JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY
Jönköping International
Business School

# The Pop(up)ular Brand Experience

**BACHELOR THESIS WITHIN:** *Business Administration*
**NUMBER OF CREDITS:** *15 ECTS*
**PROGRAMME OF STUDY:** *Marketing Management*
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**JÖNKÖPING** **May 2020**

## Acknowledgements

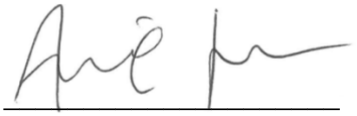
We want to communicate our appreciation to all of those who have been involved in the development of this thesis by inspiring, motivating and participating.

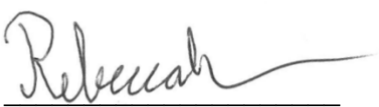
First and foremost, we would like to express our gratitude to our exceptional tutor MaxMikael Wilde Björling, who provided support and guidance, both in person and via Zoom. His extensive knowledge and experience have provided valuable feedback and insights throughout the writing process.

Secondly, we would like to send a thank you to all the interviewees for agreeing to participate in this study. Thanks for providing us with personal experiences and wisdom regarding the pop up phenomenon and multisensory experiences in Sweden and abroad.

Lastly, we want to acknowledge all the peers in our seminar group, as well as friends and family, for their contributions with helpful feedback and additional perspectives.

Thank you!





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# Bachelor Thesis in Business Administration

Title: The Pop(up)ular Brand Experience
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Date: 2020-05-18

**Keywords**: Pop Up Phenomenon; Multisensory Marketing; Multisensory Experience; Experience Economy

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## Abstract

It seems that online retail is erasing the presence of physical stores, referred to as the retail apocalypse. Consumers' desire to experience brands is increasing whilst sensory experiences in the online retail environment are limited. It is increasingly important for brands to be attainable through physical interaction for consumers to stay loyal, a fundament for the experience economy. Therefore, the pop up phenomenon could be considered an approach to blur the line between physical and online stores. The aim of this research is to create an understanding of how the pop up phenomenon is experienced by phygital companies in Sweden, exploring their use of multisensory marketing through pop ups and the effect it has on the brand. A qualitative and exploratory approach with semi-structured and asynchronous interviews including nine managers from the pop up industry was conducted. The data collected was analysed through a thematic approach and compared to existing literature. From the findings, two pop up purposes were identified: (1) pop ups with a long-term marketing purpose to enhance the brand, and (2) pop ups with a short-term selling purpose. Further, the empirical findings of this study suggest that the usage of multisensory experiences was recurrently found to be done unintentionally by the firms, indicating a lack of knowledge of its impact on customer behaviour in the long-term. From combining literature and findings a model was created explaining how firms can use the pop up phenomenon to successfully enhance the company's brand. This research provides insights of managers' personal experiences of the phenomenon and explores how pop ups can be a useful tool for a company's brand.

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# 1. Introduction

*This chapter introduces the concept of the pop up phenomenon and the underlying factors including the growth of e-commerce and the retail apocalypse. This is followed by a problem discussion and a presentation of the study's purpose. It also introduces the characteristics of Sweden indicating the feasibility of pop ups in the country. Further, the target audience is defined.*

## 1.1 Background

The world is in the process of becoming progressively digitised and globalised (Hultén, Broweus & van Djik, 2009), which can be noticed in the transformation of how consumers behave in the retail environment. Online retail is growing and is anticipated to continue. Sweden is a country in which 94% of the population are internet users (Ecommerce News, 2020). According to studies, in 2019 the total growth of e-commerce in the country was 13%, corresponding to 87 billion SEK. In 2020 it is estimated to grow by 11% and thus reaching 97 billion SEK (Postnord, Svensk Digital Handel & HUI Research, 2019). Due to major e-commerce growth, the brick and mortar stores are left vulnerable (Hultén et al., 2009). Through aspects such as having to pay high rent and local business taxes as well as the great threat posed by growing competition, it seems that online retail is erasing the presence of physical stores, something referred to as the retail apocalypse (Childs, Blanchflower, Hur & Matthews, 2020). This is also true for Sweden, where it is predicted that approximately one fourth of all physical stores will be forced to close by 2025 (Lagerström, 2017). By 2021 it is estimated that Swedish e-commerce will reach the milestone of 100 billion SEK, implying that e-commerce will become a power factor in Swedish retail (Postnord et al., 2019). Along with growing e-commerce, the competitive environment has been intensified requiring a larger focus on unique marketing efforts in order to differentiate (Zogaj, Olk & Tscheulin, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.).

As the trend of operating online progresses, another trend can be spotted which is consumers showing an increased desire to experience brands (Lindström, 2010). Due to the changing

environment, consumers no longer focus solely on low prices and large product ranges when taking a liking to a certain brand (Zogaj et al., 2019). The previous emphasis on features and benefits has changed into a desire for extraordinary marketing campaigns and marketing communication for a positive brand image (Schmitt, 1999). According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), a so-called experience economy has emerged and has continuously expanded throughout the last two decades, in which firms need to put significance in the shopping atmosphere and experience, including senses and emotions (Schmitt, 1999; Zogaj et al., 2019).

The sensory experiences in the online retail environment are mostly limited to visual elements, and to some extent, auditory elements (Petit, Velasco & Spence, 2019). Therefore, internet retailing presents a flaw in the form of consumers being unable to touch the product which can hinder the decision-making process (Citrin, Stem, Spangenberg & Clark, 2003). Physical and online stores need to make certain changes to their business models in order to stay relevant, and for consumers to stay loyal to the brand. Because of this, it is increasingly important for brands to be attainable to consumers through physical interaction (Hultén et al., 2009). One suggested approach would be through the usage of the pop up phenomenon. A pop up store operates in a temporary physical retail space and provides consumers the opportunity to experience the brand and its products (Lowe, Maggioni & Sands, 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019), whilst avoiding the traps of the physical retail industry in an age characterised by the retail apocalypse. The pop up phenomenon could be considered an approach to blur the line between physical and online stores.

## 1.2 Problem Discussion

By intertwining the physical and digital aspects of operation, the concept of the phygital company is created, enabling a more seamless experience. The word phygital originates from combining the word physical with digital. When using the pop up phenomenon to create such interweaving, the store opens with a predetermined closing date that can vary from a number of hours up to a year (Surchi, 2011; de Lassus & Freire, 2014; Lowe et al., 2018). Pop ups exist with the intention to evoke consumer emotions, reactions and not least to take them by surprise (Surchi, 2011; Zogaj et al., 2019). This is aroused through the use of multisensory elements which creates a purchasing experience for the consumer (Surchi, 2011). The most acknowledged definition of sensory marketing is “marketing that engages the consumers' senses

and affects their perception, judgment, and behavior**"** (Krishna, 2012, p. 333). A multisensory experience of a brand takes place as a result of more than one influencing factor on such reactions. This is for instance the usage of more than one of the five senses, in which the senses are haptics, olfaction, audition, taste and vision (Hultén et al., 2009; Hultén, 2011; Krishna, 2012). However, multisensory experiences are still often overlooked in marketing literature despite the evident importance of the aspect of the five senses in the matter of generating customer value (Hultén, 2011).

The experiential perspective of consumer experiences as introduced by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), argues that consumers are not always rational decision makers. They are also driven by emotions because consumption experiences are often "directed toward the pursuit of fantasies, feelings and fun" (p. 132). To strengthen this argument, Schmitt (1999) claims that there has been a shift from traditional marketing views such as functional features and benefits, towards experiential marketing and sensory experiences. A shift has not only taken place in the marketing domain, but also in the retail environment. Within an experience economy it is essential for companies to offer an experience appealing enough so that consumers are unable to disregard the product or service offered (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, 2014). Therefore, pop up stores can be used as a marketing strategy to create brand experience (Lowe et al., 2018). These temporary stores aim to build a relationship between consumers and the brand during its brief duration (Spena, Caridà, Colurcio, & Melia, 2012; Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). When a positive experience occurs due to multisensory marketing, consumers' memorability concerning the brand name, product and service is enhanced in the long term (e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016; Riza & Wijayanti, 2018). The temporary store format of pop ups, in combination with multisensory marketing, can be used strategically to strengthen a brand (Spena et al., 2012; e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016; Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019).

According to Zogaj et al. (2019), pop ups are most efficient in individualistic cultures due to the higher need for uniqueness among individuals, in comparison to collectivistic cultures. Sweden is amidst numerous western countries with an individualistic culture, and scores 71 out of 100 in regard to individualism, in accordance to Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory (Hofstede, 1983). The country also scores low on uncertainty avoidance (29 out of 100), reflecting the contrary of experiencing anxiety towards ambiguous or unknown situations which could be of importance in regard to innovative and experiential pop ups. Further, Sweden scores

5 out of 100 in regard to masculinity, implying a feminine approach in society. This indicates that equality, solidarity and caring for others are fundamental (Hofstede, 1983). Since one of the ambitions regarding the pop up phenomenon is to create a feeling of uniqueness for the people who have the opportunity to visit the pop up due to the time scarcity, Sweden is of relevance when investigating the pop up phenomenon.

Existing literature highlights the significance of using multisensory experiences in pop ups. However, it lacks information regarding experiences from the perspective of those administrating pop up stores. Therefore the ambition of this study is to minimise the gap in the literature by focusing on personal experiences of pop ups in Sweden.

## 1.3 Research Purpose

In order to fill a gap in literature, the aim of this research is to create an understanding of how the pop up phenomenon is experienced by phygital companies in Sweden on a managerial level, exploring their use of multisensory marketing through pop ups and the effect it has on the brand.

## 1.4 Research Question

In light of the growing importance of the experience economy and multisensory marketing, *how* is the pop up phenomenon experienced to be a useful tool to enhance a company's brand and *why*?

## 1.5 Target Audience

The target audience for this thesis is students within business administration and marketing, as well as professionals with prior knowledge of the discussed topics. Due to this, certain key terms from marketing and consumer behaviour are used without explicit explanation, since the targeted audience is expected to be familiar with the terms.

# 2. Frame of Reference

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*First, this chapter explains the method for the frame of reference. This is followed by introducing the reader to insights of the phygital operation. Further, an understanding of the pop up phenomenon, sensory marketing and the contemporary importance of building a brand is created in accordance with existing literature.*

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## 2.1 Method for Frame of Reference

The overall objective of the collection of data is to evaluate academic literature regarding the phenomenon of pop ups, through a systematic approach. By applying scientifically proven data and information, a summary of the relevant secondary data has been compiled for the specific topic. The literature used for this paper was selected through a systematic process; the initial phase consisted of a literature search using the databases of *Google Scholar* and *Primo* as well as *Jönköping University library*. The central keywords for the initial search were *pop up, sensory marketing*, *experience* and *brand,* and then the results were sorted by relevance. Then a systematic screening of abstracts was made in order to select the most relevant articles. Further, key scholars were identified, the works of which were used to further the search. Sensory marketing as defined by Krishna was classified as fundamental for the study, furthered by the experience economy as introduced by Pine and Gilmore. To ensure the quality of the information of the articles, peer reviewed journals were used. Non-peer reviewed journals were only used if possessing an impact factor above three (3.0). All scrutinised journals are listed in the *Appendix 5*. After examining the literature, three subcategories were established: (1) the pop up phenomenon, (2) multisensory experiences and (3) the brand.

## 2.2 The Pop Up Phenomenon

Since the beginning of the century, there has been a discussion regarding the phenomenon of the phygital operation of a company, often referred to as ‘bricks and clicks’ (Gulati & Garino, 2000). ‘Bricks’ originates from the term ‘bricks and mortar’, referring to a traditional store, while ‘clicks’ implies the online presence of the company (Gulati & Garino, 2000; Vasile &

Teodorescu, 2015). A company's online operation that includes the purchasing, sale or marketing is in general called e-commerce and is rapidly growing among different industries (Enache, 2018). The combination of online commerce and a physical presence is a multichannel strategy, which indicates a company's existence on multiple platforms with a division between the two (Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014). However, with increasing e-commerce and lack of physical presence, companies are facing the challenge to provide the customers with a unique experience, which could improve customer loyalty (Enache, 2018). With the multichannel strategy as a foundation, the omnichannel approach has been developed, in which there is a seamless connection with a high integration between the online and offline operation (Ranganathan, Goode & Ramaprasad, 2003; Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014; Vasile & Teodorescu, 2015; von Briel, 2018). Thus, one approach for phygital companies that wish to make the customer experience further personalised is to utilise the pop up phenomenon (Zogaj et al., 2019).

According to Spena et al. (2012) a pop up is a potential place for "consumption, experience, customer interaction and cognitive and sensory involvement" (p. 35). In line with this, Spena et al. (2012) summarise the views of Puccinelli et al. (2009), Verhoef et al. (2009) and Grewal, Levy and Kumar (2009) regarding the phenomenon of temporary stores, stating that it is (1) a way to conduct an interactive conversation between brand and consumer; (2) an interactive and multisensory platform where consumers merge with the brand experience; (3) an interactive platform where the firm supplies the consumers with information regarding products, technologies and risks as well as an opportunity to market itself; (4) a place for consumers and brands to form relationships and for emotions to be exchanged (Spena et al., 2012).

There are various forms of pop ups, in which the common denominator is the emphasis on bringing attention to the brand (Zogaj et al., 2019). Lowe et al. (2018) provide a framework for the key factors making pop ups successful: (1) *relational touchpoint*, (2) *strategic direction*, (3) *surprise and delight*, and (4) *serendipity* (Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019).

### 2.2.1 Relational Touchpoint

The *relational touchpoint* entails activities creating high consumer involvement related to building a relationship between the consumer and brand (Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019).

The importance of the connection with customers for pop ups is underlined by Picot-Coupey (2014) and Kim, Fiore, Niehm and Jeong (2010) stating that interaction between consumer and brand representative should occur in order for the consumer to be merged with the brand's emotional world. Therefore, this interaction should extend beyond conveying product information to involve exchanging brand experiences (Zogaj et al., 2019), which also has a positive impact on consumer satisfaction (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). Employees are essential for the service industry when building a sensory brand experience, since the members of staff ultimately shape the consumers' thoughts of the brand through their encounters and being the face of the brand (Iglesias, Markovic & Rialp, 2019). As a result, a pop up provides an opportunity for consumers to satisfy their hedonic shopping needs rather than utilitarian needs (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994; Zogaj et al., 2019).

Hedonic shopping value is defined by Babin et al. (1994) as consumers having a joyful in-store shopping experience creating enjoyment and emotional value, which also is the aim of pop up stores as they offer consumers unique experiences related to the brand (Klein, Falk, Esch & Gloukhovtsev, 2016). Emotions, fantasies and senses are central to hedonic consumption (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Babin et al., 1994; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003; Zogaj et al., 2019). This hedonic value can be created through allowing the consumer to experience product benefits without any purchase intentions (MacInnis & Price, 1987; Babin et al., 1994). Often, the items are not available for sale in pop up stores (Klein et al., 2016; Zogaj et al., 2019), and is therefore displayed solely with the ambition to present the brand and products (Warnaby, Kharakhorkina, Shi & Corniani, 2015; Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019).

### 2.2.2 Strategic Direction

The *strategic direction* is about finding the right location and context for the pop up that aligns with the brand (Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). The selected location depends on brand values and can therefore be considered dependent on each individual brand (Picot-Coupey, 2014; Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). Further, pop ups are highly adaptable meaning that they can be used to test new markets (Zogaj et al., 2019). According to Lowe et al. (2018) and Zogaj et al. (2019), pop up stores have proven to be a valuable setting for product testing, increasing brand awareness and word-of-mouth as well as sales in individualistic cultures as defined by Hofstede (1983). This retail format is well-known for providing synergistic brand

experiences as a creative exploratory marketing strategy. Through this, pop up stores generate greater consumer engagement which in turn generates value for both consumers and retailers (Lowe et al., 2018).

### 2.2.3 Surprise and Delight

The *surprise and delight* aspect of a pop up is important because it relates to how the consumer experiences the shop (Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). A pop up store atmosphere is recognised by consumers to be fun, enjoyable, spontaneous and contemporary (de Lassus & Freire, 2014; Lowe et al., 2018). The surprise element of a pop up enforces this through entertainment (Lowe et al., 2018). It can feature live music or interactive games; also free samples and free services can be offered. The surprise and fun aspect of a pop up is done in order for the consumer to feel positive emotions and to put emphasis on the hedonic shopping experience (Zogaj et al., 2019). These positive emotions and connections to a brand could eventually lead to brand loyalty (e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016; Riza & Wijayanti, 2018).

### 2.2.4 Serendipity

*Serendipity* is tied to the limited time that a pop up shop exists (Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). Along with the hedonic shopping value, time scarcity is a fundamental characteristic of pop ups (Zogaj et al., 2019). The time scarcity aspect aims at making the consumer feel as if it is a lucky coincidence for them to be able to visit the shop during its short appearance. However, this applies to a great extent more to individualistic cultures in contrast to collectivistic due to a larger need of uniqueness (Kim & Markus, 1999; Zogaj et al., 2019). This is achieved through a well thought through launch and location (Zogaj et al., 2019).

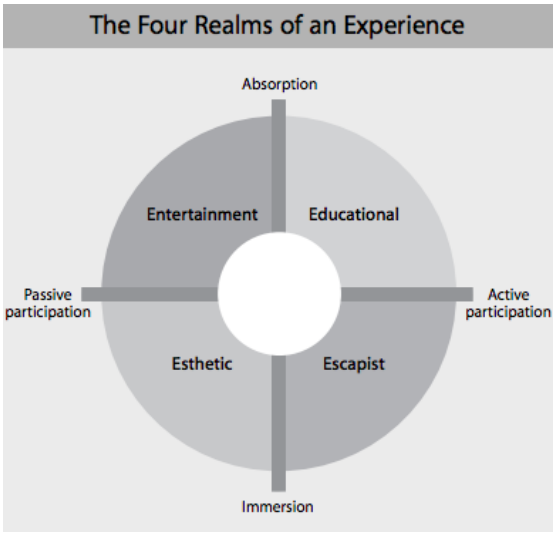
Pop ups operate for a limited time with a predetermined closing date, which can be a driving factor for consumers to visit the store (Aggarwal, Jun & Huh, 2011; Surchi, 2011; de Lassus & Freire, 2014; Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019) and for a “buzz” to be created around it (Koch & Benlian, 2015). Thus, this time scarcity creates an exclusive, and often one of a kind, experience that creates a wish for participation among individuals in order to avoid anxieties related to the fear of missing out (de Lassus & Freire, 2014; Lowe et al., 2018). Large established firms also use scarcity to impact consumer behaviour (Koch & Benlian, 2015; Zogaj

et al., 2019), which has a positive effect on the perceived uniqueness of an object (Wu, Lu, Wu & Fu, 2012; Zogaj et al., 2019). However, the perceived uniqueness is only heightened if a select amount of people have access to it. In line with this, the time scarcity of pop ups should influence consumers' perception of its uniqueness (Zogaj et al., 2019).

## 2.3 Multisensory Experience

### 2.3.1 Experience Economy

Pine and Gilmore (1998) introduce the experience economy, differentiating the selling of traditional services and goods, which are wrapped in an experience, from the selling of an experience designed to engage the consumer. They define the experience, "An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event. Commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences *memorable*." (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, p. 98).




*The Four Realms of an Experience, Pine & Gilmore, (1998).*

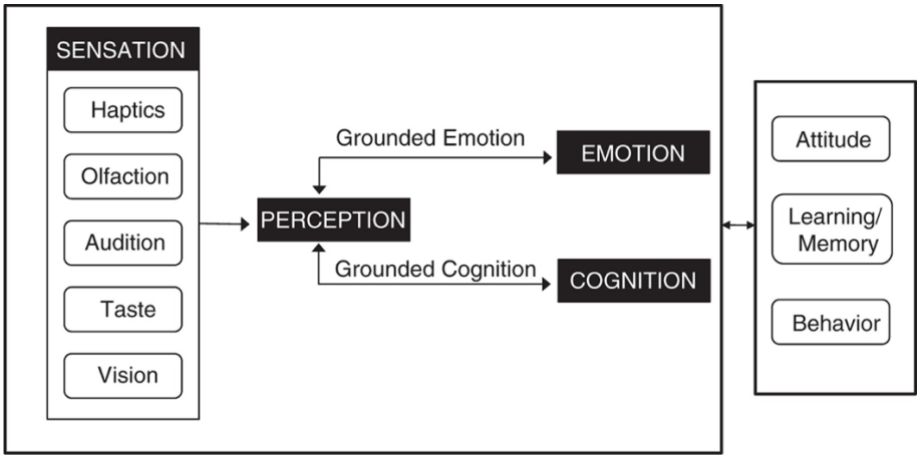
Pine & Gilmore (1998) divide experiences into four extensive categories. *Entertainment* is what most people perceive as entertainment, including watching television. The consumer participation is likely passive; and their connection with the event is most likely one of absorption rather than immersion. *Educational* events can be attending a class which requires a more active participation, however the students are not completely immersed in the action.

*Escapist* experiences can be both entertaining and educational, however the consumer is more engaged compared to the other categories. This can be playing in an orchestra which involves both active participation and immersion in the experience. *Esthetic* experience is similar to the former escapist experience, with less participation by the consumer. The consumer is immersed in the activity but has little or no effect on its execution, such as a visitor at an art gallery. Pine & Gilmore (1998) state that the richest experiences are a combination of all four categories forming a "sweet spot" in the middle.

The feelings, reactions and consumer emotions aroused through the use of multisensory tools creates a purchasing experience for the consumer (Surchi, 2011; Zogaj et al., 2019). Pop ups offer unique interactions with brands and a fundamental difference in their offerings from regular stores is their focus on creating experiences for customers (Klein et al., 2016; Lowe et al., 2018).

### 2.3.2 Multisensory Marketing

Krishna (2012) provides the most prominent definition of sensory marketing, defining it as an engaging marketing involving senses and which affects the perception, judgment and behaviour. The purpose of sensory marketing is to send cues to the right-side cerebral hemisphere of the brain controlling sensory stimuli, thus simulating the consumer senses forming a connection between consumer and product, eventually leading to purchase intentions (Costa, Zouein, Rodrigues, Arruda & Vieira, 2012; e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016). In line with this, a multisensory experience of a brand is when more than one of the five senses are used as part of the sensory experience (Hultén et al., 2009; Hultén, 2011).




*Conceptual framework for the field of sensory marketing, Krishna (2012).*

Krishna (2012) provides a conceptual framework for the field of sensory marketing. The framework separates sensation and perception as two related but different processes; sensation is the procedure of becoming aware of what is around us through our senses, and perception is how this information is transferred to the brain and interpreted. The framework further introduces the five senses; haptics, olfaction, audition, taste and vision (Krishna, 2012).

### 2.3.3 The Five Senses

#### 2.3.3.1 Haptics

Haptics is the sense of touch and is important for consumer behaviour in a number of forms, this includes people touching people, products touching products and people touching products (Krishna, 2012). Studies show that restaurant servers who briefly touch their customers receive larger tips than servers who do not (Crusco & Wetzel, 1984; Peck & Childers, 2006; Krishna, 2012). Similarly, if asked to participate in an interview in a store people are more likely to part take if touched by the requester (Hornik & Ellis, 1988; Peck & Childers, 2006; Krishna, 2012). Further studies show how touch can have a negative effect, some products are regarded as moderately “disgusting” in supermarket shelves, such as diapers and cat litter (Morales & Fitzsimons, 2007; Krishna, 2012). Having these products touch regular products such as potato chips makes the chips less appealing to the consumer, this is however not true if they are placed close to each other only when touching (Krishna, 2012).

Peck and Childers (2003) found that the effects of touch are perceived differently among people. The need for touch (NFT) is therefore used to identify these individual differences, i.e. the level of a person's preference of obtaining information about a product through touch. The NFT is viewed as having two dimensions: instrumental NFT and autotelic NFT. People who necessitate tactile stimulation with direct feedback in an attempt to gather information needed to make judgements about a product are said to be high in instrumental NFT (Jin & Phua, 2015; Peck & Childers, 2003). For these people, touch provides information they cannot obtain through other means, such as via sight. On the contrary, people who engage in touch simply because it is fun or interesting, i.e. the emotional aspect of touch, are said to be high in autotelic NFT. These people often feel an irresistible need to touch a product, with the sole focus on the sensory aspects (Peck & Childers, 2006; Peck & Wiggins, 2006; Krishna, 2012).

#### 2.3.3.2 Olfactory

The olfactory sense differs from the other five senses as it has a direct connection to the limbic system, meaning that it is connected to our memory and emotions (Herz & Engen, 1996; Krishna, 2012; Kivoja, 2017). The sense of smell therefore impacts the emotional memory (Cahill, Babinsky, Markowitsch & McGaugh, 1995; Krishna, 2012; Kivoja, 2017). Humans have the ability to recognise over 10,000 sets of scents (Buck & Axel, 1991; Krishna; 2012).

According to Krishna (2012), there are conflicting views on whether smells have an effect on memory. According to Morrin and Ratneshwar (2003) ambient smells have a positive effect on brand recognition and memory. However, Mitchell, Kahn and Knasko (1995) state that congruent ambient smells (e.g. when it smells like flowers in a flower shop when picking a flower arrangement) have a higher memorability versus incongruent scents. The findings of Mitchell et al. (1995) did not show an effect of odour versus odourless ambiance on memory. The memorability over time of a product increases when the product is scented. A study conducted by Krishna, Lwin and Morrin (2010) demonstrates that the selling points of a scented pine pencil were remembered to a greater extent than of the same product unscented (Krishna et al., 2010; Krishna, 2012).

#### 2.3.3.3 Audition

Audition is naturally frequently used in marketing, and the auditory sense can be affected through several tools, including the use of sound symbolism, language and music both in advertisements and in environments (Krishna, 2012). The usage of music in adverts has proven to affect the consumer's moods, which further impacts the customer's purchase behaviour (Gorn, 1982; Alpert, Alpert & Maltz, 2005). According to Krishna, Cian and Sokolova (2016), a congruent usage of audition in advertisement creates familiarity towards the brand attitude or brand recognition. Customers claim to prefer unfamiliar music; however, studies show that familiarity of music generates a positive image of the brand as well as increases the memorability and brand recognition (Ward, Goodman & Irwing, 2013; Stalinski & Schellenberg, 2013; Krishna et al., 2016). In line with this, Milliman (1986) states that music is one of the senses that is controllable to affect the atmosphere in the store, and thereby it is also possible to affect the purchase behaviour. It is proved that customers spend less time in stores when the music is loud and that slow and ambient music generates enhanced sales and creates a pleasant experience for customers (Smith & Curnow, 1966; Milliman, 1986; e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016). By using supplementary senses in addition to visual in the retail experience, like auditory in form of live music, augments the customer satisfaction and enhances the consumer's purchase intentions (Alpert et al., 2005; Helmefalk & Hultén, 2017; Zogaj et al., 2019).

#### 2.3.3.4 Taste

Taste can be divided into five categories; salty, sweet, sour, bitter and umami (Krishna, 2012). Humans are able to make out different tastes through a combined use of all the senses, and when there is no ability to see or smell the product, identifying it becomes more difficult (Herz, 2007; Krishna, 2012). For example, taste has been shown to change in accordance to external factors (Hoch & Ha, 1986). This includes physical attributes, brand name and product packaging (Krishna, 2012).

#### 2.3.3.5 Vision

Vision can be considered the most dominant sense in many settings and could be interpreted positively or negatively depending on how it is used (Krishna, 2012). For an inviting customer

experience, warm light should be used, while LED lights appear to be functional and unemotional (e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016; Zogaj et al., 2019). Further, product orientation has been proven to be of great importance as it is more appealing to customers if the product is in accordance to the customer's dominant hand, for instance to have the spoon leaning towards the right side of the bowl to appeal to right-handed people (Krishna et al., 2016).

### 2.3.4 Sensory Marketing in the Online Retail Environment

According to Krishna (2012), consumer judgement and behaviour is dependent on the integration of a person's senses. Due to this, consumer decision-making processes in stores can be affected by sensory inputs (Krishna, 2012; Krishna, Cian & Aydinoglu, 2017; Petit et al., 2019). The availability of these inputs is reduced in online retailing as it lacks certain sensory components (Petit et al., 2019). The tactile sense is naturally limited when shopping takes place in a digital environment, since consumers are not able to touch nor feel the products (Citrin et al., 2003). The sensory experiences in an online retail environment are mostly limited to visual elements, and to some extent, auditory elements (Petit et al., 2019).

According to Petit et al. (2019) there are certain tools for how the multisensory aspect can be incorporated in online retailing to compensate, including digital interactive technologies such as sensory-enabling technologies. This type of technology can tell users about the sensory features of a product, such as its texture, smell and even taste in some cases, which is not attainable information in most online environments. Sensory-enabling technologies include, but are not limited to, headphones and touch screens as well as less widespread technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality and digital taste/smell interfaces. (Petit et al., 2019).

To utilise the full potential of an experience, a company should aim to make it as multisensory as possible, not only to influence customer behaviour, but also to make it last longer in their memory (Daffy, 2019). When a positive experience occurs due to multisensory marketing, consumers' memorability concerning the brand name, product and service is enhanced in the long term which increases brand loyalty (e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016; Riza & Wijayanti, 2018). According to Lindström (2010), an implementation of all five senses results in "a total sensory experience would at least double, if not triple, the consumer's ability to memorize the brand"

(p. 23) and state that a higher number of sensory memories will generate a stronger connection between the customer and the brand.

### 2.3.5 Sensory Marketing in the Physical Retail Environment

The physical retailing atmosphere is recognised as an important aspect in regard to purchasing influence and retailers' competitive advantage (Hines & Bruce, 2012; Foster & McLelland, 2015; Nell, 2017). The importance of applying sensory cues in physical retail environments was first introduced by Kotler (1973) as he coined the term 'atmospherics', meaning "the conscious designing of space and its various dimensions to evoke certain effects in buyers" (p. 50). These dimensions include visuals, auditory, tactile and taste elements. The place in which a product is bought or consumed should be considered as part of the total product. Occasionally, the atmosphere itself is considered the primary product. Customers' purchasing intentions and time spent in store is directly influenced by the in-store environment (Nell, 2017). The space of a pop up shop should allow for the brand to present itself using sensory and aesthetic elements, and through this create a unique and expressive atmosphere which has an effect on consumers' hedonic shopping experience (Babin et al., 1994; de Lassus & Freire, 2014; Zogaj et al., 2019).

The sensory cues connected to the atmosphere are highly important as they independently affect the consumers' perceptions and behaviours (Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal & Roggeveen, 2014). However, the effects of single sensory cues are less effective than the use of multisensory cues. Hence, the inclusion of multiple senses within physical retailing has been proven to be beneficial for retailers (Spence et al., 2014; Helmefalk & Berndt, 2018). Several studies have shown that the congruency between the senses, the physical retail environment and the product is of fundamental importance for the success of multisensory cues (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Krishna et al., 2010; Helmefalk, 2019; Helmefalk & Hultén, 2017; Kivioja, 2017). The retail environment is evaluated more positively when there is congruence between the multisensory cues (Spence et al., 2014), and thus will increase customer browsing in store and hence increase the chance of product purchasing (Helmefalk, 2019).

## 2.4 The Brand

The aim of pop up stores is to create a relationship between consumers and the brand and thus strengthen brand loyalty (Spena et al., 2012; Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). By creating a multisensory environment for the consumers to experience the brand, it allows for a relationship to grow (Spena et al., 2012; Lowe et al., 2018). With the emphasis put on relationships in order to ensure long-term relationships with consumers, future product demand is created, rather than the intention being to generate profits from the pop up effort alone (Surchi, 2011; Lowe et al., 2018). One approach to reach this long-term relationship is to create a brand experience (Lowe et al., 2018).

### 2.4.1 Brand Experience

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) introduced hedonic consumption patterns "that relate to the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of product use" (p.99-100) connected to brand experience. In experiential marketing, consumers are described to be driven by emotions and thus aim at engaging in sensational and pleasurable experiences (hedonic), rather than solely making their purchase choices on the functionality of a product (utilitarian) where the buying process is only a necessary step in order to fulfil a need (Babin et al., 1994; Cleff, Lin & Walter, 2014). Brakus et al. (2009) define brand experience as "subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications and environments" (p. 53). An experience containing sensual elements is believed to be superior to the attributes of a product in terms of shaping customer preferences (Luo, Chen, Ching & Liu, 2011; Cleff et al., 2014). By making use of brand experiences that engage the customers' senses and emotions, an emotional bond can be formed to the brand resulting in an improved brand loyalty (Schmitt, 1999; Brakus et al., 2009; Cleff et al., 2014).

### 2.4.2 Brand Loyalty

Studies have shown that making use of sensory marketing and experiences differentiates the company from competitors and creating positive brand loyalty (e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016). According to Law (2009), brand loyalty is explained as a "result of continued satisfaction with

a product or its price and is reinforced by effective and heavy advertising" (p. 77). Day (1969 as cited in Lou et al., 2011) suggests that there are two dimensions to brand loyalty: behaviour and attitude. Behaviour loyalty is defined as "consequential actions (i.e. consumer loyalty), such as repeat purchases, share of wallet (i.e. value a customer places on a brand) and word of mouth advertising" (p. 2167). In the behaviour dimension, the focus is put on performance indicators such as the frequency of customers' repetitive purchase of a brand or the relative volume of same-brand purchasing to measure brand loyalty (Cleff et al., 2014). However, Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) further argues that brand loyalty is more greatly influenced by customers' attitude towards a brand, such as preference and commitment, rather than solely being based on frequent purchase and satisfaction (Luo et al., 2011). Thus, the attitudinal dimension of brand loyalty refers to customers' degree of commitment motivated by the unique value associated with a brand, as well as their overall attitude towards the brand. Hence, attitudinal brand loyalty has an emotional component (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Furthermore, studies have shown that a positive brand experience can increase brand loyalty by significant measures (Biedenbach & Marell 2010; Morgan-Thomas & Veloutsou, 2013). Lin and Kuo (2013) argue that a customers' most recent shopping experience has a significant impact on their loyalty intention, meaning that a positive brand experience is crucial in the formulation and continuance of strong brand loyalty. To strengthen this argument, Shim, Forsythe and Kwon (2015) reveal that by appealing to aesthetic senses and emotions that are linked to a brand can improve brand loyalty.

# 3. Methodology and Method

*This chapter introduces the reader to the research methodology including the research philosophy, approach and design. Furthermore, the research method is described including the choice of interviewees, data collection, question design, description of data analysis. Lastly, data quality is presented in which credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and ethical considerations are discussed.*

## 3.1 Methodology

### 3.1.1 Research Philosophy

Interpretivism has been used as a guiding philosophical framework for this research paper. The interpretivist approach is based on the belief that the world is subjective because it is shaped by the perceptions of human beings (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Interpretivists argue that human beings cannot be researched the same way as physical phenomena because they create meanings in which interpretivists attempt to study. These meanings look different from person to person due to differences in cultural backgrounds, circumstances and time. Therefore, interpretivists believe that it is impossible to generalise humanity into definite, universal 'laws' that apply to everybody (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Instead, interpretivism has the "focus on complexity, richness, multiple interpretations and meaning-making" (Saunders, et al., 2016, p. 141). It acknowledges that it is impossible to separate the researchers own values and beliefs from what is being researched since researchers always interact with the research, therefore affecting and influencing it (Smith, 1983; Cresswell, 2014; Collis & Hussey, 2014). It is therefore argued that interpretivism is highly appropriate for business research due to their complex and unique situations (Saunders et al., 2016), of which this paper aims to explore. Since this study aims to clarify the personal perceptions of administrators of the pop ups in phygital firms, an interpretivist approach is applicable as it allows for values and beliefs as the main focus of interest.

### 3.1.2 Research Approach

The two most commonly discussed types of research approaches are deductive and inductive. The inductive approach constitutes a collection of data with the aim of examining a phenomenon, and then developing a theory using that knowledge. On the contrary, a deductive approach is used when the research is initiated by a theory, usually developed by reading existing literature, followed by a research strategy to test the theory (Collis & Hussey, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016). Multisensory marketing and the pop up phenomenon were identified as the tentative area of research, followed by an extensive search of the existing literature. A frame of reference was formed by deducing the most relevant theory for the research topic. From the literature search and the empirical findings, a model was constructed. The model was primarily based on Krishna's conceptual framework (2012) combined with theory from collected primary data supported by literature. The motivation was to test this in the Swedish market, focusing on the individual experiences of several phygital companies. After conducting the data collection through semi-structured and asynchronous interviews, the themes that were previously acknowledged in theory internationally were identified as applicable in the Swedish pop up industry as well. This approach aligns with how the researched topic was moved from the general to the particular, as part of a deductive reasoning (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

### 3.1.3 Research Design

The research design is constituted by the overall plan for the research project (Saunders et al., 2016). For this study, a qualitative design was considered suitable as the research sought to understand *how* the pop up phenomenon is experienced to be a useful tool to enhance a company's brand and *why*. The structure of asking *how* and *why* is in accordance with how a qualitative research question should be formulated in order for personal experiences to be collected (Collis & Hussey, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016).

Further, interpretivism is often associated with qualitative research, which supports the reasoning behind the choice of research design (Saunders et al., 2016). The aim of qualitative research is to study the meaning of participants and the relationship between them. This is intertwined with the interpretivist view where there is a "[…] need to make sense of the subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the phenomenon being studied." (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 568). The nature of a qualitative research project is often exploratory,

which is also true for this study. In this exploratory study, open-ended questions are used during interviews in order to understand a setting and gain valuable insights into the phenomenon being researched (Collis & Hussey, 2014; Saunders et al., 2016). Further, for this study the results and analysis have been merged into one heading as suggested by Backman (2016). This is the case when the results are wished to be reported and analysed simultaneously, thus creating a structure that is easier for the reader to follow, presenting a general picture of what was previously mentioned in the frame of reference (Backman, 2016).

## 3.2 Method

### 3.2.1 Choice of Interviewees

In order to collect data, a choice of interviewees must first be selected. The method is dependent on both the research question and the objectives of the study (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Some studies may require a deeper insight into a phenomenon by focusing on a small number of cases that are chosen for a particular purpose. A non-probability method is considered a subjective technique where all individuals of a population do not have an equal chance of being selected (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Given the fact that this study focuses on the subjective opinions and perceptions of individuals, the non-probability method was considered to be suitable. Also, as this study follows a qualitative and interpretivist approach, the technique was found to be appropriate by enabling a deeper understanding regarding personal experiences and knowledge of the topic since it was discussed among a small number of people.

When choosing which companies to contact, the authors used their judgement to select cases that would best enable them to answer the research question: *In light of the growing importance of the experience economy and multisensory marketing, how is the pop up phenomenon experienced to be a useful tool to enhance a company's brand and why?* This was done in order to give informative insights, known as purposive collection of participants (Saunders et al., 2016). Further, the chosen group was heterogeneous, since the only shared characteristic among the interviewees is their previous experiences and knowledge of the pop up phenomenon in Sweden. In addition to this, a snowball technique was used as one of the interviewees provided recommendations of other persons of interest with both experience and knowledge within the

pop up phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2016). This enabled the authors to identify additional interview subjects with the desired characteristics.

In the selection of the interviewees, three criterions were considered and used as guidelines. Firstly, the company have worked with at least one pop up in Sweden between the years 2015 and 2020, for the information to be relevant and current. The second criterion was for participants to possess prior knowledge and personal experience regarding the topic at hand in order to provide subjective responses. Selected interviewees have relevant responsibilities at their firms such as CEO's, co-founders and marketing managers. As a third criterion the companies have a presence online and offline, due to the purpose of this study being to explore how *phygital* companies perceive the pop up phenomenon.

### 3.2.2 Data Collection

For this research, the collection of primary data was done through semi-structured interviews. Under the interpretivist philosophy, interviews are used as a means of exploring "data on understandings, opinions, what people remember doing attitudes, feelings and the like, that people have in common" (Arksey & Knight, 1999 as cited in Collis & Hussey, 2014, p. 133). According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012), semi-structured interviews are appropriate when there is a need to understand the personal ideas and concepts utilised by the interviewee that acts as a foundation for the persons opinions and beliefs. In an exploratory study like this, semi-structured interviews are considered helpful as they may provide valuable insights of the background or act as a supporting tool to understand the context of the topic under study. In semi-structured interviews, the researchers have a list of themes and key topics to be covered rather than having a predetermined and 'standardised' set of questions that are identical in all interviews as would be the case for structured interviews (themes are found in appendices 1 through 4). Therefore, semi-structured interviews allow for more freedom and the possibility to develop other questions during the course of the interviews, which is highly important when adopting an interpretivist philosophy as the aim is to understand the meaning behind participants statements (Saunders et al., 2016). In this type of interview, the order in which the questions appear is flexible due to the flow of conversation as the interviewee might have provided relevant information when answering another question. For the same reason, semi-structured interviews may be more difficult to analyse as the questions raised and

information explored may vary between interviews. However, the open discovery aspect is also seen as a strength of this type of interview as it allows for different perspectives of the topic to emerge (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

#### 3.2.2.1 Interviews

Due to the current situation globally and in Sweden concerning COVID-19 and the regulations and recommendations regarding gatherings, most of the interviews were conducted using internet mediated devices. These include Zoom, Google Hangouts and Skype instead of face-to-face meetings. All three authors were present during these interviews where two acted as interviewers in order to ensure that all themes and topics were fully explored, whereas one had the role of taking notes of gestures, interruptions, as well as keeping track of the point of time when important quotes were said. However, two of the interviews were conducted through phone calls, where only one interviewer was present due to technical limitations. All of the interviews were audio recorded using a phone or computer application to enable the authors to revisit the interviews and make correct interpretations. Details regarding the interviews are presented in the table below.

| Interview | Duration | Company | Tool | Authors present | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | 12:01 | Axel Arigato | Phone | 1/3 | 2020/04/03 |
| **2** | 37:18 | Anonymous 1 | Google Hangouts | 3/3 | 2020/04/07 |
| **3** | 1:25:15 | Pop Up Agency | Zoom | 3/3 | 2020/04/08 |
| **4** | 25:08 | maxjenny! | Phone | 1/3 | 2020/04/09 |
| **5** | 1:06:43 | xNomad | Google Hangouts | 3/3 | 2020/04/15 |
| **6** | 34:43 | Stålhästen | Zoom | 3/3 | 2020/04/16 |
| **7** | 37:54 | Rights and Brands/ Moomin | Skype | 3/3 | 2020/04/16 |

### *Interview 1*

The first interview was held with Albin Johansson, the CEO and co-founder of the high-end sneaker brand *Axel Arigato* that have administered pop ups in both Stockholm and Gothenburg. Due to the limited time of the interview, the authors had to redesign and choose the most important questions in order to obtain the most relevant information. However, all themes identified were covered in the interview. To avoid misinterpretation, the interview was conducted in Swedish as it is the mother-tongue of both the interviewee and the interviewer.

### *Interview 2*

The second interviewee wished to remain anonymous, therefore the person will be referred to as the gender neutral pseudonym Kim Andersson, marketing manager at *Anonymous 1*. The interviewee had prior knowledge of the topic. *Anonymous 1* mainly operate online and has also utilised the pop up strategy at different trade shows in Stockholm and Gothenburg. The interview was held in English as preferred by the interviewee.

### *Interview 3*

The third interview was held with Peter Scherr, Chief Experience Officer and co-founder of *Pop Up Agency*. The interview was held in Swedish as all four participants are native Swedish speakers. *Pop Up Agency* helps businesses to find the ultimate location for their pop up store, thus Scherr has a lot of experience and knowledge regarding the pop up phenomenon.

### *Interview 4*

The fourth interview was held with Maxjenny Forslund, the designer and founder of the luxury clothing brand *maxjenny!*. She operates on multiple channels, such as her web shop and through the use of physical stores including pop up stores. The interview was conducted in Swedish as both the interviewee and the interviewer are native Swedish speakers.

### *Interview 5*

The fifth interview was held with Jonathan Haralambakis, the co-founder and CEO of *xNomad* which is a marketplace for pop up retail space. Similar to the Pop *Up Agency, xNomad* helps other businesses to execute their pop ups. Therefore, Haralambakis possess a great amount of

knowledge concerning the pop up phenomenon with perspectives from both Sweden and abroad. The interview was conducted in English as it is the native language of the interviewee.

### *Interview 6*

The sixth interviewee, Martin Sjögren, is the co-founder of the Swedish bicycle designer and retailer *Stålhästen*. The company operates mainly online and has had pop up stores in Sweden as a recurring strategy. The firm was contacted due to recommendations from *Pop Up Agency*.

### *Interview 7*

Interview number seven was held with Anna Svenman, retail and sales manager at *Rights and Brands* representing the *Moomin* character and brand among other well-known brands. They have utilised the pop up strategy a number of times with the *Moomin* brand. Svenman possesses extensive knowledge of the execution and planning of pop ups.

#### 3.2.2.2 E-mails

Three out of ten companies that were used in the data collection provided their insights and knowledge via answering personalised semi-structured questions through e-mail. This, in accordance with the preference by the interviewee subject. This type of interview is referred to as asynchronous since the time of the data collected differs from the time the questions were initially asked, and hence not being conducted in real time (Saunders et al., 2016). This form of collecting data is usually not preferred in exploratory studies, like this one, since they often require a large number of open-ended questions (Saunders et al., 2016). However, this was tackled by reducing the number of questions and instead of numerous questions, focusing on fewer while covering all the main themes that were previously identified, as shown in *Appendix 3* and *Appendix 4*.

| Respondent | Company | Date of reply |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | HUI Research | 2020/04/09 |
| **2** | Anonymous 2 | 2020/04/22 |
| **3** | Anonymous 3 | 2020/04/30 |

The first company in which the data was collected via e-mail was *HUI Research*, an institution that conducts research about consumption and tourism in Sweden. The questions were answered in Swedish by retail analyst Erik Bergh.

The second participant wished to remain anonymous and is henceforth referred to as the gender neutral name Alex Jansson at company *Anonymous 2*. The company is a large operator in the beverage industry on a global aspect, and the interviewee is the Swedish project coordinator. The data was collected in Swedish.

The third participant via e-mail wished to remain anonymous, thus referred to as gender neutral name Sam Holm, the brand and growth manager, at the customer experience agency *Anonymous 3*. Holm has previous experience of the research topic, and responsibilities including documenting and activating the concept of pop ups. This company was found through recommendations from *Pop Up Agency*. The data was collected in Swedish.

### 3.2.3 Question Design

When designing questions it is important to consider the target audience (Collis & Hussey, 2014). This was done by thoroughly researching each company prior to the interview and then adjusting the tone and way of posing questions accordingly.

A semi-structured technique was used across all verbal interviews. This allowed for a number of topics to be discussed during each interview in no particular order, as shown in the interview guides in *Appendix 1* and *Appendix 2*. The semi-structured approach allowed for the interviews

to flow freely with the interviewee in charge, whilst the authors mediated the conversation to make sure all topics were attended to. During the interviews via video conferencing tools, the authors encouraged the interviewees to continue to elaborate their response with silent nods.

If the subject of the interview specifically asked for the questions beforehand, the authors provided them with an interview guide upfront, whilst making it clear that the questions were more of a guidance rather than a strict agenda to be followed.

Open-ended questions were used in order to allow the respondent to answer in their own words. These questions allow for the participant to respond openly, with long and developed answers (Collis & Hussey, 2014). However, if certain key terms were picked up from a thorough answer, closed summary questions were asked in order to reduce any biases in regard to the interpretation (Collis & Hussey, 2014). In order to reduce any confusion, each question was asked independently and kept as short and simple as possible.

In the case of e-mail interviews, fewer and more open questions were asked in order for the respondent to be able to elaborate freely on their personal experiences.

### 3.2.4 Description of Data Analysis

The process of qualitative data analysis consists of three overlapping stages: (1) data reduction, (2) displaying the data and (3) drawing conclusions and verifying the validity of the findings (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

The data reduction was applied by reviewing the transcriptions and relating the content to different themes. Subsequently, the irrelevant information was disregarded and hence reduced. In the second stage, the data was organised in a privately shared document, through a system of labelling and colour coding. At this stage the data was compared to the previously defined topics of interest, whilst new themes were introduced, and colour coded from the findings. This is in accordance with a thematic analysis, described to be a “systematic yet flexible approach to analysis qualitative data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006 as cited in Saunders et al., 2016, p. 579). Next, a summary of the data was produced in which the colour coded information was displayed

in categories as different themes. Lastly, the primary data was presented in chapter *4. Results and Analysis* categorised in accordance to each theme connecting the analysis to the findings.

## 3.3 Data Quality

### 3.3.1 Credibility

Credibility in research is highly important and verifies whether the study has been done in a way where the subject is identified and described thoroughly and accurately (Collis & Hussey, 2014). According to Collis and Hussey (2014) it is important to ensure that the interpretations are not influenced by single researchers under an interpretivist study. This can be achieved through establishing proper protocols and procedures to ensure authenticity of findings. To make sure that all citations were correctly translated from Swedish to English, all authors provided an individual translation for the quote, these were cross-examined for a final result. The quotation was examined and approved by an unbiased observer.

Another important part of credibility is to be involved and attentive (Collis & Hussey, 2014), this was ensured in the study by each author being present at all interviews conducted via video conferencing tools. In the case of phone interviews, these were conducted and recorded by one of the authors, and then reviewed by all authors taking notes. The notes were then cross-checked to ensure that no deviating and contradictory interpretations were made. Credibility was further ensured by the use of triangulation by using different sources and collection methods of data (Saunders et al., 2016), including semi-structured video interviews, semi-structured phone interviews and semi-structured asynchronous e-mails.

### 3.3.2 Transferability

Transferability i.e. generalisation, refers to whether the findings can be transferred from one setting to a similar one (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Due to an interpretivist study there is a low transferability of this paper since the data collected is being based on the current personal feelings, perceptions, thoughts and previous experiences of the managers of the firms that were interviewed. However, the study provides valuable insights of the pop up phenomenon in Sweden.

### 3.3.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the importance of the research process being systematic, rigorous and well documented (Collis & Hussey, 2014). This was ensured through several precautions. All authors were involved in the data collection process. The data was well documented, both through audio recordings and notes being taken at the time of the interviews. The recordings and notes were then uploaded to a privately shared cloud among the authors to ensure that each author had full access. Further, this reduced the risk of losing any data. Each interview was transcribed individually.

### 3.3.4 Confirmability

Confirmability describes whether the research process has been described thoroughly, and whether it is possible to determine if the findings flow from the data (Collis & Hussey, 2014). To ensure confirmability the research process was fully provided, further measures were taken through collecting and reviewing audio recordings and notes. The interviews were reviewed by all authors several times to reduce bias. In order to establish further confirmability all participants were referred to by name in chapter 4. Due to three of the interviewees' wish to remain anonymous, a private document with the references was provided to the examinator at Jönköping International Business School to validify the findings.

### 3.3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical research is of great importance for the study (Collis & Hussey, 2014), which was considered carefully throughout the entire process. All participants were offered anonymity and confidentiality upfront, either in a written form via e-mail or verbally at the occasion of the interview. This was done by posing a simple question of consent; if the participant would like to be featured by name and company name in the study, or if they would prefer to remain anonymous. Through this they were asked if the study can feature their expressed opinions in combination with their identification, thus ensuring informed consent. It was explained to all participants that the audio recording will solely be available to the authors in order to correctly state the empirical findings and analyse the results. Further, it was clarified that the audio files will be deleted after the study has been completed.

The authors decided against providing a written consent form due to the wish of reducing the feeling of strict formality. This, because the foundation of the semi-structured interview requires for the interviewee to feel comfortable and confident to share their thoughts and experiences.

# 4. Results and Analysis

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*This chapter presents an analysis of the findings in relation to the frame of reference, seeking to understand how the pop up phenomenon is experienced by phygital companies in Sweden, exploring their use of multisensory marketing and the effect it has on the brand. This through answering the research question: In light of the growing importance of the experience economy and multisensory marketing, how is the pop up phenomenon experienced to be a useful tool to enhance a company's brand and why?*

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## 4.1 The Pop Up Phenomenon

The evolving retail apocalypse could be argued to be a fundamental aspect clarifying the necessity of the pop up phenomenon. Bergh at *HUI Research* confirms that the retail apocalypse is indeed ongoing in Sweden. With increasing e-commerce and a lack of physical presence, companies face a challenge in offering unique experiences to customers (Enache, 2018). Bergh confirms that "*E-commerce is expected to grow. We are expanding our e-commerce consumption and buying more different product categories online*". This implies that there is a possibility that a broad variety of industries will be affected by the retail apocalypse. The statement is supported by Scherr at *Pop Up Agency*, who claims that this so-called crisis has been occurring internationally for years and reached the Swedish market in the autumn of 2018. Haralambakis explains that *xNomad's* ambition is to help combat this issue. This is true also for Scherr, as both agencies operate as suppliers of retail space for pop up stores.

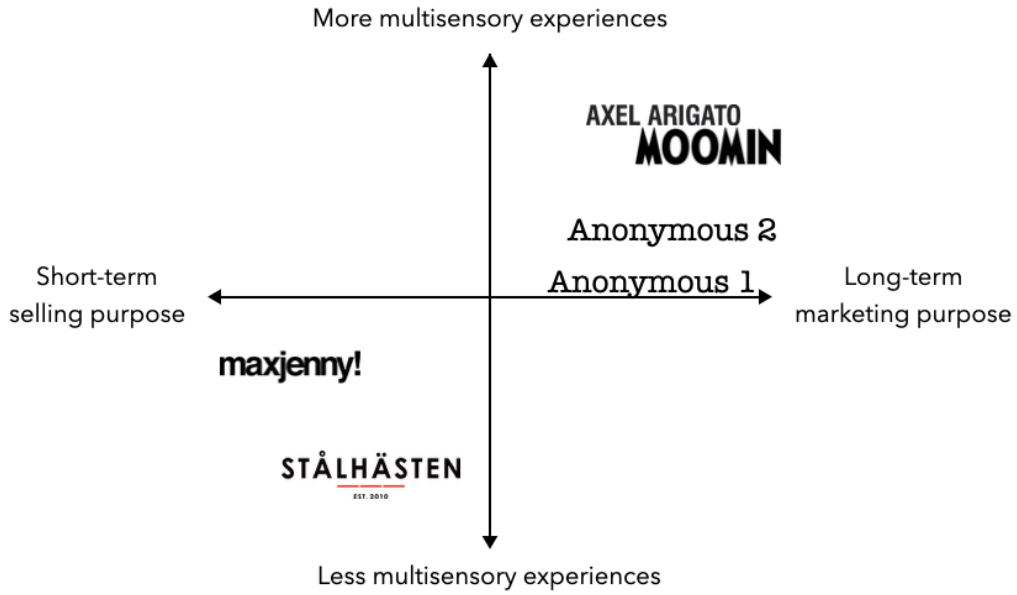
According to Bergh one of the issues with online retail is the lack of physical contact, which is supported in literature by Citrin et al. (2003) who state that the tactile sense is limited when shopping takes place digitally. Bergh further argues that pop ups can be used to bridge the gap between the online and offline retail environments which is supported by literature regarding the use of an omnichannel approach for better integration between online and offline operation (Ranganathan et al., 2003; Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014; Vasile & Teodorescu, 2015).

### 4.1.1 Phygital Company

Sjögren at *Stålhästen,* describes that having a presence online does not have to eliminate the opportunity of having an offline presence. This goes hand in hand with a phygital approach described in literature as a "bricks and clicks" approach (Gulati & Garino, 2000; Vasile & Teodorescu, 2015). Pop up stores are experienced to be beneficial for firms that mainly operate online, serving as a bridge to the offline world. *"That's the good thing about pop ups- you can have the cake and eat it too"* (Sjögren). Forslund at *maxjenny!* was solely established online before deciding to open up a pop up store, expressing that pop ups are a fantastic complement to the online practices. *"It's a match made in heaven. When I got a physical presence in Stockholm, that's when it took off."* (Forslund). This is supported by Bergh, claiming that pop ups could be used as a supplement to the growing e-commerce. Andersson at *Anonymous 1* states there are advantages and disadvantages with both online and offline retailing, and pop ups can be considered an in-between space creating a further uninterrupted experience for the customers.

### 4.1.2 Pop Up Purpose

As a result of the conducted interviews a figure was created in order to position the companies, with the purpose to categorise the pop up efforts conducted by the interviewed firms and compare their strategies to each other. From the interviews, two main purposes were identified explaining why firms choose pop ups as a tool. These can be summarised as (1) pop ups with a long-term marketing purpose to enhance the brand, and (2) pop ups with a short-term selling purpose. The figure includes the firms that have administered pop up efforts during the period 2015-2020. It excludes interview objects categorised as providers for pop up space (*Pop Up Agency* and *xNomad*), event agencies (*Anonymous 3*) and research institutions (*HUI Research*).




The first approach identifies pop ups as a means of a marketing strategy where the experience is central. This can be seen as a long-term approach because sales in the actual pop up are not prioritised. This is supported by Haralambakis, stating that the reason a customer visits a pop up store is to experience something, not only to purchase goods. Instead this approach relies on the creation of an experience, aiming to build long-term relationships with consumers. This approach is supported by Lowe et al. (2018) and Surchi (2011), stating that emphasis should be put on long-term relationships with customers in order to ensure future product demand, as opposed to the intention of only generating profits. This is fundamental in an experience economy, since customers expect extraordinary experiences beyond the traditional sales interaction, resulting in a memorable event (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999). Hence, it could be argued to enhance the brand.

This first approach is used by *Moomin*, *Axel Arigato*, *Anonymous 1* and *Anonymous 2*. Svenman representing *Moomin*, clarifies the objectives with the pop up to enhance the brand in contrast to traditional advertisements in newspapers. The ambition is to create a significant impression of the brand, beyond the pop up to result in sales alone (Svenman; Johansson). Value is created for both consumers and the firm by making the pop up experiential, providing an extraordinary experience (Lowe et al., 2018). This approach further connects to the strategy of *Anonymous 1* and *Anonymous 2* utilising experiential marketing without sales intentions at the pop up. This aligns with literature stating that items do not have to be available for sale but can be displayed

with the ambition to represent the band (Warnaby et al., 2015; Klein et al., 2016; Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019).

The second determined approach includes *Stålhästen* and *maxjenny!*. It explains that pop up stores designed to be similar to regular retail stores mainly focusing on the short-term goal of increasing sales. The interviewed firms that are categorised with this purpose are smaller companies, thus with a probability of a smaller liquidity indicating a smaller margin for expenditures without receiving incomes as a direct result. It should however be clarified that these companies do not necessarily have less of a long-term approach in general, but that the pop up is rather operated with the intention of provoking quick sales. This type of pop up strategy differs from the 'traditional' definition in the literature, which states that the main emphasis of the pop up is to bring attention to the brand (Zogaj et al., 2019).

According to Andersson at *Anonymous 1*, pop ups are not an appropriate approach for short-term success as it is a long-term activity to stage pop ups. *"If you want quick wins pop ups and events are probably not the way to go, but I think it's more of a marathon to get going with that. And it will for sure benefit us in the longer term"* (Andersson). Svenman, agrees that pop ups are not profitable in the short-term, furthering that they should be used as a marketing strategy and be placed in the firm's marketing budget. This shows that finances are central to both approaches.

### 4.1.3 Finances

From the collected interviews two conflicting aspects of financing pop ups are highlighted. One aspect proposes that providing multisensory experiences is expensive, whilst the second one proposes pop ups as a way to save money on high rental prices. The first aspect can be connected to pop ups as a marketing effort and as a consequence of making the retail space highly experiential. The second aspect can be connected to utilising the pop up as a regular retail store and testing the strategic direction. Nonetheless, both aspects can be seen as a way to enhance the brand through establishing a physical presence, thus forming relationships.

*Moomin* utilises pop ups with the purpose of marketing and does collaborative work with Åhlens City in Stockholm where a previous *Moomin* pop up effort involved a planning phase

of approximately six months, implying high total costs. Scherr at *Pop up Agency* supports this, emphasising that experiential pop ups oppose a low-price strategy. Scherr exemplifies this by explaining that a former client, Magnum Pleasure store, was extraordinary but expensive, due to the multisensory experiences. Johansson at *Axel Arigato* shares the view of pop ups being costly due to the experiential aspect.

Johansson claims that due to the high expenses of experiential pop ups, meeting financial results is necessary. Svenman of *Moomin* agrees, stating that the pop up inevitably needs to be covered financially. Haralambakis at *xNomad* claims that pop ups should not solely be viewed as a short-term marketing campaign and highlights the importance of creating effectful brand experiences and exposure. As a result, customers that have been acquired offline have moved online by the closing date. This is also supported by numerous interviewees, stating that it is evident that pop ups drive sales online. Thus this can be seen as transforming a physical experience into an online purchase.

For Forslund at the luxury clothing brand *maxjenny!*, the main reason for having pop ups is to sell because finances are central. The reasoning behind opening a pop up rather than a permanent store aligns with the second approach of operating the pop up store with a short-term selling purpose. Holm at *Anonymous 3* supports this and claims that the limited time of a pop up can be positive from a financial aspect. This is also applicable for Sjögren at *Stålhästen*, who explains that having physical stores is considered an expensive asset in Sweden and that it is much easier for companies to conduct practices online due to the unassisted purchase process.

The short-term selling aspect is relevant for *Stålhästen* since bicycles are seasonal goods. Through the usage of pop up stores, both *Stålhästen* and *maxjenny!* are able to have physical stores with a short-term contract for the retail space which otherwise would have been too expensive on an annual basis. This is further supported by Bergh at *HUI Research* who views the pop up phenomenon as a cost effective option, while it enables the possibility to obtain a personal experience through the sensation of touch when utilising a physical store. Further, Sjögren views pop ups as an opportunity to have a physical store at a prime location, but only during the peak months thus avoiding surplus costs the remaining months. Beyond the purpose of short-term sales, *Stålhästen* uses pop ups with the ambition to test different locations and have tried several geographical areas in Stockholm. Using pop ups to test different locations

aligns with existing literature stating that it is important to find the right location that correlates with the brand (Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019).

### 4.1.4 Strategic Direction

Testing a new market and location can be considered a well-known purpose for opening pop up stores, both in existing literature and amongst the interviewed firms. Literature underlines the importance of finding the right strategic location for the pop up to be successful (Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). Johansson confirms this claiming that a pop up can be a way to test a new market or location. It is further explained that *Axel Arigato* opened a pop up at Norrmalmstorg in Stockholm before they had the resources to open a permanent store. This confirms the financial approach of pop ups as a way to test a location without signing up on a long lease, which is confirmed by Haralambakis. Further, international companies could use this pop up approach when curious to test the Swedish market. Haralambakis mentions three international clients intending to do so at different locations in Stockholm. Zogaj et al. (2019) supports this approach as the adaptable characteristic of pop ups makes them a feasible option when testing a new market.

Sjögren explains that each pop up effort has been at a new address for *Stålhästen*, allowing several districts in Stockholm as well as shopping centres outside the city to be tested. This is a way to gain insights regarding where consumers are most prone to purchase bicycles. Sjögren claims that the most successful pop up was at Sergelstorg, due to high activity in the area, which could be argued to enable more opportunities to meet current and potential customers. This insight can be further connected to the choice firms have of opening pop ups at an individual address or with a reseller. One success factor among the participants is interpreted to be the number of visitors, sales and the "buzz" the pop up generates despite the noise in the surrounding area. Haralambakis explains that, generally, the desired location of the pop up is in larger cities like Stockholm or Gothenburg, with high footfall and distinguishing districts aligning with different brand identities. In Stockholm for instance, Östermalm is regarded as high-end, while Södermalm could be described as hipster. However, with a high density of stores and exciting events already occurring in those areas, there is a need to distinguish the firm in order to break through the disturbing noise.

According to Svenman, *Moomin* always conducts pop up efforts together with partners such as Åhléns City, as this allows *Moomin* to take advantage of the already established traffic driven by the store. This, because if a pop up takes place at a reseller, the focus on the brand could steer the customers' attention from competitors' products. Svenman however expresses the risk of being side-lined in the noise, and therefore continuously works on innovative and brand coherent pop up ideas. Scherr at *Pop up agency* explains that many companies are hesitant to open pop ups at locations outside the city but suggests this as an approach to establish a recognised brand in order to deal with noise in the city centre at a later stage. This, because it could be easier and more cost efficient to generate a "buzz" followed by creating a stronger brand awareness in an area with fewer competitors nearby.

Haralambakis further explains the importance of the chosen location being coherent to the brand to avoid confusion for the consumers, which literature supports stating that the selected location of pop ups should reflect brand values (Picot-Coupey, 2014; Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). *"Sometimes a streetwear brand really wants to be on Östermalm, and I'm like 'alright, cool, well this is the data which suggests that the majority of stores in the segment here are actually luxury brands'"* (Haralambakis). This implies that there might be a gap between how companies perceive themselves and how customers perceive the brand, indicating a positioning issue. Thus, suggesting the importance of using data to analyse who the target customers are and who the real customers are.

Haralambakis demonstrates that digitally native brands have a better understanding of what could potentially work for their product in regard to location, giving an example of a high-end brand that had a pop up in an affluent area by focusing on the foot traffic in that specific area. Additionally, Scherr states that this type of data collection is emerging in physical retail spaces, however e-commerce is more advanced. Online retailers can keep track of customers through their credit cards and obtain information about what they buy and where they make their purchases. Despite this information, the conducted interviews have made it clear that several of the interviewed companies do not utilise any data-collecting technologies in their pop up stores. Yet, several interviewees have acknowledged a correlation between sales and brand loyalty concerning their pop ups (Johansson; Andersson; Sjögren). It has been recognised that more sales results in an increased number of customers as brand ambassadors, which leads to loyalty. However, real data to confirm this is yet to be established by the firms (Johansson; Scherr).

Haralambakis emphasises the importance of collecting customer data before and during the pop up formation. *xNomad* use Telia Crowd Insights to collect anonymous data from telecommunication towers to gain generic insights about customer quantity as well as movement patterns such as previous and current location and time spent. In-store sensors, known as WiFiprobedata, are also used to measure and analyse movement. Through these technologies, companies can measure store performance over time compared to competitors through the effects of customer interactions. This provides valuable insights of possible improvements regarding the format, setting and location of the pop up. Essentially providing the answer to why it was or was not successful (Haralambakis).

## 4.2 Multisensory Experiences in Pop Ups

### 4.2.1 Five Senses

From the conducted interviews it can be assumed that one way firms use pop up stores is to escape the limits of digital retail, thus enabling more opportunities to use multisensory marketing as it aligns with an experience economy. This, because literature states that the senses in online retailing is limited to visual, and to some extent auditory elements (Petit et al., 2019). Several interviewees mention that pop ups allow consumers to “touch, squeeze and see” the products (Scherr; Sjögren; Svenman), which coincides with literature regarding instrumental and autotelic NFT explaining that touch can provide consumers with otherwise limited information and engage them through enjoyment (Peck & Childers, 2003). However, haptics and vision tend to happen naturally in a pop up setting, and it can therefore be argued that the senses may not be attentively and intentionally considered by firms in the design-process.

Thus from interviews, two general conclusions can be drawn regarding the five traditional senses amongst the firms; (1) all firms have included vision and haptics in their pop ups, and (2) the five senses have not been intentionally included by the majority of the firms. The conducted interviews leave the impression that if a third, fourth or fifth sense is included in the pop up, the reasoning is more of a coincidence rather than a specific effort to this end. According to literature, a higher number of senses included in a store leads to enhanced memorability of the brand. This is supported by Lindström (2010) stating that implementing all five senses results in a sensory experience which can at most triple the consumer's ability to memorise the

brand. Spence et al. (2014) and Helmefalk and Berndt (2018) further support that the effects of a single sensory cue is less impactful than the use of multisensory cues, thus including multiple senses is beneficiary for retailers. Lindström (2010) further explains that these sensory memories will generate a stronger connection between the customer and the brand. Holm at *Anonymous 3* confirms that all the senses should work together for a holistic experience in order to strengthen brand awareness. Yet, *Anonymous 3* focus on the most relevant sense for the brand and the products in question. This contradicts the literature advocating multiple senses, however it is supported by literature claiming the importance of congruence between senses, retail space and products (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Krishna et al., 2010; Helmefalk, 2019; Helmefalk & Hultén, 2017; Kivioja, 2017).

During interviews it was established that one of the limitations of pop ups is the raw space. According to literature, the space of a pop up shop should allow for the brand to present itself using sensory and aesthetic elements, and through this create a unique and expressive atmosphere which has an effect on consumers' hedonic shopping experience (Babin et al., 1994; de Lassus & Freire, 2014; Zogaj et al., 2019). For most interviewed firms, it appears that the geographical location of the store is primary whilst the layout of the pop up is secondary. This includes the architecture of the retail space, such as placement of windows or ceiling height. According to Forslund, *"you have to do the best of what you have when it comes to space"*. Svenman agrees, claiming that an adaptation of the space received has to be done. Forslund further explains that in a pop up agreement the tenant does not have a lot of negotiating power and is therefore neither able to have high demands. According to Forslund, *maxjenny!* currently uses a pop up space described as a "square within a square". This space is less impressive compared to spaces previously used, for example one with an irregular shape and a nine meter high ceiling, which created that "wow-feeling" for customers. This implies that the space and its layout can contribute to a heightened unique experience, whilst the lack thereof can indicate less enthusiasm. According to Johansson, the choice and quality of a pop up space should not substantially differ from a permanent one, it is important to find a raw space which can generate a good experience and mood, aligning with the brand. This is interpreted to align with atmospherics (Kotler, 1973).

Kotler (1973) introduces atmospherics as an incentive to influence customers' mood and thus increase purchasing behaviour. In line with this, *Stålhästen* previously wanted to convey a rural

atmosphere for visitors in the pop up, but today they aim at creating a space characterised by stylish minimalism, and that the pop ups should feel like a living room (Sjögren). Connected to this, vision is discussed in literature, stating that it is often recognised as the dominant sense (Krishna, 2012), which can have both positive and negative implications depending on use. Existing literature mentions lighting to be a strong factor in retail-environments (e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016; Zogaj et al., 2019), as well as product-orientation (Krishna et al., 2016). From the interviews only one participant mentioned in-store lighting of the pop up in regard to vision, which further supports the analysis that the reasoning behind the use of senses in pop up settings might be low amongst firms.

It can be further assumed that in order to avoid confusion it is important for firms to let the ambiance of the pop up be coherent to the atmosphere of their established presence, online and offline. This aligns with brand identity and recognition. Haralambakis explains that it is difficult for the brands to understand how to design, fabricate and market their store, stating that *xNomad* work closely with partnerships, including a partner providing the interior for their pop up space. Therefore, it can be seen that the choice of furniture is often interpreted to reflect the brand image and hence the retail space in the pop ups could be used as a strategy to enhance the brand identity if done coherently. The importance of brand congruence is supported by Spence et al. (2014) stating that the retail environment is evaluated more positively when there is congruence between multisensory cues. The use of senses can coincide with building brand identity, this is true for the use of colours. Andersson at *Anonymous 1* states that the colours of the pop up should be coherent to the colours on the website in order for the consumers to easily recognise the brand. According to Svenman the *Moomin* pop ups can differ in colours in accordance to different artwork, enhancing the importance of the logo to always be visible.

The interviews imply that firms find it difficult to incorporate additional senses such as olfactory and taste when this is not what they are selling. It could be argued that this would happen more naturally if it was a food pop up rather than a pop up selling goods. This indicates a diversion from existing literature on the importance of including multiple senses. In literature, olfaction is stated to be the only sense directly connected to the memory and emotion (Herz & Engen, 1996; Krishna, 2012; Kivoja, 2017), which can argue for a more extensive use of smells for improved brand recognition. Taste can be further connected to this as it is contingent on other senses such as smell and vision (Herz, 2007; Krishna, 2012). Yet most of the interviewees

claimed to not make use of smell (or taste) in the pop ups. This further connects to literature regarding the importance of olfactory cues being congruent with the brand delivery, which can have a positive effect on memorability (Mitchell et al., 1995; Krishna, 2012). However Svenman shares an experience regarding another *Rights and brands* client, explaining how they made an exhibition space at Formex for Carl Larsson, where they made use of sound, lighting and smells. Svenman claims that this amplified the experience for the customer to the extent that numerous visitors cried. The music and the smell were further congruent with Carl Larsson and the exhibition, by using violin music and Christmas smells thus making it feel very "Swedish".

Olfactory and taste can further be incorporated in pop ups through offerings to consumers, such as coffee during their visit to the store. This is also in accordance with literature stating that the surprise aspect of a pop up is a factor for its success, which can include free samples and free services (Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). Svenman states that whenever free coffee, lollipops or stickers are handed out, the customers are enthusiastic. During their first pop up at Åhléns City, 100 Moomin mugs were given out, which caused a lot of visitors to line up, thus showing how free samples or free services can lead to creating a "buzz". Also, *Anonymous 2* works closely with promotional giveaways of their product. However, Svenman believes that it is about generosity rather than giving away something expensive. This is considered to be connected to the kindness economy, in which it is believed that genuine kindness is fundamental for modern brands (Scherr). However, it is crucial to focus on genuinity in kindness, since generosity with apparent ulterior motives could be disadvantageous for the brand thus creating the opposite effect. Acts of kindness can be further connected to creating unique experiences.

### 4.2.2 Unique Experience

An important aspect of pop ups is the experience created for the consumer, and the conducted interviews confirm that the experience is of importance for the brand when designing a pop up. This is supported by existing literature stating that pop ups should convey more than merely product information and involve a brand experience (Zogaj et al., 2019). According to Andersson at *Anonymous 1* the tangible experiences are important for born-digital companies. Andersson furthers this by explaining that when designing a pop up, the aim is to create an experience memorable for customers, in order to differentiate from competing companies.

Jansson at *Anonymous 2* supports this, stating that *"The aim is to create an experience you would not easily experience with someone else".* Literature states the importance of hedonic shopping value, creating a joyful in-store shopping experience (Babin et al., 1994), which is further developed by Klein et al. (2016) stating that this is essential in pop ups as they offer consumers unique experiences related to the brand. Haralambakis agrees stating that customers visit pop up stores for the "wow-factor", which can consist of an activity engaging the consumer. Andersson explains that this could be through using live music or a motorbike featured in their next pop up, supported by literature stating the importance of surprise and delight in pop ups enforced through entertainment (Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). Johansson at *Axel Arigato* explains that their intention is to grasp attention from new customers as the pop up seeks to be unique in new circumstances, combining a new geographical location with a one-of-a-kind experience in the temporary store. Jansson at *Anonymous 2* agrees with this point of view and claims that the experience in the pop up should be unique.

Sjögren shares that *Stålhästen* has made several attempts to organise competitions and social media "check-ins" to engage consumers, interactive games are identified in literature to be a success factor for pop ups (Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). Haralambakis shares that *xNomad* created a café (hereinafter referred to as the Pink Café) in Stockholm attempting to stand out from generic ones by including flower walls, pink coffee, pink furniture, pink chocolate and more, with the main objective to create a customer experience. This type of pop up can be described as "instagrammable", encouraging visitors to document and share their visit on social media. This brings another aspect to the experience as it can be connected to user-generated content, seen as a way to engage consumers when drawing parables between social media and utilising interactive games. User-generated content implemented in the pop up strategy can further be connected to ambassadorship as a way to humanise the brand as it helps make the brand more authentic in the eyes of the consumer.

According to Svenman, the experience itself is becoming an increasingly important factor, as it leads to positive purchase behaviour. This is supported by literature stating that stimulating consumer senses forms a connection between consumer and product which leads to purchase (Costa et al., 2012; e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016). Svenman explains that pop ups are meant to offer consumers something more than regular stores, in terms of experience. This is closely related to the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), explaining that experiences are memorable.

Andersson shares the views of Svenman, which is supported by Pine & Gilmore (1998), stating that pop ups are a great way to build brands and forge customer relationships, generating an opportunity to create something remarkable and remembered.

This can be further connected to existing literature, using The Four Realms of Experience model by Pine & Gilmore (1998) which categorises experiences according to the level of consumer-participation and the level of immersion. From this analysis *maxjenny!* and *Axel Arigato* can be placed in the esthetic category as both express an ambition for the pop up to be comparable to an art gallery. This indicates that the consumer is immersed in the pop up activity but to a passive degree. *Pop Up Agency* client Magnum Pleasure Store could be categorised as escapist since it allows consumers to design their own ice creams, meaning it is a highly consumer-active pop up. According to Scherr, the pleasure store is built solely on its "instagrammable" nature, which was also the case with the Pink Café as explained by Haralambakis. This categorisation is also true for *Moomin,* allowing their visitors to engage with the Moomin and Little My characters, encouraging photos to be taken with the characters for social media (Svenman). Thus, the general conclusion to be drawn is that when pop up stores are more engaging, there is a higher level of customer experience offered. This can be connected to hedonic shopping value (Babin et al., 1994). It can also be concluded that if a firm wishes to move from the esthetic dimension to the escapist one, this may require bigger funding. Forslund supports this analysis, stating that creating an experiential space would be very expensive for the brand as it would require a large space when dealing with space-consuming goods. During interviews, no interactions were made with firms identified to be in the entertainment or educational dimensions. Further, from this analysis no firms can be placed into Pine and Gilmores' (1998) defined "sweet spot".

The time scarcity aspect in pop ups is connected to creating a heightened experience for consumers, which is further experienced to have an impact on the brand. Scherr shares an experience from a pop up restaurant in London using "EXP. Dec. 2019" (expires), rather than "EST. Dec. 1880" (established), which for him felt quirky and fun. This aligns with literature stating that pop up atmosphere should be considered fun, enjoyable, spontaneous and contemporary (de Lassus & Freire, 2014; Lowe et al., 2018). Scherr further explains that letting people know that the time is limited drives traffic, this is supported by literature stating that pop ups operating for a limited time can be a driving factor for consumers to visit the store

(Aggarwal et al., 2011; Surchi, 2011; de Lassus & Freire, 2014; Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). In line with this Haralambakis claims the time scarceness can enhance the customer experience, by creating a fear of missing out, also efficient in driving traffic. Both Lowe et al. (2018) and de Lassus and Freire (2014) support this claiming that time scarcity creates a one of a kind experience, driving participation amongst consumers wishing to avoid anxieties connected to a fear of missing out.

From the interviews two standpoints are highlighted regarding the value of the word 'pop up'. The word pop up is further connected to the time scarcity aspect. In order to resemble regular stores, interviewees at *maxjenny!* and *Stålhästen* have decided against using the word "pop up" as a part of their marketing strategy. This, because their main purpose is generating sales, and hence disregard the usage of displaying the words "pop up" to increase the current brand awareness. According to Scherr the word "pop up" is perceived to be outdated and is not recommended to use as long as it is the appropriate location and season. Andersson at *Anonymous 1* supports this stating that pop ups were a few years ago and do not appear as particularly special nor exciting today. On the contrary, Haralambakis states that the purpose of having a pop up loses its leverage if it poses as a generic store front with no advertised time limit. Haralambakis' viewpoint aligns with existing literature, that the concept of time scarcity which is signified by the word pop up, can create a "buzz" and thus be a driving force for consumers to visit the store (Surchi, 2011; Aggarwal et al., 2011; de Lassus & Freire, 2014; Koch & Benlian, 2015; Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019).

During interviews, both Scherr and Haralambakis compare the Swedish pop up industry to the one in London, where temporary stores is broadly used as a highly experiential marketing tool. *xNomad* have attempted to create a similar pop up atmosphere in Stockholm. One supporting aspect for its feasibility is the culture and atmosphere among Swedish people, described as open-minded, homogenous, and a commonly shared willingness to try new products on the market, both tangible and intangible (Haralambakis). This further aligns with Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory, in which Sweden is described as an individualistic culture and scores low on the uncertainty avoidance. These two combined could imply that at large people in Sweden are enthusiastic to try out new innovations, aligning with a wish to differentiate themselves from the greater mass, while there is a relaxed view on unknown situations, which could occur when trying out the latest inventions. Haralambakis has experienced the feminine

approach of the culture, in which the community is caring for one another and kindness is fundamental meaning that a favour could be remembered and returned in a decade. This implies the importance of forming lasting relationships. *"It takes no sweat to introduce this person to another person, and maybe in ten years this person might return the favour*." (Haralambakis).

### 4.2.3 Relational Touchpoint

The importance of creating a relational touchpoint between a brand and consumers is becoming more meaningful due to the continuous rise in e-commerce and the decrease of brick and mortar stores. Sjögren at *Stålhästen*, which used to solely operate online, elaborates on these advantages: *"In a physical store you have the opportunity to meet the customers, and maybe sell a little bit more, and also create loyalty."*. As concluded in previous studies by Picot-Coupey (2014), there is a need for interaction between the consumer and a brand for consumers to become emotionally attached. To reach the emotional dimension, it is essential for companies to offer something more than solely product related information, including personal experiences (Zogaj et al., 2019). As argued by Brakus et al. (2009), these personal experiences also have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. This is something Forslund has experienced through the usage of pop us, explaining that the employees are important for the company. Further claiming that *maxjenny!* receives a lot of attention due to the employees, through hands-on positive feedback. Forslund elaborates that it is important to hire employees that are compatible with the brand identity. This is supported in previous research by Iglesias et al. (2019) indicating that the encounters between members of staff and consumers will ultimately shape the perceptions consumers obtain about a brand. Attributes such as being friendly and service-minded is not enough to create a positive brand experience, extensive knowledge about the brand and its products is necessary (Sjögren; Scherr). *"You can be super nice and service-minded, but if it's obvious that you don't know the product the customer will feel unsure about the purchase and you will miss the selling opportunity because you haven't understood the customer needs or what you can offer"* (Sjögren). Holm at *Anonymous 3* confirms this stating that a physical meeting with the right employees, a large part of which is expertise, strengthens the consumer brand experience. Thus, showing how relationship-building in pop ups is experienced to be a tool to enhance the brand.

Andersson at *Anonymous 1* describes that the employees work as ambassadors for the company and thus have to correlate to the expectations obtained by the consumers regarding the brand. Andersson further claims that it is not necessary for their company to conduct any employee training concerning pop ups, instead focusing on letting the personalities of their personnel shine through. At a small company with a strong company culture similar to *Anonymous 1*, members of staff are aware of what kind of behaviour is expected of them in regard to the brand, further implying that they solely hire people with personalities that are coherent with their brand and corporate culture. It can therefore be confirmed that employees are an essential part in the creation of sensory brand experiences as they act as representatives of the company and thus being the face of the brand. Because of this, pop ups are an opportunity for consumers to satisfy their hedonic shopping needs rather than only utilitarian needs (Babin et al., 1994; Zogaj et al., 2019).

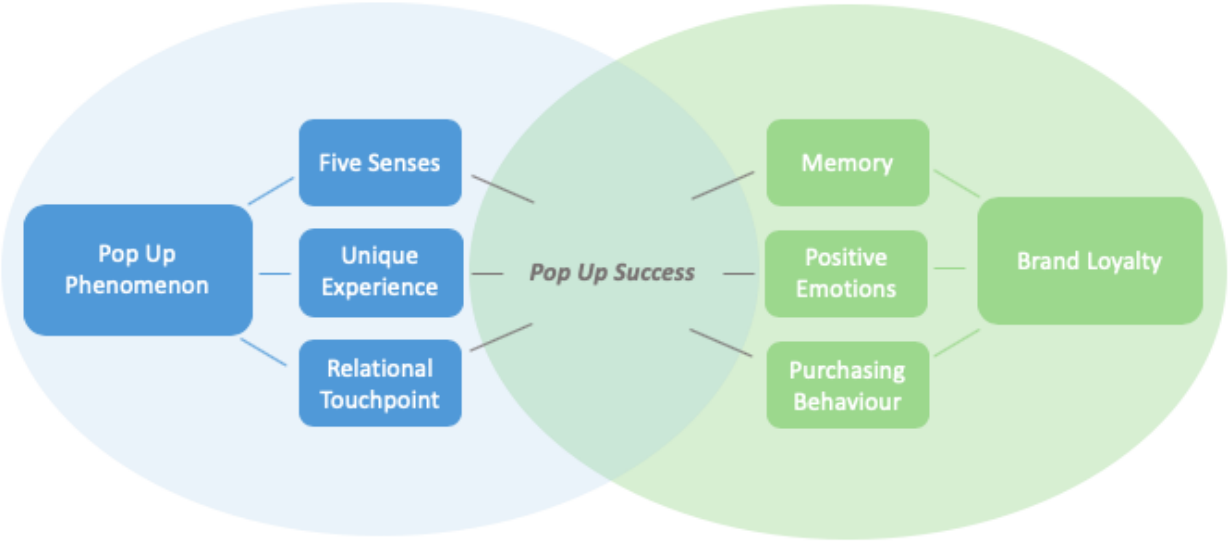
From the collected interviews the importance for customers to be able to humanise the brand is evident, however it is equally important for brands to humanise the customers. This can be viewed as a two-sided interaction, not least an opportunity for employees to gain insights of how the brand is perceived from the customer's point of view. This is supported to be of importance for the consumer to experience the brand (Kim et al., 2010; Picot-Coupey, 2014). Andersson at *Anonymous 1* suggests that the opportunity to meet the customers is often neglected during trade shows and other physical marketplaces. This opinion is also shared by Sjögren who claims that several dimensions of customer service communication is lost through the use of e-mail or chat functions, which is a limit connected to online retail. However, pop ups can be used as a channel to receive feedback from customers and to discover what they demand in terms of product and service development, an opinion that is also shared by Forslund. It is therefore implied that pop up stores can be used as a part of a development strategy for companies wanting to improve their products, communication services, and not least the brand image.

## 4.3 The Model of Pop Up Success

Based on existing literature and empirical findings, the authors developed a model which builds on how the five senses found in Krishna's conceptual framework (2012) affect consumer behaviour and memory. Literature further supports the importance of creating a unique

experience by utilising a relational touchpoint in pop ups for consumers (Lowe et al., 2018; Zogaj et al., 2019). This is supported by the findings, stressing the importance of the sensory experiences in the pop up, as well as the relational touchpoint. This indicates that every positive experience that the customers gather in the pop up will be stored in their memory, leading purchase behaviour and brand loyalty, which is supported by literature (e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016; Riza & Wijayanti, 2018; Daffy, 2019).

The literature and findings thereby provide numerous insights regarding how the pop up phenomenon could positively affect the brand in the long-term. With the new model the authors aim to provide a guide for practitioners in their strategic development of pop ups, in order to obtain brand loyalty.




The pop up phenomenon consists of the different components of a multisensory experience; the five senses, a unique experience and a relational touchpoint. For a full experience in a pop up all of these are recommended to be included. Pop up success is achieved by implementing all of the elements of a multisensory experience, resulting in enhanced memorability, positive emotions and purchasing behaviour. This ultimately leads to brand loyalty. The first circle represents what can be implemented by the firm, whilst the second circle shows the results as a consequence of the implementation.

# 5. Conclusion

*This chapter presents the most evident factors of how phygital companies in Sweden experience the pop up phenomenon with the focus on multisensory experience and the brand.*

The purpose of this study is to provide insights of managers' personal experiences of the pop up phenomenon and explores how pop ups can be a useful tool for a company's brand. This through answering the research question: *In light of the growing importance of the experience economy and multisensory marketing, how is the pop up phenomenon experienced to be a useful tool to enhance a company's brand and why?*

In the research process, four factors were identified as important for phygital companies in Sweden to acknowledge in order to use pop ups as a successful strategy and thus improve the brand. These four factors further summarise the model of pop up success as it shows how firms can utilise pop ups as a successful tool.

- *The five senses* include olfactory, taste, auditory, vision and haptics. The latter two being prominently used amongst the firms. The reasoning behind the usage of multisensory experiences was recurrently found to be done unintentionally by the firms, indicating a lack of knowledge of its impact on customer behaviour in the long-term.
- A *unique experience* is identified as a motivator for pop ups, to differentiate the brand and to give customers an extraordinary and memorable encounter. Time scarcity is an important aspect to create a unique and exclusive experience, especially in individualistic cultures like in Sweden. Time and experience influences finances by making pop ups a low- or high-cost effort depending on the wished outcome.
- *Relational touchpoint* is a missing aspect for companies that mainly operate online, and through the usage of pop ups it allows for humanising the brand through face-to-face interaction between employees, customers and the brand. Thus pop ups are considered to be an approach to blur the line between physical and online stores.
- *Brand loyalty* is a successful result of the collected efforts in a multisensory experience of a pop up. Through implementing senses, experiences and relationships between consumer and brand, this evokes positive emotions, purchase behaviour and memorability thus leading to brand loyalty.

# 6. Discussion

*This section will discuss the contributions and practical implications of this study. It will further present the limits of the study and present suggestions for future research.*

## 6.1 Contributions

This study provides practical suggestions concerning how phygital companies can utilise pop up stores to enhance the company's brand marketing as experience economy and multisensory marketing is found to be necessary. Multisensory marketing and brand loyalty are two widely researched topics in academia. However, the application of these in pop ups is a relatively new research topic, and due to the retail apocalypse, and consumers increased demand regarding experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), it was deemed important to increase the understanding of this topic. Through interviews with ten companies, a deeper understanding of how these firms view this strategy was created. From the integrative review of previous research and the application of this to the empirical findings derived from this study resulting in a developed model for pop up success by the authors. This research may serve as valid information and suggestions for how companies can achieve brand loyalty through the use of multisensory experiences in their pop up stores.

## 6.2 Practical Implications

Findings from this study implies a lack of knowledge compared to existing literature, regarding the importance of multisensory cues in a pop up setting, mainly concerning the traditional senses. According to literature, incorporating an increased amount of senses in the pop up can significantly increase brand recognition (Lindström, 2010; Spence et al., 2014; Helmefalk & Berndt, 2018). Further, a positive experience could affect memory which subsequently has a positive effect on brand loyalty (Lindström, 2010; e Hassan & Iqbal, 2016; Riza & Wijayanti, 2018). However, the reasoning behind the usage of multisensory experiences was recurrently found to be done unintentionally by the firms. Therefore, the authors suggest for companies that operate, or wish to operate, in the pop up industry to actively form a strategy of

multisensory experiences that are congruent with the brand by considering the long-term implications. This could be applied by acknowledging and utilising the model *Pop up Success*. By implementing all elements of a multisensory experience, pop up success is achieved, resulting in enhanced memorability, positive emotions and purchasing behaviour which leads to brand loyalty. Through this, the pop up phenomenon can be seen as a useful tool which has a long-term positive effect on the brand.

## 6.3 Limitations

The main limitation of this study is that it makes use of a relatively small sample consisting of ten companies operating in different industries. Due to similar and comparable findings, generalisations are allowed with the limitation to the pop up phenomenon and not the retail industry as a whole. This study is however only a true representation of how the phenomenon is experienced by the companies that have been interviewed.

Another limitation is that the companies subject of interview have used the pop up strategy only in Sweden's two largest cities; Stockholm and Gothenburg. Thus, it does not validify a representation of Sweden as a whole.

As a consequence of the current circumstance of COVID-19, the possibilities to meet face-to-face and therefore gain full qualitative measurements, such as body language and gestures, was limited.

Lastly, eight out of ten interviews were conducted in Swedish whereupon citations were translated into English. Although the citations were translated independently, then collectively scrutinised and lastly overlooked by an unbiased observer, this might have implications for the interpretation.

## 6.4 Future Research

By taking into account the findings and limitations of this study, future research is recommended to extend the existing knowledge of the pop up phenomenon. Given that the

interviewees in this study have conducted pop ups in Stockholm and Gothenburg, it is of interest to further this knowledge to include companies who have undertaken pop ups in other cities, in accordance with findings stating the importance of being where the customer is.

The term kindness economy was discovered during the interviews and was then a recurring concept throughout data collection. Suggested future research is to explore whether kindness in a pop up setting, meaning the difference between genuine and ingenuine activities, has an impact on the brand. This could be of high relevance to investigate due to the current global COVID-19 pandemic, which is expected to impact the economy negatively. Thereby, future studies could incorporate the survival rates of firms with versus without kindness economy embodied in the business model of pop ups.

Further, it is argued to be important for companies to work increasingly with data measurements in combination with pop up efforts, as seen with the collaboration between *xNomad* and Telia. There is an extensive lack amongst the interviewed firms and in literature of measuring footfall, which further implies an unawareness of information regarding their visitors and the pattern of their movements. Therefore, the authors would suggest a research concerning whether measuring footfall in pop ups has a direct effect on brand loyalty.

Findings suggest that firms tend to view pop ups either as a place to create consumer experience or a place to increase sales. The purpose of some pop ups operating mainly to generate sales, differs from the traditional definition of pop ups in which the purpose is to create a customer experience and thus humanising the brand. However, as the financial aspect was primary, the focus on experience was found to be secondary. Therefore, it allows for future research to study pop ups as a strategy for a quick return of investment.

Lastly, literature suggests that pop ups are more successful in individualistic countries (Zogaj et al., 2019). In individualistic cultures this is connected to aspects of time scarcity and uniqueness, which is not applicable in non-individualistic cultures. Therefore, it is suggested to conduct further research in regard to pop up success in non-individualistic countries, to find out the success-rate and the driving factors.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Interview Guide Version 1

*The interview guide shows the topics that were discussed during the interviews with **Axel Arigato**. All questions are not stated in the guide due to that each question was revised and adjusted based on the participants position and the uniqueness of each interview. Further, the topics were not discussed in the exact order as stated below, since the conversation was allowed to be led through the interviewees' answers.*

**Introduction**

**The Purpose**

**Multisensory**

- Which senses are used

**The Brand**

- Effect on brand as perceived by consumers
- Any measurements

**Online and Offline**

- Importance of presence on both

**Time Scarcity**

# Appendix 2: Interview Guide Version 2

*The interview guide shows the topics that were discussed during the interviews with **maxjenny!, Anonymous 1, Pop Up Agency, Rights & Brands, Stålhästen and xNomad**. This guide was also used for the interview conducted with **Anonymous 3** via e-mail, however it was made clear that they could answer freely and only respond to the questions they believed were relevant to their company.*

*All questions are not stated in the guide due to that each question was revised and adjusted based on the participants position and the uniqueness of each interview. Further, the topics were not discussed in the exact order as stated below, since the conversation was allowed to be led through the interviewees' answers.*

**Introduction**

- Introduction of ourselves and our work
- Information regarding anonymity and confidentiality, and permission to audio record the interview
- Allowing interviewee to describe their position in their own words

**The Purpose**

- The purpose of having a pop up
- Geographical location of a pop up

**Multisensory**

- Which senses were incorporated in the pop up
- The experience of a pop up
    - Which types of experiences
    - The wow-factor
    - The relational touchpoint

**The Brand**

- Consumer view of the brand
    - Affected by pop up
    - Loyalty
- Brand identity
- The relational touchpoint

**Offline and Online**

- Which retail combination they use
- If it is important to be present both online and offline

**Time Scarcity**

- What can this aspect mean to the consumer
- What can it mean for the results

# Appendix 3: Interview Guide Version for HUI Research

*The interview guide shows the topics that were discussed and sent to **HUI Research**, requesting to be interviewed via e-mail.*

**The Retail Apocalypse**

- Difference between shopping malls and city centre
- Difference larger and smaller cities

**Pop Ups and E-commerce**

**E-commerce in Sweden**

- Future expectancies

**Spending Patterns of Swedish Consumers**

# Appendix 4: Interview Guide Version for Anonymous 2

*The interview guide shows the topics that were discussed and sent to **Anonymous 2**, requesting to be interviewed via e-mail.*

**The Purpose**

- Geographical location of a pop up

**Multisensory**

- Which senses were incorporated in the pop up

**The Brand**

- Consumer view of the brand

# Appendix 5: Scrutinised Journals

The scrutinised journals that were used throughout the frame of reference are following: *Communications of the ACM, Computers in Human Behavior, Current Opinion in Psychology, Educational Research, Esensi: Jurnal Bisnis Dan Manajemen, European Business Review, European Journal of Marketing, Fashion Marketing: Contemporary Issues, Food Quality and Preference, International Journal of Business Strategy, International Journal of Consumer Studies, International Journal of Electronic Commerce, International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management, International Studies of Management & Organization, IUP Journal of Brand Management, Journal of Advertising, Journal of Brand Management, Journal of Business and Retail Management Research, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Consumer Marketing, Journal of Consumer Psychology, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Electronic Commerce Research, Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning Memory and Cognition, Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Journal of Global Fashion Marketing, Journal of Interactive Marketing, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Management, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Journal of Retailing, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, Marketing Letters, Nature, Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences (PJCSS), Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, Psychology and Marketing, Psychonomic Bulletin and Review, Public Opinion Quarterly, Research Methods for Business Students, Service Industries Journal, Strategy and Leadership, Technological Forecasting & Social Change, The Journal of Applied Psychology, The Proceedings of The International Conference Marketing - from Information to Decision.*