JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY

Jönköping International Business School

Riding the Viral Wave: Generation Z consumer behaviour during viral demand in relation to Brand Management

A qualitative study on how to strategize brand equity management to prolong customer retention from viral demand based on Generation Z consumer behaviour

Bachelor's Thesis Within: *Business Administration*

Number of credits: *15 ECTS*

Programme of study: *Marketing Management*

Authors: *Aini Safiya Husain Jinnah and Lolav Ismail*

Jönköping May 2023

Bachelor Thesis in Business Administration.

Title: Riding the Viral Wave: Generation Z consumer behaviour during viral demand in relation to Brand Management

Authors: Aini Safiya Husain Jinnah and Lolav Ismail

Tutor: Ulf Linnman

Date: 2023-05-19

Key terms: Virality, Viral Transmission, Brand Management, Generation Z, CBBE-Model, Customer Retention

---

Background: Following the development brought by the digital age, social networks and consumer behaviour has significantly changed. The network connectivity of WEB 2.0 enables information to spread at an accelerated rate to a wide scope, creating viral demand. This phenomenon presents an opportunity for brands to increase their customer base. Building brand resonance through brand equity management will result in a stronger brand-to-consumer relationship from viral demand, leading to improved customer retention and overall brand growth.

Purpose: This paper focuses on theory development of Kevin Keller's (1993) CBBE model. The remodelling aims to strategize brand equity management to optimize long-term customer retention from viral demand based on Generation Z consumer behaviour. The framework provides value for brands as it allows to recognize key drivers influencing Gen-Z's customer retention within the context of virality.

Method: The study follows a qualitative design, which is inspired by grounded theory methodology, enabling us to develop a framework based on the CBBE-model (Keller, 1993). An open-ended survey was conducted to understand Generation Z consumer behaviour during viral trends. The survey was systematically analysed, and empirical conclusions were made, respectively.

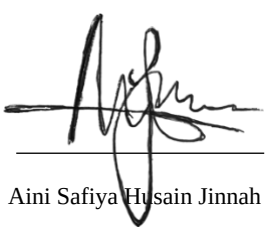
Conclusion: An interest in product over brand during viral trends disrupts the customer retention longevity, explaining why the individual Gen-Z customer lifetime is rather short lived. Furthermore, the proposed CVRM model strategizes how to (1) create willingness for the customer to return and (2) how to prolong customer retention and thus generate long term benefits from a short-term phenomenon.

Acknowledgement:

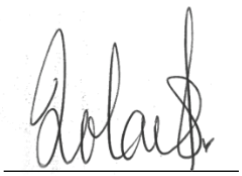
First and foremost, we wish to express our gratitude to those individuals who have supported us in the completion of our thesis. More specifically, we thank our survey participants as their insights and willingness to voice their values has enabled us to commence with our research. Furthermore, the knowledge provided by survey participants allowed us to conclude relevant findings.

We wish to thank our home institution, Jönköping International Business School for providing support and resources throughout our Bachelor studies. Our time at JIBS has been growing and guiding towards our future professional ambitions. Followingly, we give thanks to our tutor Ulf Linnman for providing insights and encouragement throughout the research process.

Lastly, we thank each other for the journey. Having collaborated closely over the past three years, we are thrilled to see our hard work come into fruition in the form of our bachelor's thesis. The journey has developed critical thinking, resilience and creativity in us, which we take forward into the next chapter of our lives. It has been an honour to be acquainted and be able to share these moments with each other.



Aini Safiya Husain Jinnah



Lolav Ismail

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 1

1.1 Background 1

1.2 Problem 2

1.3 Purpose 3

1.4 Definitions 3

1.5 Delimitation 4

2. Frame of reference 5

2.1 Virality 5

2.1.1 Word-Of-Mouth and Electronic Word-of-Mouth 6

2.1.2 Virality in online social networks 7

2.1.3 Online Customer Communities (OCC) 9

2.2 Consumer behaviour 11

2.2.1 Neuroscience of Consumer Behaviour 11

2.2.2 Generation Z Consumer Behaviour 12

2.2.3 Customer Retention and Customer Loyalty 14

2.3 Brand Equity Management 14

2.3.1 Consumer Based Brand Equity Model 16

3. Methodology and method 18

3.1 Methodology 18

3.1.1 Research paradigm 18

3.1.2 Research approach 19

3.1.3 Research design 19

3.2 Method 20

3.2.1 Data collection 20

3.2.2 Data analysis 22

4. Empirical findings 23

5. Analysis and discussion 41

6. Conclusion 49

6.1 Practical Implication 49

6.2 Theoretical Implications 49

6.3 Limitations 50

6.4 Future Research 50

References 51

Appendices 55

Appendix A 55

Appendix B 55

Appendix C 60

Appendix D 60

Table of Figures

FIGURE 1 24
FIGURE 2 25
FIGURE 3 27
FIGURE 4 28
FIGURE 5 29
FIGURE 6 30
FIGURE 7 32
FIGURE 8 33
FIGURE 9 34
FIGURE 10 35
FIGURE 11 37
FIGURE 12 38
FIGURE 13 39
FIGURE 14 40
FIGURE 15 47

Table of Abbreviations

CBBE: Consumer based brand equity

OCC: Online Consumer Communities

OSN: Online Social Networks

WOM: Word-of-mouth

eWOM: Electronic word-of-mouth

Gen-Z: Generation Z

Gen-Y: Generation Y

CVRM: CBBE based Viral Retention Model

B2C: Business to consumer

1. Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth overview of background, problem and purpose of our research. The chapter has been divided into five parts, respectively. Background, problem and purpose sections discuss the research gap and research questions, which posit the value base of our study. Followingly, definitions and delimitations aid the reader in following the research comprehensively.

1.1 Background

The advancements of the digital age have significantly affected consumer behaviour. Followingly, the technological development, accessibility of the Internet and globalisation have played a role in restructuring society's code of conduct. The development of digital platforms has, furthermore, been one of the key drivers in shaping the economy, as demand now exists in both, online and offline environments (Balbi et al., 2021).

Today, a version of the Internet, namely known as WEB 2.0 is used, which emphasises user-generated content and network connectivity as its core for information transmission (Han, 2011). Consequentially, WEB 2.0 has remodelled social networks, in specific, to coexist saliently on online platforms in addition to offline environments (Han, 2011; Mukherjee et al., 2023). Social media and respective communities are an evident example of such online social network transformation (Isson, 2018). Owing to the structures and circumstances created by WEB 2.0, information is able to transmit between users at an accelerated pace to a wider, if not a near global scope, causing viral transmission (Balbi et al., 2021). Furthermore, given the influence of an enhanced level of global interconnectedness through online social networks, we are exposed and stimulated by a wider variety of cultures, ideas and products, which ultimately impact our consumer decision making process', respectively (Petrescu, 2014).

Viral trends are driven by an accelerated rate of communication between online social networks; hence, increase in electronic word-of-mouth attracts many consumers in one place at once (Isson, 2018). When a viral trend regards to a specific product or brand, it often transpires into a momentary shift in demand, after which it resets in a sharp downward turn motion. The sudden exposure presents an opportunity for business' in the limelight to capitalise on the increase of incoming customer flow (Petrescu, 2014). Viral trends in online social networks generate exposure, however, brands are responsible for converting the gained exposure into an incremental increase of customers. Through appropriate brand equity management, building persisting brand resonance from viral exposure will consequently result to a stronger brand-to-customer relationship and customer retention, which harvests brand growth (Becker et al., 2014).

1.2 Problem

Current literature does not address the potential long-term value of viral exposure that can be addressed with brand management, specifically when taking Generation Z's behavioural consumer patterns into consideration. Without a focus on building long term outcomes, an opportunity gap exists in the value retention of viral exposure due to the current short-lived customer relationship (Becker et al., 2014). Furthermore, academic coverage on virality is sparse and the most established theoretical constructs within brand management may be considered outdated, such as the CBBE model by Kevin Keller (1993), as they have been created to fit pre-digital age consumer habits and market constraints, additionally, suggesting a lack of scholarly consideration of Gen-Z as consumers. In addition to the shortcomings of Gen-Z consumer behaviour research, literature examining the juxtaposition between viral demand and brand management is furthermore limited. This may be caused by the academic unfamiliarity of virality as it is a relatively new phenomenon. Due to the impact and increased occurrence of virality in WEB 2.0, however, it is important to understand related implications.

Generation Z is establishing its dominance in the market and are considered as the first generation to grow up with technology instead of having to get accustomed to it (Seyfi et al., 2023). This posits an argument that Gen-Z consumer behaviour on the market differs from that of Gen-Y, for example. Moreover, Gen-Z has been the most exposed to virality, owing to being the most immersed in online social networks through social media platforms introduced by the establishment of WEB 2.0. Additionally, e-commerce has been developed and commercialised during their upbringing, suggesting online market-savviness (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). Ergo, it is important that updated research is conducted of Generation Z consumer behaviour, to take current socio-environmental circumstances into consideration. As every generation to come will evolve with technology as a baseline, understanding the first generation to do so will serve as an important starting point for future frameworks.

Albeit brand management being a more established academic field, most findings suggest brand equity management structures that mainly focus on the long-term development of brand equity management, lacking the right research in how to capitalise long-term outcomes from the short-term change in demand brought by viral exposure. Moreover, there is little to no framework on, how to strengthen customer retention by prolonging the customer-brand relationship that is established through viral transmission. Brands that are able to successfully position their brand equity to align with consumer expectations, are more likely to see long-term benefits from viral exposure. Customer retention, thus, can present itself as a more valuable focus for a brand when managing through incoming viral demand, as it stabilises and promotes growth by minimising the customer turnover (Gao et al., 2022).

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis regards to the theory development of the Consumer Based Brand Equity model (CBBE), created by Kevin Keller (1993), to strategize brand equity management that prolongs customer retention from viral demand based on Generation Z consumer behaviour. Followingly, the proposed model considers the relationship between viral transmission and Generation Z consumer behaviour. The remodel will be segmented to Generation Z consumer behaviour, due to their dominance in the market and participation in online social networks.

Furthermore, the framework will be of value for brands, as it allows to recognise primary drivers influencing Gen-Z customer retention within the context of virality. This knowledge encourages correct brand positioning through brand equity management and in return, enables to generate long term benefits from a short-term phenomenon. In order to establish our developed theory, this thesis will analyse the following research questions:

RQ 1: What are Gen-Z's consumer behaviour patterns during viral trends?

RQ 2: How can brand equity management be strategized to optimize long-term customer retention from a viral demand based on Generation Z consumer behaviour?

1.4 Definitions

Virality: The sudden, widespread transmission of a specific piece of information within a social network either online or offline (Han et al., 2020). The information is shared rapidly within and between social networks. A viral message may be of a product, post (online content) or a brand (Petrescu, 2014).

Customer retention: Customer retention is the actions a company takes to increase a customer's return rate in the form of repurchasing, for example (Gao et al., 2022). The goal is to elongate the lifetime value of the customer, by offering products and services that satisfy their needs to enhance customer loyalty to the company (Becker et al., 2014).

WEB 2.0: The current structure of internet characterized by interconnectivity and focus on creating value for end users through information transmission and user generated content, such as social media (Han, 2011).

Generation Z: A demographic born between 1997-2012. Currently emerging to be the dominant consumer segment in the market (Goldring & Azab, 2020).

Generation Y: Individuals born between 1977 and 1995, better known as millennials (Sendek & Hobart, 2014).

1.5 Delimitation

This thesis disregards brand management structures that aim to maximize benefits from viral exposure in the short-term outlook, but rather focuses on capturing the potential long-term value through customer retention. Furthermore, this thesis will not examine the management scaling required to meet increased demand caused by virality, i.e., in terms of supply chain changes or other restructuring.

Regarding the research demographic, this thesis excludes other generations and focuses on Generation Z, in specific, due to their increasingly dominant market position and active role in social networks online. Hence, other generations will be excluded from primary data. Although an exception is considered that general studies conducted on human behaviour explain tendencies that are less likely to be tied to social generation and rather explain fundamental neuropsychological structures of our human nature.

Lastly, this thesis will not examine ways to establish brand equity management but rather locate ways for an existing brand to restructure its brand equity structure to be proactive in case of a viral demand, in order to generate prolonged customer relations from a short term and high-level exposure period on the market.

2. Frame of reference

This chapter builds the theoretical foundation of our study, providing the reader with an explicit overview of relevant findings in literature. This chapter has been divided into three main sections: Virality, Consumer Behaviour and Brand Equity Management. The sections aid the reader to understand the structure and value of virality in social networks, identifies existing behavioural patterns of Generation Z as consumers, and establishes the relevance of brand equity management. The frame of reference ends with describing the CBBE model.

2.1 Virality

Conceptually virality is a well-recognized phenomenon, however, inconsistencies in literature exist regarding the definition. Generally, a product, post, or brand is considered viral once reaching an unusually large audience in a short period of time due to a surge of electronic word-of-mouth (Han et al., 2020). Online social network platforms, such as Instagram, have grown exponentially during WEB 2.0 leading to a significant increase in content exposure and thus an increased occurrence of virally transmitted content (Han, 2011). For example, although Scrub Daddy gained publicity after airing on Shark Tank in 2012, statistics on Google Trends (2023) show that the search term "Scrub daddy" only reached its popularity peak ten years later in 2022 (See Appendix A). The hashtag "Cleantok" on TikTok, brought sudden and explosive attention to Scrub Daddy due to content creators sharing videos about the product within #Cleantok, generating exposure that motivated other consumers to purchase the same product (Koziel, 2023).

Virality can transpire naturally through an increase of communication between online social network participants. In addition, a company can intentionally implement viral marketing practises that increase their chances of gaining rapid and widescale market exposure. Social transmission-based marketing differentiates itself from other strategies as it relies on finding consumers who are willing to forward promotional messages in order to create peer-to-peer discussions (Petrescu, 2014). Apkinar and Berger (2017) explain that certain emotions stimulated by online content affects the level of social transmission. Furthermore, positive, and negative emotions such as anger, increase the likelihood of the viral transmission (Berger & Milkman, 2012). The ability to connect with consumers and persuade them to engage with content is, furthermore, the main distinction of successful viral marketing campaigns, respectively. The United Colours of Benetton, for example, have sparked a lot of controversy in the past as they have portrayed racial, religious, and political issues in their marketing messages (Petrescu, 2014). By targeting strong emotional stimuli's, such as societal predicaments, brands are able to generate social transmission, whilst differentiating themselves on the market. (Barela, 2003). Studies show that the relationship between the content and the user is a critical aspect of social transmission

since users tend to share content that increase their personal satisfaction and content their social circle will enjoy. Furthermore, interpersonal communication affects both purchasing decisions and the impact of word-of-mouth which is a key factor in virality (Berger & Milkman, 2012).

2.1.1 Word-Of-Mouth and Electronic Word-of-Mouth

Word-of-mouth **(WOM)** communication represents a consumer-to-consumer conversation without the interference of commercial entities. WOM occurs when individuals share their opinions, experiences, and recommendations about brands and products to their family and peers. Consumers are more likely to trust their closest social networks over blatant selling attempts made by companies, which explains the power behind WOM (Petrescu, 2014). Earned media is publicity gained through WOM and is therefore a cost-effective, trustworthy, and a more sufficient method of gaining market exposure over paid media, which relates to traditional marketing communication such as, television. By understanding the efficiency of social transmission, more attention should be placed on earned media over paid media.

For social transmission to be feasible, consumers must find the content interesting and shareworthy (Phillips et al., 2013). Views, likes and shares do not automatically generate revenue or increase in sales, however, engaged customers will. Literature argues that different types of advertising have different effects on targeted audiences. Brands either aim to elicit emotions by implementing techniques such as mood manipulation through music, for example, or focus on informational appeals that target consumers' thinking processes' by providing information about the brand's functional attributes. Although both emotional and informational appeals generate benefits for the brand, emotional appeals are more likely to be shared while informational appeals increase purchasing intentions (Akpinar & Berger, 2017).

Electronic word-of-mouth (**eWOM**) differentiates itself from WOM as it predominantly occurs online. Due to the connectivity of online social networks today, eWOM has a higher viral potential than the traditional form of WOM, as consumers are able to share their opinions and experiences across multiple digital platforms in a more efficient manner. Furthermore, consumers are also able to access opinions from members outside of their social circle and, thus, potentially base their purchasing decisions on a stranger's experience (Petrescu, 2014).

In both WOM and eWOM, poor customer experiences and opinions result in negative social transmission, which has a bigger impact than positively charged messages in purchasing decisions, according to Wilde's (2013) study. Dissatisfied customers tend to be more aggressive in the way they communicate and prefer sharing their experience more than satisfied customers do. Consequentially, new customers will reconsider their decisions if negative feedback surrounds a product. Although

negative eWOM has a greater impact on purchasing decisions, positive WOM the is more prevalent (Wilde, 2013).

EWOM and traditional WOM have similar features, however, there are important distinctions between the two. The decision-making process involved in sharing information and determining whom to share with, is a notable distinction. In eWOM, users tend to gather information first before deciding whether or not they want to share their opinions. Contrary to that, traditional WOM chooses individuals to share with, prior on deciding what information to share (Akpinar & Berger, 2017).

2.1.2 Virality in online social networks

Online social networks (**OSNs**) can be described as a system of social connections that are established between organisations and individuals through online platforms (Wilde, 2013; Arazzi et al., 2023). Network nodes (i.e., users) are end points of communication that receive, store and further distribute information (Wilde, 2013). The large-scale user connectivity developed during WEB 2.0 provides right circumstances for information to spread rapidly (Han, 2011). The way information spreads in OSNs through eWOM, for example, is heavily influenced by their structures (Susarla et al., 2016). Density, average path length, homogeneity and size restrict the scope of outreach of information within an OSN (Wilde, 2013). From a company perspective, understanding OSN structures allows to understand how information moves between social networks and enables to identify user interaction (Susarla et al., 2016). Furthermore, understanding the spread patterns of information in OSNs enables brands to position themselves in a way that enables control over eWOM navigation (Donthu et al., 2021).

OSNs can be structured as either *homophilous* (densely knit) networks, where nodes are well acquainted with each other and are in frequent contact but avoid interactions outside of their communities. Contrarily, *heterophilous* networks (sparsely knit) exist as the opposite formation. Here, nodes have minimal interaction with one another and instead, are highly active and attentive in communications outside of their network. The third, and most common, variant distinguished in OSN structures are described to be globalized networks, which are the combination of both *homophilous* and *heterophilous* structures (Wilde, 2013). YouTube is a unique example of a globalized network, in which loose knit nodes that frequently engage in networks out of their own (through actions such as commenting) and densely knit nodes that are more loyal to their own network (such as subscribers) cross paths in a public online platform (Susarla et al., 2016)

Online content is shared through WOM exchanges between nodes in online social networks. Occurrence of eWOM can be quantified by the activity of nodes through data regarding shares, comments and likes (Susarla et al., 2016). Due to the high level of desire to share content with each other through their online social networks, proposes the value of online user communities, as a user's feedback becomes a

direct reflection of the electronic WOM footprint (Susarla et al., 2016). Moreover, the key objective in creating user attention and viral traction is to turn passive nodes into active participants and commentators (Donthu et al., 2021). Susarla et al., (2016) explains, publicly visible choices make it easy for people to signal that they identify with others, attracting large movements of users around a specific piece of online content. Furthermore, users expect to be able to communicate and interact with each other on platforms rather than just browse digital content. This indicates high relevance and impact of eWOM, as users value the opinions of others and use it to influence their own decisions, moreover, suggesting that online communities are integral to viral transmission (Susarla et al., 2016).

According to Wilde (2013) the transmission of information spreads between nodes online much like a virus or a disease. When focusing on the viral phenomenon, the transmission of information must reach a *tipping point* after which the piece of online content begins to spread exponentially. Furthermore, Wilde (2013) distinguishes three alternative tipping point structures that lead to an aggressive spread of information.

1. **Law of the few**

The law of the few is a tipping point that explains how diffusing a message through opinion leaders in social networks warrants a higher probability to a rapid spread of information, due to the influence opinion leaders have amongst their community. Owing to the well-connectedness of opinion leaders, they are exposed to new content earlier on, allowing them to be in charge of introducing the information into their own network, potentially triggering a WOM or eWOM spread (Hinz et al., 2011). Opinion leaders can be further broken down into subgroups based on their nature of influence. **Connectors** are considered as highly networked users, who have a lot of friends and acquaintances online. **Salesmen** are skilled in persuading others by building trust and attractiveness by reflecting their own charisma (Wilde, 2013). **Mavens** accumulate a large knowledge who are able to influence others by their own expertise.

In addition to the influence of opinion leaders, Hinz et al., (2011) states that users that engage in tightly knit social networks tend to influence each other as a result of managing uncertainty in prospective decision making. Furthermore, it is argued that as long as the node is exposed to social contagion during the awareness stage of the customer journey, whether the source of information stemmed from an opinion leader, becomes of secondary factor to the outcome of influence (Hinz et al., 2011). This can be seen in viral marketing, for example, where a combined use of influencers (opinion leaders) and non-commercially motivated users is common (Wilde, 2013).

2. The stickiness factor

The stickiness factor is a tipping point that refers to the characteristics of the message or content of the viral transmission (Wilde, 2013). The level of contagiousness or the memorability of the content drives the movement within social networks. It is said that product design, i.e., the characteristics of the content, in fact plays a greater role than social influence in stimulating contagion between nodes (Akpinar & Berger, 2017).

If the information of the viral transmission entails product or brand placement, the brand image of the company affects whether the brand presence accelerates the viral sharing or vice versa, decreases the interest of sharing. Strong brand images that appear in viral content furthermore makes shareability a more attractive action, as the brand's visibility is integral to the narrative of the product. For example, luxury brands are considered as strong brand and are able to build content around the brand image in their viral marketing efforts to motivate interactions between online social networks. Weaker brands on the other hand, do not benefit of brand image similarly as it impacts the shareability of viral content in a negative manner due to less significance and in return might come across as pushy product placement and selling (Akpinar & Berger, 2017).

3. The power of context

The final tipping point is the impact of socio-environmental factors. The conditions and circumstances inevitably have an impact in the occurrence of viral information spread online. Content that is relevant to societal interest, shared on the correct online platform and has enough user interactions, has a higher likelihood of gaining movement within online social networks. Moreover, combining these three tipping points, provide the best conditions for viral information transmission (Wilde, 2013).

2.1.3 Online Customer Communities (OCC)

Following the manner in which OSNs are clustered into groups of social networks, nodes that communicate on public platforms and engage in social activities that are mainly motivated by fascination towards a specific brand can be labelled as **online customer communities (OCC).** Members of these communities tend to be enthusiastic in sharing their user experiences or feedback of products, for example (Wang et al., 2019)**.** Owing to the development of the WEB 2.0 and high level of internet adoption by consumers in the 21st century, such OCC's have numerically increased over the years (Faraj et al., 2016).

As individuals are able to share their customer experiences in regard to products and services in a more accessible manner, OCC's have come to prove substantial value for both consumers and businesses. OCC's increase not only customer engagement and expenditure but an enhanced level of information

flows through reviews, for example, that provide a saturated overview of the brand and its products (Manchanda et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2019). Therefore, many firms choose to operate and show involvement in building such communities given the belief that customers who are able to actively engage with the brand or its products present higher economic gains through sales for the company (Manchanda et al., 2015). It is argued that OCC's will be the second most powerful tool used for customer engagement purposes in the future, right after face-to-face interactions (Manchanda et al., 2015). This is factored by the disappearing boundary of the online and offline worlds that are diffusing together to create a more seamless experience simultaneously (Faraj et al., 2016). Moreover, desire for belonginess, social ties as well as relatability all factor in the motivation of participation within OCC's (Faraj et al., 2016; Manchanda et al., 2015). The increased scrutiny and participation of consumers in OCC's, furthermore, identifies the value of such engagement in the online purchasing decision making process (Karimi et al., 2015).

Farah et al., (2016) distinguish, how OCC participants are "driven by varied and complex sets of intrinsic, pro-social, and extrinsic motivations that impact decisions to participate, levels of effort, and continued engagement." (p.678). Attachment between a customer and an OCC tends to be focused on either the symbolic value of the brand that the OCC represents or the bond that is created between members inside the community itself, often led by key members such as online influencers that help shape the brand voice and increase brand resonance. The more psychological the attachment and identification between a member and an OCC is, the higher of a participation and level of involvement can be assumed (Faraj et al., 2016). Additionally, OCC's have enabled co-creation between brands and their customers to be more effortless, which has been proven to support brand loyalty of customers as they now feel more considered in the symbolic and materialistic development of the brand (Manchanda et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2019). Despite their age, individuals who use online social networks are observed to have a greater life satisfaction than those who do not use them due to the emotional and peer-like support they offer (Dutta & Mandal, 2022).

2.2 Consumer behaviour

2.2.1 Neuroscience of Consumer Behaviour

Physiologically, our behaviour is largely conditioned by our hormonal fluctuations. Our feelings and attitudes, specifically, are susceptible to such chemical shifts that naturally occur in our bodies (Bayle-Tourtoulou & Badoc, 2020). Among a plethora of reasons, hormones are imperative to ensure a functioning human body and work together to create a state of homeostasis, or i.e., a state of balance, that abides to a sound psychological state, for example (Zurawicki, 2010). It is apparent that the contingencies of reward (or reinforcement) and punishment are key drivers in the modern marketplace (Wells, 2014). Generally, we tend to repeat behaviour that maximises the rewards of enjoyment, which is stimulated by the increase and fluctuations through the release of the dopamine hormone (Wells, 2014; Zurawicki, 2010).

Our cognition is in charge of our information processing, learning and creates our perception of reality (Zurawicki, 2010). Our senses affect our emotional processing, which furthermore drives our cognitive actions (Wells, 2014). Emotions reinforce and shape our evaluations and attitudes that, furthermore, define, our perceptions of our environments (Zurawicki, 2010). According to the theory of cognitive dissonance created by Leon Festinger (as cited in Dutta & Mandal, 2022), people favour consistency in our environments. Cognitive dissonance is the tension created by the unpleasant or contradicting feelings brought by a dichotomy of two contradicting cognitions or i.e., cognitive thoughts. A wider level of discrepancy between two cognitions followingly contribute to a higher magnitude of dissonance, due to the greater discomfort that occurs as a consequence (Dutta & Mandal, 2022).

Consumer choices are increasingly driven by the emotional experiences the brand is able to create, rather than of a merely functional purpose of the product. Followingly, although functional aspects impact satisfaction, when consumers share their brand experiences, they share the respective emotional experience instead of the functional one (Dutta & Mandal, 2022). Bayle-Tourtoulou and Badoc (2020) describe that “A brand is nothing but emotions; you cannot see it, smell it or feel it. It is only in retrospect that purchase is rationalized” (p.21). Neuroscientific research demonstrates that a great majority of our purchases are irrational and driven by a subconscious mechanism in our brains (Bayle-Tourtoulou & Badoc, 2020). Dutta and Mandal (2022) furthermore argue that today’s consumer “seeks happiness rather than satisfaction” (p.5). Thus, suggesting that the average consumer is more inclined to spend more money on brands with a higher expectation of returned happiness. Moreover, happy customers seek repeated interaction and are willing to share it with others through recommendations, which promotes customer loyalty (Dutta & Mandal, 2022).

Neuroscientific findings that explain behavioural tendencies, benefits brands as it identifies triggers, responses and motivators in a consumer context (Bayle-Tourtoulou & Badoc, 2020). For brands, an opportunity exists in understanding the impact of cognitive dissonance and the consumer pursuit in happiness. Identifying, why customers find themselves unhappy even when a product technically meets their functional needs, will enable to target happiness and in return offer an enhanced customer experience, which supports a stronger customer-to-brand relationship. For example, a brand can position new cognitions that minimise the existing gap in current cognitions as an attempt to shift customer perception from a negative view to a more positive and rewarding one (Dutta & Mandal, 2022).

According to the hedonic fluency hypothesis, when all other circumstances being equal, stronger resonance occurs for objects that (1) are presented clear and concise (2) have longer periods of exposure, and (3) objects that are positioned in a manner that are within cognitive maturity of the target customer segment (Zurawicki, 2010). In other words, when stimuli (products) are presented in a digestible manner for cognitive processing, it is likelier to generate positive responses (Bayle-Tourtoulou & Badoc, 2020). Good visual aesthetics, for example, generate more emotional involvement, such as arousal, which consequentially results in an increase of purchases as a cognitive response occurs to the stimuli (Wells, 2014). Furthermore, Dutta and Mandal (2022) conclude that "creating a superior customer experience is a definitive mean to customer happiness" (p.117). Customer experience must be both meaningful and contextual throughout the customer lifetime (Dutta & Mandal, 2022).

2.2.2 Generation Z Consumer Behaviour

When characterising Generation Z, honesty, open-mindedness, and creativity are often attributed traits. Societal transformation brought by the digital age has factored in training Gen-Z to be agile when facing changes (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). Agility not only allows them to view things from multiple perspectives but encourages them to be open to new ideas and products of innovation (Seyfi et al., 2023). Gen-Z's care for sustainability surpasses environmental issues, as they take a stance towards societal issues as well. Brands that value inclusivity such as race and gender in their marketing strategies appeal to this demographic. Cover Girl magazine, for example, revolutionized the beauty industry by using a male model on their cover, which made the brand increasingly popular among Gen-Z consumers. Although this generation may be considered digital natives, they do not disregard in-person interactions. Rather an omnichannel communication structure is preferred, meaning a combination of face-to-face interaction, texting, and sharing pictures. Therefore, products that resonate within an immediate OSN through, such as a friend group, can quickly achieve viral status (Seemiller & Grace, 2019).

As a cohort, Gen-Z is conscientious with their choices, as there is an understanding of how consumer decisions have an effect beyond the purchase itself. By supporting brands that align with their values, they are able to advocate for social change (Seyfi et al., 2023). Furthermore, 85% of Gen-Z believe that companies should be mandated to solve social problems and expect brands to act as civil servants, not just as companies (Seemiller & Grace, 2019).

Gen-Z are able to be selective on the market given that they have six times the purchasing power in comparison with the two prior generations (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). Hence, the buying behaviour and lifestyle preferences vary significantly, due to an emphasis on ethical and responsible consumerism in specific (Seyfi et al., 2023). According to Seemiller and Grace (2019) the saying "I must leave the world better off than when I arrived" (p.15), captures the philosophy behind Gen-Z's focus on sustainable development and a more circular economy.

In addition to ethical and responsible consumer choices, Gen-Z engages actively in political consumerism as well. This means Gen-Z recognizes, how their purchasing decisions and actions can have an impact in the political decision-making field. In western countries specifically, political stances taken through consumer choices are considered to be some of the most favoured ways to show political involvement. This can be done through intentional purchases in favour of companies whose behaviour is considered in line with Gen-Z values or avoiding companies that have negative associations, more known as boycotting (Seyfi et al., 2023). According to a study, 23% of Gen-Z respondents had boycotted an activity or company in the last 12 months (Seemiller & Grace, 2019).

Therefore, products that resonate within an immediate OSN through, such as a friend group, can quickly achieve viral status (Seemiller & Grace, 2019).

In addition to peers, the parasocial relationships a Gen-Z individual engages in, might be equally as impactful. Parasocial relationships are defined as one-sided connections between an influential person and a viewer. In this trade off, the emotional charge is only one sided, whilst the other is unaware of the other person's existence (Lee & Watkins, 2016). Although the acknowledgement of the relationship is one sided, the thoughts and opinions made by the influencer may be heavily persuading. For example, an influencer is able to spark the consumer's want recognition by posting content about a product that can persuade them to also purchase the same item (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). Furthermore, Seemiller and Grace (2019) explain that "while most might not be making their best friends virtually, building and maintaining their online peer community is paramount for many in Generation Z" (p.116).

2.2.3 Customer Retention and Customer Loyalty

Customer retention is a construct seen to have direct implications with the customer lifetime value and firm profitability. Customer retention refers to the duration of business to customer (B2C) relationship. By acknowledging the variables related to customer retention, a brand is able to minimize customer turnover by prolonging the lifetime duration of an individual customer (Torkzadeh et al., 2022). Conversely, customer loyalty is the willingness of a customer to keep doing business with a brand over its competitors. Whilst customer loyalty and customer retention identify the nature of the B2C connection from different perspectives, it is important to understand corresponding implications, patterns and intentions that affect behaviour in the consumer decision making process (Gustafsson et al., 2005).

Literature proposes three prominent drivers of customer retention; (1) overall customer satisfaction, which relates to the customers overall evaluation of the performance of the brand offering to date (2) affective commitment, which refers to the emotional attachment created in the B2C bond and (3) calculative commitment, which refers to the accrued economic cost-beneficial values (Gustafsson et al., 2005). Affective commitment is a heightened driver in customer retention, due to its neurological impact (Verhoef, 2003).

Furthermore, a brand may address and strengthen its customer retention by understanding the target customers implicit needs and being able to decrease the distance between the buyer's current position and their personal goal, through which the feeling of progress stimulates positive cognitive response or, instead, creates satisfaction through functional value (Torkzadeh et al., 2022). Albeit neuroscience argues that most consumers aim to decrease cognitive dissonance, it is notable that satisfaction not only is often the primary criterion when choosing between alternatives on the market, but also has an impact in whether the brand is re-considered again in the future (Dutta & Mandal, 2022; Torkzadeh et al., 2022).

Overall, developing a customer-centric approach to business allows to understand customer needs and expectations that enable the optimization of customer retention. Analysing qualitative B2C interactions, for example, such as phone call conversations, will provide insights of the customer voice and enable more in-depth knowledge of the market expectations (Isson, 2018). Building more meaningful connections through engagement suggests a deeper customer loyalty and a longer duration of retention because of the enhanced overall satisfaction (Torkzadeh et al., 2022).

2.3 Brand Equity Management

The intangible assets and liabilities associated with a brand, including its name, logo, and other attributes are known as Brand Equity. The critical assets and liabilities in the development of brand equity are generally divided into several categories, the main four being brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and other exclusive brand assets such as trademarks and patents. The brand and its intellectual properties contribute significantly to the overall value that a product provides, any changes made may result in a loss for the brand as a whole (Aaker, 1991). The consumer's opinions regarding value-adding attributes will lead to a preference for certain brands. It is therefore important to understand brand equity from the consumer's point of view as it will affect brand success and create positive brand equity. For instance, a consumer's perception of a painting may change when they discover that it is the work of a famous artist rather than an unknown one (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2018).

The assets of brand equity shape the perceived value that attaches customers to a product or a brand. Consumer's confidence in the decision-making process is affected by understanding the information about the brand or product. Additionally, previous encounters with a brand may also shape the customers' perceptions. The main objective is, however, that both perceived quality and brand associations enhance consumer satisfaction in the overall user experience (Aaker, 1991). Value can be influenced by various strategic approaches, including structures that attract new customers or retention strategies. Strong brands, with positive brand equity, are more likely to gain loyal consumers (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2018). Brand loyalty allows brands to maintain stability over time while being less sensitive to competitive pricing, thereby generating a higher return on investment than their competitors. The main advantage of targeting brand loyalty is being able to invest less in maintaining B2C connections due to a cost-benefit efficiency of maintaining positive brand attitudes over than building it recurringly (Aaker, 1991).

Brand awareness and brand attitude are the dimensions that furthermore enhance brand loyalty. Brand awareness is comprised of two district forms: recognition, and recall. Recognition considers the consumer's ability to recognize a brand at the point of purchase, whilst recall is the consumer's ability to think of the brand when a need for a product arises. Strong brand awareness derives from a sense of familiarity, whereby consumers are more likely to remember well-known brands over new ones (Aaker, 1991). For both forms of brand awareness to be feasible, the brand needs to be salient, meaning it must be associated in memory with the consumer's set of preferred brands.

Brand associations include anything that is directly or indirectly linked to a brand based on a consumer's memory, the more the brand is associated with the product category, the stronger brand identity and awareness exists in the mind of the consumer (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2018). Furthermore, to achieve strong brand equity, the associations held in the consumers memory must be strong, unique, and positive (Aaker, 1991).

Consumers' opinions of the brand and its reputation is often referred to as perceived quality. A positive brand attitude is crucial for fostering band loyalty and preference. To achieve this, the brand must consider various factors such as marketing communication along with every aspect of the relationship between a brand and the consumer. The benefits and positive attitude towards the brand are based on which attributes the consumer deems important when making their purchase. If a consumer values "sugar-free" options when grocery shopping, for example, then such attributes will be seen as beneficial and contribute to a positive brand attitude. However, if the consumer is indifferent about the ingredients, the sugar-free attribute will not be seen as advantageous and therefore not contribute to a positive brand equity attribute. When a consumer encounters difficulty in choosing a brand, more trust is required, making emotional associations more central in the decision. Studies show that brands with high positive emotional associations tend to have strong brand equity. Ultimately, consumers learn about brands and form judgments based on what they see, hear, and experience with the brand (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2018).

Individuals who are strongly committed to a brand and its positive brand equity respond to promotional activities more positively than those who are considered vulnerable. Building a positive brand attitude among vulnerable brand users is challenging, as their lack of commitment often leads to lack of interest of the marketing communication. If brands are unable to communicate effectively to the less committed consumers it is unlikely for strong brand equity to be developed even if they are frequent users of the brand. However, it is possible to develop a positive brand attitude and equity among vulnerable consumers by understanding their attitude and not rely on them being regular users (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2018).

2.3.1 Consumer Based Brand Equity Model

The consumer-based brand equity model (**CBBE**) was originally created in the early 90s by David Aaker and followingly developed by Kevin Keller (Tasci, 2018). This model was created to provide a new perspective into the concept of brand equity, which focuses on the emotional responses. CBBE model is furthermore used as a guideline to gain competitiveness in the market by establishing differentiative market positioning through brand equity (Çifci et al., 2016). Keller (1993) describes that "Conceptually, consumer-based brand equity occurs when a consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favourable, strong and unique brand associations in memory" (p.1). Over time, different variations have been created of this model to fit more specific market segments and thus, its existing interpretations and structures found today differ between authors (Tasci, 2018).

Keller's CBBE model is a pyramid-like structure that consists of six main components forming a layout for navigating a successful brand-customer relationship through customer-based brand equity development (Keller, 1993). Rosenbaum-Elliott et al. (2018) refers to Keller's words "Customer-based brand equity is defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (p.146). The distinguishing aspect of this model is the focus on the brand equity relationship between the brand and a customer. The customer reaction is used in the development of the brand equity, in order to create strong branding that resonates with consumers (Keller, 1993). Keller (as cited in Stahl et al., 2012) furthermore argues that "The power of the brand lies in what customers have learned, felt, seen, and heard about the brand. This is also known as the customer mindset" (p.45).

Six building blocks form Keller's pyramid-like CBBE-model, in which each tier adds onto the value creation. The blocks are distinguished followingly; **(1) Brand salience**, which is arguably considered the baseline of CBBE, refers to the strength of recall of the brand in the consumer's mind. For example, when asking consumers to name a water brand off the top of their mind, Evian is a more likely answer than Volvic. (**2) Brand performance** relates to the product functionality. Price-to-quality evaluation is often used as a determinant of brand performance satisfaction, for example. **(3) Brand Imagery** considers how well the brand visuals address the consumers social and psychological expectations **(4) Consumer Judgements** are the opinions made of the credibility of the brands aesthetics and the imagery-associated perception of product quality. **(5) Consumer Feelings** capture the emotional response to the brand, and lastly **(6) Consumer Brand Resonance,** which relates to the behavioural loyalty that is created between the customer and the brand. Consumer brand resonance includes purchasing frequency, attitude towards the brand and sense of brand community that tie in the entire CBBE model and is the top-tier of establishing a strong the B2C connection through brand equity management. (Keller, 2001; Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2018).

3. Methodology and method

Selecting an appropriate methodology and method is an important aspect of conducting research as it directly affects the legitimacy and usefulness of the study. In this context, the term "methodology" refers to the central framework utilised in this study, while "method" focuses on the procedures used to collect and analyse data. Hence, this section aims to explain and justify the chosen methods along with explaining how the research has been conducted.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm covers the philosophical essence of how research is conducted. It provides a framework for understating the chosen methods, data collection, analysis, and the interpretation made by the researchers. Despite the prevalent use of positivism in research, we chose to adapt the interpretivism paradigm in order to effectively address our research questions (Flick, 2020). Different backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences affect how individuals interpret their surroundings and their behaviour. The interpretivism paradigm assumes that the author's prior knowledge is relevant to answer the research question and that participants follow the social rules that are relevant for the chosen topic. Furthermore, this paradigm does not support the idea of studying objective reality through empirical methods but rather understanding social phenomena through the subjective experiences of individuals (Flick, 2020). Therefore, the interpretivism paradigm allowed us to research Generation Z's consumer behaviour to gain a deeper understanding of what encourages them to make purchases influenced by a viral transmission and how brands should position themselves to prolong the relationship between the brand and the customer. This paradigm therefore allowed us to fully understand the complexity and diversity of perspectives that individuals from this generation hold.

This research refrained from adopting the positivism paradigm due to being it better suited for quantitative studies, where researchers aim to study the objective reality and testing hypotheses. Positivism fails to acknowledge various influential factors, such as the subjective experiences or diverse backgrounds of individuals that significantly shape Gen-Z's decision-making processes. Given the necessity to provide an accurate representation of our research, using positivism would have hindered us to capture the value and diversity of Gen-Z's experiences (Flick, 2020).

3.1.2 Research approach

The choice of research approach depends on the type of research question and the available data. A deductive research approach focuses on either confirming or rejecting a hypothesis by analysing collected data. An inductive approach develops a theory based on previous observations after which the data is collected and analysed to identify patterns. Lastly, an abductive approach, is a combination of the inductive and deductive approaches, where the researcher begins with a problem or observation and creates a theory based on obtained data (Flick, 2020). Our research adopted an abductive research approach, given the purpose of our research was to develop a framework based on the existing CBBE-model made by Keller (1993). Hence, the abductive approach enabled us to collect data and observe patterns that allowed us to identify cohort tendencies that guided our findings. Furthermore, due to the nature of our study, an absence of a hypothesis disregarded the need for a purely deductive approach. Data from the survey and existing literature was analysed bringing an inductive element to our research approach.

3.1.3 Research design

The research design includes strategies of investigation used to obtain answers to the research questions (B. & Kothari, 2022). Given that our aim was to gain understanding of the empirical implications regarding the Generation Z behaviour, we proceeded with a qualitative approach; although, a statistical analysis was made when collecting data from the survey and structuring the respondents' answers into categories. Furthermore, the open-ended nature of our survey offered answers that allowed us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the motivations and triggers of Gen-Z's consumer behaviour during viral trends from a more dimensional perspective. Hence, a quantitative approach, that focuses on the interpretation of numerical values and causalities, was not suitable for our study as a it would have limited the understanding motivations of Gen-Z's consumer behaviour.

Furthermore, our study was inspired by grounded theory in the development of our proposed framework, *The CBBE based Viral Retention model* (**CVRM**), that structures brand equity management to prolong customer retention from viral demand based on Generation Z consumer behaviour. Oktay (2012) suggests that grounded theory facilitates the creation of new models based on real-world experiences, exemplified by our survey-based research. However, since established theories regarding virality, brand equity management and consumer behaviour were used, our research was not solely based on grounded theory as the pre-existing theories were needed to develop CVRM. Furthermore, a thematic analysis was made when looking for patterns and themes in the respondents' answers. These patterns were then divided into multiple categories and subcategories, respectively.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Data collection

Primary data can be conducted through different methods such as interviews, surveys, or observations. The uniqueness of this data makes it valuable in the research as it is specifically conducted to suit the current research project while allowing researchers to investigate the research questions from a fresh perspective. Secondary data, however, is pre-existing literature conducted by other researchers. This type of data can come in various forms such as books, academic journals, or statistical databases. The secondary data is useful as the information provided may give a useful insight for other studies (B. & Kothari, 2022).

The frame of reference is based on a literature review that is a compilation of academic articles rated three and above in the ABS ranking list. We followed the ranking as a guideline to ensure the information came from reliable sources and were academically renowned and recognized. Furthermore, we limited the time-period of the academic literature to be between 2010 to 2023 as the widespread popularity of online social networks did not emerge until early 2010s. Although with the exception for sources related to brand management, customer retention and neuroscience of consumer behaviour, the time-limitation was not followed due to these constructs being focused on tendencies that were developed prior to the transformation brought by the digital age.

The CBBE model served as the foundation for our framework CVRM that was created based on Generation-Z consumer behaviour during virality. The CBBE model was adapted into a long-term value creating model that focuses on prolonging customer retention from viral purchases in online social networks. A qualitative survey with mainly open-ended questions enabled us to gain empirical data from Gen-Z consumers by which we were able to, in an inductive manner, find cohort related behavioural tendencies in viral trends.

Primary data

Existing literature often fails to address the exact research question of other researchers or fully contribute to their study (Silver & Wrenn, 2013). Primary data was therefore a useful source of information in our study when trying to understand Generation Z's consumer behaviour. The data was employed through a survey in order to investigate the factors driving Gen-Z's purchasing behaviour, their opinions about viral trends, and their use of both eWOM and WOM. The study focused on Gen-Z as a demographic rather than their geographical location. The motivation behind conducting a survey was to increase our chances of having a wider sample. As our study focused on a generational cohort, having data from a diverse sample set enabled us to increase the variance that would better reflect the behaviour of the population. Hence, interviews would limit our scope to a rather segmented data. The

survey consisted of eleven questions, including four structured question, six open-ended questions and one question including images of advertisements where the respondents were asked which one they were more inclined to share within their social network (See Appendix B). The respondents were assured of the voluntary nature of their involvement and the anonymity of their responses through the introduction of the survey. The open-ended questions aimed to find consumer behavioural patterns, tendencies, opinions, and experiences that would have been unattainable if the survey was close ended. The participants were able to express their opinions and experiences without restrictions allowing us to gain an in-depth understanding of their consumer behaviour during viral trends. The four structured questions included inquiries regarding the participants age, location, and engagement in viral trends as there was no need for in-depth explanations for questions, given that our primary objective was to focus on the consumer behaviour and related tendencies. The survey was created on Google forms, where a sample of Gen-Z consumer were contacted through an emailing list at Jönköping University. The email inquired students that were born between 1997 and 2012 to participate in our study. Additionally, the survey was promoted on our own online social networks on platforms such as LinkedIn and Instagram resulting in 76 participants total.

Secondary data

Secondary data was of great importance in our study as it facilitated our understanding of the underlying factors of Gen-Z consumers behaviour during virality. Additionally, the literature on brand management equity provided valuable insights into the importance of brands and their strategies for enhancing market positioning while providing the appropriate information and functionality that will create a long-term relationship. By comparing our findings with existing literature, we were able to conduct a thorough analysis that gave us valuable insights in the development of our own framework. Timely literature was used when researching virality, the interplay between online social networks and WOM, and other viral concepts to ensure accuracy. For data regarding consumer behaviour however, we opted for established sources as they provided us with relevant historical context and traced the development of ideas over time. When searching for literature a collection of databases were used such as *Scopus*, *Primo*, and *Google Scholar*. Keywords used to collect the secondary data were '*Viral marketing', 'Generation Z consumer behaviour'*, '*Word of mouth'*, '*Electronic word of mouth'*, '*Generation Z characteristics*', '*Brand equity management'*, and '*Virality*', '*Neuroscience* AND *consumer behaviour'*, '*Online community'*, '*Online community* AND *consumer behaviour'*, '*Online community social networks*'. By only using sources ranked three and above in the ABS ranking list we are able to achieve a academically backed foundation for legitimacy.

3.2.2 Data analysis

A data analysis covers various amounts of techniques and processes that can be applied to the results generated by the data collection. The different pieces of information combined allows implications to be drawn (Silver & Wrenn, 2013).

Although it is uncommon to use surveys in qualitative studies, we found that it would give our thesis the most value due to the nature of the open-ended questions and the qualitative analysis enabling us to make empirical interpretations. A grounded theory analysis involved a systematic approach when analysing qualitative data, in our case identifying frequently mentioned themes and patterns from the information provided in the survey. The data was categorised depending on the nature of answers from the respondents, if the answers were mainly positive, we created the category "*positive"* and added subcategories that segmented the responses into further groups. Although multiple respondents may have expressed positive opinions, the underlying reasons may differentiate. Therefore, we found the subcategories essential to gain a truthful insight on Generation Z's opinions. The survey was mainly unstructured, allowing respondents to express their thoughts and opinions without restrictions. In contrast, a structured survey would only consist of close-ended question and was therefore not suitable for our research. The thematic analysis was used for developing, analysing and understanding patterns given its efficacy in detecting individuals' experience and opinions (B. & Kothari, 2022). Once the coding process was done, we were able to write our empirical findings that link the categories and subcategories to our own framework CVRM.

The framework CVRM was made by using findings from the survey explaining Gen-Z behaviour during viral trends. Furthermore, the CBBE model was restructured based on the value building variables identified from our primary data in conjunction with neurophysiological explanations found in our secondary data. All the elements included in the CBBE model were used to structure the CVRM model. Contradicting to the CBBE model however, the CVRM proposes a diamond shaped structure which is further divided into the purple zone and the red zone, respectively. The purple zone focuses on creating willingness to revisit the brand in order to create a both a functional and emotional response to the viral purchase. The red zone targets the retention of the established B2C connection to provide long-term benefits.

4. Empirical findings

The primary objective of this chapter is to present the findings from our survey. Each question will be presented and explained along with the respondents' answers. The answers are put into themes and categories to ensure a clear categorisation of opinions and values. The empirical findings and existing literature found in chapter 2, will serve as the fundamental base for our framework presented in the following chapter.

Each question in our survey aimed to provide insights into Generation Z consumer behaviour on the market when discussing viral transmission related purchases. At the time of terminating the survey from the public, a total of 76 answers was registered. Each question was analysed separately as no interdependence is precedent between the questions. In each question, the results exclude answers that were determined non-viable and exceed the parameter of the question. Our survey began by segmenting the geo-demographic for our study with age and location. The first two questions, followingly, were:

Q1: This study focuses on examining Generation Z consumer behaviour. Are you born between 1997-2012?

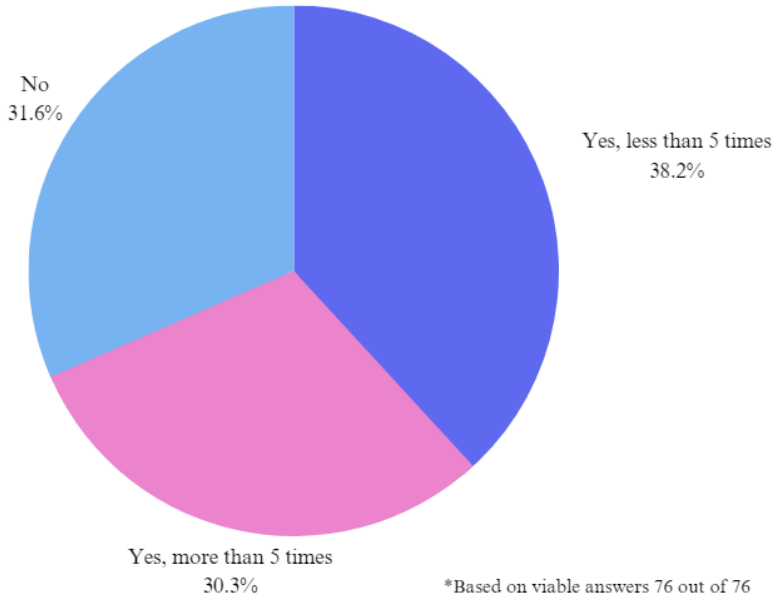
Q2: Where do you live?

All respondents were born between 1997 and 2012, therefore qualifying as Generation Z, which validifies the sample selection. Furthermore, 88.2% of the 76 respondents answered that they live in *Sweden*, 6.6% answered that they live in *Finland* while the rest occupy in other parts of Europe, such as *Italy*, *Germany* and *Estonia*. The sample is represented by a large majority of individuals from the Nordic area, although the geographical location is considered of secondary value for our study, as we aim to focus on demographic behaviour. This is why no geographical segmentation is relevant.

Q3: Has a viral trend online ever encouraged you to purchase a product?

Figure 1

Survey question 3

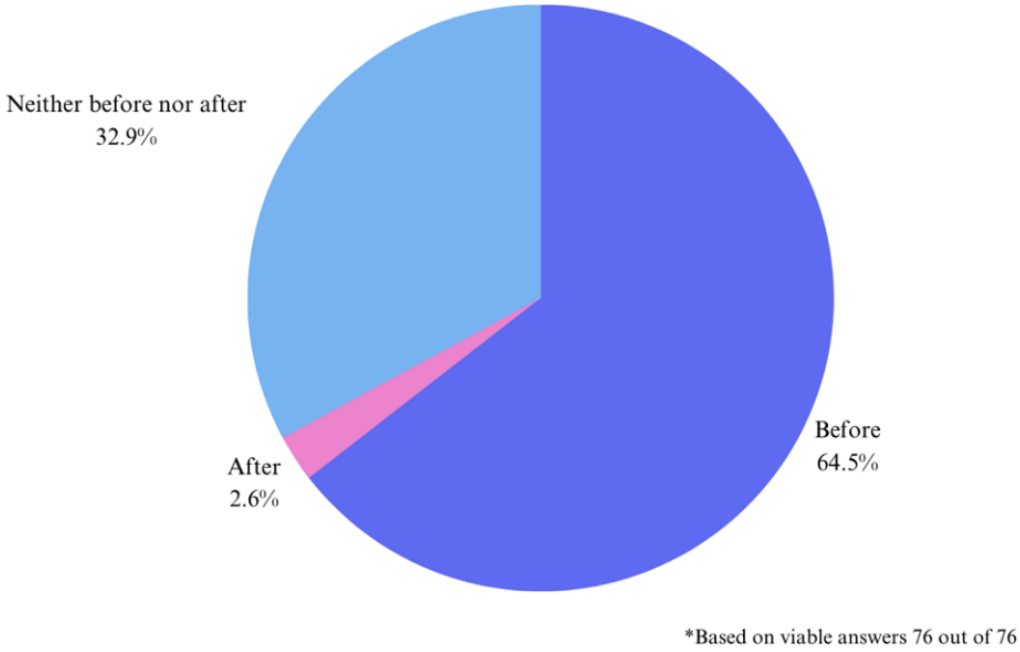


The majority of respondents answered that they have purchased a product due to viral *trends less than 5 times* which amounts to 38.2% of a total of 76 viable answers. Respondents who answered they have purchased a viral product *more than 5 times* total to 30.3%, while 31.6% answered that *they have not purchased viral products* at all. The frequency of Generation Z participation in viral trends enables us to gain an overview of the actual engagement. The results distinguish that a large majority does take part in products exposed by viral trends, thereby enhancing the validity of our research (See fig. 1)

Q4: Do you look for information of the brand behind the viral product before or after making the purchase? (For example, brand origin, brand sustainability, etc...)

Figure 2

Survey question 4



Out of all respondents, 64.5% answered that they look for information about the brand behind the viral product *before making the purchase*, while 32.9% claim they *do not research at all.* Only 2.6% do research *after making a purchase* (See fig. 2). The majority of results supports literature that describes the cohort to being cautious and intentional with their purchasing decisions, however the percentage of neither before nor after is relatively high.

Q5: Think about the brands that you love and use often. What does your favourite brand do that is so special for you to keep revisiting? Please, mention at least 2 things.

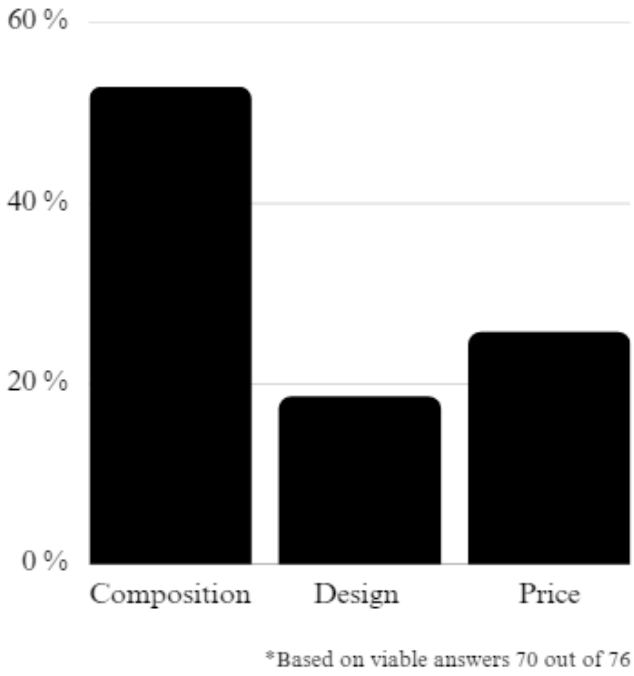
This question explores how respondents identify value creating brand activities that strengthen their willingness to make reoccurring purchases (i.e., customer retention). Gen Z's articulation of factors contributing positively to building customer retention and loyalty, enables us to understand their consumer behaviour more concretely and followingly analyse, how accurately existing literature supports our findings. Out of the 76 participants 70 responses were identified as viable answers. We analysed the answers under three main categories respectively: ***Quality, Brand Engagement*** and ***Sustainability***. Each specific main category was followingly subcategorised to provide more detailed data enabling to distinguish, which attributes are valued by Generation Z consumers. This question was unstructured and suggested respondents to provide at least two examples of positive brand practises.

We analyse each main heading separately as the nominal data enables us to fit responses under one or more subcategory at once. Consequently, for this question, we are not able to group our headings together, but must address them individually.

Under the category ***Quality*** the subcategories chosen were; *product composition*, which includes answers that deem product material and ingredients to be significant in creating customer retention, *product design*, which relates to retentive value created by the physical design of the product and *price* which creates customer retention based on a price-to-quality cost-efficient economic benefit.

Figure 3

Survey question 5: Quality



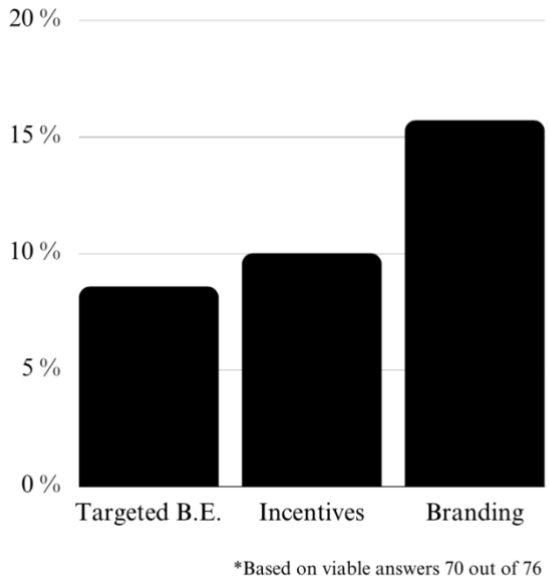
.

The graph for ***Quality*** (See fig. 3) indicates that 52.86% of the 70 respondents describe product composition to be most valued attribute in terms of quality. Furthermore, it can be seen that price is valued by 25.71% and thus is deemed more favourable than product design, which totals to 18.57% of the respondents.

The second main category titled ***Brand Engagement*** has been divided into three subcategories and describes the B2C communication actions that generate customer retention. *Targeted Brand Engagement* (See fig. 4) is the first of three subcategories. *Targeted Brand engagement* refers to direct brand activities that focus on creating customer retention through direct and personalised engagement methods such as newsletters and customer service, for example. *Incentives* is the second subcategory under brand engagement that relates to increase in customer retention by offering incentives to financially bridge the brand to the customer. Incentives entail loyalty bonuses, discounts and other complementary gifts that the brand seemingly provides in the benefit of the customer, in order to appear more generous. Lastly, *Branding* is distinguished as a subcategory in which the intangible elements, such as the logo, and other aesthetic visuals of the brand create brand value and build brand retention.

Figure 4

Survey question 5: Brand Engagement

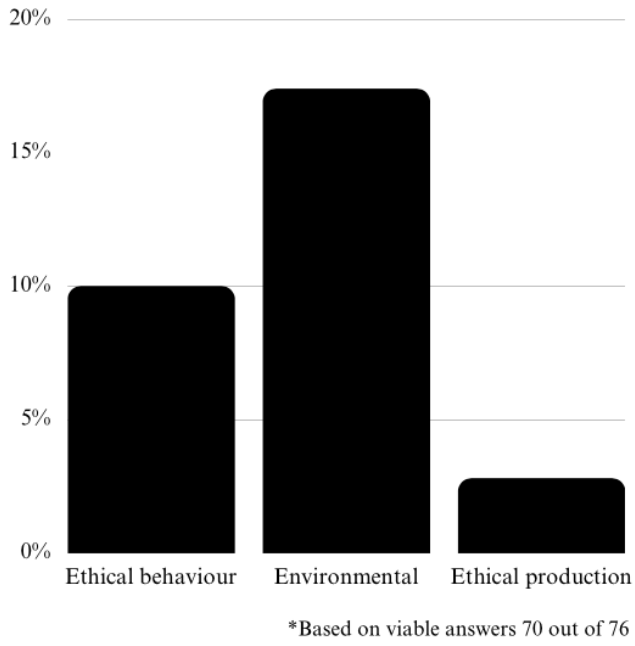


Results (See fig. 4) show that value created through intangible *Branding* elements and visuals was the most favoured category within ***Brand Engagement***, given that out of all respondents a total of 15.71% had answered in favour of *Branding.* Many respondents voice that they enjoy creative and consistent brands. *Incentives* was valued the second most favoured action at 10%, suggesting that many respondents are enticed to repurchase from brands that show generosity through financial aid e.g., loyalty programmes and discounts. *Targeted Brand Engagement* was supported by 8.57% of respondents. This subcategory was the least favourable amongst Generation Z respondents in the category ***Brand Engagement.***

The third main category, ***Sustainability***, was similarly divided into three subcategories targeted to further explain which aspect of sustainability is realistically seen as a favourable attribute when considering repurchasing and customer retention. The headings for the subcategories followingly are; e*thical behaviour*, *environmentally conscientious* and *ethical production*. Responses considering *ethical behaviour* as a favourable measure for customer retention, view sustainability from a multi-dimensional perspective, where social, economic and environmental factors are considered. This includes for example, transparency, employee rights and carbon footprint. *Environmentally conscientious* subcategory refers to responses that distinguish that the level of environmental conscientiousness plays a role for them when considering brand loyalty, assuming that the more environmentally conscientious a brand is, the more value is associated. Actions such as using recycled materials are associated under this subcategory. Lastly, the subcategory named as *ethically produced* compiles responses that explicitly state that production chain of a brand effects customers willingness to revisit the brand. This entails responses that value, where the product was made, for example.

Figure 5

Survey question 5: Sustainability



The graph (See fig. 5) distinguishes that a vast majority (17.14%) of responses within the category Sustainability choose to revisit brands that are environmentally conscientious, meaning that an emphasis is placed on the environmental aspect of sustainability. Some of the responses that valued the importance of sustainability answered; "*Focuses on sustainability and comfort*" and "*Sustainability focus and quality fabrics*". Contrarily, 10% of the responses related to sustainability answered in

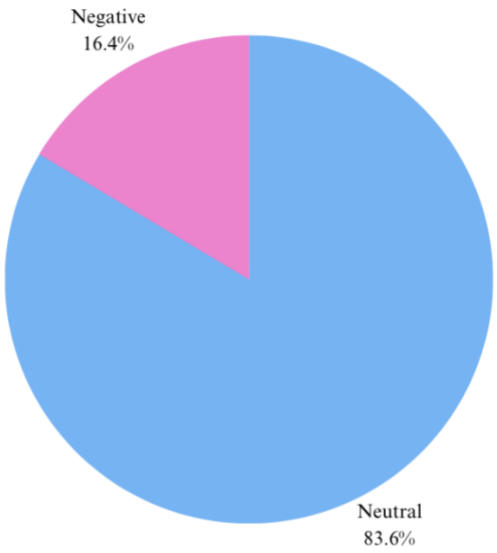
relation to ethical behaviour, i.e., a more multidimensional perspective to sustainability. Some examples regarding ethical behaviour were; *"Trustworthy, no deceptive marketing, discount codes"* and *"Being transparent, being inclusive*". Lastly consideration towards ethical production was valued by 2.85% of respondents in the *Sustainability* category.

Q6: How does a brand with negative associations (e.g., greenwashing, deceptive marketing) affect your attitude towards the brand?

Question six examined the attitudes of Generation Z when considering negative associations such as green washing and deceptive marketing. This question provided greater insights into Gen-Z as consumers as it reflects how dishonest brand practises effect the purchasing behaviour and the B2C relationship. For question 6 we received 73 viable answers out of 76 responses. The answers were followingly divided respectively into two categories: *negative* and *neutral*.

Figure 6

Survey question 6



*Based on viable answers 73 out of 76

Answers subjective to the category *Negative* were consumer behaviour opinions that had a negative outcome as a result of negative associations of the brand. Our data shows (See fig. 6) that a total of 16.4% of 73 responses agree that indeed a dishonest negative association would affect their future purchase with the brand in a pessimistic manner. Many in this category reflect that they will stop purchasing from the brand altogether. The majority of responses, 83.6% to be exact, however, feel that negative associations of a brand does not affect their purchasing decision directly, though they might consider switching to a competitor if they are able to find a complementary product instead.

Q7: After purchasing a viral product, what makes you more likely to share the experience in your own social networks?

For example;

- Physical attributes such as product packaging or product quality etc...

- Non-physical attributes such as to be able to engage in online communities or to expand your own social network etc.

The purpose of question 7 was to distinguish which attributes, physical or non-physical, reach the threshold of a Gen-Z consumer to share a viral product in their own social networks, either through WOM or eWOM. Identifying which attributes encourage Gen-Z to share their experience, provides insights of the factors that make them happy, which is said to influence their willingness to revisit a brand. Furthermore, the answers will present us the gap between purchasing intention and customer retention. Whether the product has been purchased due to the impact of viral trend or for the brand itself, will not only present the motivation for the purchase but provide insight to how genuine the connection with the brand is.

There were 73 viable responses, which were categorised under ***Physical Attributes***, ***Non-Physical Attributes*** and ***Negative***. The category ***Physical attributes*** was further divided into subcategories; *Brand Equity**,*** which groups responses that would share a viral product for the brand equity value the product is perceived to have, *Product Quality* which reflects the responses that suggest that they will share a viral product in their social networks due to the product quality. Answers under the category ***Physical Attributes*** suggest that the purchase has been done because of interest towards the brand as these responses show interest in brand and product attributes. Responses under ***Non-Physical attributes*** on the other hand suggest that the purchasing decision are made as a result of the impact of viral transmission. The ***Non-Physical attributes*** category has been divided into two following subcategories: *WOM* and *social media*. These subcategories further segment, whether eWOM or WOM has a lower threshold for sharing a viral product. Lastly, the category ***Negative*** entails responses that either state that they would not share viral products in their social networks and answers that suggest that they do not engage or purchase viral products at all.

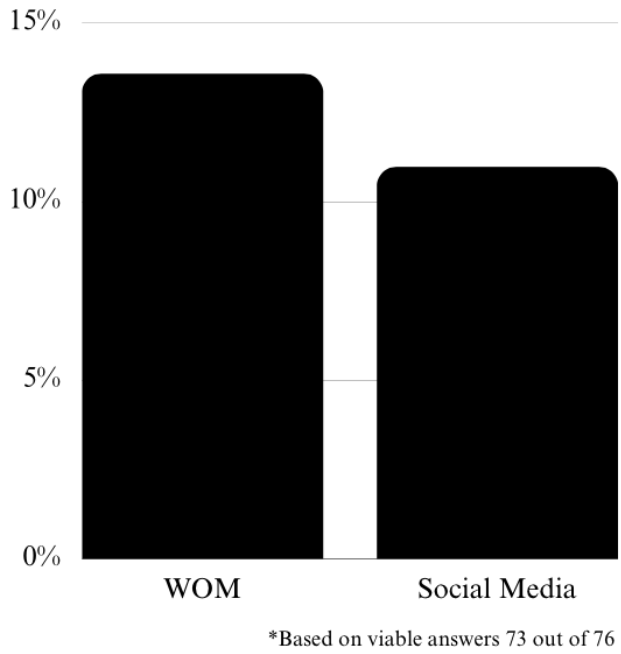
Figure 7

Survey question 7: Physical Attributes

The results for the category *Physical attributes* (See fig. 7) show that out of the 73 viable answers product quality had the majority of answers at 58.9%. Responses that valued attributes regarding *Brand Equity* totalled to only 9.59%. Some examples of responses from the survey state: *"I usually don't share my experience in my social network, and if I do it is only to friends. And if so, it is usually my experience of the brand, what I think about the product, my satisfaction etc."* and *"If I feel like the product or service delivered what I expected (or more!). Especially if it is something extraordinary or if someone asks for advice for a product. If it is a pretty product, I may also post it somewhere".*

Figure 8

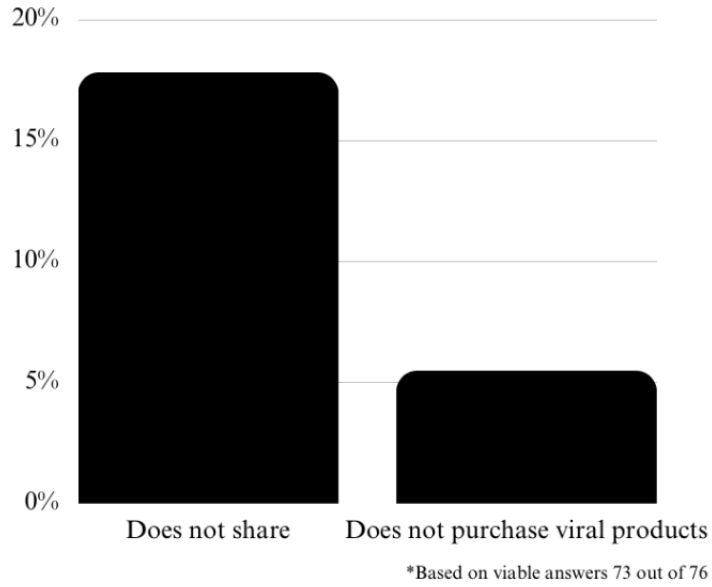
Survey question 7: Non-Physical attributes



Results for category *Non-Physical Attributes* (See fig. 8) show that sharing through WOM at 13.7% is more likely than through social media that totals to 10.96%. Furthermore, this indicates that a total of 24.66% of our survey respondents value the "shareability" and engagement aspects of the virality based purchase, with a higher emphasis on WOM transmission.

Figure 9

Survey question 7: Negative



Responses under the category *Negative* (See fig. 9) indicate that a total of 17.81% of respondents are not willing or interested to share viral product online and followingly, 5.48% say that they do not purchase viral products. The respondents defended their answers by stating *"I don't share, but if I did I would definitely appreciate nice packaging and brand values, such as sustainability.", "I don't purchase products for the sole fact of them being viral."* And *"I never share products on social media, I might tell my friends about it in person".*

Q8: After buying a viral product, would you consider revisiting the company for more products? If so, why or why not?

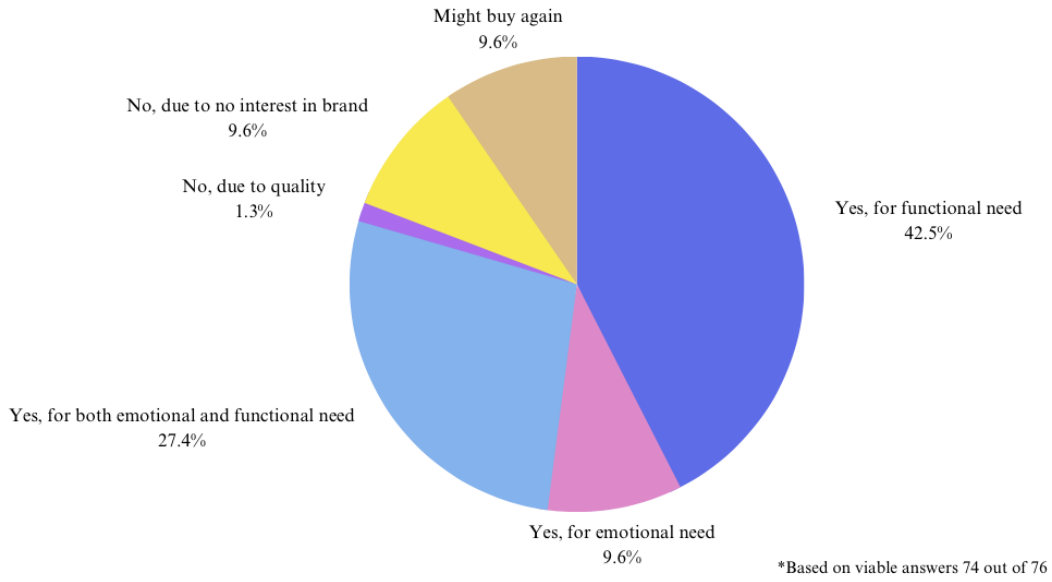
Question 8 aims to determine the willingness of a Generation Z consumer to revisit the brand after purchasing a product due to a viral trend. This question will furthermore present the openness for repurchasing and identify which values and attributes will support the likelihood of prolonging customer retention past the initial purchase. A total of 74 viable answers were identified and categorised under the following main categories: ***Yes***, ***Maybe*** and ***No***.

If an answer showed that they were willing to revisit a company post-purchase, the response has been subcategorised for either, ***Yes***, *if it meets functional needs* and *yes, if it meets emotional needs.* Answers regarding emotional gratification would suggest that happiness and other positive emotions are a key driver in the customer retention of a Gen-Z consumer and, in contrast, answers with more functional values would suggest that satisfaction with the product is enough for the continuation of the relationship. A subcategory for yes, for *both functional and emotional* needs was also created, as some responses reflect that both needs should be met for them to reconsider a revisit. The category named ***Maybe*** had

one subcategory, *might purchase again*, which was characterised by the respondents, who were unsure about their willingness to return. The responses in the category ***No*** were further divided under two subcategories, *no, due to quality*, indicating that poor quality is a determinant in the creation of customer retention, and *no, due to no interest in the brand*, suggesting that a portion of respondents only purchase viral products due to the influence of viral transmission.

Figure 10

Survey question 8



The results present (See fig. 10) that out of the responses, willingness to revisit the brand (Category ***Yes)*** was the large majority. A total of 42.5% of respondents considered to revisit the brand as long as the viral product was able to meet their *functional need.* Revisit *due to emotional needs being met* totalled to 9.6%, and 27.4% of the responses felt that *both emotional and functional needs* should be met as a prerequisite for revisiting. Our survey therefore shows that consumers value *functional need* more than *emotional need*, although many expect both needs to be met.

A total of 9.6% of responses were categorised under *Maybe*, showing that an opportunity exists for the brand to sway and convince neutral in favour of the brand. If the brand does not engage with neutral consumers, it is unlikely that further purchasing action or retention is created due to no motive.

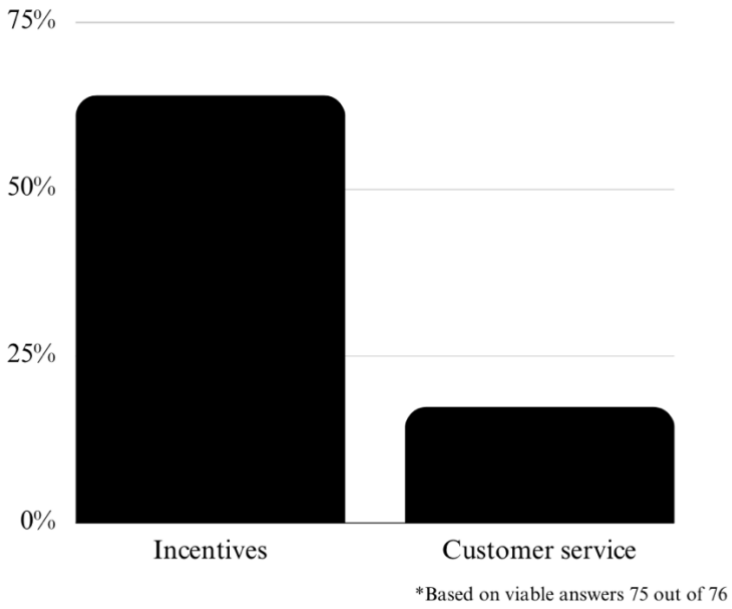
Responses in the category ***No*** were a total 10.9% of all respondents. *No, due to no interest in the brand* was more prevalent at 9.6%, whilst *no, due to quality***,** amounted to 1.3%. When analysing this category, it can be proposed that consumers who are not willing to revisit due to no interest in brand is caused by the purchase being made in response to viral transmission. Opinions that do not purchase due to quality, instead, associate that dissatisfaction with the quality of a viral product automatically reflects with the brand as a whole.

Q9: What type of engagement from a brand do you appreciate after a purchase? For example, receiving emails with discount codes, customer experience surveys etc.

It is important for a brand to engage in appropriate ways that are effective in reaching the specific customer segment, in order to generate return on investment. Question nine was asked to distinguish, which engagement methods are value creating and appreciated by Generation Z consumers. A total of 75 viable responses were divided into two categories: ***Positive***, which factors in responses that consider that brand engagement is seen favourable and ***Negative,*** in which the responses deem brand engagement to be ineffective and unappreciated. The category ***positive*** had two subcategories: *Brand incentives* and *Customer Service***.** *Brand Incentive* categorises responses that appreciate generosity as a form of brand engagement. This is mediated by discount codes, free samples, and loyalty programs. The second subcategory is *Customer Service* which categorizes answers that see customer service as a valuable form of brand engagement. Customer service includes engagement actions such as customer experience surveys and both streamlined and helpful customer service. The category ***Negative***, on the other hand has two subcategories: *No Contact Post Purchase*, which conclude answers that do not appreciate any form of brand engagement at and find engagement "annoying". The other subcategory is *Minimal Contact Post Purchase* which groups responses that appreciate certain types of engagement, for example, newsletters and even so wish to be approached seldom with relevant information, e.g., of new product launches.

Figure 11

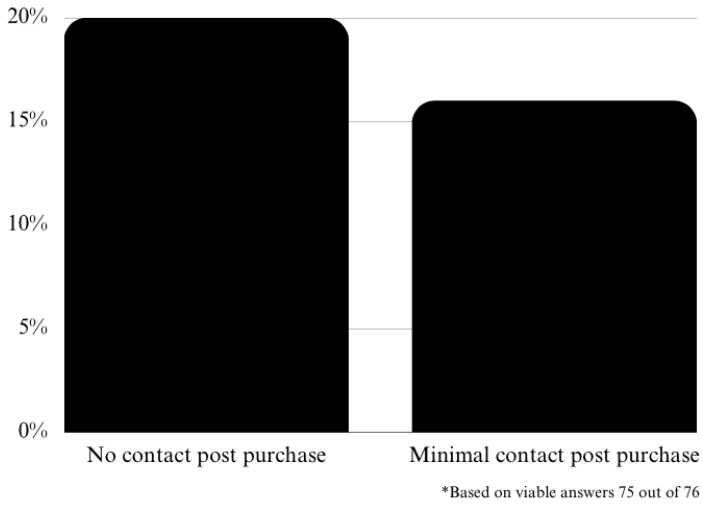
Survey question 9: Positive



The graph categorising ***Positive*** (See fig. 11) shows that 64% of respondents value brand incentives as a form of brand engagement, whilst 17.33% reflect that customer service is an important aspect of brand engagement that is felt valuable. A significant difference is seen in this category, where brand incentives are felt more meaningful. The respondents who appreciated customer service also mentioned their appreciation for well-developed social media presence, where a brands social media presence makes the brand more accessible for customers to engage with them.

Figure 12

Survey question 9



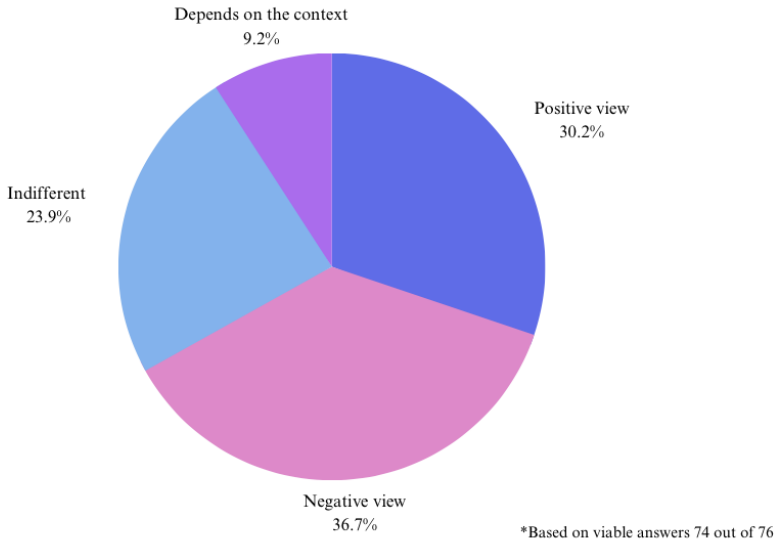
Responses under the category ***Negative*** (See fig. 12) show that 20% prefer no contact post purchase and 16% prefer minimal contact post purchase. Many responses perceive post contact engagement negatively and many claimed that they found that newsletters, for example, can easily turn into spam-like and annoying, others claimed that they disliked the discounts and newsletter altogether. One of the respondents writes followingly; "*I prefer to be left alone by brands. If I want to buy something again, I will be the one to look for information, then a good website and social media presentation is helpful to me to evaluate a brands product"*. Another respondent answered; "*Discounts code, but other than that I prefer as less engagement as possible. I am aware of the brand and will remember it if I want to purchase again, no need for extra engagement in my opinion"*.

Q10: What is your opinion on viral trends online?

Although virality is a relatively new phenomenon to literature, Gen-Z respondents seem to be well acquainted and well opinionated in regard to it. Question 10 posits a general inquiry on the opinion surrounding viral trends in online environments where a total of 74 viable answers were registered. Responses were divided into three main categories, ***Positive***, ***Neutral*** and ***Negative*** depending on the nature of the opinion. *Positive* - category is comprised of answers that indicate positive emotions regarding viral trends online. *Neutral* replies were further segmented to two subcategories, as a division was found amongst those who could be considered *Neutral*. Either the opinion was indifferent to the occurrence of viral trends, or the opinion was subject to change depending on the general context in which the viral trend would occur. E.g., One response explains that: "*It depends really which viral trend. If they are meaningful, I like them.*" Respondents who had a ***Negative*** opinion of viral trends online describe that viral transmission leads to unnecessary consumption and thus, purchasing such products is done for the wrong reasons, i.e., the purchase does not actually create value.

Figure 13

Survey question 10



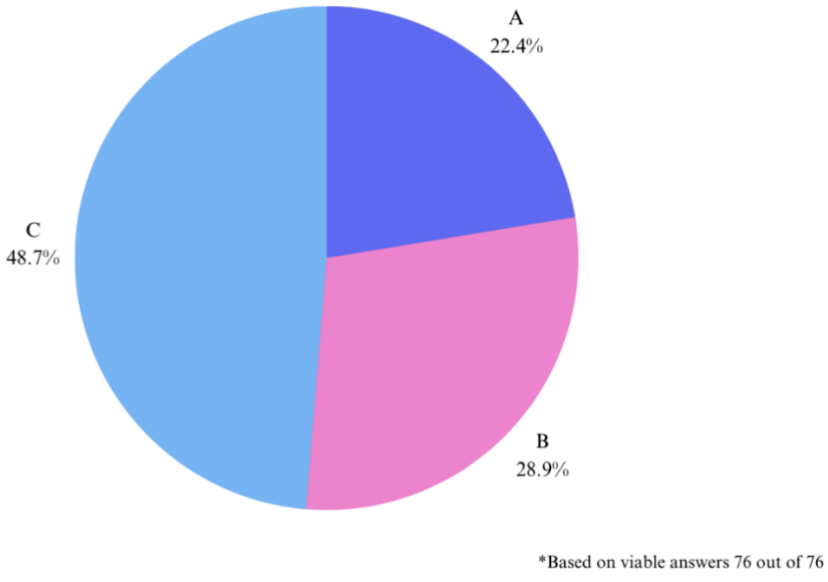
Most respondents had a *Negative* view on viral trends (See fig.13), often due to quality or in relation to mass consumption issues. This category amounted to 36.7%. In contrast, 33.1% of the responses were *Neutral*, where 23.9% was indifferent to the occurrence of such events and 9.2% reflected that the opinion depended on the context. The respondents with a positive view on viral trends online total to 30.2%. The results show that there is a rather even distribution of responses in each main category, suggesting that the opinion on viral trend online is based on their consumption values in general.

Q11: Which one of these ads are you most likely to share to your friends, family or followers?

Question 11 examines emotional triggers of Generation Z, in the context on which type of advertisement would incline a Generation Z person to share it in their own social networks. In general, literature argues that emotions are considered to motivate consumers in their actions, the purpose of this question is to furthermore analyse which emotion triggers and resonates with Gen Z the most, and in specific, which emotion amongst happiness, anger and sadness influences a Gen-Z person to take action (such as sharing it to their own social network). Three advertisements were presented in the survey, each representing a different emotion. The first advertisement by Dove for their campaign *Real Beauty* published in 2004, is an image with an inclusive arrangement of models feeling beautiful. This represents happiness and joy. The second advertisement presented was made by United Colours of Benetton in 2011 for their "Unhate" campaign. This is a provocative and politically influenced advertisement, where Barack Obama is seen kissing Hugo Chavez in a fictitious situation. Such provocative content is made to target shock. Thirdly, the advertisement by UNICEF created in 2017 for their campaign that aims to remove mainstream negativity and the labels against refugee children targets social responsibility and elicits sadness. A total of 76 viable responses was generated for this question.

Figure 14

Survey question 11



Results (See fig. 14) present that the majority at 48.7% would be more inclined to share the advertisement created by UNICEF. This advertisement elicits sadness and furthermore, targets the feeling of social responsibility. The advertisement by United Colours of Benetton (that targets anger through provocation) was chosen by 28.9% of the respondents whilst Dove's campaign eliciting happiness was chosen as the least action triggering at 22.4%.

5. Analysis and discussion

In this chapter, the two established research questions are discussed in accordance with the purpose of this study. The answers of the survey are analysed and followingly, through an appropriate discussion, this section guides the reader to the outcome of this research. This chapter concludes with the proposed CVRM model, which is a theory development of Kellers (1993) CBBE model. The CVRM model aims to enable prolonged customer retention from viral demand based on Gen-Z consumer behaviour.

RQ 1: What are Gen-Z's consumer behaviour patterns during viral trends?

The majority of the respondents in the survey claim that viral trends have influenced their purchasing decisions, thereby explaining the power of WOM and eWOM. Petrescu (2014) states that consumers are more likely to trust the opinions of their peers and family over brand promotions, which is a notion respondents showed favour to. One respondent expressed a reluctance to follow online trends, by stating, *"Following viral online trends is very strange and weird to me. I usually never pay attention to viral trends, nor do I let myself get affected by it. I might only get interested if my close friends follow it"*. Despite disinterest in viral trends, the survey shows that a large majority has in fact engaged in such purchases, suggesting that consumers are still influenced to participate in viral trends based on peer recommendations, for example (Q10; Q7). Highlighting the importance of social influence in Gen-Z decision-making processes followingly supports Seemiller and Grace's (2019) study on how favourable products within a group of peers can generate viral exposure that may transpire beyond the immediate social circle. Moreover, when asked to verbalise which attributes encourages them share their experience in their social networks, answers suggest that respondents are keener to share their opinions with their friends rather than in their online social networks. This supports literature stating that Gen-Z value face-to-face interactions (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). In the rare cases where they do feel encouraged to share their experiences online, it is due to the design of the product and other intangible assets associated with brand equity. However, the survey also showed that respondents who refrain from sharing or engaging in viral trends still place high value on product quality and are more likely to return to the brand if they are content with the product (Q8).

Scholar's consider open-mindedness and societal awareness to be defining factors of this demographic, making them more likely to invest in brands that align with their values. Furthermore, it motivates them to advocate for social change whilst participating in active in political consumerism. Findings indicate that sad and political advertisement provokes the most action as the UNICEF advertisement was most likely to be shared among Gen-Z respondents (Q11). Whilst the survey revealed that certain respondents valued environmental conscientiousness, ethical behaviour, and ethical production during viral trends

(Q5), our findings suggest that societal issues may not be as important during viral trends (Q6). The majority of the respondents were indifferent to the negative associations, some were completely untroubled by it, while others stated that they try to avoid such brands. A respondent with a negative opinion voiced *"It makes me decide not to buy from them. No item ever seems important enough to me that I have to have it, even at the expense of other people"* and *"Trustworthiness is key, I would pay a much higher price for that"*. Furthermore, our findings suggest that whilst characteristics related to environmental and social issues are valued by Gen-Z, a higher percentage show to be more inclined to look past the undesired associations if they perceive a higher value of the product, despite being aware of the negative implications. Paying a higher price to ensure ethical values in a business correlates with Dutta & Mandal's (2022) study where they argue that today's consumers seek happiness rather than satisfaction.

Our findings show that Gen-Z are motivated to share their experience when the expected functionality and physical needs are met. These attributes influence their willingness to revisit a brand and share it with their peers and family (Q5). The survey establishes that 83.6% show neutrality towards negative brand associations. The underlying cause of why some consumers may choose to overlook brands with negative associations, in contrast to those who participate in boycotts, for example, is however, considered ambiguous (Q6). Possible explanations may include cost benefits or an absence of product alternatives. Moreover, the power of viral transmission may influence them to make purchases solely to be a part of the viral trend. Although a majority of respondents are neutral to negative associations, the survey indicates 64.5% research information about the viral brand prior to the purchase, suggesting that respondents are aware of the circumstances. Furthermore, 32.9% do not search for information about a brand prior to or after a purchase. This may be due to the established brand trust derived from social transmission. Additionally, the short-term nature of virality may lead individuals to forgo the need for extensive research due to fear of not having access of the product.

Question 9 distinguishes, which post-purchase brand engagement is considered meaningful with Gen-Z. The large majority of respondents expressed preference for communication that included incentives such as discount codes. The next most valued response was no contact post purchase. Gen-Z appear to be bothered by extensive promotional activities that do not provide direct value to them (Q10). This suggests that Gen-Z want to be in control of the brand exposure they are subjected to.

Given the emphasis on functional needs in viral trends, Gen-Z behaviour contradicts general consumer behaviour literature that posits a higher value on the emotion eliciting attributes (Q8). Furthermore, this finding aligns with the preceding question (Q7) aiming to establish which attributes persuade them to share the product with their social networks. Physical attributes were the most frequently mentioned variable as 58.9% value product quality. Consequently, emotional attributes are generally considered of secondary value, explaining why customer retention from viral trends is short-term as well. A lack

of a customer-to-brand connection furthermore is caused by Gen-Z customers focusing on the product's functional qualities in the post-purchase stage, leading to a engagement based on only an interest in the product. As product quality is replicable on the market, a transaction based on solely interest in product does not establish a strong enough link to the brand, explaining the high customer turnover in such cases (See Appendix C).

RQ 2: How can brand equity management be strategized to optimize long-term customer retention from a viral demand based on Generation Z's consumption behaviour?

Primary data unveils the discrepancy between Generation Z consumer behaviour and their retention in viral trends to originate from disinterest in the brand, due to the purchase being primarily motivated by functionality and thus, the product (See Appendix C). Consequentially, a lack of an emotion based B2C connection to the brand, explains why the individual customer lifetime is rather short-lived during viral trends. As product quality is replicable on the market, explains why customers are more likely to consider choosing other brands instead in the future, creating a gap with generating long-term customer retention from a short-term phenomenon.

Followingly, the key in building prolonged customer-retention from viral exposure with brand equity management is to, firstly, find ways to increase willingness to revisit the brand by establishing an emotion driven brand-based B2C connection and secondly, to structure brand equity management in a way, where the brand is able to build brand resonance through engagement that induces customer retention.

Focus 1. *How to establish a B2C connection with Gen-Z that increases willingness to revisit the brand post-purchase of a viral product?*

Literature states that happy customers seek repeated interactions with brands that elicit positive emotions and, moreover, are willing to share information in their own social networks, respectively (Dutta & Mandal, 2022). When asking to identify, which attributes found in viral products influence Gen-Z to share their experience in their own social networks, an emphasis was made on the product functionality. Parallel to this finding, it may be stated that this emphasis translates into the willingness of Gen-Z customers to revisit the brand again post-purchase of the viral product (Q7). Given that Gen-Z consumers appear to be rather sceptical when considering viral trends, a focus on addressing functionality needs through product development is focal when creating willingness to return to the brand.

Assuming the viral purchase to be the first interaction between the consumer and the brand, to successfully establish a brand-to-consumer connection over a virality-to-customer bond, they should explore approaches that inflict a rather emotional response to their brand equity in addition to meeting product quality satisfaction. The objective in establishing a feasible B2C relationship from viral transmission, thus, is to influence the purchase to be driven by both, viral transmission and interest in the brand, not just by the influence WOM, enabling a shift from product to brand (See Appendix D)

Given that the market is highly saturated with options, product quality can be easily reproduced and emulated by competitors. Thus, a brand is able to differentiate itself with the experience it offers. The overall purchasing experience is furthermore considered to be subject to establishing an emotion-based connection (Rosenbaum-Elliott et al., 2018). The experience relates to every aspect of a customer's interaction with the brand, from user experience in the e-commerce platform, product, customer service, intangible branding elements such as packaging, presence in online social network platforms to brand engagement, e.g., brand communities. These aspects are evaluated (subconsciously or consciously) by the customer during their rationalization stage post-purchase.

When aiming to meet Gen-Z functionality needs, and to inflict an emotion-based component into viral purchases, a customer-centric brand development model should be considered proactively, due to the unpredictability of viral transmission. When the products reflect the voice of the customer, a higher likelihood for positive emotional and functional response exists in the case of a viral transmission.

The customer voice can be considered through customer surveys, for example, as Gen-Z respondents show favourability to such brand engagement. Furthermore, incentives that encourage Gen-Z consumers to participate, such as in-store credits, could furthermore excite Generation Z consumers to be more vocal in sharing their experiences. Identifying why customers find themselves unhappy even when a product technically meets their functional needs, will enable to target happiness and in return offer an enhanced customer experience, which supports a stronger customer-to-brand relationship (Dutta & Mandal, 2022).

A customer-centric and consistent approach to customer-brand interaction, will increase the perception of the brand to enable a stronger bond and willingness for the customer to return no matter of, how the customer was initially exposed to the brand. Modern day technology is introducing artificial intelligence, virtual realities and blockchains as ways to enhance the online purchasing experience, by developing the purchasing process to be more dynamic and visually stimulating, for example (Appel et al., 2019).

Focus 2. *How to maintain the established B2C connection post-purchase of the viral product with brand equity management?*

Brand engagement actions are in primary role of upholding established B2C connections. Building more meaningful connections through engagement suggests deeper customer loyalty and a longer duration of retention because of the enhanced overall satisfaction (Torkzadeh et al., 2022). Gen-Z survey respondents value engagement through incentives, such as discount codes and free samples. However, a significant percentage of responses reflect to appreciate minimal contact by the brand post-purchase, or in more extreme cases, no contact at all. This posits that Gen-Z consumers value generosity from brands they engage with and validation from the brand of the B2C connection, suggesting that when trying to generate customer retention with Gen-Z customers, brands should aim to target minimal but meaningful engagement, with information that either incentivises the customer to repurchase or to provide relevant information of the brand, such as campaigns.

Well established online presence in online social network platforms and developing a wholesome brand community in OSNs can thus be suggested as brand engagement channels that allow brands to connect with Gen-Z less intrusively. As digital natives, once a Gen-Z customer is willing to reconsider a brand, they have the skills to find their way back to the brand. Given the purchasing power of Generation Z on the market, they are able to be selective and stay loyal to those that feel meaningful to them. Moreover, as the survey reflects that it is important for Gen-Z consumers to feel like they are in control of the brand exposure they are associated with, the answer in prolonging customer retention is to subconsciously persuade Gen-Z customers to revisit the brand, seemingly by choice, by firstly inflicting a brand-to-customer connection supported by a quality purchasing experience and product quality, and secondly, to create a brand space, where they are enticed stay and engage in.

Including an OCC as part of the brand equity management structure will enable to retain and prolong incoming Gen-Z customers from viral exposure. Using an OCC to support a B2C connection will provide a two-way communication stream and furthermore link the customer to the emotional value of the brand, which is said to strengthen customer retention (Manchanda et al., 2015). Furthermore, the interactions between community members increase brand resonance as the brand image becomes more digestible and within cognitive reach as the brand is represented by its existing community members that serve as peer-to-peer influence on new Gen-Z customers.

When considering including an OCC as a part of the brand equity management, a brand should aim to structure the information flow to resemble a globalized network. The advantage of a globalized network-based OCC is the active participation of community members, which often correlates with a positive relation to repurchasing and moreover, retention (Akpinar & Berger, 2017). Furthermore, a

globalized network structure enables to assimilate incoming customers into the community due to the combination of tight-knit and loose-knit users through peer-to-peer and parasocial relationships. As Generation-Z is said to respond well to peer-evaluation and parasocial connections, an OCC is a feasible way to create customer retention through a connection with the brand voice and community interactions.

Building a globalized network OCC with the help of OSN opinion leaders, such as those categorised as salesmen and mavens, enables to help build brand attractiveness and diffuse brand imagery to evoke brand resonance. In addition to opinion leaders, brands should consider user generated content (UGC) as well in its community, for example, to enhance a peer-evaluation-like atmosphere, which is valuable for Gen-Z in their purchasing decision journey's, respectively. Furthermore, utilising UGC presents an efficient way for brands to show diversity and inclusivity within its communication streams due to the cost-efficiency of earned media and power of peer-like representation to Gen-Z. Using a combination of opinion leaders and non-commercially motivated users will enable to establish a saturated peer-network environment (Wilde, 2013).

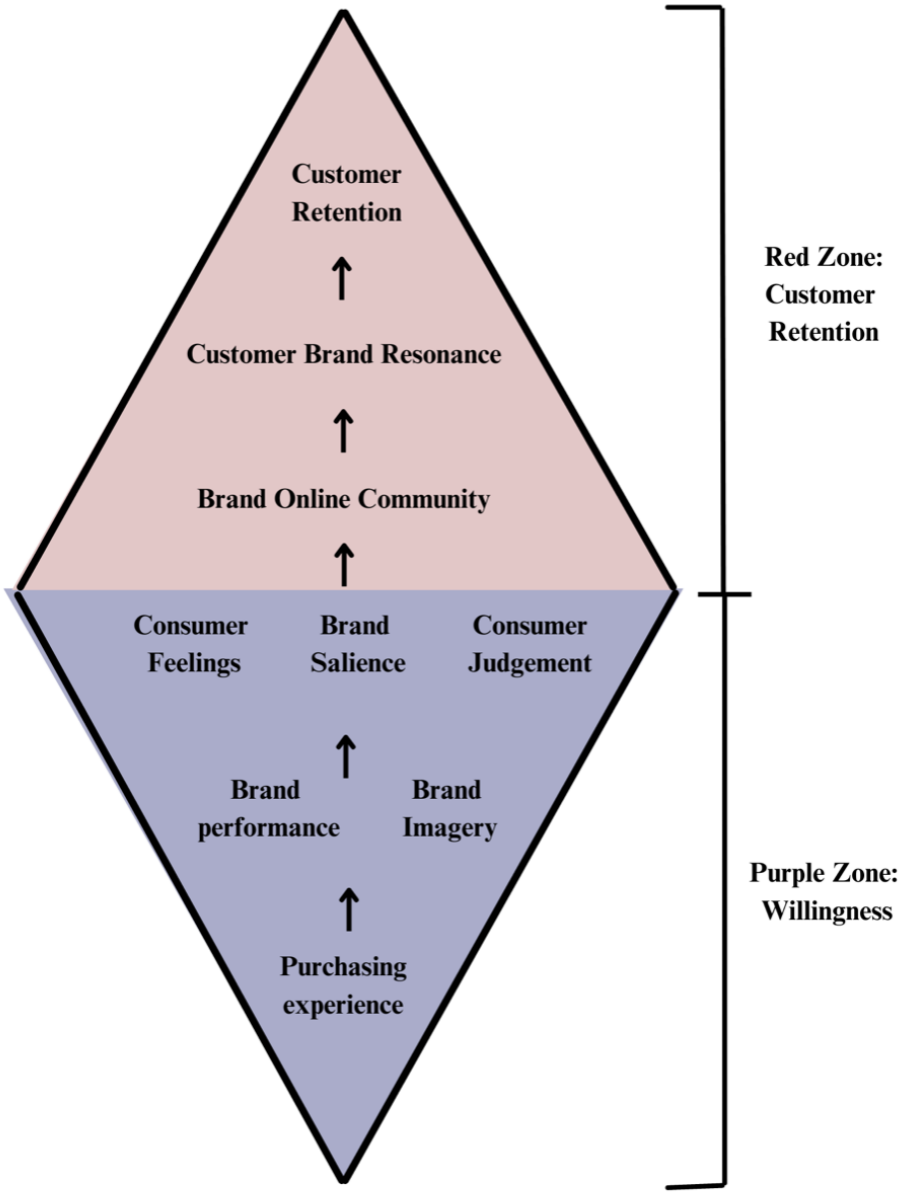
Followingly it may be considered that although the level of brand sustainability is overlooked in cases related to viral purchasing, in order to create genuine customer retention, sustainability and social responsibility should be encouraged to incorporate in the brand equity structure (Q5). Being transparent on sourcing and product composition, for example, enable to build more trust between the brand and a Gen-Z consumers. Brand trust provides Gen-Z more power to feel in control of their purchasing decisions, furthermore, maintaining a connection with aligned values strengthens brand resonances and shifts the brand to become more of the customers personal identity (Seemiller & Grace, 2019).

CBBE based Viral Retention Model (CVRM)

The CVRM model transforms Kellers (1993) CBBE model into a brand equity management structure that aims to optimize long-term customer retention from viral demand based on Generation Z consumer behaviour. The CVRM incorporates findings from primary data (survey) and secondary data (literature). The model is meant to be followed vertically upwards from *purchasing experience* to *customer retention.*

Figure 15

CBBE based Viral Retention Model



The CRVM model (Authors own model, 2023) is divided into two segments that together form a diamond-shape structure. The purple zone in the lower area of the diamond targets to establish a brand-to-customer connection with brand equity, in order to create willingness to revisit a brand post-purchase. The **Purchasing Experience** associated with the purchase of the viral product determines the

progression and retention of the B2C relationship. The purchasing experience should subject to both functional and emotional value creating attributes. A customer-centric approach in purchasing experience enables a proactive approach to address viral demand, in specific.

Brand Performance relates to the satisfaction of product functionality. Hence, how well the purchase answers functional expectations determines the brand performance. Product quality and pricing are considered the most valuable factors for Gen-Z consumers. **Brand Imagery** addresses the intangible brand attributes. A brand that is visually able to elicit positive emotions through branding elements, enables an understanding of the brand image and furthermore, encourages an emotion-based response. Emotional branding can be used to strengthen the level of brand imagery and should focus on exploiting the attributes that differentiate the brand on the market. Unique brands are associated with stronger brand imagery in Gen-Z consumer minds.

Brand salience occurs as the outcome of emotional charge created by a combination of brand performance and brand imagery. Positive brand associations increase the level of brand salience. The recall strength of the memory associated with the purchase of the viral product will furthermore affect the development of the B2C relationship. **Consumer Judgements and Feelings** are the responses generated from being exposed to the brand. They affect the brand salience and distinguish whether or not the brands equity is within cognitive reach of Generation Z, in addition to the emotions associated with the brand. The level of happiness, in specific, increases the interest to brand engagement and customer retention.

Once the purple zone successfully creates willingness to revisit the brand, the red zone in the upper area of the diamond relates to the longevity of the customer lifetime and furthermore, customer retention. A **Brand online community** is considered to be a favourable brand engagement method to prolong customer retention. This way the B2C connection will be upheld as the community requires customer-initiated engagement. Furthermore, a brand online community, will implicit a psychological bond with the brand. Active participation translates into **Brand Resonance** and behavioural loyalty, that increases the probability for repurchasing, for example. Moreover, with strong brand resonance, the brand becomes a part of the customers identity through the social network connections and emotional value created by brand equity.

As a result of the B2C bond being established to the brand over the product by providing a customer-centric purchasing experience that actives customer engagement and behavioural loyalty (See Appendix D), we are able to generate long term **Customer Retention** from a short-term exposure in the market (virality).

6. Conclusion

The conclusion is divided into four sections, practical implications, theoretical implications, limitations and future research. The practical implications identify Gen-Z consumer behaviour during viral demand, followed by the CVRM model, which is discussed in the theoretical implications section. Furthermore, theoretical implications identify, how to prolong customer retention from viral demand. Following the implications, limitations and future research are discussed.

6.1 Practical Implication

Practical implications suggest that the Generation Z consumer purchasing journey during viral trends differs to the general decision-making process. The discrepancy between Gen-Z consumer behaviour and their retention in viral trends originate from a disinterest in the brand as the purchase is motivated by the product. When engaging in viral trends, functionality, quality, and incentives are key drivers in Gen-Z customer retention, which contradicts with the common belief that purchases are driven by an emotion eliciting connection. Moreover, implications show that social transmission plays an important role in this demographics action taking, due to the value placed on peer-evaluation and parasocial relationships. Furthermore, the primary data suggests that although Generation Z is commonly considered to be a conscientious cohort in their purchasing decisions, negative brand associations and sustainable values are of secondary value during viral purchases, if the product otherwise meets their functional expectations.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

The proposed CBBE based Viral Retention Model or CVRM focuses on strategizing brand equity management to optimize long-term customer retention from viral demand based on Generation Z consumer behaviour. Furthermore, findings present the process of prolonging customer retention to be divided into two phases, (1) to address accurate satisfaction needs and inflict an emotional response to create willingness to revisit the brand, and followingly, (2) create brand engagement through brand equity management that proceeds to retain the B2C relationship. The model's focal points are **the purchasing experience** and utilizing a **brand online community** as ways to build meaningful brand engagement and increase brand resonance, which ultimately translate into customer retention.

6.3 Limitations

In regard to the data collection, given that not all 76 answers were viable under each question caused us to have alternating data samples in terms of quantity. Additionally, more emphasis could have been placed on targeting the post-purchase relationship between the brand and the consumers and less focused on the geographic location and the use of WOM and eWOM, for example. Furthermore, another limiting factor in our study is the sample set constitutes of mainly Swedish Gen-Z consumers. Although we generalize our findings from our sample, more responses from different geographic locations would have brought a more saturated overview of the consumer behaviour. Lastly, resource constraints limited us to test our CVRM framework in the form of a pilot study, for example.

6.4 Future Research

As we are in the transition period between WEB 2.0 and WEB 3.0, an opportunity exists to furthermore investigate the changes in social networks and consumer behaviour that are brought by the implementation of the new WEB paradigm (WEB 3.0). For example, behavioural changes in the purchasing behaviour, that reshape existing phenomenon such as virality, caused by the adaptation of metaverses, virtual realities and blockchains, for example, may present a value-providing continuation of this research.

References

Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name*. Free Press.

Arazzi, M., Nicolazzo, S., Nocera, A., & Zippo, M. (2023). The importance of the language for the evolution of online communities: An analysis based on Twitter and reddit. *Expert Systems with Applications*, *222*, 119847. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2023.119847

Akpinar, E., & Berger, J. (2017). Valuable virality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *54*(2), 318–330. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.13.0350

Appel, G., Grewal, L., Hadi, R., & Stephen, A. T. (2019). The future of social media in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *48*(1), 79–95. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00695-1

Balbi, G., Ribeiro, N., Schafer Valérie, & Schwarzenegger, C. (2021). *Digital Roots: Historicizing Media and Communication Concepts of the Digital age*. De Gruyter Oldenbourg.

Barela, M. J. (2003). Executive insights: United colors of benetton—from sweaters to success: An examination of the triumphs and controversies of a multinational clothing company. *Journal of International Marketing*, *11*(4), 113–128. https://doi.org/10.1509/jimk.11.4.113.20152

Bayle-Tourtoulou, A.-S., & Badoc, M. (2020). *The neuro-consumer: Adapting marketing and communication strategies for the subconscious, instinctive and irrational consumer's brain*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

B., D. U. K., & Kothari, D. P. (2022). *Research methodology: Techniques and trends*. Chapman & Hall/CRC Press.

Becker, J. U., Spann, M., & Schulze, T. (2014). Implications of minimum contract durations on customer retention. *Marketing Letters*, *26*(4), 579–592. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-014-9293-2

Berger, J., & Milkman, K. L. (2012). What makes online content viral? *Journal of Marketing Research*, *49*(2), 192–205. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.10.0353

Bright, L. F., & Logan, K. (2018). Is my fear of missing out (FOMO) causing fatigue? advertising, social media fatigue, and the implications for consumers and brands. *Internet Research*, *28*(5), 1213–1227. https://doi.org/10.1108/intr-03-2017-0112

Çifci, S., Ekinci, Y., Whyatt, G., Japutra, A., Molinillo, S., & Siala, H. (2016). A cross validation of Consumer-Based Brand Equity models: Driving customer equity in retail brands. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*(9), 3740–3747. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.12.066

Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Pandey, N., Pandey, N., & Mishra, A. (2021). Mapping the electronic word-of-mouth (ewom) research: A systematic review and Bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, *135*, 758–773. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.07.015

Dove (n.d) *Dove campaigns*. Dove. https://www.dove.com/us/en/stories/campaigns.html

Dutta, T., & Mandal, M. K. (2022). *Consumer happiness: Multiple perspectives*. SPRINGER.

Faraj, S., von Krogh, G., Monteiro, E., & Lakhani, K. R. (2016). Special section introduction—online community as space for knowledge flows. *Information Systems Research*, *27*(4), 668–684. https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2016.0682

Flick, U. (2020). *Introducing research methodology: Thinking your way through your research project*. SAGE.

Gao, L., de Haan, E., Melero-Polo, I., & Sese, F. J. (2022). Winning your customers' minds and hearts: Disentangling the effects of lock-in and affective customer experience on retention. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *51*(2), 334–371. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-022-00898-z

Goldring, D., & Azab, C. (2020). New rules of social media shopping: Personality differences of U.S. gen Z versus gen X market mavens. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *20*(4), 884–897. https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1893

Google. (2023). *Scrub Daddy*. Google trends. https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2012-10-01%202023-05-02&geo=US&q=%2Fg%2F11g6qkvn8k

Gustafsson, A., Johnson, M. D., & Roos, I. (2005). The effects of customer satisfaction, Relationship Commitment Dimensions, and triggers on customer retention. *Journal of Marketing*, *69*(4), 210–218. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.2005.69.4.210

Han, S. (2011). *Web 2.0*. Routledge.

Han, Y., Lappas, T., & Sabnis, G. (2020). The importance of interactions between content characteristics and creator characteristics for studying virality in social media. *Information Systems Research*, *31*(2), 576–588. https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.2019.0903

Hinz, O., Skiera, B., Barrot, C., & Becker, J. U. (2011). Seeding strategies for viral marketing: An empirical comparison. *Journal of Marketing*, *75*(6), 55–71. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.10.0088

Isson, J. P. (2018). *Unstructured data analytics: How to improve customer acquisition, customer retention, and Fraud Detection and Prevention*. Wiley.

Karimi, S., Papamichail, K. N., & Holland, C. P. (2015). The effect of prior knowledge and decision-making style on the online purchase decision-making process: A typology of consumer shopping behaviour. *Decision Support Systems*, *77*, 137–147. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2015.06.004

Keller, K. L. (2001). Building customer-based brand equity. Marketing Management, pp. 16–19.

Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based Brand Equity. *Journal of Marketing*, *57*(1), 1. https://doi.org/10.2307/1252054

Koziel, S. (2023). *Here's why the scrub daddy sponge is so popular*. LifeSavvy RSS. https://www.lifesavvy.com/162843/heres-why-the-scrub-daddy-sponge-is-so-popular/

Lee, J. E., & Watkins, B. (2016). YouTube vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perceptions and intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*(12), 5753–5760. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.171

Manchanda, P., Packard, G., & Pattabhiramaiah, A. (2015). Social dollars: The economic impact of customer participation in a firm-sponsored online customer community. *Marketing Science*, *34*(3), 367–387. https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2014.0890

Mukherjee, A., Rangaraja P., S., Vander Meer, D., & Dutta, K. (2023). Domain-independent real-time service provisioning in digital platforms: Featuring bundling and customer time-preference. *Decision Support Systems*, *167*, 113927. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2023.113927

Oktay, J. S. (2012). *Grounded theory*. Oxford University Press.

Phillips, R., Cordel, G., Church, G., & Moore, J. (2013). *The passion conversation understanding, sparking, and sustaining word of mouth marketing*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Petrescu, M. (2014). *Viral marketing and Social Networks*. Business Expert Press.

Purani, K., & Jeesha, K. (2021). Community based brand equity as brand culture: advancing brand equity conceptualization for a connected world. *AMS Review*, *1*(1). https://doi.org/10.1007/s13162-020-00189-2

Ragnedda , M., & Destefanis, G. (2021). *Blockchain and web 3.0: Social, economic, and technological challenges*. ROUTLEDGE.

Rosenbaum-Elliott, R., Percy, L., & Pervan, S. (2018). *Strategic Brand Management*. Oxford University Press.

Seemiller, C., & Grace, M. M. (2019). *Generation Z: A century in the making*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Sendek, H., & Hobart, J. W. (2014). *Gen Y now: Millennials and the evolution of leadership*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Seyfi, S., Sharifi-Tehrani, M., Hall, C. M., & Vo-Thanh, T. (2023). Exploring the drivers of gen Z tourists' buycott behaviour: A lifestyle politics perspective. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2023.2166517

Silver, L. S., & Wrenn, B. (2013). *The Essentials of Marketing Research*. Routledge.

Stahl, F., Heitmann, M., Lehmann, D. R., & Neslin, S. A. (2012). The impact of Brand Equity on Customer Acquisition, Retention, and profit margin. *Journal of Marketing*, *76*(4), 44–63. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.10.0522

Susarla, A., Oh, J.-H., & Tan, Y. (2016). Influentials, imitables, or Susceptibles? Virality and word-of-mouth conversations in online social networks. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *33*(1), 139–170. https://doi.org/10.1080/07421222.2016.1172454

Tasci, A. D. A. (2018). Testing the cross-brand and cross-market validity of a consumer-based Brand Equity (CBBE) model for Destination Brands. *Tourism Management*, *65*, 143–159. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.09.020

Torkzadeh, S., Zolfagharian, M., Yazdanparast, A., & Gremler, D. D. (2022). From customer readiness to customer retention: The mediating role of Customer Psychological and Behavioral engagement. *European Journal of Marketing*, *56*(7), 1799–1829. https://doi.org/10.1108/ejm-03-2021-0213

UNICEF. (2017, May 1). *A child is a child*. UNICEF. https://www.unicef.org/reports/child-child

United Colors of Benetton (n.d). *Unhate Worldwide campaign*. Benetton Group. https://www.benettongroup.com/en/media-press/press-releases-and-statements/unhate-worldwide-campaign/

Verhoef, P. C. (2003). Understanding the effect of customer relationship management efforts on customer retention and customer share development. *Journal of Marketing*, *67*(4), 30–45. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.67.4.30.18685

Wang, Y., Wu, J., Lin, L., & Shafiee, S. (2019). An online community-based dynamic customisation model: The trade-off between customer satisfaction and Enterprise Profit. *International Journal of Production Research*, *59*(1), 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207543.2019.1693649

Wells, V. (2014). *Handbook of developments in consumer behaviour*. Edward Elgar.

Wilde, S. (2013). *Viral marketing within social networking sites: The creation of an effective viral marketing campaign*. Diplomica Verlag.

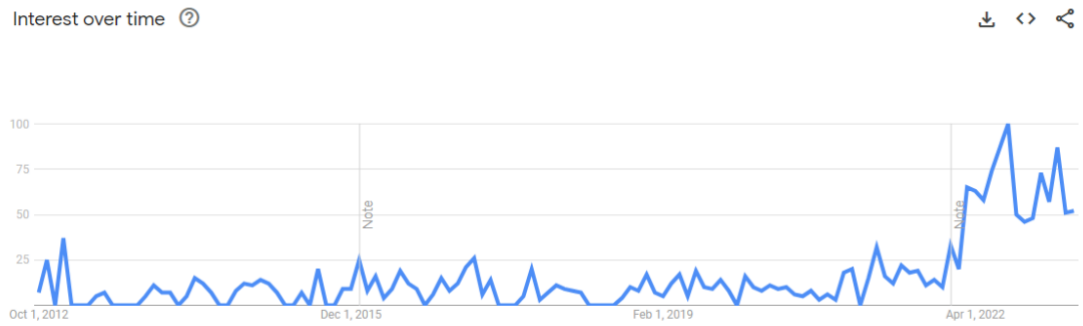
Yousaf, I., Pham, L., & Goodell, J. W. (2023). The connectedness between meme tokens, meme stocks, and other asset classes: Evidence from a quantile connectedness approach. *Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions and Money*, *82*, 101694. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intfin.2022.101694

Zurawicki, L. (2010). *Neuromarketing: Exploring the brain of the consumer*. Scholars Portal.

Appendices

Appendix A

Google analytics for Scrub Daddy from 2012-2023



(Google trend, 2023)

Appendix B

Generation-Z consumer behaviour survey

Generation Z consumer behaviour

We are two students from Jönköping University conducting a study on Gen-Z consumer behaviour during viral trends that occur primarily in social networks online. The purpose of this study is to identify, how brands should position themselves on the market to build strong customer relationships with this specific generation.

This survey should take approximately 5 minutes and if you have any questions please contact: Lolav (islo20cl@student.ju.se) or Aini (huai20kd@student.ju.se)

Participation is voluntary and anonymous. You will not be identified in any ensuing reports or publications

We thank you for your time!

* Indicates required question

Background

1. Q1: This study focuses on examining Generation Z consumer behaviour. *

   Are you born between 1997-2012?

   Mark only one oval.

   - ◯ Yes
   - ◯ No (Please do not proceed with the survey in this case)

2. Q2: Where do you live? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Sweden
- ◯ Finland
- ◯ Norway
- ◯ Denmark
- ◯ Other: _____

Survey

3. Q3: Has a viral trend online ever encouraged you to purchase a product? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes, more than 5 times
- ◯ Yes, less than 5 times
- ◯ No

4. Q4: Do you look for information of the brand behind the viral product before or after making the purchase? (For example, brand origin, brand sustainability, etc...)

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Before
- ◯ After
- ◯ Neither before nor after

5. Q5: Think about the brands that you love and use often.

   What does your favourite brand do that is so special for you to keep revisiting? Please, mention at least 2 things.

6. Q6: How does a brand with negative associations (e.g. greenwashing, deceptive marketing) affect your attitude towards the brand?

7. Q7: After purchasing a viral product, what makes you more likely to share the experience in your own social networks?

   For example;
   - Physical attributes such as product packaging or product quality etc...
   - Non-physical attributes such as to be able to engage in online communities or to expand your own social network etc...

8. Q8: After buying a viral product, would you consider revisiting the company for more products? so, why or why not?

9. Q9: What type of engagement from a brand do you appreciate after a purchase? *

   For example, receiving emails with discount codes, customer experience surveys etc...

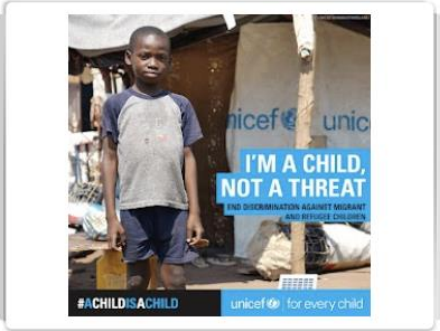
10. Q10: What is your opinion on viral trends online? *

11. Q11: Which one of these ads are you most likely to share to your friends, family or followers? *

Mark only one oval.

A

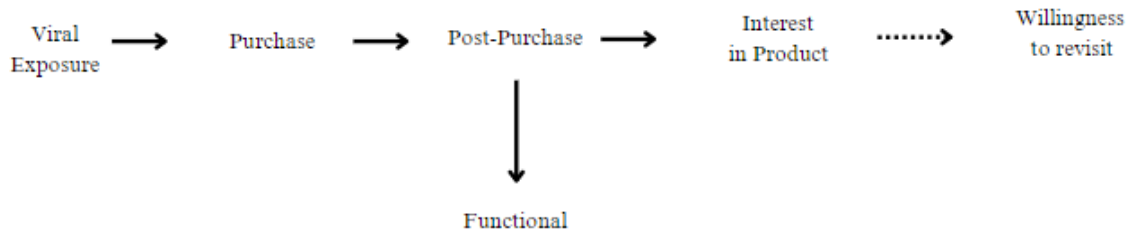
B

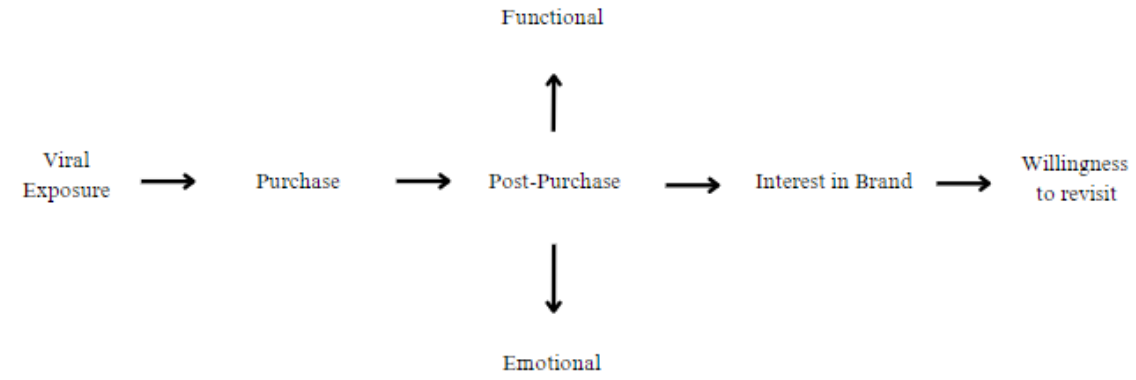


C

Appendix C

Current purchasing journey during viral demands



Appendix D

Optimal purchasing journey during viral demands