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Master thesis

Consumer engagement behavior in social media

Why members of Generation Y decide not to engage

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Abstract

Purpose - This thesis aims to develop understanding of why certain consumers choose not to engage in social media. Earlier research on the topic is highly based on positive and negative consumer engagement, which leads to opportunities for studying why some members of Generation Y decide to stay neutral.

Design, methodology and approach - the data collection process is based on semi-structured interviews with ten respondents, showing different levels of engagement and a variety in behavior on social media platforms.

Findings - The empirical findings reveal how personal branding, social phobia and self-focus affects how and to what extent members of Gen Y choose to engage on social media platforms.

Research limitations and implications - This study is related to mapping levels of user engagement and types of behavior on social media. We chose to focus on the overall engagement and behavior, with the main focus on social media users, within Generation Y. The main research limitation is that our study only covers a small part of social media users in Norway, which limits the research setting.

Practical and theoretical implications - In theory, this study reveals how different elements affect decisions towards consumer engagement on social media platforms. It describes what goes through members of Generation Y's minds before deciding whether or not to engage with content from commercial brands. Practical implications are presented to aid brands in properly motivating CEB.

Originality / values - This master thesis provides a deeper understanding regarding why certain users on social media platforms choose not to engage with brands and other users. The study is limited to social media behavior of users in Norway. Our findings, however, may have value in other contexts around the world as members of Generation Y share some similar traits, where the understanding of users' behavior on social media platforms may be used in other scenarios.

Key terms

CEB - Consumer Engagement Behavior

eWOM - Electronic word of mouth

Generation Y - Individuals born between 1981 and 1996 recognized by early and frequent exposure to technology

Social media - Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

WOM - Word of mouth. Informal communication between two conversational participants. The conversation regards characteristics of a brand or their product or service. Can occur offline or online (eWOM).

UGC - User generated content

Brand - A provider of products or services, characterized by features that identify their offer distinctively from their competitors, and building a strong brand is considered the goal of many organizations.

Table of contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background and purpose

Generation Y is the first generation to grow up in an environment characterized by digital technology (Bolton et al., 2013; Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield, 2013). The explosion of social media in the early 2000s resulted in the generation being surrounded by communication technology throughout their childhood and adolescence in a way that is vastly different from what any previous generation had access to in their youth. Social network platforms were mainly used as mediums for communication between people in the early stages, and in the later decade companies and brands have discovered value in communicating and being "social" with consumers and potential customers through social media (Leonardi et al., 2013).

Existing research on user engagement have often focused on the antipoles of user engagement on social media (Cheung, Lee, & Zheng, 2012; Chiang, Lo, & Wang, 2017; Dessart, 2015; Schlosser, 2005; Zailskaite-Jakštė, Damaševičius, Ostreika, & Tiwari, 2018), leaving the continuum between positive and negative consumer engagement behavior (CEB) an area of research that require further studies. Quantitative studies have been adequately used to study CEB and Gen Y to understand how this generation behaves, while studies focused on why they behave the way they do are more sparse. The individual behavior of humans should not necessarily be considered as black or white, and the continuum of behavior of the consuming members of Gen Y build grounds for further qualitative research.

CEB is a complex term and can be understood as behavioral manifestations that are communicated at a certain valence, and the consumer may experience different levels of being present in the act of their engagement (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, & Ilic, 2011). In the context of this thesis, CEB can be reflected through behavior in regards to what manifestations are made, at what valence it is communicated and to what degree the consumer is present in the act of engagement. Hence, it is valuable to explore the continuum of CEB that is expressed by different individuals when pursuing research within the social study of marketing. This thesis seeks to develop understanding of Gen Y and their CEB, and explores why a notable amount of the generation chooses not to engage on social media.

1.2 Research objectives

The existing theoretical contributions explored prior to collecting empirical data for this study exhibit areas within the field that is lacking extensive investigation. Social media has been an important element of marketing in recent years, and it is continuously developing and being used in new ways. Moreover, scientific studies on CEB and social media has received more attention in the past two years and has grown to become a field of higher interest. Thus, several perspectives have not yet been thoroughly researched, and those that have been studied already will benefit from being either confirmed or rejected. Existing research have primarily used quantitative methods, and it is considered beneficial to substantiate the field with qualitative studies.

The study will contribute to the research field by investigating vaguely explored perspectives on CEB on social media and further develop understanding of Gen Y and their reality. When observing behavior online it is possible to see a tendency that members of Gen Y are not engaging as much as the prior generation, which is coherent with the findings of Bughin (2007). Motivations to why individuals choose to engage have been adequately documented amongst researchers, while reasons not to engage appears to have been comparatively overlooked.

The theme of the thesis is *Consumer engagement behavior in social media* with the overall research question being: Why do members of Generation Y decide not to engage? In order to answer the overall research question, three underlying research objectives are developed consisting of:

- Investigating attributes to social media platforms that counteract motivations to engage
- Understanding users' decisions of *not* engaging on social media as a conscious and/or subconscious choice.
- Exploring how CEB on social media affect the way people perceive their own identity.

1.3 Context and methods

Evolving technologies and an increase in communication on digital platforms has led to new patterns for how individuals choose to engage and interact with each other. Moreover, being present on different social media platforms has become a big part of people's lives (Shang, Li, Wu, & Hou, 2011). The term FOMO is relevant for describing behavior in social media. FOMO is the abbreviation of "Fear Of Missing Out", describing how some people are afraid of not having sufficient information regarding what people in their relations are doing (Andreassen & Lervik-Olsen, 2016). The fear of missing out on valuable information from individuals they have a relationship with would substantiate the findings presented by Bolton et al. (2013), as the authors suggests consumers perceive information from other users as valuable.

Regarding behavior in social media, this thesis seeks to explore how consumers engage with content on social media platforms. Golbeck (2015) presents different scenarios regarding activities on social media, and describes the most common activities as; status updates, likes, comments, shares, and page-liking or following. Considering how most members of Gen Y are consumers rather than contributors on social media (Bughin, 2007; Schamari & Schaefers, 2015), this study will focus on the continuum of engagement behavior rather than just the antipoles of positive and negative engagement.

The context of the thesis will further focus on CEB between consumers, and between consumers and brands. A brand is characterized by features that identify a company's product or service distinctively from their competitors, and building a strong brand is considered the goal of many organizations (Keller, 2009). Typically, the product is the primary brand in packaged goods while the company is the primary brand of services (Berry, 2000). However, a common characteristic of a brand is that it increases trust in the invisible purchases, and reduces the customers' perceived financial, social and safety risks when purchasing something intangible. Intangible purchases are commonly linked to services, but Internet and online stores have made branding salient for producers of tangible products who seek to reach their target group online and through social media.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This master thesis is divided into chapters and structured as follows. In the beginning, the theoretical framework and a literature review is presented, and relevant literature related to the topics of interest is explored. Further, the methodological approach is presented, including research methods that were used to explore the research objectives, and methods for data collection and analysis are discussed and described. The findings are then presented in a discussion chapter, analyzed together with previous research on the field, and comparing the different results to explore potential contributions to the research field. The final chapter of this thesis consists of a conclusion, and furthermore both practical and theoretical implications are presented before proposing suggestions for further research.
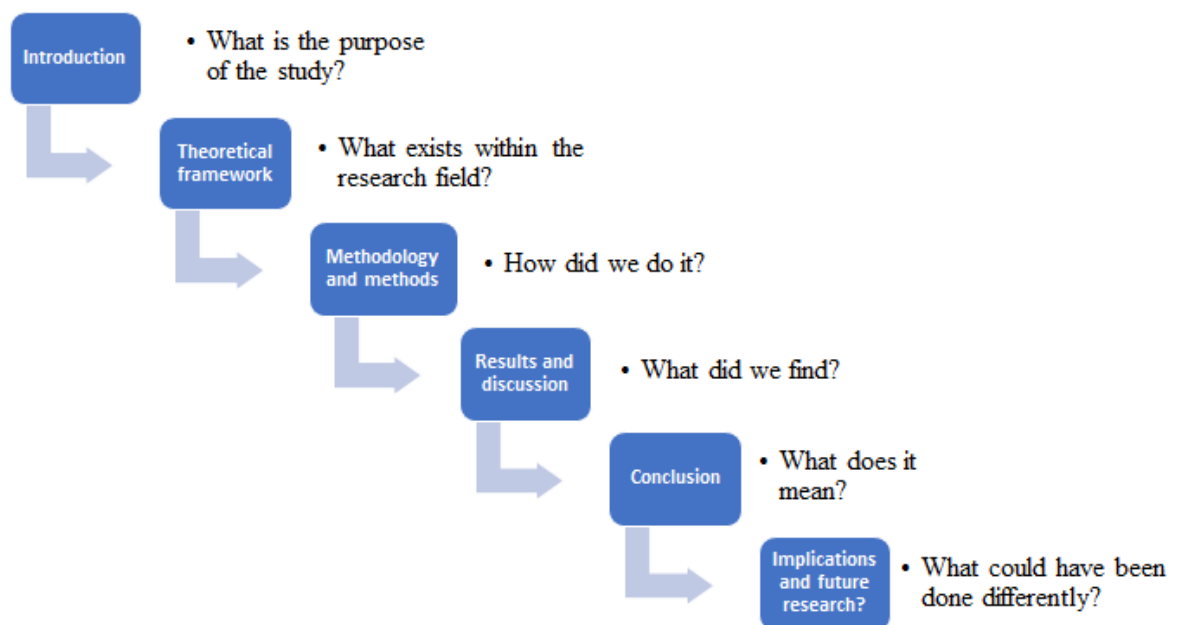
Figure 1: Structure of the thesis.

Adapted from Rienecker and Stray-Jørgensen (2013)

1.5 Limitations and delimitations

1.5.1 Limitations

There are certain limitations to this study that are worth acknowledging. Firstly, the resource of available time was limited due to the nature of a master course, as it was crucial to uphold a fixed deadline. Furthermore, lacking access to financial resources is considered a limitation for this study, in which a better financial foundation would potentially aid in procurement of more equipment for data collection in addition to travelling opportunities and other benefits.

The situation related to the Covid-19 pandemic (WHO, 2020), also put limitations to the project. Access to literature was narrowed down, in which access to potentially valuable materials got restricted, making the researchers having to rely mostly on online resources. Covid-19 also limited how data was collected. Even though all interviews were completed before the virus caused Norway to go into lockdown, the crisis situation limited the possibilities of conducting additional interviews for follow-up questions.

1.5.2 Delimitations

As limitations are considered uncontrollable aspects which hinders the study, delimitations are the different decisions the researchers make to delineate the study and keep the focus on important theories that help answer the research question. The theoretical contributions that build the theoretical framework of this thesis is based on its relevance in the research context

Firstly, a decision was made not to focus CEB on social media towards contexts with specific industries or brands. In this thesis, CEB on social media platforms regards different types of interactions with commercial brands, and not any specific brand or industry that exists. Limiting the context to a specific industry was considered disadvantageous as it would require unavailable resources and further may be inhibitory on the respondent's ability to reflect on their own CEB. Furthermore, it was considered beneficial to explore CEB comprehensively to potentially discover findings that can contribute managerially for commercial brands in different industries in general.

Brand communities could potentially have been relevant to explore in this thesis to immerse into a deeper discussion regarding CEB that takes place in brand communities. However, it would be probable to believe that consumers engaging in brand communities already have a strong relationship to a certain brand and are therefore more willing to engage. Thus, for this study it is more applicable to focus on consumers alone and not in the context of brand communities. CEB in brand communities is, however, an angle that could potentially be beneficial for future research to investigate.

A deeper psychological approach might be beneficial for studying CEB. While theoretical contributions were explored within both the marketing and psychology field initially, the data collection process revealed that further psychological aspects would be advantageous. However, due to the direction of the master course it would be too comprehensive to immerse further into the psychological point of view.

Whilst collecting data, it became clear that age range of the respondents did not cover the entire generation, and more specifically: the sample only covered the younger half of the generation. The variety in in different ages within Gen Y is limited as a result of using the snowballing approach for recruiting respondents, meaning a vast amount of the respondents were recruited based on their experience and ability to provide high quality information.

2.0 Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the different theoretical foundation that build grounds for the. Firstly, different theories within consumer engagement behavior are presented, before describing theories about Gen Y. Theories within the field of social media are then presented together with theories related to WOM and eWOM. Finally, the theories are all presented together in a conceptual framework to highlight their interconnections and relevance for this thesis.

2.1 Search process

The research field consists of multiple different perspectives on the topic at hand, and it is essential to explore these perspectives to build a comprehensive theoretical foundation (Mehmetoglu, 2004). There are different ways of searching for literature, and Mehmetoglu (2004) suggests two different approaches: The digital approach and the manual approach. For the context of the thesis it was feasible to benefit from a combination of the approaches. The digital approach when searching for literature relies on searching through digital databases (Mehmetoglu, 2004). The preponderance of searches were executed in English, as relevant literature predominantly was to be found in international journals and databases. The findings were sorted based on their publication date, to find new theoretical contributions that were relevant and considered not to be outdated. Systematic searches were done in databases, such as; ResearchGate, Google Scholar, Brage and Oria.

The findings were further used to discover relevant literature manually, by looking at different theories that the authors use and suggest. This way of exploring literature is what Mehmetoglu (2004) describes as the manual way of searching for literature, and it is also known as the snowballing method. Snowballing is an approach used to explore relevant information, by using existing articles and literature within the research field (Wohlin, 2014). By following this approach for mapping the existing literature within the field, it is easier to clarify how to address the following process of writing the thesis. Furthermore Wnuk & Garrepalli (2018) suggests that snowballing is beneficial to explore new aspects and insights of existing literature within the field of interest.

2.2 Consumer Engagement Behavior

Consumer engagement behavior (CEB) is an essential concept for this thesis, and it is vaguely defined in existing literature. CEB is important to understand, as highly engaged consumers are more likely to buy more, promote more and demonstrate more (Clarabridge, 2019). "Engagement" is a complex term with several meanings, but is commonly understood as a motivational construct with varying intensity (Dessart, 2015). Engagement can occur between a brand orompany and a consumer, and it can also occur on an individual level between consumers themselves (Dessart, 2015; van Doorn et al., 2010). This distinction from customer engagement is necessary to emphasize, as customer engagement is defined to take place between a customer and a company (Patterson, Ting & De Ruyter, 2006),

2.2.3 The continuum of CEB

Moreover, previous research has typically considered engagement to consist of either positive or negative interaction between two or more parties (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, Leventhal, & Chen, 2014). However, Brodie, Ilic, Juric and Holebeek (2013) developed a definition of consumer engagement stating that it is a context-dependent psychological state characterized by fluctuating intensity levels that occur within dynamic iterative engagement processes. From these definitions it is understood that consumer engagement behavior takes place with different intensity, but some cognitive presence required for it to be addressed as engagement. In other words, engagement behavior does not require intense cognitive presence as behavior can occur intuitively, but to be defined as engagement it cannot occur entirely subconsciously (Dane & Pratt, 2007; Simon, 1987).

It is interesting to consider that CEB may not only take place in social media, as CEB can occur as word-of-mouth (WOM) behavior offline as well. Hirzalla & Zoonen (2011) suggest that the way people engage online and offline are often converging. If a person is less active in sharing their thoughts, experiences and opinions offline they are likely to express similar behavior online and the other way around. CEB may therefore occur both offline and online and both aspects will be considered in this thesis. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and WOM are further discussed in chapter 2.5.

In the context of social media, it is natural to draw a distinction between a customer and a consumer despite the similarities of the terms. Webster and Lusch (2013) are among few who have made a clear distinction between the terms to elevate consciousness in marketing. Customers are defined as individuals who purchase offerings from a seller and who are willing and able to pay the seller's price or meet other conditions of a sale (Webster & Lusch, 2013). Consumers, on the other hand, engage in the act of consumption to realize a set of benefits or use the seller's offering to satisfy some need. Consumers of social media are also referred to as lurkers, and are individuals who observe the content of others rather than contribute as a content producer themselves (Schlosser, 2005). This distinction presented by Webster & Lusch (2013) is important to understand the consuming role of individuals on social media.

2.2.4 Conceptualizations of CEB

CEB originates from customer engagement which have been conceptualized as communication behavior (Hirschman, 1970), as behavioral manifestations (van Doorn et al., 2010) and as a psychological state (Patterson, Ting & De Ruyter, 2006). These concepts are considered to be equally valuable when discussing consumers. Hirschman (1970) suggests that customers may choose to communicate in order to express their experience (voice) after an encounter with a brand, or to diminish their relationship with a brand (exit). Voicing can for example occur as positive or negative WOM, and exit usually takes place as decrease of consumption by no longer purchasing their product or service. The author further suggests that there is a continuum of behaviors in between voicing expression and pure exit. This theorem remains highly relevant in the context of consumers. Valence is a term used to explain whether something is more positive or negative (Berger & Milkman, 2012). The valence of a consumer's engagement may not be extreme, and the arousal of their engagement may not necessarily be on an intense level. In other words, consumer engagement behavior does not have to be either positive or negative, and the arousal of the psychological emotions involved in such behavior can be expressed excitedly, calmly and everything in between (Laghari et al., 2013).

The behavioral manifestations presented by van Doorn et al. (2010) are all related to behaviors that in one way or another influence the company and its brand. This perspective is especially important to acknowledge due to the range of manifestations presented. The authors state that behavioral manifestations range from personal communications such as emails to public customer

recommendations and web postings, and branches further to include word-of-mouth (WOM) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (von Doorn et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the psychological state presented by Patterson, Ting & De Ruyter (2006) is considered a relevant perspective. The authors highlight engagement as a consumer's various 'presence' in their relationship with a brand, and separates into physical, cognitive and emotional presence. Moreover, while marketing literature typically tends to focus on the interactions between the consumer and a brand, the authors emphasize that the dimension of interaction is better understood when considered together with the dimensions of presence. However, Sveningsson (2015) found that youth consumes informational content on social media as a pastime, but simultaneously they consider engaging with news is part of being a good citizen. This may insinuate that individuals are not as present in their engagement behavior as one might think.

The figure presented below shows an overview of the characteristics of CEB, together with the antecedents and consequences of CEB.
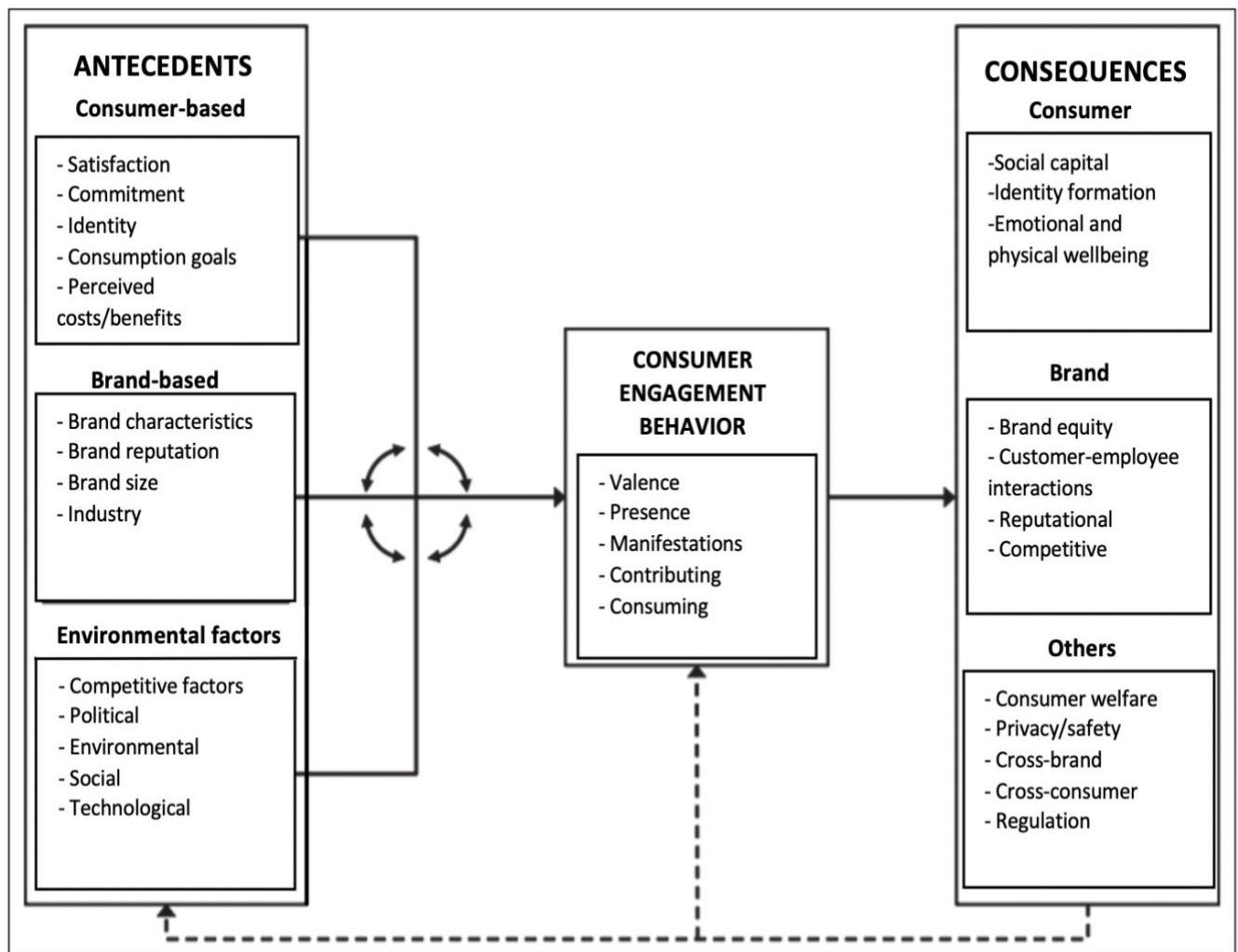
Figure 2: Conceptual Model of Consumer Engagement Behavior

Adapted from van Doorn et al. (2010) and Bolton et al. (2013)

The concepts presented in this chapter will influence the definition of CEB in the study henceforth. Thus, CEB is reflected through behavior in regards to what manifestations are made, at what valence it is communicated and to what degree the consumer is 'present' in the act of engagement. It is feasible to emphasize that both high and low levels of valence and conscious presence in the act of engagement behavior are relevant for the thesis.

2.3 Generation Y

2.3.1 Defining Gen Y

Brosdahl and Carpenter (2011) identify Gen Y as individuals who are born after 1981. Gen Y is often referred to as millennials, and some researchers have suggested that this generation consists of individuals born between 1981 and 1996 (Brosdahl, 2011; Bolton et al., 2013; Dimock, 2019). However, limiting the start and end points for Gen Y has been debated in different studies, but a common characteristic for members of Gen Y is early and frequent exposure to technology (Bolton et al., 2013; Immordino-Yang, Christodoulou, & Singh, 2012). Characteristics of Gen Y are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of Generational Characteristics.

Adapted from Mohr, Moreno-Walton, Mills, Brunett, and Promes (2011) and Peterson, D. (2011).

Generation	Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	Generation X (1965-1980)	Generation Y (1981-1999)
Personal characteristics	Optimistic, desire personal gratification, highly competitive	Independent, self-directed, skeptical, resilient, more accepting of diversity, self-reliant	Optimistic, need for praise, collaborative, global outlook
Social events	Civil rights and women's movements, Vietnam War, TV, economic prosperity	Limited economic prospects, fall of institutions, political scandals, computers	Economic globalization, terrorism, multiculturalism, technology boom
Education characteristics	Learners dependent on educators, lecture format, process-oriented	Independent learners, problem-solvers, desire to learn on the job, outcome-oriented	Grew up in team-based educational environment, turn to Internet, outcome-oriented
Communication style	Diplomatic	Blunt	Polite
Technology	Not particularly techno-savvy	Interested and facile	Very savvy, view technology as a necessity

Members of Gen Y have been referred to as "digital natives"; the first generation to grow up in an environment of digital technology (Prensky, 2001). They have grown up with social media as channels for communication (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008), and their engagement on social media can be separated into two categories: the contributors who post content and the consumers who simply observe (Bolton et al., 2013; Schlosser, 2005).

2.3.2 Behavior of Gen Y

A study from 2011 showed that members of Gen Y value the opinions of others in social media and feel important when they provide feedback about a certain brand (Bolton et al., 2013). Nevertheless, a high percentage of content is generated by a low percentage of users, and according to Bughin (2007) 65 percent of the contributors post their content to seek fame. This finding may be coherent with the findings of Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, and Bushman (2008), suggesting that members of Gen Y have moderately increased narcissistic behavior from previous generations. Narcissism and narcissistic behavior in this context is not based on the clinical personality disorder, but is characterized by a positive and inflated view of self, and involves a range of self-regulation efforts aimed at enhancing the self (Twenge et al., 2008).

In his classical theorem on human motivation, Maslow (1943) states that individuals try to satisfy different needs through different types of behavior, and are motivated to act in different ways based on how strong specific needs are. It is relevant to draw lines between the esteem-needs presented by Maslow and narcissistic behavior (Twenge et al, 2008) based on members of Gen Y and their search for fame when posting content on social media. Maslow (1943) describes the esteem needs as a need for people to feel highly evaluated by themselves and others. These theories substantiate the statistics presented by Bughin (2007), stating that social media users post content to seek fame from others, which is looked upon as a desire for better reputation. Based on the links between these literary contributions, it is likely to believe that narcissistic behavior may be a result of how members try to satisfy their need for self-esteem and increase their self-confidence through social media.

2.3.3 Gen Y's social media behavior

Social media is useful for those individuals who seek to enhance themselves, and therefore they may be more likely to be active on different social media platforms in order to satisfy their need for self-esteem (McCain & Campbell, 2018). This may be considered coherent with the need for self-esteem presented by Maslow (1943). Moreover, social media platforms are suitable for individuals that are seeking higher admiration from others. These individuals are more likely to spend an increased amount of time on different social media platforms, as well as posting more frequently than others. Previous research by McCain & Campbell (2018) regarding narcissism and social media behavior states that there are differences between generations. The study suggests that members of Generation X, which is the generation previous to Gen Y, show higher levels of narcissism whilst using Facebook. The same research suggests that narcissistic and self-enhancing characteristics has developed into social norms among members of Gen Y rather than behavior associated with personality as in the previous generations. It is probable to believe that this development might be coherent with the rise of social media.

2.4 Social media

2.4.1 The development of social media

Social media is defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content". However, as social media continues to evolve, so does the different understandings of what social media really is. Cohen (2019) gathered the perspectives of more than 60 marketers which have been broken down in this thesis to highlight some of the most important characteristics of social media that are coherent with Kaplan and Haenlein's definition. These include: 1) social media are online platforms and apps that enables a two-way street for peers to captivate, reach and communicate with other peers by creating or sharing powerful experiences; 2) social media is a hyper-interactive relationship-builder that is device indifferent; and, 3) social media allows data mining to opportunistically develop marketing strategies to connect the right people with a relevant message.

2.4.2 Social media and UGC

It is natural to consider social media to be interlinked with user generated content, as social networking sites typically facilitate for users to generate and share their own content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Naab & Sehl (2017, p.5-6) defines user generated content based on different criteria; "it is characterized by a degree of personal contribution, UGC must be published, and UGC is created outside the realm of a profession and professional routines". Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) suggest that user generated content sums up the reason as to why people make use of social media. Nevertheless, depending on the platform, only 3-6 percent of social media users contribute to 75 percent of the content (Bughin, 2007). In other words, despite research suggesting that UGC is the cause to why individuals initiate social media participation, most users function as consumers rather than contributors. This insinuates that other people's UGC is a reason for joining social media rather than creating content themselves.

The growth in monthly social media users have made it easier for companies to advertise and reaching out to larger groups of potential customers, with Facebook having more than 2.5 billion active monthly users (Clement, 2020). This prodigious number of users proves that Facebook satisfies their mission to: "bring the world closer together" (Zuckerberg, 2017). Furthermore, a case study conducted by MarketLine (2012) suggests that users evaluate recommendations from friends higher than recommendations that come from the companies and advertisers directly. This makes social media an intriguing channel for marketing communication. When users engage in different scenarios on Facebook, they make it easier for advertisers to target their ads in more suitable ways towards the different users based on the information that can be mined from their activity.

Moreover, social media has become a mainstream source for information among recruiters as it is an efficient and cost-effective way of obtaining new hires (Wetsch, 2012), making certain platforms well suited for individuals to engage in personal branding. The author claims that both Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are all platforms commonly used among recruiters. However, the study was published the same year as Instagram was launched, and have therefore not been investigated as extensively. Thus, more recent research would be beneficial to understand if Instagram is used for recruiting to the same extent, and if the use of different platforms has developed since the study was conducted.

To understand social media behavior, it is of interest to emphasize the spiral of silence theory. This theory highlights how people choose to remain silent if they evaluate that their opinion will fall within the minority (Liu & Fahmy, 2010; Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Hence, the spiral of silence theory is closely linked to the humane fear of social rejection (Rochat, 2009), and the basic need for belongingness presented by Maslow (1943). It is natural to consider these elements as a part of social phobia, characterized within cognitive psychology as a strong desire to convey a particular favorable impression of oneself to others and marked insecurity about one's ability to do so (Clark & Wells, 1995). However, with the growth of social media, research has found that individuals only need one alternative voice representing the minority for the spiral of silence to be substantially diminished (Sohn, 2019).

The needs for belongingness, esteem and self-actualization are located at the very top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Belongingness involves the hunger for relations, and it can be linked to the aforementioned FOMO phenomenon in social media. An important reason why youth use social media is to keep updated on what is going on in the life of people they have a relationship with (Andreassen & Lervik-Olsen, 2016). Further, the esteem needs are centered around needs for approval such as respect, self-esteem, status and recognition. This need for approval may in the context of Gen Y draw links to the emphasized level of narcissism characterizing the generation.

Maslow further presents the need for self-actualization, and the desire to become the most one can be. With the reach of social media, individuals are frequently exposed to UGC that idealize reality, and research has found that especially young women are prone to experience body- and beauty consciousness due to content they consume on social media (Chae, 2017; Fardouly & Holland, 2018; Manago, Ward, Lemm, Reed, & Seabrook, 2014). This development in self-consciousness due to social media can create a struggle for youth to fulfil the need of self-actualization.

2.5 WOM & eWOM

Word of mouth (WOM) is an essential aspect to include when discussing consumer engagement behavior. WOM can be defined as "informal, evaluative communication (positive or negative) between at least two conversational participants about characteristics of an organization and/or a

brand, product, or service that could take place online or offline" (Carl, 2006, p. 605). The term eWOM is defined by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004, p. 39) as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a company or product, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet". The authors emphasize eWOM to include emails as well as online communities and social networks, thus stating that eWOM can occur both through public communication and in more privately disclosed manners.

2.5.1 eWoM motivations

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) highlight five different motives for engaging in eWOM. Firstly, the authors emphasize focus-related utility, meaning the utility the consumers receive when adding value to a community through their contributions. Second is consumption utility, a post-purchase advice-seeking motive where consumers may be motivated to post their own experience after reading comments and reviews posted by others. The third motive presented by the authors is approval utility, the satisfaction a consumer experiences when other individuals consume and approve their contribution. Moderator-related utility is the fourth motive presented, and this motive is linked to complaint behavior. The mere existence of a platform can in the context of social media make the complaint-process easier for the consumer, thus functioning as a motivational factor. The final motive presented is homeostase utility which revolves around the human need of maintaining a balance. This balance can be maintained through venting negative feelings or expressing positive feelings.

Another important element that differentiates eWOM from traditional WOM is that individuals expressing themselves online have the opportunity to have their contribution consumed by millions of other users within minutes, but the Internet also allows individuals to express their engagement anonymously (Abălăesei, 2014). A study conducted by Kang, Brown and Kiesler (2013) showed that 55 percent of their informants expressed that they used anonymity in social networking and 45 percent used anonymity when sharing art or work. The study further found that some important benefits of choosing anonymity are linked to giving honest recommendations, avoiding embarrassment/judgment/criticism, have control over personal image and feel free to express views.

2.5.2 CEB and (e)WOM

A recent study suggest that intangible benefits could be predictors for users to engage in eWOM on social media (Majali, 2018). The study found that altruism and reputation are important factors that can influence an individual's engagement behavior. The finding is coherent with previous findings by Hennig-Thurau (2004). Furthermore, when considering why individuals decide not to engage it is valuable to draw a connection to the findings of Kang, Brown and Kiesler (2013) where control over personal image was found to be an important benefit of remaining anonymous on social media. Other studies have also shown that the need to acquire information and knowledge through social media facilitates users to engage in eWOM (Chu & Kim, 2011). This theory suggests that users searching for knowledge and information are more likely to engage on social media to meet their needs.

For the context of the thesis it is necessary to highlight the distinction between eWOM and engagement. On social media, users express their engagement in different ways varying from consuming content, liking content, interacting with other consumers and contributors publicly, interacting privately and to contribute with their own user generated content (Oh, Roumani, Nwankpa & Hu, 2016). Engagement can take place in the shape of eWOM, but as stated by the authors it can also occur without conversation. This raises an important question; What should be considered a statement? However, whether giving a "like" to a post on social media is considered making a statement may be perceived individually by different people. Thus, it is salient to acknowledge eWOM and WOM as important elements that often characterizes CEB, but CEB consists of more than just eWOM and WOM.

2.6 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework was developed based on the primary theoretical contributions from marketing and psychology that build the foundation of the study. Further, CEB is highly interlinked with the nominalist approach of methodology, which is further discussed in chapter 3.1, coherent with the continuum of behavior that is considered a crucial element when studying CEB. Certain essential characteristics of Gen Y are emphasized in the model and connected to the theoretical foundation. A further developed conceptual framework based on the findings of the study is presented in chapter 4.6.
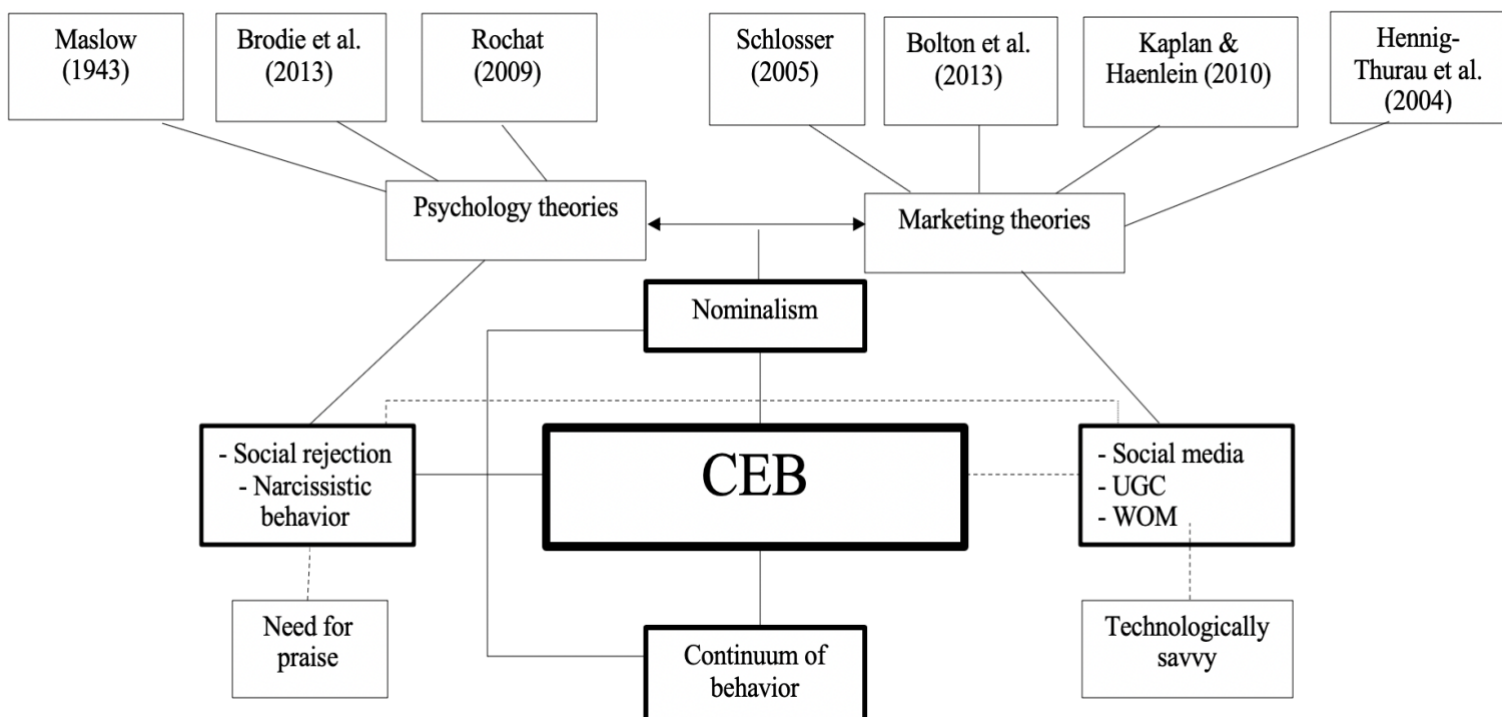
Figure 3: Conceptual Framework

Adapted from Imenda (2014).

3.0 Methodology and methods

In this chapter, the methodological approach and methods used in the study are discussed. As previously mentioned, the theme of the thesis is *Consumer engagement behavior in social media* with the overall research question being: *Why do members of Generation Y decide not to engage?* The following underlying research objectives were further developed:

- Investigating attributes to social media platforms that counteract motivations to engage
- Understanding users' decisions of not engaging on social media as a conscious and/or subconscious choice.
- Exploring how CEB on social media affect the way people perceive their own identity.

These research objectives are fundamental for the methodology and methods that are applied.

Firstly, the scientific point of view composed by the ontological and epistemological viewpoints that is the root of this research are presented. The ontological position describes the way we think the world is, and it influences the epistemological position which describes what we think can be known about it (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jackson, & Jaspersen, 2018). Further, the choice of research design, methods and techniques for how to investigate are argued, followed by strategies for recruitment and execution. Next, the interview guide is presented together with an overview of respondents and information about the interview setting. The validity and reliability of the data are discussed, and finally ethical implications and how to manage these are taken into consideration.

3.1 Methodology

The study to be conducted resides within the social sciences (Mehmetoglu, 2004), and relies on a nominalist ontology where the basic assumption is that reality does not exist independent from our perception (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Hence, we assume there is no truth and that what is considered reality depends on individual frame of reference. There is a continuum of ontological

assumptions that explain how we view reality, and we further take an epistemological standpoint to enhance how knowledge is acquired (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018).
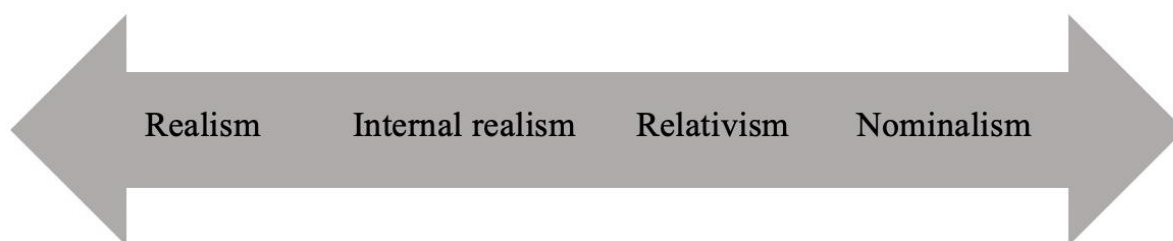
Figure 4: Ontological Positioning Continuum.

Adapted from Easterby-Smith et al., (2018)

Epistemologically, we address the research from a strong constructionist point of view, and more specifically cooperative inquiry. This level of involvement allows for the researchers to engage with individuals to understand their experiences, and also focus on involving the individuals in deciding the important questions and issues worth researching (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018).

The foundational philosophical viewpoint of methodology presented here, together with the research question, builds grounds for why a qualitative study was decided to be the most beneficial method. Through this study we seek to understand and make sense of individuals' perceptions of reality through discourse and develop new insights. We further seek to understand why individuals engage in certain behavior, and to aid them in reflecting on their own engagement behavior to make sense of their actions as well as absence of actions. The research question, as well as underlying research questions, revolve around why individuals behave a certain way. Based on an approach to understand 'why' they engage differently, the decision was made to benefit from a qualitative approach rather than quantitative. In this thesis the value resides within understanding people and exploring their minds, which makes qualitative methods the most suitable approach.

However, the underlying assumptions of this thesis are not seen as black and white, and the continuum is valuable to acknowledge. Close to the nominalist approach is the relativist ontology, assuming that there are many truths, and that facts are dependent on the viewpoint of the observer (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). This ontology is connected to the weaker constructionist epistemology, and data is collected through triangulation and comparison of different sets of data.

In other words, even though the relativist ontology might be equally beneficial for the research in question, we found that conducting both quantitative and qualitative research would be too comprehensive for this thesis. Nevertheless, we do seek inspiration from these methodological philosophies, especially to sustain our study with previous research. This is further coherent with the method chosen for data analysis.

3.2 Research style and methods for data collection

A qualitative study is conducted based on curiosity to explore how peoples' lives are shaped, how social order is developed and what this means rather than assuming that this can be explained by specific measurable factors (Tjora, 2017). A qualitative study is recognized by creativity, devotion, structure and systematics. It is also important to acknowledge that a qualitative study where interviews are conducted allows exploration of new topics that the researcher did not plan for ahead, including personal aspects the researcher could not predict.

3.2.1 Research style

It was decided to conduct in-depth interviews for this study, as this method for data collection is most coherent with the research question and methodology. Moreover, an engaged social constructionist research design was applied to allow the researchers to engage with the respondents rather than observe from a distance (Easterby-Smith et al. (2018). Doing such, the researcher and respondent together build the research and discover the topics and questions of highest importance. Of this reason, in-depth interviews were designed to be semi-structured to allow for reflection and discovery. Facilitating for reflection is the core of in-depth interviews, and it is essential that the researcher ensures a relaxed situation to discover and reflect on how the respondent constructs their reality (Easterby-Smith, 2018; Tjora, 2017).
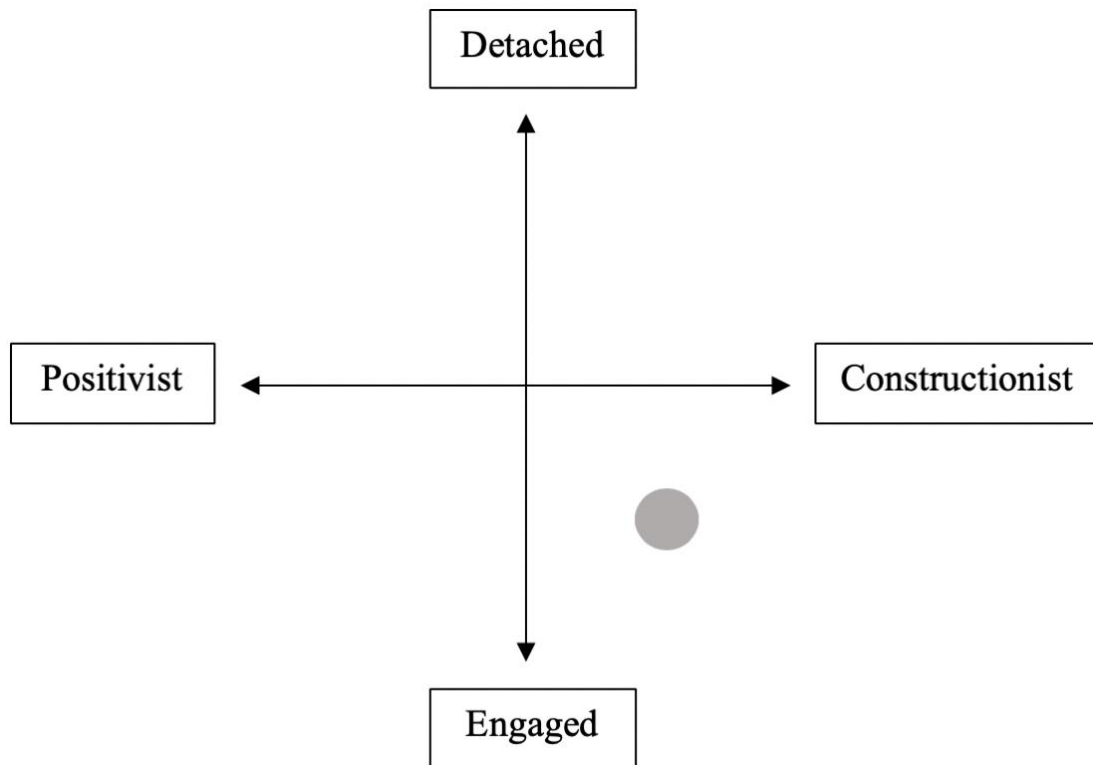
Figure 5: Epistemology and research style.

Adapted from Easterby-Smith et al. (2018)

3.2.2 Interviews as method for data collection

In-depth interviews aim to develop understanding and meaning, and this is dependent on the social situation created around the interview (Tjora, 2017). When creating a safe space for the respondent to reflect it is quintessential to spend time in the beginning of the interview to build comfort and trust. For this study it was decided that sharing the interview guide with the respondents beforehand would be beneficial to give them time to gather their thoughts on the topic for further reflection during the interview. This method is advantageous as the respondent can enter the interview prepared, and it allows them to understand what questions we seek answers to. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the disadvantage that the answers provided by the respondent may be affected by a desire to supply the researchers with the answers they seek.

By executing semi-structured interviews, it is ensured that there are no misinterpretations in regards of the questions that are asked, and the researchers can display certain emotions to show interest in

what the respondent talks about to motivate more reflection (Mehmetoglu, 2004). This requires the researcher to have some standardized questions that apply to all interviews, while being open and prepared with follow-up questions for more in-depth information on the topic that will differ between the respondents depending on their own reflection. These topics were discovered by paying close attention to what each respondent appeared excited to talk about. The researchers took on different roles when executing the interviews, whereas one kept dialogue going based off the answers provided by the respondent, while the other researcher ensured that every important topic and question from the interview guide was reflected upon.

The interviews were recorded as per guidelines provided by NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data) and HINN, and stored accordingly.

3.3 Interview guide

3.3.1 Development of the interview guide

The interview guide was thoroughly developed based on previous research on similar topics within the field. The guide was created to ensure the most essential topics were explored, and that relevant information was not lost due to dialogue taking unexpected directions. Every question was methodically prepared based on existing literature, and it was important that each question was easy to understand for a respondent without the same academic background as the researchers. Thus, the interview guide was developed with a comprehensive theoretical foundation to substantiate the formulations. However, the document that was shared with the respondents before the interview took place contained fewer questions to allow time for initial reflection while giving room for further exploration and dialogue in the interview situation.

The interview was structured according to recommendations by Tjora (2017). As an introduction to the interview the respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and their rights to cancel the interview at any time without need for providing a reason. The interview then started off with easy to answer introduction questions, continued with more research relevant questions, and the more complicated questions that perhaps were more uncomfortable for some to answer were

asked towards the end. The aim of this structure is to build trust and comfort before the complicated questions are asked.

As the study seeks to explore why members of Gen Y choose *not* to engage, it was equally important to understand why they *do* engage. Thus, follow-up questions were frequently asked to discover both sides of the research question at hand. By thoroughly examining both why users decided to engage and why they choose not to engage, the chances of the respondent trying to provide the desired answers rather than their truthful answers was reduced. A challenge that easily surface when asking follow-up questions is that the respondent feel like they are being interrogated. As the aim of the interviews was to receive genuine descriptions of the way the respondent sees the world, it was essential that the respondent felt both physically and emotionally comfortable (Wolcott, 1994). At the end of each interview the respondents were asked if they had any additional thoughts, and they were also asked what they thought of the interview experience. By asking these questions, the researchers got the opportunity to adapt their behavior and questions before the next interview. Additionally, some respondents added further information when they experienced that the serious situation was over.

All interviews were conducted in Norwegian, and citations are translated to English by the authors. Citations were confirmed with each respondent to ensure the correct meaning was extracted. A challenge that occurred when translating from one language to another was to secure the exact formulation of the respondents to make certain new meanings were not added to their statements by using terms that were inaccurate. However, by further translating the translations back to Norwegian and completing member checks, the meaning was thoroughly and correctly extracted.

3.3.2 Pre-study

Following the development of a conceptual framework and the interview guide, a pre-study was completed to explore the practical relevance, the effectiveness and efficiency of the interview guide and to map out areas that were of high interest to an individual within the target group. The pre-study showed that certain questions needed to be formulated differently to ensure thorough answers and avoid shortcoming information.

3.3.3 Interview guide

The interview guide was developed based on theoretical contributions and is presented in this chapter. Different purposes were developed to ensure all research objectives were thoroughly investigated. Moreover, each question is formulated based on existing theoretical contributions, and further linked to a research objective.

Purpose	Research objective	Theoretical affiliation	Questions
Mapping the respondents' behavioral patterns on social media.	RO 1 RO 2	Gen Y's early exposure to technology makes it likely to believe they have a different experience with social platforms than prior generations (Bolton et al., 2013) Reading a negative review triggers posters' concerns with the social outcomes of their public evaluations, thereby causing them to lower their public ratings strategically (Schlosser, 25). Moreover, being present in the act of engagement is essential for it to be considered engagement (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric, & Ilic, 2011).	● To what extent are you engaging in activities on social media, including liking, sharing, commenting etc.? ● How do you engage with the people and/or brands you follow?
What evaluations are taken into consideration before engaging	RO 1	In the context of news, Sveningsson (2015) found that young people in general don't trust what they see on Facebook and Twitter and rather use the social media as pastime than as mediums for gathering information. Moreover, Kang, Brown and Kiesler (2013) suggests that control over personal image is an important motive for remaining anonymous online, which may affect CEB on different platforms.	● What's your purpose for using social media? ● Can you explain how you use different platforms for different purposes?

What evaluations are taken into consideration before choosing not to engage?	RO 1	The spiral of silence theory claims that if individuals judge that their opinions are on the minority side or are on the decline, they might decide to keep silent or conform to the majority (Liu & Fahmy, 2010). On social media, however, they only need one voice to represent the minority for the spiral of silence to be substantially diminished (Sohn, 2019).	● Do you experience following a brand without engaging further? ● Are you conscious of why you don't engage further? ● Are you conscious of why you do engage? ● What criteria must the content fulfill for you to engage?
Broadened understanding regarding narcissism and need for recognition.	RO 3	Maslow's (1987) theory of human motivation includes the needs for belongingness, esteem and self-actualization. Moreover, members of Gen Y have moderately increased narcissistic behavior from previous generations. (Twenge et al., 2008) Henning-thurau (2004) presents approval utility as one of five motives for engaging in eWOM	● Do you experience a need for recognition through social media? ● How do you believe other members of your generation experience narcissism and a need for validation? ● How do you think other people on social media value your potential engagement compared to engagement from others?
Mapping the respondents' experience of feeling self-conscious on social media	RO 2 RO 3	Social rejection is acknowledged as the main fear experienced by human beings, and humans tend to keep others in mind when behaving in social settings (Rochat, 2009).	● Can you tell us an experience where you've felt conscious before engaging on social media? ● What made you feel conscious?
Mapping the respondents sharing behavior offline and online	RO 3	Future research should study the consistency between Gen Y's offline and online behavior (Bolton et al., 2013) Correlations between offline and online engagement have been discovered in political and activist settings, but little research have been done on consumers (Hirzalla & Zoonen, 2011)	● Do you actively share opinions with other users in offline settings? ● How do you consider the potential value your engagement might have for the content producer offline vs. online? ● How are you affected by others response on different posts on social media?

3.4 Sample and recruitment

For this study it was of interest to recruit respondents who are born within Gen Y, and who obtained extensive experience to provide in-depth answers during the interview. To meet this requirement, it was important that the respondents:

    1) are weekly active users of one or more social media platforms

    2) have engaged on social media in one way or another within the past week.

The first criteria will ensure that the sample only include respondents with high awareness of social media, it's development and potential norms that have evolved on different platforms. The second criteria confirm that the respondents are familiar with engaging on social media. Even though the study seeks to explore why respondents choose not to engage, it was essential to recruit respondents who would be able to reflect on their own CEB. Thus, potential respondents who claimed never to engage on social media were excluded. For the study it was crucial that the recruited sample consisted of individuals who were able to reflect on both why they choose to engage and why they choose not to. The term "respondents" is used in this thesis, as Jacobsen (2005) describes respondents as individual who obtain personal experiences about the topic while "informants" are described individuals who knows a lot about the topic. Hence, "respondents" is the most suitable term for this study.

Withal, how consumers engage is dependent on both macro-level factors and individual-level factors according to Bolton et al. (2013). The authors emphasize how economic, technological, cultural and legal environments can influence social media use on a macro-level. Additionally, in regards of narcissistic characteristics research has shown that individualistic countries, typical for countries in western Europe, show higher levels of narcissism than collectivistic countries such as countries in Asia and South America where families, community and common goals often are emphasized culturally (Foster, Keith Campbell & Twenge, 2003). To ensure an equated selection of respondents, the research focused on Gen Y individuals in Norway. By constricting the selection to remain within the Norwegian borders, the chances of the respondents being characterized by similar environmental influence were increased.

Purposeful sampling was used to strategically select respondents for this study. With purposeful sampling, the researchers aim to recruit respondents who can provide the most information about their experiences (Mehmetoglu, 2004). Some of the respondents were known to the researchers, and further the snowballing method was used to recruit respondents based on recommendations from said respondents (Bryman, 2016). This method is advantageous for recruiting respondents who obtain the desired knowledge and necessary ability to reflect on the topic to provide substantial information. One possible drawback of using snowballing as an approach for finding respondents is that there might be less of a variety regarding characteristics of the respondents, leading to a potentially homogenous respondent group (Jansen, 2018).

Finding agreement among researchers regarding the necessary number of respondents in a qualitative study was proven difficult. Kvale, Brinkmann, Anderssen and Rygge (2015) suggests that there should be between 5 and 25 respondents, even though some studies will only require one respondent. Jacobsen (2015) states that there should be an upper limit of 20 respondents to ensure all data is rich in details and information, while not letting the data become too complex to the point where it cannot be analyzed in a sensible way, and Malterud (2017) highlights there should be 10-25 respondents. The number of respondents is dependent on the research question, and after a certain number of interviews there is little to no more new information to obtain and the dataset becomes unnecessarily complex (Kvale et al., 2015). However, a common agreement is that one should interview as many individuals as necessary to obtain the desired knowledge (Jacobsen, 2015; Kvale et al., 2015; Mehmetoglu, 2004).

Based on the theoretical foundation presented, it was considered feasible for this study to conduct approximately ten interviews considering the probability selection and limitations regarding resources (Jacobsen, 2015). A goal was set for having equal representation of both genders. This was somehow achieved with six female respondents and four male respondents. The disproportionate gender distribution is a result of the interviews early on showing that gender was not a crucial constituent in regards to CEB. Thus, probable sampling and the snowballing method resulted in one additional female respondent rather than male. During the interviews it was found that minimal new information was explored after the eighth interview, but two more interviews were conducted to confirm that no potentially valuable information was lost and to further substantiate the findings.

3.5 Data analysis - The SDI method

Qualitative research is very different from quantitative research regarding the research process. The quantitative research process is seen as linear where the design comes first, then the data is collected and then the data is analyzed as a final step. Qualitative research, on the other hand, facilitates the activities of design, data collection and analysis to take place in a circular process and affect each other (Mehmetoglu, 2004). This is closely interlinked with the epistemological standpoint of the study, as it was considered beneficial to analyze large amounts of data during the data collection to thoroughly gather the desired information. Further, a gradual deductive inductive analysis was conducted, a method where the data is coded and further used to develop new concepts based on our empirical findings and theoretical contributions (Tjora, 2017).
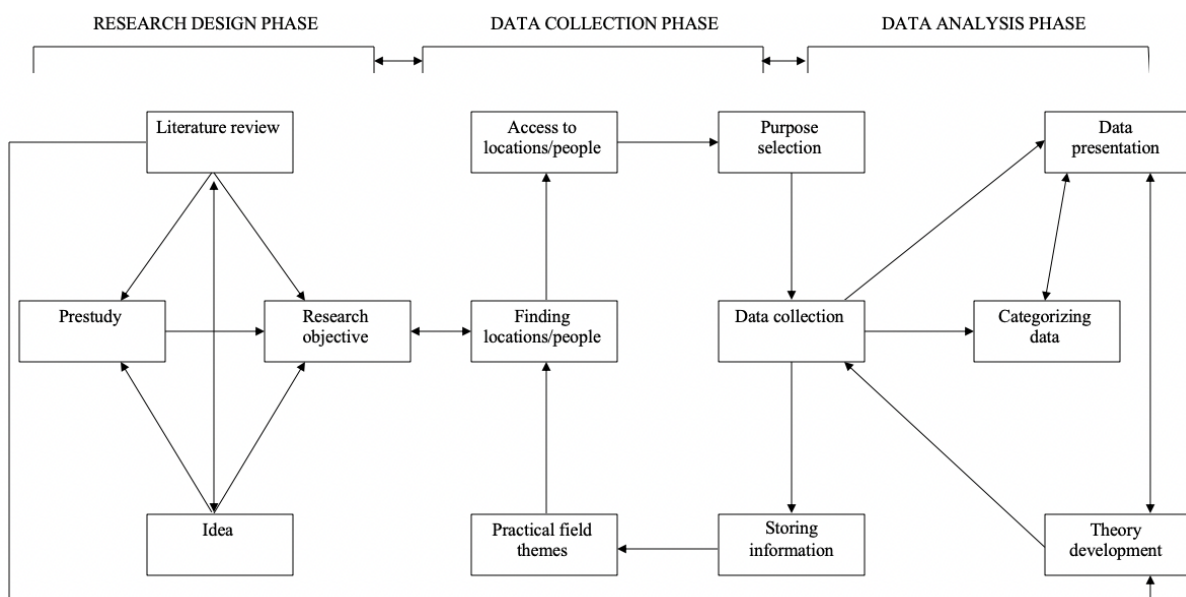
Figure 6: The circular qualitative research process.

Adapted from (Mehmetoglu, 2004)

The gradual deductive inductive (SDI) method for analysis is suggested by Tjora (2017) and is a method of analysis that combines the sensitivity of raw data with the ambition of interpreting empirical findings in the light of theoretical perspectives. The SDI method was chosen based on the coherence of its characteristics and the methodological standpoints taken in this study. Despite essential parts of the analysis taking place in the course of data creation, the final analysis is quintessential to reduce the complexity of data to generate concepts and theories that will contribute to the research field. By using the SDI method and comparing existing theory with the new insights

explored through empirical findings it will be possible to further substantiate the findings of the study.

Coding the data to extract the essence of the empirical material, reduce volume and complexity, and facilitate generating ideas based on details in the empirical material is the first step of the analysis process (Tjora, 2017). The codes were extracted "in vivo", meaning the codes aimed at preserving the empirical material by using native terms that are close to the actual statements and specific situations expressed in the interview. Every researcher has certain expectations and theory in mind at a more or less explicit level, and this approach aims to cultivate inductive empirical codes. Thus, the empirical material was first transcribed to start extracting codes that were close to the empiricism. Groups of codes were then extracted inductively based on thematic context. At this point it became essential to reduce the complexity of the material and develop the aggregated themes that are the main focus of the study.

The next step of the analysis is to develop concepts and start the deductive part of the analysis process (Tjora, 2017). Existing research and theories were utilized to make sense of the empirical findings and develop labels for the findings. By analyzing the material in this order, new concepts were developed inductively while being deductively substantiated. Further, these concepts were tested against Karl Popper's falsification criteria claiming that for a theory to gain scientific status it must be falsifiable and testable (Tjora, 2017).

There are evident benefits of the SDI method for data analysis, but some disadvantages are prominent and worth acknowledging. The first challenge to be managed is to avoid becoming biased, a challenge that is impossible to avoid and one must supervise thereafter. Bias is built due to previous studies the researchers took under consideration in the search process. However, when the interviews were conducted it was imperative not to ask questions that might be perceived as leading or direct the questions in a certain theoretical direction, a concern that was carefully managed (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Further, bias may arise in the interpretation of data and create misleading results. To avoid bias, both researchers were present at every interview to ensure the interview stayed within the theme and that no potentially leading questions were asked. By both researchers being present, it was ensured that truthful meaning was extracted from the dataset based on two individual interpretations. Furthermore, the first-order codes were extracted by each researcher individually to make certain no important information was lost. After the first-order

codes were extracted, the remaining coding was thoroughly extracted and developed by the researchers in close partnership.

3.5.1 Coding structure

To make certain the codes remained inductive and closely related to the empiricism, the codes were extracted in different phases as proposed by Tjora (2017) and Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012). Initially, first-order codes were extracted based on three criteria presented by Tuli, Kohli and Bharadwaj (2007): 1) is the insight applicable beyond a specific context?, 2) whether multiple participants mentioned the idea, and 3) whether the idea goes beyond the 'obvious' and can provide more interesting conclusions. Based on these criteria, an initial analysis of the dataset provided 97 first-order codes. To reduce this number, the codes were re-coded based on similarities and differences (Gioia et al., 2012; Tjora, 2017), and resulted in 22 first-order codes.

In the next phase, the first-order codes were inductively developed into six second-order groups, with the main ambition of building the foundation for the analysis (Tjora, 2017). In the last phase, three aggregated themes were developed to build the final empirical foundation to be used in the discussion together with previous theoretical contributions. The final structure of the coding process is presented in Figure 7.

First order codes   Second order codes   Aggregated categories

- Relevance for those I share with
- Establish and maintain trust
- Less people will care if you engage more
- Creating a safety net for future needs

Credibility

- Engagement is making a statement
- Not having my name associated gives comfort
- Engagement supports something more than the one posts

Associations

Personal branding

- Social norms
- Won't share if I'm not sure I'll get recognition for it
- Comments disappear in a million others so what value does my engagement have

Need for acceptance and/or recognition

- The reach on social media is enormous
- Online posts are long-term
- Fear of one's opinion being wrong
- Once bitten, twice shy

Lack of control

Social phobia

- Information
- Inspiration
- Entertainment
- Follow as a reminder
- Keeping in touch

Fulfill a personal need

- No need for others to earn money off my engagement
- Must earn the value of my engagement
- Want something in return

Reciprocity

Self- focus

Figure 7: Coding Structure

3.6 Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability

As aforementioned, qualitative research is very different from quantitative research. This is equally important to acknowledge when discussing evaluation criteria. Mehmetoglu (2004) presents different perspectives for evaluation, the evaluation criteria presented by Lincoln & Guba (1985) as well as taking the perspective of Wolcott (1994) into consideration. The different criteria are included based on the methods and methodology presented earlier in the thesis. If not thoroughly considered, these elements will reflect momentous weaknesses to the study.

3.6.1 Credibility and confirmability

Credibility refers to constructing trust in that the findings and results of a study are true. Thus, it was important to ensure that data and results depict the truth as experienced by the respondents (Mehmetoglu, 2004). As previously mentioned, triangulation could be a beneficial method for this study if the timeframe of the project was not limited. By triangulating data through continuous observations as well as quantitative data collection in addition to the interviews, further credibility could be added to the study. Both the theoretical foundation developed, and the findings of the study, have been discussed with individuals who obtain great knowledge on the research topic to ensure we did not see ourselves blind on the data. The interview guide was also discussed with these individuals to make sure the questions would explore the research question thoroughly.

Member check was pursued, meaning the respondents were offered to review the individual transcripts and citations from the interview to confirm correct translations and interpretations (Tjora, 2017). Member checks was helpful in order to ensure accuracy regarding how the researcher has presented the participant's subjectivity (Koelsch, 2013). While some researchers have suggested that change rather than representation should be a primary goal of a qualitative study (Koelsch, 2013), it was decided that thorough representation together with interpreted discussions would be more feasible for this study.

At times of uncertainty regarding the true meaning of a recorded statement, the researchers would listen through the recording multiple times and contact the respondent by email with follow-up questions if they had offered permission to contact them with future concerns. By confirming transcripts and citations with the individual respondents the confirmability of data presented was safeguarded. Of these reasons we evaluate the criteria of credibility and confirmability to be met.

3.6.2 Transferability

Ensuring transferability of a qualitative study is not possible in the same way as a quantitative study might be. In a quantitative study, transferability can be assured by randomized selection and probability reasoning (Mehmetoglu, 2004). However, in a qualitative study the transferability is dependent on how well the researchers manage to provide a detailed description of the situation that has been studied to provide the reader with satisfactory background to evaluate the

applicability of the conclusions for different contexts (Mehmetoglu, 2004). Due to the probability selection of this study it is not possible to generalize the findings outside of this context. However, it is probable to believe that the findings of the study will be similar if a study was conducted with the same recruitment criteria in a different part of the country. This study provides an insight into why Norwegian members of Gen Y behave the way they do on social media, in the context of interaction with brands and other consumers. We have to the best of our ability provided thorough information about the research process, and continuously considered the transparency of both the data collection and interpretations.

3.6.3 Dependability

Dependability is equal to what is commonly known as reliability in quantitative research. In the process of data collection, the researchers were careful to recruit enough respondents to obtain a sufficient number of perspectives, while keeping within the recommended limits of being satisfied when the respondents did not provide any new information to avoid an unnecessary large amount of data (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018; Mehmetoglu, 2004). Nevertheless, there are certain elements that weaken the dependability of the study, mainly due to our lack of practical experience of qualitative research. Due to this, theoretical contributions were carefully used to provide guidelines in the correct directions. Both practical and theoretical notes were taken during the project, and thorough discussions are included to explain how conclusions were reached as well as the empirical findings' relations to existing literature. However, lacking experience as researchers is considered a weakness both in regards to data collection and interpretation. Additionally, every respondent was asked if they had any information to share that they considered relevant at the end of each interview to encourage respondents to provide additional information that we might have missed out on. By doing such, the interview guide could be further developed before the next interview in case essential information was shared when asking this question.

3.6.4 Validity

Despite the ontological and epistemological standpoint residing within constructionism, some inspiration was gathered from the stronger constructionist standpoint. Thus, the perspective on evaluation presented by Wolcott (1994) is taken into consideration. The author emphasizes that

validity to a high degree is dependent on the researcher talking little and listening a lot, and that thorough understanding is more important than validity. By talking too much the researchers risk becoming their own worst enemy by being their own best informants according to the study. Furthermore, the author states that validity of qualitative research requires accurate recordings, start writing early after data collection, report fully, be candid and seek feedback. Through this study, Wolcott's perspective was taken into careful consideration and the validity was evaluated accordingly together with the previously mentioned criteria by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

3.7 Ethical concerns

Kvale et al (2015) states that human interaction in interviews affects the respondents, the knowledge accumulated, and are affecting our view as researchers related to what situation the respondent/individuals is in. Based on these statements, it is relevant that the researches know how to deal with ethical problems that might occur whilst collecting data from respondents. If one were to follow the seven stages that Kvale et al (2015) presents, there would be some ethical implications that requires attention. There is a link between what Kvale et al (2015) present as potential preparations for the interview and the theoretical contributions by Bell and Bryman (2007) regarding the ethics on how researchers should behave whilst collecting data.

Bell & Bryman (2007) present some key principles in research ethics that apply both during and after the interviews are conducted. Some of the key principles are described in this chapter, as they were considered relevant for the project. The first key principle, whilst gathering information in interviews, is to ensure that the respondents are not harmed during the interview process. This means that the researchers have to make sure that the respondents are feeling both physically and psychologically comfortable while being interviewed. The authors then present a need for dignity which means that we have to focus on how not to cause potential discomfort or anxiety.

As researchers it is important to satisfy the need for full consent of the respondents, which was acquired by providing the respondents with a declaration of consent before conducting interviews (Appendix 1). The privacy of the respondents is crucial to acknowledge when discussing potential

ethical issues. By providing the declaration of consent to the respondents prior to the interviews, the need to protect their privacy is satisfied. Furthermore, this shows how the privacy of the respondents are protected, and that the information collected through audio are deleted when the project ends.

The need for anonymity describes how the researchers are responsible for safeguarding the respondents' right to remain anonymous. Moreover, this means that information about the respondents will not be utilized in other ways than promised through the declaration of consent. It is important to acknowledge the concern of questions that might be perceived as leading to make sure the researchers don't mislead the respondents. This was managed by continuously reflecting on both why the respondents do engage and why they choose not to engage. Further, body language was carefully considered to support the respondents when they were excited about a topic, and to show interest in their thoughts. This was further documented in an evaluation form attached in appendix 2, to potentially use during the analysis to ensure proper interpretations.

Misrepresentation is the last ethical concern included in this study. This concern regards how the findings from the data collected will not be misrepresented or falsely reported after the interviews are conducted. The study was notified to NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data) to confirm that ethical concerns and privacy regulations were properly managed. The application was approved because no sensitive information was gathered, the respondents participated voluntarily, and the study did not conflict with any legislations or privacy policies.

4.0 Result and Discussion

The table below displays the gender of the respondent, time spent on the interview and the location where the interview took place. The respondents were all born between 1990 and 1996. This age range means members of Gen Y born between 1981 and 1990 are not represented which is important to acknowledge as a potential limitation to the study and might be the reason why minimal new information was explored in the last two interviews.

Table 2: Respondent and Interview Information

Respondent	Year of birth	Gender	Time Spent	Location of the interview
R1	1995	Male	106 minutes	Meeting room at the respondent's university campus
R2	1996	Female	58 minutes	Meeting room at the respondent's university campus
R3	1993	Female	63 minutes	Meeting room at the respondent's university campus
R4	1995	Female	71 minutes	Skype
R5	1995	Female	67 minutes	Skype
R6	1995	Male	62 minutes	Meeting room at the respondent's university campus
R7	1995	Male	82 minutes	Meeting room at the respondent's university campus
R8	1996	Female	72 minutes	Meeting room at the respondent's university campus
R9	1996	Female	72 minutes	Meeting room at the respondent's university campus
R10	1990	Male	46 minutes	Meeting room at the researchers' university campus

4.1 Social media usage

The findings show the complexity of human behavior and explore patterns of why members of Gen Y choose not to engage on social media. The respondents have all matured concurrently with social media, and the prevalence and rapid expansion of digital technology. This simultaneous evolution has made its mark on the respondents through seeing others get burned, early and frequent reminders of how what's posted online will remain there forever and the underlying reminder of 'once bitten, twice shy' from remembering their own embarrassing phases of social media use. Additionally, social media is bringing the world together and connecting people and brands from opposite sides of the world. The development of the social media experience is epitomized as one respondent explained:

> Whereas social media earlier was each and everyone's own little bubble where we existed with just our friends from school, because you didn't have friends from other schools or the other side of the planet for that matter. Now, instead of there being a bubble around your community, you're the bubble looking out at the rest of the world community. Instead of the bubble surrounding the people you care about and interact with, you're now exposed to many more. Where there used to be many small bubbles there is now one gigantic bubble making you exposed to everything and everyone (R7).

To understand the findings further, it is therefore essential to present how the respondents use different social media platforms. Facebook is the platform that has been used for the longest period of time by all respondents, and it is also the platform where the preponderance of the respondents now engage the least as other platforms have taken over its original purpose. Facebook is also the platform that most respondents claim not to use at all, and state to only use Messenger for communication. This finding is not coherent with statistics presented by IPSOS (2019) regarding social media usage in Norway. The difference could be caused by different interpretations of the word 'use', as some might consider it 'use' if they actively engage on the platform, while others might consider themselves to 'use' social media when just consuming. A previous study conducted by Sveningsson (2015) suggested that youth consumed information on social media as a pastime, and their experience of being present might therefore be inadequate (Patterson, Ting & De Ruyter,

2006). Additionally, some individuals might consider Messenger and Facebook to be the same thing as they are highly integrated platforms.

> Facebook is no longer a platform for posting content, I feel like. I mean, should I post a status on Facebook, share something on Facebook? It's super awkward, it's completely weird, I couldn't sit there and write about my day like I used to, it doesn't work. But there you've got Instagram, where you can post stories, you can share pictures from your everyday life. So even though Facebook has changed, other social media has picked up what we once used Facebook for (R3).

> Well, I use Instagram both privately, but also my work's Instagram to post pictures and promote. I use Facebook very little, mostly just to talk to people (R2).

> Facebook is more of a calendar for me to be reminded of other's birthdays. And there's the Messenger app, that's the one I use the most and that has replaced my way of texting. And calling, I sometimes do that on messenger as well instead of regular calls (R7).

Further, the respondents experience that Instagram is a platform that better facilitates a lower threshold for sharing content as well as liking and commenting. Snapchat is the third platform all respondents claim to be actively using, and emphasize that this platform is more relaxed and informal, and that they use the platform to share their 'unvarnished reality' with close friends.

> I feel like a lot of my personality shows through on Snapchat. Like, through things that's happening in my daily life, what I do, my humor, that kind of stuff. While Instagram is more the superficial personality. Not even personality, more looks in many ways. So, I guess Snapchat is the unvarnished reality while Instagram is for the varnished reality (R3).

Moreover, the respondents make a clear distinction between engaging privately through direct messages and engaging publicly, whereas the majority of respondents prefers engaging privately

as they see no reason as to why everyone else should see their engagement. Currently, few known studies to date can either support or reject this finding. Furthermore, the findings show that several of the respondents experience a big difference in threshold in regards of posting on their profile or posting content in a 'story' where they can narrow down the people who can see it and the content will only stay public for a set amount of hours. This might be coherent with the finding of Belanche, Cenjor, & Pérez-Rueda (2019), claiming that members of Gen Y perceive Instagram stories as less intrusive than posts on a Facebook wall.

> I have a public profile on Instagram, and anyone can follow me on Snapchat, but they can't see my story for example so it's like having a closed profile. And Facebook is closed to only people I know... I think I'm kind of... I would like to limit the audience, but I'm not afraid of what would happen if anyone were to see it either (R4).

Different kinds of engagement behavior have different thresholds, similar to how the threshold for engagement behavior is different on different platforms according to the respondents. Sharing behavior is very rare among the respondents, but it is possible to see a pattern in the respondents being reluctant to engage publicly in any way on Facebook, while they are more open for engaging on Instagram both in terms of sharing, posting content and liking.

> On Snapchat I mostly share my daily life, what's going on, while Instagram is for the more special moments when you're out somewhere or... While Snapchat is more relaxed and fun, informal place. Facebook is more something I have, in case I ever need it for something like events, it's just for information (R3).

This finding may be coherent with the aforementioned suggestion that Instagram as a platform has replaced many of the previous purposes of Facebook. According to the respondents, other platforms have over time replaced many of Facebook's features, and different platforms facilitate different thresholds for engagement. Whereas Facebook now is considered quite formal for many, Instagram and Snapchat are considered gradually more informal by the respondents. The findings suggest that this is based on limiting the audience who will be able to see the content they share. Some consumers might find it hard to distinguish between the different platforms that exist, until

they have explored their options. After exploring the different options, it is probable to believe that they are more conscious of their needs and what they seek to achieve on different platforms.

4.2 Personal branding

Approximately 2400 years ago, Socrates said that "the way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear" (Referred in Petrucă, 2016). Today, creating a personal brand is easier than ever before due to social media facilitating for everyone to develop a public presentation of themselves. As aforementioned, existing research on personal branding has typically focused on branding in the context of hiring and winning the affection of recruiters (Wetsch, 2012). However, the results of the research conducted in this study suggest that personal branding is equally important in regards of personal relations rather than towards companies. Additionally, previous research has emphasized that how people engage on social media can be considered a form of impression management (Berger, 2014), which may have close links to why people choose not to engage.

Personal branding became an important element early in the interview phase when R1 stated that:

> I am, generally in life, quite aware of how it affects the brand 'me'. I often think about how others perceive me as a person. It's like... Whether you think about it or not, there are characteristics that represent people in the same way as brands (R1).

Building a 'personal brand', developing a public 'persona', and creating and maintaining a certain 'representation of myself' were different phrases used by the respondents which all fall into the same category of the original statement revolving the brand 'me'. The importance of a personal brand has been studied and acknowledged among members of Gen Z (Vitelar, 2013), and are according to the findings of this thesis of high relevance to Gen Y. A personal brand is often developed from a personal image. Whereas a personal image is a perception of you held in another person's mind, a brand evolves based on repeated contact (McNally & Speak, 2009). The repeated contact is easily acquired through CEB on social media. Moreover, an individual may want to experience a feeling of affiliation with a brand, whether the brand descend from a company or a person. This makes the importance of a personal brand coherent with the theoretical contributions

presented in chapter 2.5, acknowledging the importance of reputation and personal image when considering CEB (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Kang et al., 2013; Majali, 2018).

> There is a persona you present on social media, absolutely. I think it can be compared to how you present yourself at a job interview. For example, you want to display your good sides, but maybe not the sides that aren't as charming (R4).

> I'm conscious that anyone can research me, and therefore I want to be a bit selective in how I can be perceived, or how I represent myself (R10).

The findings show that the respondents are conscious about the content they associate themselves with as it affects how they are perceived as a person and as a brand. All respondents explain in different ways that what they engage with should be something they can stand for in the long run, and that they can stand behind having their name associated with. Coherent with existing theory presented by Kang et al. (2013) and Bachmann, Knecht, & Wittel (2017), remaining anonymous can be an important factor for maintaining a personal image and therefore gives more comfort when engaging. The lack of anonymity on social media may therefore be a cause to why members of Gen Y choose not to engage, as anonymity would allow them to not commit in any way.

> I don't want to have my name under many brands. A like can always be defended by saying you mis-clicked or that it wasn't conscious. If you, on the other hand, go in and comment on something, it's far more of a statement that I don't feel the need to make (R10).

> I know that there are many idiots out there, so I don't feel the need to have my name and my identity on display (R5).

> I would like to engage more than I do, but I think I might first of all be a bit lazy, and then there's that what's stays behind with your name on it... It becomes a lot over the years (R5).

However, there is a distinction between the respondents when reflecting on associations connected to liking or commenting content. While some respondents have a carefree attitude towards liking content they enjoy, R4 is concerned about engaging with content that is posted by a person who may be perceived as 'controversial' or 'polarizing'. As engagement on social media becomes visible to the entire world, some people perceive their engagement as supporting the sender of the content. Thus, it may be beneficial to some to avoid associations they are not certain about, to protect their own identity. As R4 states:

> I feel like when I like a photo, I stand behind much more than just that one photo (R4).

This aspect draws strong connections to the theoretical contribution of Wolter, Brach, Cronin and Bonn (2016) regarding consumer brand identification (CBI) and consumer brand disidentification (CBD). The study suggests that a brand will simultaneously attract and repulses different consumers when they present their identity, and that associations with a brand may obstruct or enhance the consumers social identity creation and expression.

Moreover, the respondents find that content on social media often need to make an extreme statement on either a positive or negative note. Hence, when they do not have strong feelings on a topic, they find it difficult to find their place and therefore choose to distance themselves from the matter instead. Low sharing behavior remains narrowly researched in existing literature (Borges-Tiago, Tiago, & Cosme, 2019), but connections can be drawn to this finding of not wanting to commit when they are not entirely convinced. Additionally, the findings suggest coherency with the bystander effect, whereas individuals seek not to have an opinion because they do not want to take on any responsibility (Fischer et al., 2011).

> I also feel like it's very hard to relate to, because things are very black and white these days, its either-or. You're either an opponent of it or you're rooting for plastic surgery. Let's say you partially agree with both sides, like seeing both points of view in a debate, but I think it's hard to find a place in between and thereafter place yourself in the middle. You're often asked who you root for. I think humans like to know their place, who we are and where we belong and so

on. I guess that's what's difficult these days, because I think many people
struggle with it (R8).

How I am on social media and how I engage reflect how I am as a person. I can
be... I don't know... A bit calm in my opinions and generally in life, like I said,
I have always struggled with making decisions and I'm worried my opinion
might be wrong so I choose not to have opinions (R9).

All respondents came to the same conclusion in regards to sharing the content of others, stating that they are more prone to sharing content on a story on Instagram or Snapchat as these stories are ephemeral. This finding is coherent with previous research, as ephemeral content has been found to be "raw" and require less perfection and careful consideration than non-ephemeral content (Villaespesa & Wowkowych, 2020). Moreover, only two respondents would describe themselves as active content producers. They are more comfortable sharing content they have produced themselves on their profile, while they prefer ephemeral alternatives when sharing content produced by others. This was further given substance by several of the respondents stating they do not want to share something to their profile that they cannot be sure will be relevant or that they will still support in a few years. As stated:

I am more careful with what I post, as it should be something I can stand behind
for a longer period of time, like a selfie. Yes, this is what my face looks like and
it will most likely look like this for another year, but if I post on my story it
could be the kind of food I eat or what I do that might not be relevant in a year
from now. On story I can post the content nobody would care about in a year
from now (R4).

I enjoyed making fun of myself in middle school, I had very many instances
where I had the opportunity to make fun of myself which made other people
have fun and then I had fun as long as others laughed. They might have laughed
at me, but I felt like they laughed with me and that was the most important to

me. So, in a way I became the clown, but it was in a real situation, not something online that could be held against me ten years later (R7).

Relevance is a term that was highly acknowledged by the respondents in terms of why they choose to engage. When sharing, the respondents will only share with the people they believe the content is relevant for, both in regards of content sharing and comments. This is an important reason why sharing content privately is more frequent among the respondents than sharing content publicly on one's personal social media profile. The element of relevance is coherent with existing research, whereas discussions in focus groups in a study conducted by Swart, Peters & Broersma (2018) found that relevance to the community you share with is crucial when deciding whether to share or not.

When I actually share something, I choose to ensure there is internal consistency with the whole group, so if I share I make sure it's relevant for as many people as possible, not just a conversation between two people, then it might as well be shared privately. What I share should be relevant for many others, and if I share something it's supposed to be relevant for a certain amount of people, and it can't be relevant for the 700 friends I have on Facebook. I want to share what's relevant, if not I don't want to bother you and steal time out of your day for something only I'm passionate about (R7).

I don't know, it feels more natural to me to say that a commercial is cool in real life, it feels very unnatural for me to say it on Facebook. Then I would share it with everyone, instead of just sharing with the people I think it would be relevant for (R2).

Thus, relevance and the lack of control on social media are to a high degree interlinked. The finding further suggest that relevance is an important reason as to why people rather engage privately than publicly to reach their targeted audience, and is also essential for the respondents to build and maintain trust and credibility.

'Trust' and 'credibility' are some of the terms mentioned by every respondent. Building trust in their social media community is important to maintain credibility and to further have an influence

on their followers. This is highly consistent with existing literature. Even though definitions of trust and credibility may differentiate depending on the scholar, foundational research on marketing and relationship marketing suggests that trust is a crucial element for establishing and nurturing social relationships (Grönroos, 1994; Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

> I mean, you don't want to share something you can't stand behind. Because... Trust on social media is... It's everything. If nobody believes in what you post or if nobody thinks it's real, then nobody's willing to interact with your content. I feel like I have credibility and... I mean... a credibility capital if you will, that I don't wanna mess away (R4).

> I want to safeguard my credibility, both for my own sake and for others, that I as a main rule can stand behind what I've said and meant (R5).

The respondents share the underlying belief of not sharing content for the sake of creating a safety net for the future, ensuring that they will receive the desired feedback when they need it the most in coming times. This aspect appears to have been neglected in existing research and is considered an important finding in this study that would require further research.

> The more you share, you use up a kind of quota for sharing within a certain period. If you share a lot, you'll be noticed less because... Or you might be noticed, but people won't engage because they're fed up with what the person has to say (R7).

This aspect of personal branding is vaguely explored in existing literature, as previous research mainly has focused on trust in regards of the relationship between a brand and their followers as well as the aforementioned self-representation towards companies and potential recruiters (Wetsch, 2012). However, when exploring personal branding, trust is an important element both in a professional sense and to enhance one's own credibility in personal networks and relationships. Not only are the respondents careful in their engagement behavior to establish and maintain their credibility, several of the respondents emphasized that they are more likely to engage with content that feels authentic and transparent. This finding is of high value for brands, as it adds new insight into what content is more likely to engage the target group.

4.3 Social Phobia

Social phobia is defined as a strong desire to convey a particular favorable impression of oneself to others and marked insecurity about one's ability to do so (Clark & Wells, 1995). As previously stated, a personal brand is about the difference we bring through what we do, the power to convince that we do it well, substantiated by the received feedback. Social phobia, on the other hand, is the fear of not being able to create a satisfying presentation of oneself. Social media is a facilitator for giving and receiving feedback, and the recognition that can be received on social media is highly acknowledged by the respondents both in regards of getting the desired feedback but also in regards to fearing the absence of feedback.

> In a way you expose yourself and put yourself in a vulnerable position where there is the chance of being judged. And there's that, do I get enough likes on this photo, it's a real thing. I don't want to think that way, but most of us do to some degree. There's the fear of few people liking your photo (R3).

The fear of not getting recognition when engaging on social media is prominent in the findings. This fear is more outstanding when the engagement behavior regards sharing or producing content, but it is also present in regards of lower intensity engagement such as liking or commenting. Furthermore, every respondent acknowledged a fear of not receiving recognition when engaging on social media. This finding is coherent with existing theoretical contributions by Rochat (2009) and Burtăverde, Avram, and Vlăsceanu (2019) on the fear of social rejection. Moreover, the fear of not receiving recognition may be coherent with the theories on narcissism among members of Gen Y (Twenge et al., 2008) presented in chapter 2.3. Even though the respondents' goal is not necessarily to seek fame, they do seek recognition from either strangers or people they know.

> I think we always seek some kind of recognition, otherwise I don't think we would share as much (R3).

> Afterall, I'm terrified of posting something, and it's really stupid, because I'm not like that in any other area of my life. But I'm terrified of posting something, in fear that people will think 'who does she think she is?' (R8).

One respondent stated that which social media platform she uses will depend on the recognition she aims to accumulate. This is coherent with the theoretical contribution by McCain & Campbell (2018), suggesting that individuals who seek to enhance themselves on social media are active on different social platforms in order to satisfy their need for self-esteem. The respondents can seek different kinds of recognition, varying from compliments on their appearance, to something they have accomplished, to the opinions or thoughts they share, and so on.

> When I share and produce content, I want recognition. I get very unmotivated if I don't get any answers. And then I'd rather change to a different social platform where I know I'll receive more feedback (R4).

One respondent compared the feedback received on social media to social cues in real life, to emphasize how a lack of feedback will make you think twice before sharing something again. In real life, being sensitive and thoughtful to the feelings of others is essential to maintain and establish social relationships (Pickett, Gardner & Knowles, 2004). Thus, it is natural to draw a further connection to social cues on social media.

> Many of the processes of interpreting people's mood happen without us thinking about it, but they are still processes that happen when you are online. So, when somebody gets few likes it won't affect you in a way you think about, but it will still affect you because it's like a social cue that you put in like a metric to measure the success of interaction. If you walk out of here angry now, then this was a lousy conversation and you feel bad, and when you then put the same things in a virtual space you'll have much of the same effects. If you got five likes versus 15, then this was a bad conversation. Even though it's not really a conversation but it kind of is inside your head (R7).

A reason for the social phobia to arise on social media is the potential reach of any engagement or statement that is made online. However, it is worth mentioning that the potential reach on social media is not only a root to fear.

> The thought of anyone in the world being able to see it is what makes it exciting (R8).

This an interesting finding as the respondent further explained that she is more concerned about what the people she has a personal relationship with will think about her than what people she does not know may think. This might be related to the idea of personal branding and being in control of the image that is presented of oneself.

While most respondents claimed they care about what other people think of their engagement and presentation of themselves, there was a distinction between those who were concerned about the opinions of people they have a personal relationship with and those who were concerned about the opinions of the people they do not know. Whereas some found they fear lacking or negative responses from people they do know, others fear the negative response of people they do not know. This may further draw connections to the theory regarding the perception gap. The perception gap is described as the difference between the communicator's intentions with the statement, and the receiver's perception, and can potentially affect users' decisions towards engaging or not (Loehr, 2014). Moreover, the decisions are made without certain knowledge of the concrete consequences of specific actions for engagement (Cohen, 2015)

> I think what stresses me the most, what I'm the most caught up in, is what those who are closest to me think. That is the group that affects me the most, making me anxious. I care very little about the people I don't know (R8).

> By having a larger influence than your social circuit, that means many people don't know you for who you are. And when you then choose to spread a message to very many people who don't know you for you, a lot will be left to your imagination. So how you choose to interpret what I write matters more than how I actually meant it. If you know me, you would know it's just me being me, unlike another person who may think this guy is a real idiot. So, I guess the fact that you can't defend yourself is my fear (R7).

The different points of view may be caused by the ways the respondents experience satisfying their need for recognition in other aspects of life. If a person experience confidence in the recognition they receive from close ones in real life, they may not experience a need for their recognition on social media. In such cases they may rather seek creating a positive impression towards strangers. On the other side, if they do not satisfy their need for recognition through relationships in real life, they might be more conscious of receiving such recognition on social media. This theory is coherent with the findings presented by Stanculescu (2011). However, further psychological studies would be highly beneficial to confirm or reject the interpretation.

In addition to the user's engagement potentially reaching millions of people, several of the respondents expressed that when something is posted online they make a commitment to being associated with said content. When asked to elaborate, the respondent reflected on how posts online will stay there for all future time. Even if they delete their post or remove their engagement, some people may have already seen the applicable expression of engagement, meaning it can never truly be retracted. This finding is coherent with a recent study conducted by Mondal, Messias, Ghosh, Gummadi and Kate (2017), and emphasizes why the respondents may be more inclined to share ephemeral content. Moreover, willingness to share ephemeral content may be linked to the comfort of sharing offline rather than online.

> Everything you share, it is always out there in a way, some place, forever. If I were to share an opinion in a comment section, or share something that may be radical, it will be out there, and someone I know have seen it. These people will remember it, and it will be out there no matter what, and it's easy to mess up and hard to retract. Because even if you delete it, it will still be out there because someone have seen it. It will be out there forever (R6).

The respondents reflected on engagement as long term commitments, and all ten respondents shared consistent reasoning as to why they are reluctant to engage on social media. They worry about their opinion being wrong in the eyes of another beholder, they are afraid of being interpreted in a way that is unintentional, and they are concerned about creating a wrongful representation of themselves and their identity. Additionally, multiple respondents addressed the difficulty of not being able to correct oneself after a statement is made, which may lead them to keep their statements off the Internet. This may further be highly connected to the aforementioned fear of not

receiving recognition when sharing content on social media. Previous research supports that fear of social isolation, which could be experienced if statements are wrongfully communicated or misinterpreted, leads individuals to withdraw from social media interaction (Chen, 2018). Furthermore, some respondents found this aspect as an important reason as to why they would rather share their opinions offline than online.

It's easier to correct myself if I've miscommunicated something (R1).

I feel safer when sharing offline, I feel more assured that I will get answers, and I can choose who I share it with, and I don't share it with everyone (R6).

A characteristic every respondent had in common was their reminiscence of an 'awkward' phase of social media use when they were younger. "Once bitten, twice shy" was the expression used by R7, explaining how he feels Gen Y have experienced a phase of life where their social media behavior does not reflect how they seek to be perceived today.

Once bitten, twice shy. Because I've lived through the rise of the Internet, I have in many ways seen things go wrong, people getting burned, and because of that I'm very careful when actually expressing myself in public forums on the Internet because I've seen so many get burned (R7).

I feel like when we grew up and social media came there were no rules, or there were no trends on how to use it, so we experimented a lot. And... I don't know... Now we've all been through a very awkward phase on social media when nobody knew what was ok to post (R4).

As the respondents have experiences of remembering their own previous behavior on social media with regret, they now keep that in mind when choosing whether to engage or not. This finding is coherent with the findings of Zhao et al. (2013). Moreover, several of the respondents will not engage unless they can be certain they can represent the same behavior in the foreseeable future or in a couple of years. This finding is highly coherent with the generation's characteristics as digital natives (Prensky, 2001), as well as the findings previously presented in this thesis.

Several respondents acknowledge the value of their engagement, and therefore desire to receive recognition from the actor they engage with. This is closely related to the theme of personal needs and reciprocity, whereas they experience no need to engage if they cannot be sure that they will receive recognition for it. This aspect draws connection to the bystander effect in critical situations as discussed in section 4.2, where an individual is less likely to contribute if other people are present and they do not wish to take on any responsibility (Fischer et al., 2011).

> I often feel like you drown in a sea of other comments or that there's so much out there that you won't reach through anyway (R5).

The finding suggests that experience of not getting noticed in the crowd may counteract motivation to engage and may cohere with the findings regarding self-focus and reciprocity presented in the next chapter.

4.4 Self-focus

The term self-focus is used in this context to describe how some users on social media are trying to satisfy different personal needs, and furthermore getting something in return for their actions. Different from personal branding and social phobia, self-focus describes why some users choose to do specific actions for satisfying their needs, without any further focus on branding themselves in one specific way or another. Based on how to satisfy these needs, it is relevant to describe that members of Gen Y are fully aware of what they want, and that they want it immediately. Bolton et al. (2013) suggest that Gen Y show high levels of impatient behavior whilst using technology.

The findings show that users on social media actively use it for consuming different types of content to satisfy personal needs regarding information, inspiration, entertainment and social connectivity with others. This suggests that users focus on themselves in different situations, before considering how their engagement might benefit the other part. One of the respondents claimed that their behavior has changed regarding how they consume information on social media. The behavioral patterns have developed, and the respondents have to be more selective and restrictive regarding how they are affected by content on social media.

> Earlier, I used social media for finding information about different topics, and now information is presented to me in another way, and I see more information about topics I don't search for. The information presented today is more random than it used to be (R10).

The change regarding behavioral patterns on social media may be a result of the increase in information given from different content-producers. The consumers' behavioral patterns can be affected by how their data is stored, and many webpages use "cookies" for storing information. In general, cookies are described as functions that gives the website a memory, and furthermore describes how cookies are able to remember interaction between the user and the webpage (Pierson & Heyman, 2011). The authors further describe third party cookies, which are cookies placed on the webpage through advertisements or other content similar to advertisement.

As aforementioned by the respondent, the way social media is used have changed and third-party cookies is considered a reason for changed behavior. Since third party cookies do not require any

form of interaction between the user and the content-producer before posting something in the browser (Pierson & Heyman, 2011), users will see more irrelevant information about topics that are not within their interests.

> Advertisements should be more personally oriented, for example if I see an advertisement for dresses, it won't fit my personality at all. I have been looking at dresses earlier, when I was in a relationship, but since I am no longer in a relationship, it would be better if advertisements I see fit my personality better (R10).

This statement may be linked to why some users choose not to engage, based on how they want to shape their feeds with information on the different social media platforms. There is little research conducted on how users engage to shape their feeds on social media, but Bode (2016) suggest that users on social media to some degree are allowed to control what type of content they are exposed to. Based on different actions, such as unfollowing, choosing not to engage, hiding or blocking content producers, the users will see less of the content they perceive as irrelevant. The opportunity related to shaping their own feed on social media platforms also describes why some users choose to engage with different brands. The collected data suggests that some users are engaging in different ways and using functions on platforms to shape their feeds and get useful information, some also use this opportunity to get a feed consistent of content that inspire them.

> There is also the aspect that if I like many posts from the same accounts, they will appear higher up in the algorithms. So, I tend to for example like news-articles because I want it higher up. It's something informative. I'm attracted to the posts that inspire or inform me (R4).

> There is a function on Facebook, where you can decide which pages and users to see first, and I use this to make sure that the content I like the most are presented to me at the top of my news feed (R6).

On the other hand, some might choose to not follow specific companies, brands or other users, because they know they will get information that might affect them in negative ways, or that it puts some type of pressure towards making decisions they regret later.

> I think I'm aware of the different types of brands I choose to follow, and I'm
> also aware of those I choose not to follow as well. I know that these brands will
> make me want to buy more things, so I try not to follow them (R4).

A few of the respondents further stated that they use the different social media platforms for consuming different types of entertainment, as a pastime, and for satisfying a type of personal need. As aforementioned, when used as pastime their potential engagement would not qualify to be considered an engaged state due to the lack of presence according to Patterson, Ting and de Ruyter (2006). However, it is probable to assume that consuming entertainment requires some level of cognitive presence, and may therefore still be considered engagement even though it occurs more intuitively (Dane & Pratt, 2007; Simon, 1987).

> There are different purposes for using social media, and sometimes I use it for
> entertainment, just to look at random videos as a pastime (R6).

Whilst doing this, some users may come across something they really appreciate, and therefore choose to engage with the content-producer to make sure they receive similar content that they will enjoy in the future. Brands can act as content-producers, but everyday individuals may also take on the role of content-producers when contributing with content on social media. There is a variety in personal needs, and some of these needs are latent, which means that the customers are unaware of their needs and associated solutions (Narver, Slater & Maclachlan, 2004). These latent personal needs might lead to some type of engagement in social media, in which they were not aware of a certain need before being exposed to it. Of this reason some respondents decide to follow a certain brand as a reminder.

> Sometimes, when I see something I like, and my intention is that I am going to
> buy it later, I choose to save the content, or click the like-button as a reminder
> for later (R6).

These latent needs may potentially lead to actions where users engage in different ways for keeping in touch with brands that peak their interest. By engaging they make it easier for themselves to satisfy a personal need in the future, whether they seek to purchase something, obtain information or inspiration, or anything in between.

The data collected suggest how self-focus might be a reason for why some choose not to engage with brands or other users. The findings imply that some users want something in return for their engagement, as they consider their engagement to be valuable for the receiver. This may further be linked to personal branding, based on how they desire to expose/express themselves on social media and that they want to be acknowledged for their efforts.

> I don't usually like content on Facebook, because I don't want to present myself in specific ways out there. It doesn't really matter to me, and it doesn't give me anything. Honestly, what does it give me to like some random post on a specific page? (R1).

The desire for reciprocity may further be linked to another first order codes in the category, regarding how some respondents claim that they experience no need for others to earn money off their engagement. Some experience not wanting to engage with a brand and having them earn money for their engagement without getting anything in return for their actions and engagement. This is also a reason why some users choose not to like posts on specific pages on social media platforms, because it does not give them anything useful in return.

Lewis (2015) describes reciprocity as an exchange between parties, in which all involved actors benefits. Furthermore, it describes how some might want something in return for their contributions. The author claims that reciprocity is both elusive and obvious; elusive because some take it for granted, and obvious because the social norm related to giving something back is accepted and recognized. The elusive way of looking at reciprocity might be the reason why some users choose not to engage, if the content-producer takes their engagement without having to give something back. Some users might be aware of this and therefore make the decision towards not engaging, because they do not benefit from doing such.

And of course, if a brand goes in and likes my photo, or comments on my photo, I'll have an extra eye out for them in the future (R4).

If a brand and an influencer is doing a collaboration, one of the parties have to be highly convincing for me to want to engage. Cause I don't really see the need to let someone I don't know... Earn any money off my engagement (R5).

The findings further suggest that the respondents are aware of the potential value their engagement have for the content-producer, but the degree of self-focus make them decide not to engage. This may draw links to complaint behavior, whereas previous research by Ayertey & Ozoum (2017) suggest that some brands are aware that many users do not bother to complain, and therefore do not have a functional strategy regarding recovery. If the brand shows lacking motivation to manage incoming complaints, consumers might believe that their positive engagement will receive equally inadequate acknowledgement. Thus, it is probable to believe that consumers choose not to engage with brands in either positive or negative valence due to lacking recognition.

A like from me is worth more than a like from someone that likes all the content the company publish (R10).

If I had any influence I would of course engage more, with the things I consider good and important (R6).

Furthermore, social norms have evolved on social media platforms, in which some users press the like-button even when they do not necessarily enjoy or agree with the material presented in the content. The findings show that reciprocity might be the reason why people engage in this way, even when they might disagree with the content that has been posted. By engaging with others posts, there is a possibility that the users think the content-producer will engage similarly with their content when they post something of their own.

> I don't expect others to like or comment on the content I share, just because I did it on their posts, but I know that is the norm for a lot of people (R3).

Several of the respondents described this as a form of norm and used the term courtesy-likes.

> I tend to press the like-button on content from some friends, even though I do not like what they post, just as a courtesy, and as a thank you for sharing something from their lives (R10).

> Sometimes, I share content from work. If my colleagues or boss posts something, I share it, even though I do not agree with it, just to be nice. I feel like it's kind of a norm (R6).

As aforementioned, users focusing on themselves, and furthermore focusing on reciprocity may partially explain why they choose not to engage in certain scenarios. The primary constituent related to why they choose not to engage is based on their emotions towards benefiting from their actions. Some feel that they are contributing by engaging in a situation where the other party is benefiting from it, without getting anything in return. In such situations, motivation to engage is immensely diminished.

4.5 The relationships between the themes

It is of high importance to emphasize that the aggregated themes extracted through the coding process are all highly interlinked and not mutually exclusive. Additionally, several of the first-order codes could be placed within other aggregated themes when considering the multiple aspects of CEB. Thus, the aggregated themes are coherent with each other and substantiates one another.

Despite the topic of not engaging being narrowly investigated in existing research, the aggregated themes are predominantly found in newer studies as important motivational factors to engage on different social media platforms (Burtăverde, Avram, & Vlăsceanu, 2019; Villaespesa & Wowkowych, 2020). The themes of personal branding and social phobia are closely interlinked and should be considered as such. The personal brand of an individual represent how they seek to present themselves to the world, while social phobia enhances the fear of not managing to properly create this presentation. These findings are highly coherent with the results of newer research including a quantitative study conducted by Burtăverde, Avram, and Vlăsceanu (2019). The authors found that the core of protective self-presentation is the avoidance of social rejection, and that avoidance of social media occurs due to an individual's need to belong and need for self-presentation. Self-presentation and personal branding are in this matter considered interlinked terms for presenting the same phenomenon.

Self-focus and awareness towards satisfying different personal needs often leads to actions where users affect in what way they want to get information from different content-producers. Moreover, they are conscious of what kind of content they seek to receive. The reach on social media is extensive, and the amount of information available on social media platforms is prodigious. Thus, the content that becomes available to an individual may be more arbitrary than in the earlier stages of social media. An important reason why some users might choose not to engage with brands, or their content, is to affect their feed. Due to the algorithms on social media, what an individual engage with will affect what they see in the future. Some of the respondents are highly aware of this, while some are more open to engaging with content they in some way enjoy. By being careful they will reduce the chances of seeing content that is perceived as annoying or insignificant.

Furthermore, several of the respondents seek to adjust their social media feed by affecting the algorithms in ways to receive relevant content. This emphasizes how crucial relevance is in CEB as it is an important element to understand sharing behavior, consuming behavior and overall engagement behavior. Awareness towards how relevant the information of their feeds should be, for satisfying their own personal needs, further lead to higher evaluations before posting something of their own due to their concern of the content possibly being irrelevant for the users seeing the content. By being relevant to their audience they might experience satisfying their need for recognition.

One might say that the need for recognition could be placed within the theme of personal needs. However, in this thesis the need for recognition was connected to social phobia as the need for recognition creates roots for fear of rejection within the respondents. Some respondents explain that they put their personal brand at risk by engaging on social media, and therefore feel that they should get something in return for taking that risk when brands want them to engage. Reciprocity is an important aspect that affects CEB regarding who to engage with and not on social media, and is as aforementioned highly interlinked with social phobia. Some respondents emphasized that they want to feel liked, and that the engagement they receive on social media further reflects how well liked they are in real life. This connection may be a cause as to why courtesy-likes and comments have grown to be common in the respondents world, as they state that even though they may not particularly enjoy the content they will like it if supports someone they care about.

4.6 Advanced conceptual framework

An advanced conceptual framework was developed based on the empirical findings and discussion. The findings required different theoretical contributions to be addressed and added to the framework. Moreover, the impact that the findings may have on brands related to social phobia, self-focus and personal branding were added to the framework to create a holistic understanding of CEB and why consumers may choose not to engage. The primary impact consumers may experience if brands adhere this developed understanding of CEB was further implemented in the framework. The findings are to a great degree coherent with previous research, and the study further adds new elements that may expand the current understanding of CEB.
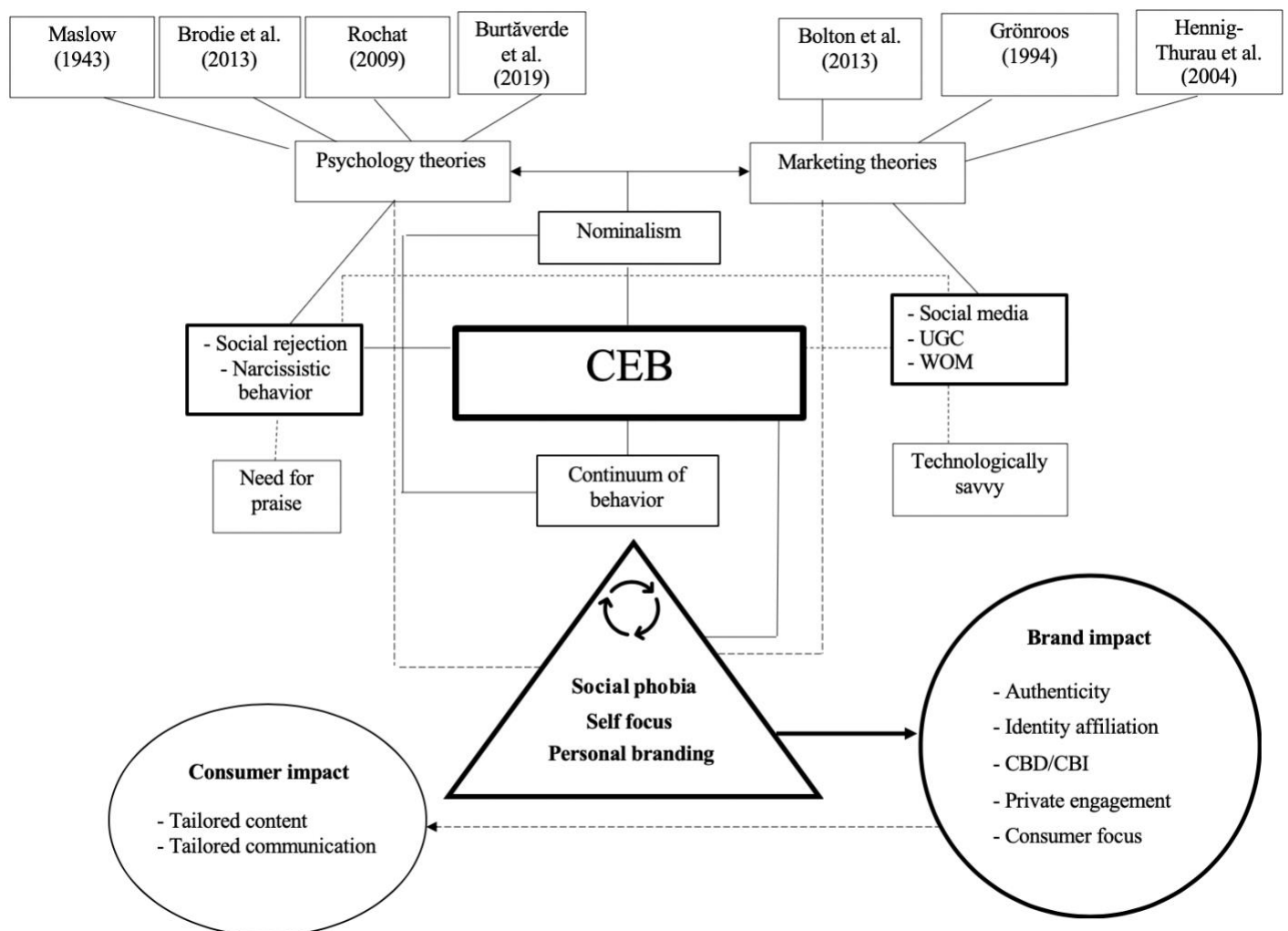

Figure 8: Advanced conceptual framework.

Developed for this study.

5.0 Conclusion

The research objectives are responded to in the first section of the concluding chapter. Theoretical contributions and practical implication are then presented, followed by an examination of limitations to the study and suggestions to what future research will benefit from investigating further.

5.1 Responding to underlying research objective one

The first underlying research objective of this master thesis was to investigate attributes to social media platforms that counteract motivations to engage. The potential reach on social media appears to be an important reason as to why individuals choose not to engage. Moreover, the fear of social rejection, or not receiving the desired recognition, results in individuals abstaining from publicly engaging online. The combination of the immense reach and how content posted on social media never truly can be retracted builds ground for the social phobia to develop. Furthermore, the fear of publicly shared information about oneself on social media being used by others for unwarranted purposes counteracts engagement.

Different platforms are used for different purposes by the respondents depending on the reach. The findings suggest that a larger reach will result in the respondent being more restricted in their public CEB due to their desire to only share content they believe will be relevant for those who see it. Furthermore, brands on social media often encourage their followers to make a statement and have an opinion about something in one way or another. This makes it difficult for individuals to find their place if they don't entirely agree with either side, thus counteracting their motivation to engage. However, the respondents experience that the opportunities for sharing ephemeral content allows them to share more content that they enjoy or support as it will not remain on their profile long-term.

5.2 Responding to underlying research objective two

The second underlying research objective of the thesis was to understand users' decisions of not engaging on social media as a conscious and/or subconscious choice. To a large extent the respondents are highly conscious of their behavior on social media. While choosing not to engage

publicly has become the norm to some degree for certain people and therefore takes place subconsciously, they are highly conscious of the reasoning behind this development. Moreover, the respondents experience willingness to share content, but they only want to share with the people they are sure it will be relevant for. Relevance is reoccurring in this study, and it becomes clear that members of Gen Y value relevance both in what they share and what they receive on social media.

The findings show that members of Gen Y are highly conscious about why they choose not to engage. The reasoning resides in observing other get burned by posting or engaging with content that they later regret for one reason or the other. Additionally, the fear of losing control over one's privacy is an element that counteracts motivations to engage and is something members of Gen Y appear to be highly conscious about.

5.3 Responding to underlying research objective three

The third research objective was to explore how CEB on social media affect the way people perceive their own identity. The identity of Gen Y can be seen as how they develop their personal brand. The findings emphasize the importance of personal branding in regards to personal relationships on social media. Whereas existing research commonly has considered personal branding to be related to presenting oneself towards companies and potential recruiters, this study prepends a new aspect. Further, the thesis address social phobia as a crucial cause to why members of Gen Y choose not to engage, due to the fear of miscommunicating their identity. The findings suggest that the members of Gen Y experience a low need to engage on social media, and that not engaging is a safe way of building and maintaining their personal brand.

However, members of Gen Y will engage with content that is necessary to nourish personal relationships and support individuals they care about. The engagement of Gen Y may be of high value for marketers even though it's not necessarily publicly visible. Additionally, they engage with the content that gives them something in return either in regards of information, inspiration, humor, a positive association or any other personal need.

5.4 Theoretical implications

5.4.1 Personal branding

Personal branding has been theoretically investigated through the perspective of personal image and presenting oneself in a certain way to give recruiters and impression of who you are and what you do. However, the findings presented in this study adds insight to existing literature by emphasizing how the personal brand an individual develops signifies the way they desire to appear in the eyes of other individuals. Different social media platforms are used for different purposes, whereas some are used in a more formal way than others. However, on the platforms where Gen Y are active, they generally have a desire to present themselves in ways that are satisfactory to portray a proper image towards friends and strangers online. This perspective contributes to the research field by adding the element of personal branding in regards of other consumers rather than recruiters or companies.

The findings presented suggest that members of Gen Y experience that building and maintaining trust is of high importance in their relationship with their followers and friends on social media. To do this, they create a safety net by sharing minimal content to ensure they will receive the feedback they need in the future. This aspect of social media contributes to previous research by acknowledging the element of a safety net concerning sharing behavior, and by substantiating existing literature where relevance is emphasized.

5.4.2 Social phobia

The human fear of social rejection has received thorough investigation in existing literature, and the findings presented cohere with previous theoretical contributions. Social phobia has received thorough attention within the psychology field and moderate recognition within the marketing field. Nevertheless, the findings presented suggest that social phobia in the context of CEB requires more attention within the marketing field. The psychology of human behavior and motivation should be considered essential for the marketing field to develop holistic understandings on the topic. This study contributes to the marketing field by exploring social phobia as a relevant element to explain absence of CEB among members of Gen Y on social media. Moreover, the fear of social

rejection may enhance CBD and brands may therefore risk intimidating their potential customers by encouraging them as consumers to commit to certain associations.

5.4.3 Self-focus

The element of self-focus is a natural motivator for engaging in CEB. Social media provide platforms where individuals and brands can benefit financially off the engagement they accumulate, and an initial thought may be that consumers provide engagement to help others succeed. However, the study provides valuable insight by suggesting that reciprocity is essential when discussing Gen Y and CEB. Reciprocity have received some investigation in the marketing field, and the study contributes to substantiate existing research on the topic.

5.5 Practical implications

The findings explored in this study may have great practical implications for brands who desire to reach Gen Y as their target audience and motivate CEB. Through understanding the reasoning behind why the generation chooses not to engage, brands can facilitate their marketing communication to meet the consumers need and further provide content in ways that motivate CEB privately and publicly both in an ephemeral and indefinite manner. By properly targeting communication methods and tailoring content accordingly, brands may experience increased CEB among their target group, and further may experience increased loyalty if their brand identity coheres with the consumers personal brand.

By tailoring the content and communication methods, brands might additionally benefit from the potential advantages that come from CEB including increased reputation, positive WOM, feedback, direct sales and potentially returning customers who identify with the brand. Moreover, by brands marketing content that feels authentic to the receiver, they may experience a higher degree of sharing behavior, both privately and publicly, due to the consumer's desire to protect and enhance their personal brand. The findings can support brands in developing marketing strategies and spend their resources effectively and efficiently.

5.6 Limitations and future research

5.6.1 Limitations

A distinct limitation to the study is the time-limit of the master course. During the interviews the respondents grew more reflective and aware of their own behavior, and new thoughts and emotions were discovered. Thus, by conducting a longitudinal study, even more perspectives on the comprehensive topic could possibly be explored. Moreover, by conducting new interviews with the same respondents after a certain amount of time, they might have been more conscious of their recent behavior. During the research process conducted in this study, the COVID-19 virus broke out to become a global pandemic. This presented the effect of many people engaging more on social media to raise awareness, to support those in need, and many people taking to social media as they were in lockdown with reduced opportunities for being social in real life. Having this aspect in mind, it would be of high interest to revise with the respondents and see if they consider their CEB any different now compared to what they did before the virus outbreak. Considering that CEB is a topic that requires time to reflect thoroughly on, a longitudinal study could explore beneficial aspects.

Furthermore, a limitation of the study is the lack of existing research on why individuals choose not to engage. Existing studies have primarily investigated reasons to engage and the motivational factors behind, while the opposite aspect have been severely overlooked thus far. Due to this, it would be beneficial to supplement the study with quantitative data to develop a more holistic overview of Gen Y and CEB. However, a combination of methods was not possible because of resource limitations.

5.6.2 Future research

A vast amount of previous research has focused on customers, and this thesis emphasize the importance of future research focus more on consumers. The majority of respondents in this study experience being consumers rather than customers or contributors and is therefore an important group to understand for potential reach. Additionally, the findings show tendencies to consumers being more likely to engage with content that feels authentic and real, leaving grounds for future research to consider the value of content marketing for building a brand's reputation and trust rather than just selling products.

Furthermore, it would be of high interest for future research to consider Gen Y compared to both the younger generation and the prior generation, as the respondents portray a vast distinction between the generations and their CEB. For example, a potential side effect of the low CEB among Gen Y may be that people in this generation behave less like internet trolls than in generations who are more active in their engagement. Further, future research might find it beneficial to explore why Gen Y have left Facebook for other social media to better understand how the development might continue to evolve.

Moreover, future research will find it beneficial to study the consciousness of social media users regarding their CEB. The interviews conducted in conjunction with this master thesis showed that several respondents did not want to admit that they care about engagement on social media, but during the time for reflection every respondent came to the conclusion that they do care to some degree. While some experienced caring about engagement to be natural, others felt it was embarrassing to admit that such caring was contradictory with how they wish to feel about the topic. Thus, future research regarding consciousness of CEB is considered to be of high interest.

Finally, future research should consider the research question of the thesis in a different context. As initially mentioned, previous studies have suggested that countries with individualistic culture show higher levels of narcissism than countries where collectivistic culture is dominating. Hence, it might be beneficial to further investigate CEB in countries with generally lower levels of narcissism to explore whether the findings will cohere with the findings presented in this study.

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8.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Informational sheet and declaration of consent

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet?

«Brukerengasjement i sosiale medier: hvorfor velger medlemmer av generasjon Y og engasjere i sosiale medier?»

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å forstå hvorfor medlemmer av generasjon Y velger å engasjere seg i større eller mindre grad på sosiale medier. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål
Denne studien er en del av en masteroppgave ved Høgskolen i Innlandet, Handelshøgskolen Innlandet – fakultet for økonomi og samfunnsvitenskap. Studien har som formål å forstå hvorfor medlemmer av generasjon Y velger å engasjere seg i større eller mindre grad på sosiale medier. Studien benytter en kombinasjon av kriteriebasert utvelgelse og «snøballmetoden». Det vil si at de første personene som blir intervjuet blir forespurt basert på atferd i sosiale medier. Etter at første gruppe med informanter har gjennomført intervju, blir disse spurt om å foreslå andre aktuelle informanter.
Spørsmålene vi stiller vil omhandle hvordan ulike sosiale plattformer legger til rette for ulik grad av engasjement og atferd, bevissthet rundt engasjement og atferd, og hvilke tanker konsumenter gjør seg før de velger å engasjere eller ikke engasjere seg.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?
Høgskolen i Innlandet, Handelshøgskolen Innlandet – fakultet for økonomi og samfunnsvitenskap er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?
Du er utvalgt til å delta i denne studien, på bakgrunn av kriteriene som omhandler generasjonstilhørighet og aktiv bruk av sosiale medier. Studien tar for seg mellom 12 og 20 informanter.

Aktuelt er det at vi benytter oss av «snøballmetoden» hvor informanter som allerede er intervjuet, har fått anledning til å anbefale andre aktuelle informanter.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?
Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer dette deltakelse i et intervju, som vil tas opp på lydopptak. Det vil ta deg ca. 45 minutter. Intervjuet inneholder spørsmål om dine erfaringer tilknyttet atferd og engasjement på sosiale medier. Lydopptak fra intervjuet blir lagret sikkert på Office 365 One Drive.

Det er frivillig å delta
Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykke tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger
Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.
Det vil hovedsakelig være to personer, Andrea E. Brataas og Robin A. Stothers, som vil ha tilgang til informasjonen som samles inn via studien. I tillegg vil også veileder (førsteamanuensis Xiang Mei ved Høgskolen i Innlandet) og ekstern sensor også ha tilgang til dataene som samles inn.

Opptakene vil bli tatt opp med applikasjonen Nettskjema-Diktafon, og vil bli sikkert lagret i Office 365 One Drive. Opptakene vil oppbevares sikret når det ikke benyttes i analyseprosessen slik at informasjon ikke kommer på avveie.

Du som informant er fullstendig anonym som deltaker, og det eneste av personalia som blir samlet inn er kjønn og tilhørende aldersgruppe.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?
Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 01.07.20. Etter dette vil opptak destrueres, og informasjonen vi samlet inn om deg, vil ikke kunne gjenopprettes. Oppgaven som publiseres vil anonymisere informantene, slik at informasjonen ikke kan spores tilbake til deg.

Dine rettigheter
Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:
- Innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- Å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- Få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- Få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- Å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?
Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskolen i Innlandet, Handelshøgskolen Innlandet – fakultet for økonomi og samfunnsvitenskap har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?
Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Høgskolen i Innlandet, Handelshøgskolen Innlandet – fakultet for økonomi og samfunnsvitenskap ved Andrea E. Brataas på telefon 976 11 490 eller e-post andreaebrataas@gmail.com eller Robin A. Stothers på telefon 909 92 752 eller e-post rostothers@gmail.com. Veileder Xiang Ying Mei kan kontaktes på e-post xiang.mei@inn.no.
- Vårt personvernombud: Hans Petter Nyberg
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Andrea E. Brataas og Robin A. Stothers   Xiang Ying Mei
Prosjektansvarlig
        Førsteemanuensis/veileder

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «Brukerengasjement i sosiale medier: hvorfor velger medlemmer av generasjon Y og engasjere i sosiale medier?», og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

☐ Å delta i intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. 01.07.20.

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 2: Evaluation form for conducted interviews

Informant:

Atmosfære:

Før (+/-)	Under (+/-)	Etter (+/-)

Tonefall:

Kommentar	Relatert til spørsmål om:

Non-verbal kommunikasjon:

Kommentar	Relatert til spørsmål om:

Sitater: tidspunkt/ relatert til spørsmål om

Sitat	Tid/ relatert til spørsmål om

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Feil vi som intervjuere gjorde:

Kommentar	Relatert til spørsmål om:

Annet:

Kommentar	Relatert til spørsmål om:

Appendix 3: Notification form in Norwegian - NSD

NORSK SENTER FOR FORSKNINGSDATA

Meldeskjema 646140

Sist oppdatert

23.01.2020

Hvilke personopplysninger skal du behandle?

- Navn (også ved signatur/samtykke)
- Lydopptak av personer

Type opplysninger

Skal du behandle særlige kategorier personopplysninger eller personopplysninger om straffedommer eller lovovertredelser?

Nei

Prosjektinformasjon

Prosjekttittel

Masteravhandling - Andrea Brataas og Robin A. Stothers

Begrunn behovet for å behandle personopplysningene

It is necessary to collect the names of the informants, and their signature to confirm their consent. Additionaly it is necessary to record the interview, to ensure that no information is lost.

Ekstern finansiering

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Robin Alexander Stothers, rostothers@gmail.com, tlf: 90992752

Behandlingsansvar

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Høgskolen i Innlandet / Handelshøgskolen Innlandet - Fakultet for økonomi og samfunnsvitenskap / Institutt for økonomifag

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Xiang Ying Mei, xiang.mei@inn.no, tlf: 4762430459

Skal behandlingsansvaret deles med andre institusjoner (felles behandlingsansvarlige)?

Nei

Utvalg 1

Beskriv utvalget

For this study it was of interest to recruit informants who are born within Gen Y, are active users of one more more social media platform, and who have engaged with a brand on social media in one way or another.

Rekruttering eller trekking av utvalget

The informants are recruited based on their engagement with brands on social media, and we seek informants with a variety of different engagement levels. Contact will be established through direct messages on social media.

Alder

23 - 39

Inngår det voksne (18 år +) i utvalget som ikke kan samtykke selv?

Nei

Personopplysninger for utvalg 1

- Lydopptak av personer

Hvordan samler du inn data fra utvalg 1?

Personlig intervju

Grunnlag for å behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger

Samtykke (art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Informasjon for utvalg 1

Informerer du utvalget om behandlingen av opplysningene?

Ja

Hvordan?

Skriftlig informasjon (papir eller elektronisk)

Tredjepersoner

Skal du behandle personopplysninger om tredjepersoner?

Nei

Dokumentasjon

Hvordan dokumenteres samtykkene?

- Manuelt (papir)

Hvordan kan samtykket trekkes tilbake?

The informants can at any time during the interview choose to withdraw their consent without questions from the researchers.

Hvordan kan de registrerte få innsyn, rettet eller slettet opplysninger om seg selv?

At the end of the interview the informants are asked the question of whether they want to

Totalt antall registrerte i prosjektet

1-99

Tillatelser

Skal du innhente følgende godkjenninger eller tillatelser for prosjektet?

Behandling

Hvor behandles opplysningene?

- Maskinvare tilhørende behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
- Private enheter

Hvem behandler/har tilgang til opplysningene?

- Student (studentprosjekt)
- Prosjektansvarlig

Tilgjengeliggjøres opplysningene utenfor EU/EØS til en tredjestat eller internasjonal organisasjon?

Nei

Sikkerhet

Oppbevares personopplysningene atskilt fra øvrige data (kodenøkkel)?

Ja

Hvilke tekniske og fysiske tiltak sikrer personopplysningene?

- Opplysningene anonymiseres

Varighet

Prosjektperiode

01.01.2020 - 04.05.2020

Skal data med personopplysninger oppbevares utover prosjektperioden?

Nei, data vil bli oppbevart uten personopplysninger (anonymisering)

Hvilke anonymiseringstiltak vil bli foretatt?

- Lyd- eller bildeopptak slettes

Vil de registrerte kunne identifiseres (direkte eller indirekte) i oppgave/avhandling/øvrige publikasjoner fra prosjektet?

Nei

Tilleggsopplysninger

Appendix 4: Granted Application – NSD

NSD NORSK SENTER FOR FORSKNINGSDATA

NSD sin vurdering

Prosjekttittel

Masteravhandling - Andrea Brataas og Robin A. Stothers

Referansenummer

646140

Registrert

23.01.2020 av Robin Alexander Stothers - robin.stothers@inn.no

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Høgskolen i Innlandet / Handelshøgskolen Innlandet - Fakultet for økonomi og samfunnsvitenskap / Institutt for økonomifag

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Xiang Ying Mei, xiang.mei@inn.no, tlf: 4762430459

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Robin Alexander Stothers, rostothers@gmail.com, tlf: 90992752

Prosjektperiode

01.01.2020 - 04.05.2020

Status

23.01.2020 - Vurdert

Vurdering (1)

23.01.2020 - Vurdert

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg 23.01.2020. Behandlingen kan starte.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER
Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:

85

https://nsd.no/personvernombud/meld_prosjekt/meld_endringer.html

Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET
Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til 04.05.2020.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER
NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER
Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19), dataportabilitet (art. 20).
NSD vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.
Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER
NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).
Dersom du benytter en databehandler i prosjektet må behandlingen oppfylle kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29.
For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET
NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!
Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)