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**THE EFFECT OF FACEBOOK MARKETING ON THE CONSUMERS' PURCHASE
INTENTION IN SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES**

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ABSTRACT

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Theory regarding digital marketing nowadays focuses a lot on how companies communicate, rather than what they communicate, which has emerged new topics of study: conversational human voice (CHV) and corporate tone of voice. The purpose of this study is to find out what tone of voice in social media marketing works most efficiently for text and pictorials to create the highest possible purchase intention with the consumers. The study focuses only on Facebook platform and is limited only to a SME context. The study is conducted as an assignment to a Finnish microbrewery, whose main product to sell is craft beer.

The study was conducted as an experiment using Qualtrics platform. Respondents were shown one of four different advertisements, and had to then answer to questions based on what they saw. Results were then analyzed in SPSS with a two-way ANOVA analysis, which proved that the formal picture resulted in a higher purchase intention than the CHV picture. The tone of voice of the text did not have an impact on the respondent's purchase intention. Results also indicated that advertisements regarding beer are found funny and casual regardless of the tone of voice used in the advertisement, since respondents found the formal picture and corporate voice text to be as funny and casual as the corresponding CHV versions.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tekijä	Ellen Vinkvist
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Tutkimus digitaalisen markkinoinnin ympärillä keskittyy nykyään entistä enemmän siihen, miten yritykset kommunikoivat, eikä siihen mitä ne kommunikoivat. Tämä on luonut uusia tutkimusaiheita: keskusteleva ihmisääni (CHV) ja korporaatio äänensävy. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää, mikä äänensävy sosiaalisen median markkinoinnissa toimii tehokkaimmin tekstin ja kuvien osalta kuluttajien korkeimman ostoaikomuksen saavuttamiseen. Tutkimus keskittyy vain Facebook-alustalle, sekä rajoittuu vain pk-yrityksiin. Tutkimus on tehty toimeksiantona suomalaiselle pienpanimolle, jonka pääasiallinen myyntituote on käsityöolut.

Tutkimus tehtiin kokeena Qualtrics-alustalla. Vastaajille näytettiin neljästä eri mainoksesta yksi, ja he vastasivat kysymyksiin näkemänsä perusteella. Tulokset analysoitiin kaksisuuntaisella varianssianalyysillä SPSS-tilasto-ohjelmassa. Tulokset osoittivat, että formaali kuva aiheutti korkeamman ostoaikomuksen, ja tekstin äänensävyllä ei ollut tilastollista merkitystä ostoaikomukseen. Tulokset osoittivat myös, että olutta koskevat mainokset nähdään hauskoina ja arkisina riippumatta mainoksessa käytetystä äänensävyistä, sillä vastaajat näkivät formaalin kuvan sekä korporaatiotekstin yhtä hauskana ja arkisena kuin vastaavat CHV-versiot.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Decades ago, information was transferred to its recipients through quite slow means, e.g., paper mail. However, due to digitalization, information resources are nowadays abundant and transferred to people around the world within seconds. (Dupuis, Moss, Endicott-Popovsky 2017, 2-3) Thus, firms have enabled tremendously more efficient ways of building and maintaining customer relationships during the digital age. As communications means have become faster and easier, competition between firms has also grown. According to some estimates, Americans are exposed from 4000 to 10 000 ads daily (Simpson 2017). This means catching the potential customers' attention is becoming increasingly difficult. The use of social media has also grown due to the substantial spread of technology. In America, about 90% of young adults (ages 18-29) use actively social media. However, also the use of social media within seniors (65+ years old) has tripled since 2010, and is nowadays about 35%. (Perrin 2015)

Facebook is one of the several communication platforms used by millions of consumers. As we open our Facebook page, we are not only exposed to status updates by our friends and family, but also to several posts by different companies. Posts may be made by companies we follow on Facebook, but they also might be sponsored ads by companies we do not follow with our personal accounts. In either case, the company wants to communicate to us, and it is our decision whether we pay our attention to the post that we see on our Facebook feed. The aim of a single firm generated Facebook post may vary quite a lot, but in the end, all firms aim in getting the consumer to choose their product or service over others.

1.1 Background of the study

Small and medium-sized enterprises, also known as SMEs (max 249 persons employed), are known to have a significant contribution to the national economies. For example, in 2018, over 65% of the people employed in Finland were employed in SMEs, and 99.7% of all the enterprises registered were categorized as SMEs in Finland (European Commission 2019). Thus, it is interesting and timely to research how these SMEs utilize social media as marketing platforms in influencing their customers. Due to the smaller resources that SMEs have

compared to large companies their marketing initiatives are also more likely to not be as structured. The marketing budgets are also naturally much smaller than with large companies.

Facebook, a social media network page, has gathered nearly 3 billion users worldwide in the year 2021 (Statista 2021a), making it the most popular social media platform still today. As marketing is becoming more and more digital, Facebook is becoming one of the most relevant platforms where firms conduct their marketing initiatives online. Facebook is also popularly used by SME firms, since marketing can be conducted there with relatively small budgets. Many studies have researched the effect of tone of voice or pictorials in the consumer attitudes in digital marketing (Barcelos, Dantar & Sénécal 2018; Alalwan 2018; De Keyzer, Dens & De Pelsmacker 2017; Liebrecht, Tsaousi, & Van Hooijdonk 2021; Pieters & Wedel 2004). However, studies still lack to show which specific combination tone of voice and pictorials affect most positively on the consumer's purchase intention, specifically in a SME context.

1.2 The aim of the study

The aim of this study is to find out which combination of tone of voice and pictorials in Facebook advertising convinces the consumer most probably to buy the advertised product. This is relevant information especially for firms with limited marketing budgets, and also because all sales can rarely be allocated to specific marketing campaigns or social media posts. Thus, it is useful to know which sort of Facebook marketing style generally works positively for the consumer's purchasing decisions. This research also provides insights for other companies operating on a similar field on what type of Facebook marketing generally creates better consumer responses.

There is still a research gap in researching the combination of tone of voice and pictorials, since all studies focus mostly on either or (Barcelos, Dantar & Sénécal 2018; Alalwan 2018; De Keyzer, Dens & De Pelsmacker 2017; Liebrecht, Tsaousi, & Van Hooijdonk 2021; Pieters & Wedel 2004). Previous research on this topic also does not focus on the SME point of view, but rather in a very general level regardless of the company's size and resources. Since previous studies do not focus on what type of combination of the linguistic tone of voice and pictorials in social media marketing have the best positive effect on the consumer's purchase behavior, this study aims to answer that research gap. The linguistic tone of voice and pictorials are also

usually the main elements used in social media marketing, making it easy for firms to change these elements to become more effective with their marketing communications.

The main research question of the thesis is:

How do different types of posts on Facebook influence the consumers' purchase intention in the SME context?

The main research question is divided into sub-questions:

- 1. How does the pictorial aspect of the advertisement influence the consumer's purchase intention in the SME context?*
- 2. How does the tone of voice of the advertisement influence the consumer's purchase intention in the SME context?*
- 3. How does the combination of the tone of voice and pictorials influence the consumers' purchase intention in the SME context?*
- 4. Does the effect of the tone of voice and pictorials on the consumers' purchase intention differ depending on the consumer's age?*

The main two elements of a Facebook advertisement are the pictorial or video element combined with the text element that has a certain tone of voice. Thus, these two aspects were decided to be studied when looking at the effect of the Facebook advertisement's effect on the consumer's purchase decision. The research questions were decided in cooperation with the firm this research is conducted to, since it helps them to determine what type of pictorial and tone of voice elements in their Facebook marketing works most efficiently in achieving the best possible sales proceeds.

The fourth research question focuses especially on the age target groups of firm X. As the firm plans their future marketing strategies, it is important to evaluate the behavior of the younger generations, as they become a more and more important target group in the future. Social media marketing is also a fairly new phenomenon, and the majority of Facebook's users are under 34-year-old consumers (Statista 2021c). Thus, this study wants to evaluate the difference between the younger and older consumers' preferences in the advertisement they prefer, or whether there is any difference at all in the preferences at all.

1.3 Preliminary literature review

The literature review aims to provide a brief overview of the existing theories and literature of a certain phenomenon. Thus, this literature review will be focusing on social media marketing, and how it affects the consumer's purchase intention in the 21st century. The literature review will especially focus on how the tone of voice and pictorial side of the social media marketing affect the consumers purchase intention.

Consumer behavior analysis is a topic that has been researched for decades. According to Foxall (2001), it is described as the use of behavior principles to interpret humans' economic consumption. He also states that data on consumer behavior is usually gathered experimentally. Samli (2013) also covers modern consumer behaviour thoroughly in their book "International Consumer Behavior in the 21st Century". Consumer characteristics have been changing a lot compared to what it was for example thirty years ago. Thus, Samli (2013, 5-6) covers seven characteristics that describe consumers nowadays: more aware, well informed, quality conscious, recognizing global brands, informed about international currencies, have access to products globally and have swift delivery. These factors have also affected tremendously on the consumers' purchase intention (Shah, Aziz, Jaffari, Waris, Ejaz, Fatima & Sherazi 2012). As digitalization has enabled more options and information for consumers to evaluate, for firms to catch potential customers, a well strategized digital marketing plan plays a more crucial role than ever before.

Social media has been used as a marketing platform by many companies and brands for years now (Alalwan 2018), and organizations world-wide are becoming more and more curious on how these different platforms can be most efficiently utilized when attracting customers (Alalwan, Rana, Algharabat & Tarhini 2016; Lin & Kim 2016). As the result of the growth of social media usage, companies are more interested also in integrating their communication planning in their social media elements (Park & Cameron 2014). Thus, social media is providing tremendous possibilities for companies nowadays to reach their customers and build long-lasting relationships with them (Kelly, Kerr & Drennan 2010).

The effect of the tone of voice used in social media marketing has been a popularly researched topic lately. Delin (2005) describes the corporate "tone of voice" as the specific language styles

that are created in an attempt to express the brand's personality to a wide audience. In example, one corporation may want to be envisioned as *professional* and *reliable* by its customers, when another one wants to be perceived as more *easy-going* and *fun*. The way the corporation wants its brand to be identified affects the tone of voice it decides to use in its marketing actions. However, Delin (2005) highlights that companies do not use the tone of voice that suits their brand on the continuum, so any randomly chosen piece of text from one company's communications cannot be assumed to be a perfect example.

The studies of tone of voice have also similar results with each other. Most studies compare a formal and corporate tone of voice to a more conversational human voice. The study conducted by Barcelos, Dantar and Sénécal (2018) and De Keyzer, Dens and De Pelsmacker (2017) both found out that a human tone of voice increases purchase intentions in low-risk and hedonic contexts. However, the influence of the tone of voice is weakened in utilitarian, low-risk contexts.

Some of the studies have also focused more on how the tone of voice effects brand trust. Kelleher's study (2009) found that a conversational human voice correlated positively with the feelings of trust, commitment and satisfaction. However, Gretry, Horváth, Belei & Van Reil (2017) add to this in their study that the informal tone of voice increased brand trust only if the consumers were familiar with the brand beforehand. Correspondingly, the informal tone of voice decreased brand trust if the consumers were not familiar with the brand before. What comes to complaint handling, Javornik, Filieri and Gumann (2020) also found that the conversational voice leads to greater customer satisfaction in social media rather than a corporate voice. This supports the study from Gretry et al. (2017) since usually complaints are made only in the cases where the consumers are already familiar with the brand. What comes to communicating in a crisis, Kerkhof, Beukeboom, & Utz (2011) discovered that the conversational human voice was connected to commitment in the crisis and it decreased negative cognitive results, especially in a case when the company has to deny the accusations.

Pieters & Wedel (2004) researched the elements of print ads, dividing them to brand, pictorial and text effects. Results proved that the pictorial parts, meaning the non-verbal parts of the ad excluding the trademarks or logos of the firm, were clearly superior in catching the consumers attention regardless of the picture's size. Feiereisen, Wong and Broderick (2008) also found

that the use of pictorials worked better in conveying information to the consumers when the marketed product was a hedonic product rather than a utilitarian.

As the effects of the tone of voice, pictorial elements in social media marketing as well as different Facebook ads' effects on consumer behavior has been researched quite a lot through the years, there still are some research gaps. For example, very little literature is yet to be found of correct tone of voice decisions only within the SME context, or in specific business industries. Studies also still lack information on specific pictorial ad elements that work most efficiently for SMEs in influencing consumer purchase intentions. Studies also lack information about the best combination of these two, the tone of voice and pictorials, to be used in social media marketing. Also, as marketing techniques become more and more automated and professional in the 21st century, it should not be assumed that the same results apply to all business industries, or that SMEs have the same resources as large companies to analyze thoroughly and automate all their social media marketing actions.

1.4 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study will be combining two parts. It combines the tone of voice and the pictorial aspects of a social media advertisement, and examines their influence on the consumers purchase intention. It also takes into account whether the age of the consumer has an effect on the results. The advertising platform used in this study is limited only to Facebook.

Research context: Facebook marketing in SMEs

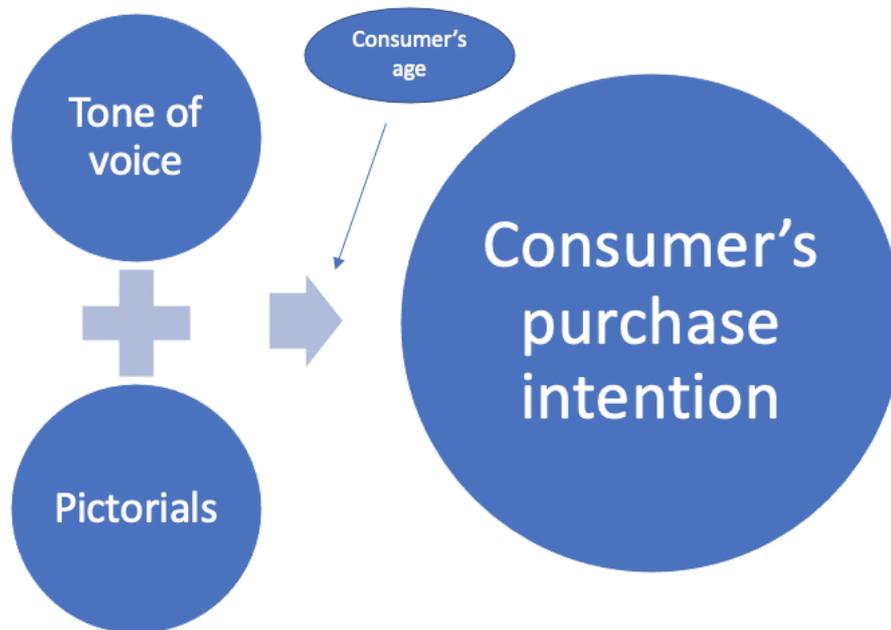


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

As the use of social media has increased significantly within consumers, companies must understand the pictorial aspects that catch the consumers attention, alongside with the suitable tone of voice. The dual-coding theory, created by Allan Paivio (1971), suggests that both verbal and pictorial information is used in the human brain when learning new information. According to this theory, a person learns for example the concept of a “cow”, meaning they learn the word cow and connect it with an image of a cow in their minds. This concept can aid marketers, since when planning social media communication actions, the visual images attached to the verbal information might help consumers in recalling the brand better in the future, when only hearing the name or only seeing a picture.

As studies have found before (Barcelos et al. 2018; De Keyzer et al. 2017; Feiereisen et al. 2008), both the linguistic tone of voice and the chosen pictorials in marketing activities do effect on the consumer's purchase intention. Thus, it is important to discover the most ideal combination of these two variables, that results in the most positive outcome in a company's sales.

The previous literature, as seen in chapter in chapter 1.3, focuses a lot on studying separately the tone of voice of the text and pictorials, but there still is a research gap on the most suitable combinations of text and pictures used in social media marketing. Previous studies have proven that a CHV tone of voice increases consumers' purchase intentions in low risk and hedonic contexts (Barcelos et al. 2018; De Keyzer 2017), and also that pictorials work more efficiently than mere text when conveying information for the consumer of hedonic products (Feiereiden et al. 2008). Thus, the theoretical framework of this study combines the existing literature and theories found on the use of tone of voice and pictorials and connects them in order to find out the most optimal combination to increase the consumer's purchase intention. The previous literature also does not cover possible differences in social media marketing that may occur in the SME context compared to large companies, so this study also adds that to the theoretical framework.

1.5 Definitions of the key concepts

Many concepts used in marketing and in psychology may have differing meanings. In this chapter, all the key concepts and terms of the study will be explained. The understanding of the main concepts used in this study is important, so that the reader can get the most out of study.

Social Media Marketing is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary (2021a) as “methods for advertising products, services or brands using the internet” while also aiming to engage more with the customers in the social media platforms.

Tone of voice is described by Delin (2005) as the specific language style that is chosen to express a certain brand personality to the firm's audience. The tone of voices a firm chooses to communicate with are usually divided into formal (or corporate tone of voice) and informal (conversational human voice) (Gretry et al. 2017). This division is also used in this study.

Pictorials are elements expressed in the form of pictures or photographs (Cambridge Dictionary 2021b). In the context of this study, pictorials refer to the picture or photograph element of the social media post.

Purchase intention is defined as the measure of strength of a consumer's intention to make the decision to buy a service or a product. It is also known as the individual's conscious plan to make the effort of buying a certain brand. (Amoroso, Roman & Morco 2016)

SME refers to small and medium-sized enterprises which is measured with their staff headcount as well as their turnover or the balance sheet total. Small enterprises employ 50 people or less and medium-sized enterprises employ 250 people or less. The maximum turnover for SMEs is 50 million euros. (European Commission 2021)

1.6 Delimitations

In order to stay in the limited resources this study has, the social media platform that is studied is limited only to Facebook. Facebook is the most used social media platform worldwide (Statista 2021a), and it has relevant tools also for firms to conduct social media marketing campaigns, e.g., Ads Manager where firms can select campaign parameters such as target audience and objectives (Facebook 2021). Thus, results may vary if the research would be conducted in any other social media platforms, where the user experiences differ.

Also, only the customer's likelihood to make a purchase decision is examined, not the phases before or after the customer's purchase decision. The customer purchase journey is traditionally divided into several phases before the actual purchase decision, e.g., awareness, familiarity and alternatives consideration (Court, Elzinga, Mulder & Vetvik 2009). Due to the limited resources of the study, the effect of the social media advertisement will only be examined to the purchase decision phase, and not phases the consumer goes through before it.

This study is also focusing only on the marketing actions of SMEs. Compared to large companies, SMEs typically have limited resources, smaller cash flows, fewer customers and also a higher percentage of staff turnover. SMEs also focus more on current performance compared to large companies, who tend to take a more strategic overview of the future. (Hudson, Smart & Bourne 2001) This enables SMEs to make faster changes to their marketing actions, compared to the more structured and planned actions that large companies often have. Thus, results can vary, if the study would be conducted for large companies with more structured communication plans.

1.7 Methodology

This research is conducted as an assignment to a Finnish microbrewery which is categorized as an SME. The microbrewery's products are categorized as hedonic products, since beer is not something people need as a necessity in life. In this research the firm is going to be referred to as *company X*. Company X considers its brand identity as fun, relaxed and informal. Company X wanted to conduct a thorough research on what type of social media marketing is most optimal for them, so that they can conduct their social media marketing efficiently in the future in order to grow their sales. Company X has over 17 000 likes on their Facebook page, making it their largest social media channel to this day. It is also the company's first social media page that was created in the year 2014, six months before the microbrewery had launched any actual products to the markets. Thus, Facebook was decided to be the examined social media platform for this research.

The study will be conducted as quantitative research. Quantitative methods examine the effects of specific circumstances to a certain outcome numerically (Lakshman, Sinha, Biswas, Charles & Arora 2000). The data will be collected as an experiment. This is a research method, where one or more independent variables are manipulated to measure their effect on one or more dependent variables (Bevans 2021). An independent variable is thought as the cause of an effect. As we manipulate the independent variable, the dependent variable is the one that is affected by the manipulations. The dependent variable is thought as the outcome of the manipulation. (Field 2009, 7) The manipulated independent variables are the pictorial and tone of voice aspects of the Facebook post. Thus, the dependent variable that is measured as the effect of the independent manipulated variables is the consumer's possible purchase intention.

1.8 Structure of the study

This study consists of six main chapters. Chapter one goes through the introduction to the study, as well as the main research questions, the background of the study, the theoretical framework, preliminary literature review, the definitions for the key concepts and shortly also the chosen methodology. Chapter two then focuses thoroughly on the all of the theory that is used in this study, focusing especially on social media marketing, tone of voice and pictorials used in marketing.

After getting a thorough understanding of the literature backing this study, chapter three then introduces the hypotheses for this study and how they are formed. In order to conduct any quantitative study, hypotheses are needed. They explain what the researcher expects to happen and they should be clear and measurable.

The fourth main chapter then explains the research design and methodology used in the study. It goes through the research design, how the data was collected and how the questionnaire was developed. It also then defines the scales and tests used, presents the factor analysis and goes through reliability and validity. Chapter five then presents some descriptive statistics of the experiment, goes through the two-way ANOVA analysis and its results, tests the formed hypotheses and presents possible other results.

The final main chapter is chapter six, which includes discussions and conclusions of the study. It goes through the theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations and possible future research topics for the study. List of sources are finally listed in the end.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers the main theories and literature previously written regarding social media marketing in SMEs and the different tone of voices and pictorials used in it. The literature review focuses on the themes presented in the theoretical framework. First, social media marketing in SMEs is covered, focusing especially on Facebook and its opportunities as a marketing platform. The following subchapters then cover the tone of voice in marketing, explaining the difference between corporate tone of voice and conversational human voice. Lastly, the literature and theories of pictorials in marketing is covered.

2.1 SME's Social Media Marketing

Social media has enabled firms to communicate with their customers for years now. The great popularity of different social media channels, especially Facebook, has enabled companies to create new business models as well as more efficient online branding. (Barcelos et al. 2018) As marketing theories have evolved tremendously during the years to adjust with the emerging digitalization trends, most of them are designed theoretically for large organizations (Harrigan, Ramsey & Ibbotson 2011). However, as SMEs are a crucial part of the Finnish economy (European Commission 2019), it is important to theoretically research also their digital marketing actions and best practices for it.

SMEs often operate in a quite different environment and manner than large organizations, and they are not able to operate fully in the ways that is prescribed theoretically to be the best practice. (Harrigan et al. 2011) Kocak and Abinbola (2009) also state that SMEs are more highly influenced by macro-economic changes making it more vulnerable for changes of the competitors. The owners of SMEs may face often very different issues compared to large companies such as tactical or strategic customer-related problems (Doole, Grimes & Demack 2006).

What comes to the marketing in SMEs, the marketing operations of SMEs differ usually due to limited resources (e.g., fewer number of employees and smaller budget), limited expertise and smaller impact on their environment (Harrigan et al. 2011). The study of O'Brien (1998) also found out, that many SMEs had significant attitudinal barriers in what comes to implementing

marketing strategies. The most significant problems that rose within the sample firms was that marketing was seen as costly and its management as time consuming. Sample firms were also lacking relevant skills in implementing and understanding fully marketing implementation and the meaning of being “marketing oriented”. Thus, according to previous literature, implementing an efficient and strategically planned marketing strategy is typically more challenging for an SME compared to large firms.

Atanassova and Clark (2015) researched the use of social media in SMEs. The research supported also Harrigan et al. (2011), saying that SMEs operate in a very different environment than large companies, and emphasized also that the marketing in SMEs is often very informal, unstructured and flexible. However, what comes to the use of social media in SMEs, SMEs often gain valuable market intelligence through the use of social media, which enables them to tackle the uncertainty and resource gaps they have in the planning of marketing. (Atanassova et al. 2015) SMEs intention to improve their operations’ effectiveness has been seen also as a main factor of motivation when embracing the use of social media within the firm (Zeiller & Schauer 2011). Even though multiple researchers have stated the several benefits SMEs can gain from the use of social media, such as effective communication and the improved operational efficiency (Atanassova et al. 2015), only a relatively small portion of SMEs are fully utilizing and reporting all the possible benefits that social media offers (Barnes, Clear, Dyerson, Harindranath, Harris & Rae 2012).

2.1.1 Facebook as a Marketing Platform

Facebook was initially launched in Harvard University in 2004, at a time when MySpace was still dominating world widely the social media network. At first, the use of Facebook was limited only to Harvard students, and later on also to other Ivy League schools. The use of Facebook was very similar conceptually as MySpace: users created profiles of themselves and got to know other people from their campus by browsing others’ profiles. It was not until late 2006, when Facebook was released to the use of all general public and companies. The exclusiveness that Facebook first obtained has claimed to be the reason for its exponential growth over MySpace towards the year 2009. (Treadaway & Smith 2012, 10-15)

Facebook was the most used social media platform still in 2020 ranked by the number of users (Statista 2021b), so it is no wonder firms, both large and SMEs use it actively as a marketing platform (The State of Queensland 2021). The benefit of Facebook is not only its popularity, but also the age distribution of its users. A great majority of its users are 25-34 years old, but over 5% of the platform's users are also over 55 years old (Statista 2021c), meaning the firms can perform marketing to a variety of different audiences depending on their own targets. Thus, the possibility of presenting the firms offerings to a great number of potential future customers has been one of the reasons in adopting the use of different social networks, such as Facebook, for SMEs (Franco, Haase & Pereira 2016).

Facebook has also other benefits for SMEs marketing. It provides a low-cost marketing strategy, which benefits SMEs who typically lack more resources than large companies (Hudson, Smart & Bourne 2001). As some other marketing techniques such as print media and outdoor screens may cost significantly for firms, the opportunities are better available for SMEs when marketing in Facebook costs a fraction of the price compared to some other marketing forms. (The State of Queensland 2021) Several studies have also found cost effectiveness in being a factor that influences SMEs to use Facebook in their marketing actions (Ainin, Parveen, Moghavvemi, Jafaar, Mohd & Nor 2015; Franco et al. 2016)

Another benefit for SMEs to use Facebook is the easy and effortless opportunity to engage with the customers on a daily basis. Engaging with customers in Facebook as if they were the company's friends rather than marketing targets has been seen to work efficiently in Facebook marketing strategies (Kwok & Yu 2013). Studies have also proven, that the inclusion of images in social media posts increases the amount of likes and comments in the posts that brands post. Adding videos to the post was only relevant for likes, but still images were more likely to increase the amount of like and comments. Also, posts published within business hours were more prone to be commented rather than posts published outside business hours. (Sabate, Berbegal-Mirabent, Canabate & Lebherz 2014) Facebook provides this opportunity to add these pictorial elements to any post the brands make, making it easy to increase engagement. Thus, the possible two-way communication between the firm and its clients is an important factor for SMEs when deciding whether to use Facebook as a marketing platform (Ainin et al. 2015).

All in all, SMEs can easily acquire market intelligence through the use of Facebook and other social media platforms. The use of social media provides valuable information about the firm's current and potential customers and it can reduce the resource gap SMEs have compared to large organizations. Even though the captured market intelligence is often not clear and rapidly digested, it is a strategic asset in the long run for the firm. (Atanassova et al. 2015)

2.2 Tone of Voice in Marketing

As the use of social media has increased, the ways in which organizations and consumers interact has also changed (Dijkmans, Kerkhof, Buyukcan-Tetik & Beukeboom 2015). Due to this, the term "tone of voice" has emerged. This term is commercially referred to as the language styles the company uses to express its distinctive personality (Delin 2005). Tone of voice is nowadays considered to be a key factor in social media communications (Oh & Ki 2019). The brands' chosen tone of voice is especially important in the very first encounters with the consumer, when they form their opinions of brands that are previously unfamiliar to them (Barcelos et al. 2018).

The tone of voice used in the firms' social media marketing influences the consumers purchase intentions (Barcelos et al. 2018). However, Delin (2005) notes that the aim of a tone of voice should not just be to sell the firms products or services, but to engage people with the firm's messages. Thus, it is important for the firm to find the tone of voice that fits their brand image best, to maximize the benefits of marketing as well as to maximize sales.

2.2.1 Corporate Tone of Voice

Corporate tone of voice is described as formal, persuasive and consistent. It is the more traditional communication style used by companies before the rise of the use of social media. (Dijkmans et al. 2015). Corporate tone of voice, also known in some studies as organizational tone of voice, is usually written in third person and without any personal information of the staff member (Oh & Ki 2019).

Delin (2005) presents examples of terms that are often used in the corporate tone of voice. These terms are, for example, "*undertake to*" instead of "*agree to*", "*at such time as*" instead

of “*when*” and “*commence*” instead of “*start*”. The second words are more commonly used in spoken language, but the first ones are characterized as corporate tone of voice. Even though nowadays many tend to avoid these more formal so called “jargon busters”, Delin’s (2005) research found that many consumers were satisfied also with some of the more formal language decisions. For example, “*complete*” was preferred rather than “*fill in*” and “*consecutive*” was preferred rather than “*in a row*”. However, these terms were researched in the context of a government agency, where the expected tone of voice is more formal already in the first place.

One of the most recent ones regarding corporate tone of voice, conducted by Javornik et al. (2020), found that the use of corporate tone of voice lead to poorer customer satisfaction in complaint handling compared to the use of conversational human voice (CHV). Barcelos et al. (2018) found that corporate tone of voice increases purchase intentions in high-risk contexts. In addition, Gretry et al. (2017) stated that a formal communication style increases trust when consumers are unfamiliar with the brand before.

2.2.2 Conversational Human Voice (CHV)

Kelleher (2009) has been one of the first researchers to write about conversational human voice in brand communications. He defines conversational human voice as “an engaging and natural style of organizational communication as perceived by an organization’s public based on interactions between individuals in the organization and individuals in public and communicated relational commitment” (Kelleher 2009, 177). The communicated relational commitment from the perspectives of the public is defined by Kelleher (2009, 176) as “a type of content of communication in which members of an organization work to express their commitment to building and maintaining a relationship”. Several studies also showed that conversational human voice and communicated relational commitment increased trust, commitment and satisfaction within the reader (Kelleher 2009; Gretry et al. 2017).

Before the rise of social media, companies communicated mostly with only a corporate voice, which created their communications to be formal and persuasive. As the use of social media rose, many replaced their communication methods with a more human-like approach, which made their communication seem more friendly and approachable from the consumers eyes. (Dijkmans et al. 2015)

Van Noort, Willemsen, Kerkhof and Verhoeven (2015) established three different practical linguistic tactics of how brands can communicate using the conversational human voice: message personalization, informal speech and invitational rhetoric. Message personalization means to what extent a message can be addressed to a specific individual or individuals. Informal speech refers to expressive and casual language which is mostly used in everyday conversations. It's seen as the contradictory of the neutralized language that is often used in corporate communication. Invitational rhetoric refers to a communication style that is oriented to exchange opinions and ideas with stakeholders. When the persuasive communication, typical to the corporate tone of voice (Dijkmans et al. 2015), tends to convince others with the organization's viewpoints, the purpose of invitational rhetoric is to create an open atmosphere and willingness to also listen the consumers' concerns or critic.

Liebrecht, Tsaousi and Van Hooijdonk (2021) conducted a chart with linguistic examples of the three categories of CHV: message personalization, informal speech and invitational rhetoric. The following charts are constructed after Liebrecht et al. (2021) and they present the different linguistic subcategories that are divided to the three main CHV means defined by Van Noort et al. (2015).

Table 1. Conversational Human Voice: Message personalization (After Liebrecht et al. 2021, 126-128)

MESSAGE PERSONALIZATION	
CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<i>Personal greeting</i>	"Greeting the client personally, e.g., Hello or Hi, often addressing with their first name, e.g., Hi John!"
<i>Personal addressing consumer</i>	"Using second person pronouns, e.g., You, U, yours."
<i>Personal addressing employee</i>	"Using first person pronouns e.g. I, me, myself, we."
<i>Personal signature</i>	"Signing the brand message personally, which gives the consumer the ability to identify the sender", e.g., Ellen from Customer Service.
<i>Personal information of employee</i>	"Presenting more personal information of brand's representative, e.g., profile picture, phone number, personal narratives. "

Table 2. Conversational Human Voice: Informal Speech (After Liebrecht et al. 2021, 126-128)

INFORMAL SPEECH	
CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<i>Nonverbal cues</i>	“Linguistic features that represent audible, tactile or visual elements in face-to-face communication.”
<i>Audible elements</i>	“Capitalization (FOLLOW US), repeated punctuation (???, !!!), sound mimicking (sooo), intonation, volume (*whispering*), censorship (?!!&%).”
<i>Visual elements</i>	“Emoticons (:-)), emojis, stickers, giphys, pictures.”
<i>Tactile elements</i>	“Emojis and stickers where bodily touch is visualized, e.g., a kiss, handshake or high-five.”
<i>Verbal cues</i>	“Conversational-style communication that consists of linguistic cues on a lexical and phonological level.”
<i>Contractions</i>	“Shortened words, (e.g., plz, ok) or multiple words merged into one word (e.g., that's, LOL, tbh, fyi).”
<i>Interjections</i>	“Spoken language-based words that mimic a spoken sound (e.g., ah, haha, wow).”
<i>Other language choices</i>	“Informal vocabulary and phrases used to create a natural, spoken-like conversation (e.g., great, check out, that's awesome).”

Table 3. Conversational Human Voice: Invitational Rhetoric (After Liebrecht et al. 2021, 126-128)

INVITATIONAL RHETORIC	
CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<i>Stimulating dialogues</i>	“Explicitly inviting people to share their thoughts and experiences about the company, and expressing the value of (critical) feedback (e.g., "Please share your thoughts with us!").”
<i>Acknowledging</i>	“Explicitly thanking consumers for their suggestions, comments, thoughts and questions (e.g., "Thanks for approaching us!").”
<i>Apologizing</i>	“Offering an apology to show consumers' comments are taken seriously.”
<i>Showing sympathy or empathy</i>	“Showing the company feels along with the customers and understands their concerns (e.g., "I can imagine").”

<i>Using humor</i>	“Using humor to enhance a warm, open and approachable climate.”
<i>Well-wishing</i>	“Expressing positive wishes to the consumer to ensure a well-maintained relationship (e.g., "Have a nice day!", "We hope to see you again!").”

The use of conversational human voice in corporate communications has also been found to have positive outcomes. Kelleher and Miller (2006) found that conversational human voice correlated significantly with trust, commitment and satisfaction. Gretry et al. (2017) also supported this with their more recent study, stating that an informal brand communication style increases trust if the consumers are previously familiar with the brand. Javornik et al. also found, that conversational human voice led to greater satisfaction with complaint handling in social media.

2.2.3 Comparison of CHV and Corporate Tone of Voice

The number of studies regarding the use of corporate tone of voice is relevantly smaller than what comes to the number of studies regarding the use of Conversational Human Voice (CHV). This might be due to the fact that CHV has mostly emerged after the rise of social media, making it a more recent phenomenon (Dijkmans et al. 2015). Studies that that have researched corporate tone of voice are mostly comparing this tone of voice to CHV, meaning no recent studies focusing only on corporate voice have been conducted. Studies that have compared the use of CHV and corporate voice have similar results.

Regardless that CHV and corporate tone of voice are described as the very opposites of each other, Barcelos et al. (2018) suggests that firms should not choose just either or, but evaluate the tone of voice depending on the context of the situation. For example, even though a company might build their brand identity around being jokey and casual by using CHV tone of voice, Barcelos et al. (2019) suggests that a company should be able to adapt also to a corporate tone of voice especially in situations where consumers have low trust towards the organization.

2.3 Pictorials in Marketing

As mentioned before, pictorial elements tend to create more engagement for branded posts on social media. Thus, the elements of a picture must also be studied, when looking at social media marketing as a whole. Studies have proven (Le Callet & Niebur 2013; Engelke & Le Callet 2015), that consumers do not treat visual information equally when observing something. For example, Engelke and Le Callet (2015) found by using eye-tracking technology, that consumers invest their visual attention to factors that interest them the most. This indicates that there is a strong relationship between overt visual attention and perceived target of interest.

Roland Barthes (1977) has researched more thoroughly messages sent through pictures in advertising. He is notable for researching “image rhetoric”, which is more familiarly known as the means of expression to persuade the image viewer. Barthes focused on researching images used in advertising, since the signification is intentional in these types of images. Barthes divided the messages found in advertising images into three categories: *linguistic message* (text), *the symbolic message* (coded message that often requires some cultural knowledge, connoted message) and *the literal message* (denoted message). One of the most phenomenal advertising images analyzed by Barthes is the Panzani advertisement. (See following link for the picture of the Panzani advertisement: <https://hughitb.files.wordpress.com/2009/12/panzani-preview.jpg>)

What comes to this advertisement, all three message categories can be clearly found and analyzed according to Barthes’ (1977) message categories. The linguistic message can be found for example in the product labels; the word *Panzani* sounds Italian and thus connotes Italianicity in the viewer’s mind. This is a connoted linguistic message. In addition, there are denoted linguistic messages, such as the caption of the advertisement saying “Pasta – Sauce – Parmesan, the Italian luxury” in French language.

The second message category – the symbolic message, can also be identified clearly in this advertisement. Firstly, the shopping bag that is half open signifies that somebody has returned from the grocery store or market. The tomatoes, onions and pepper are identified as pasta ingredients which again signifies Italianicity. The collection of all the objects to one picture signifies a total culinary service; as though Panzani provides everything necessary for a

delightful dish. The final symbolic signal is the composition of the elements in the picture, reminding the viewer of several famous food art pieces, and thus signifies still life. The third message type – the literal message, refers to the non-coded parts of the image, such as the tomato representing a tomato and so on. Barthes remarks that in this third message category, the signifier and the signified are essentially the same, meaning the message does not need any coding.

Pictorials are a relevant part on affecting the consumers perception of the product and affecting positively on their purchasing behavior (Joffe 2008). Even though Barthes' (1977) theory of messages in images used in marketing dates back over 40 years, this theory is still relevant when analyzing modern day marketing pictorials. Pictorials used in social media marketing needs to correlate with the brand culture, since pictorials communicate a story (Kartunova 2017). Pictorials in marketing transmit denoted and connoted signals to the viewer and thus play a significant part on what kind of brand image is born in the viewers mind (Kartunova 2017). Denoted and connoted signals were a major part of Barthes' (1977) theory of visual rhetoric, and they still play an important role when analyzing the social media marketing pictorials. For example, also Ståhl and Kaihovirta (2019) used Barthes' theory in their study exploring visual communication and competencies through interaction with images in social media.

Some examples of pictorials in social media that transmit the brand story are for example Coca-Cola's pictorials in Facebook compared to KPMG's pictorials in Facebook (Kartunova 2017). Coca-Cola's Facebook pictures include a lot of people, mostly smiling, having fun and enjoying their free time. The example pictorial linked below has three people perhaps watching a sports match, cheering and laughing while enjoying a Coca-Cola drink. One person has no shirt on making the atmosphere very casual. This communicates to the consumer connoted signals of happiness, freedom and joy, and the feeling of being engaged. As pictorials tend to cause the viewers stronger emotions compared to pure text (Joffe 2008), the pictorials Coca-Cola uses on their social media marketing should be well aligned with the brand image they are trying to build in the consumers' minds. (See example picture of Coca-Cola's Facebook marketing through the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/cococolaFinland/photos/1854567734565232>)

On the other hand, pictorials found in KPMG's Facebook account communicate very different signals to the viewer compared to Coca-Cola. Most of the pictorials include people, but in a very formal business setting. This transmits the viewer connoted signals of professionalism, credibility and accountability, which are values KPMG wants to highlight in their brand image (KPMG 2021). (See example picture of KPMG's Facebook marketing through the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/370244473023102/photos/pb.100068966267406.-2207520000../1634422489938621/?type=3>)

Both of these example pictorials have very different connoted and denoted messages, but they are aligned with the brand's image the companies want to build. As mentioned, pictorials are a relevant part of affecting the consumer's purchasing behavior in a positive way (Joffe 2008), it is important that the messages transferred through social media pictorials are aligned with the firm's business idea and sought brand image.

As the linguistic tone of voice used in the firms' social media marketing influences the consumers purchase intentions (Barcelos et al. 2018), also pictorials have a certain tone of voice in social media communication. Coca-Cola Facebook post has clearly a much more conversational human voice (CHV) in the message it transmits to the viewer, whereas picture 3, KPMG's Facebook post, has a more corporate tone of voice in its image rhetoric. The choice of tone of voice in these images is aligned with the findings of the studies conducted by Barcelos, Dantar and Sénécal (2018) and De Keyser, Dens and De Pelsmacker (2017). Both studies found out that the conversational human voice increases purchase intentions in low-risk and hedonic contexts, which Coca-Cola drinks can be categorized as.

3 HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

This chapter develops and presents the hypotheses used in this empirical study. Hypotheses are testable and precise statements that are stated to predict the outcome of the research. They often suggest in advance a possible relationship between an independent and a dependent variable. (McLeod 2018) The formed hypotheses are based in literature discussed in the previous chapter as well as theories presented in this chapter.

3.1 Dual-coding theory

The dual-coding theory roots back all the way to 2500 years ago, when imagery started being used as memory aid (Yates 1966). Allan Paivio (1971) then presented a theory regarding the general cognition of humans. It states that there are two different classes of phenomena that humans handle cognitively: processing information that includes non-verbal events or objects, usually referred to as images, and processing language. Thus, information is stored in the human memory with two separate mental codes: the verbal code that directly assesses language and the non-verbal code that assesses nonlinguistic objects.

The concept of picture superiority effect is related to the dual-coding theory, when Kirkpatrick's (1894) study revealed that humans generally remember pictures better than plain words. This is due to the fact that humans encode pictures to both of the memory stores, when words are only encoded to one. Humans use both coding, verbal and non-verbal, when memorizing images, causing images to usually have a better memory performance in the human cognition rather than pure linguistic elements (Stenberg 2006). The study conducted by Walters, Sparks and Herington (2007) showed that vivid pictured had a vital imagery stimulus, which affected positively on the consumers' purchase intentions. Even though the theory of dual-coding theory dates way back, the understanding of the dual-coding theory and the picture superiority has an important effect in also modern-day marketing activities, when trying to evoke the consumers purchase intentions with image and linguistic objects. The dual-coding theory works as a theoretical basis for this paper to be focusing specifically on the pictorial and text aspect of social media marketing. These two aspects are commonly also the main aspects of a Facebook advertisement, making them a logical choice as the two variables of this study.

3.2 Congruity theory

The congruity theory suggests that people prefer elements that are consistent with each other. Congruity theory is often aligned with persuasion and communication contexts. Viewers often already have some attitudes towards the source or element they see, which regulate whether congruence or consistency occurs. (Osgood & Tannenbaum 1955) According to this, people tend to change their attitudes towards increasing congruity. For example, if a person owns a product, and we assume they like the product, they will try harder to like the product in a case where they hear negative information of the product, compared to if the person would not own the product before hearing the negative information. (Woodside & Chebat 2001) This is because consumers want to maintain cognitive congruence, keeping their assumptions and beliefs in balance.

Congruity theory also applies to marketing strategies. For example, a study found that when a social media user perceives high congruence with a social media influencer, and the influencer promotes products with high congruence to their personal brand, the congruence between the social media user, also known as the consumer, and the promoted product is likely also very high. The congruence between the consumer and the product affects positively towards attitude, which again leads to higher intentions to purchase and recommend. (Belance, Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez 2021) This can also be applied so social media marketing activities conducted by companies. Consumers perceive higher cognitive congruence when the social media post includes pictorial and a tone of voice that fit each other well. The congruence then increases even more if the chosen social media communication style matches with the perceived brand image of the firm.

3.3 Hypotheses

Based on the literature review discussed in chapter 2, the hypotheses are formed. As Kelleher's study (2009) found, a conversational human voice correlated positively with the feelings of trust, commitment and satisfaction. Also, the study conducted by Barcelos, Dantar and Sénécal (2018) and De Keyzer, Dens and De Pelsmacker (2017) both found out that a conversational human tone of voice increases purchase intentions in low-risk and hedonic contexts. Thus, the first hypothesis is constructed as following:

H1: Conversational human voice increases purchase intentions compared to corporate tone of voice.

As part of the dual-coding theory, also pictorials and their effect on the consumer is studied. As mentioned in chapter 2, pictorials in marketing transmit denoted and connoted signals to the viewer and thus play a significant part on what kind of brand image is born in the viewers mind (Kartunova 2017). As company X perceives its brand identity as fun, relaxed and informal, based on the congruence theory, the following hypotheses is constructed:

H2: Informal pictorials increase purchase intentions compared to formal pictorials.

The third hypothesis is based on the congruence theory and is also a combination of H1 and H2. If the tone of voice and visuals do not match with each other, the consumers cognitive congruence is not high, causing decreasing positive attitudes and decreasing purchase intentions. Thus, the final hypothesis is:

H3: Conversational human voice and informal pictorials increase purchase intentions the most compared to any other combination of tone of voice and pictorials.

Research has also found age-related differences in responses for ads especially regarding hedonic versus utilitarian products. Drolet, Williams and Lau-Gesk (2007) found that the younger audience (18–25-year-olds) preferred affective ads only for hedonic products, whereas the elderly audience (65+ year-olds) favored affective ads for all product categories. The young audience on the other hand preferred rational ads for the utilitarian products more. Affective advertising is described as marketing that raises the consumer's emotions and feelings rather than their basic beliefs and knowledge (Heath & Nairn 2005).

When the use of social media grew, many companies replaced their communication methods with a more human-like affective approach, which made their communication seem more friendly and approachable from the consumers eyes. (Dijkmans et al. 2015) Thus, the use of CHV in marketing communications can be connected with the birth and growth of social media. Facebook's vast majority of users are also from the age of 18 to 34 years old (Barnhart 2021),

so the largest user group of Facebook is quite young. Even though the first social media platforms were already in use in the beginning of 2000s (Ortiz-Ospina 2019), the real exponential growth of the use of social media happened after 2010. For example, in the past 10 years, the number of Facebook users has over tripled, being nearly 3 billion nowadays (Statista 2021a). As the CHV communication trend can be connected with the rising use of social media, and Facebook’s vast majority of users being younger than 34 years old, the final hypothesis is constructed as following:

H4: Younger consumers have higher purchase intentions from the informal picture and CHV text compared to the older consumers.

The following graph summarizes all four hypotheses of this study, followed by a graph which locates the hypotheses to the theoretical framework of this study.

H1	Conversational human voice increases purchase intentions compared to corporate tone of voice.
H2	Informal pictorials increase purchase intentions compared to formal pictorials.
H3	Conversational human voice and informal pictorials increase purchase intentions the most compared to any other combination of tone of voice and pictorials.
H4	Younger consumers have higher purchase intentions from the informal picture and CHV text compared to the older consumers.

Research context:
Facebook marketing in SMEs

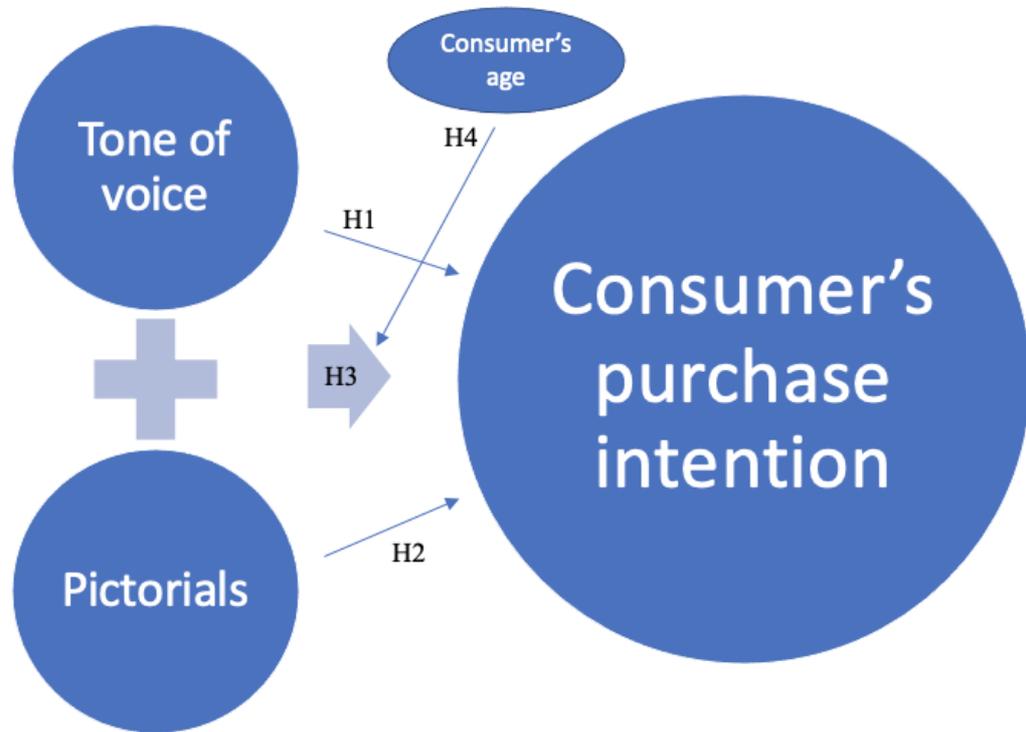


Figure 2. Theoretical framework with hypotheses

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter will explain how the empirical part of the study has been carried out. The aim of this study is to find out what type of social media advertisement makes the customer have the highest intention to buy the advertised product. The sub-chapters are first going to explain the approach in how the research was designed, after which the data collection methods and analysis is explained. The chapter is finished with the reliability and validity of the empirical part.

4.1 Research Design

This research is conducted as a mono method quantitative study. The method used to collect the data is an experiment. Experiment is a form of research that studies causal links; whether a manipulation in an independent variable causes a change in another dependent variable (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 142). Independent variables are considered to be a cause of a certain effect, and the dependent variable as the variable that is affected by the changes of the independent variables. In experimental researches, the independent variables are considered as the predictor and the dependent variable as the outcome. (Field 2009, 7) The independent variables were the texts as well as the picture elements of the advertisement, which effects were measured on the dependent variable – the consumer’s purchase intention. The research included two different still pictures of the company X’s product, and two different tones of voices used in the texts of the social media marketing post. From these four, four different social media advertisement examples were created, which are presented below. The participants were randomly allocated to the different treatments.

Table 4. Forming of example advertisements for the experiment

	Informal Picture	Formal Picture
Conversational Human Voice (CHV) text	Advertisement 1 (Informal picture + CHV text)	Advertisement 2 (Formal picture + CHV text)
Corporate voice text	Advertisement 3 (Informal picture + Corporate voice text)	Advertisement 4 (Formal picture + Corporate voice text)

As the study measures Facebook marketing’s effect on the consumer’s purchase intention to buy beer, some control variables had to be added to make sure factors such as a respondent

not drinking or purchasing alcohol regardless of what advertisements they see would influence the results. The table below summarizes the variables used in this study.

Table 5. The variables of the study

Type	Variable	Meaning
Independent	Text of the Facebook post & picture of the Facebook post, Tone of voice	Variables that are considered to be a cause of a certain effect. These variables are manipulated to measure the effect.
Dependent	Consumer's purchase intention	Variable that is affected by the changes of the independent variables
Moderator	Age	Variable that changes the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables
Control	Facebook usage & Frequency of buying beer	Variables that are constant and do not change during a study, but might influence the outcome if not taken into account.

The data was decided to collect through an online self-completed experiment survey using the Qualtrics platform. Each respondent was presented one advertisement out of the four possible advertisements disclosed above. The experiment was open for one week during the end of November 2021. The link to the experiment was shared in various social media channels by the author and other people working in the marketing field.

4.2 Data Collection

The experiment was fully in Finnish, since company X, whose example advertisements were used in the experiment, does their marketing in Finnish and operates only in Finland. Thus, all respondents were also Finnish-speaking.

The experiment consisted of 20 questions in total, which were shown to the respondent after seeing one of the four possible advertisements (Table 4). The first four (4) questions measured

the **purchase intention** variable, and the questions used were based on other studies who had measured the same variable (Richard & Guppy 2014; Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gómez 2015). The following four (4) questions measured brand familiarity and brand attitude. However, the brand attitude question block was not relevant for the research hypotheses and were only added to give company X more thorough information of their brand and future marketing. The following four (4) questions were about the **checking the manipulation** of the independent variables, meaning that the respondents were asked whether they found the advertisement's text and picture they saw in the beginning as funny or more serious. This way it can be assured that respondents found the independent variable's tone of voices as they were intended to be. The following three (3) questions were **control variables**, measuring whether or not the respondent uses Facebook or ever purchases beer. Control variables are not part of the actual experiment, but may affect the outcome of the experiment, so it is important to take them into account (Helmenstine 2021). The last four (4) multiple choice questions measured the respondent's **demographics**, of which the question age was the only relevant one for our hypothesis 4. Other demographic questions were just additional information for company X to utilize in their future marketing activities.

The experiment was fully anonymous and this was mentioned in the beginning of the survey to all respondents. The response time to the experiment was approximately 5-7 minutes. The experiment was conducted on Qualtrics platform, which LUT University has a license for. The experiment was then transferred to respondents via a link, which was shared in several social media channels (e.g., Instagram and LinkedIn).

A total of 204 responses were gathered to the experiment. The sample was self-selected meaning individuals could choose themselves whether they wanted to take part in the experiment. The experiment had no incentive for the respondents.

4.3 Defining Measures

After the data was collected, it was exported from Qualtrics to SPSS for the analysis. The data needed to be cleaned first, since several respondents had not finished the experiment. After cleaning all the responses that had not answered through the questions measuring the purchase

intention variable (which was the first question block after seeing the example advertisement), we were left 181 acceptable responses.

In order to conduct the 2-way ANOVA analysis and other correlation analyses, some variables had to be recoded into a Dummy variable format. Dummy coding is used when we need to represent groups of people using only zeros (0) and ones (1). The number one (1) is assigned to the group of people who we want to compare against the baseline group of people (0). (Field 2009, 254) Dummy coding was done for the picture and text of the advertisement each respondent had seen (formal picture being zero (0) and informal one (1), formal text being zero (0) and CHV text one (1)), as well as the age variable. The respondent's age was measured by an open question about the respondent's birth year, and the median value was measured to be 1996. Thus, 1996 was chosen to be the dividing year between the older and the younger consumer groups. Respondents whose birth year was earlier than 1996 were coded as group zero (0) and respondents born 1996 or after that were coded as group one (1). After recoding the age with the median split, 79 respondents belonged to the older group (0) and 92 respondents to the younger group (1). The reason for the division not being perfectly divided with the number of respondents is because several respondents had answered their birth year being 1996, which meant all of those respondents had to be coded to group one (1).

The tone of voice of the text and pictures were also recoded as dummy variables. Four different advertisement combinations were shown to the respondents in the experiment with two different pictures and two different text tone of voices (Table 4. Forming of example advertisements for the experiment). These ads were then shown as values 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the initial SPSS data import. In order to finish the 2-way ANOVA analyses, these were then recoded so that the picture variable had zero (0) representing the formal picture, and one (1) as the CHV picture. The same was done for the text, so zero (0) represented the corporate tone of voice and one (1) the CHV.

Table 6. Incidence of formal and CHV pictures and texts in the experiment (shown in Dummy variables)

Between-Subjects Factors			
		Value Label	N
PIC	0.00	Formal	88
	1.00	CHV	83
Text	0.00	Formal	95
	1.00	CHV	76

4.3.1 Defining Scales and Tests

The experiment was made using a **7-point Likert scale**. The Likert Scale was developed to measure attitudes in a scientific environment. Attitudes are characterized as preferential ways of behaving in a specific circumstance. The respondents are asked to answer their level of agreement from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7) for a given statement. All the statements combined reveal then the overall attitude to a certain topic of the study. Likert scales can often also be 5-pointed, but a 7-point Likert scale shows more varieties of options which usually in turn increases the probability of meeting the actual reality of the respondents. (Joshi, Kale, Chandel & Pal 2015) In this experiment, all questions used a 7-point Likert scale, except the ones asking about the respondent's demographic background.

The variable "Purchase Intention" was then created with a factor analysis. **Factor analysis** is a statistical multivariate method used to describe a set of variables with common features or dimensions with new variables called factors. The amount of factors created is less than the amount of original variables. Exploratory factor analysis is used to find the most correlated variables and form factors from them, also known as the so-called underlying variables. Factor analysis is used to find out the possible variation between the variables. Factor loadings express correlations between the single variables and the factor, and they can range from -1 to +1. The closer the absolute charge is to one (1), the stronger the variable is charged to the factor. If the variable loading is negative, it only indicates that the values are correlated negatively with the factor values. (Heikkilä 2014)

The **eigenvalue** represents the amount of variance in the factors. The eigenvalue for the retained factors should be greater than one (1). (Field 2009, 243) The cumulative percentage (Cum% of

variance explained) then explains the percentage how much variance is explained with the chosen factors.

Usually, the minimum factor loading is stated to be at least 0.4. Variables that do not exceed that loading are not considered as strong enough. When the sample size is small (less than 100 responses), the correlation should be at least 0.75. (Hair et al. 1998, 111) This experiment reached 181 acceptable responses meaning the factor loadings should be over 0.512 in order to be considered acceptable (Field 2009, 644).

The overall reliability of the whole scale is measured with the **Cronbach's Alpha**. For this measure, values around 0.8 are considered good. Values around 0.7 are considered to be adequate. (Field 2009, 675)

4.4 Factor Analysis

After the data was cleaned and transformed to a correct format, the factor analysis and reliability tests. The factor analysis was conducted in SPSS using principal axis factoring with varimax rotation for factor extraction. In this experiment, the "Purchase Intention" was the only variable which needed a factor analysis.

All items within the purchase intention loaded on one (1) factor. All the factor loadings in the factor were between 0.636-0.887 which are within an excellent range. The Cronbach alpha value was also 0.812 which means the reliability of the scale is at a good level. Eigenvalue is also greater than one (1) and the factor is explaining 64.1% of the variance.

Table 7. Factor Analysis of Purchase Intention

			Communalities	
	Item	Factor 1	Initial	Extraction
PI1	If you had to buy a beer, can you indicate what the probability would be of your buying a beer of this brand (in the picture shown)?	0.713	0.440	0.509
PI2	Would you buy a beer that is recommended to you on Facebook?	0.636	0.371	0.404
PI3	Would you buy a beer from this brand if you happened to see the advertisement shown in the beginning on Facebook?	0.887	0.569	0.787
PI4	Would you actively seek out this product to buy it?	0.654	0.353	0.428
	Eigenvalue	2.565		
	Cum% of variance explained	64.124		
	Cronbach's alpha	0.812		

4.5 Reliability and Validity

As part of a proper research, the evaluation of reliability and validity of the chosen methodology needs to be assured. In scientific research terms, this means reducing the possibility of getting the wrong answer. High reliability generally means high consistency – that another researcher will get similar results if this research design was duplicated. Validity refers to whether the findings that appear in the study results are actually what they appear to be about. High validity means the results are generalizable – i.e., findings could be applicable to also other organizations and not only the one the research focuses on. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 156-158) Reliability and validity often come hand in hand; if the research method is not reliable, it most likely is not valid either (Middleton 2021).

This research has transparently explained the method used in the data collection. Chapters 4.1 and 4.2 go thoroughly through the research design and data collection method, providing all the relevant information for the method to be replicated. However, it is good to note that the context of this study was Facebook, a social media platform that is likely to have changes and updates over time. Possible changes in this platform could affect which research design would be the most optimal for this kind of research.

To evaluate the validity of this study, both internal and external validity need to be evaluated. Internal validity refers to the extent to which we can be sure that a cause-effect relationship in a study cannot be explained with other factors. In other words, for the results to have high internal validity, other possible explanations for an effect need to be ruled out. (Bhandari 2022) For example, an experiment in a laboratory setting usually has high internal validity, since most external influences can be minimized (Streefkerk 2021). As this experiment was not performed in a laboratory setting, we can not for example be certain how well the respondents concentrated on the advertisement they were shown. Also, as the advertisement was shown as a screenshot in the Qualtrics questionnaire platform, rather than actually in Facebook, we cannot be certain whether this had an effect on the results.

External validity and internal validity often come with a slight trade-off. Since external validity refers to how well results are generalizable for a “real world setting”, an experiment done in a laboratory setting is very different compared to the outside world. (Streefkerk 2021) Since this experiment was not done in a laboratory, the external validity could be considered fairly high. Respondents took part in the experiment along-side their normal day to day activities, so the setting was very similar compared to seeing any other advertisement online while scrolling on Facebook during the day. Thus, the stimulus of seeing the example advertisement was very similar compared to seeing any other normal advertisement online. However, as the advertisement was not actually presented on Facebook and the respondents knew they were taking part in an experiment, the experiment is not fully generalizable for a real-world setting. A so-called Hawthorne effect might occur, where participants are likely change or improve their behavior, since they know they are being studied (Streefkerk 2021).

5 RESULTS

The results of the data analysis are discussed in this chapter. Firstly, some descriptive statistics are presented, after which all the hypotheses are tested and results for them are discussed.

5.1 Descriptive statistics

After cleaning the unqualified answers, the dataset of this study contained 181 answers. However, the criteria in the data cleaning were that the respondent had to at least have finished answering to the purchase intention questions. Thus, the number of respondents that actually made it all the way to the end of the experiment and to the questions about their demographics was less than 181.

The data had 9 missing values in the question regarding the respondent's gender (5.0%). 32% of respondents were men, 61.9% women, 0.6% other and 0.6% chose to prefer not to tell (Figure 3).

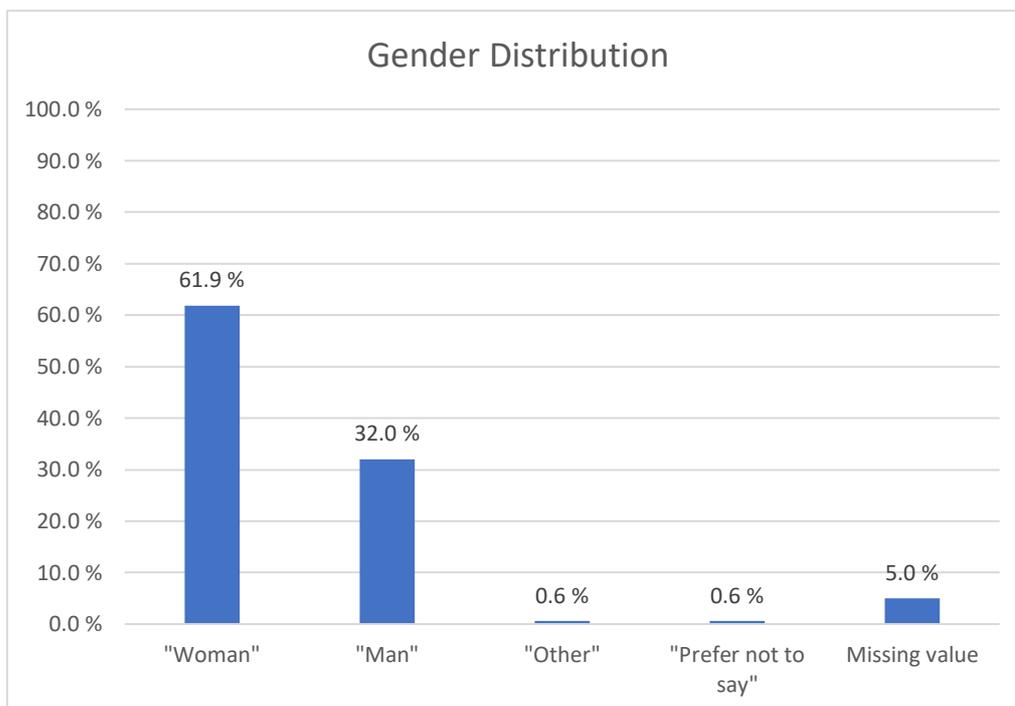


Figure 3. Gender distribution, $n=181$

The age of the respondents was measured by asking their birth year, and results ranged from 1933 to 2000. The age of the respondents was divided into five (5) different age categories. Group 1 had people born from 1933 to 1959, group 2 1960 through 1969, group 3 1970 through 1979, group 4 1980 through 1989 and group 5 had everybody born 1990 or later. The clear majority of the respondents were part of group 5 (over 67%). The mode value was 1997, with 40 respondents being born on that year. The median value was 1996.

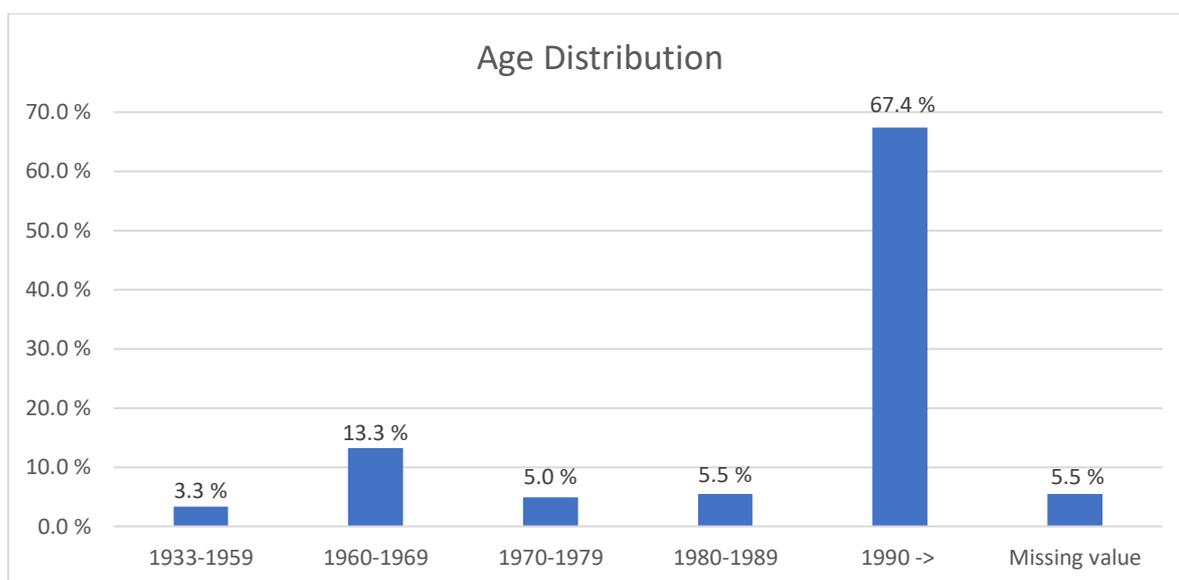


Figure 4. Age Distribution, n=181

The monthly net income of the respondent was measured with five different income groups. The income of the respondents was divided fairly equally between all income groups, (excluding the missing values, which was 9). 3000-3999€ per month income was the most common answer, with 26% of all responses.

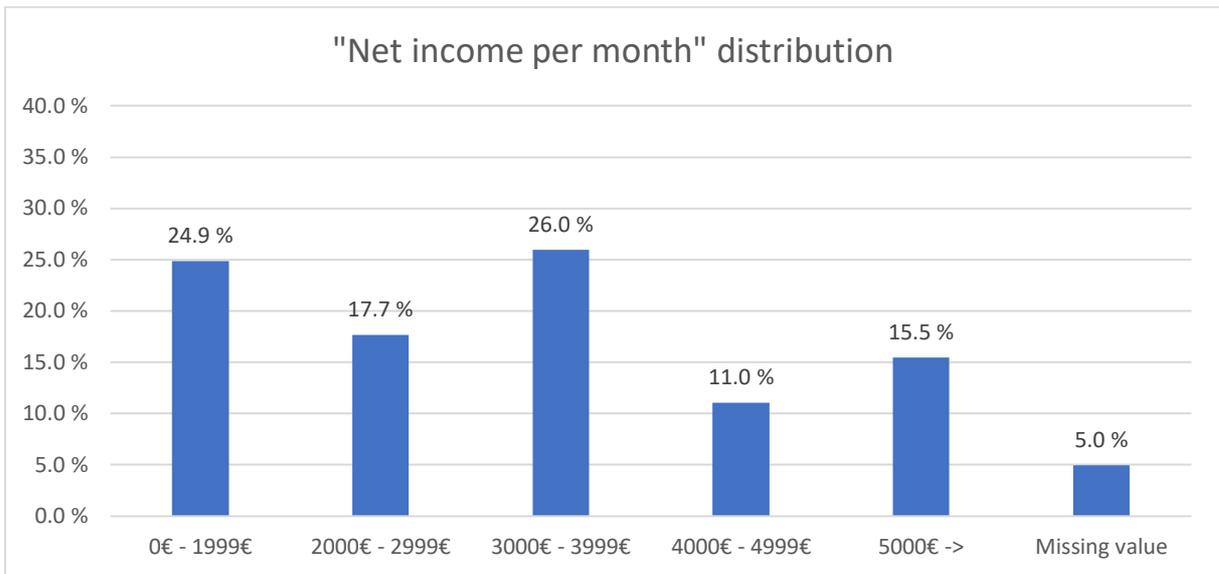


Figure 5. Net Income/Month Distribution, n=181

5.1.1 Correlations

The overall mean for the purchase intention variable was 3.6934. This is a bit below 4, which is the midpoint in a 7-point Likert scale.

Table 8. Purchase Intention Mean & Std. Deviation

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Purchase Intention Index Variable	3.6934	1.28313	181

The Pearson correlation test was then run to find out possible correlations between the picture, text and age with the purchase intention. As mentioned in chapter 4.3, the variable “age” was recoded to a Dummy variable. The younger consumer group (born 1996 and later) were coded as “1” and the older ones were coded as “0”. From the correlation table, we can see a marginal significance between “AGE median split” and the “Purchase Intention Index Variable” since the 2-tailed significance value is 0.099. A value below 0.10 indicate that the results are marginally significant, and values below 0.05 indicate that results are highly significant. The Pearson’s Correlation between these two variables is 0.127. This means that purchase intention was higher with the younger consumer group compared to the older ones.

When looking at the table for correlations, there can also be seen a marginal significance between “PIC” and “Purchase Intention Index Variable”, since the 2-tailed significance value is 0.055 (below 0.10). As mentioned in chapter 4.3, the picture variable was also coded into a dummy variable, so that zero (0) was the formal picture and one (1) was the CHV picture. As the Pearson’s correlation value between these two is negative (-0.143), the CHV picture actually had a negative association with the purchase intention compared to the formal picture. The text variable however did not have any significant correlation with the purchase intention, since its 2-tailed significance value is above 0.10.

Table 9. Correlations with Purchase Intention

Correlations		PIC	Text	Purchase Intention Index Variable	AGE Median Split
PIC	Pearson Correlation	1	-.008	-.143	-.133
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.917	.055	.084
	N	181	181	181	171
Text	Pearson Correlation	-.008	1	-.048	.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.917		.520	.517
	N	181	181	181	171
Purchase Intention Index Variable	Pearson Correlation	-.143	-.048	1	.127
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	.520		.099
	N	181	181	181	171
AGE Median Split	Pearson Correlation	-.133	.050	.127	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.084	.517	.099	
	N	171	171	171	171

5.2 Manipulation Check

As the experiment compared the picture and the text variables effect on the purchase intention, some manipulation checking had to be added to the experiment questionnaire, which measured whether respondents interpreted correctly the desired manipulations in the independent

variables (whether text and picture were considered as formal or CHV as they were supposed to). These manipulation questions were analyzed then with T-tests.

There are two kinds of t-tests: independent-means t-tests and dependent-means tests. Independent-means t-test (also known as independent-samples t-test) is used when there are two experimental conditions (in this case formal and CHV tone of voices) and different participants were assigned with each condition. The dependent-means t-test is used when the two experimental conditions are both assigned to the same participants. (Field 2009, 325) As this experiment showed the respondents only either or of the formal and CHV text as well as either or of the formal and CHV picture, the independent-samples t-test will be used. Both of the t-tests assume that the sampling distribution is normally distributed and the independent t-test also assumes that variances in these populations are roughly equal as well as that the scores are independent (Field 2009, 326).

First, the manipulation of the picture was tested with two questions. The following table below shows the questions how this manipulation was tested (questions MC1 & MC2), as well as the mean of the results (measured on a 7-point Likert scale), standard deviation and standard error mean.

Table 10. Manipulation check for the picture variable

Group Statistics					
	Pic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MC1: I think the picture (shown in the beginning) is funny, jokey and casual.	Formal	90	5.22	1.216	0.128
	CHV	85	5.07	1.717	0.186
MC2: I think the picture (shown in the beginning) is appropriate and formal.	Formal	90	4.88	1.429	0.151
	CHV	85	3.11	1.611	0.175

Then the independent-sample t-test was then run for the manipulation check of the picture. SPSS runs automatically first a Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, so that we know whether or not we can assume our variances are equal for the manipulation check that is in question (the questions regarding the picture shown). The level of significance is measured with the "Sig." value in the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. The "Sig." value for MC1 is

0.011, which is lower than 0.05, so we choose to assume **equal variance does not apply to MC1**. The t-test then reveals that the 2-tailed significance value is 0.503 for MC1, which is significantly higher than 0.05. This means that the differences between the formal and the CHV picture were not significantly different according to the respondents when asked whether they reviewed the picture they saw as “funny, jokey and casual”.

A bit different results applied for MC2. Levene’s test for Equality of Variances gave us a significance value of 0.382 (much higher than 0.05), so **equal variance is assumed for MC2**. The t-test then reveals us a 2-tailed significance value of <0.001, which is less than 0.05, so there is a statistical significance in the differences of the answers for MC2. This makes sense also when we look at the mean values in Table 10. The differences in the mean values are much smaller for MC1 between the formal and the CHV picture, meaning that respondents found both the formal and the CHV picture as funny, jokey and casual. However, MC2 has a much larger difference in the mean values, meaning that when respondents were asked whether the picture they saw was appropriate and formal, bigger differences occurred in the responses between the formal and the CHV picture.

The same t-tests were then run for the manipulation check of the text in the advertisement. Table 11 shows the questions used to measure the manipulation of the text variable, as well as the mean for the answers (measured on a 7-point Likert scale), the standard deviation and the standard error mean.

Table 11. Manipulation check for the text variable

Group Statistics					
	Text	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MC3: I think the caption/text (shown in the beginning) is funny, jokey and casual.	Formal	96	4.95	1.217	0.124
	CHV	79	5.09	1.521	0.171
MC4: I think the caption/text (shown in the beginning) is appropriate and formal.	Formal	96	4.28	1.382	0.141
	CHV	79	3.38	1.734	0.195

The same independent-samples t-test was then run for the manipulation check questions of the text variable. Both questions MC3 and MC4 received scores less than 0.05 in the Levene’s Test

for Equality of Variances (MC3 with 0.025 and MC4 with 0.014) so **equal variances do not apply to either of the questions**. The t-test then gave MC3 a 2-tailed significance value of 0.507, which is higher than 0.05. This also means that the differences between the formal and the CHV text were not significantly different according to the respondents when asked whether they reviewed the texts they read as “funny, jokey and casual”. However, MC4 received a 2-tailed significance value of <0.001 , which is less than 0.05, so there is a statistical significance in the differences of the answers for MC4. This also makes sense also when we look at the mean values in Table 11, since the mean values for MC3 differ from each other much less than in MC4. Thus, respondents again considered both formal and CHV texts both to be as funny, jokey and casual, but larger differences occurred when they were asked whether the text they read was thought to be appropriate and formal.

5.3 Two-Way ANOVA Analysis

ANOVA stands for analysis of variance. It is used in testing differences for effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Compared to the one-way ANOVA, as the name predicts, two-way ANOVA test is used when we need to find out the effect of two independent variables on a dependent variable. It also is used to analyze the relationship of the independent variables to the outcome. Two-way ANOVA analysis is an extension of the one-way ANOVA analysis, where only one independent variable is being tested to the dependent variable. (Hayes 2021) In this study, the two independent variables are the picture and the text of the advertisement, which effect is being tested to the purchase intention – the dependent variable.

Table 12. Results of 2-way ANOVA for the Picture and Text variables

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention Index Variable					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	6.797a	3	2.266	1.385	0.249
Intercept	2436.001	1	2436.001	1489.061	0.000
Picture	6.112	1	6.112	3.736	0.055
Text	.728	1	0.728	.445	0.506
Picture * Text	.046	1	0.046	.028	0.867
Error	289.560	177	1.636		
Total	2765.375	181			
Corrected Total	296.357	180			

a R Squared = ,023 (Adjusted R Squared = ,006)

When interpreting the results of a two-way ANOVA report, the “Sig.” column is the values we are especially interested in first hand (bolded). It reveals the potential statistical significance of our results, also known as the p-value. Primarily, the p-value should be less than 0.05 for the results to be considered statistically significant. (Field 2009, 193) In this case, we can see from the table that only the picture variable has a p-value that is even slightly near the 0.05 limit. As the p-value for the picture variable is just above 0.05 (0.055), we can only consider it marginally significant. The text variable and the combination of the picture and text (Picture * Text) have no statistical relevance for the purchase intention variable, since the p-values are significantly higher than 0.05.

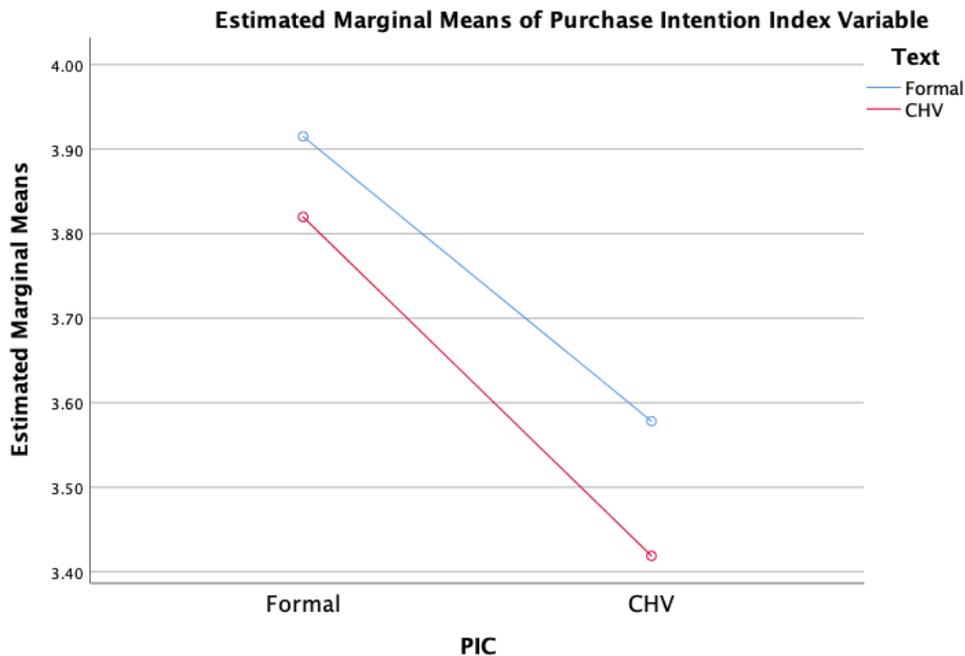


Figure 6. Results of 2-way ANOVA with picture and text variables

The figure above presents the results of the Two-way ANOVA analysis in a graphical view. The graph shows that both text and picture variables had a higher purchase intention with the formal versions, compared to when they were switched to the CHV versions. However, as we stated above, the text variable did not have any statistical relevance for the purchase intention, so the only the only thing that can actually be taken marginally into account is the picture variable, which also had a higher purchase intention with the formal picture compared to the CHV picture.

The same ANOVA was then run again, with the AGEMS (*Age Median Split*) added to the independent variables to see whether the respondents age had any effect on their possible purchase intentions based on the example ads they saw. However, the significance value for the interaction effect of picture, text and AGEMS to see its effect on the purchase intention was 0.904, so no significance was determined even though the respondent's age was taken into account.

5.3.1 Two-Way Ancova

As two-way ANOVA stands for analysis of variance, two-way Ancova stands for analysis of covariance. It is used to discover whether there is an interaction effect between two independent

variables in terms for a dependent variable, when controlling or adjusting one or several continuous covariates. (Lund Research Ltd 2018)

In this experiment, several factors needed to be controlled which might influence the purchase intention variable. First of all, as the experiment concentrated on the purchase intention of beer based on the advertisement they saw, factors such as the respondent never drinking beer themselves or never buying beer to their friend or family member will affect their purchase intention regardless of what advertisement they saw in the beginning. Thus, the frequency of the respondent buying beer was measured with two questions: 1) “How often do you buy beer to yourself?” and 2) “How often do you buy beer do somebody else (e.g., a family member or friend)?”. Also, as the example advertisement shown focused only on Facebook-platform, whether the respondent uses Facebook at all had to be taken into account. This was measured with “How often do you use Facebook?”. Thirdly, the final controlling variable taken into account was brand familiarity. If the respondent was familiar with the brand before taking part in the experiment, they most likely have a preconceived opinion of the drink shown in the advertisement. This most likely will affect their purchase intentions of the advertised drink more than the specific advertisement they were shown in the experiment. This was measured with a statement “I am already familiar with the brand featured in the advertisement.”. All controlling variable questions were also measured with a 7-point Likert scale.

After taking into account all the controlling variables, the two-way Ancova analysis was run in SPSS. The results showed very similar results as the two-way ANOVA analysis, and the significance value for the picture and text variables’ interaction effect on the purchase intention was 0.790. As the desired p-value should be 0.05 or less, the p-value 0.790 had no relevant significance. Thus, the addition of the control variables did not change the results of the picture or text variables, or their interaction, having effects on the respondents’ purchase intentions.

5.3 Testing Hypotheses

This chapter tests results to the hypotheses presented in chapter 3.3. by using the results of the 2-way ANOVA analysis and the T-tests. The hypotheses are then either accepted or rejected based on the results.

H1: Conversational human voice increases purchase intentions compared to corporate tone of voice.

The two-way ANOVA analysis revealed that there is no statistical significance between the text the respondents read in the advertisement and the purchase intention they had, as we can see from Table 12, where the significance value for the text variable is significantly above 0.05. This result could be explained mostly by the results from our T-tests for the manipulation check questions. The t-test revealed that respondents did not perceive the CHV tone of voice significantly more funny, jokey or casual than the corporate tone of voice. Thus, in this experiment, conversational human voice did not increase the purchase intention of the respondents compared to the corporate tone of voice. This means H1 is rejected.

H2: Informal pictorials increase purchase intentions compared to formal pictorials.

Similar results apply to H2 as for H1. There was a marginal significance with the picture the respondents saw to their purchase intention, since the significance value for picture was 0.055 in the two-way ANOVA analysis. However, even though the picture element was the only variable with even the slightest significance for the purchase intention, the purchase intention of the respondents was higher when shown the formal pictorial compared to the informal pictorial, as we can see from Figure 6. Thus, also H2 is rejected.

H3: Conversational human voice and informal pictorials increase purchase intentions the most compared to any other combination of tone of voice and pictorials.

As seen from Table 12, the combination of the picture and text variables had no statistical significance on the respondent's purchase intention. This is explainable since the text variable on its own did not have any statistical significance for the purchase intention and the picture variable was only marginally significant. Thus, the picture and text combined together did not either have a statistical significance. Thus, H3 is rejected.

H4: Younger consumers have higher purchase intentions from the informal picture and CHV text compared to the older consumers.

When the variable AGEMS was added to the two-way ANOVA, it did not add any statistical significance to the respondent's purchase intention based on the advertisement they saw. Thus, H4 is also rejected.

5.4 Other Results

As mentioned above, the picture and text elements of the advertisement did not have significant effects on the respondents' purchase intention. However, some other interesting results were found that could support the microbrewery in their future decision making regarding their marketing activities.

The experiment also measured the respondent's brand attitude towards the brand presented in the advertisements with three questions: 1) The brand of the company featured in the ad is pleasing, 2) The brand of the company featured in the ad is well-known and convincing and 3) The brand of the company featured in the ad has positive connotations. After doing a factor analysis for the brand attitude questionnaire with principal axis factoring, all items loaded on one factor and all factor loadings were above 0.7. The Cronbach Alpha value for Brand attitude was 0.858. Thus, it can be assumed that the brand attitude index was reliable.

When looking at the correlations from Table 13 below, brand attitude proves to have a high positive correlation with purchase intention, since the significance value is <0.001 . This is however not surprising, since also studies before has proven to us that positive brand attitude correlates positively with purchase intentions (Lee, Lee & Yang 2017; Kim & Kim 2016). There is also, as mentioned in chapter 5.1.1, a marginally significant correlation with the AGEMS (*Age Median Split*) and the purchase intention. Since our "Age" variable was recoded as dummy variable, so that group zero (0) was respondents born before 1996 and group one (1) was respondents born 1996 or later, we can assume from the positive correlation that the younger respondent group had higher purchase intentions compared to the older respondents.

Other interesting results are also seen, as the AGEMS variable has a significant correlation with the Brand Attitude Index Variable (Sig. value 0.001), and the Pearson Correlation value being positive. This means that the younger consumers had a more positive attitude towards the brand shown in the ads compared to the older respondents.

Table 13. Other results: Correlations

Correlations		Purchase Intention Index Variable	AGEMS	Gender	Brand Attitude Index Variable
Purchase Intention Index Variable	Pearson Correlation	1	.127	.058	.580**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.099	.453	.000
	N	181	171	170	179
AGEMS	Pearson Correlation	.127	1	-.331**	.250**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.099		.000	.001
	N	171	171	169	171
Gender	Pearson Correlation	.058	-.331**	1	-.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.453	.000		.698
	N	170	169	170	170
Brand Attitude Index Variable	Pearson Correlation	.580**	.250**	-.030	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.698	
	N	179	171	170	179

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5.5 Summary of the results

Table 14 below summarizes that all four of the hypotheses were rejected. This proves that the existing literature claiming that CHV tone of voice increases purchase intentions in low-risk hedonic contexts (Barcelos et al. 2018; De Keyzer et al. 2017) does not necessarily apply to all industries. In this experiment, the tone of voice of text had no significant impact on the purchase intention. What comes to the picture aspect of the advertisement, the formal picture in fact had higher purchase intentions compared to the informal CHV picture. However, this result was only marginally significant. All in all, respondents found both versions of the picture and text as “funny, jokey and casual”, which most likely caused the rejection of the hypotheses, since the CHV text and picture were not found significantly more funny or casual as the corporate versions.

Table 14. Summary of the Results

Hypothesis number	Hypothesis	Result
H1	Conversational human voice increases purchase intentions compared to corporate tone of voice.	Rejected.
H2	Informal pictorials increase purchase intentions compared to formal pictorials.	Rejected.
H3	Conversational human voice and informal pictorials increase purchase intentions the most compared to any other combination of tone of voice and pictorials.	Rejected.
H4	Younger consumers have higher purchase intentions from the informal picture and CHV text compared to the older consumers.	Rejected.

6 Discussion and Conclusions

This thesis studied how social media marketing affects the consumer's purchase decision in a SME context, specifically focusing on the text and the picture elements of a Facebook post. Both the text and the picture elements were manipulated with two different kinds of tone of voices; a formal voice and a conversational human voice, and their effect was measured on the consumer's purchase intention of the advertised product. The study was conducted for a Finnish microbrewery, in order for them to distinguish the most efficient social media marketing tactics for their future to maximize the consumers' purchase intentions.

This chapter will answer the research questions presented in the beginning of the study, and evaluate how the results of the study align with the previous theories and research. Some managerial implications are also presented to address who could benefit from this study's results and how. The final sub-chapter explains critically the limitations that this study had and presents ideas for further research possibilities.

6.1 Theoretical Contributions

This sub-chapter evaluates whether previous the research and theories presented in chapters two and three are in line with the empirical results presented in chapter five. As there also were some research gaps in the previous literature, this chapter also presents possible new theoretical findings emerged in this study. Results are presented by answering all four research questions that were presented in chapter one.

1. How does the pictorial aspect of the advertisement influence the consumer's purchase intention in the SME context?

This research question was approached with hypothesis two:

H2: Informal pictorials increase purchase intentions compared to formal pictorials.

The previous literature stated that CHV tone of voice in marketing increases purchase intentions in low-risk hedonic contexts (Barcelos et al. 2018; De Keyzer et al. 2017), which is why hypothesis two also assumed that the informal pictorials will increase the purchase intentions

in this experiment. However, opposite results were found, since the consumer's purchase intention was higher when seeing the formal picture. Yet, the effect of the picture was only marginally significant for the purchase intention, so the results for the first research question should not be viewed as the absolute truth. H2 was thus rejected.

As the previous literature regarding this topic did not focus merely on a SME context, it can be stated that CHV pictures increasing purchase intentions in low-risk hedonic contexts does not apply to all industries. As this experiment was conducted for a microbrewery and example advertisements were advertising beer, the reason why purchase intentions were higher with the formal picture can most likely be explained with the results of our manipulation check. The t-tests proved that consumers viewed also the formal picture as "funny, jokey and casual", proving that regardless of what type of picture the respondents are shown, a picture advertising beer is still viewed to be casual. Thus, the theoretical contribution for the first research question is that the level of formality depends a lot on the advertised product, and thus the formal picture in this experiment was still seen as informal, because it advertised beer. Thus, against expectations, when compared to the informal picture, the formal picture caused higher purchase intentions.

2. How does the tone of voice of the advertisement influence the consumer's purchase intention in the SME context?

This research question was approached with hypothesis one:

H1: Conversational human voice increases purchase intentions compared to corporate tone of voice.

As chapter 5.3 proved, there was no statistical significance with the tone of voice of the text and the respondent's purchase intention. Thus, this experiment proves that tone of voice does not affect consumer purchase intentions in some fields of business in the SME context. This result can also be mostly explained with the results of the manipulation check, since respondents found also the corporate tone of voice as casual and jokey, since the text was promoting beer. Thus, we can contribute to theory that the level of formality in the tone of voice is very much influenced by the product or service its advertising, and consumers clearly are not familiar with attributing alcoholic beverages with formalness.

All in all, H1 was rejected since there was no statistical significance with the texts the respondents read and their purchase intention, so the tone of voice of the text in the advertisement did not have any effect on the purchase intention.

3. How does the combination of the tone of voice and pictorials influence consumers' intention?

This research question was approached with hypothesis three:

H3: Conversational human voice and informal pictorials increase purchase intentions the most compared to any other combination of tone of voice and pictorials.

As H3 is highly related to H1 and H2, and H1 had no statistical significance with the purchase intention, it is logical that H3 was thus also rejected. This experiment proved that any of the combinations of the text and picture had no significant effect on the consumer's purchase intention. This result is also most likely explained by the fact that consumers found both the formal picture and corporate tone of voice as funny and casual, and the manipulation did not work as planned.

4. Does the effect of the tone of voice and pictorials on the consumers' purchase intention differ depending on the consumer's age?

The final research question was measured with hypothesis four:

H4: Younger consumers have higher purchase intentions from the informal picture and CHV text compared to the older consumers.

As H3 proved that no combination of the text and picture had a statistical significance for the purchase intention, also H4 was rejected. However, interestingly, as mentioned in chapter 5.4 "Other results", the younger consumers in general had higher purchase intentions for the advertised product regardless of the advertisements shown. All in all, however, the tone of voice and pictorials did not have different effects on the consumers purchase intentions depending on their age.

Finally, our main research question for this study was:

How do different types of posts on Facebook influence the consumers' purchase intention in the SME context?

As mentioned in the results, the tone of voice used in the texts of the advertisements had no significance to the purchase intentions, and the picture had only a marginal significance. Even though the initial hypotheses were not supported, this study provided new insights. Nearly all previous research stated that CHV tone of voice increases purchase intentions with hedonic products, this experiment proved otherwise, since the formal picture actually had higher purchase intentions and the tone of voice of the text had no significance. The main theoretical contribution it proved is that consumers view products with certain attributes as jokey and casual regardless of the tone of voice in the advertisement. Beer is an alcoholic beverage and it is thus seen as casual and the formal advertisement did not create the desired manipulation within the consumers.

Thus, in this experiment, the formal picture influenced marginally the consumers purchase intention most positively in this SME context. The text in the advertisement did not have any influence on the consumers purchase intentions.

6.2 Managerial Implications

New insights were especially created for the microbrewery this study was conducted as an assignment to. First of all, against expectations, the formal picture had slightly higher purchase intentions within the respondents than the informal one, which is something that is useful for the management of the microbrewery to take into account in their future marketing plans. Since SMEs marketing operations differ usually due to limited resources (e.g., fewer number of employees and smaller budget) and limited expertise, this small switch of use in pictorials is an easy measure to change when planning the future social media strategies.

Also interestingly, the younger consumer group did not react differently to the CHV tone of voice and picture, but however had still higher purchase intentions regardless of the advertisement shown. This is something the microbrewery should take into account when planning their future, even though their largest consumer group is currently mostly middle-aged

men. The use of social media has no sights of starting to decrease, and new users become more and more younger, meaning they are a quickly growing target group for the microbrewery to take into account.

Other SMEs, especially breweries, in Finland can also turn to account from these results. Companies should evaluate what attributes their products have, and weigh whether their product is also viewed as very casual and jokey by consumers. If this is the case, the CHV tone of voice might even be considered as too familiar and friendly, and the tone of voice that the company considers as corporate might actually be considered as the ideal CHV tone of voice by the consumers.

6.3 Limitations and further research

As mentioned in chapter one, purchase intention refers to an individual's intention to buy a certain product. Measuring the purchase intention for products that already exist in the market is important when companies need to forecast future demands, in order to plan production amounts. (Morrison 1979) Purchase intentions however also vary a lot depending on the attributes of the product in question. This means intention to buy can depend a lot on the brand or model of the product even though the product could serve the same basic function as its comparison product. (Morwitz, Steckel & Gupta 2007)

Hedonic products are described as sensational and experimental, causing usually people more guilt when they engage with hedonic product consumption. Hedonic versus utilitarian products are often compared also as necessities versus luxuries. Consumers tend to make often trade-offs when choosing between hedonic and utilitarian products. The difference between hedonic and utilitarian products is not only defined by the product itself, but also with attributes regarding the product (e.g., luxury brand shoes versus standard sneakers). (Lu, Liu & Fang 2016)

Barcelos et al. (2019) found in their study, that consumers were more likely to do the purchase decision with hedonic products when the brand posted with a conversational human voice. Their study regarded travel booking intentions, so when the purpose of booking a travel was for a vacation or holiday, which is considered a hedonic goal, the use of CHV had a large

positive effect on the purchase intentions. If the consumer was booking a business trip, which is considered as a utilitarian goal, the effect of the use of CHV in the brand's posts was significantly smaller.

As this study is conducted to a microbrewery, whose main product to sell is beer, it is important to distinguish the difference between the purchase intentions of hedonic and utilitarian products. Beer is considered as a hedonic product, since it is not a necessity for consumers. Thus, a limitation of this study is the fact that results apply only to when the advertised product is a hedonic product, and result can possibly differ, if the study would be focused on a utilitarian product.

Another limitation of the study is the attributes of the advertised product. Even though, for example Barcelos et al. (2019) had proven that a CHV tone of voice causes higher purchase intentions for hedonic products, this experiment proved that the previous results are not generalized to all hedonic products. Barcelos et. al. (2019) research concentrated on travel bookings, but when the advertised product was switched to a beer, respondents considered both of the advertisements as "funny and jokey", and even had a higher purchase intention with the more formal picture. Thus, the limitation of this study is that it only focused on advertising beer, which had attributes that respondents found casual and funny regardless of the tone of voice used. Further research could for example examine what other hedonic products have certain attributes that respondents find funny and jokey regardless of the formality of the advertisement.

As this research was conducted as an assignment to a specific microbrewery, another limitation that should be taken into consideration is the brand. Even though the controlling variables had a question whether respondents were familiar with the brand, people might have subconscious preconceptions regarding the products the certain brand manufactures that might affect their purchase intentions without them realizing it. Further research could experiment do previous conceptions of a certain brand affect people's purchase intentions when shown a certain advertisement.

The final limitation that should be taken into account is that the study focused only on Facebook as the marketing platform. Results could definitely vary, if the marketing platform studied

would have been different (for example Instagram or LinkedIn). Further research could definitely study would the results differ if the examined platform was something different than Facebook.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The experiment questionnaire (in Finnish)

Question blocks studied in this thesis are in bold.

Kiitos, kun osallistut tähän tieteelliseen kyselyyn. Osallistumalla kyselyyn vaikutat merkittävästi tutkimukseen. Kaikki vastauksesi käsitellään täysin anonyymeinä, eikä niitä jaeta kolmansille osapuolille. Kun vastaat kyselyyn, älä ihmettele, jos jotkin kysymykset kuulostavat toistuvilta. Tämä johtuu metodologisista syistä, ja on tärkeää tietojen analysoinnin kannalta.

Vastaa jokaiseen kysymykseen rauhassa ja harkiten. Kyselyyn vastaaminen vie noin 5-10 minuuttia. Arvostan suuresti osallistumistasi ja aikaasi! Kiitos paljon!

(Advertisement 1, Advertisement 2, Advertisement 3 or Advertisement 4 were shown to the respondent here. They are censored due to the request of Company X)

Purchase Intention:

Jos olisit ostamassa olutta, millä todennäköisyydellä ostaisit tämän kuvassa näkyneen brändin oluen?

1 - En lainkaan todennäköisesti	2	3	4 - En osaa sanoa	5	6	7 - Erittäin todennäköisesti
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Ostaisitko oluen, jota suositellaan sinulle Facebookissa?

1 - En lainkaan todennäköisesti	2	3	4 - En osaa sanoa	5	6	7 - Erittäin todennäköisesti
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Ostaisitko tämän brändin oluen, mikäli näkisit alussa näkyneen mainoksen Facebookissa?

1 - En lainkaan todennäköisesti	2	3	4 - En osaa sanoa	5	6	7 - Erittäin todennäköisesti
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Etsisitkö aktiivisesti tätä tuotetta ostaaksesi sen?

1 - En lainkaan todennäköisesti 2 3 4 - En osaa sanoa 5 6 7 - Erittäin todennäköisesti

Brand Familiarity:

Mainoksessa näkyneen yrityksen brändi on minulle entuudestaan tuttu.

1 - Täysin eri mieltä 1 3 4 - En osaa sanoa 5 6 7 - Täysin samaa mieltä

Brand Attitude:

Mainoksessa näkyneen yrityksen brändi on miellyttävä.

1 - Täysin eri mieltä 1 3 4 - En osaa sanoa 5 6 7 - Täysin samaa mieltä

Mainoksessa näkyneen yrityksen brändi on tunnettu ja vakuuttava.

1 - Täysin eri mieltä 1 3 4 - En osaa sanoa 5 6 7 - Täysin samaa mieltä

Mainoksessa näkyneen yrityksen brändissä on positiivisia mielleyhtymiä.

1 - Täysin eri mieltä 1 3 4 - En osaa sanoa 5 6 7 - Täysin samaa mieltä

Manipulation Check:

Edellä näkyneen valokuva on mielestäni sävyiltään hauska, vitsikäs ja rento. (Vastaus vain valokuvasta, ei siihen liitetystä tekstistä)

1 - Täysin eri mieltä 1 3 4 - En osaa sanoa 5 6 7 - Täysin samaa mieltä

Edellä näkyneen valokuva on mielestäni sävyiltään asiallinen ja formaali. (Vastaus vain valokuvasta, ei siihen liitetystä tekstistä)

1 - Täysin eri mieltä	1	3	4 - En osaa sanoa	5	6	7 - Täysin samaa mieltä
<input type="radio"/>						

Edellä näkynyt kuvateksti on mielestäni sävyltään hauska, vitsikäs ja rento. (Vastaus vain tekstistä, ei valokuvasta)

1 - Täysin eri mieltä	1	3	4 - En osaa sanoa	5	6	7 - Täysin samaa mieltä
<input type="radio"/>						

Edellä näkynyt kuvateksti on mielestäni sävyltään asiallinen ja formaali. (Vastaus vain tekstistä, ei valokuvasta)

1 - Täysin eri mieltä	1	3	4 - En osaa sanoa	5	6	7 - Täysin samaa mieltä
<input type="radio"/>						

Frequency of buying beer and use of Facebook:

Kuinka usein ostat olutta itsellesi?

1 - En koskaan	2	3	4 - Noin kerran kuussa	5	6	7 - Useamman kerran viikossa
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Kuinka usein ostat olutta jollekin toiselle (esim. ystävälle tai perheenjäsenelle)?

1 - En koskaan	2	3	4 - Noin kerran kuussa	5	6	7 - Useamman kerran viikossa
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Kuinka usein käytät Facebookia?

1 - En koskaan	2	3	4 - Noin kerran kuussa	5	6	7 - Useamman kerran viikossa
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographics:

Syntymävuotesi?

Sukupuolesi?

- Mies
- Nainen
- Muu
- En halua kertoa

Koulutustaustasi (korkein loppuun suoritettu tutkinto)?

- Peruskoulu
- Lukio / Ammattikoulu
- Alempi korkeakoulu (Yliopiston kandidaatti / Alempi AMK)
- Ylempi korkeakoulu (Yliopiston maisteri / Ylempi AMK)
- Tohtori

Kuukausitulosi bruttona?

- 0€ - 1 999€
- 2 000€ - 2 999€
- 3 000€ - 3 999€
- 4 000€ - 4 999€
- 5 000€ <

Free feedback:

Tähän kenttään voit halutessasi jättää palautetta kyselystä, mainoksesta tai yrityksestä! Sana on vapaa.