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Abstract:

An exploration of the impact of omnichannel integration on the consumer decision journey and its effect on brand equity of luxury brands with the use of online touchpoints.

Martin Dannervig Højbjerg & Mikkel Dannervig Højbjerg, Aalborg University

The emerge of the Internet has changed the way consumers are searching for and buying products. Also, the Internet provides the opportunity to shop anywhere at any time. Consumers are getting exposed to advertisments everywhere and the lines between online and offline have become very blurry. An omnichannel approach has the purpose of connecting all channels and closing gaps across them offering a seamless unified experience through online and offline touchpoints.

The emerge of the internet has also changed the luxury industry with online luxury sales five doubled since 2009 - this number will triple by 2025. In fact, 78 percent of all luxury sales are influenced by the digital world with the customer hitting at least one digital touchpoint in their luxury shopping journey.

Luxury brands are faced with the challenge of bringing the same high-end experience into the digital aspect. The different channels do no longer exist in a silo, and luxury brands are readjusting their strategy investing in the digital world. Online and offline experiences are components of the overall brand experience. Luxury brands have to adopt an omnichannel approach in order to create an experience that blurs the difference between online and offline.

As the world is becoming more digital, brand equity becomes even more important. Loyalty is a major factor in brand equity together with brand trust. Brand trust has an impact to increase online sales and a link is found between brand trust in an offline store and the online purchase intention. The decision journey is affected, and the consumer now has a non-linear path to purchase. The journey has become more accessible with more content being put in front of the customers.

By researching hypotheses developed by exploring previous literature, it becomes evident that channel integration has a significant impact on omnichannel, and that there exists a significant relationship between digital touchpoints and the adoption of omnichannel for luxury brands. Furthermore, it becomes evident that the adoption of omnichannel has a significant impact on the consumer decision journey for luxury brands. Lastly, the research showed that the consumer decision journey acts as a mediator in the adoption of omnichannel and its impact on brand equity.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures.

Table of Tables.

Table of Appendix

Appendix 1 - Literature Review

Appendix 2 - Survey

Appendix 3 - Statistics

Appendix 4 - Interview

1. Introduction

The first part of this thesis has the purpose of giving the reader a general introduction to the topic. This will include the purpose as well as the problem statement. It is done in order to make the reader aware of the motivation as well as the considerations that have been taking into account in order to answer the problem statement.

1.1. Research background

Around the world, the lines between online and offline have become very blurry along with the distinction regarding virtual reality and actual reality. Human beings are surrounded by screens, be it on the street, at work, or at home switching between devices, knowing that information will be synced in real time. Nowadays retailers need to follow connections and communications that start on one platform ends on another after touching a few more channels along the journey. A consumer may see their favorite influencers wearing a luxury designer dress on Snapchat, ask for the price of the dress on Instagram, seeking information about the product online, send to a friend through Messenger, receiving a retargeting ad on Facebook and finally making the purchase in store with a discount code received via email. Brands are seen as being one entity. Consumers do not think of diverse sections within an organization, the separation of online and online teams, or the fact that stores may not have access to a customer's purchase history if items are purchased online. Consumer's expectations are different. When a consumer walks into a store they expect to be looked up in the system to see what they regularly shop, both online and in the physical store (*Parekh, 2019*). So, the development of the internet and social media have changed the consumer experience. Retail has become an experience where consumers can take action through online and offline channels, and consumers are getting exposed to advertisements everywhere on a daily basis both online and offline. Consumers are using several channels in order to increase their shopping experience and the emerge of the internet has made it possible to research and shop at anytime, anywhere. Online and digital channels are not viewed as secondary channels anymore but are becoming an essential part of different channels utilized by companies in today's omnichannel environment (*Hossain, Akter, Kattiyapornpont & Wamba, 2017*). With the increasing digitalization in both marketing and retailing, changes within markets are happening due to phenomena, such as shopping through mobile phones and social media. A new concept referred to as online-to-offline is increasingly becoming popular (*Du, Wang, & Hu, 2018*). An increasing number of companies are converting into omnichannel operations.

Omnichannel is a new retail mode that focuses on the interplay between channels and consumers. Omnichannel involves a synergetic integration of several channels with the purpose of creating a special brand experience for customers, no matter the channel or stage they are in during the purchase process (*Lee, Chan, Chong, Thadani, 2018*). Consumers are no longer just doing their purchases online or in-store but are shopping across different channels. They may search for information in one channel and may complete their purchase in another (*ibid*). Consumers are increasingly demanding an integrated purchase experience across channels that have forced retailers to turn to omnichannel in order to remain competitive. Therefore, an increasing number of companies are transforming and adapting into omnichannel operations (*Du, et al. 2018*). In an omnichannel environment, where the products are available from both online and offline channels, the consumers have the opportunity to purchase directly from an online web-shop or only seek information online and may choose to visit the brick-and-mortar store in order to touch and feel the product before making a purchase decision *(ibid)*. In such a digital age marked by data analytics, influencers, social media, and e-commerce, marketers have numerous tools to target their ideal customers. It is not enough for brands to exist on multiple channels, they need to be able to connect the channels in order to create a seamless experience for the consumers in their customer journey (*Launchmetrics, 2018*). During a purchase journey, a customer can switch between online and bricks-and-mortar several times and it is therefore important for companies to understand the connection between these channels. Companies should not only encourage in-store customers to meet the brand online, but also drive the customers to their physical stores *(ibid)*. The connected consumer uses several online sources such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, endorsements, Influencers, QR codes on printed advertise along with traditional touchpoints such as magazines, stores, and catalogs when browsing for products (*Tuunainen & Rossi, 2002*). It is all about getting the consumer connected through several channels and creating a seamless experience.

1.2. Problem discussion

Marketing is moving from multichannel to omnichannel. Omnichannel is more than just adding mobile and social media to the mix. It involves an interconnecting between touchpoints that from the consumer perspective blurs the distinction among the different channels (*Bloomberg, 2014*). The internet has become an essential element in branding in order to manage consumer experiences through communication strategies for all companies within all categories.

Luxury is about being exclusive. Luxury is anything that is desirable and something more than ordinary and necessary, but there is not one widely accepted definition of what constitutes a luxury brand. The luxury industry has experienced tremendous development in the last decade due to the increasing number of consumers who can afford luxury goods and services *(Heine & Phan, 2011)*. Scholars have attempted to define what constitutes a luxury brand but with no clear consensus. There are several challenges in composing a specific definition of a luxury brand, including the fact that luxury is a relative concept and the term luxury has changed over time. It has been claimed that the definition and measurement of luxury has been subjective even though luxury is not a naturally subjective construct time *(Ko, Costello, Taylor, 2017)*. Luxury brands are typically defined on consumer perceptions and determined on dimensions such as marketing activities and product attributes. Elements that are common in the determination of luxury brands are elements such as rarity, premium pricing and a high level of aesthetics, and high quality. According to Ko et al., *(2017)* luxury depends on the consumer evaluation of that brand. Strategic tactics from marketing managers such as pricing and quality can increase the demand and likelihood of a specific brand in order to be considered as a luxury brand, but these actions do not necessarily lead to a luxury brand unless consumer perceive is as such. Ko et al., *(2017)* have identified five elements being essential to any luxury brand and a theoretical definition of a luxury brand, which will be accepted in this thesis:

A luxury brand is a branded product or service that consumers perceive to:
1. *be high quality;*
2. *offer authentic value via desired benefits, whether functional or emotional;*
3. *have a prestigious image within the market built on qualities such as artisanship, craftsmanship, or service quality;*
4. *be worthy of commanding a premium price;*
5. *be capable of inspiring a deep connection, or resonance, with the consumer.*

The digital world has and will continue to change the consumer behavior. The experience the consumer is going through is crucial knowledge and it is more than simply shopping and buying. Nowadays, the consumers are not just buying a product, they are purchasing the experiences and emotions the specific brand is able to offer. The digital world has formed the consumer into expecting continuous excitement and the most exciting online consumer experience will set the bar for the next online shopping experience. But it also sets the bar for the next in-store shopping experience. In the omnichannel world, online channels must provide the same quality as the physical stores - but also the other way around.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate and explore the impact of omnichannel. The internet has changed the way companies market their products and have created numerous opportunities to create relationships with the consumers. The consumer decision journey is also being affected by the emerging of the internet, and the ambition of this paper is to explore how this is affecting the decision journey. Furthermore, how this is affecting the brand equity. To be specific, the following problem statement will be answered:

An exploration of the impact of omnichannel integration on the consumer decision journey and its effect on brand equity of luxury brands with the use of online touchpoints.

Furthermore, to get a more detailed view of the problem statement, several research-questions will be analyzed:

1. What is the impact of online touchpoints on brand equity?
2. How do omnichannel change the consumer decision journey?
3. What is the impact of omnichannel on brand equity?

The research questions will be answered by investigating previous literature within the same field of research. Furthermore, primary data will be collected and statistically tested in order to gather knowledge for answering the questions, and thus the problem statement.

The first research question will be answered by first, illumination which online touchpoints that should be included in the research. Second, the touchpoints will be connected to an omnichannel approach by statistically testing if the touchpoints have a relationship to the adoption of omnichannel. Last, the adoption of omnichannel will be tested in relation to brand equity.

The problem statement will be answered through both quantitative and qualitative research. A literature review has been done to explore already existing findings within the same field of research. Also, a questionnaire has been created with questions directed towards answering the problem statement. Furthermore, an interview has been performed to gather primary data with specific questions pointed towards the research. Different theories are being presented with the purpose of giving the reader adequate information related to the topic being investigated.

1.2.1. Omnichannel

Luxury brands are facing a major challenge in this digital era. How to bring the same high-end experience they offer in-store to the digital space. The consumers are online on their mobiles and ready to receive information at any time, which is creating the motivation for the research of this thesis. Luxury brands are faced with the challenge of adapting to an increasingly omnichannel world. Omnichannel marketing is about closing gaps in experiences across channels and offers a seamless unified brand experience across devices and physical touchpoints. Channels do no longer exist in a silo, they interact with and support the others, resulting in a singular brand presence. Offline and online experiences are components of the overall brand experience from the consumer's perspective *(Weiners, 2017).* Hence, the omnichannel approach has the purpose of connecting all shopping channels and being able to track consumers across them in order to make it easier for consumers to move between different channels. Many luxury brands are readjusting their strategy to invest in the digital world. These brands should be able to provide quality on all platforms and channels to maintain a luxury image. In relation to omnichannel, these brands need to provide a custom personalized experience that is possible by tracking consumers through several channels. The companies are getting knowledge about their consumers and can develop individual response to the consumers' demands. This is giving the companies a chance to increase their sales as the companies are able to recommend a certain item to the individual customer *(Woodworth, 2018).*

One of the challenges for luxury brands when entering omnichannel retailing is to create a seamless experience. This is forcing the companies to create high quality service no matter the platform; online, mobile, in-store catalog etc. These different platforms must provide accurate information about products. Customers will expect their favorite brand to be able to recognize them and identify their preferences as if they walk into a physical store. Another challenge or threat omnichannel will cause is price transparency. The transparency leads to intense competition across channels. When consumers evaluate products firsthand in store, they have the opportunity to go online via mobile technology to compare prices on several channels before making a purchase decision *(Li, Liu, Lim, Goh, Yang & Lee, 2017).* Also, when prices are available on digital platforms it becomes easier for competitors to challenge the prices. This challenge is most likely to affect companies who serve several luxury brands across several sales channels. According to Sherman *(2017)*, the way luxury goods are priced in global markets is more transparent than ever. This is affecting where consumers shop and fueling the grey market. The global transparency of prices is a game changer. Massive amounts of money are transferring from one continent to another.

The internet as a phenome has become a challenge for luxury brands. It allows brands to explode in brand awareness and offer consumers to get inside the companies with easy information about the heritage and consumers can attend to live runway shows. If anything is available online, it may affect the perception of the brands. Luxury brands are faced with the challenge of keeping the luxury aspect of the brand when it is so easily available. Keeping the perceived cache of luxury in the online world have made the migrating of luxury brands to go online slow *(Danziger, 2018)*. Also, challenges of distribution arrive as the companies have to organize their sales orders. The companies have to maintain their inventory through all sales channels no matter if sales are done online, click-and-collect or in the physical brick-and-mortar store.

1.2.2. Digital luxury

Beautiful storefronts with big window display, rich interiors and courteous salespeople who are dressed even more elegantly than the products they sell are usually elements people expect when searching and buying luxury goods. E-commerce and sales through multiband retail websites were only for the lower and middle range of products. The belief was that luxury shoppers with their taste of products and preference for high-priced goods would not buy expensive products online. These luxury shoppers would always choose the option of personalized customer service and a physical shopping experience that single-brand brick-and-mortar stores provide *(Dauriz, Remy, Sandri, 2014)*. That way of thinking has evolved the past years and luxury shoppers are willing to buy luxury goods online, also to an undiscounted price. With the growing power of the digital aspects of marketing and sales, all luxury brands must evaluate their digital presence. Online sales of personal luxury goods such as watches, jewelry, apparel, etc. account for 8 percent of the €254 billion global luxury market (*Achille, Marchessou, Remy, 2018*). This number has five doubled since 2009 with approximately €20 billion in online luxury sales. According to Achille et al., *(2018)* this number will triple by 2025 and reach about €74 billion. Hence, one-fifth of the total sales of luxury products will be purchased online.

The digital world is having a great impact on how luxury shoppers are searching and choosing among brands and goods. Today, 78 percent of luxury sales are influenced by the digital world. The consumers are hitting at least one digital touchpoint in their luxury shopping journey. These customers are going through a mixed online/offline journey in order to seek advice from peers on social media and looking for reviews/suggestions from influencers before making a trip to a brick-

and-mortar store. Pure offline sales represent only 22 percent of the total luxury sales but nearly all luxury shoppers have embraced the digital element of shopping (*Mckinsey, 2018*). The consumer behavior and luxury purchases vary depending on the product category and price point, and within the online luxury sales products such as apparel and accessories (handbags, leather goods, etc.) are categories with most sales. Watches and jewelry fall behind in terms of pure online sales due to the higher prices, which is hurting companies and thus forcing them to make a bigger effort to stay connected with their customers (*ibid*).

The luxury shoppers have adopted the digital lifestyle and 98 percent of these shoppers have smartphones compared to the general population with 65 percent. This digital adaptation is not only linked to the millennials, but the baby boomers are nearly as much connected to the digital world as the millennials. The boomers spend 16.4 hours per week on the internet, not much less than the millennials with 17.5 hours. 75 percent of the boomers are connected to social media whereas 98 percent of millennials use social media. The millennials are the leader when it comes to the digital world and is teaching the older generations new behaviors creating new expectations regarding the digital interaction between consumers and brands (*Achille et al., 2018*). The mobile has overtaken the desktop and consumers are using their mobile 4 times more than desktop computers, and the mobile has become the preferred source for seeking information. This transformation has created challenges for brands in order for them to show their details and quality of their products to consumers who are on their way to work or walking a noisy street. The challenge of giving consumers the information the shop assistant will provide etc. Luxury brands are using the internet as a discovery tool just as much as a commercial tool, where consumers should be able to learn just as much about products, as they can in store. According to Annika Storfait (*2014*) from Balenciaga, consumers are continually coming into the store with images of different products on their mobile phones. Therefore, the brands are forced to have a fully integrated understanding of marketing and distributing both online and offline (*Doran, 2014*).

1.2.3. Offline & Online channels

Luxury brands were reserved for the premium experience of offline retail stores. This assumption was based on the idea the consumers would not be willing to spend premium money on luxury goods online. The assumption that luxury shoppers always would favor the personal experience from the employees of a physical store with their knowledge and service. But as the data show, this is no longer the case *(Mckinsey, 2018)*.

One of the keywords in luxury is the experience. The experience of shopping is affected by any aspect done by the company from the contact point to the retail channels. The channels make the distribution and the distribution makes the communication. The distribution channels have the purpose of communication the price level without saying it explicitly. In order to speak and interact accordingly with the customers, luxury brands place their physical stores carefully in the right locations in the biggest cities around the world with the right street names. The typical luxury shopper will not look at the price before making a purchase and this is the reason luxury brands do not typically speak their prices directly. This is where the retail channels take its action with the assignment of speaking the brands' price level (*Kapferer, Bastien, 2009*). Online and offline have several advantages. While offline channels traditionally have the purpose of producing a high-class service through brick-and-mortar stores with collaboration from the design of the store to the personal service provided. Online channels have the main focus of driving consumers to the physical stores. For luxury brands to have success in the online market their channel integration will have to be executed to the best. Channel integration is defined as the interaction between channels. By integration of different channels, companies are able to achieve a competitive advantage over competitors. Studies have found that the quality of the channel integration consistently influences the evaluation consumers have on a specific brand. In order to create a seamless experience for the consumers, the quality of the channel integration is consistently being emphasized (*Lee, Chan, Chong & Thadani, 2018*). Distinct from multichannel retailing, channel integration in omnichannel retailing represents its own value creation and delivery of elements which could support the retailers in serving the customers (*Li, Liu, Lim, Goh, Yang & Lee, 2017*). Offline channels may appear to be the easier channel to manage for luxury brands, but it does not meet the consumers where they are the most active. However, the online channels do not provide the opportunity to touch and feel the products, which is highly preferred by luxury shoppers with circa 85 percent of the total luxury sales being made offline (*Mckinsey, 2018*). With online and offline channels both have their pros and cons, luxury brands have to adopt an omnichannel approach in order to create an experience that blurs the difference between online and offline. In the omnichannel aspect, the goal is to vanish the boundaries among the channels and turning the retailing into one big showroom using multiple channels to interact and fulfill the consumers' needs. The quality of the integration between the channels has a critical role when shaping the customer engagement in the context of omnichannel (*ibid*). These channels offer opportunities for luxury brands with the interacting of social networks, showrooms, events, brick-and-mortar stores, e-retailers etc. The value of channel integration lies in realizing these benefits of cross-channel elements that embrace overall sales growth and optimized customer experience. Omnichannel assist

the retailers in retaining customers by reducing the uncertainty. Even as customers travel from country to country, they expect a seamless relationship with the brands across different touchpoints (*Li et al., 2017*).

1.3. Outline of the project
The outline of this thesis has the purpose of giving the reader an overview of the whole project. It clarifies the structure and will simplify the process of navigating through the thesis.

| Chapter 1: Introduction | This chapter is giving the reader a general introduction to this thesis. The research background and a problem discussion are provided which will lead to the problem statement. Omnichannel and digital luxury is introduced to provide the fundamental elements. |

| Chapter 2: Methodology | This chapter explains the methodology of this project. It outlines the theory of science, paradigm and methodical considerations. Furthermore, it includes the research method, the data collection and how the data is analyzed. Last, the reliability and validity are evaluated. |

| Chapter 3: Theoretical considerations and literature review | This chapter presents the theoretical considerations and a literature review of existing literature within the same filed of research. A theoretical framework is presented, and four hypotheses is stated. A conceptual model is constructed in order to answer the stated hypotheses. |

| Chapter 4: Empirical Findings | This chapter outlines the empirical findings from the data collected. First, secondary data is presented of luxury brands online performance. Second, the primary data is presented with the findings from the survey conducted. Last, the hypotheses are statistically tested and explained. |

| Chapter 5: Discussion | This chapter provides an overview and discussion of the findings. The discussion of the hypotheses is presented, and the results will be compared with the existing literature and connected with building brand equity for luxury brands. |

| Chapter 6: Conclusion | The final chapter illuminates the findings of this thesis and concludes the project with an answer to the problem statement. There will not be provided any new information and the conclusion is based on the thesis as a unity. |

Figure 1. – Outline of project

2. Methodology

This part of the project is indented to visualize and illustrate the scientific considerations, theories, and models, which are the building blocks for the assignment. The methods are chosen with the purpose of creating a framework and form rules, that creates the premises and prerequisites of our data collection, as well as how the findings should be explained. The process is done inside our worldview and our recognition of the world. Through this master thesis the book *Methodology for Creating Business Knowledge (2009)* has been used. The book is written by two economists born in Sweden; Ingeman Arbnor and Björn Bjerke. They have made a deep research of the science cycle and business philosophy. Together they are known for their research methodology and the interplay between philosophy of science, business philosophy and science cycle. Also, the have done a deep analysis of the consequences for research and counseling. The book is considered as a framework for this chapter and is done by using the model *Theory of Science and Methodology,* which outlines the structure of this section.
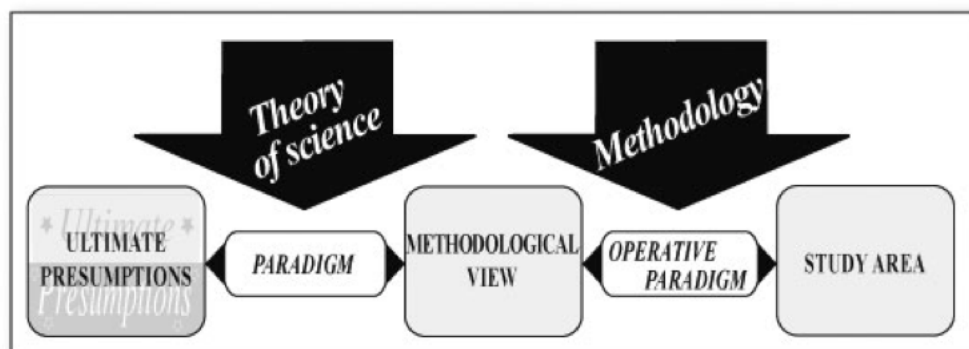
Figure 2. – Theory of Science and Methodology

(Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009)

2.1. Theory of science

The first factor that affects the final outcome of the project is theory of science. When working two individuals there are some ultimate presumptions, which creates an understanding of the reality we work inside through this paper. Also, there is a methodologically process, which is an understanding of our knowledge through the ultimate presumptions.

2.2. Ultimate presumptions

When working within a reality, we are subject to certain ultimate presumptions. They work as a guideline for us as researchers, as how we explore and obtain knowledge about the world. This is how we think, what information we gather and how this should be understood and explained, which hereby will affect the information we as researchers generate. With no ultimate presumptions, it would be challenging to explain the information and knowledge we obtain. These ultimate presumptions are reached through dialectics and with only two individuals this process has been simple and with no major complications.

We define our ultimate presumptions when looking at the ontology. We will work inside an objective ontology where the society is seen as a set of independent systems. We will see changes happen gradually where the society functions as a collective, where there is no room for the individual. We are relying on rules and laws and believe that through analysis and effort can comment on general conditions. We have holism in focus, where the picture will always be a part of the reality and not the reality itself. We wish to explain and determine causality and try to predict the future by explaining and describing. We work with the fact and believe that we are controlled by own interest, norms, and value.

2.3. Paradigm

When working with theories, certain rules will be created about what kind of empiricism we can use and how this should be processed. These rules are created by the choice of paradigm *(Darmer, 2010)*. The definition of a paradigm is taken from the book *'Business research methods' (2015)* by Bryman and Bell: *"A cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, how results should be interpreted" (Brymann & Bell, 2015)*. This means that it is the choice of paradigm which dictates the rules inside the field that we as researchers are working inside.

There exist many different definitions of *'paradigm'* as a term, but this is not an issue when the definition that is the base for the project is described. Here we would like to elaborate Bryman and Bells description of a paradigm, by introducing the American scientist Thomas S. Kuhn. He is one of the most notable historians and philosophers when looking at theory of science. His concept about paradigms and the shift in those has changed the view about science.

Thomas S. Kuhn *(1962)* has made three points that characterize a paradigm:

- A set of values and beliefs that mark the foundations in actions.
- A set of assumptions, which is a characteristic for a subject area and is believed as being steered by the choice of problem formulation, methods, theories, ethics, concepts, etc.
- An expression for the perception of reality in a period of time *(Darmer, 2010).*

The paradigm concept is in a close relation to the ultimate presumptions where it is used as a kind of language to express a pattern of this. The paradigm is the overall assumptions of the reality and outlines what should be used to judge when a research contains a logic that is accepted. This means that there is both an optical and a social side of a paradigm, which involves the way the researcher does the research and the theorizing *(Fast, 1994).*

According to Thomas S. Kuhn *(1962),* the paradigm is described as a universally recognized scientific achievement, which for a time are providing model problems and solutions to a researcher community. This means that a theory can only be accepted as a paradigm in this definition, when the theory does exist better that this challenging.

We have in our paradigm section decided to reference the work of two professors; Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan who, respectively, are from Leicester University and Lancaster University. They have created an organizational analysis of the sociological paradigm, which is highly based on Kuhn´s theory about paradigms that deals with the identification of a researcher's conception of reality. The two professors define sociologically paradigms as either being subjective or objective and the social system can only be changed by regulations or major changes. The purpose of their work is to clarify a large number of reality assumptions in relation to each other. Burrell and Morgan work inside the social science and they have two main paradigms: *Functionalism* and *Interpretivism.*
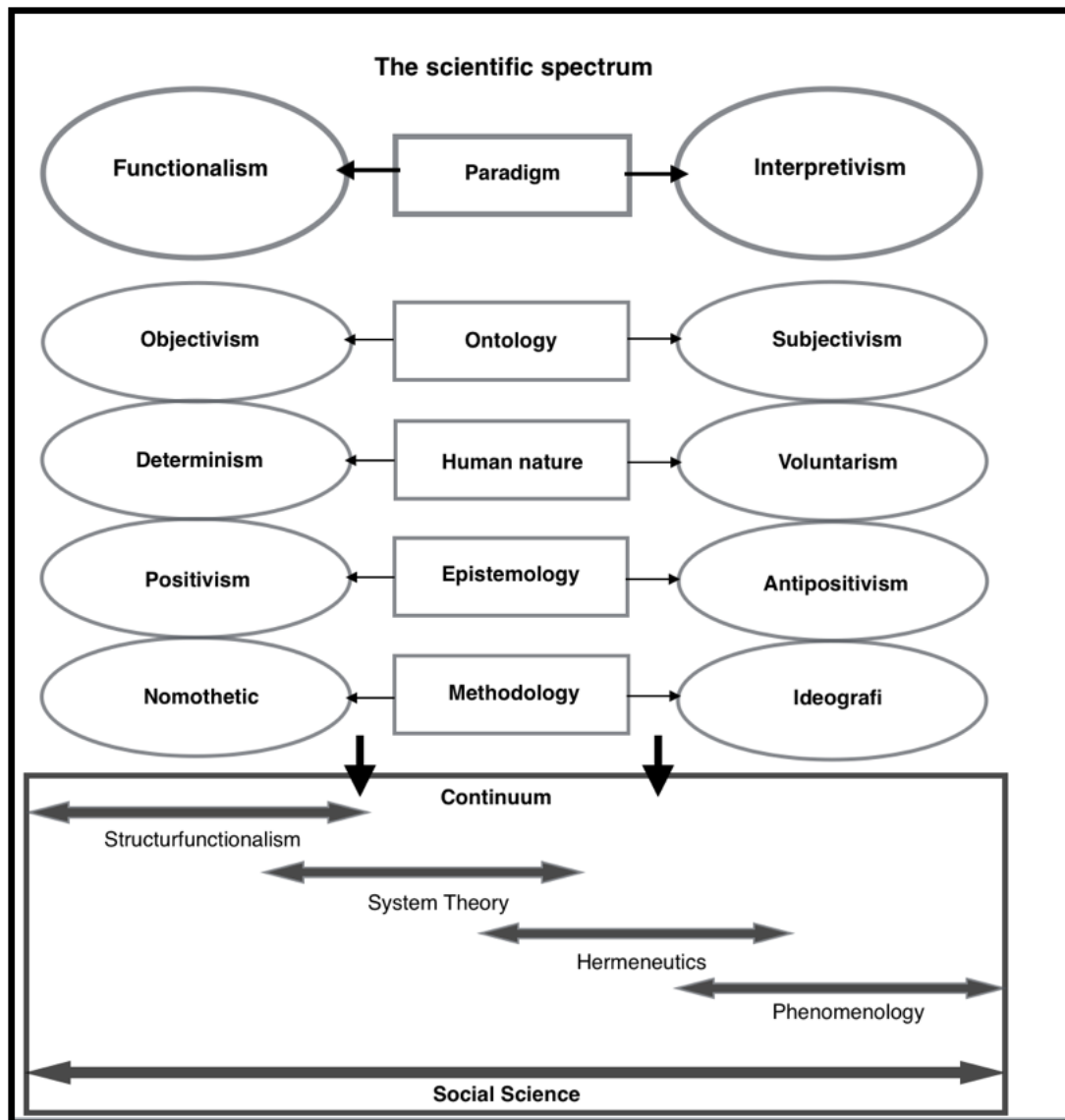
Figure 2.1. – View on the two paradigms inside social science.
The scientific spectrum. Based on Burrell and Morgan (1979) and Fast (1994)

2.4. Functionalism

The functionalistic paradigm has the intention to research the reality with explanations and descriptions, where the objectivity forms the basis for the given study. The paradigm seeks to make rational explanations of social interactions and is a way of understanding and relate to the reality and the social world. Functionalism has provided the dominant framework for how to conduct academic sociology and the study of organizations *(Burrell, Morgan, 1979)*. The equilibrium mindset in the social science is central in this paradigm and is introduced by Vilfredo Pareto. Also, it relates to a perception of reality that is based on social phenomena, harmony and social empathy.

Inside the functionalistic paradigm the approach is typical problem-based with one or more issues. Objectivity is the main factor and a requirement inside the paradigm, which means that factors such as personal values and emotions cannot be included in the actual study. When the reality has been explained inside the functionalism, it is possible for the researcher to predict an outcome of a given effect. This means that it is important for the researcher to remain neutral during the whole study.

Inside the functionalistic paradigm, there exist two main schools that are dominant in how certain business or problems should be understood. The two main schools are: *Structural functionalism* and *System theory,* which both have had a key influence on organizational theory, social science and business economics. In many points the two main schools can look identical, which is not correct, but many similarities accrue regarding the perceptions of organisms. *Structure functionalism* and *System theory* both perceive the reality as objective, but they are different in how you look at the different parts and how you analyze them *(Fast, 2008).*

2.4.1. Structural Functionalism

This main school is a theoretical construction in which the society is understood as a complex system. Here the focus is to study social functions and hereby gain knowledge about the whole system and its effect. Structural functionalism is considering the society as a built by different independent institutions, which are in harmony with each other. Here the reality is covered by observations and means that the society do not die the same was as an organism. Human behaviors are governed by norms and values and is what keeps the community alive. Structural functionalism has an objective reality and the sum of the parts is what creates the basis for the wholeness with a premise that knowledge is individually dependent.

An English social anthropologist named A. R. Radcliffe-Brown is known for the developer of the structural functionalism. Radcliffe-Brown does not consider all phenomena as related or dependent on each other inside a totality. He perceived the society as a system which has connected elements, a social structure, as he defines as a system of normative relations. As an entity the social constructions can be observed through its function but also not perceived independently *(Fast, 2008).*

2.4.2 System Theory

System theory has a particular way of doing research, where the environment has to be understood as a part of an interacting system. Here the purpose is to do a holistic study of the interacting systems. The system research provides a general language, where it is possible to combine different aspects within interdisciplinary communication in a way, which automatically works toward a universal research. Thus, this method of researching creates a specific culture where science, philosophy and religions are no longer separated from each other. The society is divided into systems that are autonomous *(Skyttner, 2015)*.

The German sociologist Niklas Luhmann is the creator of a theory where the baseline is separation and the analysis of objects is replaced by distinctions. This results in that an analysis of something is a split from something else. His theory is basically divided into systems, where it distinguishes between the system and the world. Social phenomenon is understood as a social system wherein the systems indicate an unknown world. Here it is possible to distinction between these two, because the system is no able to exist without distinctions from the environment. There do not exist any ´general system´ that fits all systems, but more an indefinite world where the system differs from its environment. The world is observed as unites of the difference in systems and environments, as well as something indefinite and undeniable. Luhmann claims that systems include living systems, mental systems and social systems *(Luhmann, 1995)*, which means that the world are existing of systems with that are connected to each other with a certain strength and durability.

The systems have no specific types of object included, they appear in different units and distinguish from their world. The systems are also transformed and self-created into relationships. There are several types of systems in the reality, where the relationships between the world and the systems is never equilibrium, with the fact that the world will always be more complex than the system. The point of making sense of relations and systems is the main element in a social system communication. Any societies can be perceived as a system of communicative elements, which means that it can be a meaningful relationship *(Baraldi, Corsi, 2017)*.

2.5. Interpretivism

This is a term specified to a contrasting epistemology to positivism. Interpretivism subsumes the view of writers who are critical of the applications inside the scientific model in studying the social world

and also who have been influenced by the different intellectual traditions. The view is a matter of the fundamentally difference between social science and natural science. Therefore, the study of the social world requires a different logic of how the research is made, one that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as an element against the natural order *(Bryman, Bell, 2015)*. Interpretivism is a paradigm, where there exist many realties and where knowledge is gained in interrelationships between individuals in a society. The paradigm is knowledgeable by a concern to understand the world as it is, and to understand the fundamental nature the social world in a level of subjective experiences. The actors in the society exist as a result of social agreements, where it is in the interest of the researcher to understand the actors' different assumptions. Interpretivism seeks to explain the empire of the individual consciousness and subjectivity within the framework of the references of the participant as divergent to the observer of the action. The social world is seen as an emergent social process that is created by the respective individuals. The social reality and its understanding are recognized to have existences outside the consciousness of single individuals and is aimed as being more than a network of assumptions and more than an organization theory *(Burrell, Morgan, 1979)*. The consciousness of an individual is dominated by the ideological superstructures in where the person interacts, which drives a cognitive wedge between themselves and the true consciousness that inhibits or prevents true human fulfillment. Hereby it is the researcher that creates the picture of the world, where the world cannot be understood as a whole since it is only possible to describe it. The future is not possible to be predicted, but there can only be created some ideas of it. The prediction is made upon an interpretation that a strategy is required that respects differences between people and objects of the natural sciences. Therefore, it requires the social scientist to grasp a subjective meaning of the social actions. The intellectual heritage does include the hermeneutic-phenomenological tradition *(Bryman, Bell, 2015)*. The human nature enchase that humans react of our own free will and our experiences are saved through the lifecycle. As in functionalism, there exist two main schools in interpretivism, which are: *Hermeneutics* and *Phenomenology*.

2.5.1. Hermeneutics

This is an interpretation doctrine, where it is about *understanding* and not only intelligently *comprehend*. The understanding of something is created by our own memories, experiences and understandings, which are created by personal experiences and feelings, and cannot be tested in interrelationships. A hermeneutic study builds on what understanding is and also how people achieve an understanding of meaningful material. Hermeneutics is about interpreting and to achieve an interpreting, and considers texts as funds to transfer beliefs, evaluations and experience from a subject

or society to another. The central idea behind this main school is that a analyst of something seeks to bring a meaning of something from the perspective of its creator. Modern advocates see the strategy with potential in relation to texts, documents, social actions and other non-documentary phenomena *(Bryman, Bell, 2015)*.

The German theologian Fredrich Schleiermacher founded the classic hermeneutics, where he compared the interpreting of a specific text with a conversation, where those who participated were trying to understand each other. Schleiermacher claims that hermeneutics is an art to understand verbal and written language. At the same time, he tries to understand the author of something, which means that he reaches ´behind´ the text and wants to find the ´I´ of the author. This task is grammatical and physiological, with the purpose to reconstruct the process, meaning and understanding of the author, that results in an understanding of the author that is even better as he understands himself *(Lawrence, 2008)*. The German philosopher and idea historian Wilhelm Dilthey studied Schleiermachers work and claims that human science is a construction of self-awareness and interpretive. This demands the individuals' unique methodology, which Dilthey describes as understanding, opposite to explaining. The two Germans claim that to understand text, you got to familiarize with the life of the author *(Lawrence, 2008)*.

In the 1990s other two German philosophers, Martin Heidegger and Hans-George Gadamer, expanded the hermeneutics by an understanding of existing rules about an understanding in general. In order to understand, you must possess a pre-understanding of the investigative. The two philosophers claim that a person work with a process where you recognize, interpret and produce knowledge. The focus is an interpretation of the meaning, where the main point is that the object affects the person who interprets it. Hans-George Gadamer is assumed as the father of the hermeneutics and presents the process as the *Hermeneutic circle.* The hermeneutic circle describes a process where the understanding and interpretive equates with a circular motion, in which the researcher travels back and forth between the understanding of the parts to gain an understanding of the whole. In modern days the hermeneutics is mostly used to interpretive and understand different life situations. The human has a subjective perspective and are considered as an actor where we try to get an understanding about the life situation of the actor. We emphasize with the subjects' place and permeate further than the immediate observable. The researcher has to permeate into the world of the practitioner and thereby make an arming to humans' own reference system. This process gathers an understanding of another individuals reference system. Furthermore, the individual doing this process, revise or enriches their own reference system.

2.5.2. Phenomenology

The term phenomenology means learning about phenomena, which in general can be anything. This is how something is giving to the human consciousness and also how it takes its character. Edmund Husserl a Czech-Herm philosopher is assumed to be the main actor within phenomenology. He considers this as a method to study different phenomena of consciousness, where the purpose is to investigate and justify recognition. This main school questions if the common/normal everyday experiences are cable of perceive itself, but at the same time tries to seek an understanding of the very same world. The human ´already´ exist in the world as a subject, and it does not face an objective world. It exists between two different philosophically mainstreams, empiricism and rationalism. The term empiricism is considered to exist as an objective world, that are independent from the subject and everything in this world is included within a causal context. The term rationalism argues the opposite. Where the subject is related with the opportunity for reflection stands higher than the object. With a reflection like this, the subject has an opportunity to interpret and understand the objective world.

Humans are considered as already existing inside the world that it is intentionally pointed towards. An existing individual cannot escape to witness a meaningful world, because the individual is sentenced to meaning. Phenomenology seeks to describe the world that lies before the constitution of the subject or object. Phenomenal is neither subjective, where it exists internally in the human, or objective, where it exists outside the human *(Merleau-pontly, 1999)*. Before a researcher can identify and investigate something, it must have a meaning for the individual before the investigation begins. Therefore, the scientific knowledge is not completely new, and the subject is already known which will be elaborated further. This means that any investigation always has some prerequisites and a starting point.

2.6. Choice of paradigm

In this thesis, we have decided to work inside the functionalistic paradigm and chosen the system theory as the main school. This choice is made with the belief that it will give us an accurate understanding of the paradigm and hereby the way this thesis has been designed. With the choice of paradigm, it brings some consequences in which scientific view we can use during the research. With the functionalistic paradigm, the problem statement has to be analyzed with objectivity. This means that during the writing process we cannot relate personal or subjective to any of the results produced.

Our own personal opinions to the results gathered can and will not be included in this thesis. The overall purpose of the functionalistic paradigm is to create an all-round view of the problem statement.

2.6.1. Ontology and Epistemology

Within the functionalistic paradigm the reality is seen as existing. The reality is objective and mutual relations plays a part because the whole is different from the parts. Basically, the objectivity represents our perception of reality in the investigation. The perception of reality is holistic, and it exists of entities, which cannot always be summed.

The ontology and epistemology create our general presumptions, which is the leading way of how we perceive the world and helps the create an understanding of the paradigm choice. Hence, the choice of paradigm is the bridge between the general presumptions and the chosen method approach. The combination of the elaboration of the operative paradigm and chosen method approach will generate study area and hereby a final problem statement.

Through dialectics we have obtained a common understanding of the chosen paradigm and investigate inside the same rules. We have chosen to write this thesis inside the functionalistic paradigm, which we believe gives the best opportunity to illuminate Omnichannel and its effect on brand equity. Furthermore, this match our perception of reality (ontology) and our scientific area (epistemology). With an objective approach of the investigation, we cannot relate personal or emotional to any of the results obtained. This implies that we as researchers perceive the obtained results as being correct.

2.6.2. Human nature

Dimerism prevails inside the functionalistic paradigm and means that all events have a cause. With any events there exists a number of conditions that must employ before the event necessarily occurs. The free do not exists since the will are not able to rise above the causality of events.

2.6.3. Method approach

Arbnor and Bjerke *(2009)* introduce three different approaches, which differ in their assumptions about the reality. Thus, data collection, observations and results are highly influenced by the choice of approach. There is not an approach that are better than the other, but the best approach is

determined in how the researcher view the world, life and field of study. An approach is a consistent set of concepts, basic assumptions and principles. Arbnor and Bjerke has divided the approaches in the analytic, the system and the actors' approach.

2.6.4. Chosen approach

We have decided to work with the system approach, which matches our choice of paradigm; *Functionalistic paradigm.* However, with the system approach both subjective and objective evidences can be accepted. But, according to the system view conception of reality, the subjective facts can be treated as objective and be described as systematic. The world exist independently of the researcher and the whole will always be different from the parts *(Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009).*

Inside the system approach there is a distinction between an objective reality and the models of this character. Thus, the world is considered to be factual and is composed in a way that the whole is differ from the sum of the parts. The knowledge that are generated on the basis of this approach depends on the system, where individuals are explained by their relation to the system, as the parts are explained and understood in their connection to the whole. The objective reality consists of systems, where the relationship between systems creates a synergy and is the key word inside this approach. There can accrue both positive and negative synergies – the purpose is to create the positive influx. Synergy effect is illustrated in figure 2.2., and this thesis will be a combination of different systems components which will create the whole and then the synergy will take effect.
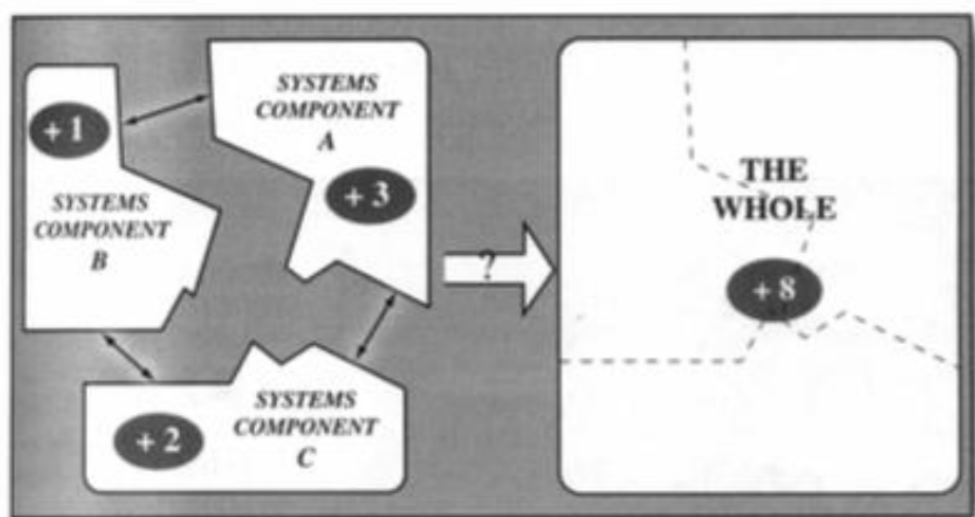
Figure 2.2. – System approach

(Arbnor, Bjerke, 2009)

Functionalism and the system approach are treated as a holistic explanation, where the actions are seen as being determined by a process, which is defined mutually through interactions *(Fuglsang et al., 2013)*.

2.6.5. Criticism of the system approach

The system approach is criticized from both the analytic and the actors' approach. They mean that the system approach has a lack in thoroughness inside the field that are investigated, and it do not reach the bottom of the investigations. This is with the fact that the system approach is an investigation of systems and not individuals. The actors approach believe that the systems approach lacks in subjectivity where personal interpretations must be included. Inside the systems approach it is synergy and the whole that are the key words. Furthermore, the system approach is being criticized due to the fact that it is not possible to remove any certain parts of the system, without consequences that it changes the whole and hereby the understanding.

We are aware of this criticism and we acknowledge these throughout the thesis. *"The criticism most commonly levelled against the systems view is that it cannot see the trees for the forest" (Arbnor, Bjerke, 2009).* There exist important factors within the parts, which cannot shine through due to the main focus of the whole.

2.7. Research method

In this section an explanation of the research design will be illuminated. This is inspired from our philosophy of science and impacts the data collection methods, hence the generated conclusions.

In order to secure that the data collected is capable of enlightening the research questions as unambiguously as possible, the methods used in the thesis is based on and being in line with the research questions. The research questions strive to generate an understanding of the research field with an application-oriented perspective. With a close connection between the purpose, research questions and research design, the foundation of the research design is based on the purpose and research questions. This is done to clarify the circumstances of relevance that particularly is underlined the social context of consumer patterns in a cross-field of luxury brands, omnichannel, consumer decision journey and brand equity.

A research design is a grand plan of approach to a research topic. This requires lots of work and reading as well as understanding our view as researcher. There do not exist one right way of conducting business research, but it depends on a number of different factors such as the research topic, audience for research, time and other resources available for the researcher. Furthermore, the kind of study that is considered appropriate for the topic. Designing the research is vital and choosing a strategy means that we have considered our view on truth and knowledge, social entities, what business research can and cannot achieve, and lastly how all this can affect what we actually do to answer research questions *(Brymann, Bell, 2015)*.

The research design is a blueprint or framework of conducting the marketing research thesis. It has specific methods and procedures in the collecting and analyzing the needed information. Hence, it is providing a framework of action for the research. There exist several research designs and therefore, the choice reflects the decisions regarding priorities given of the dimensions and the research process. It is important to consider and decide whether the research should take a 'point in a time' approach. When looking at a phenomenon at a particular time from the perspective of more than one person, it is known a *cross-sectional research.* If the phenomenon is looked at over a period of time it is known as a *longitudinal study (Brymann, Bell, 2015).* Most academic studies including this thesis is using a **cross-sectional research**, due to the factor that the thesis is completed within a limited period of time. This research design creates a 'snapshot' of the outcome and the characteristics associated with this in a specific point in time. The focus is to determine the ´what´ rather than the ´why´ and helps to answer the research questions. The process is simple, and it is focused on how single variables is different between groups and is a valuable tool of assessing attitudes and preferences of knowledge. This study is conducted with the same set of variables in a certain time period. Moreover, it is conducted in a single instance, it has more than two variables, and it detects patterns of association. A cross-sectional research gives the flexibility to look at multiple variables together like a constant with a variable being the focus *(Eduardsen, 2018)*.

In business research, it is increasingly usual to mix methods of the data collection and analysis. This can be done by using different data collection methods, which can be either quantitative or qualitative, and is called *multi-method approach*. It can also be done by using both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods which is called a *mix method approach*. With the wish of achieve trustworthy and transferable data a combined method perspective is used that integrate methods across practices in order to investigate the same phenomena and obtain validation. Therefore, this research is using a **mix method approach** and is used in social science to support the understanding

of an experience, a meaning, or a process in using multiple collection methods. Furthermore, this bring to another argument for the choice, which is the factor of ***triangulation***. This term refers to the use of several methods in the research of a same phenomenon with the purpose of strengthen the validity of the research *(Eduardsen, 2018; Bryman, Bell, 2015)*. When applying triangulation in the research, it is possible to illuminate the field of research from more than one dimension and protects against blind spots. Also, a ***sequential explanatory design*** is used, which is the overall mix-method design. This method is a two-phase design where we first collect quantitative data followed by quantitative data. The purpose of this is to use the qualitative data to further explain or confirm the findings from the quantitative data *(Creswell, 2003)*. This will be done by analyzing the results from the survey by testing hypothesis, where the results will be followed up with an expert interview.

2.8. Data collection

Data collection is a process where the researcher gathers information from all relevant sources in order to answer the research problem, test of hypothesis and evaluate outcomes. When gathering data, researchers must identify the type of data, source of data and the methods used to when collecting the data.

2.8.1. Primary & Secondary

The data collection for this thesis is done with mixed-methods (*cf. 2.7*) with both quantitative and qualitative data. Furthermore, the data used is a combination of both primary and secondary data. The primary data is conducted from a survey and an expert interview. Secondary data is collected from a literature review and an analysis of luxury brands current presence on digital touchpoints.

The advantages of using primary data is that the data collected is specific for the purpose of the study. The questions asked is tailored to elicit the data from first-hand sources to help answer the problem statement. Secondary data is gathered from other studies done within the same research field and are used to gather knowledge (*Greener, 2008*).

2.8.2 Literature review:

A literature review is a discussion of any published information inside a specific subject area. Sometimes it can be specific within a certain time period or sometimes as simple as a summary of the sources. Usually, it is an organizational pattern and is a combination of both summary and synthesis. The summary is a recap of the most important information of the sources. The synthesis is a re-shuffling or a re-organization of the specific information. The search of literature is a central

aspect of research and its results are often the empiric that is the building blocks for the research. This means that it is very important to be careful when searching, so the results can be representative with on bias and also solid enough to carry an analysis and conclusion.

Much relevant literature can be found, if there is enough time to search thoroughly. The impression is that in any event, it is relentless to focusing on grasping everything. Therefore, it is important to prepare and know what kind of criteria that should be used in the search; "A search strategy". With this in our mind, we have made a plan to find the most important literature inside our study area and problem formulation. This will be considered as a sub-system, with the wish of creating knowledge of the super-system that is this case would be the thesis as a whole.

In our thesis we will be using a systematic approach in our literature review. Alongside ´narrative´ and ´traditional´ literature reviews, this is a new type and has appeared in recent years *(Pettigrew & Roberts, 2006).*

A systematic literature review is a method of making sense of large amount of information and a funds of contributing of answers to questions about what is working and what is not. The reviewer of the literature is engaging in a systematic, transparent means of appraising, gathering and synthesizing of the findings in a study of a specific topic. We adhere closely to a set of scientific methods which explicitly aims to limit bias by attempting to synthesize, appraise and identify all relevant studies in order to answer a specific set of questions *(ibid).* When we are working with at specific problem formulation, this would be considered as the right method in order to gain the right knowledge for our super-system. It is a scientific tool, but it can also be used with the purpose of summarize, appraise and communicate any results and implications of unmanageable quantities of research.

When we are using Pettigrew and Roberts *(2006),* they have introduced seven steps of a systematic literature review:

1. Clearly define the question that the review is supposed to answer.

The literature review is intended to answer the problem statement (cf. 1.2.) and will help to create an overview of what is already know inside the field of study.

2. Determine the types of studies that need to be located in order to answer your question.

Both quantitative and qualitative studies are included.

3. Carry out a comprehensive literature search to locate those studies

Five different criteria have been created to limit the search and located the studies. The criteria are shown in table 2.

4. Screen the results of the search.

The first search in AAU library and Google Scholar contained the keywords 'omnichannel' and 'brand equity' with AND as a connecter, which showed a total of 551 hits. In order to limit the amount of hits, 'consumer decision journey' was added together with limiting the search to only English entries, which resulted in 241 hits. In order to ensure gathering all relevant units, several possible spellings (omnichannel, omni channel, omni-channel) has been used with OR as a connecter. We examined the entries by reading the abstract in order to gather the most relevant information which is used to answer problem statement. All used entries are described in the appendix (Appendix 1).

5. Critically appraise the included studies.

Included in the literature table (Appendix 1). The studies are gathered from various countries with the majority being from North America.

6. Synthesize the studies and assess heterogeneity among the study findings.

Included in the literature table (Appendix 1).

7. Disseminate the findings of the review.

Included in the literature table (Appendix 1).

2.8.2.1. Inclusion- and Exclusion criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria have been developed prior to the research in order to ensure boundaries of the literature review. It is important not to define the criteria too narrowly or too broad. With too narrow defined criteria, the risk of losing relevant literature arises and with criteria too broad, the possibility of gathering literature not relevant for the research occurs (*O'Brian, Guckin, 2016*).

Criteria	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Criterion 1	*Articles must be published between 1990 and 2019.*	*Any articles outside of the designated dates 1990 and*

		2019 will not be included.
Criterion 2	*All articles included in the review must be published in English.*	*Any articles not published in English were excluded. If the researcher felt that a particular study was essential to the research, a translation occurred.*
Criterion 3	*All retrieved articles must include; ʹOmnichannelʹ, ʹConsumer decision journeyʹ and ʹBrand equityʹ as a keyword.*	*Studies not including these keywords are excluded.*
Criterion 4	*Articles gathered all over the world.*	*N/A*
Criterion 5	*Literature must be retrieved from AAU library or Google Scholar.*	*Literature outside these databases has not been included.*

Table 2. – Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

The table of the literature review is added in the appendix *(Appendix 1).*

Expert Interview

A quantitative interview has been conducted with employee of Toro Performance Group Simon Mørk. Toro Performance Group is a marketing company who is specialized in online marketing and web development. The interview has been completed via Skype as Simon Mørk is currently located in South Korea. The interview has been done in order to search for objective valid data, which has purpose of this project. Simon Mørk is fully aware of the purpose of the interview and the usage the data collected.

Simon is considered as an expert in the field of the interview and creates primary data. Kvale and Brinkmann *(2015)* argues that when interviewing an expert, it is important to be well informed about the about the subject and not only use technical terms. In order to do that, we have used time to understand what properties Toro Performance has and what Simon Mørk is undertaking at the company. When doing this we are met with respect and obtain a certain symmetry in the interview relationship. Another consideration when interviewing an expert is when using Simon there is a risk of the research focus being biased and the credibility is deteriorating *(Kvale, Brinkmann, 2014).*

The interview has been created with the metaphor 'the miner', which means that the relevance of the questions is important. A semi-structured approach to this interview has been used, which has giving the chance to change the questions continuously, if the answers were not answered satisfactorily. Also, questions can be reformulated if the answers have not been answered with enough depth. Hence, the interview has been dynamic. This can provide additional information that the questions where not initially prepared for, but at the same time is follows the original theme of the interview *(Kvale, Brinkmann, 2014)*. This type of interview fits the paradigm of this thesis. By using the semi-structured approach, we believed to overcome the obstacles of interviewing an expert and keeps the interview in an open situation for a deep understanding. We conducted the interview with having gained theoretical knowledge about the field of the interview.

The preparation and execution of the interview has been inspired from Kvale and Brinkmann *(2015)* seven stages of an interview, which includes: *Thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying* and *reporting.* Furthermore, we have been formulation the questions with caution with the awareness of the impact the formulation of the questions has on the respondent.

The primary data cannot be considered as representable because of the fact that it is collected based on only one person's convictions. Based on that, the generation of high ethos of the interview related to the narrow focus within Simons experience and expertise in the field, it can be characterized as a contribution, which therefore is seen as qualified and useful for our research. Before the formal interview, we had an initial conversation with Simon and together with the theoretical knowledge of the field regarding omnichannel, consumer decision journey and brand equity, we have constructed the questions and affected our pre-understanding of the field. In the following there will be a specified explanation of how we used the seven phases guide *(kvale et al., 2015)* of interviewing.

Thematizing (step 1) and Design (step 1)
The thematizing and design is an essential part of the interview and relates to the formulation of the questions and a theoretical explanation of the examined theme. The thematizing relates to the ´why´, ´what´ and ´how´ of the interview.

´Why´: The process of the interview is based on the objective of the overall research question, which is the ´why´. The interview is about obtaining more knowledge about field of what the respondent is an expert. Also, it is about getting an understanding of the online media environment and illuminate

what is important when using online touchpoints. Furthermore, it is intended to gain knowledge of the omnichannel approach with multichannel integrated with each other. This will be used as a complement to the data gathered from the questionnaire and used as a form of confirmation to the final result.

´**What**´: To the interview process a certain knowledge and understanding of the field is necessary. This it with the purpose of understand relevant key theoretical concepts inside the field of research. The key theoretical concepts are elaborated in our section of ´theoretical background´ *(cf. 3.)* and has been the foundation of the questioning making *(ibid)*.

´**How**´: Here the data collection methods and design of the interview will be introduced. However, the technique of interviewing is introduced in the beginning of the above section and therefore we refer to there. With Simon representing a marketing industry we are interested in understanding the industry that he represents and illuminate the subject field in the current situation. We are aware that Simon cannot represent the whole industry. When working with online marketing it gives an argument for using him as a data source that illuminates a connected representation of online marketing and touchpoints. When sitting in a position of working with customers, he is in direct contact with online initiatives and what brands need.

The design of interview is made with scripting the interview which results in the formulation of the questions that creates the course of the interview *(ibid)*. The questions were designed with the interviewer giving the opportunity of freedom and deviation from the interview guide. With the semi-structured approach in mind, there are room for the unexpected and room for the respondent's own inputs.

The techniques that are described is used with the purpose of increasing the quality if the interview data. Also, in the situation of the interview, the techniques and rules has been hidden for the personal intuition to come into play. Thus, the techniques were not in focus, instead the field and the knowledge aimed to collect. With sound interview research, it extends beyond the formal rules and techniques *(ibid)*. Kvale and Brinkmann *(2014)* argues that the interview techniques are kept in the background, because Simons competences have increased importance.

Interviewing (step 3)

Before the interview with Simon he was aware of the agenda and before recording a briefing was made. The was done in order to obtain most relevant data. The interview took place on skype and was recorded, and notes was taking doing the process.

Transcribing (step 4) and bricolage (step 5)

In a transcribing the conversation between two persons abstracted and fixed in a written form. It is done prepare the analysis of the interview. Transcribing from sound files to text is connected to a number of technical and interpretative problems, especially regarding spoken language and written language where there do not exist any standard rules. The transcription does not include body language or movements and is transcript into a more formal language with no frequent repetitions, pauses and linguistic complexities. The focus will be on the meaning in the context and the transcript is provided in the appendix *(Appendix 4.)*.

The analysis is based on bricolage where a combination of different technical tools is used. This enables us to freely use different modes and techniques of analysis that generates connections and structures that is relevant for the research. There will be a focus of creating meaning of the interview based on what is being said. The choice of a meaning analysis is chosen with the fact that it is an expert interview. The transcript of the interview is used to point out relevant meaning units *(ibid)*.

The interview has been conducted in Danish but the transcript will be presented in Danish and has also been translated into English.

Verifying (step 6)

This is connected to what degree the giving results can be evaluated as valid and communicable. The reliability of an interview is often discussed to be low because of a certain degree of subjectivity and therefore not reliable to produce new knowledge. This is due to the fact that subjective stories and interpretations is difficult to recreate in a similar situation. This is though based on the understanding of objectivity. Kvale and Brinkmann *(2014)* argues that objectivity is explained as ´freedom from one sidedness´ and is explained as reliable knowledge, that is verified and controlled, unaffected by personal attitudes and prejudices. Therefore, the interview is treated with inspiration of ´freedom from one sidedness´ and creates a natural basis for the interview which fits the choice of paradigm.

Kvale and Brinkmann *(2014)* states that the validity should not have a separate section but permeates the whole research process as a unity. They argue that the validity is evaluated based on the quality of the craftsmanship and a pragmatic criterion of truth. Therefore, the evaluation of the validity in the interview is controlled continuously and seeks to ensure a high quality with control of both the questions and the answers.

Reporting (7)

The interview report is a social construction where the method choice of writing provides an insight of the interview persons world. There are no standard rules for the reporting. In this thesis the expert interview will be used to compare and support the findings and will be mentioned when a connection arises. Here the interview will be referred to in the appendix *(Appendix 4.)* with its transcription.

Questionnaire

The answers of a survey are of interest not intrinsically but because of the association to something they are supposed to measure. Good questions are reliable. They are providing consistent measures in comparable situations. Also, good questions are valid meaning that the answers correspond to what they are intended and designed to measure (*Fowler, 2009*).

A quantitative questionnaire has been developed for this thesis in order to answer the problem statement. It involves a deductive approach to theory and the research of this project will test several hypotheses with quantitative numerical data or data that can be converted into numbers. The social reality is seen as external and objective (*Eduardsen, 2018*), and the use of this approach matches the paradigm of the project. The design of the questionnaire has been created in order to make it simple to answer and analyze afterwards. Different scales have been used in order to gather the most valuable data concerning this thesis and vary from question to question to avoid the respondents from always choosing the same or middle option. The questionnaire is developed with the use of survey-xact with access through Aalborg University. It is self-administered and have been sent out in form of an anonymous link via social media and exposed to friends and family to answer and share as well.

The questions of the questionnaire are designed to answer several elements regarding the problem statement and the respondent are going through different phases when responding. Firstly, the respondent is to answer demographic questions followed by questions relating brand equity. Afterwards, the respondents will answer questions related to omnichannel and digital touchpoints, and lastly questions regarding the consumer decision journey will occur. Furthermore, the questionnaire also includes questions regarding a combination of the four elements (brand equity,

omnichannel, digital touchpoints, consumer decision journey). The questions have been developed with inspiration from different surveys regarding the same four elements in order to ensure the reliability *(Table 2.1.).*

The questionnaire has been pretested which is an essential step in the development process of this questionnaire. The purpose of pretesting is to increase the validity and reliability. Respondents answer the questions differently with different experience processes and the purpose is to ensure that the respondents interpret and answer the questions in the most efficient way to reach the intended purpose of the questionnaire. The pretesting also helps to determine if the questions are understandable, if they perform the tasks and if they provide information the questions require. Furthermore, the pretesting also offers the most direct evidence regarding the validity of the questionnaire. For this thesis, the questionnaire has been pretested on 10 respondents. Guidelines presented by Fowler *(2009)* have been used and the pretest judged six aspects of the questionnaire; (1) the clarity of instructions, (2) the clarity of wording, (3) relevance of items, (4) the absence of biased words and phrases, (5) the use of standard English, and (6) the questionnaire format. Feedback from the pretest were taking into consideration in the conduction of the final version of the questionnaire.

Construct Questions Source			
Question no.	Subject	Question	Own development. Inspired from
1	Demographic	Age	*N/A*
2	Demographic	Gender	*N/A*
3	Demographic	Nationality	*N/A*
4	Brand equity	Do you have a set of favorite luxury brands or do you switch from time to time?	*Hossain, Akter, Wamba, (2017) Bendoly, Blotcher, Bretthauer, Kristhan and Venkataramanan (2005)*
5	Brand equity	Would you recommend your favorite luxury brand to friends and family?	*Alex Rees (2018) Rimpy Goyal (2014)*
6	Brand equity	When buying a luxury brand in what degree do you look at following?	*Rimpy Goyal (2014) Kotler, Keller (2010) Keller (2001)*
7	Brand equity	When I buy luxury brands I:	*Carroll & Guzmán (2015) Nunes, Schunck, Wollan (2012) Ameyo, (2018) Crownpeak (2014)*

8	Omnichannel	Have you purchased luxury items online?	*Lim Ee sim (2014)* *Remy, Catena, Durand-Servoingt (2015)* *McKinsey (2015)*
9	Omnichannel	What prevents you from buying Luxury items online? If you have not bought luxury items online in the past, which barriers prevents you from doing so?	*De Lange (2016)* *Martens, Demeester, Billiet, Vanhout, Moubax (2016)* *Carroll & Guzmán (2015)* *Mckinsey, (2018)*
10	Omnichannel / Touchpoints	How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the luxury brand?	*Own creation (Cronbach´s Alpha)*
11	Omnichannel / Touchpoints	For what purpose do you use the online platforms?	*Olivia Poblano (2015)*
12	Consumer decision journey	Where do you prefer to buy luxury items?	*Harris (2019)* *Nielsen (2017)* *Bommel, Edelman & Ungerman (2014)* *McKinsey (2018)* *Lee, Chan, Chong & Thadani, (2018)*
13	Consumer decision journey	I consider buying luxury brands based on:	*BP Nanak (2015)* *Rimpy Goyal (2014)*
14	Brand equity / Omnichannel	Are you happy with the online experience provided by your favorite luxury brand?	*Ameyo, (2018)* *Mckinsey, (2018)*
15	Brand equity / Omnichannel	Do you see an integration between the luxury brands different online media?	*Herhausen, Binder, Schoegel & Herrmann (2015)* *Egan, 2015*
16	Omnichannel / Brand equity	Do you think that the online experience matches the brand and its physical store?	*Lee, Chan, Chong, Thadani (2018)* *Du, Wang, & Hu (2018)* *Egan, (2015)* *Li, Liu, Lim, Goh, Yang & Lee, (2017)*
17	Omnichannel / Brand equity	If your previous answer was no, could you explain why?	*Lee, Chan, Chong, Thadani (2018)* *Du, Wang, & Hu (2018)* *Egan, (2015)* *Li, Liu, Lim, Goh, Yang & Lee, (2017)*

18	Omnichannel / Brand equity	What would you like from luxury brands to improve in their online presence?	*Kuvykaite, Piligrimiene (2014)* *Heine & Berghaus, (2014)* *Hughes, Bendoni, Pehlivan, (2016)* *Hossain, Akter, Wamba, (2017)*
19	Omnichannel / brand equity / Touchpoints	Would you like your favorite luxury brand to?	*Olivia poblano (2015)* *Rimpy Goyal (2014)* *Abtan, Barton, Bonelli, Gurzki, Mei-Pochtler, Pianon, Tsusaka, 2016*
20	Omnichannel / Brand equity	How would you feel about luxury brands having a profile of you and your shopping pattern, history and taste in order for them to identify you as soon as you step into their store and give personalized service experience?	*Abtan, Barton, Bonelli, Gurzki, Mei-Pochtler, Pianon, Tsusaka, (2016)* *van Bommel, Edelman, Ungerman, (2014)* *Accenture, 2013)*

Table 2.1. – Construct questions sources.

2.9. Data analysis
This illuminates the tools used to analyze the data gathered and how the statistics is calculated.

Chi Square of independence

The Chi Square test of independence is used in order to investigate if there exist a significant relationship between two categorical variables. This test is also known as the Pearson Chi-square test and is one of the most useful statistics for testing hypotheses when variables are nominal. This statistic is robust with respect to the distribution of the data. It does not require equality of the variance among the study groups. The Chi-square have unlike most statistics the element of providing information on the significance of any observed differences, but also the detailed information on exactly which categories that account for the differences. This can provide the researcher with very detailed information to understand the results gathered.

ANOVA Test

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a gathering of inferential statistical tests, that belongs to a general model family which examine if two or more groups of a categorical independent variable influences a dependent variable. The purpose of this test is to see the likelihood of the results that are observed are due to the change in differences between the groups. ANOVA partitions out the variability that attributes to the difference between variables that are independent and variability in the research context.

The calculated value by the ANOVA test is the ratio of two types of variability. Specifically, it is value that results of dividing the treatment variance by the error variance. When the value is larger, the likelihood is lower of chance having a role in the differences that are observed between the groups of independent variables. With a traditional testing of the null hypothesis, a significant *F* value is one with less than 5% probability of appearing by chance ($p < 0.05$), that gives no difference and the null hypothesis is true. This means that a difference between independent variable groups is due to the independent value and is not just a random chance. Here we will compare the means of omnichannel, brand equity and consumer decision and statistically tell if there are any significant relationship between the groups *(Blankenship, 2017).*

Test Mediation with Regression Analysis

A statistic test is used to determine if a mediator carries an effect on an independent variable to a dependent variable, which is the outcome of interest. With a significant statistic evidence offers an evidence that an independent variable has an indirect effect on the dependent variable. This can be done by testing a hypothesis that there has no statistical difference between the total effect and the direct effect after taking the influence of a potential mediator into account.

This means test is used to determine whether there exist an indirect effect of an independent variable (IV) on the dependent variable (DB), when carried through a specific mediator variable (M). In our thesis we will be testing if omnichannel (IV) has an impact on brand equity (DV) with consumer decision journey the mediator (M).

When executing the test there are some analysis requirements:

1. Path C: Bivariate regression predicting DV from IV.
2. Path A: Bivariate regression predicting Med from IV.
3. Path B & C: Multiple regression predicting DV from Med & IV. *(Neiheisel, 2017).*

Spearman's correlation coefficient

The Spearman's correlation coefficient is the statistical measure of the strength of a monotonic relationship between parried data. In the study it is denoted by r_s and is constrained as:

$$-1 \leq r_s \leq 1$$

The interpretation is that the closer r_s is to 1.0 the stronger is the monotonic relationship. The correlation is an effect size and can describe the strength of the correlation using a followed guide of the value r_s

- .00 - .19 = very weak
- .20 - .39 = weak
- .40 - .59 = moderate
- .60 - .79 = strong
- .80 – 1.0 = very strong

For the calculation of the Spearman's correlation coefficient and subsequent significance test, it requires our data to be interval or ratio level or ordinal, and monotonically rated. There is no requirement for normality, hence, it is a nonparametric statistic *(Hauke, Kossowski, 2011)*

2.9.1. Reliability and validity

When conducting a research there exists two key elements which the researchers must consider; Reliability and Validity. The two terms may seem like synonyms, but they differ in relation to the evaluation of the measured concepts (*Bryman, Bell, 2012*).

Reliability

In order to ensure reliability within the questionnaire, we have developed questions very similar other studies investigating the same research field. In order to fully accept the internal-reliability of the questions, Cronbach's Alpha have been calculated for each question used.

Cronbach's Alpha

In order to underlie the constructs that we want to measure, the use om summed scales are applied. The question of reliability rises when the function of scales is stretched when encompasses the realm of prediction. We have used on of the most popular reliability statistics, which is the Cronbach's Alpha *(Cronbach, 1951)*. Cronbach's Alpha is used to determine the internal consistency or average correlation of subjects/items in a survey to gauge the reliability. In other words, the use of Cronbach's alpha gives a simple way to measure if the score of the measure is reliable, meaning that similar results will be obtained in the respondents re-take our survey. The results are expressed with a number between 0 to 1 and in order to be acceptable, the Cronbach's alpha has to range from 0.7 to 0.9.

Internal consistency describes to what extend the items in the test measures the same concept and is necessary for measuring homogeneity or unidimensional. The alpha is therefore an important concept in the evaluation of questionnaires and is mandatory for us in order to estimate the quantity to add validity and accuracy to the interpretation of our data. Nevertheless, the alpha has been reported in an accepting way, without an adequate understanding or interpretation *(Tavakol, Dennick, 2011)*.

Validity

The validity refers to the extent of which a concept really measures the intended concept. The measurements have to be well founded and correspond to the real world. *Face validity (Bryman, 2016)* is the very minimum when establishing a new measurement. When developing the problem statement for this thesis, the questions were accepted by our supervisor to ensure that the concept actually measure what is intended. Furthermore, to insure validity, *concurrent validity (Bryman, 2016)* is used where the validity is determined by investigation how well the measure correlates with other measures, that are believed to be valid. The measure of this thesis correlates with Accenture *(2018)*, Deloitte *(2017)*, and Heine & Berghaus *(2014)*.

3. Theoretical background and literature review

This part of the thesis has the purpose of introducing the theoretical considerations used as well as a review of the existing literature within the same topic. This is done in order to give the reader a clear understanding of the theories used and to illuminate what has already been discovered.

3.1. Omnichannel

The integration of the online channels and the subsequent ongoing digitalization around the world has drastically changed the way of living and certainly also changed the way companies' use online mediums in their strategies. The explosive development in new technologies, channels and touchpoints, has changed the way consumers can interact with firms and it gives consumers a chance to be connected with companies at all time. The internet has grown as a major sales and distribution channel and the integration of e-commerce and physical channels has created opportunities for synergies, that allows companies to offer different services through different channels. Internet retailing offers value for the customer regarding additional services as well as major touchpoints with the company. Hence, the rise of the internet tends to increase the frequency of interactions between customers and retailers. This will have an impact on the management but also on the consumer behavior *(Simone, Sabbadin, 2018; Blom et al., 2017)*. With the technological improvements of the internet, many retailers have developed multichannel strategies by adding new touchpoints that allows companies to interact with the consumers. Zhang et al., *(2010)* describes multichannel as a set of activities that involves selling merchandise or services to consumers through more than one channel. A new stage of multichannel is rising, specifically with the advent of mobile channel, tablet and social media and the integration of these channels. The paradigm of multichannel is moving to a model of omnichannel *(Rigby, 2011; Poitrowicz et al. 2014)*. Figure 3 illustrates the evolution of the business model.
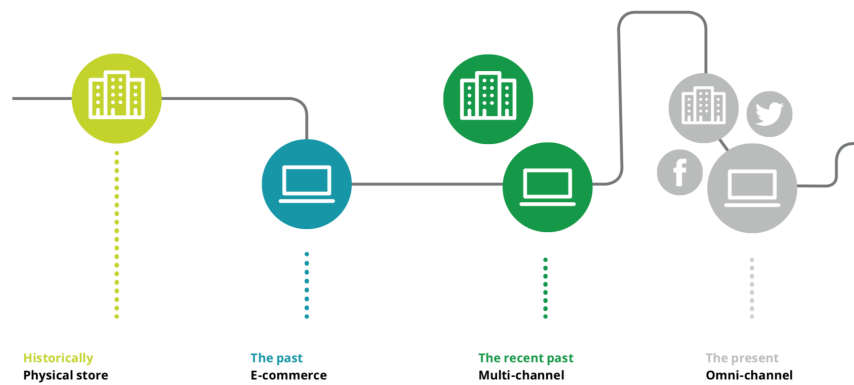
Figure 3. – Business evolution model
(Deloitte, 2017).

Previously, there has been a clear distinction between brick-and-mortar store and online stores. The integration of channels has led the separated sales channels to interweave with each other, and a move towards omnichannel experiences. Omnichannel is defined as the phenomenon for which the customers consider all the retailer's sales and marketing channels as one entity, and the shopping experience is seamless regardless of which channels the customer uses *(Herhausen et al., 2015)*. The omnichannel-customer uses several channels simultaneously in their buying process compared to multichannel-customers who uses the channels in parallel. Thus, omnichannel is the conceptualization of the complete integration of all channels. The digital and physical world is continuously blending with no distinctions between the online and physical store, and the consumers can easily shift between different channels within the same transaction process *(Simone, Sabbadin, 2018)*. Multichannel implies a division of the online and physical store whereas the omnichannel context implies customers to move between the online, mobile devices and physical store within a single transaction process. Omnichannel provides for a synergistic management between the many channels and customer touchpoints, so the customer experience across multiple channels is optimized *(Herhausen et al., 2015)*. With the omnichannel approach, companies create the opportunity to expose the customer to one large experience in terms of communication and in terms of purchase. This is increasing the customer satisfaction *(Mosquera, Pascual, Ayensa, 2017)*.

Omnichannel aims to establish a conversion point along every step of the consumer decision journey. Companies needs to utilize every available channel and provide a seamless and consistent experience for the consumers. The goal is to provide the customers with one simple and smooth process across all channels. Companies have to be available at any time anywhere to make it convenient for the customers *(Herhausen et al., 2015)*.

3.1.1. Integrated marketing communications (IMC)

In order to understand omnichannel even further, the concept of integrated marketing communications (IMC) will be introduced. IMC is a concept to ensure that all forms of communication and messages are linked together. The purpose is to create a harmonic communication towards the consumers and help them move through various stages of the buying process (*Caywood, 2016*). It is important to make a clear distinction between marketing communication tools and which media that may carry the messages:

- **Marcom tools**: the process of develop and present an appropriate set of communications stimuli (advertising, PR etc.)
- **Media**: the channels through which the communications are carried (Web, television etc.)

There should not be a confusion between the tools and the media as they differ in characteristics and serve different purposes. Also, it is important to distinguish between these elements as the aspects surrounding electronic media are frequently positioned as a process set apart from other aspects of marketing. From the marketing communicators perspective, the internet and other electronic channels are additional mediums of communication *(Egan, 2015; Frasquet et al. 2018)*.

The *American Association of Advertising Agencies* defines IMC as an approach to achieving the objectives of a marketing campaign through a well-coordinated use of different methods of promotion that are intended to reinforce each other. It is a planning process, which is designed to ensure that all brand contact received by any customer or prospect for a product/service/organization are relevant to that specific person and is consistent over time. This means that IMC is the process of using promotion tools in a unified way to create synergies *(Semenik, 2002)*. IMC has the purpose of getting all various communication messages to work together and consider the total impact of the communication activities at any time. It impacts the marketing planning by acknowledging that all the aspects of organizational communication have the potential to influence all stages of the buying process. The IMC approach should influence all brand messages and not only the traditional channels *(Duncan, 2002)*.

The meaning of being integrated is listed below in table 3.

Communication tools	● Bringing together the tools of communication.

	• Advertising and PR can reinforce each other.
Messages	• Synergy with theme and set of core messages used in any campaign
Branding	• Use of variety media where each complementing and reinforcing the core brand proposition.
Marketing Mix	• Has to be perceived by the consumers as coordinated and consistent • Maximize the impact and enable customers to experience the brand through pre, actual and post product use.
Employees	• Being customer focused and also ´live´ for the brand • Adopt of new techniques, procedures and ways of thinking and behaving.
Technology	• Effective websites, extranets and intranets, customer contact centers, databases, campaigns, CRM and sales force automation.
Agencies	• Different agencies for different campaigns - Who should be in charge for integrated campaigns? - Appoint a lead agency that assumes responsibility for integration.
Strategy	• Means of using the communications mix in a more efficient and synergistic manner.

Table 3. – Meaning of being integrated

(Fill, Turnbul, 2016)

IMC is of major importance regarding omnichannel as all different communication tools should be connected inside this strategy. The various communication tools at the different stages in the consumption process supports the notion of synergy and communications impact with IMC *(Figure 3.1.).*
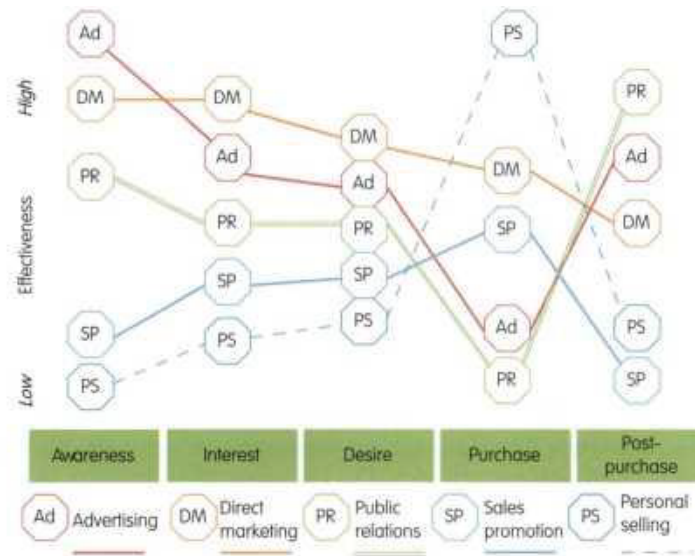
Figure 3.1. – Effectiveness of marketing communications tools
(Egan, 2015).

Novak and Phelps *(1994)* suggest that integrated marketing communications, rather than just co-ordination of marketing communications tools and messages, is based on the conceptualizations:

- One-voice marketing communications: An integration that creates a clear consistent position, message, image and/or the theme across all the marketing communications disciplines or tools.
- Integrated communications: A creation of both brand image and the behavioral response that emanates direct from marketing communications material.
- Co-ordinating marketing communications: An associating integration with the concepts of coordination of all the marketing communications tools that produce a holistic campaign that develops awareness and builds brand image. Also, it evokes a behavioral response from target audiences.

For luxury brands, it can be difficult to implement integrated marketing communications as changes needs to happen, which can cause problems. The development of IMC requires the brand to make changes and not only change within the marketing function, but also stretch to marketers and external suppliers. With such an upheaval, luxury brands would have most success with an incremental approach to implementation of IMC. A model of developing integrated marketing communications is shown in figure 3.2. The difference of initial co-ordination of promotional campaigns and

functional co-ordination is where the parts of the organization are introduced to the notion of internal marketing relationships. Afterwards, there needs to be a cultural shift of the organization to move towards stronger customer orientation. Cultural changes are not a company-only activity. Other research about clients and agencies are crucial factors, and success is seen with the ability to match and harmonize client and agency cultures, with the purpose of building ongoing relationships *(Egan, 2015; Kitchen, Pelsmacker, 2004).*

Figure 3.2. – An incremental approach to IMC

(Egan, 2015).

The increased control and co-ordination of brand-related messages has the effect of increasing the overall synergy of communications even further. Also, taken together, the impact should result in more effective communication. IMC also reduces the dependence of mass-media advertising, encourages investigation of targeted medium, heightens the demand on the agencies in order to multi-task, outsource and stimulates efforts to assess ROI on organizational communications. This is known as being *media-neutral,* with a customer-focused review of media based on research, analysis and insights, rather than on habits and/or preference. There may be many goals of using IMC and for this thesis it would be put into context with the purpose of creating brand equity. Luxury brands needs to be able to adopt IMC with the wish of creating a seamless experience by communicating any messages across all channels, with the result of making it easier for consumers to distinguish their brand from others and reach customer attention.

3.1.2. Channel integration

When looking at channel integration, the objective is to create a better consumer experience, increase customer loyalty and ensuring a high customer retention rate *(Cao, Li, 2015; Shen et al., 2018).* The integration strategies started mainly with the decision as to whether new channels should be added to the existing channel mix. The decision was aimed at both traditional brick-and-mortar who was faced with the question of being present online and online companies were faced with the question of being present offline. Leeflang, Verhoef, Dahlström & Freundt *(2014)* states that we are moving to a new phase in multi-channel retailing. The use of mobile channels, tablets, social media and the integration

of these channels in online and offline retailing, the retail landscape continues to change. As mentioned above *(cf. 3.1.)* there is an ongoing shift from multichannel to an omnichannel retailing model *(Verhoef, Kannan, Inman, 2015; Höcker et al., 2018)*. Omnichannel is distinct from multichannel retailing in terms of customer involvement and retailer control. The omnichannel approach derives synergy from full channel integration by streamlining cross-channel interactions with customers. Multichannel is focused on the intensity with which retailers are present across diverse channels *(Li, Liu, Lim, Goh, Yang, Lee, 2017)*. Omnichannel focuses on designing a cohesive user experience for the customer at every touchpoint. The integration between the different channels is essential. Previously, online and offline channels had different purposes with a specific goal, whereas the omnichannel approach is all about creating a seamless experience by integrating offline and online channels. According to Herhausen, Binder, Schoegel & Herrmann *(2015)* there exist two basic approaches to channel integration; first one is providing access to and knowledge about the Internet store at physical stores and is referred to as offline-online channel integration. The second approach is providing access to and knowledge about physical stores at the Internet store, which is called online-offline channel integration. Hence, integration can occur from a physical store to the internet and from the internet to the physical store. Studies reveal that the evaluation of a new channel from a consumer's perspective is influenced by previous experiences with other channels. Customers value a well-integrated Internet store which will lead to more favorable behavior towards both the physical store and the online store of a specific brand *(Herhausen et al., 2015)*.

Omnichannel involves more channels and one important factor in the omnichannel approach is that the different channels become blurred as the natural borders between channels begin to disappear. Brynjolfsson, Hu & Rahman *(2013)* states that new channels will break down old barriers such as geography and consumer ignorance. Also, they state that it will become critical for retailers to evaluate and reconsider their current competitive strategies. The omnichannel environment is illuminating the interplay between channels and brands. Furthermore, the omnichannel world that luxury brands now confront means many more touchpoints between brand and customer and it is making the path to purchase more variable and individualized *(Abtan, Barton, Bonelli, Gurzki, Mei-Pochtler, Pianon, Tsusaka, 2016)*.

Relationships with customers are key for luxury brands. The integration of channels will according to the literature increase the opportunities for brands to create and maintain the relationship with the customer as they are able to communicate through both online and offline channels. The touchpoints are intended to optimize the customer experience, so customers are satisfied in every stage of the

customer journey. Channel switching is common among many segments of luxury shoppers. Every touchpoint either contributes or detracts from the overall perception of the product or service being offered. If a specific luxury product shows up in strange irrelevant digital channels, or if additional information about the product is difficult or awkward to obtain online, those experiences will reduce the desirability of the product itself *(Abtan, 2016; Sahi, 2015)*. Ruben Yonatan *(2018)* states that customers today prefer relationships with companies they trust. Companies who show sincerity, respect, and empathy during customer interactions and engagement. A McKinsey research *(2018)* shows that 73 percent of customers say that valuing their time is the most important factor a company can do in order to provide them with good service. The key to providing service on the customer's schedule is a suite of omnichannel solutions that cater to preference, convenience, and reduced effort - all to build essential loyalty and retention *(Karweer, 2018)*. The demand for a seamless experience across multiple channels is key. According to a research done by Accenture *(2014)* show that customers start their journey anywhere, anytime and from any device. When they stop midway, they expect integration and to pick up from where they left off on another device or channel. When a firm understands which channels a customer prefers and the driver for these preferences, they will be able to provide a more satisfactory and consistent experience *(Melero, Sese, Verhoef, 2016)*. Every single touchpoint between the company and the customer matters. The interaction between the company and the consumers represent opportunities to improve relationships and are critical in order to build and maintain successful and profitable relationships. Hence, they must be taken care of and managed consistently and satisfactorily. According to Neslin, Grewal, Leghorn, Shankar, Teerling, Thomas & Verhoef *(2006)* companies need complete customer data integration that helps them to obtain a 360-degree view of all their customers and their behavior across all marketing channels. This will support companies in order to know which channels their customers are using at each step of their journey. This knowledge is crucial in the implementation of a successful omnichannel management strategy. This will provide companies with a proper understanding of customer channel preferences and it will enable companies to use communication channels that match these preferences. The information also supports companies to identify why some channels are generating more sales for the company and offer a profitability analysis of each channel's contribution to the performance of the company *(Li, Kennan, 2014)*. The result is to deliver a unified and personalized message through all channels specified to each customer. Nowadays, it has become a reality for companies to deliver one-to-one marketing and personalization is at the heart of a successful omnichannel strategy. Companies can improve the customer experience in an omnichannel environment by coordination and integration of their marketing channels, which allows companies to offer customers what they want at each stage of the buying process *(Melero et al., 2016)*.

3.2. Brand equity

Building a strong brand with significant equity is providing possible benefits for a brand, including greater customer loyalty and less vulnerability to competitive marketing actions. This includeds marketing crisis and larger margins as well as a more favorable response from customers when pricing increase/decrease, greater trade or intermediary cooperation and support. Furthermore, it increases the marketing communication effectiveness, licensing and brand-extension opportunities *(Keller, 2001)*. One of the most distinctive skills for any marketer is the ability to create, maintain, enhance and protect brands. Creating a strong brand commands a price premium and elicited deep customer loyalty through the years. Consumers may evaluate identical products differently depending on how it is branded. Customers learn about brands through past experience with products and the marketing program, where they find out which brands satisfy their needs. With consumers´ lives becoming more and more complicated and rushed, a brand´s ability to simplify the decision making and reduce the risk becomes invaluable *(Kotler, Keller, 2012)*. Brand equity is the added value endowed on products and services. This is reflected in how consumers act, feel and think with respect to a brand, as well as the prices, market share and profitability the brand commands. David Aaker was one of the first to introduce the term ´equity´ and defines it as the total value that a brand presence, and not just monetary. Brand equity is defined as liabilities and assets, which all stems from and directly related to; brand visibility, consumer loyalty, and brand associations. These three factors are determinant of the brands' success *(Aaker, 2017; Khan, 2016)*. With a keen interest of brand building two questions arise: 1. What makes a brand strong? and 2. how do you build a strong brand? In order to answer these questions, the introduction of customer based brand equity will be made, which provides a unique perspective of what brand equity is and how it should be built, measured, and managed *(Keller, 2001)*.

3.2.1. Customer Based Brand Equity:

There are various perspectives when studying brand equity. This thesis will contain a customer-based approach, which illuminates the consumers perspective. This term is based on the assumption that the power of a brand lies in what consumers have seen, heard, felt, and learned with past experience with the brand. In other words, the power of a brand lies in the hearts and minds of consumers (*Kotler, et al., 2012)*. The development of the customer based brand equity (CBBE) model was driven by three goals. First, it should be logical, well-integrated and grounded. It needed to reflect the state of the art thinking about branding from an academic and an industry point of view. Second, the model

should be versatile and applicable to different kinds of brands and industries. As more diverse applications of branding emerged for products/services, people, places, organizations, etc. the model needed to have far-ranging relevance. Third and last, the model had to be comprehensive with the breadth to cover important topics of branding as well as depth to provide useful insights and guidelines. This includes that the model needed to help marketers set a strategic direction and inform a brand-related decision *(Keller, 2001)*. Brands have a positive CBBE when consumers react more favorably to products and the way it is marketed when the brand is identified, than when it is not. Brands have a negative CBBE when consumers react less favorably to marketing activities from the brand under the same circumstances. CBBE is the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. The differential effect is the differences in consumer response, and brand knowledge is what they have learned, felt, seen and heard about the brand as a result through experience. Last, the consumer response to the marketing is perceptions, preferences, and behavior related to all aspects of brand marketing.

There exist three key ingredients of CBBE:

1. Brand equity arises from the differences in consumer response. If no differences occur, the brand-name product is essentially a commodity and the competition will probably be based on the price only.
2. A difference in the response is a result of consumers´ *brand knowledge;* the feelings, experiences, image, and beliefs associated with the brand. A brand must create favorable, unique and strong brand associated with the customers.
3. Brand equity is reflected in preferences, perceptions, and behavior related to all the aspects of the marketing of the brand. Stronger brands lead to greater revenue *(Kotler et al., 2012)*.

The model view brand building as an ascending series of steps, where each step is contingent upon the successful completion of the previous step from bottom to top:(1) is to ensure that customers identify a brand and associate it with a specific product class or need. (2) establishing a brand meaning in the customers' mind, strategically linking a host of tangible and/or intangible brand associations. (3) causing the proper customer responses in factors of brand-related feelings and judgments. (4) Convert customers´ brand response to an intense active loyalty. These four steps are representing the set of fundamental questions that customers regularly ask about the brand, implicitly if not explicitly:

Who are you? - *Brand identity*

What are you? - *Brand meaning*

What about you? - *Brand response*

What about you and me? - *Brand relationships*

The building ladder has an obvious sequence, where *meaning* cannot be established unless *identity* is crafted; and *response* cannot occur without the right *meaning* being developed, and a *relationship* cannot be forged without the proper *response* is elicited. Enacting the four steps to create brand identity, brand meaning, brand responses, and brand relationships can be a complicated and difficult process *(Keller, 2001).* In order to provide some structure, the use of six ´brand-building blocks´ can simplify the accomplishment of the four necessary steps of creating a strong brand.

Brand equity is important to consider when creating an omnichannel experience with the purpose of increasing this and hereby the revenue. During the analysis, there will be referred to a 'CBBE model' *(Figure, 3.3.)* which has the purpose of building brand equity.
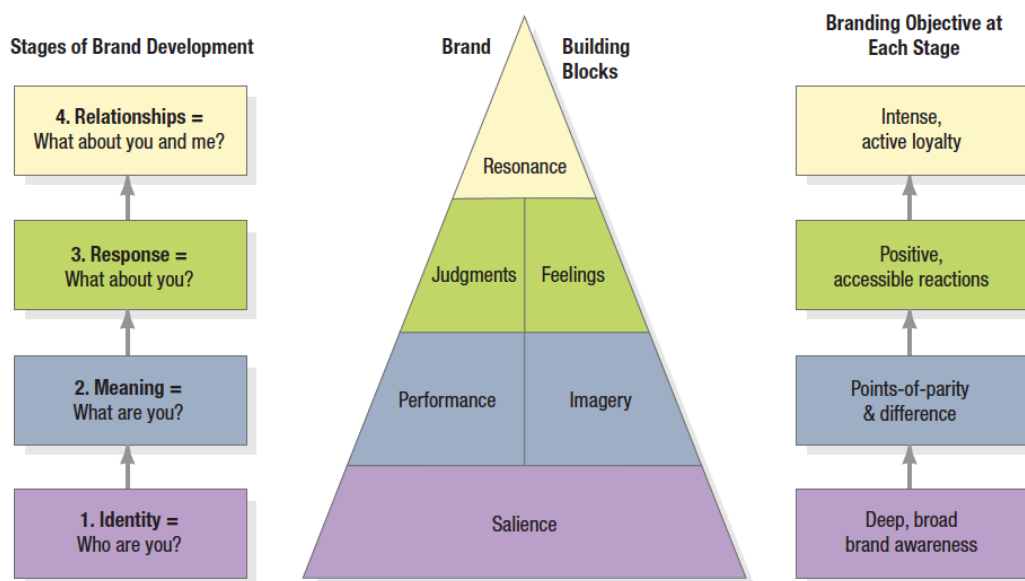
Figure 3.3. – Brand Resonance Pyramid
(Kotler, Keller 2012)

According to the model, enacting these four steps results in establishing a pyramid of six brand building blocks as illustrated in figure 3.3. The model emphasizes the duality of brands, the rational

route to building a brand on the left side of the pyramid and on the right side the emotional route of building a brand. In order to create significant brand equity, it requires to reach the pinnacle pyramid, which can only occur if the right building blocks are put into place.

- **Brand Salience:** How often and how easily customers think of the brand under various consumption of purchase situations.
- **Brand Performance:** How well the product/service meets the customers´ functional needs.
- **Brand Imagery:** Is the extrinsic properties of the product/service and includes the way the brand attempts to meet the customers´ social or psychological needs.
- **Brand Judgements:** is the focus on customers´ own evaluations and opinions.
- **Brand Feelings:** The customers´ emotional response and reaction with respect to the brand.
- **Brand Resonance:** This describes the relationship the customer has with the brand and in what extent they feel ´in sync´ with it.

Resonance is the top of the pyramid and is the intensity of the customers´ psychological bond with the brand and the level of activity it engenders *(Kotler et al., 2012).* There exist various numbers of how to build brand equity by creating the right brand knowledge structures with the right customers. The process depends on all brand-related contacts; marketer-initiated or not.

Brand Identity

Brand Salience. In order to achieve the right brand identity, it is involving the creation of brand salience. This relates to the aspect of customer awareness of the brand. Brand awareness is referring to the ability for customers to recall and recognize a brand. This is more than just knowing the brand name and that they have seen it many times. It includes linking the brand (name, logo, symbol, etc.) to a certain association in the memory. In particular, brand awareness involves making sure that customers understand the product/service category in the field where the brand competes. There must be a clear link between other products/services sold under the same brand. However, in a more abstract level, the building of brand awareness also includes the fact that they know which of their needs the brand is produced to satisfy - in other words, what functions the brand provides for the customer.

Salience forms the building blocks in the developing of brand equity and provides three functions of importance. (1) Salience influences the strength and formation of brand associations, which makes

up the brand image and hereby gives the *brand meaning*. (2) A high level of brand salience in terms of category identification and the customers' needs satisfaction is of major importance during the purchase/consumption opportunities. Brand salience power the likelihood of the brand to be a member of the consideration set of brands that receive serious purchase consideration. Furthermore, salience is important during possible consumption settings of maximizing potential usage. (3) When customers have low involvement with the brand's product portfolio, they make choices based on salience alone *(Kotler, et al., 2010; Keller, 2001).*

Brand Meaning

In the process of brand building, brand salience is an important first step, but it is usually not sufficient in and of itself. Most customers have other considerations such as brand meaning or image coming into play in most situations. When creating brand meaning it involves establishing a brand image, which is what the brand is characterized by in the minds of the customers. Many different types of brand associations are possible, where brand meaning is broadly distinguished in factors of functional, performance-related considerations against abstract and imagery-related considerations. Hence, brand meaning is constructed from two major categories inside brand associations and exists in the minds of the customers related to performance and imagery. The brand associations can be formed directly from customers experiences and contact with the brand (directly). And through the depiction of the brand through advertisements or other information sources (indirectly).

There exist two main types within brand meaning: *brand performance* and *brand imagery.*

Brand performance. The product is at the heart of brand equity because it is the primary influence of consumer experience with the brand, what they hear from others and what the brand tells customers in their communications *(Keller, 2001).* To create brand loyalty the product must meet the consumers expectations. Also, brand performance relates to attempts to meet the functional needs of the customers. Thus, brand performance is referring to the intrinsic properties in terms of inherent product/service characteristics. This includes how the brand rates on objective assessments of quality and to what extent the brand satisfies the aesthetic, utilitarian, economic needs and wants of the customer in the product/service category.

Brand Imagery. This factor deals with the extrinsic properties of the product/service and includes the way of how the brand attempts to meet the customers´ psychological or social needs. Furthermore, it

is what people think of the brand abstractly rather than what the brand actually does. Hence, brand imagery refers more to the intangible aspects of the brand *(Kotler, et al., 2010; Keller, 2001)*.

Brand associations that make the brand image and meaning, can be characterized into how strong the brand is identified with the brand association. How important and valuable is the brand associations to the customers. And how distinctively is the brand identified with the brand association. A successful result in strength, favorability, and uniqueness produces the most positive brand responses and supports the intense and active brand loyalty.

Brand responses

Brand responses are referring to how customers respond to the brand, the marketing activities and, other informational sources, which is what customers feel and think about the brand. Within brand responses, it can be distinguished in two categories: *brand judgements* which arise more from the ´head´, and *brand feelings* which arise more from the ´heart´ *(Keller, 2001)*.

Brand judgements. This focus on the customer's´ personal evaluations and opinions towards the brand and is in other words the perceived quality about the overall excellence or superiority *(Yoo, Donthu, 2001)*. This category involves the customer's integration of all the different performances and imagery associations form different kinds of opinions. There may exist all types of judgements from the customers, but with the wish of creating a strong brand Keller *(2001)* suggest four types of judgements that are particularly important. (1) Brand quality, the customers perceived quality of the brand. (2) Brand credibility, the extent of the brand as a whole is seen as credible. (3) Brand consideration depends on how much personal relevance the customers find the brand and depends on brand associations inside brand image. (4) Brand superiority relates to the extent of the customers view the brand as being unique and better than others *(Keller, 2001)*.

Brand feelings. This is the emotional responses and reactions towards the brand from the customers. It relates to the social currency that is evoked by the brand and the feelings evoked by its marketing program. Thus, it is how the brand affects the customers´ feeling about themselves and their relationships.

Brand judgements and feelings can impact consumer behavior in a favorable way; but only if the consumers internalize and think of positive responses in their clash with the brand *(Kotler et al., 2010; Keller, 2001)*.

Brand relationship

Brand resonance is the final step of the model and it focuses on the ultimate relationship and level of identification the consumer has with the brand. Resonance referring to the nature of the relationship the customers have with the brand in how much they feel ´in sync´ with it. Brand resonance can be characterized in terms of intensity or how strong the psychological bond that exist between the brand and the consumer as well as the level of activity created by this loyalty. Loyalty can be the extent to how much consumers seek out information about the brand, events, repeat purchase rates and other loyal customers. Keller *(2001)* breaks brand resonance down into four categories. (1) Behavioral loyalty, the terms of repeat purchase and the amount of category volume that is attributed to the brand. (2) Attitudinal attachment, to create resonance a strong personal attachment is necessary, where customers must go beyond having a positive attitude towards the brand and feel something special in a broader context. (3) Sense of community, the brand has to take a broader meaning to the customers with the sense of community. An identification with a brand community reflects a social phenomenon where customers feel an affiliation with others associated to the brand. (4) Active engagement may be the strongest affirmation of brand loyalty, where customers invest time, money, energy and other resources into the brand. This is in an extended degree that goes beyond those expended of purchase or consumption *(Keller, 2001; Kotler et al., 2010).*

The most valuable brand-build block, *brand resonance*, arise when the other brand-building blocks are complete and synchronized with consumer's needs, wants and desires. Put in other words, the brand resonance is reflecting the complete harmonious relationship between the customers and the brand. Here there would be a high degree of loyalty, which translates into an active means to interact with the brand and provide their experiences with others *(Kotler et al., 2010).* The basic premise of the CBBE model is the true measure of brand strength and depends on how they act, feel, and think with respect to the brand *(Keller, 2001).*

This model and its building-blocks will be the measure points for this thesis. It will declare and indicate if omnichannel provides a further extension of brand equity for luxury brands. The different elements of the model will be broken down and put into a holistic view so conclusions can be drawn to answer the research question.

3.2.2. Triadic brand equity perception

In a more modern perspective, brand equity is still perceived as the four layers in Kotler and Keller's CBBE model and the definition of brand equity is still acknowledged and used in more modern brand management *(Muniz, O´Guinn, 2001; Bruhn, Schoenmueller, Schäfer, 2012).* But modern brand theorists have another way of perceiving brand equity. They do not see brand equity being created in the interplay of brand and consumers, as it is in the traditional approach. Instead, social spheres of influence such as digital tools and social media platforms affect the layers of brand equity. The new understanding is based on a brand community theory, which research shows that brand- meaning and equity is created through social interactions of communities *(Heding, Knudtzen, Bjerre, 2009).* Therefore, community theory is the foundation of a triadic brand perspective. This academic field is relevant because of its effect on brand management, but also in the omnichannel approach of online touchpoints, especially social media, and how it is understood as online brand communities. To understand how brand meaning is constructed on online touchpoints and if luxury brands should approach these as communities to build equity, brand community theory will briefly be introduced. This will provide a theory to understand if online touchpoints should be managed as communities for luxury brands or as communication platforms.

Brand community theory

Brands are social entities which are experienced, shaped and changed in communities. Although brand meaning is ascribed and communicated to consumers by brand managers, consumers uncover and activate their own brand meanings. This is communicated back to the brand marketers and the associated brand community *(Brown, Kozinets, Sherry, 2003).* Muniz and O´Cuinn *(2005)* founded the concept of brand communities in their study of consumers interaction of specific brands. They discovered an active and meaningful negotiation of the brand between market institutions and consumer collectives *(Muniz, O´Cuinn, 2005)* in both offline and online brand settings. Thus, brand meaning was evaluated in both offline and online brand communities. In both environments three features was presented:

1. *Consciousness of kind:* Members have strong connections towards each other and feel that they know each other very well.

2. *Shared ritual and traditions:* Members have rituals and traditions which enhance and maintain the same culture of community.

3. *Sense of moral responsibility:* Members shows a sense of duty to the community as whole and to the members. This serves a purpose of integrating and retaining members *(ibid)*

According to Heiding et al., *(2009)* these three factors should exist inside a group to before it can be classified as a brand community. Muniz and O´Cuinn *(2001)* suggest that brands are socially constructed phenomena that are created through triadic relationships. Furthermore, their research indicated that brand community affects brand equity *(Muniz, O´Cuinn, 2001)*. The online communities offer luxury brands a strategic opportunity in order to strengthen brand equity through online touchpoints, thus social media. With luxury brands being characterized by strong history and heritage, it represents high involvement due to its high perceived financial, physiological and social risk *(Solomon, 2013)*. With Heding et al., *(2009)* claims that brand communities tend to drive and evolve around old brands, which has an interesting history and high involvement products *(Heding et al., 2009)*, it is suggested that communities are likely to be formed around luxury brands. As stated previously, Kotler and Keller *(2010)* argues that communities and strong engagement creates brand resonance and hence brand equity. This indicates that fostering online touchpoint communities such as social media, is a powerful possibility for luxury brands to build and strengthen brand equity.

3.3. The consumer. Hierarchy of effects

In order to understand how the consumer, think about luxury brands and purchase intention towards their products, the hierarchy of effects will be introduced. This will help to create a picture of how consumers act regards to certain communication tools and what is seen to be going through the mind of the consumer in their decision making.

It is known through consumer research, that consumers rarely make instant unsupported decisions. Instead, they are going through a number of stages prior to purchase – this is have become collective known as *Hierarchy of effects.* The traditional hierarchy effects suggest that audiences are responding to messages in an ordered way that first cognitive, then effective and last conative *(Barry, Howard 1990).* One of the best know models are the AIDA model *(1929)* shown in figure 3.4. and is designed to represent the stages to explain how persuasive communicating work. But the thing missing from this is the post-purchase effect and is the effect of future decision making having experienced consumption.

ACTION

DESIRE

INTEREST

ATTENTION
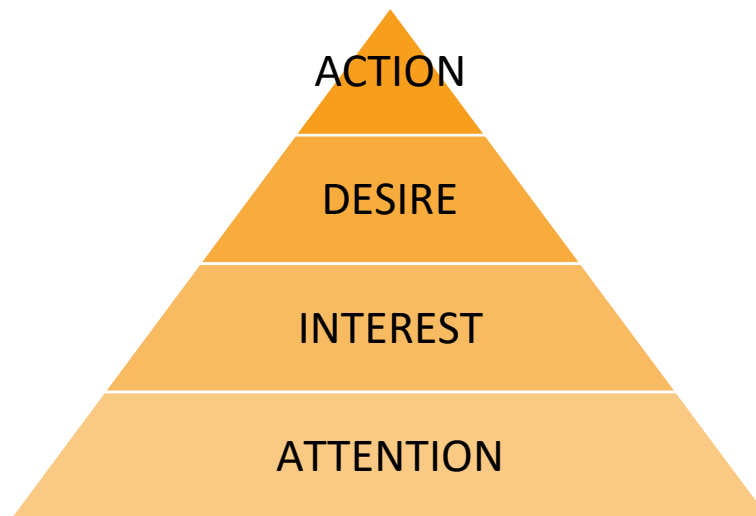
Figure 3.4. – AIDA-Model.
(Kotler, 2010).

Evidently, good consumption experiences are likely to lead to other purchases. Later research suggest that the post-purchase period is the point when advertising and other marketing communications tools should be used to bolster customer´s feel of satisfaction about the action or purchase *(Egan, 2015)*. This phase represents the beginning of a new cycle in a communication process, where omnichannel and the digital touchpoints is relevant. Something to add in this context is the fact of luxury brands, which mainly operate with high involvement products. The concept of involvement can be a measure of how important, in monetary and/or other terms, the consumer regards the purchase to be. The involvement is the degree of perceived relevance and personal importance attached to the purchase. The traditional hierarchy of effects model makes the assumptions that consumers always go along a rational path of *learning, feeling, doing*. There do exist alternative paths saying that rationality is not always a human strongpoint. With luxury brands we are talking about products that are so called *Affective* and customers seek self-esteem and ego. The consumer path is here *feeling, learning, doing*. Consumers require less information because of a strong brand image among luxury brands and associated with status. The characteristics of quality, aesthetics and price can be categorized as being the building blocks consumer´s cognitive attributes related to both the product´s physical and psychological characteristics. In the basic level in a consumer luxury brand relationship these characteristics of a product interact with consumer perceptions form luxury brand judgement *(Saricam et al., 2012)*. The experience with the brand is also related to the consumer decision making and is the extent to which the consumer has accumulated prior knowledge of the brands products and services. The key advantage of including hierarchy of effects is to clarify that brand awareness is

important. Also, it is useful as a predictor of the relative importance of all marketing communication tools at different time during the process.

3.3.1. Consumer decision journey

Traditionally the purchasing funnel is a model that is used to describe the consumer journey for the moment of contact with the brand to the goal of purchasing. The journey has been proactive for many years in marketing and is based on the AIDA model *(Figure 3.4.)* and is about creating attention through marketing communications. The brands message has a large impact on consumers journey through the buying process, which result in the consumers having a more passive role *(Mooney et al., 2008)*. There exist many iterations if the model, with all of them differ in the path of purchase process but they mainly follow a common concept. It is about establishing a cognitive message, which should result in a specific action *(Hopkins, Turner, 2012)*. Taking a look at the traditional buying funnel *(Figure 3.5)* the consumers are driven through *awareness* activities or push marketing. This is followed by the steps of *consideration, preference, action* and *loyalty*. It is the post-sale phase that becomes the trial period that determine the loyalty to brands and the likelihood of consumers to buy their products again.
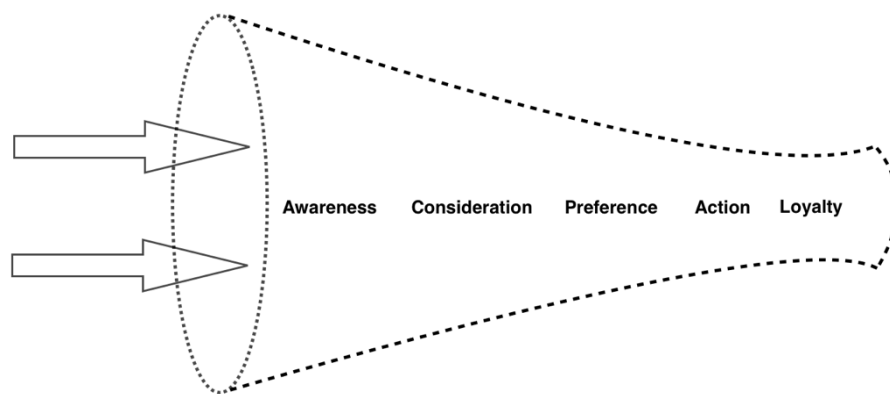
Figure 3.5. – Buying funnel.
(*Li, Bernoff, 2008*).

The steps in the model was traditional not as controllable, but this has changed over the years. The consumer decision process is usually influenced by factors such as social, cultural and environmental *(Li et al., 2008)*. The digitalization and the influences of digital touchpoints is very powerful in the

intermediate phases of the funnel, and with the converging of physical and digital environments, there is a need of digitizing the consumer decision journey.

People aspire luxury brands because they provide a thrill associated with a sense of belonging to a certain tribe while providing a unique opportunity to show off personal connoisseurship. In more mature markets during an economic slowdown, customers are becoming increasingly conscious about price and quality. Customer are willing to pay more when provided with better, customized, meaningful services and experiences when approaching, selecting and purchasing luxury products. Even in emerging markets the customers are increasingly gaining ground and moves quickly up the luxury pyramid from affordable and accessible logoed brands to niches and exclusivity *(Luxhub, 2015)*. Over the past years, consumers have become even more empowered, more connected to brands and to each other and also more globally diverse. Many brands still utilize the old ´one size fits all´ service model, which prevents them from being effective to the evolution of consumers needs and behavior. Customers are then becoming more complex in various dimensions.

More Knowledgeable: because of the internet accessibility, online consumer-created content and social networks.

More demanding: Because of customers´ redefinition of the term value. For example, time-compressed customers are increasingly prioritizing convenience.

More collaborative: Customers are increasingly bringing their own devices, apps and other tools from outside the ecosystem of the brand. This increasingly determine not just what products they wish to consume, but exactly how they want to consume those products.

More empowered: Consumers they follow their own unique requirements and therefore increasingly pursue self-service and multi-channel options.

More diverse: Thanks to the globalization of the marketplace and IT consumerization. This is mixing business requirements with consumer technology, like smartphones and tablets.

More interactive: Consumers are increasingly engaging in online dialogues, content sharing and produce own content for personal use and online publishing.

Increasingly on the move: new capabilities for mobile purchase and consumption of content anytime, anywhere *(Carroll, Guzmán, 2015)*.

The consumers now have non-linear path to purchase, whereas the path used to be illustrated by the traditional buying funnel *(cf.3.5.)*. The customer's journey is now dynamic, but customers still go through the same stages in their journey, but they no longer leave the process at the accustomed exit

of ´purchase´, instead they continuously cycle through the stages in the journey, without ever exiting the evaluation process. Figure 3.6. illustrates how today´s consumers behave and how the journey fundamentally has changed.
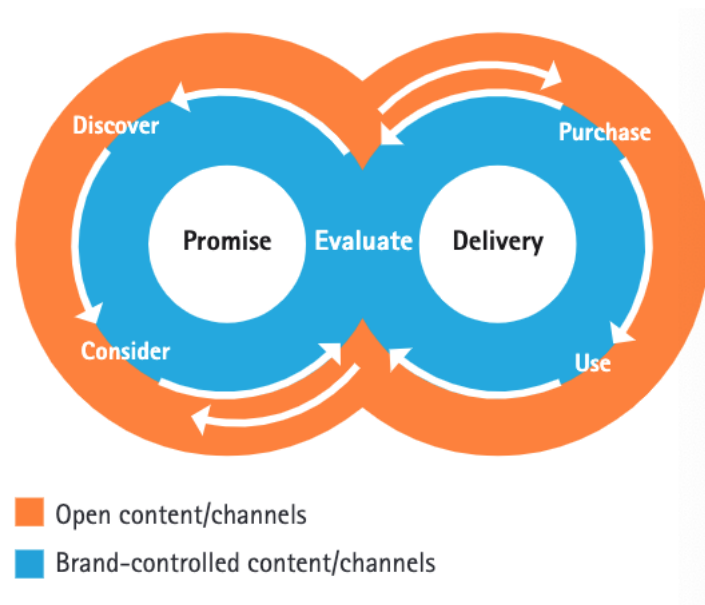
Figure 3.6. – Nonstop-customer experience model
(Carroll, Guzmán, 2015).

Due to the technology, today's customers expect to interact with brands interchangeably across channels no matter their needs at the giving moment. Their pathways can be direct, but mostly they are the non-linear path, with the fact that consumers enter and exit relationships with brands via much less predictable points, or they cycle back to choices made previously. Customers are able to check out other options online while they are in a retail store, in the wireless industry and people who do this, often end up buying through another channel. The journey has become more accessible with more content being put in front of customers. Amplified and powered by technology the ´voice of others´ is increasingly insistent and influential, which is available anywhere and anytime and comes from or through anyone. Also, the journey is continuing because of the exposed touchpoints are ´always on´. Consequently, evaluation of new products/services is now the focal point, compared to purchase. It is easier for consumers to compare brands and their promises versus delivery, and how the overall experience matches their own expectations. The consumer decision journey now being a circular nonstop process, customers can easily control and vary the route within the channels to flatter the needs at the moment. When being exposed to a flux of touchpoints that are ´always on´ makes the consumers to move around in these channels. Ultimately, this nonstop-customer experience model

(Figure 3.6) suggest that brands must transform the business activities in order to serve the customers in new critical and valuable ways. Along any loop (expectations or delivery) and on any path, the consumers will value a company that can improve the quality of their journey *(Nunes, Schunck, Wollan, 2012).* With the result of the change from purchase to evaluation, it has made it easier for consumers to compare their expectations with the experience provided by luxury brands, by looking at the brands promises versus their delivery of them. With the nonstop-customer experience being *Dynamic, Accessible* and *Continuous*, these dimensions taken together are the drivers of differentiation. In order to by differentiated, luxury brands should clearly shine in one and being at least proficient in the two others. Being only ´good enough´ in just two of them is not sufficient in order to differentiate the brand from their competitors. Thus, it is crucial for brands to evaluate and measure how they perform in the areas. This should be done from the customers perspective and helps to define the differentiation in today´s new customer dynamics *(Fulgoni, 2014; Barwitz, Mass, 2018).*

3.3.2. New playing field

Managing the relationship with the consumer is one of the major challenges in retailing and is even more crucial in luxury retailing. To build trusted relationships and alienating non-customers to protect the privilege of real customers. There exist vast knowledge and insights about customers if brands use data in a correct way. This leveling a competitive advantage in order to recruit new customer, retaining loyal consumers and also developing core customers base. It is way harder to collect useful data about customers in brick-and-mortar stores compared to the online/digital channels *(Lim Ee Sim, 2014).* Luxury brands managers need to have a well-founded understanding of the consumers decision journey and hereby mapping out communication tools to funnel specific actions. Too often luxury brands use celebrity endorsement as PR by tapping their fans´ base. Luxury brands needs to communicate, but not only to their desired target customers, but including non-customers to create desirability and dream factors within the society.

A model presented by Accenture *(2013)* suggest that the journey begins with consumer´s online traffic, which are driven by the brands direct marketing. The goal of this is to get the highest volume of visits as possible. If the customer does click on a link, they enter the second phase, whereas the customer will be in contact with the brands online tools. It is the commercial and user experience elements, which will determine the conversion rate. Third phase is the most interesting, where the omnichannel experience can be of advantage. When the customer interacts online with the brand,

they are able to decide what channel they prefer to stay on in their decision journey. The final step is the actual transaction that will affect the complete turnover for the brand. The moment a customer acquires a luxury product, they have the opportunity to use and evaluate the product and the overall experience. This will result in a reactivation of the relationship (repurchase) of if the consumer is not happy, it can result in a move to an alternative brand.
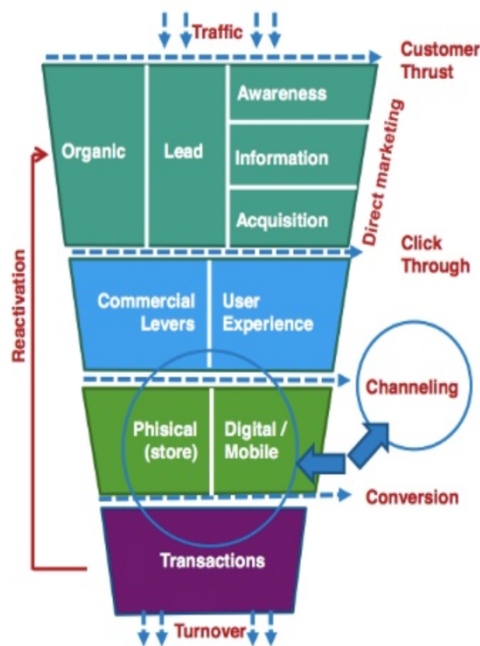
Acquisition: Can be achieved with the use of different performance channels and strategies. Traffic can be influenced by digital channels.

Click through: Can be targeted even more with the use of intelligence analysis.

Conversion rate (digital channel): Influenced by user experience elements, mix of marketing and commercial.

Conversion rate (Brick-and-mortar channel): Influenced by a mix of store shopping experiences, merchandizing, sales and commercials.

Average ticket size: Influenced with product assortment, upselling/cross strategy and category mix.

Frequency (of visits): Influenced with CRM

Figure 3.7. – Digital acquisition omnichannel
(Accenture, 2013)

With this ´new playing field´ of data across various digital platforms, it helps to complement the overall performance of IMC plan of luxury brands. A digital marketing mix are producing actionable insight, which helps to manipulate the target audience reach, traffic, conversion and click through into a measurable matrix. When decoding omnichannel consumer decision journey, it is mentioned that the purchase path is no longer linear. Research shows that the decision journey is redefined with 81 percent of interactions being engaged through digital channels, with each path starting from awareness, consideration, purchase and last advocacy. Figure 3.8. showing how customers are exploring the omnichannel experience and starting online or offline and move forth and back between the two, where each interaction becomes a seamless extension of the previous one.
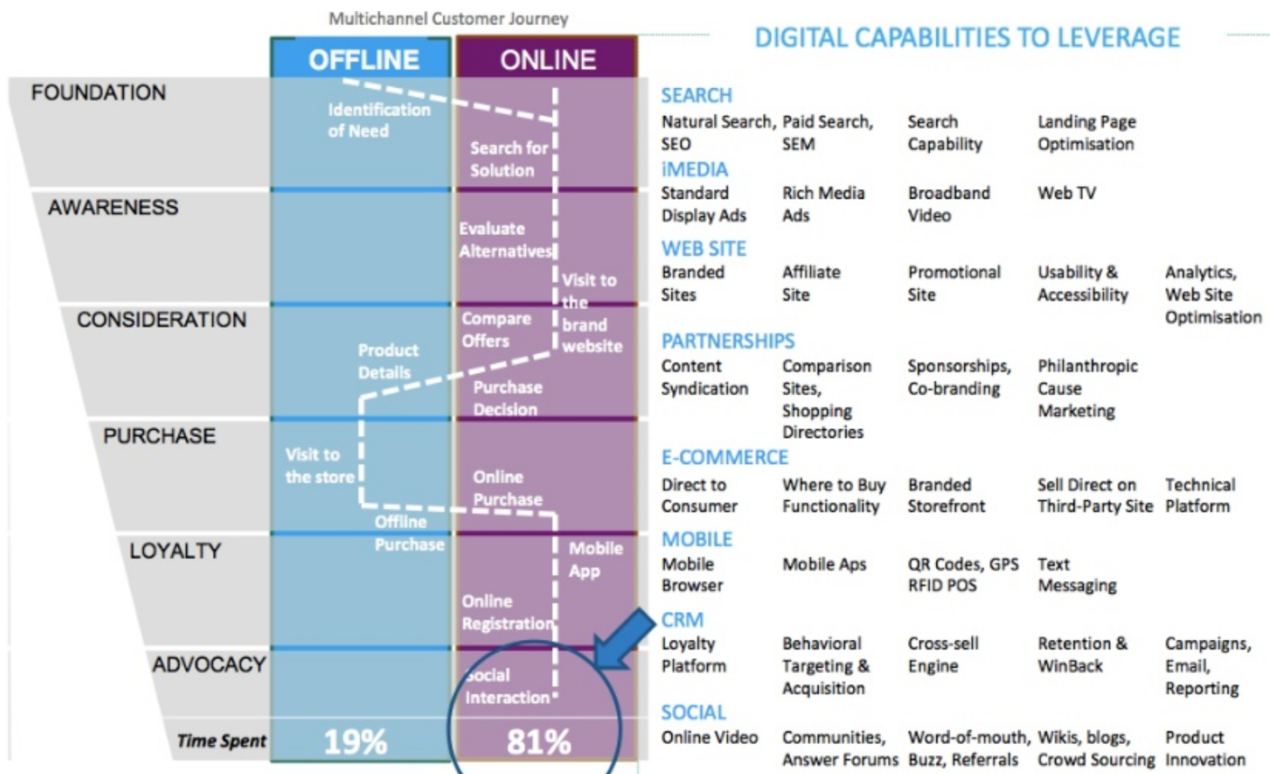
Figure 3.8. – Exploring the omnichannel experience.
(Van Bommel, Edelman, Ungerman, 2014)

There is a radical integration of the consumer experience interacted with physical and virtual environments. The consumer decision journey has been reformed by the ubiquity of big data, whereas each step being influenced by the offline and online interactions with the brand *(van Bommel, Edelman, Ungerman, 2014)*. The consumer decision journey can be explored even more when looking at the individual touchpoints that comes to play throughout the journey.

It is clear that the customer experience has changed to include online channels, therefore it is important for luxury brands to be up to date with their presence online. This include the online touchpoints and a clear vision of how to use communication tools in IMC. The consumer decision journey is no longer a linear process, but now circular and start/continue anywhere in the journey. Luxury brands have to recognize the significant time spent online and should therefore embrace the digital opportunity and change the approach to engaging with consumers. This will require many luxury brands to ultimately adjust their models of how they operate, especially their resources and tools. When understanding the journey, touchpoints and communication tools, they are cable of

influencing the consumers in the moments with the result of maximizing the change of reaching the consumer at the right time with the right message at the right place.

3.4. Consumer experience and digital touchpoints

Consumer experience is defined as how the customer perceives a brand through all the interactions across the customer life cycle. Within the modern digital era, customers are updated 24/7 and are more connected than ever. The digital world is allowing the companies use numerous channels to communicate with consumers, and they are all affecting the overall experience. Marketing have the main goal of reaching consumers at the right moments where they are most open to be influenced which can affect their decision. When marketers understand the journey of their customers, they provide themselves with the opportunity of directing their spending and messaging to the moments and elements where they can maximize the influence. The companies have a much greater chance of reaching consumers in the right place at the right time with the right message (*Manning, 2010; Dholakia et al., 2010*).

Creating consistency the right way is a crucial element for companies in order to provide a satisfying consumer experience. The digital world has been perceived by the luxury industry as a loss of control over the brand image and storytelling (*Remy, Cantena, Durand-Servoingt, 2015*). Also, luxury brands have been stuck in the assumption that luxury consumers would only make expensive purchases in physical stores. But the online world has been proved as a viable route to market and many companies find they no longer can provide the same quality of relationships with the customers as they like, and it is affecting their sales. The lack of direct access to customers results in being unable to deliver the omnichannel, highly personalized, relevant and engaging experiences consumers now expect. The luxury players now want to take control of their digital destiny (*Sinclair, Brashear, Schacklady, 2018*). Luxury brands can no longer afford to hesitate when it comes to the online digital world.
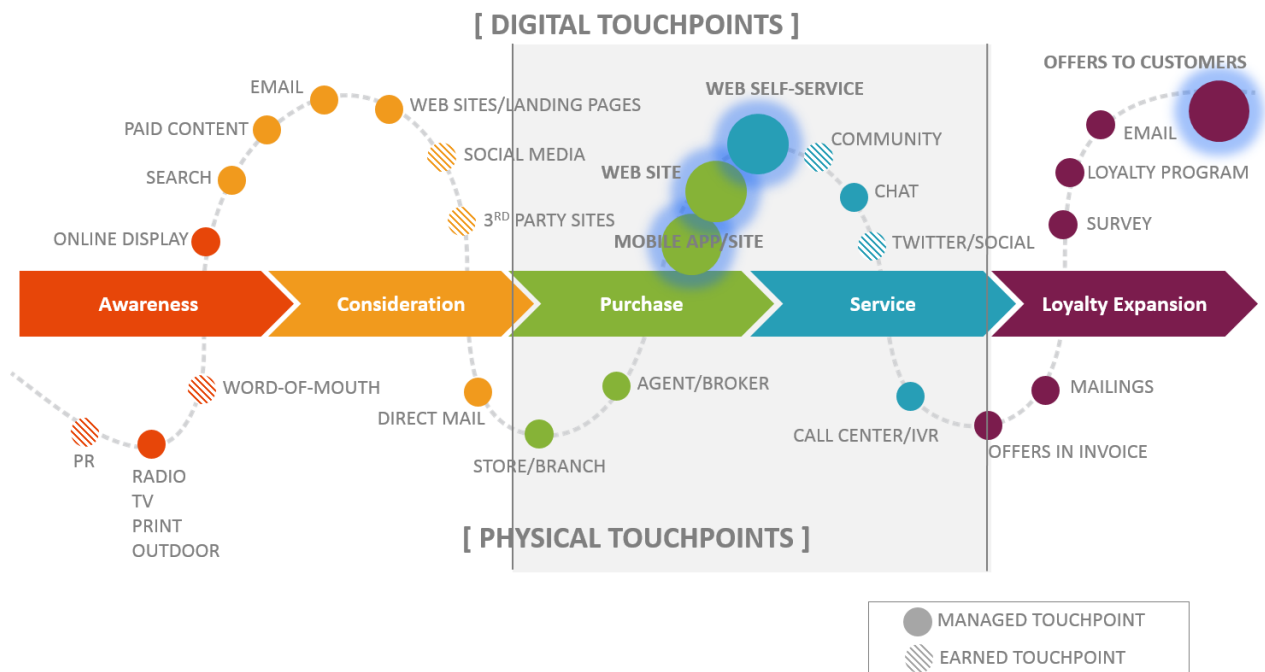
Figure 3.9. – Does marketing really own the customer experience.

(*Crownpeak, 2014*).

A consumer is going through numerous different touchpoints in their decision journey which is illustrated in figure 3.9. above. In the digital era nowadays, the consumer can now decide where and when he wants to interact with a specific brand. Also, the companies have been handed the opportunity of communicating through several touch points, which is the backbone of the omnichannel world; where the companies deliver a seamless interaction through several touchpoints. These touchpoints cannot exist in silos and companies will have to facilitate customer interactions across various channels to remain competitive. The whole combined experience is what really counts when consumers evaluate the experience of a luxury brand, but it is every touchpoint that are the building blocks of this experience. The customer is being targeted by several touchpoints every time they make a purchase *(Ameyo, 2018)*. At each stage of figure 3.9. shown above, different outcomes can occur with the use of different touchpoints. For luxury brands to stay relevant, they need to deliver and look for ways to tailor their marketing efforts to the specific consumer's need for individuality. Luxury brands have historically been very careful about the digital era and e-commerce. But, according to Florine Eppe Beauloye (*2018*), personalization plays on consumer sentiment and is an essential part of the experiential service associated with luxury brands. The increasing number of touchpoints both online and offline creates opportunities for the luxury brands to create these personal

tailored experiences for the consumers. Today, 78 percent of all luxury sales are influenced by at least one online touchpoint. This means that only 22 percent of luxury sales are pure offline, and brands need to be aware of this fact (Mckinsey, *2018*).

When consumers begin their shopping journey, they typically have a pre-selected set of brands in the mind, what is known as an initial consideration set. Mckinsey (2015), analyzed the decision journey of luxury consumers across 21 different touchpoints; 11 offline and 10 online. The research showed that in the luxury industry, the initial consideration phase has a significant role because luxury shoppers tend to purchase brands that they are already familiar with. According to Remy et al. (2015), more than three quarters of luxury purchases come from the brands consumers present in their initial consideration. This means, that a brand that is not in the initial consideration from the start has a 25% chance of being purchased. This means that luxury brands must continuously build their presence over time, so they are on the consumer's mind whenever they a need for a new purchase occurs. Mckinsey (*2015*) refers to the process as being more of a marathon than a sprint. It requires long-term building of brand awareness, reputation and category relevance and most of all the element of being consistent. The research from Mckinsey (*2015*) regarding touchpoints also revealed that luxury brands have to be present everywhere. Buying luxury products are typically high involvement purchases. Therefore, the decision journey is often long and complex, and luxury shoppers will on average be influenced by nine points of contact with a specific brand before a purchase is made. One in five of luxury shoppers will be hit by all of the 21 touchpoints analyzed by Mckinsey (*2015*). This shows that the luxury brands need be active everywhere and one of every five will be exposed to all content that the brand creates, or content created by the consumers. Luxury brands should leverage all touchpoints available in order to be present in the consumer's initial considerations and take advantage of the complex decision journey.

When luxury brands start using digital capabilities, they have to understand the use of each digital touchpoint. Companies have different amount of control over the different digital touchpoints. Heine & Berghaus *(2014)* provides a classification of eight digital luxury brand touchpoints where the level of control is decreasing as listed below.

Website:
The website of a luxury brand is being referred to as the heart of the digital presence. It is the most important digital aspect for luxury brands as it is the first stop for the majority of affluent consumers when they are searching information about a specific brand. The luxury shopper has high expectations

regarding the websites of luxury brands *(Heine, Berghaus, 2014)*. Above all, the website is a brand-building tool that illuminate and reflects the vision and stories of a brand.

Search engine optimization (SEO):

SEO is an important part of doing business in the modern world. A good SEO strategy will increase the visibility of a brand with the use of a variety of keyword and external links to make sure the website is becoming more visible. The increasing visibility can lead to an increase in site traffic and thus the sales without proportionately increasing the marketing costs *(Dzhingarov, 2017)*.

Direct mailings:

Direct mailings are seen as a classic digital marketing tool, which is not seen much anymore. Hence, it is still a potentially efficient opportunity of customer relationship management that luxury brands cannot miss *(Heine, Berghaus, 2014)*. Direct mailing is especially suited for luxury branding and is referred to as the 'diamond in the rough'. Direct mailing is perfect for capturing the consumers imaginations as it is the perfect medium for telling stories. Luxury brands should not underestimate the efficacy of direct mailing. It is still an effective touchpoint even though it is becoming less and less popular *(US Data Corporation, 2012)*.

Phone and tablets apps

In the digital era, apps are a very hot element. If luxury brands decide to develop an app, it has to very carefully done. It has to work correctly and reflect superior quality. The app can have different purposes and can be developed to suit different luxury segments. But the central aspect is a good balance of innovation and usefulness and at the same time match the image of the luxury brand. The app can be used in several aspects of the consumer decision journey depending on the elements chosen by the brand *(Heine, Berghaus, 2014)*.

E-Commerce

Luxury brands are increasingly adopting the use of e-commerce to meet the expectations of the consumers by being available at all time. Previously, luxury brands had a tendency to fear selling online due to the risk of a lack in the service quality, which customer expect to be high when it comes to luxury brands. Heine & Berghaus *(2014)* points out that the key to success with e-commerce and luxury brands is an extensive personal shopper program. A program that immediate assistance to customers.

Online advertising

Online advertising can be referred to as a more aggressive customer acquisition tool compared to the website. The companies can get very creative with this type of advertising. There is a huge variety of elements and strategies to be used with the range from shop-able videos with the purpose of creating instant conversions to user-generated campaigns to get people talking. Interactions with luxury brands can be established with online advertising and should be leveraged by the companies *(Heine, Berghaus, 2014)*.

Brand communities

A brand community can be described as "a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand" (Muniz, Albert, O'Guinn, 2011). One of the most basic examples of this is Facebook where consumers are able to 'like' luxury brands and easily get information, news and interact with the brand and other consumers. It is relatively easy for companies to create these brand communities and it is something luxury brands should benefit from.

Social campaigns

Social campaigns can facilitate the sharing of media content. The most important social content communities for luxury brands include Twitter and Youtube. The premise for luxury brands to leverage from these communities is to create content and stories to post and share. Content is mainly created in form of campaigns. The task for luxury brands is first and foremost content development. It is easy for brands to create too much noise without saying anything. Communication among consumers is something the companies should be aware of. Luxury brands must consider that the digital world is already having a discussion about their brand - with or without them. A company will never be fully in control of this discussion, but social campaigns have the purpose of creating consumer-to-consumer communication *(Heine, Berghaus, 2014)*. Modern customers play an active role in directing the narrative of a brand in different ways, which has resulted in the advent of storygiving. Storygiving is defined as the practice of co-creation of brand stories through consumer-generated content *(Hughes, Bendoni, Pehlivan, 2016)*. A luxury brand can ask customers to share their online brand experiences or post pictures of their branded items.

The eight touchpoints are crucial for luxury brand to leverage and each touchpoint have a different amount of control from the company's point of view. The first three touchpoints (*website, SEO, direct mailing*) are elements where the company have all the control of the content. *Apps* and *e-commerce*

are also touchpoints where the brand have a high amount of control. Both touchpoints have to be created with a balance between of innovation and usefulness. The final three touchpoints (*Online advertising, Brand communities, Social campaigns*) are elements where the control is decreasing. The companies are in charge of the content they post with the purpose of creating user-generated content. When the consumers start to create content, the control start to shift from the company to the consumers. Companies are no longer fully in charge of the content and hereby the control is decreased.

3.5. Omni-World. New challenges for Luxury brands on e-commerce

There always exist two sides of a coin, therefore all opportunities posses´ a potential challenge. Taking a look at the findings from eMarketer.com below, showing that customer expectation is very high, and even higher for luxury brands. Therefore, the bar of expectations is incredibly high when it comes to luxury. The same study showing that 84 percent of retailers worldwide saying that creating a consistent customer experiences across all channels is very important, and the remaining 16 percent describe it as somewhat important. Yet when it comes to implementing the vision of creating this consistent customer experience across the channels, being synchronized in areas of omnichannel, only one in five reported to be fully synchronization *(eMarketer, 2013)*

Important Aspects of a Company's Omnichannel Strategy According to Retailers Worldwide, June 2013
% of respondents

	Very important	Some importance	Little to no importance
Consistent customer experience across all channels	84%	16%	0%
Inventory visibility across all channels	80%	16%	4%
Fulfillment	75%	19%	5%
Customer order visibility across all channels	73%	21%	6%
Digital marketing (ecommerce, mobile, social media)	64%	36%	0%
Pricing strategies	53%	43%	4%
Loyalty management	52%	41%	7%
Store operations	50%	47%	3%
Customer segmentation	46%	44%	10%
Demand forecasting	44%	49%	7%
Procurement/assortment	42%	55%	3%
Customer call center	33%	48%	19%
Traditional advertising	13%	54%	33%

Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: Retail Systems Research (RSR), "Omni-Channel 2013: The Long Road to Adoption," June 11, 2013

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Figure 3.10. – Important aspects of a company's Omnichannel strategy.
(eMarketer, 2013)

As a luxury brand and high level of product quality and heritage, this is something that should be examined carefully. Otherwise, it could jeopardize the brands reputation and loose the charm effect to customers. Many still hesitate in their commitment to make changes necessary to offer an omnichannel experience because of a lack in urgency and adequate *(ibid)*. Customers are expecting a consistent luxurious experience in all channels, where all touchpoints of the journey must emit this luxurious experience. The look and feel of website require a match of the in-store and product experience. All content in digital channels has to be polished and every word has to exude the brand luxurious speak, right down to using the same exclusive packaging material in delivery for both online and offline. In order to do this and build a memorable user experience it demands more than just a user-friendly website or social media. The smell perfumes or touch of soft leather cannot be transmitted online. Thus, being able to activate the human´s five senses through digital tools is a major challenge *(Lim Ee sim, 2014)*.

Study from 2014 shows an acceleration of luxury sales realized online and luxury e-commerce is gaining traction. This is a first manifestation of the growing awareness reaching 14€ billion in 2014 with a +50 percent versus 2013. Not only is it important to be active online in order to produce customer satisfaction, but the importance of digital business is a key source for revenues growth as well *(Remy et al., 2015)*. Many believed that luxury goods could not be sold online because it was too risky, and customers would not buy - but this cynic has been proven wrong. With a slow start for luxury brands to embrace e-commerce the situation is changed. High-end e-commerce is important for luxury brands and makes a significant attitude shift towards e-commerce in the luxury industry. Luxury brands have shied away from e-commerce, with a fear of online retailing would damage the brands image and reduce the sense of exclusivity. A study from Beauloye *(2018)* shows that while traditional luxury brands has been hesitant in embracing e-commerce, the sustainable growth of online pureplay luxury retailer demonstrates that affluent customers are willing to buy luxury goods online. Arienti *(2018)* states that the worldwide online sales of luxury goods have a projected growth of 21 percent to $33.9 billion in 2018 versus $27.9 billion in 2017. Customers are buying more luxury goods online each year and e-commerce penetration is 10 percent in 2018, up from 8.9 percent in 2017. This is driving the retailers of premium goods to step up their investments in digital- platforms and marketing. Same report shows that luxury e-commerce grew 23.3 percent in 2017, which is three times faster than the total luxury growth *(Arienti, 2018)*. This shows that luxury brands are stepping

up the digital side of their business, including tentative steps in selling online on own e-commerce platforms. This helps to create the new playing field whereas valuable knowledge is generated about consumers. When further search for the e-commerce importance of luxury brands, McKinsey *(2015)* analyzed that luxury e-commerce could triple to €74 billion by 2025 and is reaching its tipping point. The market´s sales trajectory resembles an S-curve, which can be disaggregated into three steps:
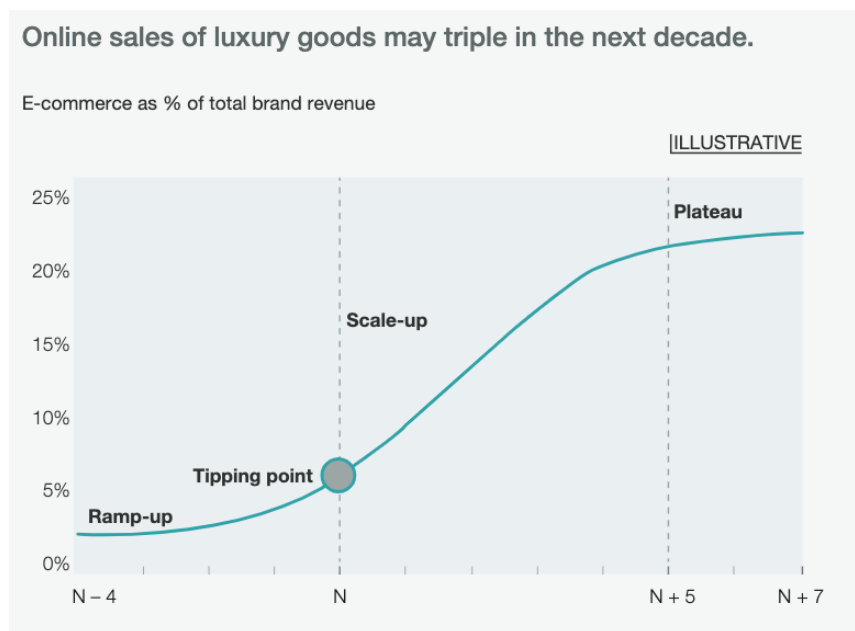
Figure 3.11. – Altagamma-McKinsey Digital Experience Observatory

(McKinsey, 2015)

Ramp-up: Luxury brands are investigating online sales through either partner with full-price, off-price, or events tools or through their own e-commerce. Here they tend to only offer reduced product range with low advertising.

Scale-up: When starting to gain a sizeable revenue form e-commerce, around 6-7 percent of total sales, luxury brands reach the *tipping point* where brands scale their e-commerce operations and launch full range on e-commerce. Many brands are now in this phase; they feature majority of products online and have upgraded websites, while increasing online and offline visibility. Now e-commerce has become a top management priority with significant investments in IT, customer support and supply chain, which will drive online sales towards 18-20 percent of total revenue within five years.

Plateau: After passing the 20 percent threshold, the growth of sales tends to decelerate as Brands e-commerce efforts reach maturity *(Remy, et al., 2015).*

This showing the potential for luxury brands to connect with e-commerce. Thus, clarifying that Luxury e-commerce is increasing revenue and helps to stay insight with customers' needs and wants, with focus on visibility and availability and not only product oriented. Technology will further enhance the personalized shopping experience. Harris *(2019)* suggest that the traditionally in-store personal shoppers switch to personalization online. Recent advancements in Artificial Intelligence and Augmented Reality have major benefits for Luxury brands. He claims that artificial intelligence is being used to improve the customer experience and meet their expectations. The customers are beginning to rely more on what their online connected devices suggest they should buy in their purchase decision. Also, artificial intelligence has been improved to personalize recommendations that predicts what customers are likely to buy, with the purpose of enhancing the overall experience. This is creating an opportunity to create tools that allows luxury brands e-commerce to connect marketing channels and CRM *(Harris, 2019).* The omnichannel approach of online interactions and technology tools helps create the luxury brands story and makes the customers feel part of an elite club. In the past the conception of online branch was a sacrificing of the exclusivity. But now 80 percent of all luxury sales are influenced by online content and an exciting way of share a compelling story. A study by Nielsen *(2017)* shows that store websites and email are some of the most used digital channels with 77 percent of households. With traditional touchpoints being the most used by consumers, the digital touchpoints are forecasted to overtake this role in 2019. Millennials are those who are using the digital touchpoints most often. However, generations X is not to be neglected, as they adopt digital touchpoints faster than other generations (*Nielsen, 2017).*

3.6. Omnichannel and brand equity

With an online word, brand equity becomes more important as the elements of smell and feel giving in store do not exist. Brands with high equity have an advantage of attracting new customers. The overall brand equity depends on customer involvement, customer experience and the ease of how customers can evaluate products of the brand *(Hossain, Akter, Wamba, 2017).* Brand equity provides the consumer with a security of quality that normally would be achieved through the human senses *(De Lange, 2016).* Marketers have been trying to brand themselves across multiple channels for a long time by integrating brand elements, messaging and call-to-actions. With the prevalence and

adoption of smartphones and technology the millennial generation is a game changer for branding. Multi-channel marketing efforts have resulted in a move from picking a segment, a message and a channel, to a continuous omnichannel strategy of integrated channels. The ability of attracting new customers is largely perceptual. Prospects have no actual brand experience and therefore must go with what they hear, see and believe about a brand. Thus, the brands ability to retain customers is heavily experiential and hereby connected to the customers loyalty and perception of value. Brand equity becoming even more important with the challenge's luxury brands are facing in an omnichannel world. This enables opportunities to differentiate with no other brand wielding an identical digital strategy. Martens, Demeester, Billiet, Vanhout, Moubax *(2016)* has come up with elements which the most successful online players have in common to create brand equity. *Be accessible,* make sure that customers are easily guided to the brand, meaning that presence and visibility in right channels are key. *Test and measure,* test and measure which channels that works best for the brand, be agile and prepared to adapt if needed. *Seamless checkout* ensures that there is a fluent road to conversion at all time. The checkout page must always be nearby and that the least amount of effort to complete. *Integrate online and offline experience,* being consistent in the story behind the brand. Again, offering a seamless, personalized experience in all channels; digital and physical *(ibid)*

Loyalty is a major factor inside the resonance model and the build of brand equity. There exists evidence that suggest a link between loyalty offline and online. Study by Balabanis & Reynolds *(2001)* indicates that the attitude towards a brand has a positive effect on their attitude towards the brands online channels. Also, Kim & Park *(2005)* found that channel extension refers to the consumers attitude towards the brands offline channels transfers the attitude towards the brands online channels. Furthermore, Farag et al., *(2012)* confirms that a synergy exists between channels, with a frequency of in-store purchase related to frequent online purchase, where a frequent online search relates to a frequent in-store purchase. Thus, different arguments are to believe that the build of customer loyalty in offline channels is likely to transfer positive attitudes and behavior to the brands online channels.

According to Shai et al., *(2016)* in the omnichannel environment and the emergence of online channels, the factor of brand trust is important. Many researches have investigated trust inside an online world, where there is an overall agreement that the relevance of brand trust is important in order to increase online sales. Studies by Das *(2016),* and Kahn & Rahman *(2016)* confirms that brand trust, which is developed from a positive brand experience are encouraging online brand loyalty.

Hahn & Kim *(2009)* found that there exists a direct link between brand trust in the offline store and the online purchase intention. But this could only be proven indirectly with links of confidence with online sales and online information search. Followed by this, a study by Badrinarayanan et al., *(2012)* indicates that the purchase intention in an online multichannel environment are influenced by the brand trust of the offline environment. For products like apparel, where the consumers are unable to feel, touch and evaluated the product in online channels, it is important that the brand is trusted in order to drive online purchases, with the fact that it reduces the risk of buying online. Jones & Kim *(2010)* claims that brand trust has a major influence in the intention to buy from the brands website.

With the increase of variety of channels format and the progression to omnichannel marketing, it has made the shopping and buying more convenient for consumers, but trickier for marketers to manage. According to study by Payne, Barger & Peltier *(2017)* the intersection of effective omnichannel, IMC strategic and tactical initiative offers an opportunity for marketers to engage their customers and create relationships and engagement. With the creation of customer engagement inside omnichannel marketing, a paper by Kuvykaite & Piligrimiene *(2014)* shows how consumer engagement can create brand equity. Their study indicates that consumers who are engaged with a brand is not only being provided with information they need, but they also help brands to gather information about their specific and individual needs. This illuminates that customer brand engagement allows companies to use the customers' competencies in the creation of brand equity. Brand engaged consumers experiences a bigger emotional, functional and social value, because of the brands ability to create more positive associations for them, which leads to increased brand loyalty and brand equity *(Kuvykaite, Piligrimiene, 2014)*. This is indicating that the creation of customer brand engagement by omnichannel marketing leads to the creation of brand equity. With the focus on digital touchpoints it includes social media platforms, where Schivinski & Dabrowski *(2015)* evaluated 302 data sets through their online survey, with the purpose of investigate the effects of social media brand communication on consumers´ perception of brand equity. Their examination of the impact of social media communication on CBBE showed that user-generated social media communication positively influences brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality *(Schivinski, Dabrowski, 2015)* again indication that the consumer engagement creates brand equity within omnichannel approach. With an omnichannel and multimedia environment it is important for brands to design and implement integrated channels and a communication strategy, that maximizes short-run sales and long-run brand equity. Keller *(2010)* introduced different concepts and frameworks of such strategies, with channels and communications showing both direct and indirect effects on brand equity. Direct effects on brands comes from activities and experiences that consumers encounter with a communication option

or channel. The indirect effects arise from association with a particular communication option or channel, which depend on the awareness, meaningfulness and transferability of image and equity. Brands must mix and match the communication options and channels in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, whereas the CBBE model *(cf. 3.3.)* can be used to interpret the direct and indirect communications and channels *(Keller, 2010)*. Furthermore, Konus, Verhoef & Neslin *(2008)* found strong evidence that multichannel enthusiasts segments consist of consumers who has a positive attitude towards all channels. Consumers who are enthusiastic about using multiple channels in their shopping journey, is of importance for brands managers and by this maintain well-coordinated channels to provide similar prices and products; otherwise, these consumers become confused and frustrated with the brand. Their research also suggest that additional channels of marketing enhance customer satisfaction and ultimately customer loyalty *(Konus, Verhoef, Neslin, 2018)*, which is the top of the resonance model. Several studies have indicated customer value as outcome of multichannel strategy. Payne & Frow *(2005)* explained integration quality as the full range of available channels in order to serve customers and indicate how brands should utilize this integrated strategy, with the purpose of increase customer value. Furthermore, Payne el al. *(2005)* argued channel integration as a strategy for value creation. In a research by Neslin, Grewal, Legholm, Shankar, Teerling, Thomas & Verhoef *(2006)* they indicated multichannel customer management as a brand value creating process through development, acquisition and retention. Thus, it is evident that value equity within customer equity is an important factor inside omnichannel marketing. In a research about driving engagement through digitization, Bhalla *(2014)* argues that interaction between omnichannel would make a deeper customer relationship with the brand and affect the customer lifetime value and long-term profitability. Van Baal *(2014)* used the term harmonization in his indication of omnichannel and tested the relationship with customer retention. Bendoly, Blotcher, Bretthauer, Kristhan & Venkataramanan *(2005)* that the integration of channels reduces the customers switching of brands due to the products unavailability. This creates higher customer retention and longer relationships with the brands. With these arguments it is suggested that there exists a relationship between omnichannel and relationship equity, customer equity and hence brand equity. Within omnichannel context customer brand experience with the brands marketing channels has been addressed. With the definition of omnichannel marketing it includes brand performance, where brands who use omnichannel marketing enables the opportunity to experience the brand rather than their channels *(Bhalla, 2014)*. The drivers of brand equity are discussed to demonstrate that there exists a relation between the drivers and omnichannel. Thus, it is evident that omnichannel do influence brand equity in different ways.

3.7. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

The internet has grown and become a major sales channel and the integration of e-commerce and physical stores have created opportunities for the companies. Simone & Sabbadin *(2018)* state that the rise of the internet tends to increase the frequency of interactions between customer and the retailers, which impact both the management and also the consumer behavior. New touchpoints have been added to the portfolio that allows companies to interact with the consumers. The integration makes the channels interweave and move towards omnichannel experiences. Herhausen et al., *(2015)* defines omnichannel as a phenomenon for which the customer considers all the retailer's sales and marketing channels as one entity. The shopping experience is becoming seamless regardless of the channels used. Omnichannel allows consumers to use different channels simultaneously through their buying process. Mosquera et al., *(2017)* states that customer satisfaction is increased with the omnichannel approach as the companies are able to provide and expose the customer one large experience in terms of communications and in terms of purchase. Omnichannel includes the aspect of channel integration and Cao & Li *(2015)* says that the objective of channel integration is to create a better customer experience in order to increase customer loyalty and a high customer retention rate. Hereby, the first hypothesis (H1) is formed stating that there exists a positive relationship between channel integration and the adoption of omnichannel strategy for luxury brands. The customers value a well-integrated internet stores, which will lead to more favorable customer experience. Studies show that the evaluation of a new channel is influenced by previous experiences with other channels. The integration of channels will according to the literature increase the opportunities for brands to create and maintain the relationship with customers. The touchpoints are designed to optimize the customer experience and make the customer satisfied in every stage of the customer journey. Companies can improve the customer experience by creating a unified and a personalized message through all touchpoints specified to each customer. Studies indicate that the attitude towards a specific brand has a positive effect on the attitude towards the digital touchpoints of that specific brand. Hereby, H2 is developed expressing that there is a positive relationship between digital touchpoints and adoption of omnichannel strategy for luxury brands. In the omnichannel environment, companies can offer the customer what they want at each stage of the buying process *(Melero et al., 2016)*. This information leads to the creation of H3 saying that the adoption of omnichannel has a significant impact on the consumer decision journey for luxury brands.

Within brand equity there exist various perspectives of how to study this field. Brand equity provides benefits for the brand, inducing customer loyalty and less vulnerability to competitive marketing

actions. The term adheres to the added value endowed on products and reflects how customers act, feel and think with respect to the brand. In this study the theory of customer-based brand equity will be used, where the power of the brand lies with the consumers. The model by Keller *(2001)* views brand building as an ascending of steps that is contingent upon the successful completion of the previous one. In order to build a strong brand and significant equity the building blocks of *brand identity, brand meaning, brand response,* and *brand relationships* are essential. These four steps are used in the thesis and will be the points that are considered in the survey and will be used to indicate if omnichannel provides a further extension of brand equity for luxury brands.

According to theories and literature review, the process of the consumer decision journey has been changed. Luxury brands include products which are *affective* where consumer require less information due to strong brand image and the association of status. Hence, the consumer path is in the process of *feeling, learning, doing.* The tradition purchase funnel has been used to describe the consumer journey and is based on the AIDA model. The influences of digital touchpoints are very powerful in the consumer decision journey whereas consumers have become more empowered, connected and complex in various dimensions. The results are a non-linear path to purchase, where the customer journey is more dynamic, but the consumers still go through the same stages of *considering, evaluate, purchase, experience,* but they no longer leave the process at the accustomed exit of 'purchase'. Instead, the consumers continuously cycle through the different stages without ever exiting the evaluation process. With omnichannel and digital touchpoints always being 'on' the journey has become more accessible; the evaluation of new products is now a more focal point compared to purchase. Thus, customers can easily control their route within omnichannel and flatter their needs at the giving moment.

The communication is happening through numerous channels and they are all affecting the overall customer experience. The consumer is able to choose when and where they want to interact with a brand. Hence, touchpoints can no longer exist in silos. The interaction will have to be facilitated across various channels and the combined experience is what really counts when consumers evaluate brands *(Ameyo, 2018)*. Consumers have according to Mckinsey *(2015)* typically a pre-elected set of brands in their mind, which is known as the initial consideration set. Research across 21 different touchpoints shows that these initial considerations are very significant because luxury shoppers tend to purchase brands that they are already familiar with. Brands are forced to continuously build their presence and brands need to be present everywhere. All the touchpoints should be leveraged in order to have the most effect on the decision journey *(ibid)*. Evidence shows that omnichannel includes

digital touchpoints and channel integration, which changes the consumer decision journey. Furthermore, arguments indicate that Omnichannel and the term of harmonization are related to relationship equity, customer equity, hence, the construction of H4 is created. H4 states that omnichannel has a significant impact on brand equity with the consumer decision journey as a mediator.

After introduction relevant theories and reviewing literature, we have been able to construct a conceptual model, which has the purpose of providing an answer to the research question. It takes the above elements into consideration with relation to omnichannel, touchpoints, consumer decision journey, and brand equity.
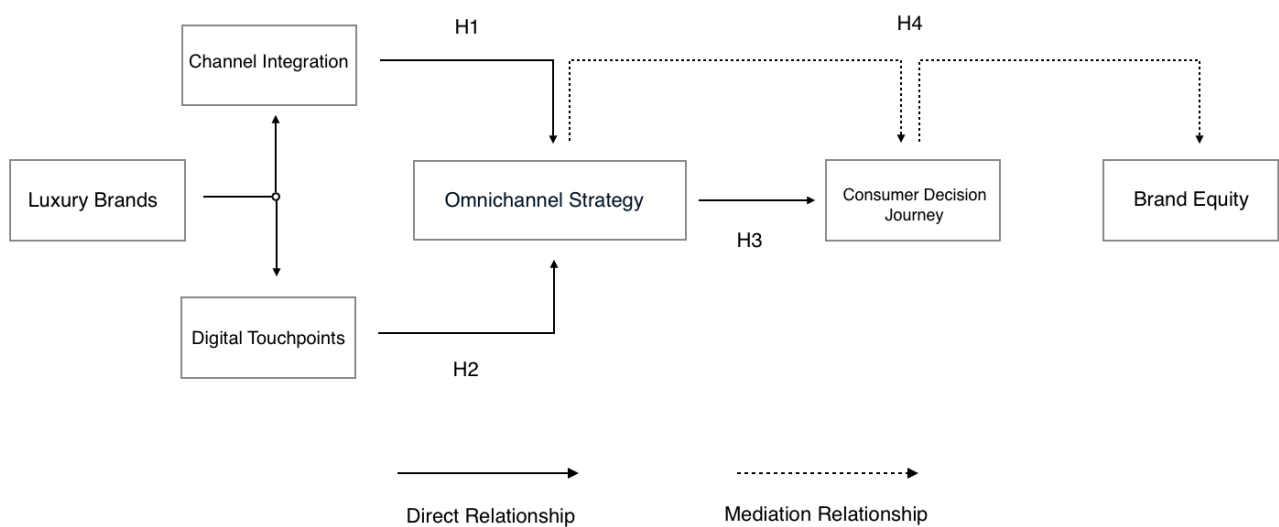
Figure 3.12. – Conceptual model.

Own creation

After introduction relevant theories and reviewing literature, it was possible to construct a conceptual model with the purpose of providing an answer to the research question. It takes several elements into consideration in relation to omnichannel and brand equity.

The model starts with luxury brands and if the adoption of channel integration and digital touchpoints relate to an omnichannel strategy. Then we see if the adoption of an omnichannel strategy affects the consumer decision journey. Last, the model indicates that the adoption of an omnichannel strategy has an impact on brand equity with the consumer decision journey acting as a mediator. Based on the knowledge gathered, four hypotheses have been created in the theoretical framework and illustrated in the conceptual model. The hypotheses are:

H1: *There is a positive relationship between channel integration and adoption of omnichannel strategy for luxury brands.*

H2: *There is a positive relationship between digital touchpoints and adoption of omnichannel strategy for luxury brands.*

H3: *Adoption of Omnichannel has a significant impact on consumer decision journey of luxury brands.*

H4: *Adoption of Omnichannel has an impact on brand equity with consumer decision journey as a mediator.*

4. Empirical findings

This section has the purpose of showing and describing the results gathered. The methods used to collect the data is described in the Research methods (cf. 2.7.).

4.1. Secondary data analysis

In order to investigate how luxury brands are performing online, an analysis of the 15 most affluent luxury brands has been made. The purpose is to get insight into their current online position and online activities. The 15 brands selected each drive substantial online conversations across social media and search results. The brands chosen are based on rankings made by Deloitte *(2017)* of the world's top 100 luxury goods companies combined with a top 100 list over the most valuable brands made by Forbes *(2018)*.

Brand	Website	E-Commerce	Links to social media	Number of social platforms	Languages	Responsive vs Adaptive	Personal shopper program	Customer account	3rd-Party
Gucci	Yes	Yes	Yes	8	5	Adaptive	No	Yes	Yes
Chanel	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	9	Adaptive	No	Yes	Yes
Louis Vuitton	Yes	Yes	Yes	10	13	Adaptive	No	Yes	No
Hermés	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	5	Adaptive	No	Yes	Yes
Rolex	Yes	Yes	Yes	9	20	Adaptive	No	No	No
Tiffany	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	8	Adaptive	No	Yes	No
Dior	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	5	Adaptive	No	No	Yes
Armani	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	5	Adaptive	No	Yes	Yes
Prada	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	5	Adaptive	Yes	Yes	Yes
Balenciaga	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	6	Adaptive	No	Yes	Yes
Cartier	Yes	Yes	Yes	6	5	Adaptive	No	Yes	Yes
Burberry	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	14	Adaptive	No	Yes	Yes
Lancôme	Yes	Yes	Yes	3	5	Adaptive	No	No	Yes
Yves Saint Laurent	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	5	Adaptive	No	Yes	Yes
Bulgari	Yes	Yes	Yes	5	5	Adaptive	No	Yes	Yes

Table: 4. – Secondary Internet data collection.

The luxury brands being investigated all have a website available for the consumer to seek information about products and learn about the heritage of the companies. All of the luxury brands has links connected to their social media platforms available on their websites. The number of connections differs with Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Rolex being in the top with 8, 9 and 10 links, and Armani, Lancôme and Balenciaga being the lowest connections with only 3 links. But, common to all of the luxury brands is that they are all connected to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, which also are the most popular social media platforms (*Price, 2019*). All of the websites are also made available in different languages to suit the preferences of consumers across the world. The majority of the companies offers 5 languages and common to all of the luxury brands is that they provide; English,

French, Italian, German and Chinese. The brand who stands out the most is Rolex, who offers 20 different language options follow by Burberry with 14 options. When investigating the brands on other devices such as mobile and tablets, it showed that all of the websites where adaptive. This meaning that the format of the website will adapt to the device being used (*Graham, 2015*). All of the luxury brands also have an e-commerce site which is available through their website. Burberry and Louis Vuitton were the first luxury brand to start e-commerce before 2004, where the majority adopted e-commerce after 2010 *(Vallois, 2016; Williams, 2017)*. The same amount of languages is available on the different e-commerce sites, but only Prada offers an extensive personal shopper program, which Heine & Berghaus (*2014*) pointed out to be a key in order to have success with e-commerce. Rolex, Lancôme and Dior are the only brands who do not offer customers to create an account on their e-commerce sites. The customer accounts make it possible for brands to track customer information, order history, and current order status. Also, it provides the brands the opportunity to suggest items based on previous purchases and helps to build a deeper relationship with the customers (*Shopify, 2019*). Only three out of the fifteen luxury brands (Louis Vuitton, Rolex, Tiffany) are not being sold through 3rd-party e-commerce sites such as YOOX, Net-a-porter, and Farfetch. The brands will not be able to control the customer service at these 3rd-party sites, but the brands are able to showcase their products in several places to create awareness (*Danziger, 2018*). The transparency on all of the luxury brands' websites and e-commerce is high with prices, product information, sizes, etc. easily accessible. The product range and delivery vary from brand to brand with some brands having only limited items available on their e-commerce (Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Cartier, Tiffany). Transparency is one of the challenges the brands are facing with digital touchpoints (*cf. 1.2.1.*) as competitors are able to gather useful information.

The websites and e-commerce are platforms where luxury brands have to pay close attention. It is the platforms, which is most frequent for information search for consumers as well as competitors, and actual sales. Also, it is the platforms where the brands have full control regarding the content and information available (*cf. 3.6*). Only 1 (Prada) of the 15 luxury brands investigated offered a live personal shopper on their e-commerce. All brands except Rolex, Lancôme and Dior do not provide the opportunity of creating an account on their website or e-commerce and lack in customer service regarding this parameter as they are unable to collect data about their customers. All 15 luxury brands are present at the most popular social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter), where the company's control is decreased due to the user-generated content. The brands have to carefully select what they post as certain posts can create unnecessary bad publicity.

4.2. Primary data analysis
The primary data is collected through a questionnaire developed for the specific thesis.

4.2.1. Descriptive statistics
The questionnaire has been active from 11/05-19 to 20/05-19 where 107 respondents have fully completed the questionnaire. Previous experiences show that the majority of the answers come within the first 3-4 days, which also was the case for this thesis. A reminder was sent out after the 4th day (14/05-19) to gather extra respondents.

The 107 respondents are divided with 48 (45%) female and 59 (55%) male with the majority of the respondents being from Denmark (71%). All other participants are from Europe except 4 respondents who answered 'other'. Over half of the respondents are in the age group between 20-30 and over one-third are in the age group of 30-40 and 40-50 combined (*Table 4.2.*).

Antal af Age Rækkemærkater	Kolonnemærkater		Female	Male	Hovedtotal		Antal af Age Rækkemærkater	Kolonnemærki		Female	Male	Hovedtotal
⊙				3	3		⊙		0,0%	0,0%	5,2%	2,8%
				3	3				0,0%	0,0%	5,2%	2,8%
⊙ Denmark		1	33	42	76		⊙ Denmark		100,0%	68,8%	72,4%	71,0%
10-20			5	4	9		10-20		0,0%	10,4%	6,9%	8,4%
20-30			12	32	44		20-30		0,0%	25,0%	55,2%	41,1%
30-40			8	3	11		30-40		0,0%	16,7%	5,2%	10,3%
40-50			6	2	8		40-50		0,0%	12,5%	3,4%	7,5%
above 50		1	2	1	4		above 50		100,0%	4,2%	1,7%	3,7%
⊙ Germany				1	1		⊙ Germany		0,0%	0,0%	1,7%	0,9%
20-30				1	1		20-30		0,0%	0,0%	1,7%	0,9%
⊙ Norway			3		3		⊙ Norway		0,0%	6,3%	0,0%	2,8%
20-30			1		1		20-30		0,0%	2,1%	0,0%	0,9%
30-40			2		2		30-40		0,0%	4,2%	0,0%	1,9%
⊙ Other			4		4		⊙ Other		0,0%	8,3%	0,0%	3,7%
20-30			4		4		20-30		0,0%	8,3%	0,0%	3,7%
⊙ Sweden			8	12	20		⊙ Sweden		0,0%	16,7%	20,7%	18,7%
10-20			1	3	4		10-20		0,0%	2,1%	5,2%	3,7%
20-30			4	4	8		20-30		0,0%	8,3%	6,9%	7,5%
30-40			1	1	2		30-40		0,0%	2,1%	1,7%	1,9%
40-50			2	4	6		40-50		0,0%	4,2%	6,9%	5,6%
Hovedtotal		1	48	58	107		Hovedtotal		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 4.1. – Nationality, Age & Gender

As the data shows, over two-thirds of the respondents are in the age group of 20-50 years, which is consistent with the fact that the baby boomers and millennials are the generation being the most active online (*cf. 1.2.2.*). The data reveal that approximately 80 percent of the respondents in the age group 20-30 and approximately 87 percent in the age group 30-40 have purchased a least one luxury items online *(Table 4.3.)*.

Antal af Have you purchased luxury items online? Rækkemærkater	Kolonnemærkater 10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	above 50	Hovedtotal
No	0,0%	0,0%	20,7%	13,3%	0,0%	25,0%	14,0%
Yes	100,0%	100,0%	79,3%	86,7%	100,0%	75,0%	86,0%
Hovedtotal	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 4.2. – Online purchases

4.2.2. Overview of constructs and respondent preference

By analyzing the data, it shows that 92 respondents have made at least one luxury purchase online and 74 percent of the participants who purchased a luxury item online make research online before making a purchase (*Table 4.3*). This result is very similar to a research made by Mckinsey (*2018*) who states that 73 percent of luxury purchases is influenced by at least one online touchpoint (*cf. 3.6.*). Furthermore, 63 percent of the participants purchase luxury products based on previous experience, which almost correlates with Remy et al., (*2015*) who state that three-quarters of luxury purchases are done based on their initial considerations, which contains previous experiences (*cf. 3.6.*). The results are gathered regardless of age.

When I buy luxury brands I: (Several answers is possible)					
Crossed with: Have you purchased luxury items online?					
	Yes	No	Total	Yes percent	No percent
Read reviews	69	5	71,8%	78%	36%
Make research offline	66	8	71,8%	74%	57%
Make research online	76	12	85,4%	85%	86%
Talk with friends and family	58	5	61,2%	65%	36%
Look at past experience	56	4	58,3%	63%	29%
Buy out of loyalty	48	2	48,5%	54%	14%
Total	89	14	103		

Table 4.3. – When I buy luxury brands I:

The 4th question of the questionnaire is related to loyalty. When asking the participants whether they have a set of favorite brands or they switch from time to time, 68 percent of the respondents answered that they stick with their favorite brand, which indicates a good amount of loyalty. Also, the data from the questionnaire show that 85 percent would recommend their favorite luxury brand to their friends and family, which also illustrates loyalty (*Table 4.4*).

Would you recommend your favorite luxury brand to friends and family?
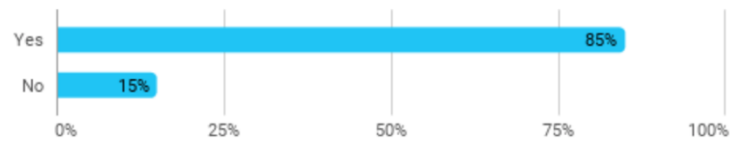
Yes	85%
No	15%

(0% · 25% · 50% · 75% · 100%)

Do you have a set of favorite luxury brands or do you switch from time to time?

Set of favorite	68%
Switch from time to time	32%

(0% · 25% · 50% · 75% · 100%)
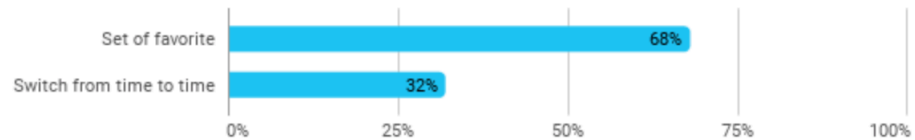
Table 4.4. – Switch from time to time & Recommend to friends and family.

While 86 percent of the participants say that they previously have purchased a luxury product online, only 7 percent prefer to do so. However, 15 percent answered that their preference differs depending on the product *(Table 4.5.)*.

Have you purchased luxury items online?

		Respondents
Yes	86%	92
No	14%	15

(0% · 25% · 50% · 75% · 100%)
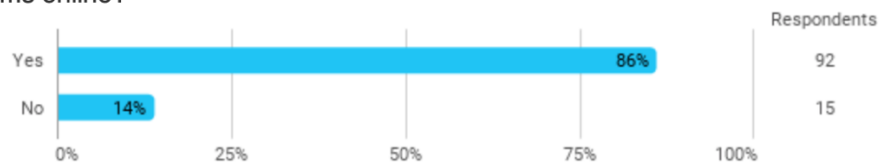
⊕ Tilføj ▼

Where do you prefer to buy luxury items?

		Respondents
Online	7%	7
In store	39%	42
Indifferent	39%	42
Depends on the product	15%	16

(0% · 25% · 50% · 75% · 100%)
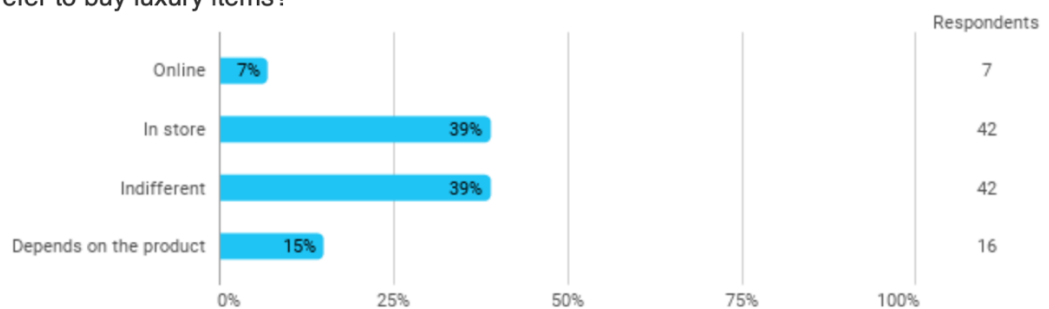
Table 4.5. - Online purchases & preferred buying location.

The questionnaire contains questions regarding several reasons why consumers do not purchase luxury items online and the respondents should answer these on a Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The data reveals that the most common reason why the consumers do not buy online is because of 'complications of returning the item' together with the consumers wanting 'the full in store shopping experience'. The question with the highest answers in 'Low degree' is 'The risk of breach when entering credit card details'.

The questionnaire contains questions regarding how often the respondents use different online platforms to interact with luxury brands, also on a Likert scale (Always - Never). A total of seven different online touchpoints are considered; Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Luxury brand website, Marketplace, and Blogs. By investigation the data gathered from the questionnaire it is clear that the most common platform to interact with a luxury brand is the 'luxury brands website' with 61 percent answering 'always', followed by Marketplace, Facebook and Instagram. It is not surprising that Facebook and Instagram are online touchpoints being in the top as they are the most popular social media platforms (*Price, 2019*). Furthermore, there are online touchpoints that stand out because they appear not to be used very often; these include Twitter, YouTube, and Blogs *(Table 4.6.)*.

|	Kolonnemærkater Always	Never	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Hovedtotal
Antal af How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Facebook	14%	15%	45%	13%	13%	100%
	Kolonnemærkater Always	Never	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Hovedtotal
Antal af How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Twitter	4%	50%	10%	17%	20%	100%
	Kolonnemærkater Always	Never	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Hovedtotal
Antal af How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Instagram	14%	12%	46%	13%	15%	100%
	Kolonnemærkater Always	Never	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Hovedtotal
Antal af How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Youtube	4%	45%	9%	21%	21%	100%
	Kolonnemærkater Always	Never	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Hovedtotal
Antal af How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Luxury b	61%	6%	17%	5%	12%	100%
	Kolonnemærkater Always	Never	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Hovedtotal
Antal af How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Marketp	40%	12%	31%	6%	11%	100%
	Kolonnemærkater Always	Never	Often	Rarely	Sometimes	Hovedtotal
Antal af How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Blogs	3%	35%	9%	37%	16%	100%

Table 4.6. - How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand?

Of those touchpoints being used the most (website, Facebook, Instagram), it is of interest to further investigate to what purpose the platforms are being used and whether they differ. The respondents are given a table with different options to what purpose they use different platforms. The primary use of Facebook is used to see interesting content and get the latest news of the brand according to over

60 percent of the respondents. The data gathered from the question regarding Instagram is all most identical to Facebook, with over 60 percent of the respondents stating that Instagram is primarily used to see interesting content and get the latest news of the brand. When investigation the purpose of using the luxury brands website the data differ significantly. The websites are primarily used to search for product information and portfolio and to make a purchase, with more than 80 percent of the respondents answering these two options (*Appendix 2 - Table 28-34*). The website of the luxury brands is referred to as being the most important digital aspect for luxury brands. The data gathered from the questionnaire are consistent with Heine & Berghaus (*2014*) stating that the website is the place where the consumers are searching for information about a specific brand (*cf. 3.6.*).

The questions from the survey also contained questions regarding whether the respondents were happy with the online experience and if they see an integration between the different digital touchpoints provided by the luxury brands. Only 8 percent of the respondents answered 'no' when asking whether the consumers are happy or not with the online experience provided by their favorite luxury brand. The data revealed that 46 percent answered 'yes', and 44 percent answered, 'in some degree' which indicates that the luxury brands are doing a good job regarding their online activities. By investigation the integration between the online touchpoints it showed that a bit more than half of the respondents stated that they were able to see an integration while the other half was divided into answering 'no' and 'don't know'. Furthermore, the questionnaire asked if the respondents think that the online experience matches the brand and its physical store. The data show that 40 percent answered 'yes', and 47 percent answered 'mostly' *(Table 4.7.)*. These elements above are good indicators in order to measure if the luxury brands are able to create 'seamless' experiences for the consumers.

39Do you think that the online experience match the brand and its physical store?

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	42	39.6%
Mostly	50	47.2%
No	14	13.2%

Table 4.7. – Online experience

36 I consider buying luxury brands based on: (Several answers is possible)

	Respondents	Percent
The Internet	34	31.8%
Social Media (Facebook, instagram, blogs tec.)	13	12.1%
Adds (Tv, Magazines, billboards etc.)	7	6.5%
Influencers	6	5.6%
Past experience	47	43.9%
Total	107	100.0%

Table 4.8. – I consider buying luxury brands based on:

The data from the survey revealed that 86 percent have purchased a luxury item online but only 7 prefer to do so. The main reason why the consumers do not buy online is according to the survey data 'complications of returning the item' and the consumers wanting the 'full in store shopping experience'. Furthermore, the delivery and return policy is the main element which the respondents would like their favorite luxury brands to improve. This is followed by a better relationship with the specific luxury brand and more personalized content with approximately half of the respondents answering these options *(Table 4.9.)*. The integration of different channels will increase the opportunities for brands to create and maintain a relationship with their customers *(cf. 3.9)*. The integration of several channels will reduce the customers from switching between brands and will create higher customer retention and longer relationships *(cf. 3.8)*.

40What would you like from your favorite luxury brands to improve in their online presence? (Several answers is possible)

	Respondents	Percent
More product info	28	27.2%
Personalized service	38	36.9%
Personalized content	47	45.6%
Better relationship to the brand	53	51.5%
Better delivery and return policy	74	71.8%
Improved customer assistance (live chat etc.)	27	26.2%
Better social media presence	18	17.5%
Better integration of channels (Different channels match each other in content, look, updates etc.)	15	14.6%
Click & Collect (Buy online and collect in physical store)	47	45.6%
The opportunity to see which store have the specific product in store/stock	26	25.2%

Table 4.9. – Improvements to luxury brands.

When looking at the data, 64 percent of the respondents want their favorite luxury brand to be able to create a personalized profile for each customer. Every luxury brand except three (Rolex, Dior,

Lancôme) (*cf. Table 4.*) provide the opportunity of creating a profile in order to personalize the shopping experience. Furthermore, 52 percent state that they want their favorite luxury brand to be able to identify them as soon as they enter their store or website, which becomes possible with the 'personal account' option *(Table 4.10.)*. Also, the luxury brands are able to send notifications with offers that match the profiles, which 66 percent of the respondents saying that they would like.

46 How would you feel about luxury brands having a profile of you and your shopping pattern, history and taste in order for them to identify you as soon as you step into their store and give personalized service experience?

	Respondents	Percent
I would like that	56	52.3%
I would not like that	33	30.8%
I am not sure	18	16.8%
Total	107	100.0%

Table 4.10. – Personal profiles.

Only 8 percent of the respondents say that they are not happy with the online experience provided by their favorite luxury brand and more than half see an integration between the different online platforms. All of the 15 brands have an interplay between their website and social media platforms in order to generate integration and a seamless experience. Furthermore, all of the websites are adaptive *(cf. Table 4.)* which plays a role in the consumer's evaluation of the experience. The adaptive layout is used to improve the experience across different types of devices, with the format of the website being adjusted to fit the specific device. Thus, to improve the overall consumer experience.

When analyzing the survey data, 81 percent of the respondents answered that they use marketplace (3rd-party sales channel) to purchase luxury products and 76 percent use marketplace to search for product portfolio and information. Only 9 percent of the participants do not use e-commerce at all, and only three of the 15 luxury brands do not sell their products on a 3rd-party channel. The brands are either available on YOOX, NET-A-PORTER or Farfetch, which helps to generate brand awareness as well as sales.

The survey data has been used to answer several hypotheses with the overall purpose of answering the problem statement of the thesis. The hypothesis has been developed from the conceptual framework and been answered through statistical analysis.

4.3. Hypotheses analysis

In order to do the statistical tests of the hypotheses, several elements had to be done before the execution in SPSS. The variables of omnichannel, consumer decision journey, and brand equity is created by combining several questions from the survey. This was done by computing the statistic mean of the questions inside these items. The analysis of the items includes Cronbach's alpha and the meaning of the computed measures.

Item	Indicators	Computed	Dimension			Cronbach's Alpha
			High/Low	Code	Level	
Integrated Marketing Channels	Q8 OC1 Q15 IMC1 Q18 IMC2	0,00 - 1,57	0,00 - 0,76	1	Low	,744*
			0,00 - 1,57	2	High	
Omni channel	Q8 OC1 Q9 OC2 Q16 OC3	0,00 - 3.11	0,00 - 1,56	1	Low	,757*
			1,56 - 3,11	2	High	
Brand Equity	Q4 BE1 Q5 BE2 Q6 BE3	0,00 - 3,25	0,00 - 1,63	1	Low	,813*
			1,63 - 3,25	2	High	
Consumer Decision Journey	Q10 CDJ1	0,00 - 3,75	0,00 -1,77	1	Low	,705*
			1,77 - 3,75	2	High	
Table 4.11 – Computed means and Cronbach's Alpha						

* Cronbach´s Alpha > ,70 = Instrument reliable.

The reliability of the instruments can be confirmed, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients *(Appendix 3)* being above the recommended ,70 in all items. The codes in the above table is computed and coded to indicate a low (1) or high (2) level of the items and enables the opportunity to use the variables in a statistic substance.

H1: *There exist a positive relationship between channel integration and adoption of omnichannel strategy for luxury brands.*

In order to answer H1 we made a statistic analysis using a Chi Squared Test of independence is used on the item integrated marketing channels with Omnichannel. Doing the analysis, the answers from the survey had to be coded before the execution of the test in SPSS. The coding and the execution can be seen in the appendix. Only the APA reporting of the test will be included here.

In the Chi Squared Test we operate with the Null hypothesis:

H0: No positive relationship between channel integration and adoption of omnichannel strategy for luxury brands.

The rules for assessing that the test is significant with a significance level of 5% (,05) is:

If $p \leq$,05 <u>the test is significant,</u> meaning that there is a significant relationship channel integration and omnichannel strategy.

If $P \geq$,05 <u>the test is *not* significant,</u> meaning there is *not* a significant relationship between channel integration and omnichannel strategy.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20,121[a]	1	,000		
Continuity Correction[b]	17,744	1	,000		
Likelihood Ratio	18,423	1	,000		
Fisher's Exact Test				,000	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	19,933	1	,000		
N of Valid Cases	107				

Table 4.12. – Chi Square H1.

The result of the Chi Squared Test of Association (2x2) shows that there is a significant association between the variable of channel integration and the variable of omnichannel strategy (df, N) =……, P = ……) = ((1,N) = 20.121 P < ,001).

In conclusion of H1 where the *p* value is below ,05 (<.001) it concludes that H0 is rejected. This means that there exist a significant association between channel integration and the adoption of an omnichannel strategy for luxury brands. The effect size has to be taken into account and we do this by using Cramer's V, which gives us value of ,434 (» ,43) and equals a moderate effect size in the study.

To sum up the final result, we reject the Null hypothesis in the Chi Squared Test of independence, which tells us that there is a significant relationship between channel integration and omnichannel strategy for luxury brands. Therefore, it concludes that H1 is accepted.

H2: *There exist a positive relationship between digital touchpoints and adoption of omnichannel strategy for luxury brands.*

In order to answer H2 we made a statistic analysis using a Chi Squared Test of question no 10 and question no 8. This was done to see if there exist an association between the use of digital touchpoints and online purchase of Luxury goods. Doing the analysis, the answers from the survey had to be coded before the execution of the test in SPSS. The coding and the execution can be seen in the appendix. Only the APA reporting of the test will be included here.

In the Chi Squared Test we operate with the Null hypothesis:
H0: No positive relationship between digital touchpoints and adoption of omnichannel strategy for luxury brands.

As for H1 the rules for assessing that the test is significant with a significance level of 5% (,05) is:
If $p \leq$,05 the test is significant meaning that there is a significant relationship between digital touchpoints and the adoption of omnichannel.
If $P \geq$,05 the test is *not* significant, meaning there is *not* a significant relationship between digital touchpoints and the adoption of omnichannel.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11,965[a]	1	,001		
Continuity Correction[b]	11,020	1	,001		
Likelihood Ratio	12,306	1	,000		
Fisher's Exact Test				,001	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	11,932	1	,001		
N of Valid Cases	365				

Table 4.13. – Chi Square H2.

The results of the Chi Squared Test of Association (2x2) show that there is a significant association between digital touchpoints and online purchase: (df, N) =……, P = ……) = ((1,N) = 11,965 P = ,001).

In conclusion of H2, with the test showing a *p* value below ,05 (,001) it concludes that H0 is rejected. This means that there exists a significant association between digital touchpoints and the adoption of the omnichannel strategy for luxury brands. Hereby, it tells that one of the two options (often or never) tend to buy more luxury brands online compared to the other. By looking further into the results, its shows that people who often interacts with the brands digital touchpoints are more engaged to buy luxury brands online (89,9% to 76,3%). Those who never interacts with online touchpoints are more engaged not to buy online (23,7% to 10,1%). Also, the effect size has to be taking into consideration when doing this test. Again, we look at the results where the use of Cramer´s V is incorporated. The test shows a value of ,181 (»,20) which equals a small effect size in this study, which relates that the association between the variable and the value.

To sum the final result, we reject the Null hypothesis in the Chi Squared Test of independence, which tells that there is a positive relationship between digital touchpoints and the adoption of omnichannel strategy for luxury brands. Furthermore, the test tells us that people who interacts more with digital touchpoints are more likely to buy luxury brands online.

H3: *Adoption of Omnichannel has a significant impact on consumer decision journey of luxury brands.*

When testing H3, we are working with ordinal scales, which means that we can make a Spearman´s rank-order correlation. It is a nonparametric version of Pearson product-moment correlation and measures the strength and direction of association between the two ranked variables. During the test in SPSS we are using the items *Omnichannel* and *Consumer Decision Journey* to see if there exist a significant impact from the adoption of omnichannel on consumer decision journey of luxury brands.

The correlation coefficient shows the statistical measure of the strength of a monotonic relationship between the ranked variables. The closer r_s is to $\pm$ 1 the stronger is the correlation.

SPSS produces the following Spearman´s correlation output:

Correlations

			Customer Decision Journey	Omnichannel
Spearman's rho	Customer Decision Journey	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,510[**]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000
		N	107	107
	Omnichannel	Correlation Coefficient	,510[**]	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.
		N	107	107

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

Table 4.14. – Correlations H3.

The significant Spearman correlation coefficient value of 0,510 shows that there appear a ´moderate´ positive correlation between Omnichannel and Consumer decision journey. Thus, high level of omnichannel is impacting the consumer decision journey.

However, there is a need for a significant test to decide whether this sample has any or no evidence to suggest that linear correlation is present. In order to do this, we test the null Hypothesis against the alternative hypothesis:

$$H0: There\ are\ no\ monotonic\ correlation\ (r_s = 0)$$
$$H1: There\ is\ monotonic\ correlation\ \ (r_s \neq 0)$$

SPSS reports the p value for the test as ,000 which concludes that we reject the null hypothesis. This means that the exist evidence that the adoption of omnichannel has a significant impact on consumer decision journey for luxury brands. The APA reporting:

The Spearman's correlation was run to determine the relationship between omnichannel and consumer decision journey for luxury brands. There existed a moderate, positive correlation between the variables $(r_s = .510, n = 107, p < 0,001)$

H4: *Omnichannel has a significant impact on brand equity with consumer decision journey as a mediator.*

When testing H4 there exist different requires for the analysis. As the hypothesis states, we want to explore if omnichannel has a significant impact on brand equity with consumer decision journey as a mediator. In order to simplify the process, we set up a visual image of the construct.

When executing the test there are some analysis requirements:

1. Path C: Bivariate regression predicting DV from IV.
2. Path A: Bivariate regression predicting Med from IV.
3. Path B & C: Multiple regression predicting DV from Med & IV.

No Mediator in the model:
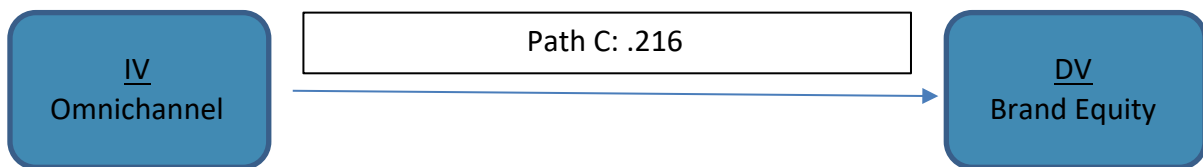
Figure 4.1. – Path. Omnichannel - Brand equity

In order to have a mediator, the correlation between the first predictor and the DV has to be significant.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4,235	1	4,235	36,980	,000^b
	Residual	12,026	105	,115		
	Total	16,262	106			

Table 4.14. – Regression H4.

The ANOVA shows that there is a significant regression between Omnichannel and Brand Equity with the *p* value < 0.001 and a beta weight of .216 *(Appendix 3)*.

Next, we add the predictor (consumer decision journey) in the regression to see if acts as a mediator. Doing this, we re-run the regression in SPSS adding the suspected mediator.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1,706	2	,853	6,371	,002[b]
	Residual	13,921	104	,134		
	Total	15,626	106			

Table 4.15. – Regression 2 H4.

The ANOVA for the second model, with the two predictors is also significant *p* value = .002. We can tell if the second predictor is a mediator if the significant beta between the original predictor and the DV changes to an *insignificant* beta and the newbie (suspected mediator) has a significant beta then consumer decision journey is in fact a mediator.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1,295	,176		7,340	,000	,945	1,645			
	Omnichannel	,067	,105	,068	,633	,528	−,142	,276	,216	,062	,059
	Customer Decision Journey	,240	,089	,290	2,698	,008	,064	,417	,325	,256	,250

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Equity

Table 4.16. – Coefficients H4.

The original predictor of omnichannel was significant, but now it is *not* significant with a very small beta weight .068 and the significant not small enough *p* value .528. The consumer decision journey beta weigh is significant and *p* value of .008 also significant, therefore it is proved that consumer decision journey is a mediator.

Mediator in the model:
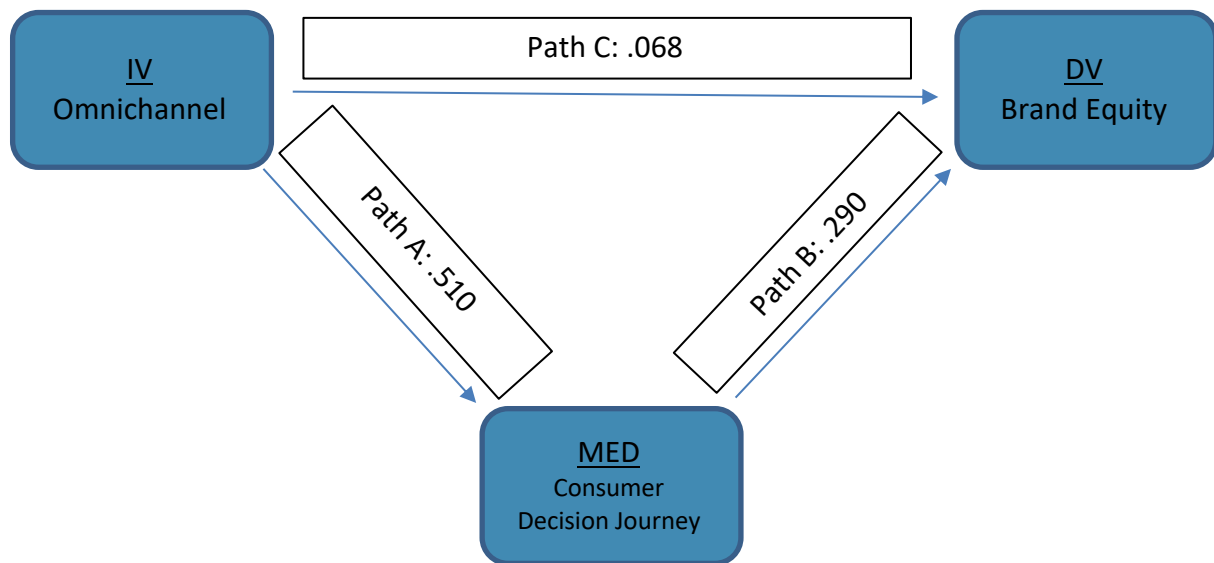
Figure 4.2. – Mediator H4.

4.3.1. Overview and summary of hypotheses testing:

Overview				
Independence	**Chi Squared**	**_p_ value**	**Cronbach´s Alpha**	**Hypothesis**
Channel integration → Omnichannel Strategy	20.121	.000*	.753**	H1 Supported
Digital Touchpoints → Omnichannel Strategy	11.965	.001*	.716**	H2 Supported
Correlation	**Correlation Coefficient**	**_p_ value**	-	-
Omnichannel → Consumer Decision Journey	.510	.000*	.743**	H3 Supported
Linear Regression Mediator	**Beta**	**_p_ value**	-	-
Omnichannel → Brand equity	.216	.000*	.730**	-
Omnichannel → Consumer Decision Journey → Brand Equity	.068	.528	-	H4 Supported
Table 4.17. – Overview of hypotheses				

*_p_ value < .0.05 = Significant
** Cronbach's Alpha > ,70 = Instrument reliable.

First, the value of the reliability was tested with a combination of the different items. All the combinations of constructs and hypothesis where all considered as reliable with a Cronbach's alpha

> .70 and allows testing the hypothesis. To proceed, a test was executed to see if Channel integration has a significant impact on Omnichannel strategy. The test results of a Chi Squared test, gave a *p* value < .001 which is significant, meaning a rejection of the null hypothesis and concludes that there exist a significant association between the two variables and hereby we accept H1. Followed by this, a test of digital touchpoints and omnichannel was executed. This was tested to see if there exist a positive relationship between digital touchpoints and the adoption of omnichannel strategy for luxury brands. The test results of a Chi squared test, gave a *p* value of .001 which is significant and means that we reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there exists significant relationship between digital touchpoints and the adoption of omnichannel for luxury brands. Furthermore, the results show that people who interacts more with digital touchpoints are more likely to buy luxury brands online, and hereby we accept H2. Next, a test was carried to see if the adoption of omnichannel has a significant impact on consumer decision journey of luxury brands. This was done by testing the correlation coefficient between the variables. The significant correlation coefficient value is 0.510 which is considered as a moderate positive correlation between omnichannel and consumer decision journey, thus a high-level of omnichannel adoption impacts the consumer decision journey. The *p* value < .001 concludes a rejecting of the null hypothesis meaning that the adoption of omnichannel has a significant impact on consumer decision journey for luxury brands, and hereby we accept H3. Lastly, a test was carried to see if omnichannel has a significant impact on brand equity with consumer decision journey as a mediator. First, we tested the correlation between omnichannel and brand equity, where an ANOVA test showed a significant regression between the two variables with *p* value < 0.001 and a beta weight of .216. Second, we added consumer decision journey to see if it acts as a mediator and re-ran the regression. Now, with two predictors there is also a significant *p* value = .002. The beta weight between the original predictor (omnichannel) changes from significant to *not* significant with a beta weight of .068 and *p* value of .528. Consumer decision journey gets a significant beta weight and a significant *p* value of .008 we can conclude that consumer decision journey is a mediator. This means that H4 is accepted.

By testing all hypotheses in SPSS using different methods, they were all accepted.

5. Discussion

In relation to the findings presented in chapter 4, a connection will be drawn to the concept of brand equity. This is based on the CBBE framework *(cf. 3.3.)* and includes the strengths of digital touchpoints. Also, the findings will be related to brand management where the creation of brand equity is discussed and how brands can utilize the elements. Furthermore, the findings will be compared to the expert interview and previous literature.

5.1. Findings in relation to Brand Equity.

The findings will be put in relation to brand equity through the CBBE model. The touchpoints will be explained in connection to their location in the model.

Based on the survey it is clear that luxury brands can use digital touchpoints to build brand equity. This can be done by strengthening brand- salience, performance, and imagery *(Keller, 2010),* which is the lower level of the model. The survey indicates that more than half *(Table 5.)* of the respondents buy luxury brands behalf on their past experience, which indicates loyalty. Also, the survey shows that in every level of the CBBE model *(Identity, Meaning, Response, Relationship),* a majority answered ´high degree´ in all the levels. This indicates that there exists a great level of brand equity for luxury brands. But the survey also indicated some interesting information about the use of digital touchpoints. It is important to state that the website is the overall most efficient touchpoint in all most every category of the interaction with the luxury brand, except for giving feedback and see interesting content *(Table 5.1).*

12 When I buy luxury brands I: (Several answers is possible)

	Respondents	Percent
Read reviews	74	71.8%
Make research offline	74	71.8%
Make research online	88	85.4%
Talk with friends and family	63	61.2%
Look at past experience	60	58.3%
Buy out of loyalty	50	48.5%

Table 5. – When I buy luxury brands I:

For what purpose do you use the online platforms? (Several answers is possible in each category) - Luxury brand website

	Respondents	Percent
Search for product information and portfolio	88	83.0%
Make purchase	91	85.8%
Get latest news of the brand	51	48.1%
Feel a part of the brand community	35	33.0%
Start conversation with the brand	38	35.8%
See interesting content	44	41.5%
Give feedback	35	33.0%
Dont use	2	1.9%

Table 5.1. – Purpose of using websites.

Luxury Brands can use digital touchpoints to build brand equity with strengthening brand Salience. The findings indicate that the respondents are highly using Facebook and Instagram to the gathering the latest information of the brand and to feel part of the brand community *(Table 5.2.),* compared to the other touchpoints. The continuous exposure of information and products available on social media such as Facebook and Instagram can trigger a problem recognition, and kickstart a decision-making process. Hereby, luxury brands should make sure to communicate their information and products on these touchpoints, and also be present all the time for the consumer to feel part of the community. This will strengthen the salience to brand equity in the minds of the consumers. When doing this, it is important the emphasize that any communication on these social media should be visualized with an authentic setting because consumers do not find traditional campaigns as relevant on social media campaigns *(Kapferer, Bastien, 2012).*

28 For what purpose do you use the online platforms? (Several answers is possible in each category)
- Facebook

	Respondents	Percent
Search for product information and portfolio	21	19.8%
Make purchase	1	0.9%
Get latest news of the brand	66	62.3%
Feel a part of the brand community	65	61.3%
Start conversation with the brand	58	54.7%
See interesting content	70	66.0%
Give feedback	35	33.0%
Dont use	15	14.2%

29 For what purpose do you use the online platforms? (Several answers is possible in each category)
- Instagram

	Respondents	Percent
Search for product information and portfolio	15	14.2%
Make purchase	3	2.8%
Get latest news of the brand	69	65.1%
Feel a part of the brand community	59	55.7%
Start conversation with the brand	50	47.2%
See interesting content	64	60.4%
Give feedback	23	21.7%
Dont use	12	11.3%

Table 5.2. – Purpose of using Facebook & Instagram.

Luxury brands can use digital touchpoints to build brand equity with strengthen brand Imagery. Here the findings also indicate that the respondents prefer Facebook and Instagram as touchpoints when they want to see interesting content from the luxury brands. The information they gather from Facebook and Instagram can be used to see if they identify themselves with the brand in sort of styles and situations where the products can be used. The imagery can thereby be strengthened by communication subjects about user profiles and usage of products in both touchpoints to increase brand equity in the consumer's mind. Again, it is important to emphasize that this communication should be visualized with the authentic setting because the consumer should be able to identify themselves with the content *(ibid)*.

When communication about brand performance and imagery on Facebook and Instagram with focus on relevant content, the luxury brands are able to successfully establish brand meaning that leads to a positive brand- judgement and feeling with the brand *(Keller, 2010)*. When the survey showing that

luxury brand websites are the most efficient touchpoint, especially in purchase, it would be smart to always provide the link to their website when posting content on Facebook and Instagram.

When strengthening Salience, Performance, and Imagery on touchpoints such as Facebook and Instagram, the luxury brands are able to build more brand equity. Also, Simon Mørks state in the interview, that especially social media is a very good tool to create relationships *(Appendix 4 - page 5, line 25)*. This statement can be connected with the findings showing that consumers are interested in connecting with the brand using Facebook and Instagram. This indicates that relevant brand created content on these media can build brand Resonance, thus Equity. The survey data show that a high number of respondents use social media and the internet when engaging with the brand *(Appendix 2 - table 21-27)*, and according to Keller *(2010)* active engagement creates equity. With the luxury brands touching on Salience, Performance, and Imagery, it will automatically provide an engagement with the luxury brand through its social media touchpoints.
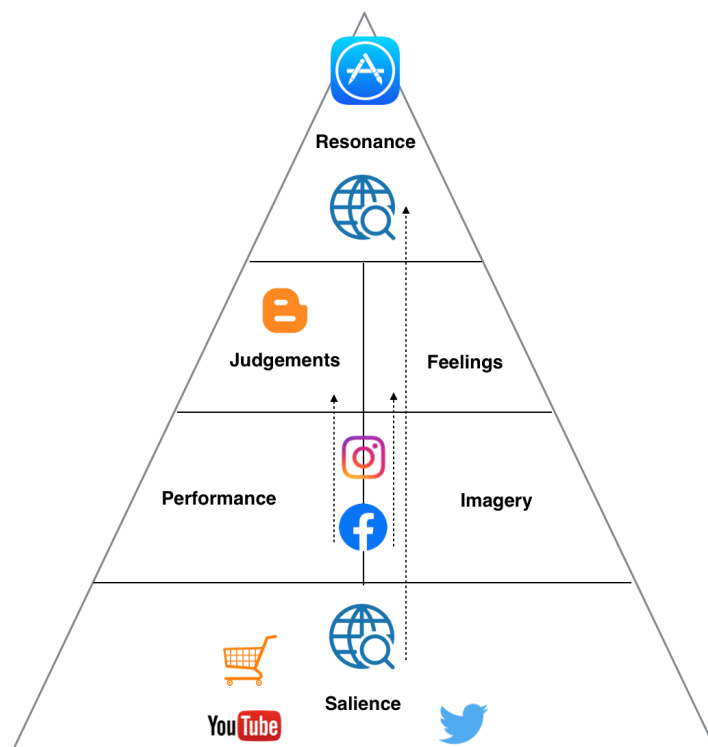
Figure 5. – Own creation inspired by
Kotler *(2010)*.

It is important that the touchpoints do not have a negative effect on the consumer experience with the luxury brand. The model above presents the different touchpoints and the level of the CBBE it purposes. The visual-intensive *(Facebook, Instagram)* touchpoints serve the purpose of building brand awareness as the above states, while the more information-intensive *(websites, blogs)* touchpoints are useful in the creation of positive reactions and loyalty.

The survey data show that luxury brands websites are the most powerful and used touchpoint, which Nielsen *(2017)* also points out. This touchpoint is used in all levels of the CBBE model. In the low levels of the model, the brands are able to create brand awareness through their websites. By investigating the luxury brands websites *(cf. 4.1.)* it was not easy to tell the difference between luxury websites and non-luxury. This can create confusion in the mind of the consumer and the luxury brands do not want to compete with non-luxury brands with significantly lower prices. All the websites had a simple design with some brands (Hermes, YSL) applying videos and music to their sites making them more notable. All of the brands are providing great content, but the task is to generate content that stands out in the consumer's mind.

As the luxury brand website is the most used touchpoint *(cf. 4.1.)*, it is also the touchpoint with the most influence to the CBBE model and extends from the bottom of the pyramid to the top. The luxury brand websites can also be used in order to create loyalty. The websites are not only an information or purchase tool but also a channel where customers can show their commitment towards their favorite brands. The brands can use their websites to redirect their customers to other touchpoints for them to share experiences after a purchase or information search. As the majority of the consumers have a set of favorite luxury brands *(cf. Table 4.5.)* it is important to keep them and be placed in the initial considerations of the consumers *(cf. 3.6.)*. The website is being used by almost every luxury brand investigated to track the customers with the option of creating personal accounts. This is a key element for the brands as they are able to provide a better experience. This element is also being highlighted by Harris *(2019)* who claims that artificial intelligence created with personal accounts is being used to improve the customer experience and meet their expectations. Furthermore, this element is being mentioned in the interview. Simon Mørk states that the use of online touchpoints enables the opportunity of gathering and save relevant data regarding the customers *(Appendix 4 - page 4, line 19)*. The luxury brands should adopt the element of having a 'live chat' function on their website to provide the customers with a personal shopping assistant further improve the experience. This feature is only being used by Prada and is according to the literature a key element for luxury brands *(cf. 3.6.)*.

YouTube and Twitter are channels not being used much according to the survey data. Hence, these platforms are located in the bottom of the CBBE model. All of the luxury brands investigated do have profiles on these platforms and are linked via their website. However, it should be mentioned that YouTube offers a great opportunity to create buzz and awareness by developing interesting videos and cheap exposure. The emergence of Facebook and Instagram where content sharing has become very easy could affect and be a factor of the little use of YouTube *(Table 5.3.)*.

How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Youtube

	Respondents	Percent
Never	48	44.9%
Rarely	22	20.6%
Sometimes	23	21.5%
Often	10	9.3%
Always	4	3.7%
Total	107	100.0%

Table 5.3. – Interaction on Youtube.

Blogs provide a great opportunity for the luxury brands as they are able to see other opinions about their brand. The survey data show that the respondents use Blogs to give and receive feedback on their products, which is creating word-of-mouth and can be more effective than actual content provided directly from the brands themselves. The use of Blogs among the respondents is low. However, the Blogs can be used in order to create positive brand judgements by collaborating with influential bloggers.

The impact of Social media communication and user-generated content available on Facebook, Instagram and blogs has a positive impact on brand awareness and brand loyalty and hereby it confirms the research by Schivinski and Dabrowski *(2015)*.

Apps have been created in order to increase loyalty by giving the consumers another way of connecting to the brand. Mostly, the apps simply allow the consumers to explore the luxury brands content from their website on a more mobile or tablet-friendly format. Over 60 percent of the respondents from the data state that they would like their favorite luxury brand to create an app. The app provides the element of easily given notifications when new products launch, or the brands are doing discounts or sales. 65 percent of the respondents would like to receive notifications with information related to their profile *(Table 5.4.)*.

Would you like your favorite luxury brand to: (Several anwers is possible) - Give notifications when products (news/sales) match your profile

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	67	65.7%
No	35	34.3%

Table 5.4. – Notifications.

The app offers the opportunity to create and maintain a close relationship between brands and customers. Therefore, this touchpoint is at the top level of the CBBE model and is a great opportunity for creating brand loyalty. With an app directly provided from the luxury brands, the triadic approach *(cf. 3.2.2.)* can strengthen the brand equity with brands communities created in the app, which provides interplays between consumer and the brand, as well as consumer to consumers. Here the luxury brands can also learn from the active users and gain useful knowledge to inspire marketing management. In this context, it is important to state that the brand can use these communities in a more observing role, where they can listen and react to constructs of unfavorable information. By doing this they are able to maintain a luxury image and somewhat ensure long term brand equity.

All of the luxury brands investigated offers e-commerce linked to their website *(cf. Table 4.)*. Only three of the brands are not being sold on a 3rd-party e-commerce site. The customers expect a consistent luxurious experience across all channels, hence all touchpoints of the consumer decision journey must contain this luxurious experience. The luxury brands are not able to activate all the human's five senses online, and 85 percent of the respondents stated that these factors affect their online purchase intention in a negative way *(cf. 3.7.; Table 5.5.)*. Thus, causing problems for luxury brands. When consumers are unable to touch and feel a product, it is important that there exists trust in order to drive online purchases. The sales of luxury brands on e-commerce grow three times faster than the total luxury growth and are expected to reach €74 billion by 2025 *(cf. 3.7.)*. One of the major issues with e-commerce is the return policy, where more than 60 percent of the respondents stated this factor prevents them from buying online in some degree *(Table 5.6)*. By optimizing the return policy, the luxury brands can enhance the senses of smell and touch, which is one of the parts missing in e-commerce. This can reflect the total sales and increase relationships between brand and customer.

16 What prevents you from buying Luxury items online? If you have not bought luxury items online in the past, which barriers prevents you from doing so? Please state your answers of how much you agree from a scale from ´Strongly agree´ to ´Strongly disagree´ - The lack of touch and feel experience

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	28	26.4%
Medium degree	36	34.0%
N/A	6	5.7%
Somewhat degree	28	26.4%
Low degree	8	7.5%

Table 5.5. – Lack of touch and feel.

What prevents you from buying Luxury items online? If you have not bought luxury items online in the past, which barriers prevents you from doing so? Please state your answers of how much you agree from a scale from ´Strongly agree´ to ´Strongly disagree´ - Complications of returning the item

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	38	36.2%
Medium degree	26	24.8%
N/A	4	3.8%
Somewhat degree	25	23.8%
Low degree	12	11.4%

Table 5.6. – Complications of returning item.

Studies show that the consumer decision journey has become more accessible and continuing because of 'always on' touchpoints. Omnichannel has changed the decision journey with the consumer being exposed to several touchpoints anywhere at any time. This has made the consumer more complex in various dimensions stated by Carroll & Guzmán *(2015)*, where the consumers have become more knowledgeable, demanding and empowered. Simon Mørk states in the interview that the consumers have changed in their behavior, which has led to more power than earlier. Furthermore, he says that the consumer is more discerning about which, where and what products they want leading to higher expectations towards the products and brands *(Appendix 4 - page 2, line 9)*. When testing H3, the findings support the above statements and concluded that the adoption of omnichannel has a significant impact on the consumer decision journey *(cf. 5.1.)*. It is important for the luxury brands to be assessable both online and offline in the omnichannel experience as the consumer can shift between offline and online touchpoints. The interactions become a seamless experience *(cf. Figure 3.8.)*, which is the heart of omnichannel.

When looking at channel integration, the objective is to create a better experience for the consumers. This will lead to an increase in customer loyalty and ensuring a high customer retention rate *(cf. 3.1.2)*. Luxury needs to have a marketing campaign through a well-coordinated use of different methods of promotion. All these methods should strengthen each other. According to Simon, the majority of brands already has a channel, and based on this they add/create more channels in the same concept, to make sure that there exists a connection between them *(Appendix 4 - page 3, line 5)*. IMC is of major importance regarding omnichannel, as all the different communication tools should be connected inside the same strategy to create synergy. Nearly 60 percent of the respondents from the survey, states that they see integration between different media *(Table 5.7.)*. Furthermore, the survey data shows that 15 percent of the respondents would like an improvement in channel integration *(Table 5.8.)*. With great channel integration, it increases the opportunities for luxury brands to create and maintain the relationship with the customer. The modern customer will start their journey anywhere, anytime, and from any device. When a brand understands which channel the customer prefers, they will be able to provide a more satisfactory and consistent experience *(Melero et al., 2016)*. The result from the brands is to offer customers what they want in each stage of the buying process. Effective IMC strategy is a key element for omnichannel, as it offers the opportunity to create relationships and engagement. Customer engagement can according to Kurvykaite et al., *(2014)* create brand equity.

[38]Do you see an integration between the luxury brands different online media? (Same products, prices, messages and designs etc.)

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	60	58.3%
No	22	21.4%
Dont know	21	20.4%

Table 5.7. – Integration between online media.

[40]What would you like from your favorite luxury brands to improve in their online presence? (Several answers is possible)

	Respondents	Percent
More product info	28	27.2%
Personalized service	38	36.9%
Personalized content	47	45.6%
Better relationship to the brand	53	51.5%
Better delivery and return policy	74	71.8%
Improved customer assistance (live chat etc.)	27	26.2%
Better social media presence	18	17.5%
Better integration of channels (Different channels match each other in content, look, updates etc.)	15	14.6%
Click & Collect (Buy online and collect in physical store)	47	45.6%
The opportunity to see which store have the specific product in store/stock	26	25.2%

Table 5.8. – Online improvement.

6. Conclusion

The last part of the thesis has the purpose of illumination the major findings of the research. The problem statement developed for this project will be answered. It is intended to remind the reader of what they have just read and will not present any new findings. There will not be concluded on the individual theories, but the thesis as a unity.

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the impact of omnichannel on the consumer decision journey and its effect on brand equity for luxury brands, with the use of online touchpoints. In order to get a detailed view of the problem statement, several research questions have thus been answered. The research questions contain the impact online touchpoints has on brand equity, and how omnichannel change the consumer decision journey. Furthermore, the thesis explores the impact of omnichannel on brand equity. This understanding of the elements above was pursued by using a clear comprehension of items of omnichannel, digital touchpoints, consumer decision journey, and brand equity, the research was approached with functionalism and system theory as the main school.

This study contributes to the concept of omnichannel by testing the effect on different elements. Based on the examination of previous literature with the same field of research, a conceptual model was developed with the purpose of providing the answers to the research questions. The results from the test shows that channel integration and digital touchpoints both have a positive relationship to omnichannel. The results show that people who interact more with digital touchpoints are more likely to buy luxury brands online, compared to those who do not interact through digital touchpoints. With the findings confirming that online touchpoints and channel integration are positively related to omnichannel, the investigation continued to explore omnichannel, consumer decision journey and brand equity.

Omnichannel has changed the consumer decision journey as the modern consumer is being exposed to several touchpoints everywhere at any time. The consumer is being more discerning regarding the expectations towards the products and brands. The findings from the study conclude that the adoption of omnichannel has a significant impact on the consumer decision journey and supports previous studies and statements from an expert. When luxury brands understand the journey of their customers, they have a much greater chance of reaching them in the right place, at the right time, with the right message. Knowing that digital touchpoints are positively related to omnichannel, and omnichannel impacts the consumer decision journey for luxury brands, it indicates that they cannot hesitate to

participate in the online digital world. This is though assumptions of luxury consumers online buying luxury brands in-store but is rejected based on a study by Accenture.

Consumer based brand equity is used in this thesis, and the concept is based on the assumption that the power of the brand lies in the heart and minds of the consumers. Brand equity is important to consider when creating an omnichannel experience for luxury brands. The research presents that the adoption of omnichannel builds brand equity for luxury brands, with the consumer decision journey as a mediator. The findings first indicate that there is a relationship between a high level of omnichannel and a high level of brand equity. These relationships are affected by the consumer decision journey, which is tested to act as a mediator and has already been proven to have a significant connection to omnichannel. In the omnichannel environment and the use of online channels, brand trust is becoming important and is developed from a positive brand experience which leads to brand loyalty. These results conclude that a better adoption of omnichannel and the knowledge of the change in the consumer decision journey should be followed by an increase in customer based brand equity.

The thesis helps to provide insights and knowledge for luxury brands to adopt an omnichannel approach of integrated channels and digital touchpoints, with the purpose of increasing brand equity. Furthermore, it provides a contribution to the luxury industry with knowledge of the change in the consumer decision journey.

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8. Appendix

Year	Author	Purpose	Country/Orgion	Data collection method	Keywords	Findings	Additional Comments
2014	Klaus Heine, Benjamin Berghaus	The purpose of this study is to investigate how to tackle the digital luxury brand-consumer touchpoints	China & Switzerland	Survey	Omnichannel, brand equity, consumer decision journey	The findings of this study show some major lessons and recommendations regarding how to tacle the digital channels successfully. The paper provide luxury marketer with an overview of the major digital luxury brand-consumer touchpoints and corresponding digital working areas.	Objective
2014	Edwin van Bommel, David Edelman, Kelly Ungerman	The purpose of this study is to investigate how to digitizing the consumer decision journey	The Netherlands & USA	Literature review	Omnichannel, brand equity, consumer decision journey	The findings of this study show that data driven activities must be supported by an organiztion that has the right people, tools, and processes.	Subjective
2014	Gian M. Fulgoni	The purpose of this study is to investigate how digital has transformed the way consumer makes purching decisions.	USA	Journal	Omnichannel, brand equity, consumer decision journey	The findings reveal that researchers must gather information about their customers in order to provide them with relecant content online. This should be done to create an effective marketing plan.	Subjective
2018	Niklas Barwitz, Peter Maas	The purpose of this study is to gather knowledge about the omnichannel customer decision journey.	Switzerland	Interview	Omnichannel, brand equity, consumer decision journey	The findings reveal an understanding of the consumers interaction choices. This is indication that omnichannel users expect a unified experience and their underlying reason for interaction choices.	Subjective
2011	Jaehee Jung, Dong Shen	The purpose of the study is to invistigate the brand equity of luxury fashion brands among chinese and U.S young female consumers	China & USA	Literature review	Brand equity, Omnichannel, consumer decision journey	The findings of the study show that among the selected cultural factors, power distance and status consumption are the two most important cultural cariables that commonly affect brand equity of luxury fashion brands across the two countries	Objective
2017	Elizabeth Manser Payne, James W. Peltier, Victor A. Barger	This paper proposes an integrated marketing communications framework for understanding how disparate customer touchpoints impact consumer engagement and profitability in an omni-channel environment, and reveals that emergence of omni-channel marketing is breaking down the silos across available consumer-brand touchpoints.	USA	Literature review	omni-channel, brand equity, consumer decesion journey	Five major research areas were identified: research that better links omni-channel and IMC theory and practice; conceptual and empirical research that helps operationalize the consumer-brand engagement construct, including its antecedents and consequences; Build understanding of off- and on-line consumer-brand touchpoints and how they may enhance engagement and profitability; how omni-channel IMC best monetizes buyer–seller relationships; and omni-channel IMC in other consumer decision contexts	Objective
2017	Tasnim M Taufique Hossain, Shahriar Akter, Uraiporn Kattiyapornpong, Samuel Fosso Wamba	The purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of integration quality on consumer equity in data driven omnichannel services markeing,	Austraila & France	Survey	Omnichannel, brand equity, consumer decision journey	The findings of this study state customer equity as an important outcome of data-driven omnichannel services marketing.	Subjective
2018	Antonio Achille, Sophie Marchessou, Nathalie Remy	The purpose of this study is to investigate how luxury brands are performing in an online digital world. The look at the future of the luxury industry with the focus on online channels.	USA	Survey	Omnichannel, brand equity, consumer decision journey	The findings show numbers on the furture of the digital industry within the luxury market. How companies must create a seamless experince for the customers who expect the same quality online as they do in store.	Objective
2018	Xiao-Kuang Shen, Yang-Jun Li, Yongqiang Sun, Nan Wang	The purpose of this study is to investigate omnichannel service usage by focusing on both objectbased belief and customer behavioral beliefs. Channel integration quality significantly affected percieved fluenzy across different channels.	China	Literature review	Omnichannel, channel integration	Cross-channel transition is reflected in omnichannel technology attributes. The results indicate that channel integration quality four factors together explain a very large proportion of the cariance in pervieced fluency, and all dimensions positively and significantly affected the perceived fluency.	Objective
2017	Yang Li, Hefu Liu, Eric T.K. Lim, Jie Mein Goh, Feng Yang, Matthew K.O. Lee	The purpose of this study is to investigate customer's reaction to cross-channel integration in omnichannel retailing. The mediating roles of retailer uncertainty, identity attractiveness and switching costs.	China, Australia, Canada & Hong Kong	Survey	Omnichannel, consumer decision-journey	The findings show relationship marketing that position CCI as service investments that can aid retailers in retaining customers by generating trust as well as cultivating the latter's dedication- and constraint-based motivations. This study also responds to the call of scholars for empirical research to unravel the relationship between service investments and competitive advantage.	Objective
2018	Filip Höcker, Carl-Oscar Sturén, Jacob Troedsson	The purpose of this study is to investigate cross-channel integration. The study aims to investigate the pratice of how MNCs can utilise their capabilities dynamically in order to make their cross-channel integration process more dynamic.	Sweden	Interview	Omni-channel, brand equity, consumer decesion-journey	The findings indicate that resources that can be connected to theory within dynamic capabilities play a central role in successful cross-channel integration. Furthermore, being up-to-date in terms of trends & development, having clear, change encouraging, company values and making sure that the employees are actively participating in the process is indicated to be of especial importance.	Subjective

Year	Authors	Purpose	Country	Method	Keywords	Findings	Type
2016	Shaofu Du, Li Wang, Li Hu	The purpose of this study is to investigate omnichannel management with consumers. The study focuses on the optimal pricing decision of omnichannel retailers with regard to consumers' disappointment aversion behavior.	China	Survey	Omni-channel, brand equity, consumer decesion-journey	The findings show that online selling purely may be an option for retailer in hetrogeneour DA market. Low-vakue DA reduces profit while benefits omnichannel retailers with physical showroom.	Objective
2015	Peter C. Verfoef, P.K. Kannan, J. Jeffrey Inman	The purpose of this study is to investigate the shift from multi-channel retailing to Omni-channel Retailing.	The Netherlands & USA	Survey	Omni-channel, brand equity, consumer decesion-journey	The findings of this study shows that multichannel retailing is moving to omnichannel. This is an important development in retailing and will affect how retailers operate-	Objective
2010	Jie Zhang, Paul W. Farris, John W. Irvin, Tarun Kushwaha, Thomas J. Steenburgh, Barton A. Weitz	The purpose of this study is to investigate integrated multichannel retailing strategies.	USA	literature review	Omnichannel, decision journey, brand equity	The findings indicate that there has been a period of rapid growth in the pratice of integrated ,ultichannel retailing, mirroring the rise of the Internet as a nearly ubiquitous tool firms use to interact with their customers.	Objective
2006	Scott A. Neslin, Dhruv Grewal, Robert Leghorn, Venkatesh Shankar, Marije L. Teerling, Jacquelyn S. Thomas, Peter C. Verfoef	The purpose of this study is to investigate challenges and opportuniteis in multichannel customer management.	USA	Literature review	brand equity, omnichannel, consumer decision journey	The findings reveal five key challenges parcitioners face in multichannel customer management. The five challenges identified is: (1) data integration, (2) understanding customer behavior, (3) channel evaluation, (4) allocation resources across channels, and (5) corrdination channel strategies.	Subjective
2014	Sebastian van Baal	The purpose of this study is to investigate how retailers should harmonize marketing variables across their distribution channels. It an investigation of cross-channel effects in multi-channel retailing.	Germany	Literature review	omni-channel, consumer decision journey, brand equity	The findings show that purchases without cross-channel information gathering, there can be no cross-channel customer retention, and subjects without cross-channel information gathering are less likley to be able to gauge harmonization validy. Correlations have been calculated.	Objective
2014	Ravi Bhalla	The purpose of this study is to investigate the omnichannel customer experince. Also, it illuminates how the omnichannel experince differ from the multichannel experince.	USA	Literature review	omni channel, consumer decision journey, brand equity	The findings reveal that the multichannel experince is moving towards an omnichannel experince with differet channels integrating. This is happning as the internet is developing rapitly.	Subjective
2017	Simone Aiolfi, Edoardo Sabbadin	The purpose of this study is to investigate the new paradigm of the omnichannel retailing. This is including key drivers, new challenges and potential outcomes resulting form the adoption of an omnichannel approach.	Italy	Literature review	omni-channel, brand equity, consumer decision journey	The findings reveal that successful omnichannel retailers will be able to engage their omnichannel customers during the entire customer journey by addressing the right message through the touchpoint to the right audience. A succesfull omnichannel strategy will result in long-term omnichannel customer loyality.	Objective
2005	Elliot Bendoly, James D. Bolcher, Kurt M. Bretthauer, Shanker Krishnan, M. A. Venkataramanan	The purpose of this study is to investigate the integration of online and in-store capabilities and Customer retention. Several hypothesis have been stated and answered.	USA	Survey	omni channel, consumer decision journey, brand equity	The findings of this study shows that multichannel firms should not neglect potential policies that simultaneously encourage the retention of customer who might disappointed by unavailability at their first channel choice.	Objective
2018	Shen, Xiao Liang, Li, Yang Jun, Sun, Yongqiang, Wang, Nan	The purpose of this study is to investigate channel integration quality. Furthermore, the study also investigates the perceived fluency and omnichannel service usage.	China	Survey	Omnichannel, brand equity, consumer decision journey	The findings proposes a research model, where channel integration quality is identified as an object-based belief. Also, it proposes that percieved fluency is labeled as a behavioral belief, to adress unique and fundamental concerns of omnichannel service.	Objective
2015	Iquácel Melero, F. Javier Sese, Peter C. Verhoef	The purpose of this study is to investigate the customer experince in an omnichannel enviroment.	Netherlands & Spain	Literature review	Omni channel, consumer decision journey, brand equity	This paper attempted to offer guideline about how firms can manage all touchpoints across all channels in an integrated manner in order to provide a superior customer experince and hereby can gain a competitive edge. Firms must become customer centric. Companies have to inify all touchpoints across all channels, which is a challenge for most brands.	Objective
2018	Zach W.Y. Lee, Tommy K.H. Chan, Alain Yee-Loong Chong, Dimple R. Thadani	The purpose of this study is to investigate customer engagement through omnichannel. How the effect of channel integration have an impact on the quality.	United Kingdom & China	Survey	omni channel, consumer decision journey, brand equity	The study illuminates insights into how channel integration quality enhances customer engagment with omnichannel.	Objective
2017	Martijn Martens, Karel Demeester, Pierre-Alexandre Billet, Silvie Vanhout, Thierry Moubax	The purpose of this paper is to investigate the importance of brand equity in an omnichannel world.	Belgium	Literature review	Omnichannel, brand equity, consumer decision-journey	The findings proposes that companies should be (1) accessible, (2) test and mesure what channels that works, (3) ensure a seamless checkout, and (4) integrate online and offline experince.	Subjective
2001	Albert M. Muniz Jr., Thomas C. O´Guinn	The purpose of this paper is to critically evaluate a theoretical concept of brand communites.	USA	Literature review	Brand equity, omnichannel, consumer decision journey	The paper emphasizes the impat of the internet on brand communites. Brand communites can positively affect customer buying behavior and brand communites are a strong medium through which customers share and exchange information.	Objective

2014	Rita Kuvykaite, Zaneta Piligrimiene	The purpose of this study is to investigate the consumer engagement into brand equity creation.	Letvia	Literature review	Brand equity, consumer decision journey, omnichannel	The study state that it is important to understand the consumer's role in brand value creation. Consumers that are engaged experince bigger emotional, functional and social value. More positive associations for the consumers leads to increased brand loyalty and brand equity.	Subjective
2017	Liz Manser Payne, James Warren Peltier, Victor A. Barger	In this study the authors showcase an integrated marketing communications (IMC) framework for understanding how disparate customer touchpoints impact consumer engagement and profitability in an omnichannel environment.	USA	Literature review	Omni channel, consumer decision journey, brand equity	The findings show different major research areas. Better links between omnichannel and IMC theory and pratice. Understanding of off and online consumer brand touchpoints and how they may enhance engagement and profitability.	Objective
2010	Kevin Lane Keller	The purpose of this study is to investigate brand equity management in a multichannel, multimedia retail enviroment	USA	Literature review	Brand equity, consumer decision journey, omnichannel	This study states that marketers must design and implement an integrated channel and communications strategy that maximizes short-run sales and long run brand equity	Subjective
2008	Umut Konus, Peter C. Verhoef, Scott A. Neslin	The purpose of this study is to investigate multichannel shopper segments and their covariates.	Netherlands & USA	Survey	Omni channel, consumer decision journey, brand equity	The findings show strong evidence of a multichannel enthusiasts segment that consist of consumers whi have positive attitudes toward all channels.	Objective
2001	Boonghee Yoo, Naveen Donthu	The purpose of this study is to investigate a multidimensional consumer-based brand qeuity scale.	USA	Literature review	Omni channel, consumer decision journey, brand equity	The restuls show a multistep study to develop and validate a multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale.	Objective
2010	Utpal M. Dholakia, Barbara E. Kahn, Randy Reeves, Aric Rindfleish, David Stewart, Earl Taylor	The purpose of this study is to investigate the consumer behavior in a multichannel multimedia retail enviroment.	USA	Literature review	consumer decision journey, omnichannel, brand equity	The results show that when retailing channels continue to expand, retail managers are faced with the prospects and problem associated with channel proliferation and channel migration among their customer base. Also, retailers are faced with the challenge of encouraging consumers to migrate from high cost lower valued channels to lower cost, higher valued channels.	Objective
2016	Gopal Das	The purpose of this study is to examine the atencendts and consequences of trust in online shopping.	USA	Survey	Omnichannel, brand equity, consumer decision journey	The findings reveal that e-tailer awarness e-tailer associations and e-tailer percieved quality is found as atecedents of trust in online shopping.	Objective
2015	Gurjeet Kaur Sahi	The purpose of this study is to investigate and understand the role played by trusting beliefs when engaging with an online retailer.	India	Sample	Brand equity, omnichannel, consumer decision journey	The findings of this study reveal that trusting beliefs are negatively influenced by an uncertainty avoidance culture and positively influenced by a firms image and customers price awareness.	Subjective
2016	Imran Khan	The purpose of this study is to examine the finluence of online brand experince on e-brand trust and e-brand loyalty.	India	Survey	Brand equity, omnichannel, consumer decision journey	The findings from this study comfirms the impact of e-tail brand experince on e-brand trust and e-brand loyalty. Also, is revealed that male become more loyal towards e-tail brands when they recieved a positive e-tail brand experinces.	Objective
2010	Vishag Badrinarayanan, Enrique P. Becerra, Chung-Hyun Kim, Sreedhar Madhavaram	The purpose of this study is to investigate the purchase intentions in online stores of multichannel retailers.	USA	Survey	omni channel, consumer decision journey, brand equity	The findings of this study show that online stores are likely to be influenced by shoppers attidudes and trust beliefs that are carried over from the multichannel retailers phusical store.	Objective
2010	Kim Soyoung, Christie Jones	The purpose of this study is to investigate retail brand trust and website quality on online apparel shopping intention	USA	Survey	Brand equity, omni-channel, consumer decision journey	The findings of this study suggest that the customers offline attitude in the from of trust in the retail brand and offline behaviour in the from of patronage towards the retailers traditional store influence the customer's intention to shop at the retailers website.	Objective
2001	George Balabanis, Nina Reynolds	The purpose of this study is to investigate the consumers attitude towards multichannel retailers. The role of involvment, brand attitude and visit duration.	United Kingdom	Survey	Omnichannel, brand equity, consumer decision-journey	The findings of this study show that eletronic shopping sites owned by multichannel retailers may be extented to the other types of sites. Brand attitude and attitude towards websites is unlikley to be restricted to retailers.	
2005	Jihyun Kim, Jihye Park	The purpose of this study is to investigate the consumer shopping channel extension focusing on the attitude shift from offline to online store.	USA	Survey	brand equity, omnichannel, consumer decision journey	The findings of this study shows that the attitude toward offline stores was a significant predictor of attitude toward the online store.	Objective
2005	Sendy Farag, Tim Schwanen, Martin Fijst, Jan Faber	The purpose of this study is to investigate shopping online and/or in store. The purpose for this study is to create a structural equation model of the relationships between e-shopping and in-store shopping	Netherlands	Survey	omnichannel, consumer decision journey, brand equity	The findings show that people who frequently search online make more non-daily shopping trips, and that frequent in store shoppers are frequent online buyers.	Objective
2017	Angelica Blom, Fredrik Lange, Ronald L. Hess jr	The purpose of this paper is to examine the effects of consumers digital shopping traces when designing promotions on purchase behavior and brand image.	USA & Sweden	Survey	Omnichannel, consumer decision behavior	The paper shows that that omnichannel retailing will have a positive effect on performance and experience for both utilitarian and hedonic products.	Objective

2016	Emma Juaneda-Ayensa, Ana Mosquera, Yolanda Sierra Murillo	The purpose of this study the omnichannel customer behavior.	USA	Survey	omni channel, consumer decision journey, brand equity	The study show that in-store techonology has to be in focus when creating a new integrated customer experince. The experince has to be ejoyable and interesting in order to ensure that innovative customers percieved that the new omnichannel stores facilite and expedite their shopping journey.	Objective
2014	Dennis Herhausen, Jochen Binder, Marcus Schoegel, Andreas Herrmann	The purpose of this study is to investigate integrating bricks with clicks: retailer-level and channel-level outcomes of online-offline channel integration	Switzerland & Germany	Survey	Omni-channel, brand equity, consumer decision journey	The results of this study provide converging evidence and show that OI leads to a competitive advantage and channel synergies rather than channel canibalization.	Objective
2014	Wojciech Piotrowicz, Richard Cuthbertson	The purpose of this study is to investigate the shift towards omnichannel retailing	United Kingdom	literature review	Omni-channel, brand equity, consumer decesion-journey	The paper states that the increasting use of mobile devices and social networks makes the traditional online-physical channel dichotomy obsolete, as the lines between channels are blurred.	Objective
2018	Marta Frasquet, Marco Ieva, Cristina Ziliani	The purpose of this study is to understand the complaint channel usage in multichannel retailing.	Spain & Italy	Survey	Omni-channel, brand equity, consumer decesion-journey	The findings showed different findings devided into several groups. Heavy multichannel complainer are more likely to use the mobile app for purchasing than all the other segments.	Objective

1 Gender

	Respondents	Percent
Female	48	45.3%
Male	58	54.7%
Total	106	100.0%

2 Age

	Respondents	Percent
10-20	13	12.5%
20-30	58	55.8%
30-40	15	14.4%
40-50	14	13.5%
above 50	4	3.8%
Total	104	100.0%

3 Nationality

	Respondents	Percent
Austria	0	0.0%
Croatia	0	0.0%
Czech Republic	0	0.0%
Denmark	76	73.1%
Finland	0	0.0%
France	0	0.0%
Germany	1	1.0%
Italy	0	0.0%
Japan	0	0.0%
Norway	3	2.9%
Poland	0	0.0%
Portugal	0	0.0%
Slovakia	0	0.0%
Spain	0	0.0%
Sweden	20	19.2%
Switzerland	0	0.0%
United Kingdom	0	0.0%
USA	0	0.0%
China	0	0.0%
Other	4	3.8%
Total	104	100.0%

4 Do you have a set of favorite luxury brands or do you switch from time to time?

	Respondents	Percent
Set of favorite	73	68.2%
Switch from time to time	34	31.8%
Total	107	100.0%

5 Would you recommend your favorite luxury brand to friends and family?

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	88	85.4%

	Respondents	Percent
No	15	14.6%
Total	103	100.0%

6 When buying a luxury brand in what degree do you look at following? - The brand name, logo, symbol

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	53	51.5%
Medium degree	22	21.4%
N/A	2	1.9%
Somewhat degree	16	15.5%
Low degree	10	9.7%
Total	103	100.0%

7 When buying a luxury brand in what degree do you look at following? - How the products perform (Does it meet your expectations)

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	55	53.4%
Medium degree	28	27.2%
N/A	1	1.0%
Somewhat degree	12	11.7%
Low degree	8	7.8%
Total	103	100.0%

8 When buying a luxury brand in what degree do you look at following? - Who is using the brand (e.g. celebs, rolemodels, friends etc.)

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	42	40.8%
Medium degree	20	19.4%
N/A	5	4.9%
Somewhat degree	20	19.4%
Low degree	17	16.5%
Total	103	100.0%

9 When buying a luxury brand in what degree do you look at following? - How other people judge the brand and its product

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	42	40.8%
Medium degree	24	23.3%
N/A	4	3.9%
Somewhat degree	21	20.4%
Low degree	16	15.5%
Total	103	100.0%

10 When buying a luxury brand in what degree do you look at following? - Personal satisfaction and ´show off´

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	45	43.7%
Medium degree	22	21.4%

	Respondents	Percent
N/A	3	2.9%
Somewhat degree	19	18.4%
Low degree	15	14.6%
Total	103	100.0%

11 When buying a luxury brand in what degree do you look at following? - Personal attachment to the brand (loyalty)

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	47	45.6%
Medium degree	28	27.2%
N/A	2	1.9%
Somewhat degree	19	18.4%
Low degree	10	9.7%
Total	103	100.0%

12 When I buy luxury brands I: (Several answers is possible)

	Respondents	Percent
Read reviews	74	71.8%
Make research offline	74	71.8%
Make research online	88	85.4%
Talk with friends and family	63	61.2%
Look at past experience	60	58.3%
Buy out of loyalty	50	48.5%
Total	103	100.0%

13 Have you purchased luxury items online?

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	92	86.0%
No	15	14.0%
Total	107	100.0%

14 What prevents you from buying Luxury items online? If you have not bought luxury items online in the past, which barriers prevents you from doing so? Please state your answers of how much you agree from a scale from ´Strongly agree´ to ´Strongly disagree´ - The risk of breach when entering credit card details

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	11	10.4%
Medium degree	7	6.6%
N/A	2	1.9%
Somewhat degree	7	6.6%
Low degree	79	74.5%
Total	106	100.0%

15 What prevents you from buying Luxury items online? If you have not bought luxury items online in the past, which barriers prevents you from doing so? Please state your answers of how much you agree from a scale from ´Strongly agree´ to ´Strongly disagree´ - I dont feel the same connection with the brand

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	24	23.1%
Medium degree	31	29.8%
N/A	6	5.8%
Somewhat degree	22	21.2%
Low degree	21	20.2%
Total	104	100.0%

16 What prevents you from buying Luxury items online? If you have not bought luxury items online in the past, which barriers prevents you from doing so? Please state your answers of how much you agree from a scale from ´Strongly agree´ to ´Strongly disagree´ - The lack of touch and feel experience

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	28	26.4%
Medium degree	36	34.0%
N/A	6	5.7%
Somewhat degree	28	26.4%
Low degree	8	7.5%
Total	106	100.0%

17 What prevents you from buying Luxury items online? If you have not bought luxury items online in the past, which barriers prevents you from doing so? Please state your answers of how much you agree from a scale from ´Strongly agree´ to ´Strongly disagree´ - Need/want help from a salesperson

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	20	18.9%
Medium degree	34	32.1%
N/A	10	9.4%
Somewhat degree	29	27.4%
Low degree	13	12.3%
Total	106	100.0%

18 What prevents you from buying Luxury items online? If you have not bought luxury items online in the past, which barriers prevents you from doing so? Please state your answers of how much you agree from a scale from ´Strongly agree´ to ´Strongly disagree´ - Want full in store shopping experience

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	30	28.3%
Medium degree	38	35.8%
N/A	5	4.7%
Somewhat degree	25	23.6%
Low degree	8	7.5%
Total	106	100.0%

19 What prevents you from buying Luxury items online? If you have not bought luxury items online in the past, which barriers prevents you from doing so? Please state your answers of how much you agree from a scale from ´Strongly agree´ to ´Strongly disagree´ - Complications of returning the item

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	38	36.2%
Medium degree	26	24.8%
N/A	4	3.8%
Somewhat degree	25	23.8%
Low degree	12	11.4%
Total	105	100.0%

20 What prevents you from buying Luxury items online? If you have not bought luxury items online in the past, which barriers prevents you from doing so? Please state your answers of how much you agree from a scale from ´Strongly agree´ to ´Strongly disagree´ - The Luxury brand do not have an online store

	Respondents	Percent
High degree	19	17.9%
Medium degree	23	21.7%
N/A	9	8.5%
Somewhat degree	21	19.8%
Low degree	34	32.1%
Total	106	100.0%

21 How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Facebook

	Respondents	Percent
Never	16	15.0%
Rarely	14	13.1%
Sometimes	14	13.1%
Often	48	44.9%
Always	15	14.0%
Total	107	100.0%

22 How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Instagram

	Respondents	Percent
Never	13	12.1%
Rarely	14	13.1%
Sometimes	16	15.0%
Often	49	45.8%
Always	15	14.0%
Total	107	100.0%

23 How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Twitter

	Respondents	Percent
Never	53	49.5%
Rarely	18	16.8%
Sometimes	21	19.6%
Often	11	10.3%
Always	4	3.7%
Total	107	100.0%

24 How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Youtube

	Respondents	Percent
Never	48	44.9%
Rarely	22	20.6%
Sometimes	23	21.5%
Often	10	9.3%
Always	4	3.7%
Total	107	100.0%

25 How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Luxury brand website

	Respondents	Percent
Never	6	5.6%
Rarely	5	4.7%
Sometimes	13	12.1%
Often	18	16.8%
Always	65	60.7%
Total	107	100.0%

26 How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Marketplace (Other websites who sell luxury brands)

	Respondents	Percent
Never	13	12.1%
Rarely	6	5.6%
Sometimes	12	11.2%
Often	33	30.8%
Always	43	40.2%
Total	107	100.0%

27 How often do you use the following online platforms to interact with the brand? - Blogs

	Respondents	Percent
Never	37	34.6%
Rarely	40	37.4%
Sometimes	17	15.9%
Often	10	9.3%
Always	3	2.8%
Total	107	100.0%

28 For what purpose do you use the online platforms? (Several answers is possible in each category) - Facebook

	Respondents	Percent
Search for product information and portfolio	21	19.8%
Make purchase	1	0.9%
Get latest news of the brand	66	62.3%
Feel a part of the brand community	65	61.3%
Start conversation with the brand	58	54.7%
See interesting content	70	66.0%
Give feedback	35	33.0%
Dont use	15	14.2%

	Total	106	100.0%

29 For what purpose do you use the online platforms? (Several answers is possible in each category) - Instagram

	Respondents	Percent
Search for product information and portfolio	15	14.2%
Make purchase	3	2.8%
Get latest news of the brand	69	65.1%
Feel a part of the brand community	59	55.7%
Start conversation with the brand	50	47.2%
See interesting content	64	60.4%
Give feedback	23	21.7%
Dont use	12	11.3%
Total	106	100.0%

30 For what purpose do you use the online platforms? (Several answers is possible in each category) - Twitter

	Respondents	Percent
Search for product information and portfolio	3	2.8%
Make purchase	2	1.9%
Get latest news of the brand	18	17.0%
Feel a part of the brand community	12	11.3%
Start conversation with the brand	11	10.4%
See interesting content	14	13.2%
Give feedback	6	5.7%
Dont use	75	70.8%
Total	106	100.0%

31 For what purpose do you use the online platforms? (Several answers is possible in each category) - Youtube

	Respondents	Percent
Search for product information and portfolio	6	5.7%
Make purchase	0	0.0%
Get latest news of the brand	10	9.4%
Feel a part of the brand community	10	9.4%
Start conversation with the brand	4	3.8%
See interesting content	29	27.4%
Give feedback	2	1.9%
Dont use	64	60.4%
Total	106	100.0%

32 For what purpose do you use the online platforms? (Several answers is possible in each category) - Luxury brand website

	Respondents	Percent
Search for product information and portfolio	88	83.0%
Make purchase	91	85.8%
Get latest news of the brand	51	48.1%
Feel a part of the brand community	35	33.0%

	Respondents	Percent
Start conversation with the brand	38	35.8%
See interesting content	44	41.5%
Give feedback	35	33.0%
Dont use	2	1.9%
Total	106	100.0%

33 For what purpose do you use the online platforms? (Several answers is possible in each category) - Blogs

	Respondents	Percent
Search for product information and portfolio	6	5.7%
Make purchase	1	0.9%
Get latest news of the brand	10	9.4%
Feel a part of the brand community	16	15.1%
Start conversation with the brand	19	17.9%
See interesting content	18	17.0%
Give feedback	29	27.4%
Dont use	48	45.3%
Total	106	100.0%

34 For what purpose do you use the online platforms? (Several answers is possible in each category) - Marketplace (Other websites who sell luxury brands)

	Respondents	Percent
Search for product information and portfolio	81	75.7%
Make purchase	87	81.3%
Get latest news of the brand	9	8.4%
Feel a part of the brand community	0	0.0%
Start conversation with the brand	0	0.0%
See interesting content	6	5.6%
Give feedback	2	1.9%
Dont use	10	9.3%
Total	107	100.0%

35 Where do you prefer to buy luxury items?

	Respondents	Percent
Online	7	6.5%
In store	42	39.3%
Indifferent	42	39.3%
Depends on the product	16	15.0%
Total	107	100.0%

36 I consider buying luxury brands based on: (Several answers is possible)

	Respondents	Percent
The Internet	34	31.8%
Social Media (Facebook, instagram, blogs tec.)	13	12.1%
Adds (Tv, Magazines, billboards etc.)	7	6.5%
Influencers	6	5.6%
Past experience	47	43.9%
Total	107	100.0%

37 Are you happy with the online experience provided by your favorite luxury brand? (Website, Social Media, Information etc.)

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	49	45.8%
In some degree	47	43.9%
No	9	8.4%
Dont know	2	1.9%
Total	107	100.0%

38 Do you see an integration between the luxury brands different online media? (Same products, prices, messages and designs etc.)

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	60	58.3%
No	22	21.4%
Dont know	21	20.4%
Total	103	100.0%

39 Do you think that the online experience match the brand and its physical store?

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	42	39.6%
Mostly	50	47.2%
No	14	13.2%
Total	106	100.0%

40 What would you like from your favorite luxury brands to improve in their online presence? (Several answers is possible)

	Respondents	Percent
More product info	28	27.2%
Personalized service	38	36.9%
Personalized content	47	45.6%
Better relationship to the brand	53	51.5%
Better delivery and return policy	74	71.8%
Improved customer assistance (live chat etc.)	27	26.2%
Better social media presence	18	17.5%
Better integration of channels (Different channels match each other in content, look, updates etc.)	15	14.6%
Click & Collect (Buy online and collect in physical store)	47	45.6%
The opportunity to see which store have the specific product in store/stock	26	25.2%
Total	103	100.0%

41 Would you like your favorite luxury brand to: (Several anwers is possible) - Create a brand app

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	64	62.7%
No	38	37.3%
Total	102	100.0%

42 Would you like your favorite luxury brand to: (Several anwers is possible) - Create a personalized profile for each customer

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	65	63.7%
No	38	37.3%
Total	102	100.0%

43 Would you like your favorite luxury brand to: (Several anwers is possible) - Give notifications when products (news/sales) match your profile

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	67	65.7%
No	35	34.3%
Total	102	100.0%

44 Would you like your favorite luxury brand to: (Several anwers is possible) - Monthly membership (paid) with special benefits such as discounts, events, customization, gifts etc.

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	57	55.9%
No	45	44.1%
Total	102	100.0%

45 Would you like your favorite luxury brand to: (Several anwers is possible) - Create a virtual image of yourself with the product

	Respondents	Percent
Yes	77	75.5%
No	25	24.5%
Total	102	100.0%

46 How would you feel about luxury brands having a profile of you and your shopping pattern, history and taste in order for them to identify you as soon as you step into their store and give personalized service experience?

	Respondents	Percent
I would like that	56	52.3%
I would not like that	33	30.8%
I am not sure	18	16.8%
Total	107	100.0%

47 Overall Status

	Respondents	Percent
New	0	0.0%
Distributed	103	49.0%
Partially Complete	3	1.4%
Complete	104	49.5%
Rejected	0	0.0%
Total	210	100.0%

Hypothesis 1

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error[a]	Approximate T[b]	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	,434			,000
	Cramer's V	,434			,000
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	,434	,098	4,931	,000[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	,434	,098	4,931	,000[c]
N of Valid Cases		107			

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20,121[a]	1	,000		
Continuity Correction[b]	17,744	1	,000		
Likelihood Ratio	18,423	1	,000		
Fisher's Exact Test				,000	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	19,933	1	,000		
N of Valid Cases	107				

a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5,79.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Integrated marketing channels * Omnichannel Crosstabulation

			Omnichannel		
			Low	High	Total
Integrated marketing channels	low	Count	14	17	31
		Expected Count	5,8	25,2	31,0
		% within Integrated marketing channels	45,2%	54,8%	100,0%
	High	Count	6	70	76
		Expected Count	14,2	61,8	76,0
		% within Integrated marketing channels	7,9%	92,1%	100,0%
Total		Count	20	87	107
		Expected Count	20,0	87,0	107,0
		% within Integrated marketing channels	18,7%	81,3%	100,0%

Hypothesis 2

Choice * Yes_No Crosstabulation

			Yes_No		
			Yes	No	Total
Choice	Often	Count	161	18	179
		Expected Count	148,6	30,4	179,0
		% within Choice	89,9%	10,1%	100,0%
	Never	Count	142	44	186
		Expected Count	154,4	31,6	186,0
		% within Choice	76,3%	23,7%	100,0%
Total		Count	303	62	365
		Expected Count	303,0	62,0	365,0
		% within Choice	83,0%	17,0%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2–sided)	Exact Sig. (2–sided)	Exact Sig. (1–sided)
Pearson Chi–Square	11,965[a]	1	,001		
Continuity Correction[b]	11,020	1	,001		
Likelihood Ratio	12,306	1	,000		
Fisher's Exact Test				,001	,000
Linear–by–Linear Association	11,932	1	,001		
N of Valid Cases	365				

a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 30,41.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Hypothesis 3:

Correlations

			Customer Decision Journey	Omnichannel
Spearman's rho	Customer Decision Journey	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,510[**]
		Sig. (2–tailed)	.	,000
		N	107	107
	Omnichannel	Correlation Coefficient	,510[**]	1,000
		Sig. (2–tailed)	,000	.
		N	107	107

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

Hypothesis 4:

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4,235	1	4,235	36,980	,000[b]
	Residual	12,026	105	,115		
	Total	16,262	106			

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1,706	2	,853	6,371	,002[b]
	Residual	13,921	104	,134		
	Total	15,626	106			

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	1,295	,176		7,340	,000	,945	1,645			
	Omnichannel	,067	,105	,068	,633	,528	-,142	,276	,216	,062	,059
	Customer Decision Journey	,240	,089	,290	2,698	,008	,064	,417	,325	,256	,250

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Equity

Cronbach's Alpha Hypothesis 1

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,716	,738	12

Cronbach's Alpha Hypothesis 2

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,753	,657	8

Cronbach's Alpha Hypothesis 3

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,743	16

Cronbach's Alpha Hypothesis 4

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,730	17

Cronbach's Alpha Consumer decision journey

Reliability Statistics (Customer Decision Journey)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,705	,702	6

Cronbach's Alpha Brand Equity

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,813	8

Cronbach's Alpha Integrated Marketing Communications

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,744	7

Cronbach's Alpha Omnichannel

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,757	9

Online_pur	Happy_Onl	Match_Exp	Integration	Prefer_Buy	Consider_B	FacebookV	InstagramV	TwitterV4
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YoutubeV5	WebsiteV6	thirdpartV7	blogsV8	Brand_Salie	Brand_Perf	Brand_Imag	Brand_Judg	Brand_Feel
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0	3	0	0	2	2	2	2	2

Brand_Resc	Switch	Recommen	Theriskofbr	Idontfeelth	Thelackoftc	Needwanth	Wantfullin:	Complicati
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3	1	0	1	3	3	4	4	4
3	0	0	3	4	3	3	3	4
1	0	0	1	4	4	4	4	4
2	0	0	1	4	4	4	4	4
3	0	0	1	4	4	4	4	4
1	0	1	1	4	4	4	4	4
3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4	1	0	2	2	2	2	2	1
4	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	2
4	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	2
2	1	0	1	3	3	2	3	4

1	0	0	1	1	3	1	3	3
4	1	1	1	4	4	2	3	4
1	0	1	3	2	2	3	3	3
3	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	0	1	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
4	0	0	1	#NUL!	2	2	2	2
2	0	0	1	3	2	2	2	2
4	0	0	1	0	0	3	3	3
4	1	1	1	3	3	0	3	4
3	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
#NUL!	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
#NUL!	1	0	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!
2	0	0	1	1	2	0	3	1
3	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	2
3	1	0	1	3	3	2	0	4
2	0	0	1	3	3	3	3	3
1	0	0	1	4	4	3	4	4
4	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	2
3	1	1	1	3	3	0	0	4
4	1	0	1	1	3	1	3	4
3	1	0	1	3	3	3	3	2
4	0	0	1	3	2	2	3	3
2	0	0	1	3	3	3	3	3
3	0	0	1	3	2	2	2	3
2	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	0
4	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
4	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	3
2	0	0	1	3	4	0	3	2
3	0	1	2	0	2	2	2	1
4	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	2
2	1	1	1	0	4	1	2	4
3	0	0	2	2	1	1	2	3
4	0	0	1	2	3	1	1	4
4	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	2
4	0	0	1	3	3	3	3	3
4	1	1	1	1	3	0	3	3
4	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	2
3	0	0	1	3	3	3	3	3
2	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	4
3	1	1	4	2	0	0	2	0
4	0	0	1	3	3	2	2	2
4	0	0	1	3	3	3	3	3
4	0	0	1	2	2	3	3	3
4	0	0	1	1	3	3	3	3
#NUL!	0	0	1	#NUL!	3	3	3	4
4	0	0	1	2	2	4	4	4
4	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	2
4	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	2
4	1	0	4	1	4	0	4	3
4	0	0	1	3	3	3	3	1

2	0	0	1	2	2	3	3	4
3	0	0	1	1	3	3	3	2
3	0	0	1	4	4	3	4	0
2	1	1	1	3	3	2	4	4

TheLuxuryk	Purpose_Fa	Purpose_In	Purpose_Tv	Purpose_Yc	Purpose_W	Purpose_Bl	Purpose_M	Consumer_
4	2/3/4/7	2/3/4/7	4	5	2/6/3/4	7	6/3	2
4	2/3/4/7	2/3/4	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	2
4	2/3/4/7	3/4	1	5	2/6/3/4	5/8	2/6	2
4	3		7	4	3	3	3	2
4	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	5	2/6	4/8	2/6	2
1	3/4	3/4	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	2
2	4	4	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	1
2	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	5	2/6	7/8	2/6	2
2	3/4/5/8	3/4/7/5	3	1	2/6/3/4	7/8	2/6	2
2	7/5/8	3	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	2
1	7/5	7/5	5	1	2/6	8	2/6	2
1	3/4/7/5	3/4/5	1	5	2/6/3/4	8	2/6	2
0	2/3/4/5	2/3/4/5	1	2/3/4/5	2/6/3	1	2/6	1
1	2	5	1	1	6	5	6	2
3	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	2
4	2/3/4/7	2/3/4/7	2	2	2/6	2/5/8	2/6	2
3	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	2
3	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	2
1	2/3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4	2/6/3/4	7/5	6/3	2
1	1	3	5/8	1	3	1	1	1
1	3	3	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	6	2
3	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	3/4/7	5	2/6	1	2/6	1
1	3	5	1	1	5	1	2	1
3	3/4/7	3/4/7	1	5	2/6	7/8	2/6	2
1	4/7/5	4/7/5	1	1	2/3	1	2/3	2
0	3/5	1	1	1	2/6/3	1	5	1
4	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	7/5	2/6	7	2/6	2
1	1	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	2
1	2/3/4/7	2/3	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	2
4	1	1	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	1
4	4/7/5	4/7/5	7/5/8	5	2/6	4	2/6	2
2	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6	3/5	2/6	2
1		2					2	1
1	2/3/4/7	2/3/4/7	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	2
1	1	2/3/7/5	1	2	2/6/3/7	2/5	2/6	1
3	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	5	2/6/3/4	8	2/6	2
3	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6	5	2/6	2
3	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	8	5	2/6	8	2/6	2
4	2/3/4/5	7/5/8	3/4	2/3	6	1	6	2
4	5	5	5	1	2/6	1	2/6	1
3	3/4/7	7/5	1	5	6/3	2/3	1	2
4	7/8	3/5	1	1	2/6/3/4	8	2/6	1
4	1	1	1	1	2/6/3	1	1	1
4	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	2
4	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6	4/5/8	2/6	2
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	3/5	1	2/6/3/4	8	2/6	1
2	2	3	1	1	2/6/3	1	2/6	1
2	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	2
2	2/3/4/7	3/4	1	5	2/6/3/4	7/8	2/6	2
1	2/3	2	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	6/3	2

3	5 /8	5 /8	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	2
1	3/4/7	3	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6/3	2
3	2	2/6	2/3	2/4/5	7	5	8	2
2	2/6/4/7	6/3	3/4	4/7/5	7/5	8	2/6/8	2
0	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	1
0	3/4/7/5	2/3/4/7	4	4	2/6/3/4	4	2/6	2
2	3/4/7/5	3/4/7	1	1	2/6/3/5	1	2/6/3/5	2
3	1	1	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	1
1	3/4/7/5	3/4	1	3/5	2/6/3/4	4/7	2/6	2
1	7/5	7/5	7/5	7/5	2/6/3	7/5	2/6	2
1	4/5	4/5	1	1	2/6	4	2/6	2
#NUL!	3/4/5	3/4/5	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	2
2	5	1	1	1	5	1	5	1
2	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	2
1	2/3/4/7	3/5	1	5	2/6/3/4	8	2/6	2
1	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6/3/4	4/7/5	2/6	2
1	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	3/4/7/5	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	2
2	1	1	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	1
0	2/3/4/7	3	3	3	2/6/3	3	2/6	2
1	1	1	1	1	2/6/5	1	2/6/5	1
2	4/7/5	4/7/5	1	1	6	3/7/5	6	2
3	3	3/7	1	3	6	3	1	2
3	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	3/5	5	2/6	8	2/6	2
3	5 /8	3/4/7/5	6/3/7/5	5 /8	2/6/4/7	4	2/6	2
0	3/4/7/5	3/4/5	1	5	2/6	1	6	2
1	3/4/5	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	2/6/3/4	7/8	2/6	2
3	2/3/5	2/6/3/5	1	1	2/6/5 /8	2/3	2/5	2
1	5	5	1	1	5	1	6	1
1	1	3/5	1	1	2/6	2/3/5	6	1
2	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	5	2/6/3/4	7/8	2/6	2
1	4/7/5 /8	4/7/5	1	1	2/6	4	2/6	2
2	3/4/5	3/4/5	1	5	6	5	1	2
1	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	5	2/6/7/5	8	2/6	2
2	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	5	2/6/3/4	7/8	2/6	2
1	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	2
1	5	5	1	1	2	1	1	1
1	4/7/5	4/7/5	4/7/5	1	2/6/3/4	4/7/5 /8	2/6/3	2
2	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6	4	2/6	2
3	3/4/5	3/4/5	1	5	2/6	4/8	2/6	2
4	3	3	3	3	2/6	3	2/6	1
3	5	7	7	4	3	6	6	2
2	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6/3/4	7/8	2/6	2
3	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6	7/8	2/6	2
3	3/4/7/5	5 /8	1	1	2/6	4	2/6	2
3	3/4/8	3/4/8	1	1	2	8	2	2
2	7	3	6/3	4	2/6/3	4	2/6/3	1
4	3/4/7/5	3/4/7/5	1	1	2/6/3	4/7/5 /8	2/6	2
2	1	1	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	1
4	3/4/7/5	3/4/5	5	5	2/6	7/5 /8	2/6	2
0	3	3	1	3	3	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	1	2/6/3/4	1	2/6	1

4	1	1	1	1	2/6	1	2/6	1
3	2/3/4	2/3/4	2/3/4	2/3/4	2/6/3/4	2/3/4/5	2/6	2
1	7	7	1	1	8	1	5	1
0	2/5	2/5	1	1	2/6/3/5	1	1	1

Brand_Equi	Omnichanr	Wouldyoul	Wouldyoul	Wouldyoul	Wouldyoul	Wouldyoul	Integrated_marketing_
2	2	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	1,00
2	2	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	1,00
2	2	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	1,00
2	2	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	1,00
2	2	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	#NUL!	1,00
1	1	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	1	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
1	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
1	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
1	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
1	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
1	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
1	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
1	1	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
1	1	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
1	1	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
1	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
1	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
1	1	1,00	2,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
1	1	2,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
1	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00

2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	2,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	2,00
2	1	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
1	1	2,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
1	1	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	1	1,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
1	2	1,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
1	2	1,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
1	2	1,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	1,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	1,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
1	2	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	1	1,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	1	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
1	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	1,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00

2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00
2	2	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00

channels

Transcription of interview.

Simon Mørk from Toro Performance Group.

Date: 24/5/2019

DANISH/ENGLISH

MH: Mikkel Højbjerg
SM: Simon Mørk

MH: Hvordan oplever I forholdet mellem offline og online aktiviteter?

SM: Der er som i nok ved sket en stor udvikling indenfor digitalisering og hvor vi kan se en tydelig tendens i at der er flere og flere der anvender forskellige online medier når de laver marketingsaktiviteter. Der har altid været en stor efterspørgsel for at lave reklame og andre ting som ikke er online. Men i de seneste mange år er der klart en stigning i at virksomheder vil have flyttet alt deres marketing over i en online verden.

MH: og hvad kan det skyldes?

SM: Altså, der er langt flere muligheder når det handler om at være tilgængelig og også at det gør det nemmere at ramme de rigtige segmenter. Der er mange virksomheder der bliver klar over at der er meget effektivt i at lave de online aktiviteter og det er jo klart at det er noget som alle virksomheder ønsker, altså, mere målrettet og effektiv marketing. Men jeg vil også gerne sige at det altså ikke kun er de online aktiviteter som virker, så det er ikke en dårlig ide at forsætte med at være tilgængelige på lidt mere traditionelle kanaler, som for eksempel magasiner, aviser, tv og sådan. Men det er klart at mange de online muligheder heller ikke har samme

omkostninger som der kan være i at have noget trykt et sted eller sætte store skilte op.

MH: Hvad så men forbrugerne, er der sket en ændring ved dem?

SM: Der er i hvert fald sket en stor ændring i deres forbrugeradfærd på den måde at forbruger bruger online medier og hvordan de tilegner sig viden omkring produkter eller virksomheder, eller brands for den sags skyld, og hvordan den endelige eksekvering den sker. Det har resulteret i en klar ændring i forbrugeradfærden der har givet forbrugerne langt mere magt i forhold til det de har haft tidligere.

MH: Hvad mener du med magt?

SM: Når forbrugeren de har mere magt, så mener jeg det på den måde at de bliver mere bevidste om og kræsne omkring hvor, hvordan og hvilke produkter de ønsker sig og deres forventninger til produkterne og virksomheder stiger meget. Det gør at vores opgaver og virksomhederne der laver marketing, skal være meget opmærksomme på hvad forbrugerne vil have, og også hvad forbrugerne forlanger og forventer fra de forskellige brands. Det er vigtigt at være aktivt på online medier. Når nu digitaliseringen der er stigende og er steget meget, så er det endnu mere vigtigt for brands at de er tilgængelige online 24/7 fordi forbrugere har fået den her magt og søger omkring informationer på nette når de skal evaluere og overveje køb at forskellige produkter. Brands bliver nødt til at engagere sig med forbruger og giver dem en følelse af fællesskab.

MH: Kan I se at flere virksomheder forlanger at deres online aktiviteter er integreret og stemmer overens med hinanden?

SM: Ja, der er et ønske om at de aktiviteter som vi tilbyder og anbefaler i form af marketing, skal stemme overens med hinanden, således at der er en fællesnævner af design, priser, information osv. på tværs af de forskellige touchpoints.

Vi ligger stor vægt på at der ikke er nogen form for mismatch i aktiviteterne og vi anbefaler at der er en rød tråd gennem alle de aktiviteter folk de ønsker af de forskellige brands/virksomheder.

MH: Hvordan laver I det sådan at det hele hænger sammen?

SM: Det vil er ofte sådan at vi laver en marketingsplans plan sammen med kunden. Det er tit at de allerede er tilgængelig på en kanel og det er så ud fra den at vi laver en naturlig sammenhæng. Og når vi laver hjemmesider, så er de altid koblet på sociale medier.

MH: Hvad med deres fysiske butik?

SM: Der er samtidig vigtigt at de forskellige touch points skal stemmer overens med den fysiske butik, således at forbrugeren har en fornemmelse af brandets identitet når de bevæger sig rundt på brandets online aktiviteter. Det værste en virksomhed kan gøre er at lave en halvhjertet indsats hvor alt bliver overladt til tilfældigheder. Det er vigtigt at der bliver lagt nogle ressourcer i at få etableret en velfungerende indsats og aktiviteter alt efter hvilke mål der skal opnås.

Alt i alt er det vigtig for os hos Toro at det bliver klargjort hvordan der opnås de mest effektive marketings aktiviteter. Det har stor betydning for brands at man ikke kun fokuserer på én enkelt marketings kanal, men at man får en integreret strategi hvor man udnytter forskellige kanaler, såsom sociale medier, e-commerce, SEO

og så videre. Der er meget stort potentiale i digital marketing men det er vigtigt at det bliver gjort rigtigt.

MH: Har I Oplevet nogle forandringer i forhold til luksus brands kunder?

SM: Vi kan se at flere og flere luksusbrands kontakter Toro Performance og ønsker hjælp til flere have flere kanaler gennem forskellige touch points både online of offline. Før i tiden havde vi ikke særlig mange henvendelser fra luksus brands fordi at der var en fornemmelse af at mange foretrak at købe dyrere produkter i fysiske butikker og krævende mere overvejelse fordi der var et større niveau af involvering i forbindelse med købet. Det havde også en forbindelse til at hele følelsen forbundet med et køb af luksusprodukter manglede og mange synes at det er hele oplevelsen som har stor værdi.

Men som sagt, så er der klar flere luksusvirksomheder som henvender sig og ønsker hjælp. Dette har nok at gøre med den mulighed som findes, med at få integreret aktiviteter som stemmer overens med brandets identitet og derfor har kunderne stadig en følelse af luksus når de handler online.

MH: Hvad gør de online aktiviteter?

SM: jamen, de hjælper på både brandets ´reach´ altså, at marketingsindsatserne når ud til flere af de rigtige kunder og de online touchpoints giver muligheden for at indsamle og gemmen data fra forskellige kunder. Ved at anvende online aktiviteter kan vi samle meget relevant data omkring kunderne, vi kan se hvor lang tid de bruger på siden, hvor mange click de foretager sig og hvad de søger mest efter. Det er alt sammen noget som er vigtige punkter i

at se hvor effektiv de forskellige aktiviteter er og med de online er det jo klar nemmere at styre ved at have elektronik som hjælper.

Man kan også se et af de vigtigste emner som er hvor mange der genkøber produkterne og hvor mange der flere gange klikker ind på aktiviteterne. Der ses her en klar gengang at kunder hvor når en hjemmeside giver muligheden for at chatte med personale og også når der eksistere et forum hvor forskellige kunder kan interagere med hinanden. Vi lægger stor vægt på at få så mange at de sammen forbrugere til at henvende sig til brandet og komme forbi deres aktiviteter.

MH: Så I kan se at der er en forbindelse mellem en integreret indsats af online aktiviteter og forbruger loyalitet?

SM: Det kan være svært at svare på om det er direkte de online aktiviteter der er lige med loyalitet. Men der er tydeligt at man med en sammensat marketing indsats på tværs af forskellige touchpoints øger en chance for at kunder vender tilbage. Dvs. jo flere aktiviteter man har online, jo flere af kunderne vender tilbage, fordi man har muligheden for at ramme kunderne flere steder og hele tiden. Med de teknologier som digitaliseringen medfører og de online aktiviteter som anvendes, giver værktøjerne til at se hvor mange kunder der vender tilbage og hvor meget de har købt. Og det er klart at denne forbrugere loyalitet er meget vigtigt for alle virksomheder og brands.

MH: Og hvad med de digitale medier?

SM: Vi bruger meget sociale medier når vi foretager online aktiviteter. Her kan vi se at der er mange der bruger Facebook og Instagram og det er også der vi har størst fokus. Det er medier som vi anbefaler til vores kunder når de gerne vil have en større

kendskabsgrad hos forbrugeren og også når der skal bygges relationer til forbrugerne. Vi bruger også sociale medier to at skabe aktivitet hvor der bliver opfordret til køb. Det er også den måde vi bruger adwords på, hvor de hele gerne skal ende med at der bliver genereret flere køb.

ENGLISH:
MH: How do you experience the relationship between online and offline activities?

SM: As you might know, a large development has happened inside digitalization, where we can see a clear tendency that more and more use different media when they are doing marketing activities. There has always been a big demand for making advertisement and other things which is not online. But in the recent many years it is clear that an increase of companies wants to move all their marketing into an online world.

MH: Why is that?

SM: So, there exist a lot more opportunities when it comes to being accessible and also it makes it easier to hit the right segments. There are a lot of companies who understands that it is more effective when making online activities and this is obviously that it is something that companies want. More targeted and effective marketing. But I would like to say that it is not only the online activities that works, so it is not a bad idea to be available in traditional channels, like magazines, papers, tv and so on. But it is clear that most of the online opportunities do not have the same costs as there can be when printing or making signs.

MH: What about the consumers, have they changed?

SM: A major changed has happened in the consumer behavior on how the use different online media and how the gain new knowledge about the products and companies, or brands for that matter, and how the final execution happens. This has resulted in a clear change in the consumer behavior which has giving the consumers a lot more power that earlier.

MH: What do you mean when you say power?

SM: When the consumers has more power, then I mean in the wat that they are getting more concerned and discerning about where, how and which products they want, and their expatiations to the products and the companies increases a lot. This makes our tasks and companies that makes marketing must be more concerned of what the consumers want and what they demand and expect from the brands. It is important to be active on online media. When the digitalization now being increasing and have already increased a lot. Then it is even more important for brands to be available 24/7 because the consumers have this power and search for information online when they evaluate and consider buying different products. Brands has to engage with the consumers and give them a feeling of community.

MH: Can you see that more companies what their online activities to interact and match with each other?

SM: Yes. There is a wish that the activities that we offer and recommend in marketing should match each other in such a way that there is a clear path of design, information etc. through the different touchpoints. We highly emphasize that there should be no miss match in the activities and recommend that there is a clear path through all the activities the different companies or brands want.

MH: How do you make sure that it is connected?

SM: It is often the way that we make a marketing plan together with our customer. It is often that they already have a channel accessible and it is based on that one channel that we make a natural connection. When we make websites, they will always be connected to social media.

MH: What about their physical store?

SM: Also, it is important that the different touchpoints are connected to the physical store, in a way that the consumer feel the brand identity when the move around on the brands online activities. The worst a brand can do, is to make a half-hearted effort where everything is based on coincidences. It is important that they put some resources into getting an established and well functioned effort and activities based on the purpose of the effort.

All in all, it is important for us a Toro, that it is clear how the most effective marketing activities are gained. It has a major importance, that the brands not only focus on one particular marketing channel but gets an integrated strategy where you utilize the different channels, like social media, e-commerce, SEO and etc. large potential is available in digital marketing, but it is important that it is done right.

MH: Have you experienced any change in the relation to luxury brands?

SM: We see that more and more luxury brands contacts Toro Performance and wish to get help to more channels through touchpoints both online and offline. Earlier, we did not really have any inquiries from luxury brands because there was a feeling that many preferred to buy expensive products in a physical store and demanded a lot of

considerations with a higher level of involvement in relation to the purchase. This might also have a connection to the whole experience connected to buying luxury products was missing and many though that the experience itself is of great value.

But as said, it is clear that more luxury brands are reaching out and wish for help. This has probably to do with the opportunity that exists with integrating channels that are connected with the brands identity and therefore the customers will still get a feeling of luxury when shopping online.

MH: What does the online activities?

SM: Well, they help on both the brands reach meaning that the marketing efforts reaches more of the right customers and the online touchpoints gives the opportunities to collect and save data from different customers. By using online activities, we are able to collect relevant data regarding the customers. We can see the amount of time they spend on the site, how many clicks thy make and what they are searching. This is all important elements in seeing how effective the various activities are and with them being online it is clearly easier to control by having electronics that help.

You can also see one of the most important elements is, which is the element of knowing how many customers repurchase products and how many who clicks on the activities. Here it is very clear that a return on the customers appears on websites who are giving the opportunity of chatting with salespersons. Also, when there exists forums where different customers can interact with each other. We attach great importance to getting as many of the same customers to return to the specific brand.

MH: So, you can see that there exists a connection between integrated efforts of online activities and the consumers loyalty?

SM: It can be difficult to answer whether it is directly the online activities that are equal to loyalty. But it is clear that with a composite marketing effort across different touchpoints, the chance of the customers return is higher. This meaning that the more activities you have online, the more customers will return because you have the opportunity to hit the customers in several places at all times. With technologies that digitalization entails, and the online activities used, the tools allow you to see the number of customers who return and much they have purchased. It is clear that the consumer loyalty is very important for all companies and brands.

MH: And what about the digital medias?

SM: We use social media a lot when we are doing online activities. Here, we can see that there are many who use Facebook and Instagram and that is also where we have the most focus. It Is the medias that we recommend to our customer when the want a greater degree of awareness towards the consumers and also when building relationships. Also, we use social media to create activity that calls for purchases. This is also the way we use adwords with the main goal of generation sales.