positively by other. (Schmitt 1999)

Schmitt (1999) emphasizes that although experiential modules can be classified as separate entities, rarely is an experience strictly one of the five modules per se. In fact, the modules are connected with one another and interact. Schmitt (1999) notes that many successful companies integrate two or more SEMs into an experience that is intended to create. Strategically, the most ideal situation would be that marketers would include all the five elements into one and create a holistic experience (Schmitt 1999).

Schmitt (1999) points out that a company striving to perform experiential marketing has to take the connection among the five experiences into account. Experiences should not be perceived as five different one and planned separately, rather the objective should be in creating a powerful experience with qualities of all these modules (Schmitt 1999).

2.5 Consumer and customer experience

The definition of customer experience and the elements of it are presented in this sub-chapter. Customer experience in an important concept, and as it will be seen, a similar concept to brand experience. The terms are related and stem from the same concept; experiential marketing which was presented in the previous sub-chapter.

The term customer experience is defined by several authors (e.g. Gentile et al. 2007; Meyer & Schwager 2007; Verhoef et al. 2009) before brand experience was given an actual definition by

Brakus et al. in 2009. The many definitions of customer experience are complementary, or add to the previous ones. The definition of Gentile et al. (2007) is a combination of LaSalle and Britton's (2003 in Gentile et al. 2007), Shaw and Iven's (2005 in Gentile et al. 2007) and Schmitt's (1999) definitions. They constructed the following definition: "The Customer Experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction (LaSalle & Britton 2003; Shaw and Ivens 2005 in Gentile et al. 2007). This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial, physical and spiritual) (LaSalle & Britton 2003 in Gentile et al. 2007; Schmitt 1999). Its evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer's expectations and the stimuli coming from the interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touchpoints (LaSalle & Britton 2003; Shaw & Ivens 2005 in Gentile et al. 2007)".

Meyer and Schwager (2007, p.118) align with this definition as they state that customer experience is the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company. Verhoef et al. (2009, p.32) agree with the above definitions, and also add that customer experience construct is holistic in nature and encompasses the total experience including the search, purchase, consumption, and after-sales phases of the experience and may involve in multiple retail channels. Also, the authors mention that customer experience influenced by firm-controlled elements, such as advertising, but also by aspects that cannot be controlled by the firm, such as the customer's purpose of shopping.

An interesting notion of the terms consumer experience and customer experience was raised by Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) as they reviewed brand experience, and related concepts such as customer experience. In many studies the terms are used interchangeably, however, according to Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) there is a slight difference in these two terms. Although their core meaning is the same, they look experience from a different perspective. Consumer experience focus on how consumers sense, perceive, and evaluate marketing activities, whereas customer experience has more of a firm-perspective, meaning that the focus is on how a company can create experiences to customer using different techniques and tools (Carbone & Haeckel 1994; Schmitt & Zarantonello 2013). All in all, an assumption can be made that to

create a customer experience it is vital to understand consumer experience and vice versa. This being said, it is not surprising that these two terms are both used referring to the same thing.

The literature on customer experience and brand experience, distinguish elements, or dimensions that create the experience (Brakus et al. 2009; Gentile et al. 2007; Schmitt 1999). Brakus et al. (2009) presents that four brand experience dimensions which are evoked differentially by various brands. Table 1 presents the different models that depict either experience, customer experience, or brand experience are found in the literature (Brakus et al. 2009; Gentile et al. 2007; Pine & Gilmore 1998; Schmitt 1999). “Four realms of experience” was included in the table because Brakus et al. (2009) state that three of the brand experience overlap with those defined by Pine and Gilmore (1998).

The models have very similar modules, components, or dimensions, as the authors like to call them. However, differences can be found in the amount of the dimensions, as well as in the contents of the dimensions. The four dimensions identified by Brakus et al. (2009) can be found in all of the conceptualizations.

Table 1. The different depictions of elements of BE and CE

BE dimensions (Brakus et al. 2009)	SEMs (Schmitt 1999)	Components of CE (Gentile et al. 2007)	Four realms of experience (Pine & Gilmore 1998)
sensory	sense	sensorial	Esthetic
intellectual	think	cognitive	Educational
affective	feel	emotional	entertainment
behavioral	act	pragmatic lifestyle sensorial	
(social)	relate	relational	
			escapist

Schmitt’s (1999) sense module is found in also Gentile et al.’s (2007) conceptualization of customer experience, as well as in the brand experience scale developed by Brakus et al. (2009). However, in the customer experience model the physical elements of values are also included in this component. Similarly, the feel module is referred to as an emotional component in the model of Gentile et al. (2007) and as an affective dimension in the depiction of Brakus et al.

(2009). The think module is called the cognitive component in the customer experience model and intellectual dimension in the brand experience scale.

Schmitt's (1999) act module is viewed slightly differently by Gentile et al. (2007) as it recognized that the act module is an aggregation of several components. In other words, the act module is divided further into sensorial, lifestyle, and pragmatic components according to Gentile et al. (2007). Pragmatic component as its own is not identified by the other authors that have similar models. This component includes the concept of usability that does not only refer to the use of the product in the post-purchase stage, but throughout the product's life-cycle (Gentile et al. 2007). According to Gentile et al. (2007) lifestyle component contains a person's values and beliefs adopting of a lifestyle and behaviors. Gentile et al. (2007) mention that an offering may provide such experience because the product itself and its use can be perceived as an embodiment of certain values the company. Brakus et al. (2009) call this module in their dimension model the behavioral dimension.

Relational component can also be found in Gentile et al.'s (2009) conceptualization of customer experience. However, they add to Schmitt's (1999) description that the relational component of a product can be a way of stating social identity that includes the sense of belonging or of distinction from a social group. In this type of a case the link with the lifestyle component which was earlier mentioned is quite relevant. Initially, Brakus et al. (2009) brand experience scale included a fifth dimension, which they referred as the social dimension. However, after testing the brand experience scale, the social dimension was eliminated and therefore it is put in parentheses in Table 1.

The results of Gentile et al. (2009) suggest for brands such as Pringles and Gatorade, the sensorial component was the most significant. Also, Gentile et al. (2009) align with the view on experiences holistic, as the findings show that more than one component emerged as important components for many brands. They analyzed that the reason for this was because a specific combination of components depended on the characteristics of the product itself. According to Gentile et al. (2009) the components are not activated independently, but there exists overlapping and interrelations across the components.

2.6 Brand experience

Studies on brand experience concept were initiated by Ortmeyer and Huber (1991 in Khan & Rahman 2015a), but it was first defined and measured by Brakus et al. in 2009. Before 2009, studies on brand experience were few, but by 2005 researchers had started explaining the brand experience concept (Chattopadhyay & Laborie 2005 in Khan & Rahman 2015a). According to Brakus et al. (2009) brand experiences occur when consumers look for, purchase, and consume brands. The definition of brand experience is: “a subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) as well as behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications and environments” (Brakus et al. 2009).

The concept of experience is without a doubt is related to many marketing construct, and brand constructs, in particular. However, a clear distinction between brand experience and other branding constructs, such as brand attitude, brand involvement, brand attachment, customer delight, and brand personality is made. For example, attitudes are evaluative in nature whereas brand experience is much more comprehensive. Also, brand experience does not necessarily require consumers showing an interest towards the brand, and therefore the concept differs from brand involvement. Brand experiences can occur without customers being highly involved with a specific brand. (Brakus et al. 2009) Furthermore, according to Keller (1993) brand experience is distinct from brand associations and brand image.

As mentioned, the foundation of Brakus et al. (2009) work lies in the five modules identified by Schmitt (1999). Brakus et al. (2009) view these modules not only as strategic devices, but as internal and behavioral outcomes. Brakus et al. (2009) present a conceptual analysis of brand experience and introduce brand experience scale. The authors mention that research has ignored the dimensional structure of brand experiences. However, marketing practitioners have come to realize that understanding how consumer experience brands is crucial for developing marketing strategies for foods and services. In order to contribute to this research gap, Brakus et al. (2009) developed a brand experience scale which aim to measure the strength with which brand evokes each experience dimension. The dimensions are: **sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral**. Initially, the researchers had a fifth dimension, social, in the model, but they

decided not to include it after testing the brand scale as after qualitative and quantitative research only the first four could be validated. Brakus et al. (2009) constructed a scale with the intention to measure experiences.

Brand experiences are unique, and therefore they vary on many aspects. Firstly, they can be brief, meaning that the experiences occur rather spontaneously, or they can be long-lasting. Secondly, brand experiences can be either positive or negative. Thirdly, the strength and intensity of the experiences vary which means that some experiences will be more powerful than others. Fourthly, brand experience does not require a surprise effect; meaning that, it can be either unexpected, or surprising. (Brakus et al. 2009; Schmitt 1999; Zarantonello et al. 2010) Finally, the consumption of a product and service is regarded as the essence of the brand experience, but they can occur indirectly as consumers are exposed to marketing communications, for example (Brakus et al. 2009). Various media channels provide consumers the opportunity to be in contact with the brand through the purchase process, from pre-purchase stage until post-purchase stage.

2.7 Brand Experience and its influence on other brand constructs

Brand experience has an influence on other brand constructs, such as brand loyalty, brand attitudes, and brand equity to name a few. These will be discussed in order to understand the significance of the phenomenon of brand experience and its relation to the many brand constructs. There are some studies that have adopted the brand experience scale of Brakus et al. (2009), e.g. Iglesias et al 2011; Ishida and Taylor (2012); Nysveen et al. (2013); Zarantonello and Schmitt 2010.

Brakus et al. (2009) did not only develop the brand experience scale, but also managed to study its impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. The findings of their research indicate that brand experience, along with brand personality is an important predictor of customer satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, the research of Berry and Carbone (2007) and Meyer and Schwager (2007) also propose there is a relationship between brand experience and brand loyalty.

Iglesias et al. (2011) agreed with brand experience dimensions for different products including cars, laptops and sneakers. The results of the study of Iglesias et al. (2011) implicate that in order for companies to create loyal customers need to put effort on the affective dimension of their communications, as well as of the whole brand experience to build and consolidate emotional relationships with customers.

Cleff, Lin & Walters (2014) studied the impact of brand experience on brand equity. They used Schmitt's (1999) five experiential modules as the dimensions of brand experience. The findings of their research revealed that only two dimensions, sense and act, had an impact on brand equity in its entirety. The other dimensions only had an impact on some of the brand equity constructs. Table 2 presents the results of Cleff, Lin & Walters' (2014).

Table 2. The results of Cleff, Lin and Walters' (2014) research on the impact of brand experience on brand equity

	BRAND EQUITY				
	Brand awareness		Brand image		
	brand recall	brand recognition	brand attributes	brand benefits	brand attitude
sense	x	x	x	x	x
act	x	x	x	x	x
feel		x	x	x	x
relate		x	x		x
think			x	x	x

According to the results, sense dimension has the highest impact on brand awareness and brand image. This show that experiences that create sensory stimulation through sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, play a crucial part in creating brand equity. Act dimension as well had an impact to all the constructs of brand equity, but to a lesser extent than sense. Feel dimension was seen impacting brand equity less than sense, but the effect was still noteworthy. Think only influenced brand image which is explained by cognitive experience is seen irrelevant in the context in which the study was made, that is, coffee shops (Starbucks). Cleff, Lin and Walter (2014) add that this is more applicable to experiences created by technology companies who

provide a functional benefit. They mention that as coffee and food provide more a sensory indulgence and therefore an emotional benefit rather than a functional benefit, the cognitive brand dimension is not seen vital. Relate dimension was according to the authors seen less important.

Cleff, Lin and Walter (2014) summarize that the empirical results show a higher impact of brand experience on brand image than on brand awareness.

Zarantonello & Schmitt (2010) examined how consumer behavior in general, and in particular the relation between brand attitudes and purchase intention, may vary for different types of consumers. They created a typology of consumers that prefer different experiential appeals by utilizing the brand scale developed by Brakus et al. (2009). The results of Zarantonello & Schmitt's (2010) study show that there are five groups of consumers that prefer different experiential appeals. On one extreme, there are **holistic** consumers, who seem to be interested in all aspects of experience; on the other extreme, there are **utilitarian** consumers, who do not attach much importance to brand experience. In-between, there are 'hybrid' consumers: **hedonistic consumers**, who attach importance to sensorial gratification and emotions; **action-oriented consumers**, who focus on actions and behaviors; and **innerdirected** consumers, who focus on internal processes such as sensations, emotions, and thoughts.

The research indicates that there is not just one type of experiential consumers. Based on this insight, marketers may develop differentiated experiential strategies and tactics. For example, to reach innerdirected consumers, marketers could focus on intriguing thoughts, and to reach hedonistic consumers, they should stress the emotional appeal of their offers. (Zarantonello & Schmitt 2010)

3 TOUCHPOINTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

This chapter is the second theory chapter and will focus on touchpoints and briefly give an overview of marketing communications. First, definitions of touchpoints will be presented and meticulously analyzed with the intention to building an understanding what is meant by a touchpoint in this study. After that, a sub-chapter is solely dedicated on digital touchpoints as they are regarded significant today. Then, the focus will shift on elements on touchpoints and brand-related stimuli. Thereafter, marketing communications is discussed and the final part of this theory chapter focuses on touchpoint planning.

Jenkins (2007) state that the term *touchpoint* can be defined in numerous ways. Also, there are several terms having the same meaning. A few of these will be presented here, for example, brand contacts (Khan & Rahman 2015a), encounters (Payne, Storbacka, Frow & Knox 2009), and touchpoints (Dhebar 2013; Homburg et al. 2015; Jenkins 2007; Meyer & Schwager 2007; Stein & Ramaseshan 2016) refer all to the same thing, interaction between any part of a firm and a customer. According to Jenkins (2007) other synonyms referring to the idea are moments of truth, media, service point, service encounter, interaction, and customer experiences.

Payne et al. (2009) define encounters as a series of interactions and transactions occurring during the relationship between the customer and supplier. Furthermore, they discuss encounters of the view of co-creating experiences. Dhebar (2013) describe customer touchpoints as “points of human, product, service, communication, spatial, and electronic interaction collectively constituting the interface between an enterprise and its customers over the course of customers’ experience cycles”. Aligning with this, Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) mention that touchpoints comprise the journey a customer takes when achieving a shopping task. With a shopping task Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) refer to looking for information or purchasing a product. According to Meyer and Schwager (2007) a customer or brand experience is created throughout all the different touchpoints. Khan & Rahman (2015a) propose that touchpoints (or brand contacts as they refer to them) are of the antecedents of brand experience.

Touchpoints can be both directly or indirectly connected to a company. *Direct contact* generally occurs during purchase, use, and service and is often initiated by the customer. (Meyer & Schwager 2007) However, Payne et al. (2009) adds, that encounters can also be initiated by the

company. All interactions cannot be planned and managed by a company, and therefore sometimes *indirect interactions* occur in the form of unplanned encounters with representatives of a company's products, service, or brands (e.g., word-of-mouth recommendation or criticism, advertising, news reports, reviews etc.) (Meyer and Schwager 2007).

3.1 Digital touchpoints

Touchpoints can further be categorized into digital (or online) and offline touchpoints (Kim et al. 2009). Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) mention that new technologies including mobile Internet and social media have created new kinds of communication channels. The Internet has changed the game in the way consumer engage with brands (Edelman 2010). New touchpoints have emerged and the number of new platforms have increased (Kim et al. 2009), and therefore this sub-chapter will focus on digital touchpoints as today's world is so technology-driven. In this study digital touchpoints refer to the same as digital channels.

In digital channels customers can voice their concerns, give their personal input to design ideas, inform if there is a problem, or look for help. Furthermore, they are able to express and publish both positive and negative experiences. (Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann 2015) According to Edelman (2010) the power of online touchpoints is evident especially in the last step of the selling process, in the post-purchase phase as the consumer interacts with the product in online touchpoints. Satisfied consumers may become advocates in online channels of the product or firm or a brand by sharing experiences by word-of-mouth (Edelman 2010).

According to the research of Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) the following touchpoints have the highest rate of use across all industries: Website, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and LinkedIn. The industry with the highest average of touchpoints was technology. (Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann 2015)

Parise, Guinan & Kafka (2016) state that not only have consumers become comfortable for example using self-service technologies, but also they are knowledgeable of the products and services today.

Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) identified 34 digital channels, or touchpoints as they refer to them, that companies use. They were the first to propose four typologies of digital

touchpoints and providing the inception for comprehensive theory of digital channels. The identified channel typologies are the following: functional, social, community, and corporate. It was found that there were relationships between touchpoints within typologies. These typologies will be described briefly.

The first typology is typology is called *functional touchpoints*. The communication is regarded as one way communication from the company to the customer. In the past, website and email were the most frequently used digital touchpoints. Websites are seen as customer's first interaction with a company, and often Internet searches or advertisements have served as the initial triggers. (Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann 2015)

The second group of touchpoint are *social touchpoints* that are managed by an administrator in other words, a representative of the company has the power to monitor the content in that specific touchpoint by deleting unfavorable messages and block users. Touchpoints in this typology are extremely interactive, for example in Facebook it is possible to respond to customers comments in real time. Social touchpoints make two-way communication possible between the company and the customers. The results of the research indicate that although companies use many social touchpoints, there is lack of integration and consistency across these. (Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann 2015)

Community touchpoints is the third typology and they are run by a group of users. The aim of these touchpoints is offering customer a platform for recreational and social activities. YouTube, Blogs, Forums, and Vimeo are considered as community touchpoints as these through these customers can feel entertained due to the richness in vivacity. The content can be text, images, and videos. In addition, customers have the possibility to comment and engage with likeminded peers. In community touchpoints customers have the possibility to share tips, help one another by providing support, share photos and comments, and moreover providing customer generated content which can be shared in their personal digital touchpoints. (Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann 2015)

The final typology is *corporate touchpoints* and this could be described as one-way communication, either from company to customer, or vice versa. For example, a digital feedback

form or advertisements would belong in this group of touchpoints. There are five purposes for corporate touchpoints: gain customer feedback, offer support and information, promote, revenue and by loyalty programs support the commitment to the company. The study revealed that this specific group of touchpoints are viewed as supportive to the other three typologies. Corporate touchpoints allow companies to be very transparent as via these touchpoints detailed information of the company can be shared. (Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann 2015)

Functional touchpoints work great in engaging through interactive media and publishing news on products and campaigns. Compared to social touchpoints, functional touchpoints don't have the ability to engage with users. According to Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) a connection between these two typologies will improve the engagement with customers. The findings of the study indicate that all industries used touchpoints of two typologies: either functional and social or functional and corporate. Companies operating in the fields of financial services, consumer services, transportation, travel, consumer products, retail, entertainment, mass media, building/construction and technology had a mix of functional and social touchpoints. The use of functional and corporate touchpoints were found to be used in industries such as business services, food/beverages, health, non-for profit, education and manufacturing. Corporate touchpoints are in the direction of communication one-way which leave it to the customer's responsibility to search for information. However, in functional touchpoints the information in corporate touchpoints can be shared. (Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann 2015)

3.2 Elements of touchpoints

Stein & Ramaseshan (2016) identify, categorize, and define the distinctive elements of customer experiences at different touch points. They identified the following elements: atmospheric, technological, communicative, process, employee–customer interaction, customer–customer interaction and product interaction elements.

The importance of **atmospheric** aspects has been noted by several authors (Dhebar 2013; Stein & Ramaseshan 2016; Verhoef 2009). Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) explain that atmospheric elements are the physical characteristics and surrounding customers observe when interacting with any part of the retailer. They further elaborate that there are different atmospheric aspects in both physical and digital settings. Dhebar (2013) state that space related touchpoints may not

be the most obvious ones, but nonetheless relevant ones. Verhoef et al. (2009) research revolve around retail context and show the importance of atmospherics.

According to Stein & Ramaseshan (2016) there are atmospheric aspects in physical and in digital settings. In physical channels such as the layout, colors, lighting, music and scents provide visual and sensory stimuli that customers use to interpret the situation. In digital settings,

atmospheric aspects include the colors, graphics, music, layout and design of the website or technological interface.

Technological elements seem to be crucial in customers' encounters with a retailer and in some type of touchpoints the core element of it. Findings indicate that technology (e.g. website) facilitate the transactions in an easy and convenient manner. Technology is the core component of the touchpoint. (Stein & Ramaseshan 2016)

The third element that Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) distinguish is **communicative elements** that include one-way communications from the retailer to the customer, including both promotional and informative messages.

Process elements are the actions or steps customers need to take in order to achieve a particular outcome with a retailer. For example, waiting time and navigation would be included in this category.

Employee-customer interactions elements: The direct and indirect interactions customers have with employees when interacting with any part of the retailer. Employee-customer interactions are not limited to direct face-to-face encounters in-store; rather, employees interact with customers through many retail channels such as telephone, email, online chat, and online forums.

Customer-customer interaction elements: The direct and indirect interactions customers have with other customers when interacting with any part of the retailer. For example, customer reviews, WOM, direct customer interactions and indirect customer action comprise this specific element.

The final element is **product-interaction elements**. These include both direct and indirect interactions customers have with the core tangible or intangible product offered by the retailer. Product interactions can be take place in both physical and digital channels.

The findings on Stein and Ramaseshan's (2016) research indicate that not all elements emerge at each touchpoint; rather touchpoints comprise of different combinations of the identified elements. In addition, touchpoints may include only one or all of the touchpoint elements. Thus, drawing from the findings of the study it can be seen that the elements which are relevant to the customer at a particular touchpoint, together, constitute each touchpoint experience. (Stein & Ramaseshan 2016)

3.3 Brand-related clues

Experience touchpoints can be further broken down into stimuli (Brakus et al. 2009), or clues (Berry & Carbone 2007; Berry et al. 2002; Carbone & Harckel 1994) or cues (Pine & Gilmore 1998) that evoke experiences, e.g. typeface, logo, colors, shapes etc. (Schmitt 2010, 75-76). The key to managing customer experiences is to focus on designing and orchestrating prerequisites and stimuli that enable customers to have the desired experiences (Berry et al. 2002; Carbone & Haeckel 1994).

An experience clue is anything that can be perceived, sensed, or even recognized by its absence. The goods and services provide one set of clues, as well as the physical environment in which they are offered. Clues carry messages with the objective of communicating the story of a company to the customer. Clues together build the customer's total experience. (Berry & Carbone 2007; Berry et al. 2002)

Clues are emitted by products, services, and the environment. Experience clues can be categorized into mechanic, humanic, and functional clues. Mechanic clues are sights, smells, sounds, and textures which are generated by things. Humanic clues are generated by people, for instance, the behavior of the employees. For example, the choice of words, body language and tone of voice have an effect on how customers perceive the interaction. (Berry & Carbone 2007; Berry et al. 2002; Carbone & Haeckel 1994) Later, Berry and Carbone (2007) distinguished a third category of clues –functional clues. The authors state that this category concern the

technical quality of the offering. Clues that have an effect on the customer's perception of technical quality are functional clues (Berry & Carbone 2007). Berry and Carbone (2007) mention that the three clue categories are synergistic rather than additive. They add that the clues need to be melded to tell a cohesive and a compelling one story.

Brakus et al. (2009) explain that the four identified experience dimensions are evoked by brand-related stimuli, such as colors, shapes, typefaces, designs, slogans, mascots, brand characters. Brakus et al. (2009) statement of there not being a direct relation of a specific stimulus type triggering a certain experience dimension align with Schmitt's (2010, 76-76) notion that distinguishing all the stimuli that can evoke experiences at various touchpoints is difficult to research, and furthermore, choosing the right touchpoint stimuli is a challenging management task.

Recently, there have been studies emphasizing the five human senses influencing the brand experience (Hulten 2011; Schmitt 2011; Kim et al. 2009). Kim et al. (2009) present the model of the brand experience wheel in which senses; sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste evoke brand experience through online and offline integrated marketing communications (e.g. advertising, event marketing, personal selling, space etc.). The authors applied the brand wheel experience model to two case studies; Nike and Puma. Hulten (2011) examines the multi-sensory brand experience and suggest that the SM models enable companies differentiate and position their brands.

3.4 Marketing communications

This sub-chapter will focus on marketing communication and its importance to brand experience. The earlier discussed subjects on touchpoints and the elements, as well as brand-related stimuli are utilized in marketing communications.

Marketing communications is critical in the creation of brands as it has the power of informing, persuading, and reminding consumers about a brand's products and services. Brakus et al. (2009) mentioned that brand experiences occur directly and indirectly. Marketing communications is a way of brand experiences to occur indirectly. Further, Keller (2009) explains that marketing communication can create experiences online and offline. Moreover,

marketing communication is the voice of the brand. It may answer critical questions that consumers have, for example explaining and demonstrating how and why a certain brand is used, or what kind of person can use it and so on. (Keller 2010) In a way, marketing communications serves as a guidance for consumers. Jenkinson (2007) states that a vital part of communication is to bring the brand, product or service alive.

Marketing communications can be classified into paid media, owned media and earned media. Paid media refers to the advertising a company has paid for, e.g. mass media, such as television, print and outdoor. Owned media are the channels a brand is in control of, such as company websites. On the contrary, earned media comprises everything the brand cannot control, for example communities of brand enthusiasts. (Edelman 2010)

Marketing communication enables consumers to educate themselves of the brand and what it stands for. Furthermore, it helps companies to connect brands to other people, places, events, brands, experiences, feelings, and things. (Keller 2010; 2009)

Keller (2009) presents eight main forms of communication that comprise the marketing communications mix: advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth, and personal selling.

Advertising is any type of paid, promotional means or presenting an idea, good or service by a brand (company). *Sales promotion* comprises of different kinds of incentives to encourage consumers to purchase a good or service. Company-sponsored activities and programs intended on creating interactions with the brand and consumers are included in *events and experiences*. *Public relations and publicity* refers to different kinds of programs that are planned to promote or protect a company's image or its products. Direct communication through whatever medium is regarded as *direct marketing*. The objective is to create a dialogue with a consumer. *Interactive marketing* includes online activities and programs planned to create awareness, enhance brand image or generate sales. *Word-of-mouth (WOM)* marketing refers to communication between consumers sharing their experiences of the brand. WOM can occur in the form of oral, written or electronic communications. *Personal selling* is the face-to-face

encounters a representative of brand has with prospects with the objective of for example giving presentations and providing answers to questions.

The use of the Internet have become critical for marketers, but most importantly for consumers as has been mentioned several times in this study. Keller (2010) note that online channels complete marketing programs. Online channels possess the strength of having the possibility of reaching various customer segments with customized messages (Keller 2010).

Keller (2009) mention that interactive marketing communications can create impactful experiential and enduring feelings because of the ability to deliver sight, sound and motion in all forms. Therefore, the importance of sensory clues are especially highlighted in online context. Kim et al. (2009) align with this view. Also, Huang et al. (2015) provides support to this as the empirical findings of their study indicate that sensory experience has more impact on relational experience in online channel than in offline channels.

Roswinanto and Strutton (2014) state that advertisements can include extensively information of a brand through various clues designed to convey the intended messages to customers. Clues, as discussed in the earlier sub-chapter can be in different forms (Berry & Carbone 2007) as well as can include sounds, striking visuals, movements, complex information or be purely entertainment (Roswinanto & Strutton 2014). The results of Roswinanto and Strutton's (2009) study indicate that by deliberately choosing brand names, the celebrity endorsers, the visual images that the company aims to deliver, and aligning messages with core values with the brand consumers' brand experience can be improved by advertising.

3.5 Touchpoint design

Parise, Guinan and Kafka (2016) mention that consumers today are using multiple channels throughout their purchase journey. They are using traditional channels, such as physical stores, but in addition, various digital channels e.g. websites, social platforms, and mobile apps, which have become important channels as well. Furthermore, customers can for example seek for information on one channel, make a purchase in another and physically get hold of the product in a third channel (Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann 2015). In order for a company to create a consistent experience for consumer, the various touchpoints have to be meticulously designed.

Companies should aim to create complementary and consistent experiences for customers in different touchpoints. The idea is not to create identical experiences, rather well aligned, holistic experiences. (Jenkinson 2007; Schmitt 1999)

It has been noted in the customer experience literature that touchpoints occur at stages of the customer experience cycle (Dhebar 2013; Schmitt 2011; Verhoef et al. 2009). Schmitt (2011) mentions that experiences occur at different stages, such as information collection, decision, and consumption stages. To clarify this, Davis & Longoria's (2003) brand touchpoint wheel is presented. The authors have identified touchpoints in each of stages or phases of the models. Brand touchpoint wheel has three phases: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase. The touchpoints at the first phase include advertising, public relations, web sites, new media, direct mail/samples, coupons and incentives, deals and promotions. Packaging, point-of-purchase displays, store and shelf placements, salespeople and sales environments are touchpoints identified in the purchase phase. Finally, post-purchase touchpoints include product and package performance, customer service, newsletters, and loyalty programs. For the brand touchpoint wheel to work as intended is crucial to pay attention to the touchpoint planning.

Jenkinson (2007) argue that touchpoint planning is a holistic way of designing, managing and implementing, as well as evaluating customized communication and experience aimed at customers. Touchpoint planning is applicable in personalized and interactive touchpoints, for example the digital touchpoints discussed in the previous sub-chapter. Media planning, again, refers mostly to paid media which include mass media, such a television and print.

According to Jenkins (2007) the main task of an integrated approach to touchpoint or communication planning is to connect the various communication goals to each other. This will optimize consumers' experience.

Consumers mentally process all the communication touchpoints regardless of the channel or medium. Even though each person is unique Jenkinson (2007) explains that there is a commonly accepted psychological structure of all human beings. In fact, it is further mentions that communication planning tools should resonate well enough to the way human minds work.

According to Jenkinson (2007) research has shown that CODAR system is a proven method in touchpoint planning. Jenkinson (2007) suggests five critical communication elements for touchpoint planning. It is further indicated that by adapting these principles, a company can be considered operating as truly customer-centric as possible.

The first dimension revolves around product, service or environment experience. The objective is to give the customer an experience, may it be an actual, or imaginal e.g. a virtual, visual, or verbal representation of the subject or product. (Jenkinson 2007)

The second dimension is the idea formation. It includes influencing ideas, associations and beliefs about the brand, company or product. (Jenkinson 2007)

Building relationship feeling is the third dimension, in other words creating emotional bond with the customer. Feeling connected to a brand or its business proposal is the main objective of this dimension. (Jenkinson 2007)

Help is the fourth dimension. Its objective is to offer help, service or support. For example it can be information about a product. The purpose is to reduce anxiety and generate a feeling of being appreciated and cared for. (Jenkinson 2007)

The fifth dimension is called activation. The nature of this dimension is behavioral as the objectives are for instance sales activation, sales enquiry, or commitment to change behavior. (Jenkinson 2007)

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will concentrate on describing and justifying the chosen methodology for this study. The empirical part of this study was conducted in two phases. Firstly, the researcher chose a relevant brand in the field of fast-moving consumer goods and conducted a company interview in order to understand the marketing campaigns created by this brand. Secondly, nine consumers that were familiar with the brand and their lifestyle aligned with the values of the brand were qualified belonging to the target market. These consumers were interviewed in-depth which form the essence of the empirical section. An outlook on data analysis is given, as well as the reliability and validity in the context of this study are scrutinized.

4.1 Qualitative research

Generally, the forms of conducting empirical research is divided into two categories: quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative analysis is often based on statistics and aims at finding causalities and correlations, whereas qualitative analysis is based on interpretative research and has the objective of understanding and describing a phenomenon (Metsämuuronen 2003, 161-162). Furthermore, Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara (2004, p. 152) add that the objective is to have an in-depth understanding of the real-life phenomenon or situation. In qualitative analysis the basic characteristics are the positioning of the researcher, the use of the perspective of the researched and theoretical or careful sampling (Eskola & Suonranta 2003).

This aim of this research is to gain insight on a specific phenomenon and form a comprehensive understanding of it. As the researched phenomenon is personal in nature and varies from one person to another, the choice of qualitative method was appropriate. Furthermore, the emphasis of the research is to gain insight on consumers' brand experience created with cross-media marketing campaigns within the field of FMCG.

According to Metsämuuronen (2003, p. 161-162) the most common methods used in qualitative analysis are interviews, observation, text analysis, and transcribing. Research interviews aim on systematic gathering of information and they can be classified into four categories: structured, half-structured, theme, and open interviews.

In a structured interview the order and format both the questions and answers are predetermined, which result in no free discussion. A half-structured, or semi-structured interview, is similar to a structured interview with exception of interviewees are not given answers and they are allowed to give free, open answers. In theme interviews only the topic areas for discussion are prepared, which gives the interviewees more freedom in answering. An open interview is the closest to a normal conversation as the discussion is informal. In addition, all the topic areas may not be discussed with all of the interviewees. (Eskola & Suoranta, 2003, 85-86)

4.2 Embedded single case study design and unit of analysis

The most common method of qualitative research is case study (Metsämuuronen 2003, p. 171; Gummerson 2000, p. 83). Case study focus on observing and explaining a limited entity (Yin 1994). According to Yin (2003, p. 83) a case study is defined as follows: “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context.” Yin (2003, p. 39) presents four types of designs for case studies: single-case (holistic), single-case (embedded), multiple-case (holistic), and multiple-case (embedded) designs. The embedded single case design describes this research method the best with some tweaks which will be explained.

Yin (2003, p. 42) described that in single embedded case study design the same case study may involve more than one unit of analysis. This is the situation when within a single case, attention is also given to a subunit or subunits. This approach applies to this research, however, the emphasis is on the sub-units (the consumers), rather than on the larger case (the chosen brand and its marketing campaigns) that is in the background. In other words, this search reversely adopts single embedded case study design.

Yin (2003) explains that the capability to view the sub-units within a larger case is impressive because the data can be scrutinized individually (within case analysis), between the different subunit (between case analysis), or across all of the subunit (cross-case analysis). It is mentioned that such in-depth analysis provide even better clarification for the case, but also has its pitfalls as focusing on the separate sub-unit level and failing to return to the larger case (Yin 2003).

The research found it crucial to make a clear distinction between the sub-units and the larger case and therefore the term unit of analysis is more suitable on describing these entities.

The terms unit of analysis and case are often used interchangeably. According to Sjoberg, Williams, Vaughan and Sjoberg (1991) a unit of analysis can be an individual, a community, an organization, a nation-state, an empire, or a civilization. In this study there are two distinct layers of unit of analysis; individual consumers and the brand PROfeel. As the primary objective is to understand *consumers'* brand experience. PROfeel serves as a vehicle, or in other words, as an instrument, in this study. That being said, the nine interviewed consumers comprise the primary group unit of analysis. Each of the individuals represents as a separate unit of analysis (compare Yin's sub-units). In order to research the phenomenon, the individuals must have something concrete on which they can reflect their experience of a FMCG brand. Therefore, the chosen brand, through which the phenomenon is researched is also a unit of analysis, but it is seen as secondary (compare Yin's larger case). It serves more as a vehicle, it gives the primary unit of analysis something to grasp on to.

The below figure 2 illustrates the idea of this research approach. The primary unit of analysis are the individuals, or consumers, in this matter. As experience is a phenomenon that is personal, the consumers have different kinds of experiences. PROfeel brand is utilized in this research to reveal brand experience of a FMCG brand. The individuals are placed on the border in this of the secondary unit of analysis (PROfeel) because personal interests, motivations, and personality traits have an impact on the experience of the PROfeel brand. As brand experience is such a conceptual term, it is striven to embody the phenomenon in a real brand.

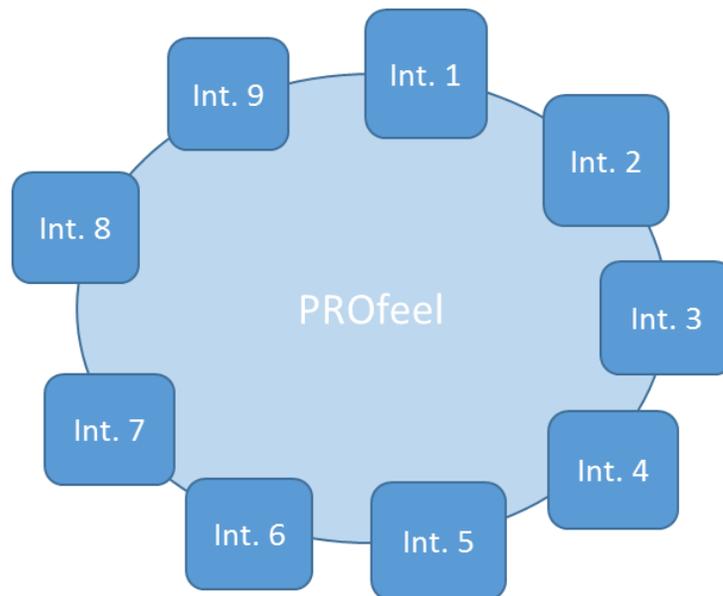


Figure 2. Layers of unit of analysis.

4.3 Data collection

The data collected for this research occurred in two phases as already mentioned in the chapter introduction. First, a company interview with a representative of Valio was conducted, and secondly consumer interviews were organized. The company interview was a critical part of understanding the secondary unit of analysis: PROfeel brand and the marketing campaigns revolving around it. The goal of the company interview was to gain knowledge on the touchpoints and elements that comprise PROfeel marketing campaigns. In addition, it gave support for the research topic and validity even though the primary focus is not on the brand PROfeel or its marketing campaigns. After the company interview it was possible to execute the consumer interviews and collect the primary data.

Semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate data collection method for this research. As the objective of the empirical part of the study is to gain insights from consumers on brand experience, the use of in-depth interviews were seen suitable and chosen as the primary research method. When the purpose of the gathered data is to reveal the ‘what’ and ‘how’, and furthermore find explanations to ‘why’, non-structured, such as half-structured or in-depth interviews are often used (Saunders et al. 2007, 313). The interviews conducted for this study are more constructive than free discussions. Semi-structured interviews with a predetermined,

but an adaptable list of questions was used to build understanding on the phenomenon (Saunders et al. 2009, 320). The interview questions were open-ended questions which gave the interviewees space to freely express their feelings, thoughts, and most importantly experiences. The researcher did not ask all the interviewees precisely the same questions as the consumers' knowledge of the chosen brand and its marketing campaigns varied. Rephrasing the questions resulted in more coherent answers.

4.3.1 Company interview

The company interview was held in October 25, 2016 at the office of Valio. The interviewee was Outi Lindberg, Marketing Manager at Valio. PROfeel is one of the brands the interviewee is responsible of. The interviewee described her job as doing consumer dialogue, consumer communications and consumer activation. The interview lasted 45 minutes. The company interviewee will be hereon referred to as "Brand representative".

This study approaches the topic from the perspective of a consumer, however, it was important to also the company's perspective into account as without the brand experience creator "the brand", the consumers would not have a brand experience. The company interview provided valuable information and helped steering the focus of the thesis to the right direction. In addition, as gaining insight from the perspective of the company, not only did the research get a more concrete view on the phenomenon researched. One aim was to find out the target market of PROfeel which helped setting the criteria for selected interviewees.

The author did an extensive research of PROfeel before the company interview. In order to obtain confirmation of what constitutes a marketing campaign from the perspective of Valio a great deal of the interview focused on PROfeel marketing campaigns and its different touchpoints. The Brand representative listed the most relevant touchpoints of PROfeel and described the actions taken in those, the objectives for each touchpoint, as well as the importance of each. The company interview provided insight on touchpoint planning, and helped understanding which ones are more important than others and why. Overall, the company interview helped to focus on relevant things in consumer interviews and the campaigns as a whole made more sense to the author.

4.3.2 Consumer interviews

The empirical part of this study consists of nine half-structured interviews. All the interviews were conducted one-on-one, eight of which face-to-face and one on the phone because of time constraints. The interviews were organized between October 27th and November 11th, 2016. It was around the same time the newest product family of PROfeel was being introduced to consumers through an extensive cross-media marketing campaign. The interviews lasted from half an hour to an hour each. Some of the interviewees were more familiar and more active users of PROfeel products and therefore they were able to share more of their experiences and thoughts than others. There were a couple criteria set which the interviewees had to meet in order to be suitable for this research: firstly and most importantly, familiarity, and first-hand experience with PROfeel, either a current user or a user in the past. And secondly, personal interest in a healthy and active lifestyle.

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2004) state that the literature does not determine any absolute number of interviews needed for a qualitative study. The number of interviewees is regarded sufficient when the final interview does not bring any relatively new information. That being said, the researcher's own consideration was used in determining the amount of interviewees.

The concept of experience is very personal and differs from one person to another, and therefore the interview questions had to be tested. In order to implement this, the two first interviews are regarded as "pilot" interviews. These are marked with grey background in the below table 3. After the pilot interviews, the order of the questions were changed to make it more logical. Also, some questions were rephrased and a couple questions needed to be added. The reason for adjusting the questions is that the answers required a certain level of introspection from the interviewees and the researcher came to the conclusion that the subject of experience must be approached from different viewpoints and the interviewees had to be "warmed-up". On top of this, it became evident that the interviewees were not able to memorize the brand's marketing campaigns clearly, and many of the main touchpoints, were not acknowledged at all. As the marketing campaigns and the touchpoints within them are seen as vehicle and tools to create brand experience, some adjustment had to be done, in order to get the deep insights on consumers' brand experiences.

The Brand representative mentioned that they take different kinds of actions in digital channels as that's the way marketing campaigns work these days. The experiences in these touchpoints were limited, and therefore the researcher made the decision to introduce to four of the interviewees digital marketing actions that Valio has taken for PROfeel in order to get richer answers. Interviewees 3-6,9 were shown marketing actions PROfeel has taken in various digital channels. The website, social media channels Facebook and Instagram, as well as some Youtube videos were shown to these interviewees.

See table 3 for more detailed descriptions of the interviewees.

Table 3. Description of interviewees.

Interviewees	Age	Gender	Use of PROfeel products	Demonstration of digital touchpoints
Interviewee 1	65	Male	Multiple times a week	No
Interviewee 2	24	Female	PROfeel user in the past	No
Interviewee 3	24	Female	Multiple times a week	No
Interviewee 4	26	Female	PROfeel user in the past	Yes
Interviewee 5	64	Female	Multiple times a week	No
Interviewee 6	28	Female	Sometimes	Yes
Interviewee 7	25	Female	Sometimes	No
Interviewee 8	25	Female	Sometimes	Yes
Interviewee 9	25	Female	Sometimes	Yes

4.4 Data analysis

The main sources of data for the empirical part of this study are the interviews, which were recorded with a smartphone excluding the one interview that was conducted on the phone. The interviews were transcribed in detail which added up to approximately 80 pages of speech when written in Arial font size 12 and spacing 1,5. All the interviews were conducted in Finnish and later only the straight quotes used in this study were translated into English. The interview questions can be found in the Appendix 1, both in Finnish and English.

The data analysis followed to some extent the framework given by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009):

1. Deciding, what is important in the data
2. a. Going through the data and marking the factors which are important based on the previous decision
 - b. All else is left out
 - c. The marked factors are separated from the other data
3. Categorizing, theming or otherwise handling the data
4. Writing a summary.

The interviews were constructed in a logical order so the process of theming them was rather easy. The most important parts of the interviews were gathered in a separate document. The interviews were analyzed question by question which made it easy to identify the similarities and differences in the answers. Also, following this manner the main findings were recognized which forms the essence of the empirical section of this study.

4.5 Reliability and validity

Research aim at producing accurate work and avoiding mistakes, however, reliability and validity vary in empirical studies. Reliability concentrates on the objectivity of the results, whereas validity on the ability of the research method to measure the wanted factors. These terms are more appropriate in studies that adapt quantitative research methods as qualitative research can only to a certain extent fulfil these demands. Qualitative research is based on individuals'

subjective views and cannot be taken out of the context. Therefore, if repeating the research, the results may vary. There are certain pitfalls for reliability as the interviewees may not be fully honest in their answers or understand the questions as intended. Also, the researcher could modify the answers towards a certain trend and leave out outliers. Misunderstandings are possible for both parties. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009)

To improve reliability of this research, the process of this research has been striven to be described in a clear and transparent form. Nevertheless, the results of this research should be cautiously generalized outside of the studied context, or even a product category the brand

represents. The objective of this study is to provide insights of the researched phenomenon which base on a small sample group.

5 EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND FINDINGS: PROFEEL BRAND EXPERIENCE

The findings of the empirical analysis are introduced in this chapter. The results will be tied together with the existing literature. The subjects will to some extent be presented in the same order as the theory, but not entirely. The consumer interviews did not either precisely follow the order of theory because gaining extensive answers on PROfeel brand experience, the interviewees had to be warmed-up and introduced to the topic before delving into the dimensionalities of brand experience, let alone scrutinizing the touchpoints. Therefore, the subjects of experience, PROfeel and touchpoints are first discussed somewhat separately before making a connection between these. By revealing the findings in this order, a coherent view of consumers' brand experience of PROfeel is presented.

Before discussing the findings in-depth, the secondary unit of analysis, Valio PROfeel is presented. It will be supported by the interview conducted with the Brand representative. Also, the interviewees' usage of PROfeel products and broader look at their view of the brand is discussed. The second sub-chapter will focus on experience, mostly defining it and discussing what it means for consumers. Also, brand experience, from the perspective of consumers will be analyzed. After that, in the third sub-chapter, the focus will shift to touchpoints and PROfeel brand. The aim is to understand the different touchpoints importance in a marketing campaign in creating a brand experience. The touchpoints are further divided into offline and digital touchpoints. Finally, the dimensions of brand experience of PROfeel's cross-media marketing campaign(s) in the eyes' of the consumers is tied together. Also, the link between the PROfeel marketing campaigns and brand experience is made.

5.1 Overview of PROfeel, marketing campaigns and consumers

Valio PROfeel is one of the sub-brands of Valio. Valio is seen as an umbrella brand that has several sub-brands, including Valio Gefilus, Valio Mifu, or Valio PROfeel (Brand representative). As of today, there are altogether 63 brand in Valio's brand portfolio (Valio 2016). Hereafter, Valio PROfeel will be referred to as PROfeel.

PROfeel has three product families; protein drinks, protein quarks, and protein powder, which the latter on is the most novel product family. A more detailed illustration of the brand PROfeel and the product families can be seen in figure 3.

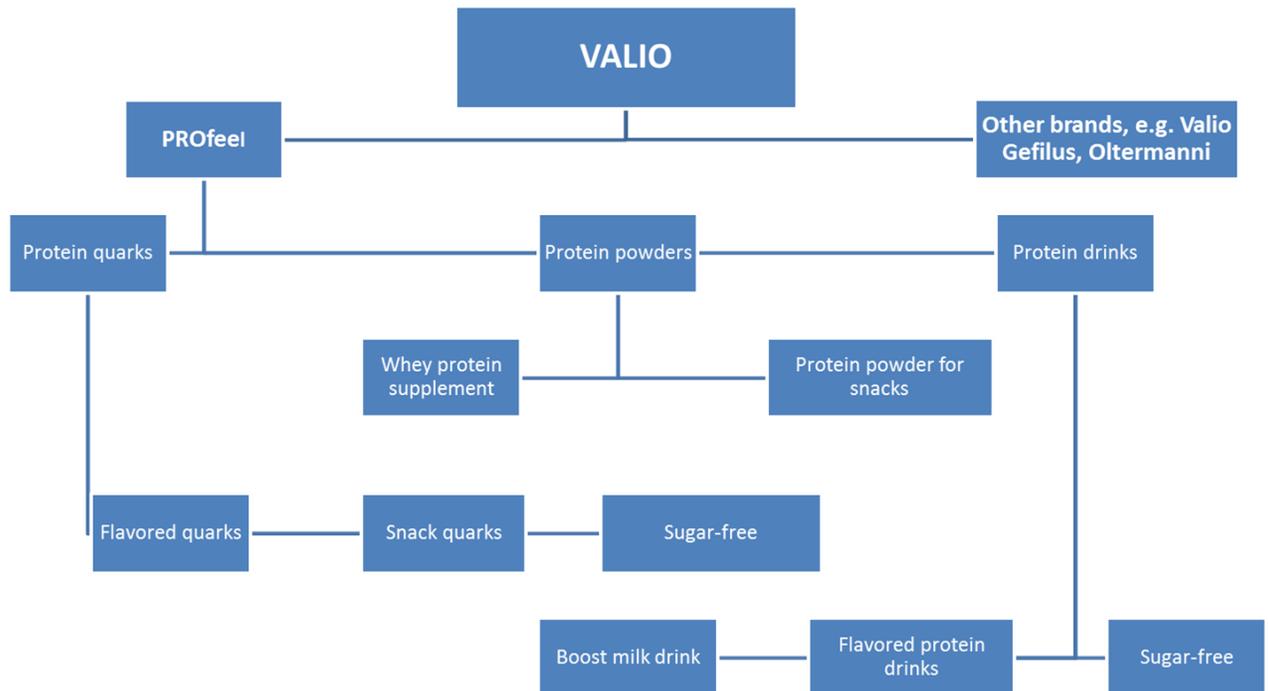


Figure 3. PROfeel product families

The Brand representative stated that the experience that Valio attempts to create for consumers with PROfeel focus on protein-based wellbeing products, whereas the umbrella brand, Valio, has a broader focus as it represents all of the 63 brands. However, the brand representative noted, that by no means can PROfeel be separated from Valio. The Brand representative described the target market of PROfeel as follows:

“The target market includes people that show interest in wellbeing, in a healthy lifestyle, and working out to some extent. I do not mean fitness athletes, rather normal people that want some extra energy from protein.”

All the interviewees acknowledged that being active and exercising regularly is an important part of their lifestyle. Surely, there exists differences in the extent the interviewees work out and how they work out.

It was crucial to understand what comprises a marketing campaign according to Valio and gain an understanding of the entirety of touchpoints used in it, as well as the objectives of the campaigns. The Brand representative stated that the way Valio operates is by executing large, cross media consumer campaigns. It was further explained that as Valio is a national brand and operating from Hanko to Utsjoki, it is a very visible brand.

“When we put an effort on something, consumers will know about it. The marketing campaign includes everything that is visible to consumers, in other words, all the channels and the marketing actions we take: online, offline... -cross-media. Our website, social media channels, everything we do there... -owned media. Also, paid media, and especially earned media (include in the campaign) are important, but the latter one is difficult to affect.”

(Brand representative)

The Brand representative mentioned that the objectives of a marketing campaign depend on the situation, the brand, and whether the marketing campaign is brand-specific or product-specific. An example of a brand-specific campaign would be PROfeel brand, in general, and a product-specific campaign would be the protein powders of PROfeel that they recently launched.

According to the Brand representative Valio has for the most part operated in a manner that the novel products are brought forward and the focus of marketing campaigns are on those.

Valio PROfeel launched a new product category, protein powders, in the beginning of September, 2016. At the time consumer interviews were conducted the marketing campaign was running in various marketing channels; advertisements on TV, information on the website, collaborations with bloggers, and outdoor advertisements, to name a few. (Brand representative)

“Now, this fall we launched PROfeel (protein) powders and at the moment the marketing campaign is running. The products have been available in stores from September and we have taken different kinds of marketing actions since then. This will last until the beginning of December and this would be seen as one campaign, speaking in time frames.”

(Brand representative)

According to the Brand representative, PROfeel has approximately two marketing campaigns yearly.

The interviewees had challenges in naming other Valio brands as they did not necessarily make a distinction between the different Valio brands, rather they consider all the products of the sub-brands being Valio. All of the interviewees had either a neutral or positive impression of Valio, their sub-brands, and products. Trustworthiness, high quality and an appreciation of Valio being a Finnish brand were the three most common things associated with Valio. Jenkinson (2007) introduces the CODAR model of which building relationships is the third dimension. It is stated that an examples include be feeling affinity with the values of the brand or culture, feelings of trust and appreciation (Jenkinson 2007). Drawing from this standpoint, Valio, a well-established brand, has successfully been able to create good relationships with its customers. However, when asked about PROfeel, interviewees were often side-tracked and described only Valio, and forgot about PROfeel.

“PROfeel products have stood out more compared to their competitors. Valio is a brand that have been around since I was a little kid and have learned to trust in. I have always used Valio’s products so it is a brand in which I can trust.” (Interviewee #8)

Interviewees viewed Valio extremely positively, however, opinions and attitudes towards PROfeel differed quite a lot. Some mentioned PROfeel causing confusion of understanding what the brand really stands for.

“I have a neutral attitude towards PROfeel. I am a bit skeptic of the protein powders, as I think PROfeel is trying to be ‘wannabe fitness brand’ with these products. It is not credible. However, I view Valio as a positive brand. PROfeel, on the other hand, is trying too hard to be novel and trendy. I think they should focus on their strengths and leverage them, rather than follow trends.” (Interviewee #7)

Some interviewees mentioned being interested in exercising, diets, and wellbeing. Therefore, many described being educated on these topics. The personal thoughts and opinions did not necessarily align with those of PROfeel, and therefore these consumers also had more critical and skeptical attitude towards the brand. Overall, it was a topic that mattered to them.

All the interviewees were able to name some PROfeel product families. Everyone mentioned protein quarks which was not surprising as the quarks have established their position in the market quite well. Around half of the interviewees mentioned being familiar of the newest product family of PROfeel; protein powders, to some extent. However, none of them had purchased or tried the product. The interviewees that were aware of this new product category mentioned having the first encounter through television advertisements.

The interviewees' usage of PROfeel products varied a lot. Two stated that they had been active PROfeel product consumers in the past, but not anymore as their diet doesn't include dairy. Some addressed preferring another brand and using their products instead of PROfeel. Other interviewees told that they had used PROfeel products for a long time and still use, but to a lesser degree. At many occasions the "quark boom" was referred to and mentioned being active PROfeel quark users back then.

The interviewees viewed PROfeel brand in a unanimous way - a healthy snack with protein. In addition, majority of the interviewees thought of PROfeel products as 'easy products that give you energy'. Also, some associated it with exercising and for example Interviewee #9 mentioned: "it is a good snack either before or after a workout".

"I eat quarks often as a snack at school. I think it is a better option than yogurt – it keeps me fuller longer. Sometimes we have them at my work and occasionally I buy them myself. "

(Interviewee #7)

"I don't eat PROfeel products as much anymore. When I used dairy products on a regular basis I would buy quarks from the cafeteria at the university. I probably bought protein quarks multiple times a week, especially when the quark boom was going on." (Interviewee #4)

The interviewees mostly agreed on using PROfeel products because they are great, healthy, and quick snacks.

"The cans are cool. PROfeel has marketed themselves very well. They have good products and they taste good. I think they respond to their value proposition. A sporty vibe can be conveyed." (Interviewee #3)

“Good, easy and quick snacks. Back in the day, it was a trendy thing to eat protein and quarks. I was so bored with the basic quarks without any flavor so I was excited when PROfeel launched the quarks with different flavors.” (Interviewee #4)

It was mentioned by several interviewees that they prefer PROfeel products to a competitive brand’s similar products because they are familiar with Valio and view the brand positively and have had good experiences with Valio’s other brands and products in the past. Also, many pointed out that they wanted to support a Finnish brand instead of a foreign brand. This seemed to be an important thing for many, they associated patriotism towards Valio. However, there were a couple of interviewees that preferred another brand’s products mainly because of the taste.

“I view Valio as a trustworthy brand and they have high quality products. I have not been disappointed in any of their products in the past.” (Interviewee #2)

“I prefer Skyr because their products taste better, and that’s the only reason. In my opinion, the quarks taste a bit artificial. Also, I view Skyr trendier. Although, I don’t know if I consciously regard this as the reason why I prefer Skyr.” (Interviewee #7)

”All the quarks taste the same. I think PROfeel might be more expensive than its competitors. PROfeel is branded in a way that is meant for active people – in the packaging the amount of protein is stated in percentages. Also, PROfeel knows what it is doing and does it in a professional way.” (Interviewee #8)

5.2 Experience and brand experience

The main focus of this research is on experience. As mentioned earlier in the theory section of this study, an experience is highly personal (LaSalle & Britton 2003 in Gentile et al. 2007; Schmitt 1999) and can be defined in various ways.

“An experience is always personal. No one can tell how you are experiencing something or how you should be experiencing it.” (Interviewee #6)

The interviewees were asked to freely describe what an experience is. For some interviewees this seemed to be a difficult question and caused anxiety. Some, on the other hand approached

the question by giving an example of an experience. The interviewees “definitions” of an experience varied but there were also noticeable similarities.

“An experience is something that involves feelings, meaning that it evokes emotions. Every day, I have different kinds of experiences, mostly in customer service situations. An experience is a coalition of thoughts, emotions and attitudes.” (Interviewee #7)

All interviewees mentioned that the emotions or feelings an experience evokes is a critical part of it and a fundamental element of an experience. Many identified that an experience can be either positive or negative which is acknowledged by Brakus et al. (2009) in brand experience literature and also by Berry and Carbone (2007).

“I think of an experience as a trade-off; what does it require from me to get something. Do I receive some added value for what I am paying for? If the experience exceeds my expectations, the experience will be positive one, and in contrary if does not meet my expectations, it most likely is a negative one.” (Interviewee #7)

One of the interviewees approached experience by sharing a recent negative experience which had affected the way the interviewee perceived the service provider currently. Schmitt (2011, 60) mentions that perceptions, feelings, and thoughts that consumers have when they come in touch with products and brands are part of an experience.

Many first approached experience as it being something extraordinary, very special, but the more they thought about it, they came to realize an experience could be something very normal. This being said, many had contrary characteristics within the individual definitions of experience as can be interpreted in Interviewee #4’s (see below) description of experience.

Even though the examples and characteristics of experience differed, it was interesting to see that even in their own, short definitions the vague and broad nature of the term could clearly be understood. For example, the following quote describes well how many of interviewees began describing an experience:

“Living abroad - that is a memorable experience. An experience is something special, it stands out... However, it can also be something very normal, a smaller thing. For example,

today, I ate vegetarian cheese for the first time in my life and I would count that as an experience as well.” (Interviewee #4)

A couple of the interviewees felt that the human connection, or customer service situation is an important part of the experience. However, as Brakus et al. (2009) note experience can be indirect or direct.

“There is some context, the situation where you are. Then there are feelings. Whether you have positive or negative emotions that has an effect on what kind of experience you will have. I assume, also expectations and assumptions have an impact on the experience. If there is customer service included, the way you are treated and how you feel is a critical part of building the experience.” (Interviewee #3)

The examples interviewees gave on experiences were mostly customer service situations; an experience at a restaurant, an experience on trying out a wedding dress and an experience on traveling. Homburg et al. (2015) state that nascent CEM research is limited to a service context, however it has been acknowledged beyond this context in later studies.

The interviewees were asked to freely pick a brand that they associate with experience. All the examples the interviewees gave, they were able to recall them vividly. Schmitt (2011) states that being able to memorize an experience is one of the characteristics of an experience. The nature of the experiences with a brand was positive for all, with the exception of one interviewee that told about a recent negative experience with a gym brand. Without any mentions of FMCG – industry, some mentioned well-known Finnish brands in this industry, such as Fazer and Paulig. Clearly, marketers have begun to highlight the significance of creating experiences for consumer.

The brands differed in context a lot. Some interviewees named a specific brand, some only mentioned a product category, such as “cars”, and gave more broad explanations. One interviewee gave a detailed description of what she was wearing 50 years ago. In addition, the feeling was palpable as the story was being told. She still today is loyal to that specific brand.

“Marimekko. They have good products. When I was a teenager I had Marimekko overalls and they were such good quality. They had stripes and I loved them. I wore them together with Swedish clogs. The overalls never broke. I have bought many Marimekko products since and they have always been good quality even though they are a bit pricy. If you invest on Marimekko products, it is guaranteed they will last.” (Interviewee #5)

The interviewees were asked to list the elements or parts that they think are the “building blocks” of an experience. Besides the elements that the interviewees were able to identify, there were also hidden elements in their stories, or examples, that they were not able to necessarily identify and express. Table 4 presents the elements of experience that emerged in the answers.

Table 4. Elements of experience identified by interviewees

Elements of experience	Interviewee								
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9
Appreciation					x		x		
Assumptions	x		x						
Atmosphere		x						x	
Attitudes			x				x		
Company (friends)								x	
Customer service	x	x	x				x	x	x
Emotions/Feelings			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Expectations	x		x				x	x	
Extraordinary				x				x	
Memory		x				x		x	
Novelty				x				x	
Personal				x	x	x			
Physical place	x	x				x			
Product (consumption)	x	x							x
Relatability			x					x	
Senses						x			
Thoughts/ Perceptions			x	x	x	x	x		

A lot of similarities were found in the answers, for example many mentioned that an experience must evoke **feelings**, or in general associated an experience strongly with **emotions**. In all of the customer experience and brand experience models, feelings and emotions are identified as an element (Brakus et al. 2009; Gentile et al. 2007; Hirschmann & Holbrook 1982; Pine & Gilmore 1998; Schmitt 1999). **Consumption** was also seen being part of the experience, which is especially highlighted by Hirschmann and Holbrook (1982). Also, it was mentioned several times that **own expectations** and **previous experience** are part of the experience. And some elaborated on this by mentioning that an experience must **redeem promises**.

“If I think of a restaurant experience, usually the food is the main thing why I am going to a restaurant, and it is a biggest part of the experience. However, the service and the atmosphere have a great impact as well on the overall experience. Also, the interior design and things that you don’t consciously think about affect, too.” (Interviewee #2)

“An experience is something that evokes feelings, it is probably the most important element. The feelings can be either positive or negative because the experience can be both.” (Interviewee #4)

The interviewees were more likely to associate service-minded brands with experience. However, when they were asked to name a FMCG brand that they associated with experience and describing why, this seemed not to be an impossible task after all. Although, the brands they picked to describe were different, the reasons why they associated experience with them, were similar. Feeling was the number one element brought up, and brands like Paulig, Coca-cola and Fazer were all described to be able to convey a warm feeling. Also, it was mentioned by several that the ways these brands communicate to people is **relatable**. Schmitt (1999) recognizes ‘relate’ as one of the five SEMs, as well as Gentile et al. (2007) do define is as a component of CE. In a way, the brands aim at being approachable, rather than trying to create something extraordinary.

“The coffee brand Paulig. They have successfully been able to convey a warm feeling. Also the way the brand represent itself in an everyday –kind of a way, makes it easy to relate to the brand. ” (Interviewee #3)

“Fazer is a very well created brand. I view Fazer as Finnish and being a lovely thing. When you think of chocolate, you instantly think of Fazer. Maybe I am thinking of this because it is almost the holiday season and I have recently seen some ads of Fazer. They are trying to appeal to the emotions and to the small moments that everyone has in their everyday life. I think these things are well associated with the brand.” (Interviewee #8)

Brand experience is a rather new term, and not necessarily common for consumers. It was coined by Brakus et al. in 2009. Interviewees associated this term with a well-known brand that is able to deliver quality products or services, meets expectations and the overall core meaning of the brand. Many suggested brand experience is how the brand is perceived and associated it with high quality.

Different kinds of notions aroused which makes sense as the nature of brand experience is holistic and includes four dimensions (Brakus et al. 2009).

“For me brand experience is a brand’s product that I have experienced to be good. Always when I have encounters with that brand and notice a new product launch, it immediately arouses my interest. The expected value is high when you know it’s a quality product.”
(Interviewee #1)

“A brand in a way represents the target group of a specific brand – the core essence of the people and the how they act. In order to create brand experience the brand should be able to be the embodiment of its target group and support or relate to their life situation and interests.” (Interviewee #5)

“It is how I perceive the brand. The visual aspects of the brand is part of the brand experience. Also, what the brand aims to communicate and how well it serves what the company, brand, or product strives to communicate.” (Interviewee #9)

5.3 PROfeel marketing communications and consumer experiences

This sub-chapter concentrates on consumers’ thoughts of PROfeel marketing campaigns in a broad, shallow way and describes consumers experience experiences, especially highlighting consumption.

5.3.1 The message in PROfeel marketing communications

The interviewees were asked to describe a PROfeel marketing campaign or parts of it as detailed as they could recall and focus on the experiential aspects. The interviewees that had stronger and more extreme opinions about PROfeel, had also noticed and paid attention to the marketing activities and were able to describe them more detailed than those that perceived the brand very neutrally. However, it was a challenge for many to recall any specific marketing actions. They could vaguely remember seeing something somewhere, but were not being quite sure.

“I’ve seen some ads in stores, they have good colors and layout. I think I have paid attention to this because I am familiar with the brand and I know from own experience that they have good products and they make you feel good. The bright colors are visible and easy to recall.”

(Interviewee #4)

The marketing communications of PROfeel emphasizes wellbeing, active lifestyle and energetic feeling for the everyday life (Brand representative). As Jenkinson (2007) argue it’s crucial for marketing communications to bring alive the brand, product, or service by different means: verbally, visually or physically. That is what PROfeel aims at doing by focusing on communicating the above mentioned things. Marketing communications in all forms, plays an important role in creating experiences (Keller 2009). Brakus et al. (2009) mentions that experiences can also be created indirectly when consumers are exposed to advertising and marketing communication. Marketing channels make it possible for consumers to be in constant contact and experience the brand before and between purchases. Also, Schmitt (1999) notes that communications is ExPro (experience provider).

All the interviewees were able to identify the same themes of PROfeel communications, the ones Brand representative emphasized, were also mentioned by interviewees.

“PROfeel is encouraging people to obtain a healthy lifestyle. People don’t need any supplementary protein if they are not actively working out. Therefore, there is a big incentive for people to be more active. I think PROfeel very clearly emphasizes that it is for athletes. It is important to take care of yourself and your health. I interpret their slogan “puhtia

viikkoon” (energy for the week) that everyone should take care of themselves. You can’t get through the week if you don’t exercise regularly and eat healthy.” (Interviewee #4)

“For me PROfeel represents an active lifestyle and it is definitely brought up in their marketing communications. It supports an active lifestyle.” (Interviewee #6)

Roswinanto and Strutton (2014) present that aligning messages with core values with the brand, consumers’ brand experience can be improved by advertising. This is can be as well interpreted of the comment of Interviewee #4 and #6.

”Well, the packaging is red. Red is an energetic color, so I would think they are trying to create an image that it is an energizing and uplifting brand. And also, I am sure the red packing was a conscious decision as it is a highlight color and it stands out of the crowd. However, why do they have an English name? In a way it confuses me as I see Valio as such a Finnish brand.” (Interviewee #9)

Roswinanto and Strutton (2014) mention the brand name being one of the antecedents of favorable brand experience. It seems that brand name, indeed, evokes confusion if not aligned with else what the brand does.

5.3.2 Experiencing PROfeel in different situations

PROfeel being a FMCG brand, it is obvious that the consumption of PROfeel product impacts on the experience building greatly. Consumption experience were theorized by Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) and Schmitt & Zarantonello (2013) acknowledges consumption being part of the experience. Further, Brakus et al. (2009) view consumption a natural part of brand experience.

It seems that brand experience is created even if the consumers don’t consciously pay attention to that. Therefore, by dissecting the experience into pieces and approaching it from different viewpoints, much information could be gathered. Consumers have much more opinions, let alone experiences of FMCG brands than they are able to express with words. Although a huge part of the experience is the actual consumption, it seems that the marketing actions in fact has had a great impact on what the consumers know, imagine, and experience of the brand.

Consumers' experiences are personal because individuals have unique preferences and therefore pay attention to different things. However, the experiences consumers have can have many similar features even though the experiences have occurred in different situations. Also, some had stronger experiences than others. However, a lot of emphasis was also put on the recently launched product and it evoked rather strong feelings and opinions in many even though a consumption of it had not occurred. The experience, in that case, is only based on the previous experience of the brand and the marketing actions the consumers have been exposed to.

Consumption is a crucial part of FMCG brand's experience and most likely the most common thing consumers are able to express of a brand as such. It could be stated that a FMCG brand experience would require consumption of a specific brand's product. However, this most certainly is not the case. For example, consumer and marketing research has implicated that experiences occur when consumers search for products, when they shop for them, and when they consume them (Brakus et al. 2009). And, also the results of this study also support this. Obviously, the brand is most commonly connected to consumption of the brand's product, but it must be kept in mind that the situations in which the consumption or other touchpoints have occurred, have a great impact on the experience as a whole.

The interviewees interpreted that in this context an experience requires the consumption of the product, and therefore they focused on describing situations as such. At first, it seemed difficult for interviewees to specify and express other ways have they experienced the brand than consumption. Thus, it was asked on what kind of situations the interviewees have experienced the brand. Still, the answers were mainly about the consumption but those provided deeper insights why the brand was associated being easy, quick and healthy. It is important to address that the consumption of the experience cannot be separated of the experience rather it must be approached from different viewpoints in order to understand it. In fact, approaching the experience in this way, interviewees were able to think of experience on an alternative manner and word their answers much richer than only mentioning consuming the brand's product.

The interviews suggest that the PROfeel brand products are often consumed as a snack in different kinds of situations: while studying, working, before/after a workout, or while traveling. Some elaborated on this by mentioning that the products are easy to carry with, are healthy and

give energy while being busy. Table 5 presents the different situations the interviewees mentioned having had experiences of PROfeel. A questions focusing on the different situations in which the brand is experienced was added after the pilot interviews, and thus Interviewee #1 and #2 are left out from the table

Table 5. Situations in which experiences with PROfeel have occurred

Situations in which experiences have occurred	Interviewee						
	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9
At work					x		x
Cafés							x
Cafeteria in the university		x			x		
Consuming in general	x						x
Reading magazines			x				
Shopping in grocery stores	x				x		x
Snack before/after a workout							x
Tastings			x	x			
Traveling				x			
Watching TV	x		x				
Website				x			

On top of these kinds of situations, some recognized they have experienced PROfeel when having seen a commercial in TV, seen the product in stores, or even visited the website. These may at first glance seem irrelevant, but when the interviewees continued to describe the situations further, they were able to surprisingly well describe their experiences. Some interviewees were surprised by their own answers. Many admitted “I did not know I felt so strongly about this and it evoke these kinds of emotions in me”.

“When there has been tastings at grocery stores when I’ve been shopping. Also, I read a lot magazines, so I would say in this context I’ve had experiences with PROfeel through that.”

(Interviewee #5)

“When I visited the website of PROfeel. It impacted on the image I have of the brand. There were a lot of information about PROfeel, but also about protein in general, and the importance of it. I really liked how all the relevant information could be found in one place.”

There were articles of protein, and also a protein calculator and in fact I calculated my personal need of protein. ” (Interviewee #6)

“When I have seen PROfeel products at a store or at the cafeteria in the university. I guess, at work I have eaten PROfeel products the most. I have not really paid attention to the actual communications and messages, I have just seen the brand and sometimes purchased the products. I recall being at school studying and being hungry and PROfeel has been very visible at our cafeteria. I have chosen to buy that because it is a good snack, healthy and nutritious.” (Interviewee #7)

“Sometimes I carry in my backpack when I am going to the gym.” (Interviewee #9)

The only time interviewees initiated contact with PROfeel was only if they felt the need to get an answer to what the product contains.

“In grocery store I have searched for the quark because I wanted to read the packaging label and know what the product actually contains. So I read the packaging label.” (Interviewee #4)

5.4 Experiences of PROfeel on different touchpoints

The touchpoints PROfeel use in the marketing campaigns are the following: mass media including TV, print and outdoor advertising; social media channels including Facebook, Instagram, blogs, and Youtube; website; mobile applications, tastings, and packaging. This list is not exhaustive, these were the touchpoints discussed with the Brand representative. An illustration of the touchpoints can be seen in figure 4. The touchpoints overlap each other because they are viewed supporting one another. Also, they are connected to each other. The packaging is often seen in the TV, print and outdoor ads. A Youtube video is embedded in their website. In social media there are links to the website. It’s crucial the touchpoints are connected to each other, that way a much stronger communication program, let alone experience can be built (Jenkinson 2007; Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann 2015).

”The same creative visual concept is utilized in different channels. In different channels we have modified the implementation so that they fit to that specific channel. In outdoor

advertising, the products and fonts are big, as they must be seen. In social media we do something different. In TV, we have films which are also utilized in digital channels. The same visual is utilized also in print advertising.” (Brand representative)

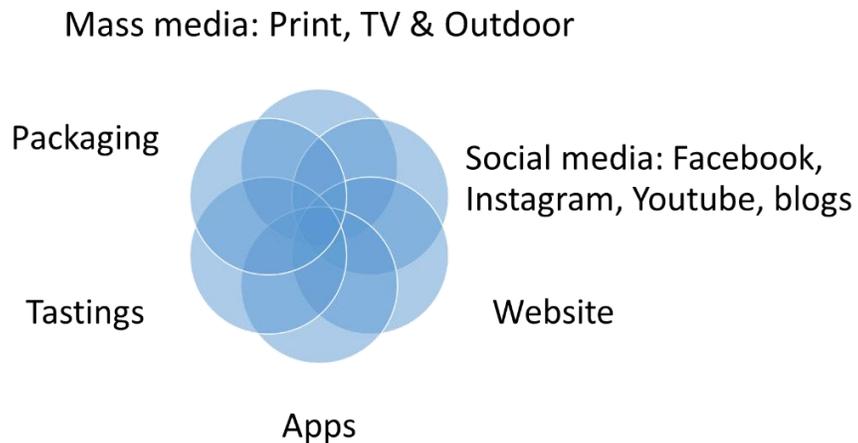


Figure 4. PROfeel touchpoints.

Almost none of the interviewees had had encounters in digital touchpoints with PROfeel prior to the couple of interviewees that were demonstrated some of the digital touchpoints. The experiences the consumers were able to express the best included the consumption of the product, seeing an advertisement on TV or in magazines, or participating in tastings in-stores. These were mostly offline touchpoints.

PROfeel television advertisements were identified by all of the interviewees. Other touchpoints identified were for example advertisements in magazines, tastings, packaging, and in-store advertising. Some interviewees were able to mention several touchpoints and some only one. Also, the content what they could recall varied.

“Tastings at grocery stores. Products are presented with a positive attitude. In addition, these tastings are informative. I think I’ve seen commercials on TV. And I might have come across some online banners promoting PROfeel when surfing online. Also, in some magazines I’ve seen ads.” (Interviewee #1)

Humanic clues, how consumers sense the representative is behaving, and such (Berry & Carbone 2007) seem to create experience that are easy to recall.

“I can only recall the red packaging if that counts.” (Interviewee #8)

5.4.1 Offline touchpoints

In this research TV, print and outdoor advertisement, as well as, packaging and tastings are regarded as offline touchpoints. Each of these touchpoints are presented and analyzed.

“In TV we create awareness as it is a mass media. Similarly in print media, we create awareness. Furthermore, in print media we are able to deepen the information much more. If someone is interested, she can read it much more detailed and focused.”

(Brand representative)

Television commercials are an effective way to create awareness. Cleff, Lin and Walter (2014) conclude in their research that brand awareness, and especially top-of-the-mind brand recall is better achieved by traditional means of branding e.g., marketing communications than by building up brand experience. The findings of this study agree with this statement. All the interviewees could recall seeing a TV advertisement; some better than the others. Some interviewees were able to describe in more detail what they have seen, and how they experienced it, whereas some could only vaguely recall seeing something relating to PROfeel on television.

“I can recall a TV ad. There is a girl dancing in front of a mirror and is endorsing either the quark or the protein drink, can't remember which one. Then I've seen another TV ad in which somebody went somewhere and had a backpack. I guess the idea was that the protein powder is easy to take with you or something like that.” (Interviewee #6)

Although TV commercials were not naturally identified as touchpoints for all as some mentioned TV advertisements only after asking if they had had encounters with that touchpoint. Also, it must be stated that some had a feeling they had seen, but were not sure. After naming TV as a touchpoint, all of the interviewees either had a feeling they had seen a commercial of some PROfeel product or were able to give a detailed description of a specific TV advertisement.

According to the Brand representative the main objective of TV advertisement is to create awareness and reach big masses.

“I think the TV ads are similar to the ones I have seen on outdoor billboards. They follow the same pattern: somebody has been running and is eating or drinking a PROfeel product. The main thing is that there is a strong connection made to exercising. I think they are trying to appeal to consumers’ emotions.” (Interviewee #4)

“I remember the red color and references to active lifestyle” (Interviewee #8)

Brand representative mentioned, **print media** is an important medium that reaches a lot of people. The findings support this, almost all could recall seeing an ad in a magazine or somehow else had an encounter in print media. Two interviewees mentioned that they rarely read any physical paper magazines, so they could not recall having any encounters with PROfeel in this touchpoints.

“I read Fit magazine, and I once read an article where they compared different brands quarks, and one of the brand was PROfeel.” (Interviewee #9)

“When there has been tastings at grocery stores when I’ve been shopping. Also, I read a lot of magazines, so I would say in this context I’ve had experiences with PROfeel through that. When seeing an ad in a magazine you can focus on it much more than seeing a quick advert in TV. It goes by so fast.” (Interviewee #5)

The experiences were quite different from those formed of TV advertisements. Some interviewees noted gaining information and insights on PROfeel by seeing an advertisement in a magazine. In this case, this touchpoint would include informative communicative elements as Stein & Ramaseshan (2016) distinguish. Certainly, there are atmospheric elements, too, but it seems the informative elements stressed more by the interviewees.

Outdoor advertising have an effect of being a reminder, for example seeing a large advertisement of a can when going to the store will stimulate the sense of sight. Majority of

interviews were under the impression they had recognized this touchpoint, but again, were not sure.

“I have seen in many bus stops ads of PROfeel. I think they are great, nice ads. They are bright and makes you smile and feel good. In a way they encourage you to buy PROfeel products because the good feeling is easily conveyed” (Interviewee #4)

Tastings is the only touchpoint included in PROfeel marketing campaign in which there is human connection, and customer service occurs to some extent. Also, it is regarded as a direct touchpoint according to Meyer & Schwager (2007). Tasting is a critical part of a consumers’ decision making process. Samples (tastings) are seen as a touchpoint in pre-purchase phase in Davis and Longoria’s (2003) brand touchpoint wheel.

*“We do **tastings** quite a lot. We want to share the product and inspire them to getting know the product.” (Brand representative)*

The findings suggest that even though many had seen tastings at store, not many actually had stopped and been involved in one. However, it must be emphasized the interviewees that had encounters with PROfeel in tasting situations, could easily recall those and told about them in a positive tone. Tastings may create experiences and be an important part of the brand experience as it includes consuming the product and most likely will impact more than one dimension of the brand experience. But this may only occur if the consumer is willing to actively take part in the tasting and be present in that moment.

“I am a victim of tastings. I love to try new things and I am always the first in line trying new things.” (Interviewee #6)

“I can recall most vividly tastings at the grocery store. There has been a sales rep presenting a new product or a flavor. This works in my case, as I like to try new products. Usually, I end up buying the product home and the rest is history.” (Interviewee #1)

Hulten (2011) mention that the sense of taste is the most distinct emotional sense and often interacts with other senses. At the same time, the consumer is consuming the product and provided information by the sales representative. All the five senses are active in this type of a

touchpoint, and it has been suggested by Gentile et al. (2007) that sensorial component was the most significant for products belonging to FMCG industry, such as Pringles and Gatorade.

The **packaging** of PROfeel was one of the only touchpoints that was instantly and easily recalled by all of the interviews. The Brand representative mentioned the packaging is an extremely important touchpoint and it seems resonating well with consumers.

The interviewees comments on packaging were divided, there were two extremes. Some stated that already the packaging conveys a sporty vibe and energetic feeling, whereas the others felt annoyed by the red color and it having a negative impact on them.

“The packaging is red and white. It’s visual and it stands out. It is easily recognizable, you don’t have to search for it at a store. Most of the other similar brands have lighter colors.”

(Interviewee #5)

“PROfeel is trying too hard to get attention with the packaging. I don’t think it fits to Valio brand. PROfeel is such a strong own brand. On one hand I think it’s good that it’s different but on the other hand I think there is a big contradiction with PROfeel and Valio. It confuses me what it is. Is it Valio or not?” (Interviewee #7)

“The packaging is very visual. You easily remember what it is. And I get a sporty vibe already of the package.” (Interviewee #8)

Somewhat strong reactions of this particular touchpoints align with Hulten’s (2011) view on sensory marketing. It is further elaborated that the sense of sight is the most powerful one for noticing changes and differences in the environment. Also, Hulten (2011) describe that sight is the sense used in perceiving goods or services. In addition, as said by Khan & Rahman (2015b) packaging is a powerful way of communicating meaning via experience. This very clear in the statement of interviewee #9. Packaging here is the embodiment of an effective visual stimuli, and mechanical clues as such are powerful (Berry & Carbone 2007; Hulten 2011).

Besides these above mentioned touchpoints, also other relevant touchpoints emerged, such as the product itself. To specify, the product inside of the packaging. It was experienced neutral to

for the most part, but some had stronger opinions. Many addressed it being tasty, and does what it is supposed to – a healthy product that gives you energy.

“It’s good and cool that there are different flavors. However, I am a skeptical about how the flavor is created.” (Interviewee #4)

“Quite basic, similar to other brands. I think it tastes processed and I don’t get the connection to Valio.” (Interviewee #7)

5.4.2 Digital touchpoints

The Brand representative stated that with digital touchpoints a broad coverage be reached, awareness can be created and for example in website or in social media detailed information can be provided. Parise, Guinan & Kafka (2016) state digital technologies and channels have become a significant part of consumers’ everyday life. The brand representative mentioned that the emphasis on marketing campaigns are on the digital channels, or touchpoints, for PROfeel.

According to Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann (2015) website is a functional touchpoint, as it is a single-way, informative channel. In their study, website was the digital touchpoint having the highest rate of use. This aligns well with PROfeel, or Valio as PROfeel does not have its own, individual **website**, rather a page dedicated for PROfeel brand and its products.

“Our website is very comprehensive and it is a very important touchpoint as, it is the home base of the information. All the relevant information should be found there. These days, if something, in this case a product, cannot be found online, it does not exist. And if it is not found by the brand’s official website, it will be found somewhere else. Finding the information on an official website you can be certain the information is valid and it is presented accordingly.” (Brand representative)

The findings indicate that consumers do not take the initiative to visit a FMCG brand’s website because they do not feel the need for doing so. Only one interviewee told she had visited the website because of *curiosity* and in fact, the visit had made her even more interested in the brand. Some commented that the urge to visit a FMCG brand’s website should be very high in order to visit the website. It was mentioned that if there were to be situation that information of the brand

or products were needed, then there would be a higher chance of visiting the website. One of the interviewees made an interesting notion by mentioning that she never clicks on any banners or displays she sees when surfing online because they annoy her. So, even if the website would be one click away she would not click it.

“I was surprised how much information there were not only about the brand, but also about protein, and its importance. All the relevant information could be found in place which I really enjoyed. I was surfing at the website because of pure curiosity and actually while reading the information on the website I became more interested – not necessarily the recipes or so on, but the importance of protein. The articles on protein were an interesting read. They even had a protein calculator for calculating how much you will need protein, and I used it. Very nice.”

(Interviewee #6)

Social media is regarded as a social touchpoint by Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015).

Also, Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) state that in social networks consumers may search for information. Most importantly, social media work as its best in the post-purchase phase of the selling process as consumers share their experiences and in the best case scenario may turn into advocates (Edelman 2010).

“Valio has a strong presence in social media in which all our brand our presented, including PROfeel. It could be said that Facebook is the one channel that reach very well the target market of Valio. A lot of Valio’s products buy the ones who actively go to grocery store, and usually those are moms. Of course it can be someone else, but mostly moms and especially the protein powder is targeted towards stay-at-home moms for giving an extra boost for the everyday life.” (Brand representative)

The Brand representative mentioned that Valio has a strong social media presence. The interviewees mentioned being very active users of various digital channels. Many even mentioned using Facebook the most out of all the digital channel. It is sensible for companies to be active on channels where the consumers are active. This is supported by findings of Straker, Wrigely and Rosemann (2015) as Facebook was shown to have the third highest rate of use with 94 % of companies using it.

Surprisingly, only one interviewee (Interviewee #4, see below) had come across any posts of PROfeel or noticed a friend liking, sharing or posting something. Also, PROfeel has sponsored ads, both in Facebook and Instagram, and some of the interviewees could vaguely remember seeing some, but not paid any particular attention to them.

“I have seen something on Facebook because my mom and her friend has linked some PROfeel posts and been inspired of them. So, I think maybe their generation pays more attention to that stuff. I think they have good ads and they are trying to appeal to emotions, but in this case it doesn’t work for me. I work out a lot and I am quite well-educated on nutritious food so I pay more attention to what’s actually in the product.” (Interviewee #4)

Most of the interviewees were 23-28 years old, and it might be that this age group uses Facebook as a social media channel differently than another age group. One interviewee had noticed there has been a change of her social media behavior in the year or two. She mentioned that two years ago Facebook would have been the number one channel that she uses, but these days it is Instagram and she does not even bother to go to Facebook that much anymore.

“I have not visited the social media channels of Valio nor have I seen any posts. Or maybe I have, but I have not paid attention to them and can’t remember.” (Interviewee #7)

Interviewee #9 was shown PROfeel’s marketing activities in digital touchpoints, such as Facebook and Instagram. It was noted, that PROfeel is almost seen as a separate brand of Valio. Therefore, as Valio does not have separate social media channels for PROfeel, confusion to some degree of the messages could be interpreted.

I don’t think Valio’s Instagram represents PROfeel as the best it could. The posts don’t really convey the same message of PROfeel than in the other channels. ” (Interviewee 9)

The findings of Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) give an explanation of the view of Interviewee #9. The researchers state that many companies use several social touchpoints but unfortunately unsuccessfully have enough integration and consistent activeness across these touchpoints.

Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) consider Youtube and blogs as community touchpoints. They further elaborate that these touchpoints have the strengths in providing richer format of text, images and videos. The Brand representative stated that at the moment PROfeel is not focusing on Youtube as a touchpoint, however the material found there are valid and useful.

None of the interviewees had watched a Youtube video before or knew they had Youtube videos excluding the one interviewee that had from her own interest visited Valio's website to research PROfeel admitted noticing a Youtube video embedded in the website featuring the world champion pole dancer Oona Kivelä, but didn't feel the need to watch it. But it was further mentioned, was interested because saw there was an athlete on the video she recognized.

Blogs as a touchpoint the Brand representative stated the following:

“We collaborate with bloggers. Right now, as we have the protein powder campaign going on, we have some bloggers writing about their experience with this product. The way it works is that Valio approaches the bloggers and then they honestly tell it's a sponsored collaboration. It's very transparent.”

Most of the interviewees mentioned they don't read blogs at all, or only seldom so they have not had any recent encounters with PROfeel through blogs, nevertheless experiences of PROfeel. Many also mentioned, that they used to be active blog readers in the past, and could recall reading about the protein quarks when they were launched.

“If I remember correctly, I had my first encounter of PROfeel in a blog. It was when I was actively reading a lot of blogs. I probably then bought PROfeel quark myself, quickly after reading about that.” (Interviewee #7)

As the above comment suggest, community touchpoints are effective, especially if a representative of the target market is supporting and encouraging to try something. Consumers feel they are relatable, and this aligns with the notions of Schmitt (1999). It is further suggested by Schmitt (1999) that campaigns emphasizing relate – module, generally show the referent person or group that the customer is supposed to relate to.

PROfeel has one **mobile application**, called PROfeel Treeniapuri which is a free, work out application to encourage consumers to be active and maintain a healthy lifestyle (Valio 2016). As of now, the Brand representative admitted that it is unsure what the next steps for this application are. In addition, Valio has another app ‘Valio Reseptit’, in which consumers search for recipes. One interviewee was aware of that Valio has the latter mentioned mobile application. Others did not know PROfeel or Valio had applications. One interviewee (#8) mentioned:

“I could have assumed they have because everybody has an app or two.”

It was stated by a few interviewees that they do not want download any more applications to their smartphones. The mobile applications were not regarded as belonging to the most significant touchpoints for PROfeel by the Brand representative.

As a summary table 6 presents the encounters the interviewees have had in the different touchpoints. This does not include those encounters with digital touchpoints that were demonstrated to some of the interviewees.

Table 6. Summary of the interviewees’ encounters in different touchpoints

Touchpoints	Interviewee								
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9
Television	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Print	x	x			x	x			x
Outdoor advertising		x	x			x	x		
Tastings	x				x	x		x	
Packaging	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Product	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Website						x			
Social media (Facebook or Instagram)				x					
Blogs							x		
Mobile applications		x							

Figure 5 presents the four digital touchpoint typologies suggested by Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015). Their findings indicated the companies have either a mix of functional and social touchpoint, or a mix of functional and corporate touchpoints.

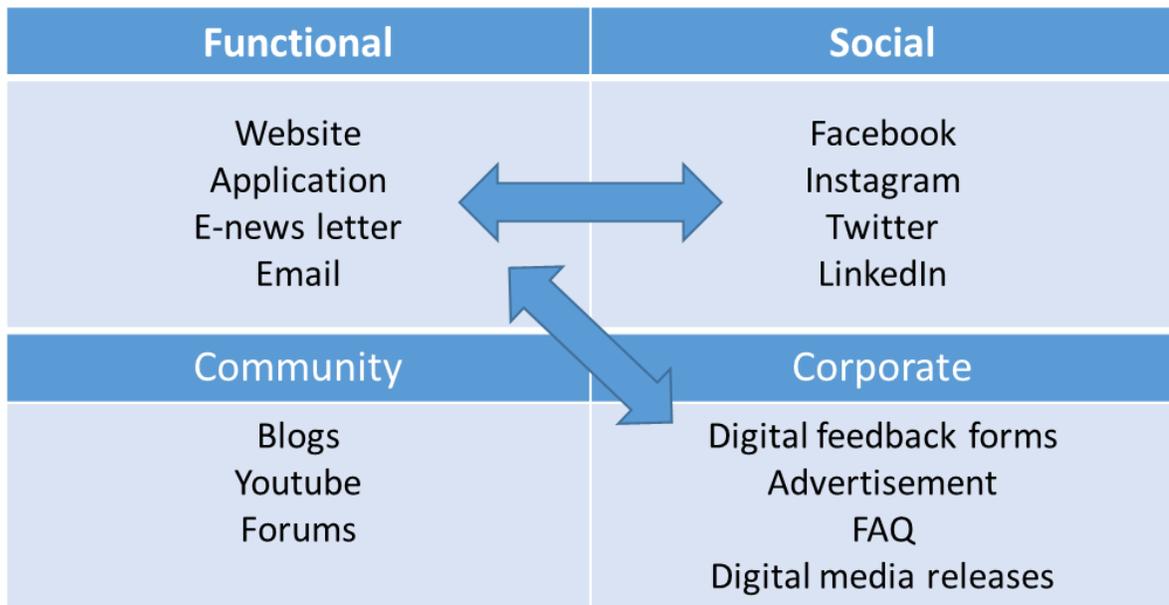


Figure 5. The four typologies of digital touchpoints. Adapted from Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015)

Overall, it could be stated that following the typology of Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) PROfeel indeed mainly focus on functional and corporate touchpoints. The findings of the study indicated that this was typical for companies operating in the field of food or beverages. Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) mention that as corporate touchpoints being simplex, or in other words, one-way communication, they require the customer to initiate the contact with the company by searching for the information. However, the company can via functional touchpoints can share this information (Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann 2015). However, it must be emphasized that PROfeel is putting a lot of effort in social touchpoints, and have some activity in community touchpoints as well although they are not regarded as the most significant ones. For example, the Brand representative noted the following:

“Sometimes we have some competitions going on as part of a campaign with the objective of activating the consumers. For example, a competition in social media could involve the

consumers by asking them to post a photo and participating or commenting something, or such. The objective of these are the consumer dialogue, activating the consumers. However, they don't necessarily have radical effects on sales."

Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) acknowledges consumer activations as means of engaging customers in social touchpoints.

5.5 Brand experience of PROfeel

Although the four dimensions of brand experiences should be looked at as a whole rather than splitting them into individual dimensions, brand experience is often studied dimension by dimension. The pioneer of experiential marketing, Schmitt (1999) argued that marketers should strive strategically for creating holistically integrated experiences that include qualities of all five different kinds of experiences: sense, feel, think, act and relates.

In this sub-chapter, the dimensions are first looked at separately, thereafter the brand experience as a whole will be discussed. To make a connection with PROfeel marketing campaigns and brand experience, the dimensions of brand experience were dissected and questions of each dimension were asked from the interviewees. Brand experience dimensions cannot be separated as the whole concept of is a holistic look of all the dimensions. However, in some industries some dimensions come across stronger than in others and it also varies how the consumers personally perceive the brand. Table 7 presents the brand experience dimensions that were most emphasized by the interviewees. The interviewees did not specifically mention these dimensions, but these are identified according to the author's interpretation of the interviewees' answers.

Table 7. The brand experience dimensions stressed the most by interviewees

Brand experience dimensions	Interviewee								
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9
Sensory	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Affective			x	x	x				x
Intellectual	x			x	x				
Behavioral			x					x	

In this research, the sense dimension is without a doubt the one dimension that stands out the most in this research. This is also evident in research that have included FMCG products or brands, even if not entirely focusing on only FMCG brands (e.g. Cleff, Lin and Walter 2014; Gentile et al. 2007).

Interviewees considered sensory experiences being the most important in PROfeel marketing campaigns and that should be focused on even more. The sense of taste and sight were stressed. However, it could have been assumed that taste would have emerged as the primary sense as a FMCG product will eventually be consumed, but according to the findings the visual elements of the brand are even more important.

“The taste is neutral, the red packaging has caught my attention more.” (Interviewee #2)

“The packaging, sure it stands out, but it is too much, it almost annoys me.” (Interviewee #4)

“Sight and taste are the strongest. As I said, the packaging is quite striking and easily recognizable. And in their website and social media channels they are clearly trying to create an image of high interest in wellbeing, youth and energy. This is also conveyed in the videos and the colors used.” (Interviewee #9)

The visual elements were mostly recognized in packaging, and in the advertisements in print and outdoor. A reason, taste did not emerge as the strongest sense, could be that there are so many similar products available in the market, and that is difficult for companies to compete with functional attributes, such as the product itself. Hulten (2011) supports this view by stating that the companies should aim at creating sensorial strategies in order to stand out from the crowd, especially when functional or rational attributes are often the same. The consumer consider the product itself quite similarly as the competing ones, so the statement of Hulten seems reasonable. Also the statement of Cleff, Lin and Walter (2014) align with this as according to them food products provide more sensory indulgence and thus possess more an emotional benefit than a functional benefit.

Those interviewees that had a limited number of encounters with PROfeel touchpoints had neutral to mildly positive feelings of the brand.

“Quite neutral feelings. I recognize the products but I don’t have any attachment to them.”

(Interviewee #1)

“Mostly positive feelings, but nothing super strong. I associate PROfeel with being active.”

(Interviewee #3)

The brand representative acknowledged that PROfeel aims to build an emotional bond with customers:

“Videos, in TV or Youtube videos are a great way to create the emotional attachment. It works better than print, a photo. And all the marketing actions taken –the product has to redeem the expectations, thoughts and everything we have created with the marketing campaign.

Everything has to cumulate that the product inside the can is as fresh or tasty as it has been promised.”

The Brand representative’s view was strongly supported by Interviewee #4 that was shown some PROfeel Youtube videos and she expressed her thoughts as follows:

“Youtube videos –very clearly PROfeel is trying to appeal to emotions and to the feeling you get after a workout. If you just put a can in front of a person it does not do anything, or evoke feelings. So, having a well-known athlete in the videos, it’s quite special and inspiring.”

This supports Roswinanto and Strutton’s (2009) findings on identified celebrity endorsement (or athlete in this case) being one of the antecedents of brand experience. In addition, Schmitt (1999) also described movie stars or athletes of being able to inspire consumers (relate module). Also, Interviewee #9 was shown Youtube videos, and addressed those evoking emotions.

” In the videos they have young, energetic athletes that are exercising. I would say my feelings are stronger than neutral. I thought the videos are great and they evoke feelings.”

The brand representative noted that in the early days, when first PROfeel products were launched, the emphasis on the marketing campaigns were on providing information for consumers of protein; why it’s good for people, and reasons why it is so important. Now, people

are more educated and their level of knowledge of protein is much better which has resulted that PROfeel can focus on communicating other things.

The findings suggest that informational communication interests people and keep them curious.

”The health aspects of the brand’s products make me interested. At this age you have to take care yourself and pay attention to your lifestyle, so I am always curious about health benefits as it is important to me.” (Interviewee #1)

The website was viewed informative which follows the typology of Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015) as they note the purpose of website as a touchpoint is to provide information.

The website is very informative, I like. It’s simple and easy for those who don’t know much about protein. It’s a good basic lesson of what protein is. The recipes on how to use the protein powder are great because I’m sure that not everybody knows how to use it.”

(Interviewee #4)

The marketing communication seems to influence the intellectual dimensions as interviewees who were shown digital touchpoints expressed these kind of thoughts:

”PROfeel is an interesting brand. I like the demonstrative videos of how to use the protein powder. I could look into it even more know, it sure did arise my interest.” (Interviewee #5)

The opinion of Interviewee #5 describes the power of marketing communications. Keller (2010) explains that providing information to consumers on how to use a product or who can use it, is an important part of marketing communications.

“I already have a pretty active lifestyle so PROfeel doesn’t really have an effect on me. However, I think some people watch the videos on how to use PROfeel products and follow the recipes. Why not, I think they are very illustrative” (Interviewee #4)

“Unfortunately PROfeel does not make any change in my behavior or lifestyle. I think it serves more as a reminder that you should strive to have a healthy lifestyle and be active.”

(Interviewee #6)

Interpreting from the above comments, PROfeel has successfully been able to communicate the core message it has intended to the consumer even if does not directly influence in a change of lifestyle. Also, as earlier described the interviewees, they all admitted already having a healthy and active lifestyle. Therefore, PROfeel does not have the power to influence the behavior, as the behavior PROfeel communicates is already occurring. Like Interviewee #6 mentioned, it serves more as a reminder for these types of consumers.

”In a way it makes me think I should be more active myself as PROfeel makes an active lifestyle and working out look so easy and something everyone can do.” (Interviewee #8)

Brand experience is a holistic approach (Brakus et al. 2009) and although the dimensions were separated they all influence each other as depicted in the framework of this study. Certainly, the dimensions that are stressed more depend on the industry and nonetheless of the brand. As the findings suggest, sensory dimension seem to be the most important in this case. Interviewee #6 gave a subjective opinion of the dimensions that she thought resonated to her the strongest:

”Sensory experience is the strongest for me, probably because of the visual of the brand. I know how the brand’s products look like, I’ve tasted some of the products so I know how they taste like. Also, I know the smell of the products, so overall the sensory experience is the one that emerges for me.”

Although the sensory dimension is the strongest according to the findings, also other dimensions can be recognized influencing the brand experience of PROfeel:

“I think it was so great when PROfeel first introduced the flavored quarks. But, I have to say, they taste a little bit too artificial. The visuality of PROfeel evokes quite strong feelings in me. Starting with the packaging, everyone knows how it looks like. And when it comes to the packaging, sure it stands out, but it is too much, it almost annoys me.” (Interviewee #4)

Interviewee #4 admitted earlier that she had once looked up the ingredients of a PROfeel quark as she wanted to find out what it contains and how the taste has been created. And by recognizing it is not as real as she would want it to be, it was in contradiction with her own preferences. This influenced her not to choose those specific products anymore. In summary, the *sense of taste*

(sensory) could be seen as an impetus to *research* (intellectual) the product which influenced her *attitude* (behavioral) towards the product and brand. This being said, the dimensions of brand experience should be looked holistically even if one of the dimensions would be stressed.

Overall, PROfeel brand experience is created in various touchpoints, both offline and digital touchpoints. The touchpoints have different strengths and weaknesses in communicating the elements of brand experience. As PROfeel is a FMCG brand, consumers do not feel the need on building deep relationships with the brand. It's a challenge for a FMCG brand to be seen especially in digital touchpoints, as it is not the priority of consumers to establish relationships with this kind of a brand.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The last chapter of this research discusses the final conclusions of the empirical findings. The chapter begins by concisely summarizing the main findings that emerged in the interviews and answering the research questions set for this study. Thereafter, theoretical contributions are discussed, as well as managerial implications are given. The chapter ends with determining the limitations of this study and suggesting future research directions concerning this research field.

6.1 Conclusions

Experiential marketing, customer experience and brand experience has received much attention in the recent years (e.g. Berry & Carbone 2007; Brakus et al. 2009; Gentile et al. 2007; Greval et al. 2009; Homburg et al. 2015; Schmitt 2010; Schmitt 1999; Verhoef et al. 2009). Companies across different context have adapted experiential elements to their marketing efforts. As the findings indicate brand experience is evident in FMCG industry.

Today, consumers are extremely educated, and hungry for information. This has led consumers becoming more critical and demanding. In order to get consumers attention and focus, it requires great effort from the companies these days. In addition, as the number of touchpoints have increased (Edelman 2010; Straker, Wrigley & Rosemann 2015), it has become critical to choose wisely the most relevant touchpoints which will help to reach the consumers and create an experience (Jenkinson 2007). Also, identifying the relevant stimuli to the brand and focusing leveraging that in marketing communication (Keller 2010) and by other means seems to be an important part of the experience creation (Berry et al. 2002; Brakus et al. 2009; Schmitt 1999).

Experience marketing and customer experience, in particular goes beyond the context of services which Homburg et al. (2015) raised a question of. Experiences can be created without a direct human-connection to the consumers. Indirect ways, such as advertising and digital touchpoints, can create the experience as well (Brakus et al. 2009).

Brand experience should be viewed holistically, although a dimension or two may be emphasized more than the others. This is sensible, that a brand would stress certain experience more, especially if it would be able to leverage its strengths by doing that. This is also supported by the findings of this study.

Consumption is part of experience as noted (Brakus et al. 2009; Hirschmann & Holbrook 1982), however, a brand experience can occur without consumption as well. Marketing actions taken in touchpoints serve as stimuli to create the brand experience. Sure, the brand experience may be drastically different by having consumption included in the experience, but this is to state that a brand experience can exist without consumption, too. In other words, brand experience can develop over time, and can be seen dynamic, rather than static state.

The aim of this study was to gain deeper insight on how consumer experience FMCG brands that have extensive cross-media marketing campaigns. By starting from the sub-questions, the first that was presented is:

What kinds of experiences do FMCG brand's cross-media marketing campaigns create?

The findings of this study indicate the FMCG brands have the potential to create all four kinds of experiences, if looking at the brand experience dimensions as four individual dimensions. However, sensory dimension was dominating in this study. More specifically, the senses of sight and taste were highlighted, sight even more than taste. Interestingly, as none of the interviewees had experiences in consuming the most novel products of PROfeel, the affective dimension was stressed as well. The way some interviewees portrayed PROfeel did not align with the perception they had on Valio, and a contradiction could be interpreted between the umbrella brand and the sub-brand. PROfeel aims at encouraging consumer to be active, behavioral dimension resonated for interviewees to some extent.

It could also be stated, that depending on what touchpoints the interviewees were exposed, different things were brought up. Some touchpoints have the capability to evoke more feelings, whereas others work best as providing information and creating intellectual experiences.

Table 8 summarizes the findings of the touchpoints PROfeel uses to create brand experience for consumers. The brand experience dimensions mentioned are from the consumers' point of view and what emerged in their answers. As these are not statistically researched, any correlations cannot be confirmed. However, future research should examine these in detail.

Table 8. Brand experience dimensions and touchpoints of PROfeel

Touchpoint	Brand experience dimension
YouTube	Affective, Behavioral
Social media	Behavioral & Affective
Website	Intellectual
Packaging	Sensory
Tastings	Sensory & Intellectual & Affective
TV	Affective, Sensory
Blogs	Behavioral
Print	Intellectual, Sensory
Apps	Behavioral

The second sub-questions that was formed is the following:

How do consumers experience FMCG brand's in offline touchpoints?

The findings indicated that offline touchpoints have the strengths in influencing the sensory dimension, whereas the online touchpoints would work better on impacting the behavioral and affective dimensions. For the most part consumers brand experience was based solely on the offline touchpoints, excluding those that were introduced to digital touchpoints during the interviews. The findings indicate that traditional mass media works well in creating awareness and influence the brand experience as well.

How do consumers experience FMCG brand's in digital touchpoints?

Digital touchpoints provide companies various ways of interacting with consumers and communicate, as well as learn from consumers. The focus has much shifted from offline touchpoints to digital touchpoints, as it is noted in the literature, but also by the Brand representative. A surprising finding was that almost none of the interviewees had encounters with the brand in digital touchpoints although a lot of effort is put on those from the company.

The interviewees attitudes towards advertising in digital touchpoints, such as Facebook were revealing. The fact, that there is a flood of information in today's digital world, consumers face frustration and anxiety. That had led to conscious avoidance of brands' advertisement. Also, it seems that consumers have a high barrier of initiating the contact with a brand, e.g. visiting brand's website, engaging in a social media touchpoint, or watching a Youtube video. This may be due to the amount of information consumers are exposed to in different touchpoints at all times. The communication efforts of the brands have become a blur amongst all the other information available. It seems, it is not enough a brand is active on digital touchpoints or have a striking and unique, visual appearance. That may work in offline touchpoints, but it is not in digital touchpoints. Consumers are making unconscious and conscious decisions all the time: what is significant enough to focus on and is it interesting enough to be active? Moreover, what do the consumers gain by being active?

Digital touchpoints have a lot of potential if used in an appropriate manner, but they require reciprocity from consumers. The results show that once the interviewees were introduced to the digital touchpoints, the level of interest and curiosity towards the brand increased. Mostly, the content in the digital touchpoints were described being appealing, although some strong reactions were aroused as some viewed PROfeel more as an independent brand, rather than a sub-brand of Valio. This caused confusion and feelings of PROfeel not representing the values of Valio or not being associated with same kinds of attributes.

Finally, the main research question is a combination of the sub-questions and it is the following:

How do consumers experience a FMCG brand's cross-media marketing campaign?

Consumers' brand experience is complex phenomenon which is impossible to explain with a simple model. Brakus et al. (2009) brand experience dimensions attempt to simplify an extremely complicated phenomenon in which myriad of things have an influence. The findings of this study indicate that the relationships between different touchpoints and brand experience dimensions should be researched further. However, it can be stated that brand experience certainly exist in the field of FMCG. It should viewed holistically, especially because different touchpoints have its own strengths and weaknesses and are able to impact on different

dimensions by evoking brand-related stimuli. Although, the sensory dimension emerged as the most powerful dimension based on the insights of the consumers, it must be mentioned at times, it is difficult to draw the line what kinds of experiences are categorized strictly sensory and which ones affective as they are often integrated.

Touchpoints provide opportunities for companies to leverage their strengths and highlight the elements of experience that align with the core values of the brand. The findings suggest, that the alignment of values and message seem to be crucial in forming the brand experience.

Figure 6 is a depiction of the process of touchpoints of a cross-media marketing campaign creating brand experience. Mass media is used to reach a broad coverage of consumers and create awareness. It works well although the consumers were not be able to give detailed descriptions of the content in the touchpoints. Print and websites are often visual, as well as informative. They are perceived trustful sources of information and in these touchpoints consumers can take the time to educate themselves of the brand and digest the information. Together these work as a stimuli of evoking sensory and intellectual dimensions. Finally, consumers do not necessary focus on what is said in brand-controlled touchpoints, but they do care what their networks have to say. Experiences of others may a significant influence of the brand experience a consumer will have. Overall, the brand experience changes throughout a consumers' buying process.

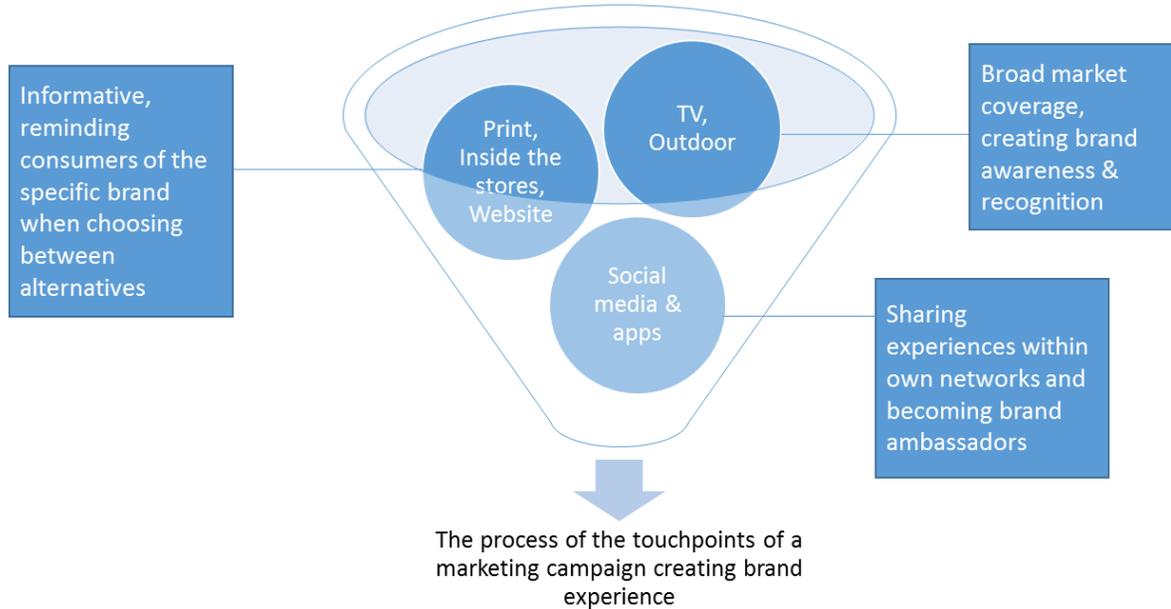


Figure 6. The process of touchpoints of a cross-media marketing campaign creating brand experience.

6.2 Theoretical contributions

Experience is without a doubt a multifaceted concept. The findings of this research indicate it truly is a fascinating and challenging phenomenon to research because of its broad nature. Some of the elements interviewees mentioned being part of the experience is feelings, relatability, expectations, previous experience and own thoughts, to name a few. These elements are also well identified in the academic literature (e.g. Brakus et al. 2009; Schmitt 1999; Gentile et al. 2007, Verhoef et al. 2009, not necessarily with same name, but sharing the same content to some extent.

Surprisingly, FMCG brands are associated with experience. That being said, experiential marketing, or brand experience, is a relevant concept for FMCG brands as well. This approach of marketing goes beyond service context, which was pondered by Homburg et al. (2015). However, the experience the FMCG brands create are not as obvious what they may be in another context.

This study adapted the brand experience model of Brakus et al. (2009). Numerous of studies have adapted the brand experience scale and research for example brand experience influence on some other brand construct (see e.g. Iglesias et al. 2011; Ishida & Taylor 2012; Zarantonello

& Schmitt 2010). By meticulously analyzing and interpreting as objectively as possible the answers of interviewees, sensory dimension dominates. Similar indications have been given in the past research (e.g. Cleff, Lin & Walters 2014; Gentile et al. 2007). Also, Hulten (2011) has highlighted the power of sensory strategies influencing brand experience. It is evident that sensory dimension strongly influences other dimensions although the correlations of the dimensions were not studied in this research. For example, the visual elements of packaging evoked strong emotions in some of the interviewees and therefore perceived the brand unfavorably. This resulted them avoiding the brand by choosing another one, not so striking.

Nysven et al (2013) suggested that relational experience should be added, and the findings of this study support that as well. It was mentioned by the interviewees relatability of a brand is important for them. The easier it is to relate to the brand, more likely a brand experience is created. Therefore, the initial model of Schmitt (1999) may be even more applicable in brand experience.

In the context of FMCG, consumption is a critical part of the brand experience. However, the findings indicate the FMCG brands can create experiences even without consumption. Although it must be mentioned, that experience of some of brand's products are requires, but necessarily all as this research suggests. The interviewees had experiences of products without them having consumed, or been in direct contact with the product because of strong marketing communication in both offline and digital touchpoints. Also, some stimuli emerged as powerful, such as the packaging the color of it. FMCG brands have the capability of creating experience by carefully designing touchpoints and the content of the communication experience. Many of the

CODAR principles (Jenkinson 2007) were evident also in PROfeel's touchpoint planning.

The traditional touchpoints (e.g. mass media) have been creating the brand experience of PROfeel for the sample group in this study. However, this finding cannot be generalized as the sample group was small and the research was not performed by quantitative means. The interviewees had very limited encounters with digital touchpoints excluding those that were demonstrated some digital touchpoints. At least, conscious encounters they were aware of. However, digital touchpoints are seen to have a lot of potentiality in influencing brand

experience. It was presented in table 8 an author's interpretation of PROfeel touchpoints influence on the brand experience dimensions. This interpretation is strictly based on the responses of the nine interviewees. On top of this, the content in these touchpoints speak louder than the touchpoint per se. If the content would have been different, possibly other dimensions could have been evoked. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the elements of these touchpoints as Stein and Ramaseshan (2016) presents.

The mix of digital touchpoints used by PROfeel are functional and corporate touchpoints according to the typology of Straker, Wrigley and Rosemann (2015). Typically, food and beverage industries have adapted this mix. But, it must be stressed that PROfeel is putting effort on social touchpoints, too. Interviewees, however, had mixed feelings of the social media strategy of PROfeel as many viewed PROfeel as an independent brand and were confused why the brand did not have its own accounts in social media. They perceived the communication of Valio and PROfeel being different. As Roswinanto and Strutton (2013) suggest the communication must align with the brand in order to create a brand experience.

Following Stein and Ramaseshan's (2016) identified elements of touchpoints, table 9 summarizes these elements of PROfeel touchpoints. The ones bolded refers to that element being stressed according to the findings. Atmospheric and product-interaction could be recognized in all of the touchpoints. The elements that should be striven to emphasize are most likely those that most influence the intended brand experience dimensions. In this case, it would be sensory.

Table 9. Elements of the touchpoints

Touchpoint	Elements included
YouTube	Atmospheric, indirect product interaction, technological, communicative
Social media: Facebook & Twitter	Customer-customer , atmospheric, indirect product interaction, technological, communicative, employee–customer interaction
Website	Atmospheric , indirect product interaction, technological, communicative
Packaging	Atmospheric, direct product interaction , communicative
Tastings	Atmospheric, direct product interaction , communicative, employee–customer interaction
TV	Atmospheric, indirect product interaction , communicative
Blogs	Customer-customer interaction, atmospheric, indirect product interaction, technological, communicative,
Print	Communicative , atmospheric, indirect product interaction
Apps	atmospheric, indirect product interaction, technological, communicative

6.3 Managerial implications

Consumers are not only demanding, but they are extremely critical. As was seen in the empirical section, one of the interviewees approached the term experience with a very analytical approach. The interviewee pondered the trade-off of the experience, the added value possibly gained and the personal sacrifices had to be made in order to receive that experience. Consumers being so critical nowadays, brands should acknowledge that and look at it as a possibility, rather than a threat. Brands, especially FMCG brands should attempt to challenge the consumers. Give the power to consumers.

The digital world has opened many doors for brands in the means of marketing. However, it is worth noting that consumers have become lazy. Sure, information is accessible almost at anytime and anywhere, but as consumers are facing a flood of information, they do not bother to initiate the contact unless they are interested enough. If something is not perceived as adding value, it will not be pursued. In order to initiate contact, something must be significant enough.

What if FMCG brands would challenge consumers by giving them the steering wheel? Activating them. Involving them. Letting them create. By activating and involving consumers in activities, even richer brand experiences could possibly be created. As this study implies, consumers can offer a lot more information that they are even self-aware of. The key is to ask the right questions and listen. Perhaps, listening to the consumers and letting them create a new product or packaging. This is not a novel finding though, co-creation has implemented by many brands for years. However, brand experience requires involvement from two sides: the experience provider (brand) and the experience recipient (consumer). Going back to the four realms of experience (Pine & Gilmore 1998), right now, what is happening, the consumers are passive recipients of information created by the brand as this study suggests.

Consumers do pay attention to the communication even if they would not consciously acknowledge it. Therefore, the content in touchpoints and messages should be aligned with the core values of the brand as Roswinanto and Strutton (2013) suggest. The interviewees viewed PROfeel as an independent brand and were surprised by the information it did not have separate accounts in social media. In PROfeel's case social touchpoints did not reach their fullest potential for this group of interviewees.

Curiosity is a natural human trait should be nurtured. Although consumers consider their time valuable and are picky in choosing what kind of information is worth to invest time in, it is evident that consumers are hungry for information if their level of curiosity is high enough. This could be interpreted that brands should aim at communicating in such ways that not all information of the brand or product would be offered immediately. Something should be left for the consumers to investigate. That way the consumer would become active and have a conscious aim at looking for the answers for the questions they may have. Also, by consciously focusing on seeking for the information, most likely different touchpoints would be researched. The information provided by the brand should work as a trigger for consumers to initiate the contact in the right touchpoints in order to find that piece of information.

It has been noted a long time in literature that word-of-mouth is a powerful mode of marketing communication. As Edelman (2010) states advocacy of consumers is much more effective than the communication through brand-controlled means. Findings implicate, that consumers do not

pay attention to the marketing effort put in digital touchpoints to the extent that the brand would like. To change this, consumers would have to be activated and inspired to raise their voice and spark conversation in the touchpoints they prefer. Regular people as brand advocates sharing their thoughts, emotions and the way they use the brand's product could be interpreted from the consumer interviews to make a brand more relatable. However, this alone, is by no means enough to create marketing campaigns. Identifying the relevant touchpoints in cross-media marketing campaign strategy and involving and activating consumers more, certainly would improve the overall experience of the brand.

6.4 Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

This study is a qualitative research, and therefore the touchpoints influencing on dimensions cannot be confirmed which was presented earlier. This was rather findings that emerged based on the interviews.

The level of introspection of interviewees is a limitation for this research. Some interviewees were able to dig deeper and provide rich insights, as for others it was challenging and their answers remained superficial to some extent.

The amount of interviewees is another limitations for this study. Only nine individuals were interviewed, two of which were pilot interviews, however, their answers were utilized as much as possible.

Another limitation is the fact, that the research did not concentrated only on one, specific marketing campaign of the brand, rather any which the consumers were able give insight on.

Only one FMCG brand with three product categories was chosen for this study which can be seen as a limitation. Although the brand works well as a representation of typical, well-known FMCG, the fact the brand only has three product categories is a limitation. Also, different brands have different kinds of marketing campaigns and the touchpoints included in those varies from one campaign to the other.

A recommendation for future research would be on further study this phenomenon and include more than one brand, but from same product categories. Another recommendation would be to

concentrate on the digital touchpoints and their influence on brand experience. Thirdly, an interesting direction for future research would be examining the strengths and weaknesses of touchpoints evoking different kinds of experiences (e.g. following the dimensions of Brakus et al. 2009 or Schmitt 1999). As it emerged in this research that consumers' brand experience of FMCG brand is mostly a creation of offline touchpoints, it would be revealing to compare offline and online touchpoints influence on brand experience dimensions. In addition, table 8 provides a suggestion for future research as it would be beneficial to study the relationships between different dimensions and touchpoints. Also, the digital touchpoint typology should be researched further and examined its importance to brand experience. Overall, more qualitative studies on brand experience within the field of FMCG is needed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Semi-structured consumer interviews

Background

How would you describe your exercise habits and your attitude towards exercising?

Digital/Online behavior

Describe your online/digital behavior?

What digital/online channels do you use and why?

How much time do you use on online channels and which channel do you use the most?

Experience

How would you describe an experience?

Tell me about an experience you have had with a brand and why did this come to your mind?

What elements form an experience?

Can you describe a FMCG brand that you associate with experience?

How would you describe brand experience?

Valio and PROfeel

How do you perceive Valio?

What Valio products or brands do you use?

How do you perceive PROfeel?

What PROfeel products do you know and how did you get to know them?

Describe your use of PROfeel products?

What are the main reasons you buy PROfeel products?

What do you know of the newest PROfeel product which was launched recently?

PROfeel marketing campaigns and touchpoints

What do you think PROfeel and its campaigns are aiming to communicate?

Describe in what kind of situations you have had experiences of PROfeel brand?

What kind of contacts have you had before consuming PROfeel products?

What kind of contacts have you had after consuming PROfeel products?

Describe the different contacts you have had with PROfeel in different touchpoint and how did you experiences those?

Tell me what you can recall of PROfeel in the following touchpoints:

-The product inside the packaging

-Packaging

-TV

-Tastings

-Outdoor advertising

-Print advertising

-Website

-Social media

-Videos in Youtube

-Blogs

-Mobile applications

How do you sense PROfeel brand what?

What emotions, moods, feelings does PROfeel evoke in you?

What in PROfeel brand appeal to you in an intellectual way or arises your interest?

What kind of change in your behavior or lifestyle does PROfeel support?

What would be the most important brand experience dimension to you in the case of PROfeel?

Appendix 2. Company interview. Outi Lindberg, Valio.

Please describe your job.

What is brand experience for Valio?

How about consumer experience?

What are the different elements that create a consumer experience?

What is the intended experience PROfeel aims at creating for consumers? How about Valio?

The brand experience theory was explained to the interviewee. Does the brand experience theory sound logical?

How are the brand experience dimensions taken into account?

How does PROfeel create brand experience if approaching it from the theory perspective?

How do you measure experience?

How would you define a PROfeel marketing campaign?

What is included in a marketing campaign?

Are campaigns product-/product family-/or brand-specific?

What kind of marketing campaigns has PROfeel had in the past?

How many marketing campaigns are there yearly?

Could you describe the most recent marketing campaign of PROfeel?

What are the objectives of PROfeel marketing campaign? Do the objectives depend on the product?

How have PROfeel campaigns changed in the past couple of years?

What is the target market of PROfeel?

What are the most relevant touchpoints for PROfeel?

The objectives and descriptions of following touchpoints:

-TV

-Print

-Outdoor advertising

-Website

-Social media

-Youtube

-Blogs

-Mobile applications

-Tastings

-Packaging

-Tradeshows

Are some touchpoints more important some other?

How would describe the use of offline vs. digital touchpoints?

Which touchpoints do you use for evoking the different brand experience dimensions?