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MSc INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

MODULE TITLE: RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES OF LUXURY FASHION
BRANDS – IMPACT ON BRAND EQUITY****Salih Baran (Candidate Number: 143119)****Supervisor: Dr Marv Khammash****Submission Date: 30.08.2016****Abstract**

This research study evaluates the efficacy of social media marketing strategies in positively affecting the components of brand equity and in particular brand salience, brand performance, brand image, judgements, feelings and brand resonance. The research is done in the luxury fashion segment and for this purpose, two brands were selected: Burberry and Hermes. Burberry is often labelled as the leader in social media marketing strategies whereas Hermès ranks low in terms of social visibility and engagement. The assumption of the study was that given these opposite social media strategies the brands' impact on the dimensions of brand equity will be different. The findings from the online survey indicate much stronger brand equity among Burberry's fans than among Hermes' fans.

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1. Introduction

Social media have become an inextricable part of our lives and the ways we communicate with each other. They have changed the traditional ways of communication in societies, a development which has been possible because of the millions of users of social media sites globally. Businesses and marketers have started to take advantage of this development and are increasingly embracing social media to communicate with the audience. The opportunity to speak directly to customers enables businesses to build relationships with the audience and attain many of their marketing objectives including influencing brand equity. Brands are considered to be based on consumer preferences and therefore one of the core marketer's goal is to positively affect the consumer preferences towards the particular brand. One of the ways in which marketers can influence brand preference is by creating a strong brand equity. Both in business practice and in academic research, brand equity is recognised as a very valuable concept. This is because marketers are able to acquire competitive advantage with successful brands (Lassar, Mittal and Sharma 1995, p. 11). High equity provides a brand with many competitive advantages, including enjoying reduced marketing costs because of a high level of brand awareness and loyalty; more trade leverage with retailers and distributors; ability to charge higher price; ability to launch brand extensions more easily and so forth (Vashisht 2005, p. 148).

1.1. Statement of problem and purpose of research

With the increased use of social media marketing (SMM) by luxury fashion brands, it is important to analyse the effects of the social media activities on this core concept. While there has been extensive research of the impact of SMM on brand equity, in general, there is rather scarce literature in the luxury industry context. Indeed, for luxury fashion brands, marketing communication utilising social media, for instance, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, have been evaluated as efficient tools (Kim and Ko 2012, p. 1480). However, other aspects of the brand have been the focus of research, including customer relationships and loyalty (Park, Song and Ko 2011); purchase intention (Kamal, Chu and Pedram 2013); customer equity (Kim and Ko 2012, p. 164); luxury brand management (Jin 2012); brand visibility (Reyneke and Berthon 2011) and so forth. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to contribute to this body of knowledge in this field by investigating the impact that SMM communications have on the brand equity of

luxury brands. This research study will evaluate their efficacy in positively affecting the components of brand equity and in particular brand salience, brand performance, brand image, judgements, feelings and brand resonance. Therefore, the purpose of this research project is to explore the constructs of social media activities of luxury fashion brands, and to assess the impact of these activities on the four dimensions of brand equity.

1.2. Rationale

The luxury brand market has been growing continuously in the past two decades. In the past 15 years, for instance, the number of luxury consumers has increased from 140 million globally to over 350 million (The Entrepreneur 2015). These numbers signify the size of this industry and most importantly the opportunities that exist for marketers in this industry. In addition to this, the increasing use of SMM and focus of firms on online marketing, in general, makes the knowledge on SMM especially valuable for marketing practitioners (Barker et al. 2012, p. 1). The source of brand equity, as stated by Keller (2001), is customer perceptions. That is, Keller (2001) argued that the power of a brand is based on the things that the customers hear, learn, feel and see about the brand in time. It is therefore crucial to investigate whether and in what ways SMM can impact customer perceptions, i.e. what customers hear, learn, feel and see about the brand. What is more, it is equally important for marketers to measure and track brand equity in order to make adjustments to their branding strategies where required. By investigating in what ways SMM can impact the desired thoughts, feelings, images, beliefs, perceptions and opinions we are investigating the ways in which marketers create desirable meanings of brands in the mind of the luxury consumer through SMM. Particularly luxury brands with their high brand equity should have a clear understanding of the ways that SMM can impact their brand, customers' experience and brand perceptions (Phan, Thomas and Heine 2011, p. 213).

1.3. Research questions and objectives

To investigate the literature gap mentioned above, the following research question is developed:

- How can the SMM activities of luxury fashion brands impact customer-based brand equity?

To answer this question the following research objectives are formulated:

- To examine the effects of brand-created SMM activities on brand salience, brand performance, judgements, feelings towards the brand, brand resonance and brand imagery;

On the basis of the reviewed literature, it is expected that luxury brands SMM activities should have a positive influence on brand equity dimensions. Consequently, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- SMM activities of luxury fashion brands have a significant positive influence on brand salience as measured by awareness of the brand;
- SMM activities of luxury fashion brands have a significant positive influence on performance as measured by perceived quality, value and uniqueness of the brand;
- SMM activities of luxury fashion brands have a significant positive influence on brand imagery as measured by imagery and performance related associations.
- SMM activities of luxury fashion brands have a significant positive influence on judgements as measured by evaluations of brand quality and brand consideration;
- SMM activities of luxury fashion brands have a significant positive influence on brand feelings as measured by evoking favourable emotions of social approval, self-respect and excitement;
- SMM activities of luxury fashion brands have a significant positive influence on brand resonance, including brand loyalty, attachment, community and engagement.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Defining the luxury construct

According to Nueno and Quelch (2007, p. 100), luxury brands' "ratio of functionality to price is low", but their "ratio of intangible and situational utility to price is high". A luxury brand is not only premium-priced product, but instead shares characteristics that differentiate them from premium and non-luxury brands. For instance, premium quality, heritage of craftsmanship, recognisable design, limited supply and distribution, global distribution are some of the main components of the luxury construct (Nueno and Quelch 2007, pp. 100-101). Kapferer (1998, p. 96) defined the luxury construct from the perspective of the consumer and as a result of the different perspectives of consumers he concludes that this concept is relative. The features that characterise the luxury product according to customers include beauty, excellence and uniqueness; creativity; timelessness and international reputation; and rarity (Kapferer 1998, p. 96). The relativity of the luxury context thus not only arises from the different importance that consumers attach to these features but also from the possibility that luxury brands can possess these features to various degrees or even completely lack some of these features.

2.2. SMM activities of luxury brands

Social media include Internet-based applications that are based upon the ideological and technological constructs of Web 2.0 and that enable users to create and exchange user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, p. 61). Popular social media sites include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and so forth. They provide marketers with various opportunities to reach and engage audiences and build stronger relationships with them. SMM designates the online communities, use of social networks, and various online media for different purposes related to marketing, sales, public relations and customer service (Barker et al. 2012, p. 3). The main components of SMM are creating buzz; building ways that enable brand fans to promote a message themselves; and encouraging user participation and dialogue (Barker et al. 2012, p. 3). The goals of SMM activities are to build brands, i.e. to increase brand awareness, improve brand perception, to develop ideas for marketing strategies, research consumer behaviour, enhance brand reputation and image and engage consumers in a brand experience (Barker et al. 2012; Tuten 2008, p. 26).

In the luxury segment, SMM is still considered a relatively new frontier. While many luxury brands resist from utilising SMM due to the risk of diluting the brand image other luxury brands, such as Burberry and Louis Vuitton are present on social media and try to find new ways of engaging with their fans. Kim and Ko (2012) examined the effects of the SMM activities of luxury fashion brands on the purchase intention and customer equity. Their study measured value equity, relationship equity and brand equity. Kim and Ko's study (2012) differs from the present study in two ways. First of all, their concept and dimensions of brand equity are different than the one adopted in the present study. They included these aspects: "brand awareness, perceived value, brand personality, brand association, and perceived uniqueness" (Kim and Ko, 2012, p.1482). Secondly, their survey was conducted with Korean consumers whereas the present study is conducted with consumers from different nationalities. The luxury fashion industry in the Korea is only "into its mature stage" (Kim and Ko, 2012, p.1485) and therefore the examination of the influence of SMM on brand equity of luxury brands should be replicated in other cultural settings.

Furthermore, Godey et al. (2016) also analysed the SMM efforts of leading brands in the luxury sector, Burberry, Dior, Gucci, Hermès, and Louis Vuitton. These authors found that the impact of SMM on luxury customer-based brand equity as reflected in brand awareness and brand equity differs very significantly across the four countries included in their survey (Godey et al. 2016, p. 7). This implies that some country-specific characteristics can moderate the impact of SMM on these aspects of brand equity. On the other hand, the impact of SMM on consumer response, as reflected in brand preference, brand loyalty and willingness to pay premium price, was similar across the four countries (Godey et al. 2016, p. 7). In this regard, the strongest impact was established in the level of consumer's brand loyalty (Godey et al. 2016, p. 7). Furthermore, Lee and Walkins (2016) found that video blogs lead to positive luxury brand perceptions but that this positive impact is dependent on the characteristics of the blogger such as physical and social attractiveness. Kim and Ko (2010, p. 164) conducted a survey in the Seoul area whose findings proved the effectiveness of luxury brands' SMM on both customer relationships, and more precisely on purchase intention, intimacy and trust. These authors first identified the different elements of luxury brands' SMM which included "entertainment, customization, interaction, word of mouth, and trend" Kim and Ko (2010, p. 164). The usefulness of the study lies in its efforts to identify the impact that each one of these properties

had on the key concepts, intimacy and trust, and purchase intention. The results revealed that entertainment has a significant positive effect on all three concepts; customization impacted trust positively; interaction had a positive impact on purchase intention; word of mouth on intimacy and purchase intention; and trend only on trust (Kim and Ko 2010, p. 164). These results demonstrate how important the particular SMM activities are in determining the impact on the brand. The present study will utilise this model and will analyse the impact of SMM on brand equity on the basis of these five properties.

2.3. Brand equity

Brand equity arises from the higher level of confidence that consumers have in a brand than they the confidence they have in competitor brands (Lassar, Mittal and Sharma 1995, p. 11). This confidence in the brand results into consumers' loyalty but also willing and being ready to pay a premium price for it (Lassar, Mittal and Sharma 1995, p. 11). This is why it is every brand's goal to build strong brand equity. Brand equity has been evaluated from two different perspectives – financial and customer perspective (Lassar, Mittal and Sharma 1995, p. 11). The financial perspective of brand equity refers to the financial asset value that the brand generates for the business whereas customer-based brand equity reflects the consumer response to a brand name (Lassar, Mittal and Sharma 1995, p. 12). The present study will focus and analyse the customer-based perspective of brand equity in order to investigate the particular value of the luxury brands to the consumers.

The concept of brand equity has been defined in different ways. For instance, Keller (1993, p. 2) and Kamakura and Russell (1991) defined customer-based brand equity as the impact that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. There are two components brand knowledge: “brand awareness and brand image” (Keller 1993, p. 2). Brand awareness refers to brand recall and recognition among consumers whereas brand image is the set of associations associated with the brand that consumers have in their minds (Keller 1993, p. 2). Based on the above definition, there are several important considerations. Brand equity reflects consumer perceptions rather than objective parameters; it reflects the global value that a brand has; it reflects the value assigned to a brand originates from the brand name and not

only from its physical characteristics; brand equity is a concept relative to competitors; and it has a positive impact on financial performance (Lassar, Mittal and Sharma 1995, p. 13).

Scholars have proposed several models of brand equity (Aaker 1996; Brandt and Johnson 1997; Keller 2003). According to Aaker (1996, p. 105), brand equity comprises of four consumer-based categories and these include loyalty, perceived quality, associations and awareness. Loyalty according to Aaker (1996, p. 106) is the core dimension of brand equity and is reflected in the amount a customer is ready to pay for the brand compared to another brand; and in customer satisfaction measured on the basis of the last experience with a product/service (Aaker 1996, p. 108). The key association component of brand equity typically involves image dimensions unique to the brand (Aaker 1996, p. 111). To measure brand associations it is useful to incorporate brand personality, organisational associations and the value of the brand (Aaker 1996, p. 111). It is also very important according to Aaker (1996, p. 114) to measure differentiation because it is considered as a key brand association. Finally, the four component, awareness, consists of several levels including “recognition, recall, top-of-mind, brand dominance, brand knowledge and brand opinion” (Aaker 1996, p. 114).

Other authors agree with Aaker (1996) on some of the components (Table 1). For instance, as already mentioned Keller (1993) argued that brand equity consists of brand awareness and brand associations. Agarwal and Rao (1996, p. 246) suggest that brand equity should be measured on the basis of overall quality of brand name and purchase intention. According to Kamakura and Russell (1993, p. 10), brand equity can be identified based on two major sources. This is managed by dividing brand value into tangible elements such as product features, and intangible components such as brand name associations. The strength of their approach is that it provides a measure of brand value based on actual purchases behaviour in the marketplace unlike other studies which have been based on what is preferred -which is acquired with surveys- and self-reported attitudes (Kamakura and Russell 1993, p. 199). Srivastava and Shocker (1991) argued that brand equity comprises of two components – brand strength, which constitutes the brand associations held by customers, and brand value. Berry (2000, p. 130) found that service brand equity originates from brand meaning and brand awareness. Brand meaning is shaped by customer experiences with the company and brand awareness is shaped by the external brand communications and the company’s presented brand (Berry 2000, p. 130). Similarly, Tuten (2008) also defined brand equity as a concept developed from the high levels of

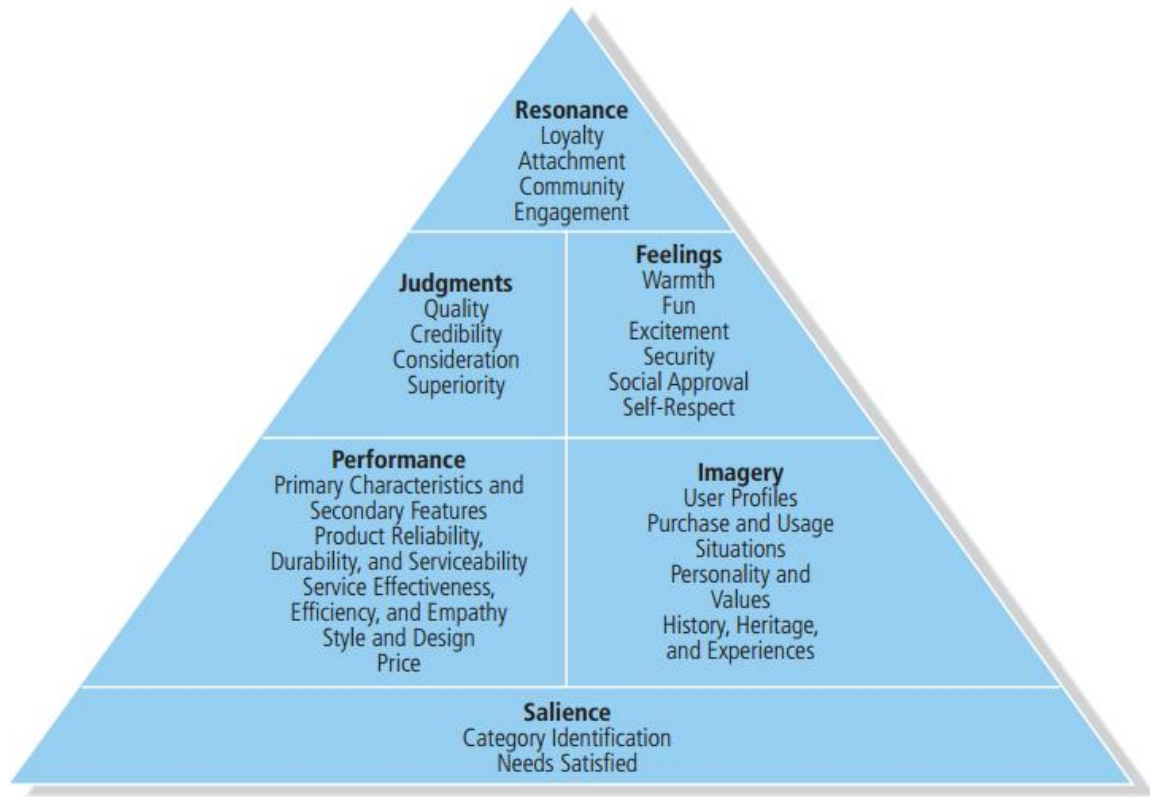
brand awareness and strong, favourable, unique perceptions of the brand's image (Tuten 2008, p. 178).

Table 1 Brand equity dimensions

Study	Brand equity dimensions
Aaker (1996)	Four customer perceptions: loyalty, perceived quality, associations and awareness and two sets of market behavior measures (Market Share and price and Distribution Indices)
Keller (1993)	Brand knowledge (brand awareness + brand associations)
Agarwal and Rao (1996)	Overall quality of brand name and purchase intention
Kamakura and Russell (1993)	Product features and brand name associations
Srivastava and Shocker (1991)	Brand strength and brand value. Brand strength comprises of associations and behaviour of consumers. Brand value is the net financial result of the ability of management to leverage the strength of the brand.
Berry (2000)	Brand awareness and Brand Meaning
Tuten (2008)	Brand awareness and perceptions
Sharp (1995)	Company/Brand Awareness, Brand Image and Relationships with customers

Even though Aaker's model is widely used and recognised it is useful to take into consideration a more recent model of brand equity, the one proposed by Keller (2003). Building strong brand equity, according to Keller's model, involves four steps: establishing the proper brand identity, or in other words identifying the breadth and depth of brand awareness; developing the appropriate brand meaning by creating strong, positive and unique brand associations; promoting positive brand responses; encouraging brand relationships with customers characterized by active loyalty (Keller 2003, p. 107). On the basis of these four steps Keller (2003) developed six brand building blocks (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Keller's customer-based brand equity model



Source: Keller (2003, p. 108)

The first building block, brand salience, measures different aspects of the awareness of the brand and how easily and how frequently the brand is evoked in the mind of the consumer (Keller 2003, p. 108). The depth of brand awareness refers to the level of likelihood that a brand element comes to mind; and breadth of brand awareness refers to the range of purchase and usage in which the brand element is evoked (Keller 2003, p. 108). The second building block, brand performance, measures the degree to which the product meets customers' functional needs (Keller 2003, p. 108). Keller named five key types of attributes and benefits that according to him form the basis of brand performance, primary components and additional features; product reliability, durability, and serviceability; service effectiveness, efficiency, and empathy; style and design; and price (Keller 2003, p. 113). The third block, brand imagery, refers to the ways people think about a brand abstractly, rather than brand's functionality (Keller 2003, p. 113). In other words, imagery refers to the intangible characteristics of brands, such as user profiles; purchase

and usage situations; brand personality and values; and history, heritage, and experiences (Keller 2003, p. 113). Keller argued that there are five dimensions of brand personality, sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness (Keller 2003, p. 115). The fourth building block, brand judgments refers to the personal opinions about and assessments of brands, which consumers develop by combining brand performance and imagery associations (Keller 2003, p. 115). These judgements can be developed towards aspects such as quality, credibility, consideration, and superiority (Keller 2003, p. 115). The fifth building block, brand feelings, refers to customers' emotional responses and reactions (Keller 2003, p. 118). Keller proposed several key types of brand-building feelings, warmth, fun, excitement, security, social approval and self-respect (Keller 2003, p. 118). Finally, the sixth building block, brand resonance, measures the nature of this relationship and the degree to which customers think that they are "in sync" with the brand (Keller 2003, p. 120). Four dimensions of brand resonance are possible according to Keller (2003, p. 120) and these include behavioural loyalty; attitudinal attachment; sense of community; and active engagement.

It is evident that Keller's and Aaker's model have many things in common. More precisely, both of these models take into consideration the following indicators: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality/brand judgements, brand associations/performance and imagery associations. While Aaker (1996) deals separately with perceived quality Keller (2003) perceives brand quality perception as element of brand judgements. Similar to this, while Aaker (1996, p. 111) defines brand associations as image dimensions unique to a brand, Keller (2003) speaks of imagery and performance related associations. Therefore, in summary, the above review of the literature demonstrates the breadth and width of the concept of brand equity and the different perspectives that scholar takes as to the dimensions of brand equity. After careful consideration of these findings and the already established definitions of brand equity in the literature this study generated six dimensions of brand equity: brand salience, brand performance, imagery, judgements (including indicators such as quality and consideration), feelings and resonance (including indicators such as loyalty, attachment, community and engagement). These dimensions are selected because of the widely used measurement model developed by Keller (2003) in studies aiming at measuring brand equity.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This study is cross-sectional as it investigates a particular phenomenon, impact of SMM on brand equity dimensions, at a particular time (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, p. 155). The philosophical stance taken in this dissertation is positivism. This stance was taken because according to the positivist approach the purpose of theory is to develop hypotheses that is possible to test and thus allow for explanations of laws to be evaluated (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 15) which is the approach taken in this dissertation. The emphasis of the positivist research approach is on highly structured methodology aimed at enabling replication, and the end product of such an approach should be law-like generalisations (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, p. 598). For this reason, this chapter seeks to describe the research methods and approaches in as much detail as possible so that the research can be easily replicated. Another characteristic of the positivist approach is that the researcher is independent of, and does not affect nor is influenced by, the subject of the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, p. 548).

The positivist paradigm adopts the deductive approach to generate knowledge (Bryman, 2011, p.16) which is the approach taken in this research study takes the deductive approach. Hypotheses were deduced on the basis of the reviewed theory on the subject of social media activities and their impact on brand equity dimensions (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, p. 124). The hypotheses were expressed in operational terms, and more precisely they proposed a positive relationship between specific concepts and variables (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, p. 124). That is, the hypotheses proposed a positive relationship between SMM activities of luxury fashion brands on one hand, and concepts such as brand salience, brand performance, imagery, judgements, feelings and resonance on the other. The purpose of this approach is to subsequently test these hypotheses by collecting quantitative data and finally to statistically generalise the findings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, p. 125).

3.2. Research strategy

In terms of the research strategy, the present research study seeks to address the research questions of this study by relying on the survey strategy which is usually associated with the deductive approach (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, p. 144). Following the review of the

relevant literature whose purpose was to investigate the existing evidence on the subject matter of this study, the following research question was developed: “How can the SMM activities of luxury fashion brands impact customer-based brand equity?”. It was on the basis of this research question and the underlying literature that the hypotheses were developed. To be able to confirm or refute the hypotheses primary research consisting of an online survey was conducted. The online survey consisted of sending questionnaires to consumers and its purpose was to provide quantitative data relating to the research question. The survey strategy enables the collection of quantitative data, and it is possible to analyse this data quantitatively through the descriptive and inferential statistics (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, p. 144). Quantitative data is collected in order to be able to determine the generalizability of the findings for other luxury brands. The quantitative data collected using a survey strategy can also be utilised to suggest possible reasons for the relationships between the variables studied here.

3.3. Research methods

As already indicated this study relied on the mono method, that is, on the use of a single data collection technique (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, p. 151). The principal data collection method is a questionnaire sent out to customers of luxury fashion brands. Structured, self-completion, online questionnaires consisting of closed-end questions were used to collect data (sample of the questionnaire is to be found in Appendix 1). Standardised questionnaires were used because it allows for relatively easy interpretation of respondents’ answers (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, p. 362). The questionnaire was distributed across social media and per e-mail because of the nature of the research. Namely, as the purpose of this study is to analyse the SMM of luxury fashion brands it is reasonable to distribute the questionnaire on social media. In addition to this, distributing an online questionnaire increased the chances of obtaining a large sample size and more importantly of obtaining a sample that is geographically dispersed. Time and cost considerations were another reason why the questionnaire was distributed and completed online because this type of questionnaire is associated with low cost and fast data collection process.

Two luxury fashion brands present on social media will be included in the survey: Burberry and Hermès. Their SMM strategies differ which will enable us to identify which

content categories are most influential on brand equity. According to Refinery 29 and Luxury Daily, Burberry belongs to the most visible brands on social media whereas Hermès belongs to the five least visible brands (Refinery 29, 2015; Luxury Daily 2016). Hermès ranked 18th in Brandwatch's Index, due to the low social visibility and accompanying low engagement (Luxury Daily 2016). Two questionnaires are developed, one for each of the above-mentioned brands. The questionnaires were then posted on the social media fan pages of these brands. In addition to this, the link of the survey was also posted on the researcher's personal social media pages and sent to the researcher's own email list. The questionnaire will be developed on www.surveymonkey.com after which a link with the survey will be generated that will be posted on the Facebook fan pages. Each questionnaire will contain several filter questions in order to ensure the eligibility of participants.

1. The participant should answer that he/she has "Liked" the particular brand's fan page on Facebook/Instagram. When 'liking' a fan page on Facebook or Instagram users start receiving the content that the brand shares and therefore we can assume that these participants are exposed to the brand's SMM activities.
2. The participant should receive the newsfeed of the particular brand at least once a week.
3. The participant should read the newsfeed from the brand.
4. The participant should have bought a product from the particular brand in the last year. This is necessary in order to be able to evaluate the level of brand loyalty among the participants. A consumer cannot be loyal to a brand if he/she has never used the product.

The items in the questionnaires are developed on the brand equity items developed by Yoo and Donthu (2001) and on Keller's (2003) brand equity categories (see Table 2).

Table 2 Brand equity items

Salience	
	I can recognise Burberry among other competing brands.
	I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Burberry.
Performance	
	Products of Burberry are worth their price.
	Compared to other fashion brands Burberry products are more unique.
	Compared to other fashion brands Burberry products are more stylish.
Imagery	
	I admire and respect the people who wear Burberry.
Judgments	
Quality	In comparison to alternative brands, Burberry has better quality.
Consideration	I am very likely to recommend Burberry to others.
Feelings	
	Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of social approval.
	Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of self-esteem.
	Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of pride.
Resonance	
Loyalty	I consider myself loyal to Burberry.
	I am willing to pay premium price for Burberry.
Attachment	I really love Burberry.
Community	I identify with people who use this brand.
Engagement	I really like to talk about this brand to others.

3.4. Sampling

Convenience sampling was used to collect the sample. The sample of 105 individuals was collected because it was available by virtue of its accessibility (Bryman and Bell 2011, p. 190). Convenience sampling was more likely to generate a larger sample size than other sampling techniques. Convenience sampling was also applied because it allowed for data collection in a very short timescale. To ensure the representativeness of the sample the questionnaires contained filter questions.

3.5. Data analysis

The data collected through the online survey was analysed with the statistical software SPSS. The data analysis consists of comparing and looking for relationships between variables. The variables and the relationships between them will be presented in the following section in the form of contingency tables and cross-tabulation, tables and frequency distribution and so forth. The data will also be analysed by applying bivariate analyses in order to identify potential relationships between specific SMM activities and the dimensions of brand equity (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 347). Simple regression will also be used in order to identify potential causal relationship between different variables.

3.6. Ethical considerations

One of the key ethical considerations during the data collection stage is ensuring participants' confidentiality and anonymity and acquiring informed consent before the data collection begins. To respond to these ethical considerations all respondents will be provided with an Information Sheet before asking them to participate in the survey (see Appendix 1). The Information Sheet will contain background information about the research study and the rationale for conducting the study. Furthermore, all participants will be asked to sign a Consent Form to participate in the survey. The Consent Form will guarantee participants' anonymity, confidentiality and data-protection. Participants will also be informed that they can withdraw from the survey at any time, and that they can ask for their data to be destroyed and/or removed from the project until it is no longer practical to do so. This will appear on the 'consent form'

page. The Consent Form and the Information Sheet will appear at the beginning of the survey on a separate page. After they agree with the terms they will be able to proceed with the survey. The online survey development cloud-based software, Survey Monkey, automatically assigns numbers to the participants which ensure the anonymity of the respondents as they will only be identifiable through this unique number. In addition to this, participants were not asked to fill in their name or to present any personal data which prevents their identification.



4. Data findings and analysis

4.1. The SMM of Burberry and Hermes

Burberry is often labelled as the top digital luxury brand. It launched its Facebook page in 2009 and was thus one of the first luxury brands that is using social networking. It currently has over 17 million fans on its Facebook page. The brand updates its statuses and posts contents on daily basis and thus seeks to engage customers. Some of the contents it posts include live streams of its runway shows, advertisements, presentations of its products, campaigns, acoustic tracks performed and recorded exclusively for Burberry (part of its Burberry Acoustic project), presenting the newest collections, make-up tutorials, footages from catwalk, behind the scenes content, important events and dates for the company, store openings, and announcements, and so forth. This variety of content manages to keep its fans entertained. The proof of this high level of engagement is the number of likes, comments and shares. The number of 'likes' and 'shares' on the Burberry Facebook page can reach few thousands (see Appendix 2).

On the other hand, Hermes' SMM appears to be significantly less engaging. This brand has considerably less fans on its Facebook page and posts contents very rarely. The last post on its Facebook fan page was on 28. June. Table 3 summarises the SMM of both brands on the basis of several variables: number of fans, frequency of posts, and level of engagement. As shown in the table Burberry's SMM is significantly stronger than that of Hermes and this is also reflected on the level of fans' engagement. Burberry delivers relevant, interesting and varied content that captures not only the personality and exclusivity of the brand but the attention of the fans as well. The number of 'likes', 'shares' and 'comments' clearly acknowledges the high level of consumer engagement that Burberry creates on its Facebook fan page. On the basis of these figures, we can make few assumptions that will later be tested by drawing upon the data collected with the online questionnaires. Considering that Burberry's marketing activities on Facebook are significantly more engaging than the marketing activities of Hermes we can assume that Burberry's consumer brand equity will be much stronger than the brand equity of Hermes. More precisely, considering that the present study conceptualises and measures the concept of brand equity through 6 different dimensions (see Table 2) we assume that:

- Burberry's Facebook activities will have a greater influence on awareness of the brand than Hermes' activities;

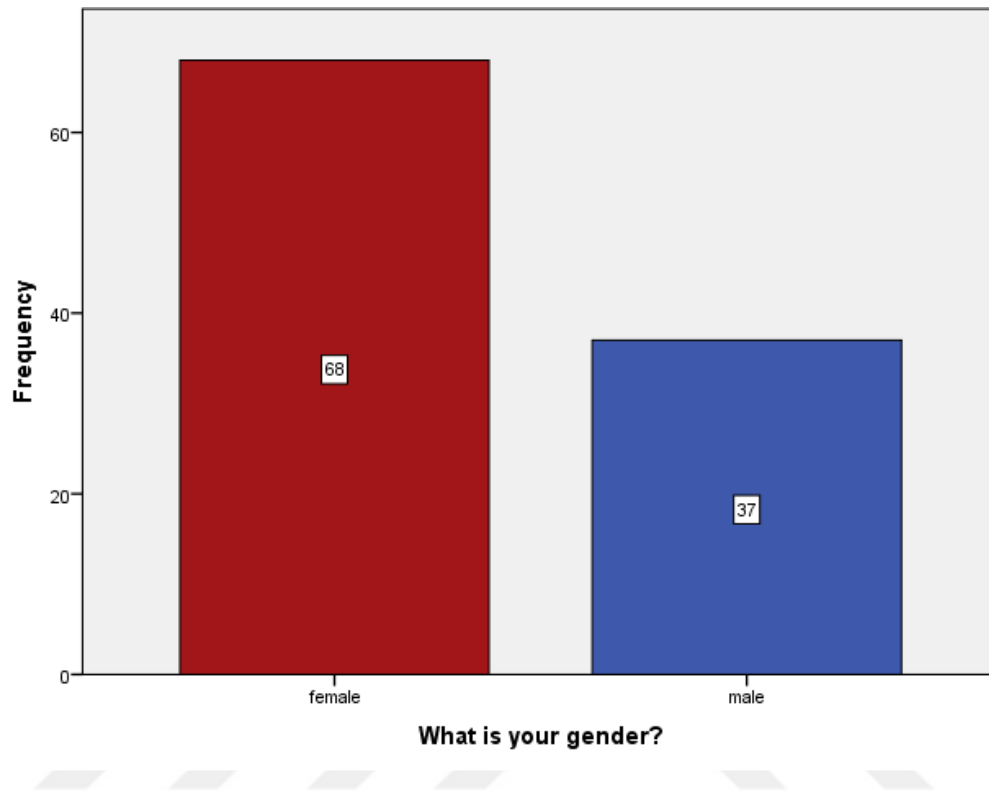
- Burberry's Facebook activities will have greater influence on perceived quality, value and uniqueness of the brand than Hermes' activities;
- Burberry's Facebook activities will have greater influence on brand imagery and performance related associations than Hermes' activities;
- Burberry's Facebook activities will have greater influence on evaluations of brand quality and brand consideration than Hermes' activities;
- Burberry's Facebook activities are more likely to evoke favourable emotions of social approval, self-respect and excitement among fans than Hermes' activities;

Table 3 Performance of Burberry and Hermes on their Facebook fan pages

	Burberry	Hermes
Number of fans	17,117,704	2,522,754
Number of posts in the last 3 months (15 June- 15 August)	16	1 (28. June)
Number of likes	38830	4400
Number of shares	2931	556
Number of comments	205	144
Total engagements	41996	5100

4.2. Demographic characteristics of the sample

A total of 154 individuals started the survey, 49 of whom got disqualified because they were filtered out with the filter questions aiming at eliciting answers regarding individuals' experience with the brand or because they skipped all the questions. For this reason, a total of 105 got qualified for the survey and these respondents' answers are used for the statistical analyses presented below. An almost equal number of qualified respondents was achieved for both brands: 52 for the Burberry brand and 53 for the Hermes brand. The reason why similar sample sizes for both brands were obtained was because unequal sample sizes typically affect the accuracy and robustness of the statistical analyses. The majority of the respondents were female: 68 as compared to 37 males (Figure 2). The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 37.

Figure 2 Gender of respondents

4.3. Burberry respondents

To measure brand salience the questionnaire asked participants how easily they can recognise the specific brand among competing brands and how easily they can recognise the symbol/logo of the specific brand. Cross-tabulation was run in order to display the distribution of answers to the question regarding the ability of the respondents to easily recognise Burberry among competing brands according to gender. As shown in Table 4, all of the 52 Burberry respondents answered that they can easily recognise Burberry among competing brands. The table also indicates that women were more likely to strongly agree with the statement than men.

Table 4 I can easily recognise Burberry among other competing brands

		What is your gender?		Total
		female	male	
I can easily recognise Burberry among other competing brands.	strongly agree	29	9	38
	agree	4	10	14
Total		33	19	52

A similar cross-tabulation was run in regard to the question about the ability to recall Burberry's logo (Table 5). As shown below all but one participants reported being able to quickly recall the symbol and logo of Burberry and again men appear to be more neutral than women because they were more likely to 'agree' rather than 'strongly agree' with the statement.

Table 5 I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Burberry

		What is your gender?		Total
		female	male	
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Burberry.	strongly agree	30	9	39
	agree	3	9	12
	disagree	0	1	1
Total		33	19	52

To measure brand performance the questionnaire aimed to elicit respondents' perceptions about the respective brand's value for money, uniqueness and stylishness. A very large proportion of the Burberry respondents reported that they find Burberry products more unique (Figure 3) and more stylish (Figure 4) compared to other fashion brands.

Figure 3 Compared to other fashion brands Burberry products are more unique

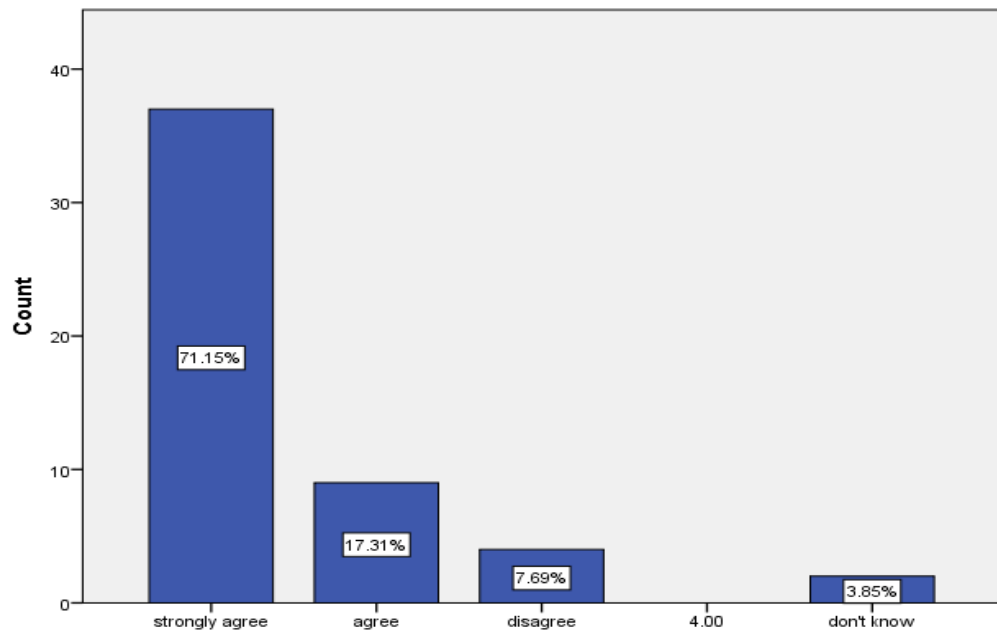
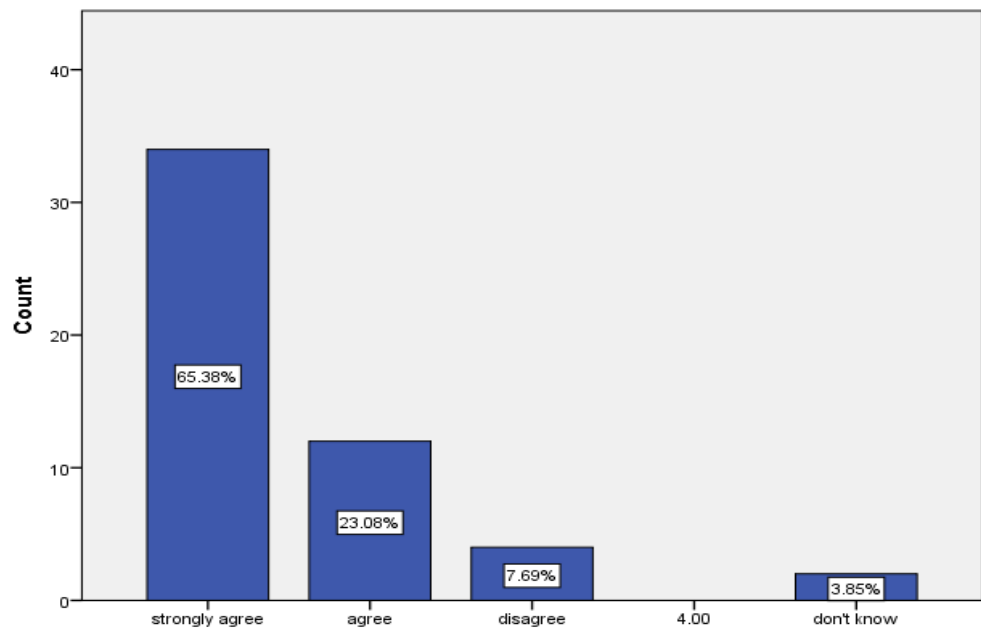
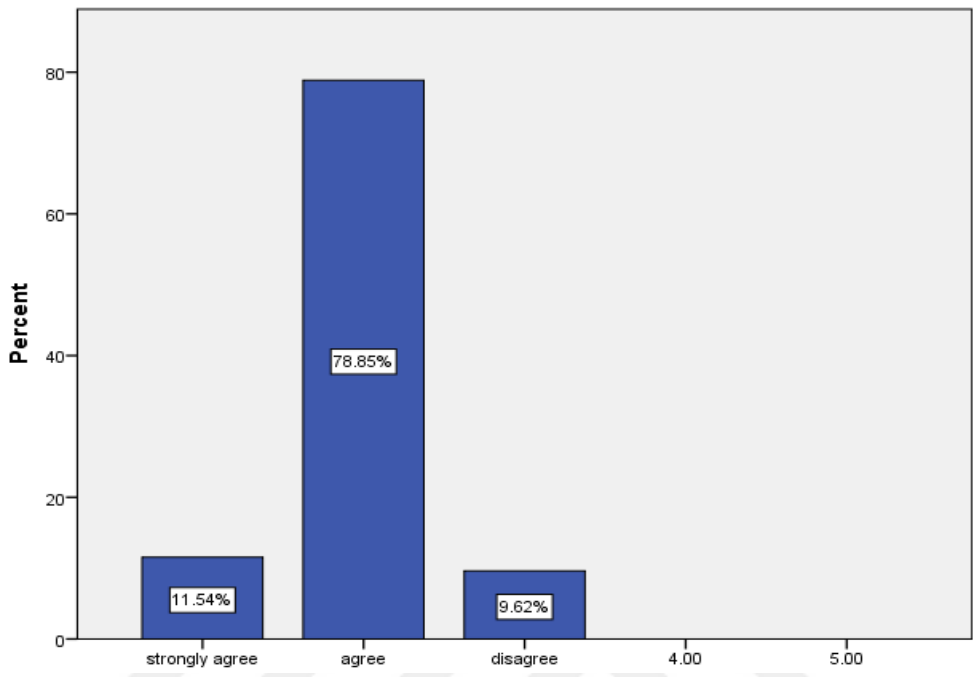


Figure 4 Compared to other fashion brands Burberry products are more stylish



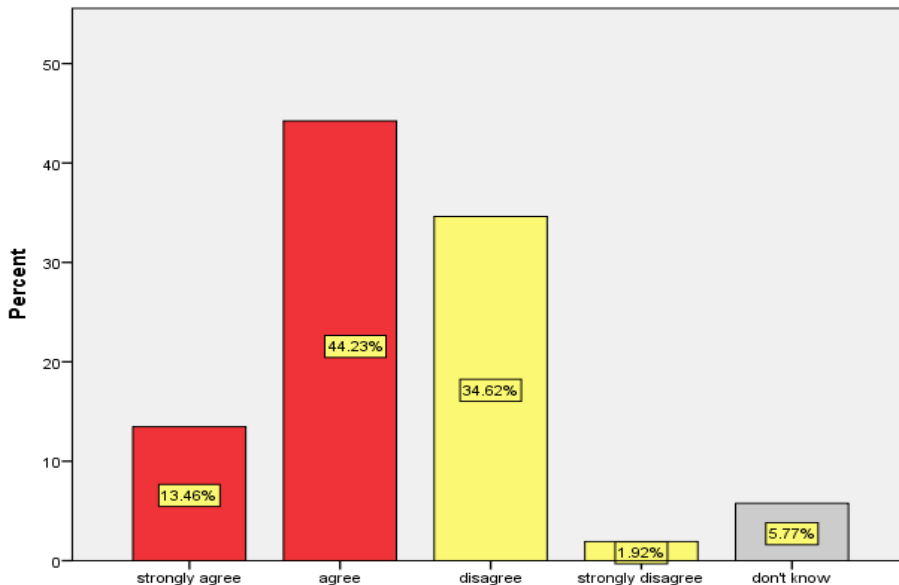
In terms of the value for money attached by respondents Figure 5 illustrates that a very large proportion of the respondents believe that Burberry's products are worth their price.

Figure 5 Burberry's products are worth their price



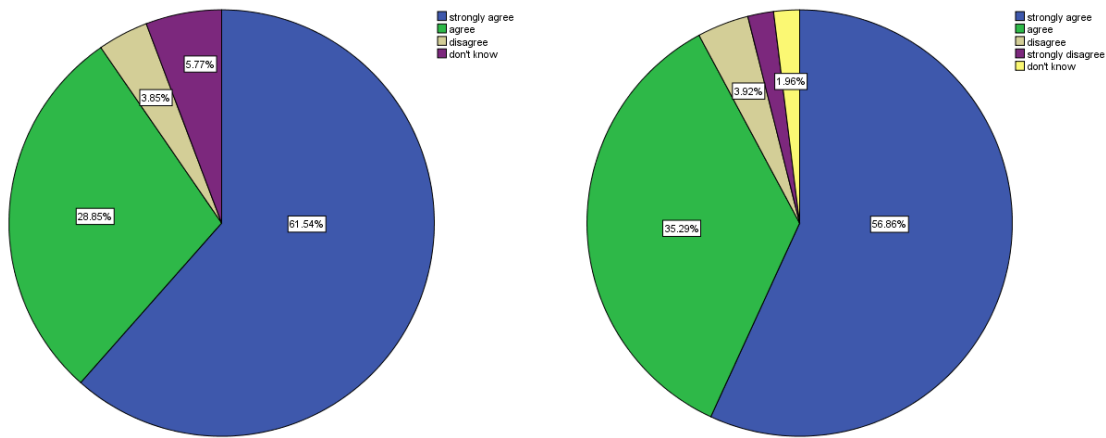
The last question of the first part of the questionnaire aimed to evaluate brand imagery, and to investigate the ways that respondents think about the respective brand abstractly. This question thus aimed to discover to what extent the respondents admired and respected the people who wear Burberry and Figure 6 illustrates the answers. As shown in Figure 6 the opinion of the respondents differed considerably. A total of 57% either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement whereas 36% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 6 I admire and respect the people who wear Burberry



The second part of the questionnaire focused on the judgements and the feelings of respondents towards the two luxury brands. Concerning the quality perception among the Burberry fans, 89% agree and strongly agree with the statement that Burberry has a better quality than competing fashion brands and 91% said they are very likely to recommend Burberry to others (see Figure 7).

Figure 7 In comparison to alternative brands, Burberry has better quality/I am very likely to recommend Burberry to others



In regard to the feelings of the respondents towards Burberry, the data was summarised in Table 6 for purpose of simplicity and because of the correlation between the three questions about social approval, self-esteem and pride. The first table shows the frequency and percentage of respondents that agreed strongly with the statements and the second table shows the frequency and percentage of respondents that were moderate in their agreement with the statements. As the tables show, 41 respondents stated that wearing Burberry gives them a feeling of social approval, which is a very high proportion. 39 of the respondents stated that wearing Burberry gives them a feeling of self-esteem and 40 that wearing Burberry gives them a feeling of pride.

Table 6 Feelings of Burberry fans towards the brand

	Responses	
	N (STRONGLY AGREE)	Percent
Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of social approval.	7	31.8%
Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of self-esteem.	8	36.4%
Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of pride.	7	31.8%

	Responses	
	N (AGREE)	Percent
Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of social approval.	34	34.7%
Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of self-esteem.	31	31.6%
Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of pride.	33	33.7%

The final section of the questionnaire aimed to collect responses regarding brand resonance. To measure the loyalty of respondents toward Burberry they were asked whether they consider themselves loyal to Burberry; and whether they are willing to pay a premium price. 41 of the respondents answered that they consider themselves loyal to Burberry and that they are willing to pay premium price for Burberry.

Table 7 I consider myself loyal to Burberry/ I am willing to pay premium price for Burberry

		Responses	
		N (STRONGLY AGREE)	Percent
	I consider myself loyal to Burberry.	29	90.6%
	I am willing to pay premium price for Burberry.	3	9.4%

		Responses	
		N (AGREE)	Percent
	I consider myself loyal to Burberry.	12	24.5%
	I am willing to pay premium price for Burberry.	37	75.5%

In regard to the attachment, community and engagement dimensions the data revealed the following: 48 of the participants reported that they love Burberry but only 14 answered that they identify with the people who use the same brand (see Table 8).

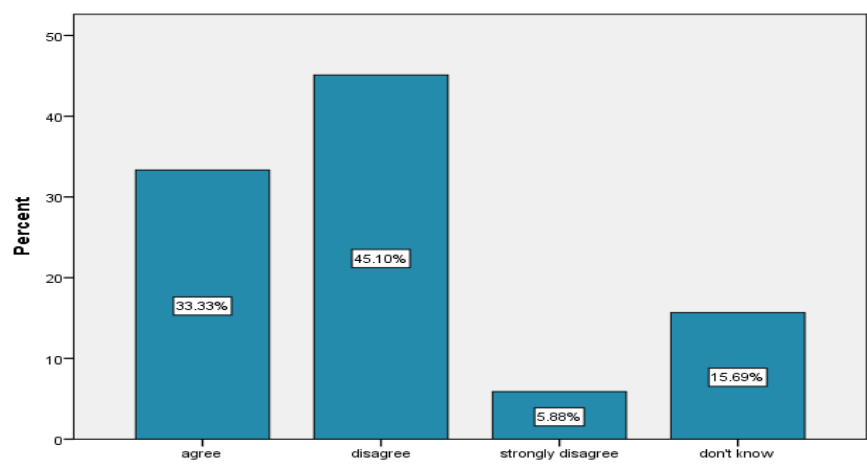
Table 8 I really love Burberry/I identify with people who use this brand

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N (STRONGLY AGREE)	Percent	
I really love Burberry.	29	87.9%	93.5%
I identify with people who use this brand.	4	12.1%	12.9%

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N (AGREE)	Percent	
I really love Burberry.	19	65.5%	82.6%
I identify with people who use this brand.	10	34.5%	43.5%

Finally, the results reveal almost half of the Burberry fans (49%) do not like to talk about Burberry to others (Figure 8).

Figure 8 I really like to talk about Burberry to others



4.4. Hermès respondents

The same descriptive and frequency analyses were conducted with Hermes in order to enable comparability of the findings. As the table below reveals, the results differ considerably from the Burberry data. While all of the Burberry fans reported that they can easily recognise Burberry among competing brands the Hermes fans answered differently to this question. From the total of 53 Hermes respondents, 31 answered that cannot easily recognise the brand among competing brands. The proportion of the respondents that could easily recall Hermes' logo were however higher (Table 10) (36 versus 13 who could not easily recall the logo).

Table 9 I can easily recognise Hermes among other competing brands

		What is your gender?		Total
		female	male	
I can easily recognise Hermes among other competing brands.	strongly agree	2	2	4
	agree	6	5	11
	disagree	23	8	31
	don't know	4	3	7
Total		35	18	53

Table 10 I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Hermes

		What is your gender?		Total
		female	male	
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Hermes.	strongly agree	3	1	4
	agree	22	10	32
	disagree	7	4	11
	strongly disagree	1	1	2
	don't know	2	2	4
Total		35	18	53

The findings also differed significantly in terms of brand performance. Half of Hermes respondents disagreed that Hermes products are more unique than the other luxury fashion brands (Figure 9) and around 47% disagreed that Hermes products are more stylish than the other fashion brands (Figure 10).

Figure 9 Compared to other fashion brands Hermes products are more unique

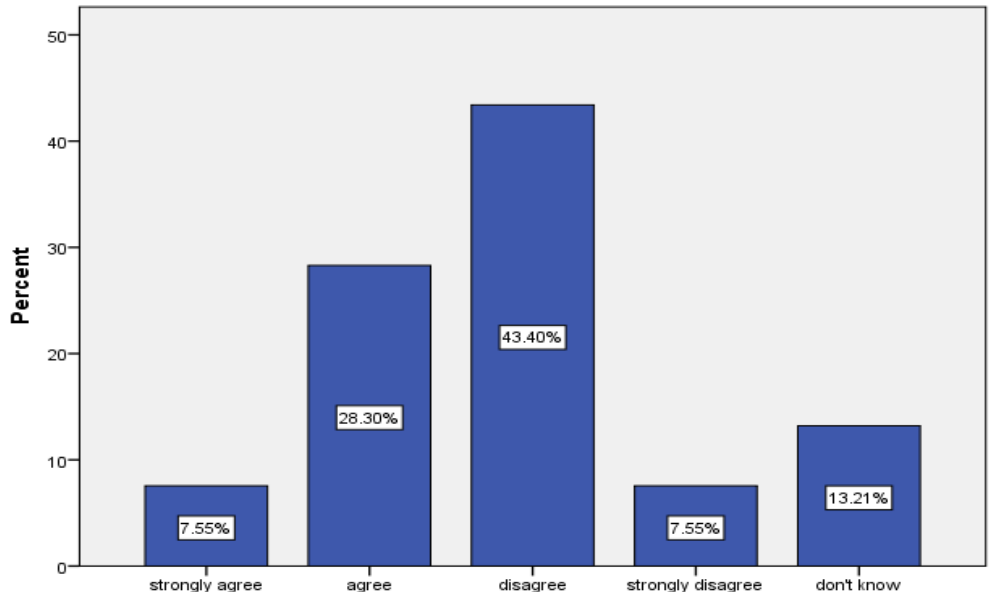
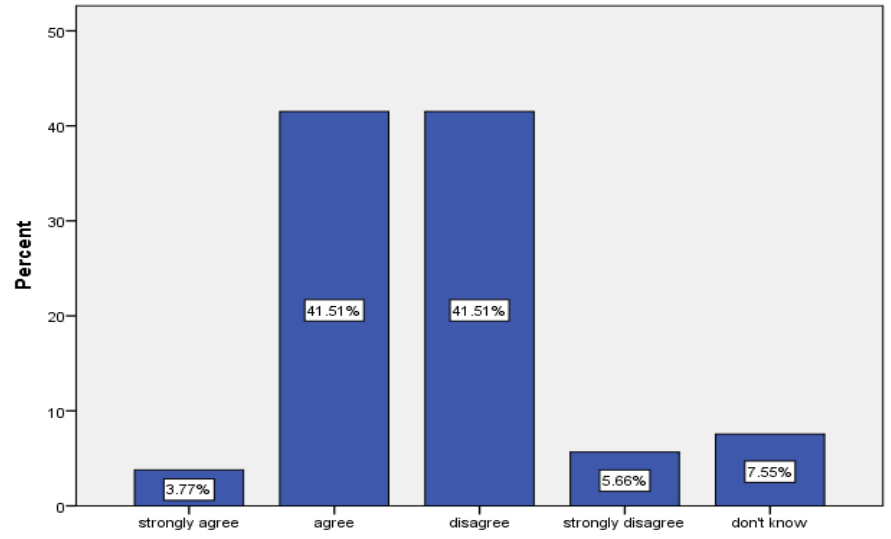
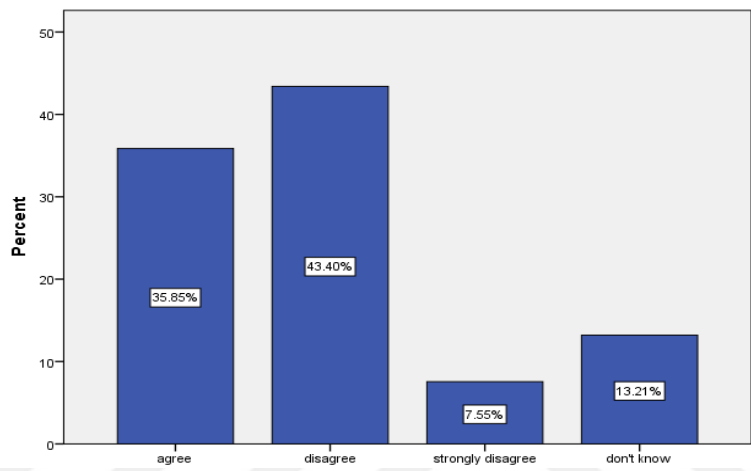


Figure 10 Compared to other fashion brands Hermes products are more stylish



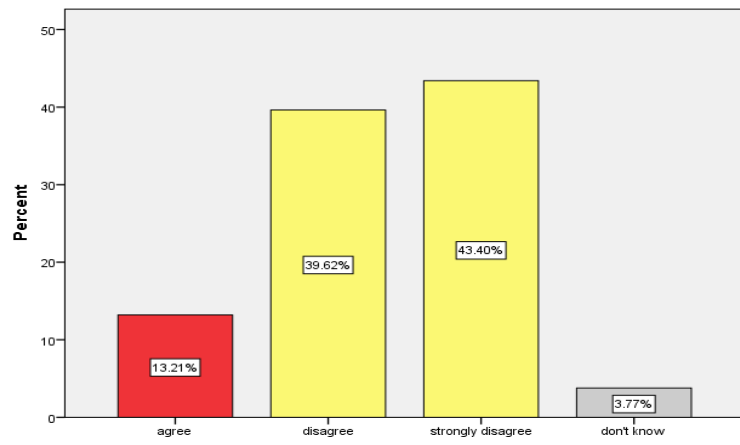
Similar level of disagreement was established in regard to respondents' perception of the value for money of Hermes. Again, around half of the respondents do not agree that Hermes products are worth their price (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Hermes products are worth their price



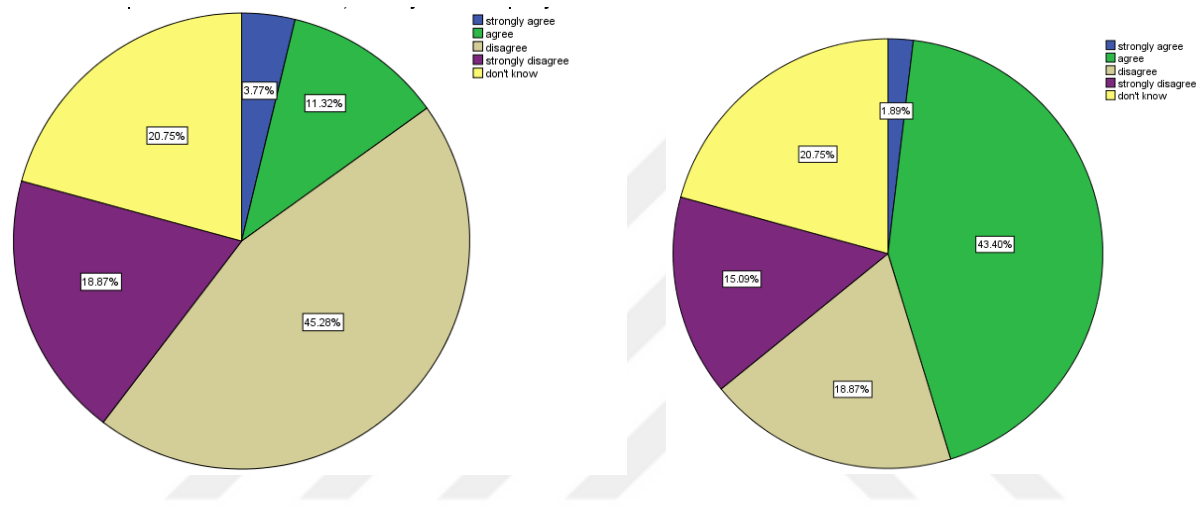
In terms of the brand imagery, the majority of the respondents answered that they do not admire and respect people who wear Hermes (82%), as opposed to 13% who reported that they admire and respect these people (Figure 12).

Figure 12 I admire and respect the people who wear Hermes



As implied by 63% of the respondents Hermes is not necessarily perceived as having a better quality than the other fashion brands (Figure 13, chart on the left). Nonetheless, around 42% of them would recommend the brand to others (Figure 13, chart on the right side).

Figure 13 In comparison to alternative brands, Hermes has better quality/I am very likely to recommend Hermes to others



Additional to this, the data concerning the feelings of the respondents towards Hermes again show rather different results. Compared to the 41 Burberry respondents only 5 Hermes respondents agreed that wearing this brand gives them a feeling of social approval. Similar results were obtained on the other dimensions as well. Compared to the 39 Burberry respondents, only 7 stated that wearing Hermes gives them a feeling of self-esteem. Compared to the 40 Burberry respondents only 6 Hermes respondents answered that wearing Hermes gives them a feeling of pride.

Table 11 Feelings of Hermes fans towards the brand

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N (STRONGLY AGREE)	Percent	
Wearing Hermes gives me a feeling of social approval.	1	33.3%	100.0%
Wearing Hermes gives me a feeling of self-esteem.	1	33.3%	100.0%
Wearing Hermes gives me a feeling of pride.	1	33.3%	100.0%

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N (AGREE)	Percent	
Wearing Hermes gives me a feeling of social approval.	4	26.7%	66.7%
Wearing Hermes gives me a feeling of self-esteem.	6	40.0%	100.0%
Wearing Hermes gives me a feeling of pride.	5	33.3%	83.3%

Hermes respondents' answers regarding brand resonance are summarised in Table 12. Only around 10% of the respondents answered that they consider themselves loyal to Hermes and that they are willing to pay premium price for the brand.

Table 12 I consider myself loyal to Hermes/ I am willing to pay premium price for Hermes

I consider myself loyal to Hermes.		
	Frequency	Percent
agree	5	9.4
disagree	25	47.2
strongly disagree	20	37.7
don't know	3	5.7
Total	53	100.0
I am willing to pay premium price for Hermes		
	Frequency	Percent
agree	5	9.4
disagree	37	69.8
strongly disagree	10	18.9
don't know	1	1.9
Total	53	100.0

Finally, in terms of the feelings towards Hermes, the results are rather mixed because around 37% reported that they love the brand as against 52% who disagreed with the statement (Figure 14). A large percentage (78%) of them answered that they do not identify themselves with other individuals who wear the brand (Figure 15).

Figure 14 I really love Hermès

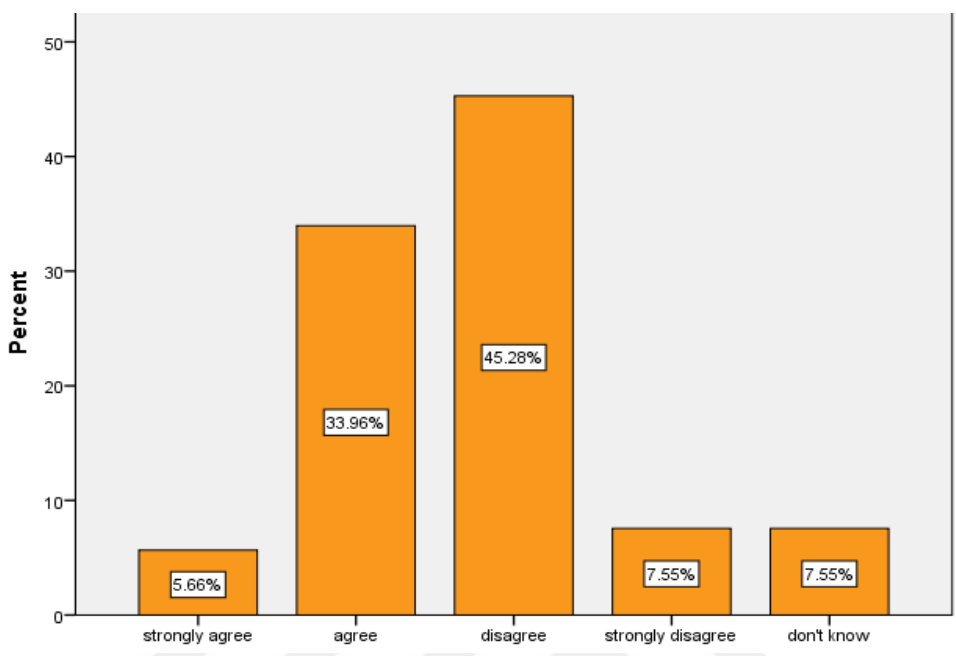
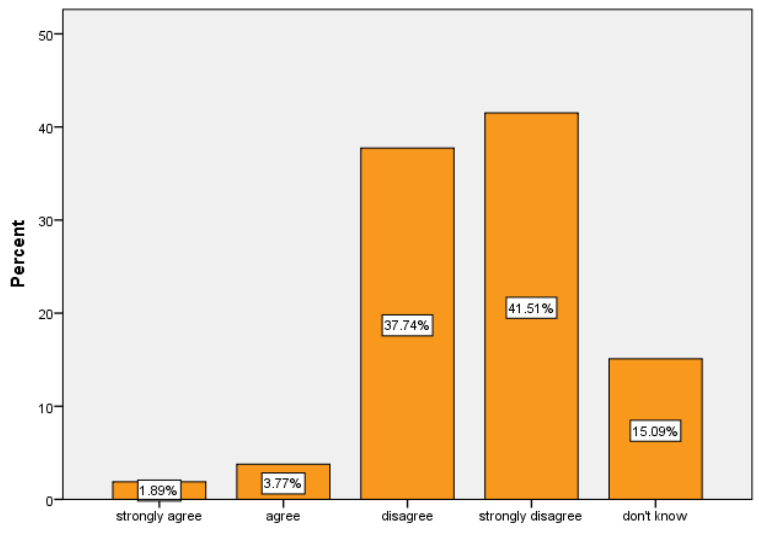
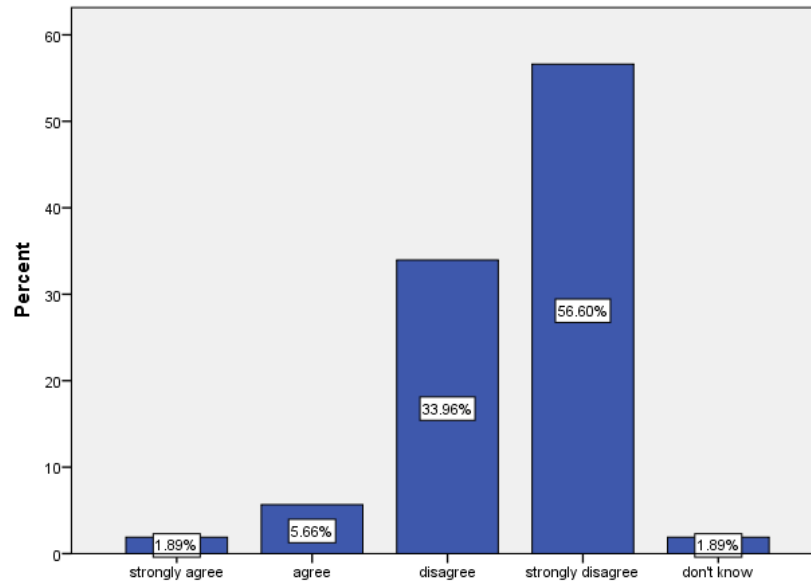


Figure 15 I identify with people who use Hermès



Talking about Hermes to others is not that common according to the results. 89% of respondents reported that they do not really like to talk about the brand to others (Figure 16).

Figure 16 I really like to talk about Hermès to others



5. Discussion and concluding remarks

The above overview and analysis of Burberry's marketing strategy on Facebook revealed that the brand is very successful at creating buzz, at building ways that enable fans to promote and share the message themselves, and at encouraging user participation and dialogue (Barker et al. 2012, p. 3) (Table 3). In regard to the impact that this marketing strategy has on the brand equity concept, several claims can be made that related to the research objectives of this study. The high level of visibility and engagement of Burberry on its Facebook fan page appears to positively influence the components of brand equity investigated with the survey, including brand salience, brand performance, brand image, judgements, feelings and brand resonance. Conversely, no such impact can be established with the Hermes fans. This limited impact of Hermes' marketing strategy on consumer-based brand equity can be explained with the limited activities this brand performs on this social media network.

The results reveal very strong brand salience among the Burberry fans as measured by the easiness to recognise the brand among competing brands and to evoke the brand's logo in their minds. The awareness of the Burberry brand is thus very high. Conversely, the reported level of brand recognition and logo was much lower among the Hermes fans. This could be explained with the fact that they had low involvement with the brand and the brand's products on Facebook which in turn reduced the awareness of the brand (Keller 2001, p. 9). In regard to the brand performance dimension, the results revealed that Burberry's fans attach favourable characteristics to the brand's products. Their assessment of the brand's uniqueness, stylishness and value were much more positive than the assessments measured among the Hermes respondents. The fact that Burberry regularly posts its newest products could explain the favourable characteristics that its fans attach to the brand's products. In terms of the brand image the results were not as straightforward among the Burberry fans. A considerable proportion of them (36%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they admire and respect the people who wear Burberry, compared to an even higher proportion among the Hermes respondents (82%). A positive brand imagery results in a mental image in customer's mind or a profile by customers of real users or users who are even more aspirational (Keller 2001, p. 11). However, as the results show such a level of admiration appears to be very weak among the Hermes respondents and much stronger among the Burberry fans. The brand Burberry can be

said to contribute towards the creation of this positive brand imagery by posting content with individual and celebrities wearing their products.

Judgements regarding the brands' quality and brand consideration also appear to be more positive among the Burberry fans. The findings that the Burberry fans find Burberry products to offer a better quality than competing brands and are more likely to recommend it to others than the Hermes fans clearly indicate stronger brand equity of the former brand. Burberry fans appear to hold much stronger judgements regarding the quality of this brand and are more likely to include this brand in the set of brands they might purchase (Keller 2001, p. 13). Additional to this, 41 of the Burberry respondents as compared to only 5 Hermes respondents reported that wearing the respective brand gives them a feeling of social approval. These findings imply that the Burberry fans could be more likely to purchase Burberry in order to gain social approval than the Hermes fans. More importantly, this may also indicate that the Burberry brand is more successful at meeting the needs of customers for social approval. Similar distribution of answers was noticed for the questions regarding self-esteem and pride. Again, it can be assumed that the Burberry fans are more likely to purchase Burberry because this gives them a feeling of pride or self-esteem. Feelings of pride and self-esteem occur when the brand makes consumers feel good about themselves following the purchase (Keller 2001, p. 13) and this is why it can be concluded that the brand Burberry is more successful at triggering these feelings among its consumers than the Hermes brand.

According to Keller (2001), the most valuable brand-building block is brand resonance which is established only when the other brand-building blocks have been reached. If there is true brand resonance customers experience high level of loyalty towards the brand which encourages them to actively look for ways to interact with the brand and share their brand experiences with others (Keller 2001). Several conclusions can be made about Burberry and Hermes in regard to brand resonance and its four categories, behavioural loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community and active engagement. In terms of the loyalty towards the brands and the impact of social media marketing on this concept, 41 of Burberry respondents answered that they consider themselves loyal to Burberry and that they are willing to pay premium price compared to only 5 Hermes respondents. Loyalty is a core dimension of brand equity. The fact that Burberry scores much better on this dimension implies much stronger brand equity. Consequently, we can conclude that Burberry's more engaging Facebook marketing

strategy and frequent posting also has a positive impact on brand loyalty. The attachment the Burberry fans feel towards the brand (as measured by their statements whether they love the brand) appears to be higher than the one among the Hermes fans. This implies that the Burberry fans feel a greater deal of attitudinal attachment to the brand than the Hermes fans and that the former regard the respective brand as being something special in the broader context and when compared to competitors. In regard to the sense of community, however, neither of the brands appear to perform very good because only small proportions of the respondents answered that they identify themselves with other individuals who wear the brand. This implies that it is impossible to make any inferences as regard the influence of social media marketing on the sense of community among consumers and their identification with the brand community. Similarly, only a small proportion appears to be actively engaged with the brand as measured by their willingness to talk to others about the brand. These results again make it difficult to draw any inferences regarding social media marketing's impact on the level of active engagement among consumers. However, in this regard it has to be emphasised that even though the Burberry fans reported that they are not so inclined to talk about the brand to others, the number of 'likes', 'shares' and comments on the fan page indicate a very strong and active engagement. According to Keller (2001, p.15) when customers are willing to invest time, energy and other resources into the brand, such as for instance, receiving updates and exchanging correspondence with other brand users, this implies active engagement. The high number of 'likes', 'shares' and comments on the Burberry Facebook fan page thus implies strong attitudinal attachment towards the brand and a strong sense of community. For this reason, the findings may thus have been influenced by the particular type of engagement that was investigated in the survey. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies should also include level and type of engagement on social media. In general, it can be concluded that the brand resonance is stronger among the Burberry consumers due to the stronger loyalty and attachments they feel towards the brand as compared to the Hermes fans.

In summary, the above finding indicates that (i) Burberry has much more engaging Facebook marketing strategy; and (ii) that brand salience, performance, imagery, judgements, and loyalty are much stronger among the Burberry fans than among the Hermes fans. On the basis of this, it can be concluded that the effective and engaging marketing strategy of Burberry positively influences these brand equity dimensions and thus contributed towards the creation of

a stronger brand equity. The findings are thus in line with previous research according to which SMM of luxury brands can impact different dimensions of customer-based brand equity (Godey et al. 2016; Lee and Walkins 2016). On the basis of this, it is recommended that luxury brands can significantly impact the strength of their brand equity by offering engaging, interesting, relevant content on social media on a frequent basis.

One of the limitations of the study is that the questionnaire did not elicit information about the respondents' nationality. As already established by some authors, the impact of SMM on luxury customer-based brand equity as reflected in brand awareness and brand equity differs across different countries (Godey et al. 2016, p. 7). Consequently, this present research study cannot discover whether some country-specific characteristics have moderated the impact of SMM on these aspects of brand equity among the Burberry and Hermes fans. Future studies could incorporate this dimension in order to identify whether nationality could moderate the impact of SMM on brand equity.

In addition to this, another limitation of the study arises from the sampling strategy. The present study sourced the data from fans of Burberry and Hermes only. The rationale for focusing on these two brands only was that the brands have rather opposite social media marketing strategies and consequently the assumptions were made that the impact on brand equity would be different as well. Nonetheless, to be able to make stronger inferences about the impact of social media strategies on brand equity dimensions among luxury fashion brands it is advisable that more brands are included in future studies. Incorporating several luxury brands that pursue different social media strategies would result in even broader and more comprehensive data as to the impact of social media marketing on social media dimensions. In addition to this, such an approach would also be valuable from a methodological perspective. Namely, incorporating several luxury fashion brands would increase the sample size that would thus be more representative of the population of interest and would generate findings that can be more accurately generalised.

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Appendix 1. Sample Questionnaire including Information Sheet and Consent Form

THE SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES OF LUXURY FASHION BRANDS – IMPACT ON BRAND EQUITY - BURBERRY

Welcome to My Survey

INFORMATION SHEET

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Institution: MSc International Marketing, School of Business, Management and Economics

Project Title: "The social media marketing strategies of luxury fashion brands – impact on brand equity"

The aim of this research project is to investigate the impact of Social Media Marketing communications on brand equity of luxury fashion brands. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Your participation is anonymous and confidential (only seen by myself and supervisor). You can decide not to answer any question if you prefer not to. You can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

CONSENT FORM

By clicking 'NEXT' you agree with the following statements: I have read the information sheet about this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason. I agree to participate in this study.

1. I have bought a product of Burberry in the last year.

Yes

No

2. I am a fan of Burberry's Facebook page.

Yes

No

3. I receive the news feed of Burberry on Facebook at least once a week.

Yes

No

4. I read the news feed of Burberry on Facebook.

Yes

No

5. What is your gender?

Female

Male

6. What is your age?

7. I can easily recognise Burberry among other competing brands.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

8. I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Burberry.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

9. Burberry's products are worth their price.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

10. Compared to other fashion brands Burberry products are more unique.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

11. Compared to other fashion brands Burberry products are more stylish.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

12. I admire and respect the people who wear Burberry.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

13. In comparison to alternative brands, Burberry has better quality.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

14. I am very likely to recommend Burberry to others.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

15. Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of social approval.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

16. Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of self-esteem.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

17. Wearing Burberry gives me a feeling of pride.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

18. I consider myself loyal to Burberry.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

19. I am willing to pay premium price for Burberry.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

20. I really love Burberry.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

21. I identify with people who use this brand.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

22. I really like to talk about this brand to others.

Strongly agree

Agree


Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know




Appendix 2. Burberry content on Facebook and fan's engagement




 **Burberry** added 5 new photos to the album: The New Burberry Collection.
April 17 · €

New season, new accessories. Signature bags are updated in uplifting citrus hues, while shoes and shirts come detailed with lace and studs for a modern contrast.

Shop women's new in: brby.co/4vo



Like Comment Share

   4.4K

577 shares

Top Comments

 **Burberry**
April 4 · €

Introducing Mr. Burberry, the new fragrance for men
Filmed by Oscar-winning British director Steve McQueen and starring Josh Whitehouse and Amber Anderson



450K Views

Like Comment Share

6.4K

1,571 shares

Top Comments

4.4K

577 shares

Write a comment...

 **Divya Anupam** I'm a regular customer of Burberry and have always like their products for their uniqueness, quality and style. However, I am quite disappointed by the customer service received recently. I purchased a Medium Check Leather Tote Bag for £495 which was r... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 3 · June 23 at 11:41am

1 Reply

 **Alina Mdr** Got a small burberry purse and realized at home it had a broken leash, no one in the stores around europe was willing to help me out with that and neither did customerservice! Love the burberry coat but will not buy it nor anything else from you because if I pay I like to recieve quality and service. burberry failed on both.

Like · Reply · 2 · June 20 at 7:21pm

2 Replies

View more comments 2 of 97

Appendix 3. Record of Ethical Approval and System generated e-mail

Ethical Review Application (ER/SB699/1, [REDACTED])	
Project Title	The social media marketing strategies of luxury fashion brands and impact on brand equity
Status	Approved
Department	Business and Management
Email	[REDACTED]@sussex.ac.uk
Applicant Status	PG (Taught)
Phone	[REDACTED]
Supervisor	Khammash, Marv
Project Start Date	27-Jul-2016
Project End Date	30-Aug-2016
External Funding in place	No
External Collaborators	No
Funder/ Project Title	
Name of Funder	
Project Description	<p>5 luxury fashion brands present on social media will be included in the survey: Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Saint Laurent and Gucci.</p> <p>Five questionnaires will be developed, one for each of the above mentioned brands. The questionnaires will then be posted on the social media fan pages of these brands. Each questionnaire will contain several filter questions in order to examine the eligibility of participants.</p>

Ethical Review Form Section A (ER/SB699/1) (cont.)

Ethical Review Form Section A (ER/SB699/1)	
Question	Response
>> Checklist	
A1. Will your study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent or in a dependent position (e.g. people under 18, people with learning difficulties, over-researched groups or people in care facilities)?	Yes
A2. Will participants be required to take part in the study without their consent or knowledge at the time (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places), and / or will deception of any sort be used?	No
A3. Will it be possible to link identities or information back to individual participants in any way?	No
A4. Might the study induce psychological stress or anxiety, or produce humiliation or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in the everyday life of the participants?	No
A5. Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use, ethnicity, political behaviour, potentially illegal activities)?	No
A6. Will any drugs, placebos or other substances (such as food substances or vitamins) be administered as part of this study and will any invasive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind will be used?	No
A7. Will your project involve working with any substances and / or equipment which may be considered hazardous?	No
A8. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses, compensation for time or a lottery / draw ticket) be offered to participants?	No
>> Risk Assessment	
A9. If you have answered 'Yes' to ANY of the above questions, your application will be considered as HIGH risk. If however you wish to make a case that your application should be considered as LOW risk please enter the reasons here:	As I indicated, questionnaires will be posted on the social media fan pages of some brands. Some of fans may be under 18 but the questions are not going to be about sensitive topics, Therefore I believe my work should be considered as low risk.

Ethical Review Form Section B (ER/SB699/1) (cont.)


Ethical Review Form Section B (ER/SB699/1)	
Question	Response
>> B.1 Data Collection and Analysis (Please provide full details)	
B1. PARTICIPANTS: How many people do you envisage will participate, who they are, and how will they be selected?	I expect that approximately 100 participants will respond and participate in the survey. Participants will be selected through the Facebook fan pages of the brands.
B2. RECRUITMENT: How will participants be approached and recruited?	The link of the survey will be posted on the Facebook fan pages of Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Saint Laurent and Gucci. Several filter questions should ensure that the participant are eligible to participate in the survey. Namely, the participant should answer that he/she has Liked the particular brands fan page on Facebook/Instagram; The participant should receive the newsfeed of the particular brand at least once a week; The participant should read the newsfeed from the brand; The participant should have bought a product from the particular brand in the last year. This is necessary in order to be able to evaluate the level of brand loyalty among the participants. A consumer cannot be loyal to a brand if he/she has never used the product.
B3. METHOD: What research method(s) do you plan to use; e.g. interview, questionnaire/self-completion questionnaire, field observation, audio/audio-visual recording?	Self-completion questionnaire.
B4. LOCATION: Where will the project be carried out e.g. public place, in researcher's office, in private office at organisation?	On social media websites, through a link of www.surveymonkey.com
>> B.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity	
B5. Will questionnaires be completed anonymously and returned indirectly?	Yes
B6. Will questionnaires and/or interview transcripts only be identifiable by a unique identifier (e.g. code/pseudonym)?	Yes
B7. Will lists of identity numbers or pseudonyms linked to names and/or addresses be stored securely and separately from the research data?	N/A
B8. Will all place names and institutions which could lead to the identification of individuals or organisations be changed?	N/A
B9. Will all personal information gathered be treated in strict confidence and never disclosed to any third parties?	N/A
B10. Can you confirm that your research records will be held in accordance with the data protection guidelines (see guidelines on research governance website)?	Yes
B11. Can you confirm that you will not use the research data for any purpose other than that which consent is given?	Yes

Ethical Review Form Section B (ER/5B699/1) (cont.)

<p>B11a. If you answered NO to any of the above (or think more information could be useful to the reviewer) please explain here:</p>	<p>The questionnaires will be completed anonymously and the researcher will be able to see the completed questionnaire on the website of surveymonkey.</p> <p>Surveymonkey automatically assigns numbers to the participants so they will only be identifiable through this unique number.</p> <p>Participants will not be asked to fill in their names or share any other personal data.</p> <p>The questionnaire will not contain questions that will elicit responses regarding participants personal data.</p> <p>No personal information will be collected with the questionnaire.</p> <p>I can hereby confirm that the research records will be held in accordance with the data protection guidelines and the collected research data will not be used for any purpose other than that which consent has been given by the participants.</p>
<p>>> B.3 Informed Consent and Recruitment of Participants</p>	
<p>B12. Will all respondents be given an Information Sheet and be given adequate time to read it before being asked to agree to participate?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>B13. Will all participants taking part in an interview, focus group, observation (or other activity which is not questionnaire based) be asked to sign a consent form? If you are obtaining consent another way, please explain under 15a below.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>B14. Will all participants self-completing a questionnaire be informed that returning the completed questionnaire implies consent to participate?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>B15. Will all respondents be told that they can withdraw at any time, ask for their data to be destroyed and/or removed from the project until it is no longer practical to do so?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>B15a. If you answered NO to any of the above (or think more information could be useful to the reviewer) please explain here:</p>	<p>All respondents will be provided with an Information Sheet before asking them to participate in the survey. The Information Sheet will contain background information about the research study and the rationale for conducting the study.</p> <p>All participants will be asked to sign a Consent Form to participate in the survey. The Consent Form will guarantee participants anonymity, confidentiality and data-protection.</p> <p>The Consent Form and the Information Sheet will appear at the beginning of the survey on a separate page. After they agree with the terms they will be able to proceed with the survey.</p> <p>All participants will be informed that returning the completed questionnaire implies consent to participate.</p> <p>Participants will be informed that they can withdraw from the survey at any time, and that they can ask for their data to be destroyed and/or removed from the project until it is no longer practical to do so. This will appear on the consent form page.</p>
<p>>> B.4 Context</p>	

Ethical Review Form Section B (ER/SB699/1) (cont.)

B16. Is Criminal Records Bureau clearance necessary for this project? If yes, please ensure you complete the next question.	No
B17. Are any other ethical clearances or permissions required?	No
B17a. If yes, please give further details including the name and address of the organisation. If other ethical approval has already been received please attach evidence of approval, otherwise you will need to supply it when ready.	
B18. Does the research involve any fieldwork - Overseas or in the UK?	No
B18a. If yes, where will the fieldwork take place?	
B19. Will any researchers be in a lone working situation?	No
B19a. If yes, briefly describe the location, time of day and duration of lone working. What precautionary measures will be taken to ensure safety of the researcher(s)?	
>> B.5 Any further concerns	
B20. Are there any other ethical considerations relating to your project which have not been covered above?	No
B20a. If yes, please explain:	



Your Ethical Review Application ER/SB699/1 has been approved by your supervisor and has been forwarded to SREO BMEC SCHOOL for review.

[This is a system generated email. Please do not reply to this email.]

Ethical Review Application ER/SB699/1 has been returned with status Approved.

[This is a system generated email. Please do not reply to this email.]