



# The Taco Theory

- A repeated measurement study of the effects of experiential event marketing on brand relationship quality in the FMCG industry

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# Abstract

Consumer marketing scholars keenly emphasize a proposed paradigm shift toward interactive relationships and lived brand experiences. Yet, little has been done to investigate the link between the two. Until now. This study is an attempt to measure the effects of lived brand experiences on consumers' perceived relationship with a brand, through testing an academically established brand relationship quality model onto the concept of experiential event marketing.

Susan Fournier's (2000) brand relationship quality scale was chosen as the construct to be tested in the experiential event marketing context. It was through a theoretical argumentation hypothesized that the experiential event intervention would produce positive direct effects within the scale, but that these would decline with time. This was consequently tested through a repeated measurement study, set at an experiential food truck event hosted by the Swedish FMCG brand Santa Maria. Respondents were to rank their perceived brand relationship quality with the brand on three different occasions; directly before, directly after, and two weeks after being exposed to the experiential event. This way, not only the immediate effect, but also the effect over time, could be measured.

It could be concluded that all but one constructs produced positive direct effects, but only half of them were significant. In all cases but one this effect declined significantly when being measured two weeks afterwards, and went in several cases back at approximately the same level as in the initial measurement. These findings have important implications for both academics and practitioners. Most notably, we argue that the link between lived brand experiences in form of typical FMCG experiential events and strengthened longer-term brand relationship quality can be invalidated.

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## Keywords

*Experiential Event Marketing, Brand Relationship Quality, FMCG, Offline Marketing, Brand Experiences.*

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# 1. Introduction

At times, we are absolutely certain that our partners have closer relationships with their iPhone than with us. They laugh with it, cry with it, dine with it, and weirdly enough sleep with it. They even call it by name. Sigrid, or Siri, or something. The amount of lived experiences they have had in their relationship with their iPhone and the Apple brand, far exceeds the amount of experiences they have shared with us.

Our jealousy is, however, justifiable. Just like with you and me, interactions and relationships are everything in marketing - regardless if it comes to iPhones, barbershops, vacuum cleaners, or tacos. But it has not always been like this. For long, the utility gained from using a product or service was the only value that mattered, and functionality ruled. Throughout the last five decades, however, customer value as utility has increasingly moved toward symbolic and emotional value. Product attributes are often subordinate to symbolic associations and emotional connections to the underlying brand (Levy, 1959; McCracken, 1986; Holt 1959), and brand-customer relationships are more important than ever (Fournier, 1998). Naturally, when consumer behaviors change, so do marketing efforts. Hand-in-hand with this growth in symbolic and emotional consumption comes the emergence of the so-called experiential marketing. In acknowledging the consumers' emotional dimension, this new form of marketing focuses on meaningful, value-creating activities, and two-way communication (Schmitt, 1999)

Susan Fournier has dedicated most of her research toward brand relationships. She shares our notion of the critical importance of strong relational bonds between brands and consumers. She argues that the way people choose to define themselves is tied to the way they choose brands. This also goes the other way around - brands impact how people see themselves (Fournier, 1998). Furthermore, she suggests that brand relations are valid at the degree of the consumers' lived experiences, and that people are engaged with brands that add meaning to their lives. Her insights are largely gained through observations of consumers and FMCG brands, and paints a picture of committed and loyal brand relationships. Not only is this pioneering study interesting in itself, the FMCG setting adds another layer of curiosity. The FMCG industry is, according to Gabriel Persson (2017), an experiential event marketing expert, unique in the sense that it is focused on activities such as sampling and demonstration

of products, with short-term sales generation as their primary objective. Persson agrees that relationship building often is a secondary objective, but that the FMCG industry is more inclined towards direct sales than higher-involvement industries and business-to-business markets, that more often have relationship building as the primary campaign objective. Yet, experiential event marketing campaigns are popular within the FMCG industry, and have added a much needed layer of depth and finesse to traditional sampling activities. This does, however, raise some important points. If the direct sales generation is considered the main objective of the campaign at the expense of the consumer-brand relationship strengthening, then the causality between the experiential event marketing and the brand relationship quality promoted by academia, surely must be suffering. The experience gained at the event risks to be short-lived and shallow. We want to investigate this relationship, and do so not only to look at the direct causality between the two concepts, but also through emphasizing the time aspect of experiential event marketing's effect on brand relationship quality. This way Fournier's (1998; 2000) brand relationship quality concept can be tested in a next context, through a new method, and the relational effects of experiential event marketing can be put to the test in a more nuanced fashion than in previous research.

In Susan Fournier's (1998) model, brand relationship strength is a measure of the intensity and endurance of the bond between the customer and the brand, where relationship stability is the desirable outcome. As for brand relationship quality (BRQ) Fournier highlights the factors Interdependence, Love/Commitment, Partner Quality, Self-Connection, Nostalgic Attachment and Intimacy as relationships facets affecting the quality of the brand relationship (2000). The research stream does, however, lack empirically and quantitatively tested applications of the brand relationship quality theory, and its facets. In particular, the field of experiential marketing has yet to be synthesized and tested with Fournier's brand relationship quality factors. In order to empirically test Fournier's brand relationship quality theory, the model will be applied to the concept of experiential event marketing, and tested through a repeated measurement study, set within the FMCG industry. This way, the connection between the two phenomena: brand relationship quality and experiential event marketing will be tested over time. More explicitly, this study aims to answer the following questions:

***Does experiential event marketing have an impact on brand relationship quality? If so, to what extent and for how long?***

## 1.1 Aim and contribution

Fournier (1998) claims that brand relationship quality is closely linked to the lived experiences of the customer. Yet, even though the two phenomena experiential event marketing and brand relationship quality appear to be closely linked, there has been little research done on the connection between the two. Therefore, this study will outline the linkage between the two concepts, as we aim to measure the direct and longer-term effects of brand relationship quality in association to an experiential marketing event.

In shedding light onto the connection between these two highly relevant concepts, and investigating how time affects the strength of the connection, we hope to fill some of the gaps in the insofar lacking research made in this field. Contributions will be theoretically applicable in that they will validate or invalidate Fournier's (2000) scale in a new context, through a never-before tested measurement method. Moreover, the relevance of the underexplored experiential event marketing concept will be put to the test in an adequate setting, through a suitable measurement. There are also managerial learnings to draw from this study. Practitioners can draw conclusions of if-to and how-to manage their brand relationship quality through experiential event marketing. More specifically, this research aims to provide managerial implications by introducing managers to how they can apply the brand relationship quality scale to measure the effects of their offline marketing efforts and gain an understanding of its effectiveness. Due to today's ease of measuring the return on online marketing investments, there is an urgent call for feasible measurement methods for offline event marketing (Costello, 2017). This repeated measure approach using Fournier's (2000) BRQ scale is an attempt to answer that call.

In doing so, we hope to inspire future researchers to more rigorously explore this space, and help managers understand the highly topical subject of lived brand experiences, something marketers around the globe are putting more and more efforts towards. Marketing today is not anymore just about promoting a product, but instead about creating valuable and enriching customer interactions with the brand (Richard, 1999).

## 2. Theoretical framework

This section presents the theoretical foundation for the study. Firstly, the concept of consumer marketing is being outlined and defined. Thereafter, FMCG as a discipline within consumer marketing is explained. Thirdly, and as seen as another discipline within consumer marketing, the consumer-brand relationship marketing approach is explained, criticized, and argued for. Within this discussion, Fournier's (1998; 2000) BRQ concept and constructs are presented and elaborated on. Thereafter, and as seen as a related discipline to consumer-brand management, the experiential event marketing research stream is introduced. Ultimately, the theoretical discussion results in seven *a* and *b* hypotheses and a conceptual research model, which conclude the chapter.

The study takes its theoretical stance from a business administration perspective, within the context of marketing. Marketing as an academic discipline is generally divided into consumer marketing and business-to-business marketing (Doyle, 2016), where this study is set within the context of the former. Consumer marketing is closely linked to consumer behavior research, where the former studies the consumer marketplace from a marketer's perspective and the latter has the same focus area, but from a consumer point-of view (Miller, 2008). For this reason, consumer marketing as a field is heavily influenced by consumer behavior research, and so is this study. Hence, some of the theoretical background will be set within the consumer behavior discipline, but will eventually venture back to the consumer marketing field. Human relationship research, as characterized by psychological, sociocultural, and relational dimensions, has a strong impact on both consumer marketing and consumer behavior, and has set the foundation for the brand relationship research field (Fournier, 1998).



*Figure 1. The theoretical framework with its stance in consumer marketing influenced by consumer behavior and human relationships*



## 2.1 Consumer marketing

The notion of value has long constituted the foundation of the consumer marketing research field, and still does today. In Sidney Levy's (1959) epoch-changing article he claims that consumers not solely value products based on their functionality but just as well on their meaning, and their effects on other people's perceptions of us. This preference complexity is displayed through consumers taking multiple factors, such as aesthetics, social pressure, and convenience into consideration in the point of action. The question the consumer poses is not anymore restricted to "Do I need this?" but is increasingly shifting to "Do I want this?". In line with Levy, Fishbein (1975) emphasized the centrality of affect towards the consumption object.

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) built on to Levy by adding the experiential dimension. This dimension once again stresses the "want" alongside the "need". The authors do not favor one perspective over another, and consider them complementary rather than supplementary. Hence, solely regarding the customer as an information processor is fallacious since many purchase situations are characterized by fantasies, feelings, and fun. Hedonic responses, arousal, exploration, and creativity come to play when consuming, and external factors affect the consumer input. These factors are often characterized by subjective features, symbolic benefits, and nonverbal benefits. The response to these is created through emotions, imagery, fantasies, as well as perceived experience, and are evaluated on the basis of fun, enjoyment and pleasure just as likely as they are depending on function, results and purpose.

Later scholars continue to support this multidimensional notion of consumers' perceived value. The experiential aspect remains important, and consumer behavior researchers maintain the centrality of subjective consumption, with emotional responses and experiential interactions with a product being key (McCracken, 1986). Due to these changing consumer behaviors and market dynamics, traditional marketing, with its narrow focus on utility (Levy, 1969), functionality (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982), one-way communication (Godson, 2009), and short time horizons (Grundlach & Murphy, 1992), scholars increasingly emphasized the rise of a new dominant marketing research stream. Cultural meaning was put forward as a central principle in consumer choices (McCracken, 1986). This meaning needs to be transferred to the consumer, which according to McCracken (1986) is done through

advertising or the so-called fashion system. Consumer marketing as a research field had at this point experienced a paradigm shift. Transactional types of exchange (Grundlach & Murphy, 1993) were increasingly overtaken in theory (Webster, 1992) as well as in practice (Peppers & Rogers, 1993), and the era of relational approaches to consumer exchanges was initiated (Dwyer et al., 1987).

### **2.1.1 FMCG as a consumer marketing discipline**

Fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies were at the very heart of the twentieth century traditional marketing paradigm (Bundel & Lockett, 2011), and are therefore also important in the marketing paradigm shift proposed above. For decades, FMCGs were fully reliant on traditional marketing tools and techniques (Bundel & Lockett, 2011) following the linear path of analysing consumer preferences and behaviours, and subsequently tailoring advertising messages accordingly, creating large-scaled, one-way communication in form of traditional media advertising, with the consumer as a passive receiver. Even though these traditional processes and communication methods are predominantly used in marketing FMCG products today, they have to an ever-larger extent been challenged by novel, alternative approaches (Grundlach & Murphy, 1993). Consumers have become more and more advertising resistant, literate, and cynical, and consequently demand new forms of value. Hence, FMCG companies have had to adapt their ways of marketing products and creating consumer value according to today's demanding consumer (Bundel & Lockett, 2011). Trust and interdependence with FMCG products are therefore increasingly being built through lived experiences and committed relationships (Fournier, 1998). Even though this more committed and experiential side of FMCG marketing has emerged, the industry is characterized by low involvement products, with which classical relationship factors such as trust do not play an all too critical role in purchase decisions (Mishra & Kesharwani, 2016). Due to the reliance on speedy product turnover and the products' low involvement character, longer-term relationship building activities are often down-prioritized in favour of short-term sales driving and promotional activities. These activities have increasingly become experiential and customer value focused, but with generating direct or short-term sales as their primary objective (Persson, 2017).

### **2.1.2 Consumer-brand relationship marketing**

By early 1990's, the consumer relationship marketing research stream had started to gain in relevance and attention. As a natural extension of the cultural meaning transfer concept (McCracken, 1986), relationship marketing pioneers affirmed that when this meaning is transferred from the brand to the consumer, a relationship is formed (Fournier, 1998). The brand was now highlighted as an important and active relationship partner, whereas previous research had focused on interpersonal relationships, mainly in business markets (Godson, 2009). The consumer-brand relationship as a study subject is closely related to similar streams of research such as symbolic consumption, brand personality, and brand loyalty (Fournier, 1998), but has through its maturation been regarded as an individual research area.

Consumer-brand relationship marketing, and Fournier's (1998) research on the brand as an active relationship partner, is recognized as one of the six paradigms of, or approaches to, brand management. Brand management, being one of the more prevalent themes within the extensive research arena that is consumer marketing, offers both transactional and relational approaches to understanding brand-consumer exchanges (Bjerre et al., 2009). The so-called relational approach to brand management, championed by Fournier (1998), views the brand as a vital relationship partner, and introduces the consumer-brand dyad as a central theme. It is built upon animism and human relationships, implying that the brand needs to be perceived as a real-life, humanoid, and an active partner in order to gain strong bonds with its users. This relational approach was disruptive at its inception in the 1990s, and founded a fifth approach to brand management, complementing the economic, identity, consumer-based, and personality approaches, and laying the foundation to the latter community and cultural approaches. The approach sharply contrasts to the first two brand management perspectives, which center around the functional and corporate dimensions of the brand, and promote one-way messages from the marketer to the consumer (Bjerre et al., 2009). This way, it distinguish itself from the traditional, transactional type of exchange, which is shorter in duration, smaller in investment, more narrow in scope, and less complex in structure (Grundlach & Murphy, 1993). The rise of this contrasting, relational approach provoked a paradigm shift in both marketing thought (Webster, 1992) and practice (Peppers and Rogers, 1993). This vastly influential approach to consumer exchanges (Grundlach & Murphy, 1993; Fournier, 1998; Bjerre et al., 2009) shares the notion of the centrality of the consumer with the consumer-based approach, but promotes a more interactive, reciprocal exchange between

the two parties, something it shares with the personality approach. The two are interchangeable in many aspects, but differ in their scientific and philosophical backgrounds, consumer perspectives, and methodologies. The relational approach was in this study chosen over the personality approach due to its emphasis on lived experiences.

In its (original) essence, the relational approach is purely qualitative in its method, and promotes a deep and holistic understanding of the personal context in which the brand is consumed. The central model, the BRQ construct, was, however, later quantified by Fournier (2000) in order to enable measurability and scalable results. In doing so she moved the BRQ construct away from one of the backbones of the relational research stream, namely its phenomenological, qualitative, constructionist research tradition. The refined BRQ scale (2000) is thusly, merely founded in the relational approach, and not impregnated by it. This forces one to question its academic rigour and credibility, but also makes it an interesting topic for further investigation.

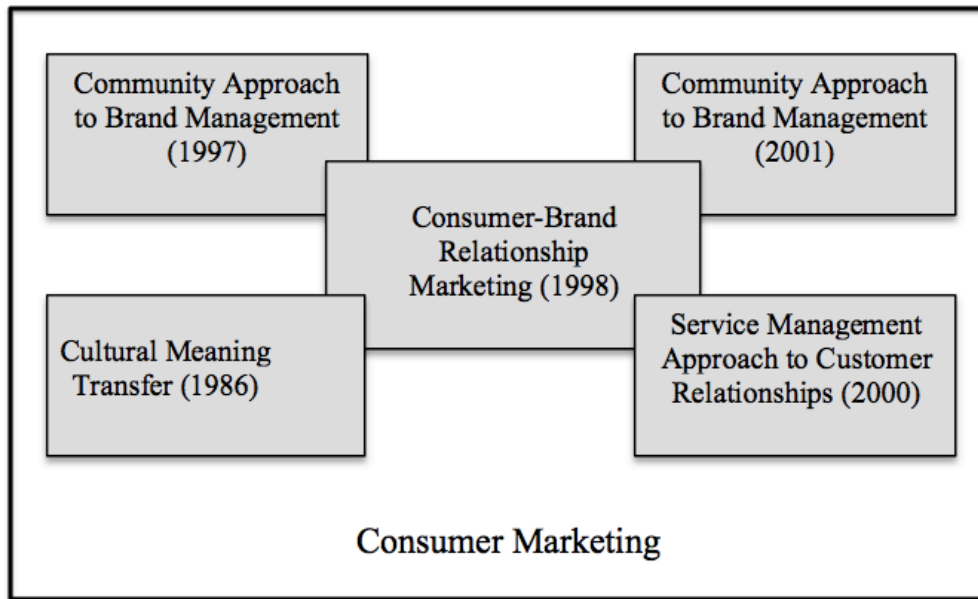
The subsequent community approach to brand management is in many senses an expansion of the relational approach. The relational dyad is transformed into a triad, where the brand acts as a facilitator in the consumer-to-consumer relationship. The two major proponents of this approach, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), emphasize the interactive involvement of groups of consumers, and the social nature of the brand as key in the creation of value and meaning. There are several reasons why this approach was not chosen for the study. Principally, the notion of the brand as a mere observing facilitator in the value creation process makes measurements more complex. Furthermore, the fact that brand subcultures and communities (even though desirable) are a rarity rather than a rule in practice, can be said to make such results irrelevant for the general majority of marketing scholars and professionals. Thusly, in order to find a clear-cut and adequate measurement scale, and to gain relevant and generalizable results, the community approach was disqualified. Instead the BRQ scale, owing to its relational origin and quantifiable results, was chosen.

### **2.1.2.1 Contrasting views to consumer-brand relationship marketing**

This section aims to show and discuss that Fournier's (1998; 2000) relationship research is neither a universal truth, nor exclusive in investigating brand relationships in the consumer marketing sphere. Several of the above depicted approaches to brand management offer explanations to the complex phenomenon of consumer brand relationships. So does the services marketing approach, which effectively highlights the interaction between customers and companies (Akaka & Vargo, 2015). In contrast to Fournier (1998), Akaka and Vargo emphasize a more complex, holistic, and experiential view on consumer value, as they claim the producer-customer exchange to be a service ecosystem where service contexts are related through aggregate levels of interactions and institutions (2015). The creation of value is often a process of complex networks, and co-creation is bridging geographical and cultural boundaries, and does consequently involve entire economies. The service ecosystem is highly relational, and always customer-centric (2004), which differs from Fournier (1998) who directs lesser focus to customer centricity. Similar to Akaka and Vargo (2015), Grönroos and Voima (2013) argue that the good is simply a bearer of operant resources, which then creates value in the interaction with the consumer (Grönroos & Voima, 2013). The customer-centric view that Grönroos and Voima (2013) have on value co-creation suggests that value appears as a function of the customer's lived experiences and logic, which somewhat corresponds to the approach that Fournier (1998) takes when she emphasizes the lived experiences of the consumer. Vargo and Lusch (2004) argue that the traditional marketing perspective was based on the exchange of goods and tangible resources while the new perspective has a revised logic that focuses on intangible resources, value co-creation and relationships. Earlier findings by Grönroos (2000) state that branding no longer exists in a vacuum, but rather is something that develops and changes when the customer relates to the flow of brand messages, originating from employees, systems, physical product elements in the service process, word of mouth *et cetera*. Therefore, according to Grönroos (2000), brands are given meaning in the minds of the customers through the services, goods, or combination of elements of a solution. In line with Grönroos (2000), Schultz and Barnes (1999) believe that a brand relationship develops in a series of brand contacts experienced by customers. A brand contact is being defined as an image and information-bearing experience obtained by a consumer (Schultz & Barnes, 1999). They share the notion of a brand-consumer relationship being characterized by high mutual interdependence and mutual cooperation with Fournier (1998), but diverge from her in their belief in the highly processual and contextual nature of brand relationships. Additionally, their

proposed relationship perspective neglects the value creation on the side of the firm by claiming value to be created in the customer sphere, while Fournier (1998) insists on the notion of a value exchange.

As indicated above, Fournier's (1998) consumer-brand relationship research has been both developed by scholars in the same research stream, and challenged by scholars in similar but separate schools of thought. She no longer holds the most far-reaching perspective on customer-centricity and interactive communication, nor does she seriously take third-party involvement into account. Furthermore, the relevance of the services marketing affirmation that the traditional demarcation between producers and consumers has become blurred and distorted, as consumers assume increasingly active roles in the marketing process (Grönroos & Voima, 2013; Gamble & Gilmore, 2013; Akaka & Vargo, 2015), has been widely endorsed. Nevertheless, and even though this stream of research represents many groundbreaking advances, it does lack in measurability, and practical applicability, which it shares with among others the above described community approach to brand management. Furthermore, it has been critiqued for being too vague and theoretical to bear any actual organizational value (Lusch & Vargo, 2014). Fournier's (1998) contributions have, to the contrary, been quantified in order to gain measurability, and acknowledge the active contribution of the brand, all without losing theoretical relevance. The brand relationship quality measure is still today seen as a central element in consumer-brand relationship theory. Owing to these favorable features, her theoretical groundwork has been chosen over competing scholars' in laying the theoretical foundation for this study. The below model depicts consumer-brand relationship marketing as a discipline within consumer marketing, its underlying concepts (behind to the left) and similar approaches having challenged it (in front to the right).



*Figure 2. Consumer-brand relationship marketing and selected underlying and related concepts*

### **2.1.2.2 Brand relationship quality (BRQ) – conceptual foundations**

Brand relationship quality (BRQ) is a central concept within Fournier's (1998) research on consumer-brand relationship marketing. The multidimensionality of the consumer-brand relationship marketing research phenomenon, and the rigour of the BRQ construct calls for a comprehensive explanation of the concept and its components, as well as its origins and influences.

Interactions with the immaterial world are easier achieved through anthropomorphizing the concerned objects. Consumers are generally open to assign personality qualities to objects or brands (Aaker, 1997). Spokespersons chosen by the brand, and other human associations not controlled by the brand (McGrath & Sherry, 1993), are effective ways of making a brand a vital entity in the consumer's mind. Furthermore, for the brand to become a true relationship partner it must possess behavioral qualities enough to make it an active, contributing companion.

Relationships add and structure meaning in people's lives (Berscheid and Peplau 1983; Hinde 1995), mainly through psychological, sociocultural, and relational dimensions. Furthermore, relationships affect and are affected by the contexts in which they find themselves. They can positively affect both profound and more trivial life themes (Csikszentmihalyi and Beattie,

1979), as well as life projects and tasks (Cantor et al., 1987), and may add more or less significant meaning to the individuals undertaking the relationships, depending on the level of relationship depth (Fournier, 1998). These psychological aspects interplay with the sociocultural dimension, which has been a central theme in consumer behavior research (Holbrook, 1993; Holt, 1997; Olsen, 1995; Sherry, 1991; Thompson, 1996) since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century consumption transformation. Adding on to this, relationships exist parallel to, or even within, other relationships (Parks and Eggert, 1991). They are distinguished from the isolated transaction (Berscheid and Peplau, 1983), in that they involve repeated exchanges. The exchanges evolve along with the parties' interactions, as well as the contextual environment. A prominent model in conceptualizing the temporality of relationships is the relationship life cycle model, and its initiation, growth, maintenance, deterioration, and dissolution phases (Levinger, 1983). In order to develop the relationship from one level to another, several processes come into play, but intimacy, commitment, love, trust, behavioral interdependence, and self-other integration are emphasized as key (Fournier, 1998).

Based on these assumptions, Fournier (1998) constructed a model where the brand acts as an active relationship partner to its consumers. The initial model was created through a discovery-oriented research project where phenomenological interviewing was used. This way, the concept could be explored, and a more holistic picture of the brand relationship proposal could be established. Through her exploratory study she cemented the following factors as brand relationship quality influencers: (i) Love/Passion, (ii) Self-Connection, (iii) Commitment, (iv) Interdependence, (v) Intimacy, and (vi) Brand Partner Quality. Subsequently, she furthered her research in order to develop a reliable and valid scale for measuring brand relationship quality. She refined her original facets and arrived at the following measurement factors: (i) Interdependence, (ii) Love/Commitment, (iii) Partner Quality, (iv) Self-Connection, (v) Nostalgic Attachment, (vi) Intimacy (Consumer-Brand), and (vii) Intimacy (Brand-Consumer). These seven first-order facets were operationalized through a questionnaire containing a number of questions related to each facet, all counting towards the latent BRQ factor (see appendix 1).

The BRQ factor is an indicator of overall relationship quality, depth, and strength. This indicator is also retrieved from human relationship research, and has in this field helped predicting consequences and outcomes such as relationship stability and satisfaction (Lewis & Spanier, 1979), tendencies of accommodation (Rusbult et al. 1991), attribution biases



(Bradbury and Fincham, 1990), tolerance to betrayal (as in a more forgiveness inclined attitude) (Berscheid 1983), and objection towards available alternatives (Johnson and Rusbult 1989). The brand relationship quality indicator's encompassing and rigorous nature, and the consumer-brand relationship concept's closeness to interpersonal relationships, makes it a credible and viable latent factor in Fournier's brand relationship quality construct. The BRQ concept has become a multifaceted construct, encompassing the dimensions of affective and socioemotional attachments (through the facets Love/Passion and Self-Connection), behavioral ties (Interdependence and Commitment), and supportive cognitive beliefs (Intimacy and Brand Partner Quality).

#### **2.1.2.2.1 BRQ facets**

The relational *Interdependence* factor stems from interpersonal relationship research. It has been emphasized as one out of four core conditions for a relationship to exist (Hinde, 1995), is often both operational and social (Grundlach & Murphy, 1993), and comes hand in hand with both parties being active contributors and to some extent reliant one another (Fournier, 1998). This sense of mutual reliance is often evolved into patterns, and leads to constructive reactions toward bad behavior and controlling impulses towards negative reactions (Rusbult et al., 1991). Due to its closeness to the accommodation tendency of the BRQ construct and its deep roots in interpersonal relationship research, the Interdependence factor proves a suitable component in the BRQ model.

The *Love/Commitment* factor has received vast amount of scholarly attention, and is thusly a stable and reliable factor within the BRQ construct. The two separate factors of Love/Passion and Commitment of Fournier's (1998) original theory were in the later (2000) BRQ scale merged into one facet due to the perceived proximity of the two. Both original facets were prevalent in Fournier's (1998) original phenomenological study, where all three studied consumers demonstrated love and commitment toward certain brands. Fournier concludes that at the core of all strong brand relationships lies an affective sense of human-to-human-like love. Commitment, as in "the intention to to behave in a manner supportive of relationship longevity" (Fournier, 1998, p. 365) is also central in the study. This is shown through the informants' various expressions of brand commitment (Fournier, 1998), which correspond well with Johnson's (1973) commitment conceptualization, where a strong personal dedication to carrying out a line of action (called personal commitment), and previous actions

leading to a sense of having to continue with a certain line of action (called behavioral commitment) constitute the two commitment dimensions.

For consumers and their brands, just as well as for married couples, the overall relationship strength and satisfaction are correlated with the level of the capacity of the partners to fulfill their roles. The brand *Partner Quality* concept includes the components of (i) a felt positive orientation of the brand toward the consumer, (ii) the consumer notion of reliability, dependability, and predictability toward the brand, (iii) the brand's conformity to certain implicit relationship rules, (iv) a consumer belief in the brand delivering and performing according to expectations, and (v) accountability for actions (Clark et al., 1994).

Key to the *Self-Connection* facet is the notion of mirroring the consumer self in the brand. The brand identity and theme must reflect certain aspects of the self. The self does not need to be the present self but could also be a nostalgic, past self, or desired self (Kleine et al., 1994). The self-connection facet is supported within Fournier's (1998) study, which indicates that strong self-connection strengthens relationships by heightening protective feelings such as dependency and uniqueness.

The *Nostalgic Attachment* facet is closely linked to Self-Connection, and could even be seen as a sub-category. In Fournier's (2000) scale, however, the facet has been separated from Self-Connection due to its past orientation. It does, nonetheless, also draw on Kleine's et al. (1994) notion of possessions' ability to help narrate and reflect one's life story. This theme is further supported in consumer research by Holbrook (1993) who claims consumer nostalgic attachments towards goods and services to be an important factor in consumer choices.

*Intimacy* does not come to play in all relationships, but increases with the intensity of the relationship. Hinde (1979) emphasizes that daily life relationships can indeed survive without intimacy. Reis and Shaver (1988) suggest that the deeper the meaning manifested in a certain relationship, the more intimate it is. Somewhat contrasting to Hinde (1979), they claim this to lead to more durable relationship bonds, a notion that is supported by Fournier's (1998) study. The constructed intimacy is built up around cognitive consumer processes such as the usage of nicknames for certain favorite brands. Such personalization, and personal experiences and associations create a narrative in which the brand gains a central position (Escalas, 1996). Interaction events will strengthen this narrative, and accumulate over time. Through this,

intimacy is deepened, and a relationship culture will be established (Wood, 1982), and support stability, through biased, positive partner associations (Murray et al., 1996). This further supports Reis and Shaver's (1988) notion of intimacy leading to stronger relationship bonds, and legitimizes the use of the intimacy facet as a brand relationship quality indicator.

### **2.1.3 Experiential marketing**

Schmitt (1999) suggests that the experiences a company delivers to its customers are vital to success of the company. Creating memorable experiences is critical to retaining relationships with old customers as well as developing relationships with new customers (Yelkur, 2000). In line with Schmitt (1999), Fournier (1998) claims that brand relationships are valid at the degree of the consumers' lived experiences. On top of these affinities, the novel research field of experiential marketing shares a great number of other aspects with relationship marketing (Wood, 2008). Henceforth, this study will further investigate the experiential marketing concept as closely related to the consumer-brand relationship marketing approach.

Experiential marketing became à jour as a result of the gained traction of the experiential dimension in consumer behavior, championed by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and McCracken (1986). In 1999, Bernd Schmitt established the term experiential marketing as a contrast to so-called traditional marketing. In line with Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), he claims traditional marketing to view consumers as rational decision-makers solely caring about functional features and benefits. Experiential marketing on the other hand views consumers as rational and emotional, just as concerned with achieving rewarding consumption experiences. The concept is founded on the four principles of (i) customer experience in focus, (ii) consumption as a holistic experience, (iii) customers being both rational and emotional, and (iv) methodologies and tools being highly eclectic (Schmitt, 1999).

Schmitt's (1999) foundation of the experiential marketing concept has then been built onto by subsequent scholars. Smilansky suggests that experiential marketing is a process to identify and meet customers' needs and aspirations through some sort of activity, engaging them into a two way communication with the goal of bringing them closer to the brand, and adding value to their lives (2009, p. 5). Experiential marketing is tightly connected to positive emotional responses, which in its turn increases the likelihood of customers developing

loyalty toward the brand (Tafesse, 2016). The noun experience is defined as “the apprehension of an object or emotion through the senses,” and the verb experience is defined as “to participate in personally; undergo” (Joy & Sherry, 2003, p. 259).

### **2.1.3.1 Experiential event marketing**

The concept of experiential marketing can be applied to many areas, such as retailing, branding, and event marketing (Williams, 2006). Since experiential marketing can be an abstract and vague concept, the focus of this study has been limited to experiential event marketing, that is experiential marketing with some form of real-life element. Event marketing as a communication tool is closely related to the perceived experience of the attendees (Khotimah et. al., 2015). Often being seen as a key element in successful experiential marketing, the event serves well as a limiting factor for the wider concept of experiential marketing (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 1999). For this reason, event marketing will in this study be seen as a subgroup to experiential marketing, even though event marketing can fulfill other purposes than strictly experiential ones, and regardless of the fact that scholars vary in their view of the two concepts; they are seen as either interchangeable (Miller, 2008), subordinated to each other, intertwined, or independent (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 1999). Ergo, the studied concept will be experiential event marketing as seen as experiential marketing in form of events.

The ways in which marketers and advertisers utilize communication channels have shifted. Traditional mass media occupy a relatively smaller share today than ten years ago, and companies no longer solely consider consumers as rational buyers that make decisions based on functions and benefits, but just as well as emotional buyers that seek for pleasurable experiences (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 1999). As a result, companies are searching for new ways of appealing to customers, with events having become a popular channel for such efforts (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013), due to its focus on audience engagement and authentic experiences (Tafesse, 2016). The concept can be defined as “a communication tool whose purpose is to disseminate a company’s marketing messages by involving the target groups in experiential activity” (Drenger et al., 2008, p. 138), and “the practice of promoting the interest of an organization and its brands by associating the organization with a specific activity” (Shimp, 1993, p. 8).

The experiential event marketing concept has also been approached by scepticism amongst both scholars and practitioners. The research stream has not sufficiently been able to prove its effectiveness and efficiency in relation to other marketing channels, and valid scales, measurements, and calculations on for example return on investments are still lacking (Wood, 2008). Wood argues that there is a risk of becoming overly reliant on inadequate research, self-affirming measurements, and a general bias aimed at legitimizing the undertaken experiential event marketing effort (2008). Another issue of experiential event marketing that is being emphasized by previous literature is the fact that an experiential event often is part of a much greater marketing strategy, which makes it difficult to evaluate the effect of the event in separate from the overall strategy (Pitta et al., 2006). Experiential marketing practitioners are slowly developing methods of actively measuring the outcomes of experiential campaigns. So far, however, these measurements are often sales conversion centered, implying that there is a general incline toward shorter-term customer conversion, than on longer-term relationship building (Costello, 2017).

## **2.2 Hypothesis generation and conceptual research model**

The experiential event marketing concept's embeddedness within relationship marketing theory, and its apparent orientation toward emotional bonds, two-party interactions and lived experiences makes it closely related to Fournier's (1998; 2000) consumer-brand relationship theories and concepts. This leads us to believe that it will have positive effects on the BRQ facets. Yet, the nature of the FMCG industry being characterized by low involvement products and promotional activities, along with experiential marketing generally being measured on sales conversion, affirms the belief that the hypothesized positive brand relationship quality effects will be short-term and decline with time. Based on these theoretical insights, and through testing the respective BRQ constructs over time with the experiential event marketing as the introduced treatment, we have formed the following hypotheses and conceptual research model:

*H1a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt Interdependence with the brand*

*H1b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt Interdependence with the brand declines with time*

*H2a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt love and commitment toward the brand*

*H2b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt love and commitment toward the brand declines with time*

*H3a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt brand Partner Quality. H3b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt brand Partner Quality declines with time*

*H4a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt Self-Connection with the brand*

*H4b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt Self-Connection with the brand declines with time*

*H5a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt Intimacy toward the brand*

*H5b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt Intimacy toward the brand declines with time*

*H6a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt Intimacy from the brand toward themselves*

*H6b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt Intimacy from the brand toward themselves declines with time*

*H7a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt Nostalgic Attachment toward the brand*

*H7b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt Nostalgic Attachment from the brand toward themselves declines with time*

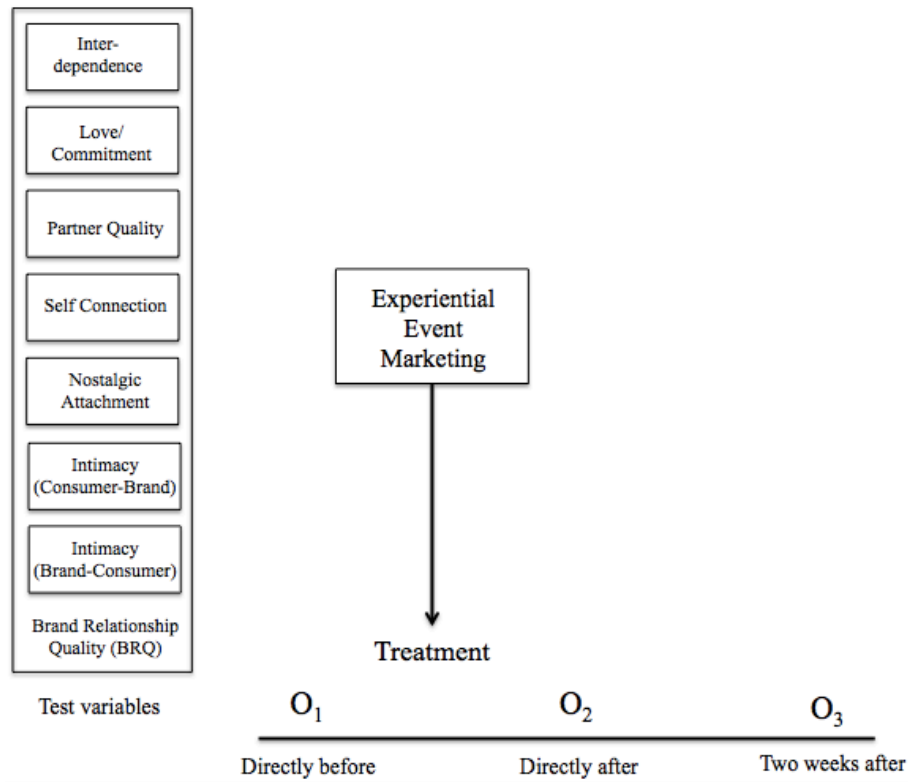


Figure 3. Conceptual research model

### 3. Method

This section will present the method used when studying the effects of experiential event marketing on brand relationship quality. Initially, the research approach will be presented, and the chosen within-subjects experiment design will be explained. A unique factor in this study is the time aspect, that is the longitudinal approach of the repeated measurement. This approach will be argued for, followed by an in-depth presentation of the pre- and main studies. Lastly, the sampling and data collection processes will be accounted for.

#### 3.1 Research approach

This study takes a deductive approach. Hypotheses were developed out of established theoretical concepts, and will subsequently be tested and analyzed through the collection of empirical data (Befring, 1992). Although being a well-established way of reasoning and conducting research, the deductive stance holds substantial risk; most notably a so-called researcher bias where the authors' own strive to find data that aligns with their hypotheses may distort the true results (Bryman & Bell, 2013, p. 627). This is dealt with and will be controlled to the extent possible through setting up screening questions and systematically testing validity to not only examine the expected correlation between the concepts, but also to ensure that this expected correlation is one of casual character.

Through the collection of survey based quantitative data we hope to find explanations of how the experiential marketing treatment produces change in the BRQ variables, *id est* examining the causal relationship between the variables. In this type of study, which does not explore a broad phenomenon but instead examines the association between certain variables, accuracy becomes a critical factor. Focus needs to be put toward minimizing biases, maximizing reliability, and permitting inferences in the variable causality (Sachdeva, 2008, p. 77). Therefore, the forthcoming sections will explain and ensure the study's internal and external strength, as well as outlining its limitations and weaknesses.



## 3.2 Research design

The study follows as so-called within-subjects experiment design. In contrast to other types of experimental research designs there is no respondent division into experimental and control groups. Instead every participant is exposed to the planned intervention (Saunders et al. 2012, p. 175). This so-called repeated measures approach studies the participants prior to the intervention, and one or more times afterwards. The first measurement constitutes the baseline against which the changes in the test variables can be measured. Then, the planned intervention occurs, and introduces the treatment, which in our case is exposure to the experiential marketing event. This is followed by another measurement occasion in which the researcher expects to find deviations from the initial measurement occasion. There can then be more treatment introductions and measurements occasions (p. 175). As for the case with this study there will be one more measurement, taking place two weeks after the planned intervention, in order to measure whether the immediate effects of the experiential marketing activity persisted, decreased, or even increased (see figure 3). This also works as a test of the reliability of the study. In retesting the respondents' answers we can assess the sample's temporal stability, where a high correlation between the two obtained scores indicate a higher reliability (Pallant, 2010, p. 244). The hypothesis is that the introduction of the treatment will provoke an immediate positive increase in the test variables, which then will decline on the final measurement occasion.

The within-subjects experiment design is both advantageous and disadvantageous comparing to between-subjects experiments. It requires fewer participants, but might lead to weariness and participation reluctance amongst study subjects due to the continuous measurements. This may in turn affect the internal validity. It also risks invoking a sample drop-off, which not only affects the final number of completed experiments, but also can be said to distort the study's internal validity in that only the most engaged participants might continue, leading to a skewness in the collected answers (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 176). The experiment takes place on the field, which implies lesser control of factors in the research process, such as sample selection and external influences, than in a laboratory setting, negatively affecting the internal validity. It does, however, lead to a greater external validity, due to its real-world setting (p. 176). The measurements are carried out in form of questionnaires, a research strategy that has clear advantages and disadvantages, but suits this type of quantitative study

well (Befring, 1992). The questionnaire as a tool for data collection, and its design in this study will be further discussed below.

Even though the method and data collection process mainly follow a quantitative method, there are a number of qualitative features in the study as well. Firstly, in order to gain insights from and understanding of the subjects of experiential marketing and brand relationship quality, in-depth interviews with three industry professionals were carried out. These served the purpose of initially ensuring that the two phenomena were connected in such a way that a study of their causal relationship would be fruitful. Furthermore, it gave us confidence that a strengthened brand relationship quality was a relevant and desirable end-goal when marketers considered using experiential event marketing, but provoked the idea that the FMCG industry would be especially interesting to study due to its evident focus on shorter-term sales driving activities rather than longer-term relationship building. Ergo, if there were positive longer-term effects within the FMCG sphere it would yield significant results in most other, higher involvement industries. Additionally, all three interviewees agreed that there has not been enough research on how to measure brand related aspects, such as brand relationship quality, in the context of experiential event marketing (Costello, 2017; Persson, 2017; Stenhammar, 2017). These initial insights and affirmations strengthened our notion that the study was not based on false assumptions, which would have gravely impacted the study's reliability (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 192).

Furthermore, the structure of the pre-study also deviated from the mono method quantitative approach the study generally can be said take. The pre-study consisted of nine semi-structured interviews where a questionnaire draft was examined by ticking "relevant/irrelevant" and "clear/unclear" in two of the four nominal scale boxes attached to every question. These answers were then discussed with the interviewees in an explorative in-depth manner. The inclusion of these two features in the overall study could imply that the study is one of a mixed method approach (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 165). Nevertheless, the dominance of the main study quantitative data in the study results, along with the generally deductive approach, leads us to view this study as one of a quantitative deductive nature.

### 3.3 Time horizon

Time is an important factor in any research. In order to emphasize and include the time aspect in the best possible manner, this study takes a longitudinal study approach. A longitudinal study is a term that can be distinguished into two categories - time series and repeated measures (Sachdeva, 2008, p. 83). Time series is often being used when measuring many waves of measures, while a repeated measure is being used when having fewer waves of measures (p. 81). Thus, a repeated measure approach is being used in this study. Through this approach we were able to gather numerical data on changes in consumer attitudes. This became the basis for the data analysis.

The longitudinal study approach that this repeated measure takes was carried out by using questionnaires during three waves of measures. This method was used owing to its ability to measure experiential event marketing effects on brand relationship quality over time. This will also produce a more multidimensional and reliable result than a cross-sectional study, and the longer-term effects of the experiential marketing activity can also be studied, not only the direct ones. However, one must consider the risk of loss in respondents when there are too many waves of measures. Therefore, the study was limited to a three steps measure. These waves of measure were conducted by creating three questionnaires with the same concept related questions, but with customized descriptive and control questions on each questionnaire. We were adamant in not changing any of the concept related questions between the measurements, in order to be sure to consistently measure the same facets, and thus work toward further strengthening internal validity. The first questionnaire was distributed before the event, the second questionnaire was distributed right after the event, and the last questionnaire was sent out two weeks after the event. The inevitable fact that the participants became aware of being studied already at the first measurement wave threatens the study's internal validity (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 175). We recognized this and tried to minimize it to as large an extent as possible, by clearly stating our independence from the study object, Santa Maria.

### 3.4 Pre-study

A pre-study was carried out to pilot-test the items and constructs, and to ensure the quality of the questions and prevent potential manipulation of the questions. In addition, the pre-study contributed to the quality of the questionnaires by making sure that the questions were correctly understood, with regard to formulation, language, and content. The pre-study therefore helped indicating whether the original questions derived from Fournier's model were translated from English to Swedish in a satisfactory way. There is always a risk related to the translation of questions, as the translated questions might not entirely correspond to the formulations used in the original model, which might hurt validity (Bryman & Bell, 2013, p. 234). However, there is also a risk of keeping the questionnaire in its original language and formulations. Exposing participants to a questionnaire in a non-native language both excludes all non-English speakers from the study, and risks to create misinterpretations, threatening the study's reliability (p. 234). Through translating and adapting the questions to Swedish our respondents can more easily understand and interpret the lexical and idiomatic meanings of the words and sentences. Thus, participant errors such as misinterpretations, and fatigue from deciphering foreign language questions were minimized (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 417). Hence, it was decided to cautiously translate and adapt the questionnaire into Swedish, and test and improve each question's clearness and applicability through the pre-study.

Fournier's original BRQ scale consists of 30 questions. Due to the scale's application in the new experiential event marketing context, and it specifically measuring Swedish consumers, some questions and even constructs might prove superfluous. Hence, the pre-study also worked as tool to evaluate if certain questions could be eliminated due to irrelevance (Bryman & Bell, 2013, p. 240). This step also became an important part in the analysis of the bearing of the BRQ scale in the experimental FMCG event setting. The answers from the pre-study were collected from both colleagues and friends in Stockholm. This may be described as a convenience sample with regard to the sample's accessibility (p. 190). Nonetheless, they are all considered to be within the target group of Santa Maria, a brand that targets a broad market segment. Nine people responded to the pre-study, which was considered to be enough to test the questionnaire and find potential weaknesses.

The pre-study respondents were unanimous in suggesting that the Nostalgic Attachment category was irrelevant in our context. It was widely considered amongst pre-study takers that nostalgia toward a brand will not be changed by something as recent as a brief event one just attended. In a repeated measures study, the questions regarding the Nostalgic Attachment toward the brand were considered highly irrelevant. Consequently, this entire construct, and its two related hypotheses were eliminated. The implications of this will be further discussed below. In addition to this, some intra-category questions were merged, as these were similar to each other. The statements “Brand listens to me”, “Brand makes up for mistakes” and “Brand is responsive to my concerns” were merged, as these were considered to be similar and would be more effectively grouped together in order to save time and prevent frustration. The same was done with “Brand understands my needs”, “Brand knows me well enough to design a product just for me” and “Brand knows a lot about me as a person”, as well as “Know brand history/background” and “Know what brand stands for”. However, questions were never merged across the different categories.

### **3.5 Main study**

In order to successfully measure the BRQ effects of an experiential marketing event we approached a number of experiential marketing and event marketing agencies. This was initially done through e-mail correspondence where the study, its aim, and the potential value for the agency and its clients were explained (see appendix 4). Several agencies did not reply, one declined, and two expressed their interest. After meeting with the latter two, looking at upcoming events fitting our aim and scope, we chose to cooperate with Ryska Posten Event, an established and well-renowned Stockholm-based agency. Since our study is focused on FMCGs, an experiential event for the brand Santa Maria was chosen. Another study opportunity, with the Swedish energy supplier Vattenfall was rejected in favour of Santa Maria. The decision was based on the argument that the intent of this study is to measure an FMCG brand, due to the fact that the BRQ measurement scale was originally developed out of observations of lived experiences with, chiefly, FMCG brands (Fournier, 1998). This way we can assure ourselves that the scale with which we are measuring the brand’s performance suits the type of brand being measured, which in its turn helps ensuring construct validity (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 176). In addition to it fitting well within the FMCG category, Santa Maria as a brand was also deemed suitable for the study due to it being known to the general

public. An unknown brand would risk to create disproportionately positive results (p. 176). Furthermore, the fact that the chosen activation was a public event, implying that anyone could partake in the activity, helped assuring that the sample would not consist of unproportionately loyal customers.

The experiential event was in form of a Santa Maria branded food truck, which was strategically placed outside of larger supermarkets. Santa Maria is a Swedish FMCG brand that is famous for its spices and Mexican food. This event was part of a roadshow, showcasing the brand's newest product line, with the aim of increasing sales on selected products, strengthening relationships and positive emotions toward the brand, and increasing brand awareness (Stenhammar, 2017). The measurement was carried out in one of the first stops on the roadshow, at Willys Eskilstuna, a large low-price supermarket outside of the city center. Eskilstuna is a Swedish city located in Södermanland, with about 70 000 inhabitants. A branded food truck serving tex-mex inspired mini-dishes, a garden decorated outside area, and event-themed music attracted consumers on their way into and out from the supermarket to experience the new flavours. This experiential way of sampling products was primarily focused on increasing direct sales on the selected products (Stenhammar, 2017). Increasing brand relationship quality was consequently only a secondary purpose. This could be said to impact both validity and relevance of the study (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 417), since we intended to measure a dimension that was not primarily aimed to be fulfilled by the chosen activity. This activity, however, can still be seen as relevant to the study owing to the facts that increasing brand relationship quality still is one of the aims of the event (Stenhammar, 2017), and that most experiential FMCG marketing campaigns are similar in design and purpose (Persson, 2017). This makes the chosen activity a relevant example of how experiential event marketing and brand relationship quality are treated in practice. Moreover, this Santa Maria experiential marketing event fits the definitions established in the theory section, both in terms of experience (Joy & Sherry, 2003), event (Drenger et al., 2008; Shimp, 1993), and its overarching conceptual foundations (Schmitt, 1999).

Questionnaires have been chosen as a main source of primary data collection in this study. The questionnaire is a frequently used data collection method, partly due to its efficiency to collect answers from a wide sample (Sachdeva, 2008, p. 111). However, we carefully consider the potential consequences of using questionnaires, such as the potential loss of respondents during the process, something that is especially delicate in the case of

longitudinal studies as these studies require the same respondent to answer the questionnaire at repeated occasions (Bryman & Bell, 2013, p. 234). Measures, in form of for example condensing the questionnaire and utilizing incentives, have been taken accordingly. Valuable advantages related to questionnaires rather than for example structured interviews is the lack of personal bias that may occur in the relationship between the respondent and the interviewer, which can affect the respondent's' answers. Furthermore, there is no risk of variation of question formulations depending on the interviewer (p. 231). For this reason respondents were approached with a questionnaire, but were able to ask us for help if any unclarities.

The questionnaire is based on established questions taken from Fournier's (2000) rigorously developed BRQ scale (see appendix 1). This ensures a more credible measurement, where the operationalized questions are more likely to measure what they intend to than if they were developed by ourselves (Schrauf & Navarro, 2005). An operationalization table with the initial concepts, the operationalized items measuring them, and their respective alphas, are found in the appendix (appendix 5). A Likert scale was chosen as the measurement tool throughout the questionnaire. The level of seven response alternatives was chosen, with agreement as the type of rating, running from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The seven-point scale that was chosen over fewer-choice scales, due to it creating more nuanced answers (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 418), improved normality, and increased reliability (DeVellis, 2006). The six construct headlines were removed from the questionnaire, in order to minimize respondent biases. Moreover, the questions associated with said headlines were mixed in order to further decrease the respondents' biases (DeVellis, 2006).

As the questionnaire initially was distributed to respondents, the theme of the study was introduced, the approximate time for completing the study was stated, and the incentives for participating were presented. In addition to this, it was clearly communicated to the participants that this was an Uppsala University research project and that it was not affiliated with the concerned brand. This was done in order to eliminate any potential participant bias, where the participant could have given falsely positive answers if thinking that the questionnaire distributors were associated with the measured brand (Saunders et al. 2012, p. 416).

Incentives in the form of Santa Maria products were given to the participants after the second questionnaire was accomplished, in order to motivate the respondents to answer the third questionnaire that was sent out via e-mail two weeks later. Scholars diverge in their views on incentives and their ability to achieve desired actions. Adversaries claim that external influences are harmful for a person's objectivity, while proponents argue that incentives can be a valuable source of motivation if managed correctly. This is particularly applicable on tasks with a low initial interest (Cameron & Pierce, 2002), which is considered to be the case of this Santa Maria study. Hence, the utilized incentive was deemed beneficial and necessary.

### **3.6 Data collection and sampling**

Sampling is the process of selecting units from a population of interest so that by studying the sample one can generalize back to the given population (Sachdeva, 2008, p. 144). However, in this case the data is collected from a target rather than a sample since we do not have a list of our population. More specifically, the data for this repeated measure is collected from a purposive sample (Bryman & Bell, 2013, p. 442). The goal of purposive sampling is to sample participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions being posed. Here, the potential respondents are constituted by Swedish speaking people, with access to e-mail, about to attend the Santa Maria event in Eskilstuna and that to some extent possesses knowledge about Santa Maria, and are at least partly responsible for the household's grocery shopping. By looking at people that were passing by the food truck, we tried to approach people that gave us a reasonable representation of being able to answer all three questionnaires. Therefore, we chose not to approach people who gave the impression that they were very stressed. Furthermore, we aimed at an equal distribution between men and women, and diversity in terms of age and socioeconomic background. This was done in order to achieve variety in the resulting sample, so that the sample members differ in terms of key characteristics. Purposive sampling does not allow us to generalize back to a population, since it is a non-probability sampling approach (p. 442).

There are both advantages and disadvantages related to a repeated measure approach. In terms of sampling, a potential drawback is that the requirement of answering the questionnaire several times, causes a higher drop off rate. For this reason, we made sure to collect a large enough sample to allow for an abnormally high drop off rate. The survey was successfully



distributed to 60 respondents with a drop-off of 26 respondents who did not answer the last questionnaire that was sent by e-mail two weeks after the event in Eskilstuna. It is also worth noting that several other people were approached outside Willys, not wanting to participate in the study.

A screening question regarding affection toward the Santa Maria brand was set up, where strongly negative respondents would be excluded, due to strong pre-conceived notions and negative biases affecting their receptiveness toward the event (Duignan, 2016). Additionally, descriptive questions determining the characteristics of the sample were included. These questions concerned people's age, gender, civil status, and whether the person is responsible for grocery shopping in the household.

## 4. Empirical findings

The study included 60 respondents, of which 26 were excluded for not completing the three questionnaires. This study was conducted in order to help answer the following research question:

*Does experiential event marketing have an impact on brand relationship quality? If so, to what extent and for how long?*

Throughout this section, and the following sections of the thesis, measurement occasion one is going to be referred to as  $O_1$ , measurement two is going to be referred to as  $O_2$ , and measurement three is going to be referred to as  $O_3$ . Also, the terms ‘item’ and ‘question’ are going to be used interchangeably. The term ‘construct’ is going to be used to explain the set of questions within each subgroup of Fournier’s questions, for example Interdependence or Self-Connection. The term ‘variable’ explains the construct at a specific measurement occasion. Conclusively, each construct consists of three variables, for example Interdependence for  $O_1$ ,  $O_2$  and  $O_3$  and each variable is built up with one or more questions or items.

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics

The total numbers of respondents included in the study amounted to 34, after the 26 respondents who did not answer the final questionnaire were disqualified. Amongst the remaining 34 there were no missing values, which is good (Pallant, 2010, p. 58). Out of the total number of respondents who answered all three questionnaires 14 people, or 41.2 percent, were female and 20 people, or 58.8 percent, were male. Eight people, or 23.5 percent, identified themselves as single households without children. 20 people, or 58.8 percent, were parts of “couple with children households”, and six people, or 17.6 percent, belonged to “couple without children” households. No respondents identified themselves with the alternatives “single household with children” and “other”. On the question of whether the respondents were the main person in charge for their respective households’ grocery purchases 20 people, or 58.8 percent, answered “yes”, while 10 people, or 29.4 percent,

answered “partly”, and four people, or 11.8 percent, answered “no”. Ages ranged from 25 to 75, and were somewhat evenly distributed across this range.

The descriptive statistics on categorical variables such as housing situation and sex were conducted using frequencies. By doing so, we could see the distribution of for example male and female respondents, in order to control if there were any notable differences within their answers. It does not make sense to derive means, standard deviations *et cetera* for such categorical variables (Pallant, 2010, p. 53), and the distribution of answers across these ranges was deemed fair.

Through testing for normality we found out that the variables in our study generally turned out not to be normally distributed. This was expected due to the ordinal level ratings in the Likert scale used in this study, which entails that the data will be of non-parametric character (Pallant, 2010, p. 125).

Moreover, the study has a relatively small sample size, which also points toward using non-parametric techniques in the coming analysis (p. 204). One could use a range of techniques to try to transform the values into normal distribution, but due to the controversy around this type of transformation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) we decided to accept the non-normality within the variables. The next question now arises; of whether to use the stronger parametric tests, which make assumptions about the sample’s distribution and population from which the sample has been drawn, or a non-parametric technique, which does not have such requirements about the sample distribution but rather focuses on random samples and independent observations (p. 213). It was decided that both the stronger paired-sample t test, which is a parametric technique, as well as the Wilcoxon signed rank test, which is the non-parametric equivalent (p. 57), were to be employed, in order to be weighed against each other in the case of potential conflicts.

## 4.2 Exploratory factor analysis

After having performed the above descriptive analysis of the demographic variables and our Likert scaled control questions, we performed an exploratory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimation and varimax rotation. This was deemed a necessary step before merging the 22 questions into their six respective constructs. Through this EFA we could clean the data, in order to explore the interrelationships among our set of variables (Pallant, 2010, p. 181). This way we could find and analyze the questions that created variance, and did not fit well with their intra-construct counterparts. It could be debated whether the EFA is deemed suitable for the study or not. One could argue that if the aim of the study is to test the bearing of Fournier's (2000) BRQ scale in a new context, few to no alterations should be done, and a natural variance should be allowed. On the other hand, the EFA in itself will be a way to prove the resilience of the scale. Its ability to measure how items in a construct correspond with other parts of that same construct makes it a solid tool in measuring the respective items within each variable, and thusly adds another level of analysis to the study. Furthermore, since we initially want to explore the underlying structure of the variables constituting the BRQ scale, the EFA is a suitable measure. The reduction of intra-variable items will, moreover, lead to a more manageable dataset which helps creating more uniform, coherent and clear results (Pallant, 2010, p. 222). Due to the debatability of using the EFA in the study, and owing to the fact that our sample size is smaller than recommended (p. 187) we will explain its every step, and motivate the subsequent actions in detail.

Since the study included a large number of questions and constructs we analyzed them in pairs. The first pairs, namely the three questions belonging to the Interdependence construct and the seven questions belonging to the Love/Commitment construct initially showed a mediocre KMO at .681. When looking at communalities we found that two questions were well below the suggested cutoff value of .5. Hence, and in order to increase the total explained variance we started by removing question 1.9, the question with the lowest communality value. The KMO now rose to a middling .746, and we managed to keep our two factor solution. We could, however, see that questions 1.4 and 1.5 of the Love/Commitment construct loaded onto the wrong factor, indicating that they were not measuring the same thing as the other factors in that construct. These two questions, which both were more vague and emotion-oriented than the other questions in the construct were removed. When Fournier

(2000) merged her original (1998) constructs “Love/Passion” and “Commitment”, she combined the two dimensions of socioemotional attachments (here represented by love) and behavioral ties (commitment), and moreover warned that the measurement of perceived love against the brand, measured by questions 1.4 and 1.5, might carry social biases, and hence be disturbing in a quantitative study. Since this disturbance, and misfit with the less vague, and more brand commitment related questions of the Love/Commitment construct, is affecting the stringency of the statistical output, we removed them from the construct. Lastly, we were forced to remove question 1.3. This way done firstly due to its low communality, .371. Communalities provide us with information about the variance in each item and how much it is explained, and suggested cutoff values range between .3 and .5 (Pallant, 2010, p. 181). Furthermore, the question loads on the wrong factor, meaning that it has more in common with the other construct than its own. These types of error hurt the statistical stringency, and the question was consequently removed. Now we arrived at a mediocre KMO at .660, but achieved our desired two factor solution, with no cross-loadings between the factors. Since cross-loadings are highly dissatisfactory, and we do not want to decrease dimensionality even further, we completed the EFA for the constructs Interdependence 1 and Love/Commitment 1 at this stage.

With the same technique we performed EFAs on the all the remaining questions, in order to attain statistically stringent data enough to merge the questions into their respective constructs. In the construct Partner Quality 1, question 1.11 was removed due to its cross-loading and low, .125, communality value. Question 1.15 from the construct Self-Connection 1 was removed for the same reasons, and since this construct contained a large number of questions, multidimensionality was not deemed to be seriously harmed. Question 1.12 was slightly cross-loading onto the wrong factor, but due to the fact that it was one out of two remaining factors in the Partner Quality 1, we judged it vital enough for the multidimensionality of the construct not to remove it. Otherwise the KMO and communalities for Partner Quality 1 and Self Connection 1 were satisfactory, and no cross-loading was found. The two constructs Intimacy Consumer-Brand 1 and Intimacy Brand-Consumer”only contained two respective one questions and were on these grounds considered not to be further reduced.

Since we are performing a repeated measurement study with the aim of finding significant differences in the variables over time, we cannot remove different items for the different

measurement occasions. This would lead to measuring variables constructed by different items, which would distort the findings. Hence, the EFA can only be carried out on one of the three measurement occasions, where we chose the first. Naturally, this led to less statistically stringent data in the constructs for measurement occasion two and three. Although humbly recognizing this, we can conclude that the thoroughly executed EFA performed on the first sets of questions will average out potential error in the construct, and at the very least create a construct that is as strong as it gets. All original questions and an indication on if and at what stage they were deleted, are shown appendix 5.

### **4.3 Reliability analysis**

When you test scores to include them in a study it is important to check the reliability of the scales by looking at the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. There are several different ways to look at reliability, but one of the most important is the scale's internal consistency, which entails how the items in the scales cluster together. Cronbach's alpha should be above .7 (Pallant, 2010, p. 97), which generally was the case for our results.

First we checked that the number of cases and items were correct in the case processing summary table and the reliability statistics table, which looked good. Also, we looked at the corrected-item total correlation values, with no negative values. The corrected item-total correlation column in the item-total statistics table suggested that our values were significantly above .3, indicating that our items do not measure something else than the scale as a whole. The reliability statistics table indicated that our Cronbach's alpha values, and consequently the reliability of our scales' internal consistency, were above or well above the cutoff value of .7 in all but one of our 15 values (the Intimacy (Consumer-Brand) construct was not included due to it only containing one item). The items 1.12 and 1.13, forming the Partner Quality 1 variable, which proved weak already in the EFA, came out with a Cronbach's alpha of .512. Since the variable only consists of two items, it was deemed best not to remove any of the items, due to the variable's already low multidimensionality. The variable will, however, be handled with caution. All Cronbach's alphas are shown in the operationalization table (appendix 5).

## 4.4 Paired-samples t test

According to the outcomes of the EFA the remaining items were merged into new variables. Now, and in order to test the hypotheses, there were two possible statistical tests to perform. Due to our relatively small sample the paired-samples t test was chosen over the repeated measures ANOVA, owing to the former requiring less power to achieve significant results (Pallant, 2010, p. 105). Since our hypotheses are formulated to investigate whether there were statistically significant differences between the first and second measurement occasion, and the second and third respectively, the paired-samples t test was satisfactory. Firstly, we checked if there were any significant differences among the answers from O<sub>1</sub>-O<sub>2</sub>, and thereafter from O<sub>2</sub>-O<sub>3</sub>. Our hypotheses are one-sided, which entails that we are to measure the t value, and not the two-tailed significance. The recommended level of a 95 % confidence interval (p. 105) was used. In order to find the critical cutoff value for the significance of the findings a t value table was used. With a sample size of 34, df 33, the critical cutoff value for a one sided t test is (approximately) 1.690 (Grange, 2015). If our t test scores were below +/- 1.690, they were deemed insignificant. As indicated in the table below, the t values were significant in Interdependence O<sub>1</sub>-O<sub>2</sub>, Love/Commitment O<sub>2</sub>-O<sub>3</sub>, Partner Quality O<sub>2</sub>-O<sub>3</sub>, Self-Connection O<sub>2</sub>-O<sub>3</sub>, Intimacy (Consumer-Brand) O<sub>1</sub>-O<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>2</sub>-O<sub>3</sub> and Intimacy (Brand-Consumer) O<sub>2</sub>-O<sub>3</sub>.

In order to understand the magnitude of the intervention's effect, the results from the paired-sample t test were calculated using the below formula in order to measure the effect size of the results. The rule of thumb for interpreting these values is: .01=small effect, .06=moderate effect, .14=large effect (Pallant, 2013, p. 249). Given our eta values in the table below one can conclude that the effect was small for Interdependence O<sub>1</sub>-O<sub>2</sub> as well as for Intimacy (Brand-Consumer) in O<sub>1</sub>-O<sub>2</sub>. Love/Commitment, Partner Quality, Self-Connection and Intimacy (Brand-Consumer) in O<sub>2</sub>-O<sub>3</sub> showed a large effect and for the remaining values there was a moderate effect. These results proved satisfying, but will be taken into account when analyzing the findings.

The below formula has been used to calculate the effect size of the results from the paired samples t test:

$$\text{Eta squared} = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + (N-1)}$$

Paired-Samples T Test	T value O <sub>1</sub> -O <sub>2</sub>	Effect size O <sub>1</sub> -O <sub>2</sub>	T value O <sub>2</sub> -O <sub>3</sub>	Effect size O <sub>2</sub> -O <sub>3</sub>
Interdependence	-2,185*	0,12638843	0,191	0,001104264
Love/Commitment	-1,221	0,043224258	4,925*	0,423637416
Partner Quality	-1,581	0,07041104	4,377*	0,367308593
Self Connection	-1,271	0,04666822	4,824*	0,413552024
Intimacy Consumer-Brand	-1,709*	0,081309177	1,811*	0,090400943
Intimacy Brand-Consumer	0,31	0,002903665	2,659*	0,176447003
Significant at a .05 level*				

Table 1. Paired-Samples T Test

When looking at the movement of the means throughout the measurement occasions, it could be concluded that most constructs moved according to expectations. Most mean values increased O<sub>1</sub>-O<sub>2</sub>, but decreased O<sub>2</sub>-O<sub>3</sub>. We looked at the paired samples statistics box and could see that the mean rose from O<sub>1</sub>-O<sub>2</sub> but shrunk from O<sub>2</sub>-O<sub>3</sub> in the constructs Interdependence and Intimacy (Consumer-Brand). However, these constructs still had a higher mean at O<sub>3</sub> than at O<sub>1</sub>. When looking at the constructs Love/Commitment and Partner Quality, one can see that the means first rose from O<sub>1</sub> to O<sub>2</sub> but then shrunk from O<sub>2</sub> to O<sub>3</sub>, ending up at an even lower mean at O<sub>3</sub> than at O<sub>1</sub>. The mean for the construct Intimacy (Brand-Consumer) shrunk from O<sub>1</sub> to O<sub>2</sub> and continued to decrease to O<sub>3</sub>. Finally, the mean for the construct Self-Connection first increased from O<sub>1</sub> to O<sub>2</sub> and then decreased from O<sub>2</sub> to O<sub>3</sub> and ended up at the same mean at O<sub>1</sub> and O<sub>3</sub>.



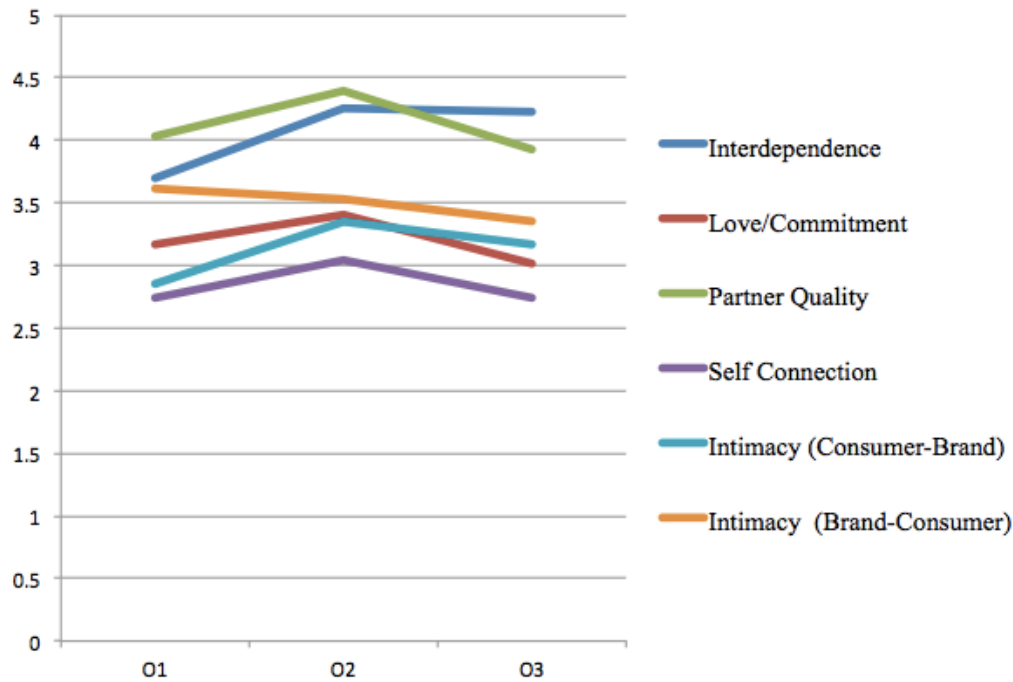


Figure 4. Mean development over time

## 4.5 Wilcoxon signed rank test

Some claim that the paired-samples t test requires parametric data (Pallant, 2010, p. 230), while the seven-point Likert scale used in this study is considered to produce non-parametric data. Therefore we chose to further validate our analysis by also running the non-parametric alternative to the paired-samples t test that is the Wilcoxon signed rank test. In contrast to the paired-samples t test that compare means, the Wilcoxon signed rank test converts scores to ranks and compare them at all time points in order to see a change over time (p. 230), which in this case would be the effect of the Santa Maria food truck event. When interpreting the Wilcoxon signed rank test we looked at the two-tailed significance value and converted it to its corresponding one-sided value, which should be below .05 in order to satisfy our 95 % confidence interval requirement (p. 331). The scores from the Wilcoxon test came out alike the scores from the paired-samples t test, except for the the O<sub>1</sub>-O<sub>2</sub> measurement of the self-connection measurement, where the Wilcoxon test came out with a significant result whereas the paired-samples t test did not.

Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	Sig. Value (1-Tailed) O <sub>1</sub> -O <sub>2</sub>	Sig. Value (1-Tailed) O <sub>2</sub> -O <sub>3</sub>
Interdependence	0,0125*	0,409
Love/Commitment	0,124	0,000*
Partner Quality	0,109	0,000*
Self Connection	0,028*	0,000*
Intimacy Consumer-Brand	0,049*	0,027*
Intimacy Brand-Consumer	0,480	0,007*
Significant at a .05 level*		

Table 2. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

## 4.5 Assessing the hypotheses

The main study consists of six *a* and *b* hypotheses. Through a number of different statistical tools such as an exploratory factor analysis, a reliability analysis, a paired-sample t test and a Wilcoxon signed rank test the mean differences in the three different measurement waves could be assessed. Owing to the resemblance of the outcomes from both the paired-samples t test and the wilcoxon signed rank test we could attain a uniform indication on whether to accept or reject the respective hypotheses, with the exception of one sets of variables. The results from the mean increase within the O<sub>1</sub>-O<sub>2</sub> Self-Connection measurement was insignificant when analyzed with the t test, but significant on the .05 level when approached with the Wilcoxon signed rank test. Due to the non-parametric character of our data, we deem the latter to outweigh the former.

Our hypotheses are being measured and classified into *rejected* or *accepted* by looking at significant differences between O<sub>1</sub> and O<sub>2</sub> for the *a* hypotheses, and significant differences between O<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> for the *b* hypotheses. If there are significant movements, the hypotheses are accepted.

*H1a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt interdependence with the brand*

Accepted. Both the parametric and non-parametric test indicated that there was a significant increase in the measured consumers' felt interdependence with the brand, at the 95 % confidence interval level. The question "Dependent on brand" was dropped which led to a decline in construct multidimensionality, but made the construct more focused on practical

interdependency through the questions of “Need brand and rely on its benefits” and “Brand is an integral part of my daily life”, and created a more statistically uniform construct, with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .815 to .825. The hypothesis was accepted.

*H1b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers’ felt interdependence with the brand declines with time*

Rejected. There was no significant decrease in the means between measurement time two and three. Hence, we can conclude that the effects produced by the experiential event marketing persisted. The results were statistically reliable, with Cronbach’s alphas of .825 and .803. The hypothesis was consequently rejected.

*H2a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers’ felt love and commitment toward the brand*

Rejected. The O<sub>1</sub>-O<sub>2</sub> mean development followed the hypothesized curve, but the results failed to show any statistical significance. The construct was firstly reduced with the “Unique feelings for brand”, due to the items low communality with its fellow construct items. The question was deemed hard to answer by several of the pre-study respondents, because of its emotional character and difficulties in defining “unique”, something that consequently also showed in the EFA. Secondly, the first two items, which also are connected to the “love” part of the construct, and are more emotion-oriented and elusive than the other commitment-focused questions, were removed due to their unsatisfactory low communalities the remaining construct. In removing these items the construct lost its “love” dimension, which will negatively affect the theoretical implications of our findings, but simultaneously created a more coherent and measurable construct. The resulting variables had high alphas, .863 and .877 respectively. If the deleted items had remained in the construct there would have been a significant mean increase, on the .05 level. Now, however, no significant increase was found, and the hypothesis was consequently rejected.

*H2b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers’ felt love and commitment toward the brand declines with time*

Accepted. The mean reverted back to the same level as found before the sample was exposed to experiential marketing event. Since the results were significant on the .05 level we can conclude that the hypothesis was accepted. Cronbach’s alphas were strong, .877 and .892.

*H3a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt brand partner quality*

Rejected. There was an increase in the mean value. Yet, the results were not statistically significant enough for us to accept the hypothesis. The significance of the mean difference, at -1.581, was slightly below the critical t value of +/- 1.690, and thusly failed to show enough statistical significance. In the statistical analysis the "Brand takes care of me" question showed a low communality with the remaining construct. As was discussed with the Love/Commitment construct this might have to do with this question being more elusive and abstract than the other intra-construct items. Question 12, which was clear and concrete already in its original format, and question 13, which was a condensed version of the three remaining questions within the original construct, are both more tangible and measurable than the eliminated question 11. This might help answering its low communality. Still, the result proved not to be statistically significant. The Cronbach's alpha for the first variable, .512, was below the recommended level of at least .7 (Pallant, 2010, p. 98), and the O<sub>2</sub> variable had a sufficient but modest alpha of .738. The result came out weak and insignificant.

*H3b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt brand partner quality declines with time*

Accepted. Alike the Love/Commitment construct, the mean score for measurement time O<sub>3</sub> regressed back to its O<sub>1</sub> level, implying that any direct positive effects in the attitudes toward the quality of the partner, in this case the Santa Maria brand, diminished with time. Weak but acceptable Cronbach's alphas of .738 and .704. The hypothesis was accepted.

*H4a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt self-connection with the brand*

Accepted. As discussed earlier, the significance level came out different in the two tests. As argued, the significance level of the non-parametric test was used and the hypothesis could be accepted. The O<sub>1</sub>-O<sub>2</sub> mean was strong enough to produce a significant result. Even though removing one item, the construct included five items, which awarded it with a satisfactory multidimensionality. Strong Cronbach's alphas of .898 and .804. The hypothesis was accepted, but the insignificant result from the t test should be borne in mind.

*H4b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt self-connection with the brand declines with time*

Accepted. The O<sub>3</sub> mean for this construct was at a significantly lower level than the O<sub>2</sub> mean, implying that it was once again back at the initial level. Acceptable Cronbach' alphas of .804 and .781. The hypothesis was accepted.

*H5a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt intimacy toward the brand*

Accepted. There was a significant increase in means, on the .05 significance level. Except for the two questions that were merged into one as a result of the pre-study, no items were deleted from the construct. The Cronbach's alphas measured .879 and .981. The hypothesis was accepted.

*H5b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt intimacy toward the brand declines with time*

Accepted. Cronbach's alphas were strong, measuring .981 and .903 respectively. The measured decrease in mean scores for O<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> was, on a .05 significance level, enough to accept the hypothesis. The positive direct effects were not maintained.

*H6a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt intimacy from the brand toward themselves*

Rejected. Due to the resemblance of the original intra-construct items they were merged into one item representing the full construct. This was done as a result from pre-study feedback, and brought with it a more condensed, easily answered questionnaire, but also a loss in multidimensionality. Being aware of this, and without being able to measure the Cronbach's alphas, the output from the statistical analysis resulted in a rejected hypothesis. Consumer's perception of intimacy from the brand toward themselves was not significantly improved.

*H6b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt intimacy from the brand toward themselves declines with time*

Accepted. The mean score decreased enough from O<sub>2</sub> to O<sub>3</sub> to produce a statistically significant difference in the mean values. For this reason, one cannot say that the consumers' perception of intimacy from the brand toward themselves remained stable. Ergo, the hypothesis was accepted.

	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Result</b>
H1a	<i>Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt interdependence with the brand</i>	<u>Accepted</u>
H1b	<i>The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt interdependence with the brand declines with time</i>	Rejected
H2a	<i>Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt love and commitment toward the brand</i>	Rejected
H2b	<i>The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt love and commitment toward the brand declines with time</i>	<u>Accepted</u>
H3a	<i>Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt brand partner quality</i>	Rejected
H3b	<i>The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt brand partner quality declines with time</i>	<u>Accepted</u>
H4a	<i>Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt self-connection with the brand</i>	<u>Accepted</u>
H4b	<i>The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt self-connection with the brand declines with time</i>	<u>Accepted</u>
H5a	<i>Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt intimacy toward the brand</i>	<u>Accepted</u>
H5b	<i>The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt intimacy toward the brand declines with time</i>	<u>Accepted</u>
H6a	<i>Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt intimacy from the brand toward themselves</i>	Rejected
H6b	<i>The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt intimacy from the brand toward themselves declines with time</i>	<u>Accepted</u>
H7a	<i>H7a: Experiential event marketing has a positive direct effect on consumers' felt nostalgic attachment toward the brand</i>	Disqualified
H7b	<i>H7b: The effect from experiential event marketing on consumers' felt nostalgic attachment from the brand toward themselves declines with time</i>	Disqualified

*Table 3. Hypotheses summary*

## 5. Discussion

Susan Fournier's (1998; 2000) BRQ scale was not only grounded on rigorous phenomenological, explorative research, it was also set within the FMCG sphere. Despite its academic rigour, scholarly critics have argued it to exclude third-party actors (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), to lack multidimensionality and customer-centricity (Akaka & Vargo, 2004; 2015), and that low involvement products such as those of the FMCG industry will be less dependent on brand relationship related factors (Mishra & Kesharwani, 2016). Adding onto this, practitioners claim that the FMCG industry is not primarily centered around brand relationships (Costello, 2017; Persson, 2017). Despite all this, Fournier's (1998; 2000) BRQ constructs are still highly topical, well-cited, and renown in academia. The below discussion will further this conversation, and do so in the context of an experiential marketing campaign, which has been theoretically confirmed to have close similarities with the BRQ concept.

This empirical study has been carried out in order to quantitatively test Fournier's (2000) brand relationship quality constructs in an FMCG context. By performing an intra-group field experiment we could assess how exposure to an experiential marketing event changed our test group's perceived relationship quality with the concerned brand. In doing so we can now discuss if experiential event marketing produces noticeable effects within the BRQ construct, and if the BRQ scale has any bearing in measuring every-day consumer marketing activations, such as the FMCG experiential event used in this study. Already in the pre-study, the Nostalgic Attachment construct was invalidated as a constructive part of the BRQ scale in the experiential FMCG event context, and the construct was disqualified from the main study. Several of the other constructs had to be modified as a result of the pre-study and exploratory factor analysis, something that has been critically discussed above, and will be further discussed below.

It was hypothesized that experiential event marketing would have positive direct effects on the BRQ facets, but that this effect would decline with time. In large, these theoretically grounded hypotheses could be confirmed by our study. The *b* hypotheses centered around decline of the direct effects, and were all but one indicating significant decreases in the mean scores, forming a uniform indication that the hypothesized phenomena was supported. As for the *a* hypotheses, however, the results were more diverse. Even though all but one produced a

positive effect in the mean scores, only half were on significant levels, leading to us have to look critically on whether Fournier's (2000) BRQ facets really are relevant in this context.

## **5.1 Direct effects on consumer's perceived brand relationship quality**

Half of the tested hypotheses measuring the potentially positive direct effects of experiential event marketing were accepted. This creates ambiguity around the positive, causal relationship between the two measured concepts. The first tested construct, Interdependence, came out with a significantly positive result. The Interdependence facet's ability to produce significantly positive results, when several other facets did not, could be explained by its well-researched, and grounded position within brand relationship marketing. A wide array of scholars point toward its centrality and measurability (Hinde 1995; Grundlach & Murphy, 1993; Rusbult et al., 1991; *et cetera.*), and Fournier (1998) argues that interdependence, along with trust, is being built through lived experiences, which aligns perfectly with what has been measured in this study. The sense of self-connection increased with the experiential marketing activation. According to Fournier (1998) self-connection shares similarities with the sense of dependency, which is a prominent factor within the Interdependence construct, which might help explain why these two constructs were among the three hypotheses that produced significant increases in their respective means.

The Love/Commitment mean effect came out insignificant. The intra-construct items that represented the love dimension were taken out due to their low communality with the commitment-oriented items. This emphasizes a vital flaw in Fournier's (2000) BRQ scale. In the scale she has merged the two dimensions of socioemotional attachments (represented by love) and behavioral ties (represented by commitment) into one construct. This forced combination of one emotion-oriented and one more behaviour and action-oriented dimension, was instantly shown in our statistical output, through low communalities and cross-loadings. The construct had to be stripped of the love dimension, which resulted in an insignificant output. This, along with Fournier's (2000) own insight that the love dimension risks to carry social biases, leads to the discussion on whether such a socioemotionally oriented dimension really should be tested quantitatively. This study has led us to confidently argue that it should not.



The Partner Quality construct showed an increase, but not significant enough to be able to accept the hypothesis. The smaller than expected change in this, and several other variables, could possibly be explained by the context in which the relationships find themselves in. Relationship building is highly contextual and the context in which a relationship is formed or maintained is central to the direction in which the relationship is heading (Csikszentmihalyi & Beattie, 1979). It might be that the context of the study, the experiential event marketing activation, was not ideal for the strengthening of these particular consumer-brand relationships. This could be attributed to the event in itself, or external factors such as weather, geographic location, or time. Furthermore, experiential marketing regards consumers as both emotional and rational, implying that the consumer will act differently depending on the situation (Schmitt, 1999). It is for this reason probable that consumers think and act more rationally than emotionally in the context of an experiential sampling activation, something that could be supported by the insight that experiential FMCG events have a rational direct-sales driven approach, rather than a more emotional relationship focus (Persson, 2017; Costello, 2017). Regardless of which explanation turned out correct, it can be concluded that this context did not prove satisfactory for increasing the perceived partner quality, love/commitment, and brand-consumer intimacy toward the Santa Maria brand.

There were two types of intimacy in Fournier's (1998; 2000) BRQ construct. In our study they came out with different results. The immediate effects did in one of the intimacy dimensions prove significantly positive, but not in the other. The positive outcome is easy to argue for. Escalas (1998) claims that personal experiences and associations create a cognitive brand narrative, which strengthens with interaction events. An interaction event like the experiential marketing activation measured in this study, should in case of Escalas' argumentation help increase the consumer's perceived intimacy with the brand. Several other scholars stress the connection between experiences, intimacy and strengthened relationships (Hinde, 1979; Reis & Shaver, 1988; Wood, 1982; Murray et al., 1996; Fournier, 1998) which also in our study was prevalent in the consumer to brand intimacy dimension. The consumers' perception of intimacy from the brand toward themselves did, however, not produce any significantly positive effects. One theoretically grounded explanation to this could be that daily life relationships do not have to be characterized by intimacy in order to survive, or even to thrive (Hinde, 1979). A practical explanation could be that the final construct in the study only contained one item, and was consequently lacking in dimensionality. The analyzed data was weak and incohesive. Conclusively, the measurability of the theoretical concept of

intimacy becomes difficult due to Fournier's (1998) division of the previously joint concept into a brand-to-consumer dimension and a consumer-to-brand dimension. Since previous theoretical discussions have treated the concepts as one, the different outcomes for the respective concepts become hard to analyze.

## **5.2 Effects on consumer's perceived brand relationship quality over time**

The results from the sample's perceived relationship quality two weeks after the event were more coherent and according to expectations than the direct effects. All but one mean value from the second measurement wave declined when measured again two weeks later. This was expected for several reasons. Firstly, the nature of the FMCG industry being characterized by low involvement products (Mishra & Kesharwani, 2016) and promotional activities, along with experiential marketing generally being measured on sales conversion (Costello, 2017; Persson, 2017), affirms the belief that the hypothesized positive brand relationship quality effects will be short-term and decline with time.

The findings, indicating that there was little to no notable longer-term increase in the customers' perceived relationship with the Santa Maria brand, contrast with Fournier's (1998) notion of brand relationships being valid at the degree of consumers' lived experiences with brands. It also discards similar notions on how experiences create durable relationships (Grundlach & Murphy, 1993; Bjerre et al., 2009). Moreover, it confronts the experiential marketing research stream, which claims that creating customer experiences is critical to both customer acquisition and retention (Yelkur, 2000). Before drawing any conclusions, however, one must analyze and interpret what in the proposed causal relationship between experiential event marketing and the brand relationship quality generated these results. It can be attributable to two factors. Either, the measured event was not experiential enough to induce any positive longer-term effects, or the gained experience was not the right vehicle in driving durable relationships.

Firstly, let us discuss the former. Experiential events are generally parts of broader strategies, with objectives extending beyond solely relational ones (Pitta et al., 2006). This notion was also confirmed by the industry professionals partaking in our study. They unanimously claimed that experiential events, like the one used in our study, have relationship building as

an objective, but not necessarily as a main objective. Instead, driving short-term sales is often the key objective in the campaigns (Costello, 2017; Persson, 2017; Stenhammar, 2017), which also was the case with the Santa Maria experiential event. It was further indicated that the FMCG industry in particular was more heavily inclined toward short-term sales driving campaigns than other industries (Persson, 2017). When being reduced to a secondary objective, the experience stemming from the event might not be experiential enough to have a significantly positive effect on the brand relationship quality. As a measure against this, a control question was set up. The question, with a ten point Likert answer scale, measured whether the respondents were satisfied or not with the experience they just had. All answered fell within the positive side of the spectrum, implying that the respondents were positive and satisfied with their experience. Still, in order to confidently say that this activation indeed was experientially focused enough to be regarded as a successful in terms of being experiential, one would need even more measurement points. Nonetheless, and based on the arguments of this being a typical, real-life FMCG experiential event (Persson, 2006), and having achieved consistently positive respondent experiences, we can claim that the Santa Maria event experience was representative for experiential FMCG events. We can consequently argue that typical FMCG experiential marketing events produce little to no significant longer-term effects on the brand relationship quality, except when it comes to perceived interdependence with the brand.

Perceived interdependence with the Santa Maria brand was the only construct whose values remained on the same level from measurement wave two to three. Why the construct was strong enough to produce a significant increase, which remained over time, has already been discussed above, but in short it can be argued that its centrality within brand relationships, it being a relatively easily measurable construct (Hinde 1995; Grundlach & Murphy, 1993; Rusbult et al., 1991), and its closeness to lived brand experiences (Fournier, 1998) are reasons why this construct performed better than the others.

Apart from the Interdependence facet, the BRQ concept in general, was not stable with time. Another possible explanation to this is that experiential marketing is simply not the right vehicle in producing longer-term effects on brand relationship quality, and that the BRQ scale is a flawed instrument in capturing the effects of an experiential marketing event. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) criticized Fournier (1998) and her relational approach to brand management to disregard important factors outside the brand-consumer dyad. Akaka and Vargo (2004;

2015) and Grönroos (2000) among others, viewed the relational approach to be too focused on artificial activations transmitted from the brand to the consumer instead of taking a more holistic, interactive, and customer-centric approach. Lastly, and based on both Fournier's (2000) own self-critique and our own findings, it is arguable that the model, in an attempt to quantify something in order to gain measurability and scalability lost its theoretical credibility and rigour. By moving the purely qualitative original BRQ construct away from its original phenomenological, qualitative and constructionist research tradition it also can be said to have lost in relevance and applicability, something our own study could confirm. The most emotion-oriented questions were the ones that performed the poorest. The love related questions in the Love/Commitment construct carried high variances and had little in common with the more concrete commitment related questions, indicating that the respondents struggled with giving uniform opinions on these more elusive, emotion-oriented questions. Fournier (2000) herself acknowledged that the constructs might carry social biases, something our study can confirm.

## **6. Implications, limitations, and conclusion**

### **6.1 Managerial implications**

The findings of this study provide a set of fruitful implications for business- and marketing managers within the FMCG industry. Experiential events often constitute a substantial part of the marketing budget, but are lacking in measurability (Costello, 2017). With the rise of online marketing, and its sophisticated methods of measuring everything from lead generation to sales conversion, offline event marketing needs to pick up speed in measurability, in order to survive. This study has been an attempt to test an academically established scale onto this marketing channel. The FMCG industry was used, chiefly due to it being the context from which the scale was incepted. Even though experiences, here represented by experiential event marketing, and relationship quality, here represented by Fournier's (2000) BRQ concept, have strong theoretically grounded bonds, the scale proved insufficient as a tool to capture the effects of the experiential marketing activation. It can therefore be argued that strengthened consumer-brand relationships should not be the main objective for an activation of this sort, due to its little to no shown effects. It can also be concluded that in order to capture the effects of experiential events, clear objectives, KPIs, and corresponding measurements need to be put into place.

The one facet of the BRQ construct that proved significant and strong was the perceived interdependence with the brand. The construct is a suitable and measurable KPI for the FMCG industry, due to the construct's closeness to the everyday life that FMCG products often represent. This, along with its previously discussed academic rigour makes it a recommended measure for FMCG activations.

Lastly, and by turning the discussion around, one can discuss that it might not be the BRQ measurement that is flawed, but instead that the focus of FMCG marketing managers is misdirected. Throughout the theory section it has been repeatedly argued for the emergence and importance of durable consumer-brand relationships, and the increasingly experientially driven consumer attitudes. Scholars stand united in emphasizing the link between lived experiences and durable brand relationships, and the value of such relationships has continuously been stressed. Nonetheless, it has throughout this research project been indicated that relationship building is a mere secondary objective for experiential events within the

FMCG industry. In order to embrace academia's recommendations, and to stand out in a short-term sales driven industry, marketing managers should consider promoting relationship strengthening to a primary objective for selected campaigns, and tailor said campaigns accordingly. This might prove strategically ingenious.

Conclusively, the recommendation for FMCG marketers using experiential events in their marketing mix is to clearly define a primary objective, tailor the event according to the decided-upon objective, and thoroughly and exclusively measure it through a suitable scale. In order to compete with the precise measurement tools of online marketing, offline marketing measurements need to be focused, coherent, and clear in order to achieve similar levels of measurability.

## **6.2 Limitations and suggestions for further research**

There have been several limiting factors to this study, where time and scope are amongst the most prevalent. This resulted in a relatively small sample size. The mean values were generally moving as predicted, but did in several cases prove insignificant, something that could have been resolved with a larger sample. Even though 34 valid respondents could be considered sufficient in a repeated measure study (Pallant, 2010, p. 245), the results and their generalizability would have benefitted from a larger sample. In light of this, and in order to further the implications of the findings from our study, similar studies but with larger samples should be conducted. Furthermore, and due to the particular characteristics of the FMCG industry, other industries than the FMCG should be tested, in order to gain further generalizability. The next step, when successfully being able to measure brand relationship quality over time, is naturally to find tools to analyze how these consumers convert into customers, which, arguably is the ultimate goal in every marketing effort (Costello, 2017).

The findings in this study generated critique toward several of Fournier's (2000) BRQ constructs, as well as the scale in general. In order to confidently invalidate the scale for further usage, more research needs to be undertaken to support our findings. More explicitly, and as discussed above, further research needs to be directed toward (i) removing the Nostalgic Attachment as a measurement construct from the experiential event marketing context, (ii) separating the Love/Commitment into individual constructs, (iii) invalidating

socioemotional items in the quantitative study context, and (iv) re-merging the two Intimacy constructs. We have argued for, supported, and motivated these necessary improvements for the BRQ scale, but need future research to further investigate each point.

In the discussion it was argued that the measured event was representative for the FMCG industry, but that it might not have been experiential enough to be representative for a lived brand experience. This was controlled against by a control question measuring the respondents' satisfaction with the attended event. Nonetheless, in order to confidently argue that the event indeed was experiential enough to be able to produce notions of increased relationship quality, one needs more data points. Thusly, we call for further research on assessing the experiential dimension of the experiential marketing event. Insights on what constitutes a fulfilling experience need to be explored, and practically applicable scales need to be developed. Subsequently, if being able to control against the experiential strength of an event, one can more confidently measure the relationships between experiential marketing and brand relationship quality. If being assured by the unequivocal experiential strength of the event, the potential lack of effect in the brand relationship quality can more confidently be attributable to the lack of causality between the two concepts.

Within the marketing sphere, both theoretically and practically, there has been an apparent shift toward two-way communication, authentic relationships, interactivity, and experiential marketing. Yet, the FMCG industry is, according to our study behind in both theory and practice. Hence, and in order for practitioners to dare to venture away from their often short-term sales driven focus, academically founded and rigorously tested measurement tools need to be developed. We have in this study argued that Fournier's (2000) BRQ scale did not work satisfactory enough to capture the effects of a real-life experiential FMCG event. If the relational and experiential gains from such activations have not been proven, few will dare to venture away from the safe havens that is the easier-to-measure sales conversion.

## 6.3 Conclusion

Throughout this study the goal has been to answer the following research question:

*Does experiential event marketing have an impact on brand relationship quality? If so, to what extent and for how long?*

This was done through firstly laying a theoretical groundwork as a foundation for the formulation of fourteen (later reduced to twelve) hypotheses. Susan Fournier's BRQ scale (2000) was to be tested through the theoretically related concept of experiential event marketing. Due to scholarly criticism, and the shorter-term focused FMCG industry in which the study was set, it was hypothesized that the experiential event would induce some immediate positive effects in the six measured BRQ constructs, but that this effect would decline with time. This was initially tested through a pre-study, where the concept of Nostalgic Attachment was invalidated due to its inapplicability with the studied context. Secondly, an exploratory factor analysis was carried out and indicated that several constructs contained poorly performing items. Most notably, the Love/Commitment construct was stripped of its love dimension, due to its deviation from the overall construct. These two initial steps became important parts in assessing the BRQ scale's bearing in the experiential FMCG event context. The main study was conducted through a repeated measurement, where respondents were to rank their perceived brand relationship quality with the measured FMCG brand, Santa Maria, on three different occasions, namely directly before, directly after, and two weeks after being exposed to the experiential event. This way, not only the immediate effect, but also the effect over time, could be measured. The results largely supported our hypotheses.

All but one construct produced positive direct effects, but only half of them were significant. In all cases but one this effect declined significantly when being measured two weeks afterwards, and went in several cases back to approximately the same level as the initial measurement. In the light of this, we can conclude several things. Firstly, and even though having shown awareness around the limitations of this study, we argue that the link between a lived brand experience, in form of a typical FMCG experiential event, and strengthened longer-term brand relationship quality should be invalidated. If being further researched on, this might lead to implications for Fournier's brand relationship research stream, that promotes the notion of brand relationships being valid at the level of lived experience. The



importance of the experiential event, being one of the primary ways for the brand to create lived experiences with consumers, cannot be stressed enough, and if this vessel for brand relationship improvement does not produce enough positive effects in the consumer-brand relationship, this will greatly effect how practitioners utilize this marketing channel.

The study did, however, indicate a general boost in positive direct BRQ effects after being exposed to the experiential event. This finding resonates well with the initial insight that experiential FMCG events generally aim to increase direct sales, something that also bears important implications. If the consumers' positive feelings toward the brand increase, it is safe to say that their purchase intent will increase accordingly. This relationship needs further research, but it can still be concluded that the measured positive effects will be highly likely to support the brand's objective of increasing direct sales.

Lastly, some facets within the BRQ construct were more positively affected than others. Interdependence was the facet that performed the best. Probable explanations to why there was a significantly positive direct effect, as well as stability over time, have been presented above. Though, in conclusion one can say that experiential event marketing did not prove to have a satisfactory strong impact on brand relationship quality, but in the facet of Interdependence, which through its centrality within the construct, deeply academically founded roots, and applicability in the FMCG context, did react strongly and steadily to the exposure of experiential event marketing. In light of this, we call for further testing of the BRQ construct in the experiential event marketing and other contexts, in order to further improve the insofar lacking scale. Relationships and interactions will always be at the heart of humanity, but in order to achieve its permanent spot in the consumer marketing hall of fame, more research needs to be done in developing reliable measurements and proving its practical significance. Until then, concepts like brand relationship quality should be handled with caution in contexts such as that of FMCG experiential event marketing.

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## Appendix 1. The Brand Relationship Quality (BRQ) scale

	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Std Loading</b>	<b>SMC</b>	<b>Alpha</b>
<b>Interdependence</b>				.89
Need brand and rely on its benefits	.79	.89 <sup>a</sup>	.79	
Brand is an integral part of my daily life	.70	.84 <sup>a</sup>	.71	
Dependent on brand	.69	.83 <sup>a</sup>	.69	
<b>Love/Commitment</b>				.95
Brand and I are perfect for each other	.78	.88 <sup>a</sup>	.77	
Really love the brand	.76	.87 <sup>a</sup>	.76	
Thought of not being able to use brand disturbs me	.72	.85 <sup>a</sup>	.72	
Very loyal to brand	.71	.85 <sup>a</sup>	.72	
Willing to make sacrifices to keep using	.70	.83 <sup>a</sup>	.69	
Unique feelings for brand	.68	.83 <sup>a</sup>	.69	
No longer keep eye out for alternatives	.64	.80 <sup>a</sup>	.64	
<b>Partner Quality</b>				.91
Brand takes care of me	.72	.85 <sup>a</sup>	.72	
Brand listens to me	.71	.84 <sup>a</sup>	.71	
Brand makes up for mistakes	.66	.82 <sup>a</sup>	.67	
Count on brand to do what's best for me	.65	.81 <sup>a</sup>	.66	
Brand is responsive to my concerns	.64	.80 <sup>a</sup>	.64	
<b>Self Connection</b>				.93
Brand is part of me	.75	.86 <sup>a</sup>	.74	
Makes statement about what's important to me	.74	.86 <sup>a</sup>	.74	
Connects with part of me that makes me tick	.73	.85 <sup>a</sup>	.72	
Fits with life goals or problems	.68	.83 <sup>a</sup>	.69	
By using brand I'm part of a shared community	.68	.82 <sup>a</sup>	.67	
Develop relationships with others who use brand	.65	.80 <sup>a</sup>	.64	
<b>Nostalgic Attachment</b>				.83
Have sentimental feelings for brand	.70	.83 <sup>a</sup>	.69	
Brand reminds me of phase of my life	.59	.77 <sup>a</sup>	.59	
Thoughts of brand contain personal memories	.56	.74 <sup>a</sup>	.55	
<b>Intimacy (Consumer-Brand)</b>				.81
Know brand history/background	.64	.80	.64	
Know what brand stands for	.61	.78	.61	
Know more about brand than average consumer	.54	.73	.53	
<b>Intimacy (Brand-Consumer)</b>				.86
Company understands my needs	.71	.84 <sup>a</sup>	.71	
Knows me so well, could design product for me	.67	.82 <sup>a</sup>	.68	
Company knows a lot about me as a person	.62	.79 <sup>a</sup>	.62	

(Fournier, 2000)

## Appendix 2. Questionnaire used for O<sub>1</sub>

Emailadress:

Ålder:

Civilstatus: Ogift ☐ Gift ☐ Änka ☐ Skild ☐

Är du huvudansvarig för hushållets matinköp? Ja ☐ Delvis ☐ Nej ☐

Känner du till Santa Maria sen tidigare? Ja ☐ Nej ☐ Osäker ☐

Företaget framkallar följande känslor hos mig:

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Mycket negativa                      Neutral                      Mycket positiva

### 1. Jag är i behov av Santa Maria och litar på dess fördelar

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med

### 2. Santa Maria är en integrerad del i mitt vardagliga liv

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med

### 3. Jag känner mig beroende av Santa Maria för vissa ändamål

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med

### 4. Varumärket och jag passar varandra perfekt

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med

### 5. Jag älskar Santa Maria

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med

### 6. Jag blir irriterad när Santa Maria inte finns tillgängligt

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med



**7. Jag är väldigt lojal till Santa Maria**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**8. Jag är villig att göra uppoffringar (ex. ta omväg, vänta) för att använda Santa Maria**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**9. Min känsla för Santa Maria särskiljer sig mot andra varumärken**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**10. Jag tittar inte längre efter alternativa varumärken**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**11. Santa Maria tar hand om mig som kund**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**12. Jag litar på att Santa Maria agerar utefter det som är bäst för mig**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**13. Varumärket är lyhört, reagerar på mina behov och gör upp för sina misstag**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**14. Santa Maria är en del av vem jag är**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**15. Santa Maria står för värderingar som är viktiga för mig**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**16. Santa Maria anknyter till mig på ett sätt som får mig att ”gå igång”**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**17. Santa Maria kan hjälpa mig med mina problem och att nå mina vardagliga mål**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**18. Genom att använda Santa Maria är jag en del av ett ”community”**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**19. Genom Santa Maria utvecklar jag relationer med andra användare**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**20. Jag känner till Santa Marias historia/bakgrund och vet vad varumärket står för**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**21. Jag vet mer om varumärket än gemene man**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**22. Santa Maria förstår mina behov och känner mig så väl att det hade kunnat designa en produkt/tjänst enbart för mig**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

## Appendix 3. Questionnaire used for O<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>3</sub>

**Mejladress:**

**Hur positiva/negativa är dina intryck från Santa Maria-eventet/food trucken du precis var på?**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Mycket negativa                      Neutral                      Mycket positiva

**1. Jag är i behov av Santa Maria och litar på dess fördelar**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med

**2. Santa Maria är en integrerad del i mitt vardagliga liv**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med

**3. Jag känner mig beroende av Santa Maria för vissa ändamål**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med

**4. Santa Maria och jag passar varandra perfekt**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med

**5. Jag älskar Santa Maria**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med

**6. Jag blir irriterad när Santa Maria inte finns tillgängligt**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med                      Neutral                      Håller helt med

**7. Jag är väldigt lojal mot Santa Maria**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**8. Jag är villig att göra uppoffringar (ex. ta omväg, vänta) för att använda Santa Maria**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**9. Min känsla för Santa Maria särskiljer sig från andra varumärken**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**10. Jag tittar inte längre efter alternativa varumärken**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**11. Santa Maria tar hand om mig som kund**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**12. Jag litar på att Santa Maria agerar utefter det som är bäst för mig**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**13. Santa Maria är lyhörd, reagerar på mina behov och gör upp för sina misstag**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**14. Santa Maria är en del av vem jag är**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med

**15. Santa Maria står för värderingar som är viktiga för mig**

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Håller inte alls med Neutral Håller helt med



## Appendix 4. Agency request e-mail

The following letter was sent as a request for collaboration to selected experiential event marketing agencies:

Hej! Tiffany Dosé och Alexander Åström heter vi och är två masterstudenter i företagsekonomi från Uppsala universitet. I vår masteruppsats i Strategic Marketing Management studerar vi kopplingen mellan Experiential Marketing (i form av event) och Brand Relationship Quality. Med en välbeprövad och vetenskapligt framtagna skala vill vi mäta effekterna av experiential marketing på konsumenters varumärkesrelation. Detta planerar vi att göra genom att mäta konsumenters inställning före, direkt efter och några veckor efter en experiential marketing-aktivitet (antagligen i event-form). Vi hoppas på att söka samarbete med er genom att ge er som byrå följande värde:

- Ni kan använda mätningen för framtida marknadsföring och kommunikation för att påvisa hur er byrå skapar värde för kunders varumärke.
- Mätningen kan agera underlag för att påvisa för kunden, vars kampanj vi mätt effekterna av, hur effektiv kampanjen varit.
- Vidare kommer kundens marknadsavdelning få ta del av mätningen för att internt påvisa aktivitetens effektivitet.

Aktiviteten bör med fördel genomföras vid ett tillfälle februari-april och skulle gå till på något av följande vis:

1. Aktivitetsdeltagare kontaktas före aktiviteten med ett 2 minuter långt formulär. Distribueras antingen digitalt eller fysiskt. Direkt efter aktiviteten fyller deltagaren i samma formulär (antingen digitalt eller fysiskt) och efter 2-4 fyra veckor fyller deltagaren återigen i samma formulär (digitalt). På så vis kan vi dels mäta hur konsument-varumärkesrelationen stärkts av aktiviteten och dels om de positiva effekterna avtagit eller stärkts med tiden.
2. Skulle ni/kunden inte vara bekväma med att vi kontaktar gemene aktivitetsdeltagare kan vi genomföra samma upplägg fast med ett egenrekryterat urval av testkonsumenter. Detta kan

anses påverka den statistiska trovärdigheten något, men kräver inget deltagande av övriga aktivitetsdeltagare och driver dessutom extra trafik till er aktivitet.

Vi vet hur svårt det kan vara att mäta effektiviteten av experiential- och branding-kampanjer och hoppas därför att ni tycker att en sådan mätning hade skapat värde för er byrå och kund. Självklart gör vi detta kostnadsfritt. Återkom jättegärna till oss med eventuella tankar och förhoppningsvis med en passande aktivitet för ett samarbete.

Med vänliga hälsningar,

Tiffany Dosé

070-861 92 16

[tiffany.dose@gmail.com](mailto:tiffany.dose@gmail.com)

Alexander Åström

070-44 55 702

[alexander.astroem@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.astroem@gmail.com)

## Appendix 5. Operationalization table

Deleted from the exploratory factor analysis \*

Deleted from the pre-study \*\*

New questions, formed through merging two or more original questions \*\*\*

Construct and items deleted \*\*\*\*

Questions		Reliability O <sub>1</sub>	Reliability O <sub>2</sub>	Reliability O <sub>3</sub>
Interdependence		.818	.825	.803
	Need brand and rely on its benefits			
	Brand is an integral part of my life			
	Dependent on brand *			
Love/Commitment		.863	.877	.892
	Brand and I are perfect for each other*			
	Really love the brand*			
	Thought of not being able to use the brand disturbs me			
	Very loyal to brand			
	Willing to make sacrifices to keep using the brand			
	Unique feelings for brand			
	No longer keep eye out for alternatives			
Partner Quality		.512	.738	.704
	Brand takes care of me*			
	<i>Brand listens to me**</i>			
	<i>Brand makes up for mistakes**</i>			
	Count on brand to do what's best for me			
	<i>Brand is responsive to my concerns**</i>			
	Brand listens to me, is responsive to my concerns and makes up for mistakes***			
Self-connection		.898	.804	.781
	Brand is part of me			
	Makes statement about what's important to me*			



	Connects with part of me that makes me tick			
	Fits with life goals or problems			
	By using brand I'm part of a shared community			
	Develop relationships with others who use brand			
Nostalgic Attachment				
	<i>Have sentimental feelings for brand ****</i>			
	<i>Brand reminds me of phase of my life ****</i>			
	<i>Thoughts of brand contain personal memories ****</i>			
Intimacy (Consumer-Brand)		.879	.981	.903
	<i>Know brand history/background**</i>			
	<i>Know what brand stands for**</i>			
	Know brand history/background and know what brand stands for***			
	Know more about brand than average consumer			
Intimacy (Brand-Consumer)				
	<i>Brand understands my needs**</i>			
	<i>Brand knows me well enough to design a product just for me**</i>			
	<i>Brand knows a lot about me as a person**</i>			
	Brand understands my needs and knows me so well they could design a product for me***			