More than what meets the eye

- An exploratory study of what image attributes influence consumer behaviour on Instagram

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ABSTRACT

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Title
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Abstract
In an era where Instagram is the new dominating social media platform to reach and communicate with consumers, the demands on companies to differentiate their social media content have increased. Executives seem to avoid social media due to absence of how to manage and learn from it. Therefore, additional in-depth knowledge of how to place apparel products in favourable contexts through images could make marketing efforts more efficient on Instagram.

The path this dissertation follows is qualitative with an abductive approach, since the aim of this dissertation is to create an in-depth understanding of what image attributes influence and motivate consumers on Instagram.

Primary data have been produced through three semi-structured focus group interviews along with secondary data collected from five apparel brands’ Instagram accounts. This thesis takes its ground in consumer behaviour and theories of visual content, but does not rely on theory alone, as it would have prevented findings of new insights.

Findings of previous research on how visual content influence consumers reinforced our research study even when displayed in the forum of Instagram. Additionally, the results of this dissertation stress the importance of placing the product in a relevant context, to a visually appealing background and preferably shown on a human being. These findings may be useful as guidance for apparel companies using Instagram as a promotional tool, as well as for companies who are planning to do so.

Keywords
Image attributes, consumer behaviour, Instagram, apparel brands, visual content
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For putting up with our ups and downs - listening to us bragging, to then dry our tears

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We will always remember, Team work creates dream work

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the following chapter the background will present the shift in communication towards sharing visual content on Instagram. Apparel brands’ presence on Instagram is further described, as well as the effects of visual content on consumer behaviour. Furthermore, the problematization, research question, purpose, demarcations and disposition of the thesis will be presented.

1.1 BACKGROUND

In an era where Instagram is the new dominating social media platform to reach and communicate with consumers, the demands on companies to differentiate their social media content have increased (Gao & Bai, 2014; Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016). A social media presence is, in itself, insufficient to maintain users’ attention, which means that companies may benefit from developing an active, innovative and nuanced Instagram profile (Schluze, Schöler & Skiera, 2015; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Today, over one million companies are present on and actively using Instagram to promote brands and products, aiming to stand out from competitors with appealing visuals (Soci, 2017). As of today, already half a million advertisers use Instagram as a marketing platform and among the “Top 100 Global Brands” 90 percent are actively using it. About 640 million Instagram users follow one or more brands (Soci, 2017), whereof 200 million visit them daily (Aslam, 2018). For example, a top global brand gained 800,000 views in 24 hours through one Story-upload (Sugrue, 2017). Overall, it seems like Instagram is an opportunity to seize and benefit from, and the social media platform of our time that marketers should not ignore.

Instagram was launched in October 2010 (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhampati, 2014), and was acquired by Facebook already two years later, when Instagram had 30 million users. In 2017, Instagram had 800 million users and it is predicted that the number of users will reach one billion in 2018 (Karlsson, 2017b). Remarkably, its content creates 58 times more engagement among users than both Facebook and Twitter (Eckerwall, 2015). More than
half of all Internet users in Sweden are users of Instagram (Karlsson, 2017a), which makes Sweden no exception of the growing Instagram trend. Instagram was the social media platform that increased its number of users the most last year in Sweden (Karlsson, 2017a), and the time spent in the application increased with 80 percent compared to 2016 (Karlsson, 2017b). According to the Internet Foundation in Sweden, the vast majority of Instagram users are in the younger age group, where women between the ages 16-25 represent a large proportion (Karlsson, 2017a). Interestingly, Instagram is also the most common and emerging social media platform used by apparel brands to promote their latest products and gain visibility by uploading photos (Manikonda, Venkatesan, Kambhampati, & Li, 2015).

According to The Guardian and The New York Times, social media tells you what to wear, and Instagram is the front-row of apparel (Cartner-Morley 2015a; Cartner-Morley 2015b; Friedman 2015). Since images have shown to be a dynamic way to communicate and raise attention (Smaoui, 2017), apparel brands may benefit from utilizing images on Instagram. Images enable them to direct their marketing efforts and create a desired perception among consumers (Manikonda, Venkatesan, Kambhampati, & Li, Trending, 2016).

The use of images is not a new phenomenon, since images have been central in advertisements for decades. Some researchers even believed that the future of advertising would consist of images only (Edell & Staelin, 1983). Despite these beliefs, the verbal way of communicating online have been the focus in previous research, where it has been argued that images often are used as a complement to both written and spoken words (Russmann & Svensson, 2017; Eriksson & Göthlund, 2004). However, Eriksson & Göthlund (2004) mean that an image should be considered in its own greatness, even if it stands together with verbal content. Burri (2012) highlights the advantages with using visual content since it cannot be converted into verbal content without partly losing its perks. Visual content enables comprehension of a greater extent of information outright, contributing with a more effective way of communicating (Burri, 2012; Wu, o.a., 2016). Statistics show that the brain can comprehend visual content 60,000 times faster compared to verbal content (Sugrue, 2017), which makes the image-based platform Instagram relevant for further exploration.
1.2 Problematization

Today’s consumers have an abundance of available information, which makes the strategic choice of how to advertise a product even more important for companies, in order to even be considered as a source of purchase for consumers (Wu, o.a., 2016). According to Kotler and Keller (2011), social media is a useful tool that can guide companies to achieve their goals and convey a desired image of the company in a cost-efficient way (Carlsson, 2012; Karimi & Naghibi, 2015). Consumers’ increased command over their social media consumption has led to consumers being more powerful than ever (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Andersson & Brodin, 2008). This empowerment is believed to have emerged through the readily available information that social media provide consumers with, such as access to reviews and word-of-mouth via social reference groups (Gatautis & Kazakevičiūtė, 2012).

Sharing images has developed as an essential piece of improving the social media experience among Western youths (Russmann & Svensson, 2017). Social media platforms are perceived as credible sources of information among consumers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Karimi & Naghibi, 2015), which makes visual social media content important for further research (Highfield & Leaver, 2016). The expansion of Instagram has brought a conversion where images and videos are dominating the social media landscape (Russmann & Svensson, 2017). Visual content contributes to a more effective way of communicating (Burri, 2012) and images do not only function as a visual source of information, but also as an indicator of a product’s real quality. These opportunities have established a phenomenon of visual shopping on social media (Smaouï, 2017), which have influenced consumers’ buying behaviour (Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016). The prevalent use of phone-based cameras (Di, Sundaresan, Piramuthu, & Bhardwaj, 2014), along with the global expansion of social media, have resulted in a worldwide spread fashion interest (Manikonda, Venkatesan, Kambhampati, & Li, 2015). In fact, fashion companies are found among the Instagram users who have the highest number of followers (Statista, 2017). The vast amount of fashion related images on Instagram have a great impact on today’s societies (Manikonda, Venkatesan, Kambhampati, & Li, 2015), which makes it interesting to explore what image attributes on apparel brands’ Instagram accounts influence consumers.
Using images as means of communications enable companies to convey desirable perceptions of products through their visual characteristics. Hence, product images play an important role in the apparel industry in particular, since clothing depend on visual performance rather than functional (Manikonda, Venkatesan, Kambhampati, & Li, 2015). Though, images also have the ability to illustrate how clothes drape on the body, different ways to use the product, or remind the consumer of a specific personal moment in life. If consumers are able to recognize themselves in the situation and feel a personal connection to the image, there is a greater chance that the image influence the consumer behaviour (Santaella, Summers, & Belleau, 2015). Apparel products continuously change and often include a strong symbolic meaning for consumers. Also, apparel product attributes are able to raise attention among consumers, which may be the reason why apparel have been appointed to be the most sold product online (Park, Kim, Funches, & Foxx, 2012).

The creation and establishment of a desirable, attractive and well-developed online platform with color-, design- and style attributes, may influence whether consumers just browse through, or if their attention is captured enough to evaluate the product and visit the apparel brand’s website. It is important for companies to create an interest among consumers to visit their website, since it is there the actual purchase takes place (Park, Kim, Funches, & Foxx, 2012). Therefore, it could be beneficial for marketers to create an in-depth knowledge of what influence and motivate consumers to be interested in products they did not even consider before.

According to Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre (2011), many executives seem to avoid social media since they have an absence of knowledge about what it is and how to manage and learn from it. A challenge of managing social media is to understand how a specific social media content can stimulate and impact consumer behaviour (HennigThurau, o.a., 2010; Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, & Wiertz, 2013). Until recently, consumer behaviour has often been seen as a rational manner, expecting consumers to behave logical and have well-founded behavioural patterns (Koski, 2005; Kim & Yang 2017). Though, it is questioned if these rational behavioural patterns actually are prominent, since Kim and Yang (2017) reflect upon that behaviour also can occur without further thoughts. It is also argued that a consumer’s behaviour is affected by emotions which evoke various feelings, and set aside rational aspects (Kotler & Keller,
According to Fill and Turnbull (2016), it is shown that the use of emotions is important in marketing, especially when it comes to create attention among consumers. Therefore, it may be a necessity for companies to strive to inspire and create interest for consumers with visual content to keep them motivated and attached, instead of making the intention to sell too obvious (Eckerwall, 2015). It is known that companies use visual content to appeal and inspire consumers (Russmann & Svensson, 2017). For example, apparel brands commonly use celebrity endorsements on Instagram, since celebrities are considered to be trustworthy and persuasive sources of information (Chiosa, 2012; Silvera & Austad, 2004).

According to Hand (2017), research about consumer behaviour is a well explored area, where less focus has been dedicated to consumer behaviour in relation to visual social media content (Sheldon & Bryant, 2015), such as on Instagram. In particular, the exploration of what different attributes included in images, and all the details featured by these attributes, influence consumer behaviour, is limited (Wu, o.a., 2016). The understanding of consumer behaviour towards images is important in order for companies to be able to influence them (Smaoui, 2017). Executives seem to need additional in-depth knowledge of social media (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011), and how to benefit from placing products in a context through images on Instagram. Therefore, it seems to exist a need for further exploring what image attributes, where products are placed in a context, influence and motivate consumers on Instagram. This will enable us to explore if these attributes may raise an intention to visit the apparel brands’ website.

1.3 Research Question
What image attributes, where a product is placed in a context, influence and motivate consumers on Instagram?

1.4 Research Purpose
The aim of this dissertation is to create an in-depth understanding of what image attributes, where a product is placed in a context, influence and motivate consumers on Instagram.
1.5 Demarcations
One demarcation of this dissertation is that the Instagram content explored only covers images, and neither videos or captions. Nor will the dissertation take into account whether the subjective acts, such as likes and comments from family and friends, influence consumer behaviour.

1.6 Disposition
This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter one gives an introduction, and starts with a background that presents the shift in communication towards sharing visual content on Instagram. Apparel brands’ existence on Instagram are further described, as well as the effects of visual content on consumers’ behaviour. Furthermore, the problematization, research question, purpose, demarcations and lastly, the disposition of the thesis is presented.

Chapter two is the research method and intends to account for selected methods and explains the path this dissertation has followed in order to approach the purpose of the thesis. In this chapter it is argued for the decision to follow a qualitative, abductive and explorative approach. At last, the choice of theories will be discussed.

Chapter three will present previous research relevant for the purpose of the dissertation, since a common pre-understanding is necessary. A description of social media and Instagram will be given, since a common pre-understanding is necessary.

Chapter four presents the theoretical framework, where consumer behaviour, the core theory of the dissertation, is presented followed by various components that constitute and influence consumer behaviour. These components consist of attitudes, celebrity endorsements and motivation, along with the AIDA-model. Furthermore, explanations of visual content, semiotics, colors, visual complexity and a categorization system of images are given.
Chapter five describes the *empirical method*, which presents the time horizon, data collection which includes selection of brands and sampling of images. Thereafter, the data analysis, limitations, ethical choices and validity will be discussed.

Chapter six is the *analysis*, which presents and analyzes the empirical data to be able to approach the research purpose. The empirical data are collected from apparel brands’ Instagram feed and produced through three focus groups and individual notes from all participants. The analysis is based on the different attributes of visual content presented in the theoretical framework. The most prominent images in each category will be analyzed to enhance previous research and create new insights.

Chapter seven is the *conclusion* and begins with the research question being revisited along with a thesis summary, followed by practical implications and suggestions for future research. The chapter aims to answer the research question to fulfil the purpose of the dissertation.
2 RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter intends to account for selected methods and explains the path this dissertation has followed in order to approach the purpose of the thesis. In this chapter it is argued for the decision to follow a qualitative, abductive and explorative approach. At last, the choice of theories will be discussed.

2.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The field of research philosophies consists of three different approaches, which are positivism, realism and interpretivism. These philosophies aim to explain the different ideas on how the world is viewed by humans (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The perspective of this dissertation is influenced by the research approach, since assumptions are drawn from the philosophy, which in turn impact strategies and methods used. Positivism advocates the use of science methods when studying the aspects of social reality where the gathering of knowledge strives towards objectivity, without influence of one’s valuations. The second mentioned philosophy, realism, implies that the context is the only real existence, independent of the human mind. Lastly, the philosophy interpretivism argues that it is vital to capture the subjective meaning of human actions, both in social contexts, and as study objects of natural science (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Due to the exploratory research purpose of this thesis, we believe interpretivism to be the most suitable approach. The selection is supported by the complexity in interpreting human behaviour, thus an in-depth approach that considers the subjectivity of human actions is necessary. Aligned with interpretivism, this dissertation seeks to create a deeper understanding, explore, and draw conclusions based on the produced empirical data.

2.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

There are different approaches in research of how to work and involve with theory: the inductive, the deductive and the abductive approach. In the inductive approach, a theory is build out of the collection of data, while on the contrary, the deductive approach is founded in existing theories whereupon these theories are tested through the collected data (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Lastly, the abductive approach is related to both the inductive and the
deductive approach, where the research process moves between theory and empirical data, and allows the understanding to increasingly emerge (Alvehus, 2013). The abductive approach usually starts with observation of an object, and then generates a logical theory in order to understand, explore and explain possible reasons for its occurrence (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). As this dissertation aims to create an in-depth understanding of what image attributes influence and motivate consumers on Instagram, the abductive approach will be applied. This allow us to base our analysis on existing theories while also considering the produced empirical data as new discoveries.

2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN
According to Saunders’ research onion (2012), there are three research purposes: the descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purpose (See Appendix 1). The descriptive purpose is to create a detailed image of specific situations and individuals, and therefore it is necessary that the observed object must be clarified. In the explanatory purpose, the aim is analyze different situations to be able to illustrate a relationship between the various components. The exploratory purpose aims to create understanding of complex phenomena that needs to be further explored to obtain a clarified explanation. By using an exploratory method, the researcher is allowed to be flexible, easily adapt to changes and ask open questions, which increase the likelihood of new insights being made. The research design suitable for fulfilling the aim of this thesis is to use an exploratory approach, due to the need of creating an in-depth understanding of what image content attributes influence consumer behaviour (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

2.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY
According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) a research strategy is a link between the research philosophy and the chosen methods of data collection. In 1967, Glaser and Strauss founded the research strategy named grounded theory, which is a methodological approach that enables exploration, explanation, interpretation and analyzation of the essence that individuals create to make situations in everyday life understandable (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Likewise, grounded theory studies various social interactions within the wide area of consumer behaviour, which is in accordance with the aim of our research.
The strategy is also commonly used when altering between induction and deduction, making it an appropriate strategy for addressing the research question of our abductive thesis. Additionally, a fundamental part of grounded theory is the use of analytical coding from collected data, where organizing data in categories facilitate empirical analysis (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). This type of analytical coding will be useful when we later on conduct the content analyzes of focus group interviews.

Research strategies can be both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative approach is appropriate when the dissertation is intended to generalize, clarify various concepts, test hypotheses and investigate the relationship between different components. Contrariwise, the qualitative approach has a holistic view and the aim is to develop an understanding of complex social phenomena, perceptions, feelings and experiences (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). The qualitative pursuit to understand social habits is a result of focusing on peculiarities, which is useful for research that studies specific phenomena by the use of a specific empirical selection (Yin, 2013). On this basis, a qualitative approach is considered suitable for this dissertation, due to the fact that it strives to both create understanding, explaining and exploring the subjective meaning of human actions, perceptions and feelings. Therefore, the methods used to produce these qualitative data will consist of focus group interviews and content analyzes of the sampling of images in combination with the produced data from the focus group interviews.

2.5 Choice of theory

In order to answer the purpose of our thesis, the theories are divided into a chapter of previous research followed by the theoretical framework. The previous research presents a brief description of social media and Instagram. We believe that the previous research is of great importance to create a common pre-understanding necessary to accompany our thoughts, arguments and analysis. The theoretical framework is constructed to ease the understanding of different components that constitute and influence consumer behaviour, such as attitudes, celebrity endorsement and motivation, along with the AIDA-model. Furthermore, an explanation of visual content, semiotics and the categorization system “Hook” images are given. However, due to the exploratory and abductive approach, this
thesis does not rely on theory alone, since this would have prevented findings of new insights.
3 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This chapter will present previous research relevant for the purpose of the dissertation, since a common pre-understanding is necessary. A description of social media and Instagram will be given, since a common pre-understanding is necessary.

3.1 SOCIAL MEDIA

Today, social media is a high priority within many companies, where executives try to find beneficial strategies to gain profit out of different social media platforms. However, there seem to exist a certain confusion among executives about the different building blocks of social media, as well as a limited in-depth knowledge and understanding of the meaning of social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, social media can be defined as (Fahy & Jobber, 2015, p.319):

Social media is the term commonly given to Internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allows users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement.

It seems as social media is important for companies since it gives them the opportunity to interact with their consumers. According to Fahy and Jobber (2015), social media are more dynamic to changes and advantageous in many ways compared to traditional media (newspapers, TV and film). It has moved users into content contributors instead of viewers only, since it is free and accessible to anyone with Internet-connected devices, such as a computer or a phone. Social media enable real-time dialogues, and permit individuals to interact globally (Fahy & Jobber, 2015), which also applies to companies in their marketing communications with consumers. The interaction between companies and consumers provides companies with more insights of consumers’ behaviours and attitudes. It may also increase awareness of brands and products among consumers (Alves, Fernandes & Raposo, 2016). It is argued that online and offline consumer behaviour are similar and generally non-distinguishable. Despite this, it has been found to exist clear differences between the two, where the online consumer is more demanding, powerful, and practical, than the offline consumer. These different characteristics are believed to have emerged through the
readily available information that social media provide consumers with, such as access to reviews and word-of-mouth via social reference groups (Gatautis & Kazakevičiūtė, 2012).

3.1.1 INSTAGRAM

Instagram is the fastest growing mobile-based social media application that enables users to upload images and videos instantly (Hochman & Schwartz, 2012; Salomon, 2013; Sheldon & Bryant, 2015; Thelander & Cassinger, 2017). Instagram has the ability to transform images into visually appealing content through the use of ‘filters’ and other retouch tools, such as brightness, saturation, hue, and contrast, to name a few (Hochman & Schwartz, 2012). Despite the possibility of publishing an image instantly, it is more common for users to post images after retouching them with different tools, such as filtering, blurring and cropping (Zappavigna, 2016). Moreover, Instagram lets its users share their content directly through other social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter (Hochman & Schwartz, 2012; Salomon, 2013; Sheldon & Bryant, 2015; Thelander & Cassinger, 2017; Zappavigna, 2016).

Instagram has become an important social media channel for companies, where they can create an account to easily publish images on their products to reach a desired audience (Krus, 2016). The Instagram corporate tools also provide companies with features, such as adding contact information, showing statistics of posts and followers (Instagram, 2018b). However, Instagram also imposes various semiotic approaches, including both written and visual constraints, which allows users to only post images that are limited to a square frame and limits the number of characters and hashtags (Zappavigna, 2016). Instagram uses a technology that allows a website to memorize the page previously visited on the site, also called cookies (Instagram, 2018c). Therefore, it is not necessary for users to follow a brand’s specific account to be exposed to their visual content. This exposure is also influenced by likes and comments, or of people the user follows.
4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, consumer behaviour, the core theory of the dissertation, is presented followed by various components that constitute and influence consumer behaviour. These components consist of attitudes, celebrity endorsements and motivation, along with the AIDA-model. Furthermore, explanations of visual content, semiotics, colors, visual complexity and a categorization system of images are given.

4.1 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The theory of consumer behaviour is essential to approach the research purpose and question of this thesis. Thus, this theory will be the core of the theoretical framework and contribute to how the interpretation of various attributes on images influence the behaviour of consumers. Consumer behaviour is a broad research field, bringing together diverse research methodologies (Morales, Amir, & Lee, 2017). According to Kotler and Keller (2016), it is important to understand consumer behaviour in both theory and reality. Therefore, the consumers’ behaviour on social media needs to be considered, since consumers are more sceptical than before (Godson, 2009). Consumers’ scepticism can be explained by the readily available information of today, which influence their attitudes and opinions regarding a product (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Consumers evaluate products in order to match their expectations, aiming to fulfill their wants and needs (Cohen, Prayag & Moital, 2014; Wu & Chan, 2011; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Consumer behaviour describes why individuals act the way they do and can be defined as a consumer’s actions, thoughts, experiences, decisions and values (Cohen, Prayag & Moital, 2014; Wu & Chan, 2011; Kotler & Keller, 2016). A consumer’s values consist of attitudes and behaviours, although values are more profound because they are built up over a longer time (Kotler & Keller, 2016). One influence of consumer behaviour is age, since a person gathers experiences throughout life that impact and shape one’s behaviour. Another influential factor is one’s personality and can be crucial factor influencing a consumer’s choice, since consumers tend to choose products that they consider reflecting their personality (Kotler & Keller, 2016). According to Fahy and Jobber (2015), one’s personality is the inner psychological characteristics which explains how they respond and
react to the environment. Furthermore, consumer behaviour can be influenced by its way of living, activities and reference groups, such as family, friends and celebrity endorsements (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Together these influences create the foundation of an individual’s self-perception, which have an impact on a consumer’s behaviour and reactions. When marketing efforts are incorporated in the social lives of consumers, offerings become alive, which increases the likelihood of product evaluation (Baines & Fill, 2014).

4.1.1 CONSUMER ATTITUDES

An important aspect of consumer behaviour is to understand consumers’ acts and attitudes, which is a response towards a situation or product, shaped by one’s past experiences (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Marketers want to create positive consumer attitudes towards products and through an understanding of people’s attitudes towards certain products, marketers can change already established attitudes. One model that highlights attitude change and formation is AIDA. The model communicates all the stages a consumer is lead through in the personal selling process (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). In 1925, the AIDA-model was developed by Edward Strong Jr and is perhaps one of the oldest models in marketing. The AIDA-model stands for attention, interest, desire and action. Both attention and interest are cognitive components, while desire is an affective component and action is a conative component (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). As the actual purchase behaviour is beyond what is being studied in this thesis, the last component of the AIDA-model, action, will not be used.

Attitudes can be seen as the channel between consumers’ behaviour and thoughts and can be distinguished into the three previous mentioned components: cognitive, affective and conative (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2008; Fill & Turnbull, 2016). The first component is the cognitive attitude, also called the learning attitude, which is associated with opinions, perceptions and knowledge of a product or various attributes of an offering, and also connected to the AIDA-model’s two component attention and interest. The consumers’ perceptions are important for determining their relation to reality, although the perceptions do not always match the reality. The second component is affection, which is referred to as emotions, desires and feelings, and is shaped by a consumer’s positive or negative perspectives towards an issue or object (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2008; Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Emotions are essential to understand consumer behaviour and intended actions.
(Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999), since they influence a consumer’s attitude towards products (Laros & Steenkamp, 2005). The behaviour of today’s consumers is argued to be deeply intuitive and emotional, and usually independent of rational manner since behaviour and intended actions often are guided by the brain’s emotional centre (Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015). The affective component connects to the desire component of the AIDA-model. The third and the last component is the conative attitude, also referred to as the action component in the AIDA-model and explains the ways individuals intend to behave (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2008; Fill & Turnbull, 2016). The theory states that all of the three components must work in balance with each other, in order to get the most comprehensive understanding regarding consumer attitudes (Evans, Jamal, & Foxall, 2008). Marketing communications can be a central component both when changing and remaining existing attitudes. Consumers’ attitudes towards a product are influenced by the way they interpret different communications in their surroundings, the environment and previous experiences (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Attitudes are influenced by the ways companies communicate with individuals, for example through advertisement’s design and creativity.

The cognitive component can be referred to as the informational and rational component and is essential when marketers need to change consumers’ perceptions. Marketers believe that consumers either lack necessary information of a product’s attributes or have a negative perception of the product. Advertisement makes it possible for the marketer to direct consumers’ attention in desired direction, for example, to focus on various aspects of a product or from one product attribute to another (Fill & Turnbull, 2016).

The affective component aims to create a desire among consumers. According to Fill and Turnbull (2016), marketing communications are an effective, emotional source of information and a good complement since rational information is not always enough when trying to stimulate consumers’ behaviour. Since it is shown that emotions are important in marketing (Fill & Turnbull, 2016), companies should strive towards inspiring and creating interest for consumers with visual content. The reason for this is to keep consumers motivated and attached, instead of making the intention to sell too obvious (Eckerwall, 2015). Marketers try to change an existing neutral or negative attitude by differentiating
their message or product from competitors by making use of a more unusual style or color. One common way is to take use of images to appeal consumers’ senses, emotions and feelings in order to make them get the feeling of “I like”, “I desire”, “I want” or “I belong to”. If consumers are able to recognize themselves in the situation and feel a personal connection to the image, there is a greater chance that the image influence the consumer behaviour. Further, marketers can benefit from using different tools, such as colors and celebrity endorsements, when trying to communicate what the product represents and influence consumers’ behaviour and attitudes. The apparel industry is the industry which uses celebrity endorsement to market their products in combination with little or no verbal information. The idea of using celebrity endorsement is to create a visual impact to get the consumer to shape a positive attitude and associations between the brand, the product and the endorser (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). By introducing the benefits with the product in images, they can influence consumers’ attitudes towards a product (Santaella, Summers, & Belleau, 2015).

4.1.2 CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT
The use of celebrity endorsements could be a beneficial strategy for companies, since celebrity endorsers are believed to be an effective tool to increase attention in a cluttered environment (Zafar & Rafique, 2015). A celebrity endorser is a famous or well-known person who advertises a product and has achieved popularity for some reason. The use of celebrity endorsement can take various shapes, for example, a celebrity can endorse the product only, use the actual product, induce the product and appear with the product (Chiosa, 2012). Endorsers have the ability to shape and influence someone's attitudes, actions and motivation through interaction, images and posts (Forbes, 2016). In that way, a consumer could be influenced and motivated to potentially purchase an endorsed product, even if the consumer does not have an actual need for the product in the first place (Cheung, Xiao, & Liu, 2014). People often admire celebrities’ lifestyles and values, and therefore the use of celebrities add value and is often seen as a trustworthy, believable and persuasive source of information (Chiosa, 2012; Silvera & Austad, 2004). Furthermore, the characteristics of a celebrity endorser, such as likeable, charming and attention drawing, increases the attractiveness, level of recall and attention and makes the advertisement more memorable (Chiosa, 2012; Zafar & Rafique, 2015). However, how consumers interpret
content on images and posts depend on one’s motivation and attitudes (Nejad, Sherrell, & Babakus, 2014).

Motivation is a force that drives both conscious and unconscious decisions and is an essential part of consumer behaviour (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2008; Nwankwo, Hamelin & Khaled, 2014). Evans et al. (2008), argue that one must distinguish between needs and desires as a driving power. The needs refer to physical needs, such as food, while the desire refers to psychogenic motives, such as wanting fashionable clothes (Evans, Jamal, & Foxall, 2008). Kotler and Keller (2016) argue that a person’s needs convert into motives, when one reaches the level of intensity that provokes an action. According to Baines and Fill (2014), motivation arise from intrinsic and extrinsic interest, either in combination or separately. An intrinsic interest is based on an individual’s own motivation, for example, liking a product due to previous satisfactory experiences. On the contrary, an extrinsic interest oftentimes is provoked by others, such as family, friends or celebrity endorsement (Baines & Fill, 2014).

4.2 VISUAL CONTENT
According to Eriksson and Göthlund (2004), humans learn by seeing and therefore images play an important role in marketing. To ensure that visual content is perceived in a desirable way it is important to analyze what message the image actually sends, both as the image altogether and the different parts of the image. Due to previous experiences, signs can symbolize different meanings to the viewer and can be helpful in trying to understand messages that marketers want to convey to the consumer (Baines & Fill, 2014).

4.2.1 SEMIOTICS
When analyzing and interpreting an image, one must take several contexts into account, since an image is not limited to one context only. Therefore, the concept of semiotics has shown to be important when studying the underlying meaning in images. Semiotics is the science explaining how people study and analyze the function of signs, such as visuals, sound, taste and touch, in a specific context. Semiotic analysis corresponds to the interpretation of different attributes of the image as a sign, identification of all meaningful parts, and analyze the attributes individually and in relation to each other. Images are sets of symbols combined in a variety of ways, just like language, spoken words and written
characters (Eriksson & Göthlund, 2004). One way to facilitate the understanding of semiotics is to study the model “the positioning triad”, which consists of three interrelated factors: the item, the symbol, and the meaning. The item represents the actual object or the product, followed by the symbol that intends to communicate something about the item. Lastly, the meaning aims to give a clearer understanding of how the consumer interpret the message (Baines & Fill, 2014).

4.2.2 COLORS
In addition to find the underlying meaning with images, it is shown that colors can influence consumer behaviour, as well as online purchase intentions. Therefore, marketers should understand the importance of strategically use colors to influence consumer feelings, desires and attitudes towards products. In that way marketers may differentiate their products from competitors (Singh, 2006). According to Chang and Lin (2010), colors are the visual attributes that capture a viewer’s first impression, and individuals base 62-90 percent of the judgement on colors only. Hence, colors are emotionally powerful and together with components, such as size and shape, they can convey messages, increase attention, influence emotions and arouse feelings (Singh, 2006). According to Wu et al. (2016), an image with sharp contrast of colors to its background and salient product, captures consumers’ attention more compared to other images. Also, attributes, such as shape and color, could influence consumers and increase the likelihood of an intention to consider a purchase of the product. However, research has shown that different colors have different meanings and physiological impact on humans. For example, orange, blue and yellow are considered as happy colors while black, brown and red are considered as sad colors (Singh, 2006). According to Hall and Hanna (2007), people perceive colors, such as blue and green, more pleasant than red and yellow.

Further, Pelet and Papadopoulou (2012) explain that colors have three key components; hue, brightness and saturation. The hue corrects the visual sense of an image by adjusting the color scheme combination of blue, red and green. The brightness is the component that illume the overall lightness of the image to make it more or less bright. Lastly, the saturation regulates the degree of chromatically pure color in the image, where high saturation equals to intense colors. The hue and brightness have shown to significantly affect online purchase intentions in a positive manner, much due to consumers’ preferences.
of bright images with warm tones. It is also shown that purchase intentions are preeminent when the brightness of colors between the background and foreground are not too bold. However, overall color preferences in images may vary depending on gender and age of the perceiver (Pelet & Papadopoulou, 2012; Singh, 2006).

4.2.3 VISUAL COMPLEXITY
Another factor that may influence how consumers interpret images is the visual complexity of them. Visual complexity corresponds to all the various attributes included in the image and all the details highlighted by these attributes (Wu, o.a., 2016). Images that include more attributes, such as movement, visual features or colors, are considered to be more complex than others. For example, a black and white image is less complex than an image with two or more colors against a background (Huhmann, 2009; Pieters, Wedel, & Batra, 2010). According to Wu et al. (2016), it has been argued if one should use a complex or simple design to differentiate the image in order to create attention in marketing. Some studies advocate the use of complex design, while others advocate a simple design. The advantages of applying a complex design, which is information rich, is that it facilitates the viewer to create an attitude towards the product and evaluate the product (Wu, o.a., 2016). Further, one believes that marketers can benefit from the use of a complex design, since it increases consumers’ attention in another way than simple design (Pieters, Wedel, & Batra, 2010). A disadvantage could be consumers’ limited ability to locate and process all the information at the same time. As individuals have limited ability to process things, the simple design of an image has fewer attributes in the image to ease the understanding for consumers (Wu, o.a., 2016).

The choice of which marketing strategy is the most efficient varies. Because of this, marketers sometime choose to apply a combination of the complex and simple design, which means that they publish simple product images among more complex ones, or the other way around. Today, many marketers often apply similar strategies to improve the product’s visual complexity, which makes it more difficult to get noticed. Therefore, the creation of more appealing images than other marketers may be crucial (Wu, o.a., 2016) to have an innovative, nuanced and inspiring Instagram account). To simplify the understanding of image design and attributes, images can be categorized based on their different characteristics.
4.2.4 THE CONCEPT OF “HOOK” IMAGES

“Hook” images is a concept founded by Mohamed Smaoui (2017), which is useful for the image categorization in this dissertation. A “Hook” image can be defined as an image that illustrate visual content or a product in order to influence consumers’ actions and behaviours. According to Smaoui (2017), images can be divided into four subcategories based on content attributes (See Appendix 2). The first category is referred to as *collage*, where numerous products are placed together in one single image. By making use of this category, a company can market several products through a common theme. The second category is referred to as *landscape* image, where the product itself is not the main focus, but instead the surrounding nature is the centre of attention. This type of image gives the consumer an idea of what the apparel collection contains of and in what contexts it can be used. The third category is referred to as *model/lifestyle*, where a model or a celebrity displays the product. The fourth category is referred to as a *single product*, where only one product is in focus. Smaoui (2017) says that if a company composes appealing images that are differentiated based on consumer segments, the visual content should provoke desirable attitudes and likely influence prospects’ behaviours.

In order to create a more in-depth understanding of the various attributes of an image, the concept of “Hook” images may benefit from being complemented with other subcategories. Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati (2014), assort Instagram images in eight categories, whereof four are relevant for this study, called *activity, selfie, fashion* and *friends*. The first mentioned category, *activity*, consists of images visualizing both indoor and outdoor activities, as well as spots where happenings take place, i.e. concerts. The second category, *selfie*, can be recognized as self-portraits where the image consists of one face only. The third category, *fashion*, belongs to images containing fashion products, such as costumes, shoes and makeup. Lastly, the *friends* category requires an image of at least two persons, for example a user posing with friends (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhampati, 2014).

4.3 THEORETICAL SUMMARY

To the best of our knowledge, there seems to be a need to further explore what various attributes included in an image and all the details highlighted by these attributes, influence consumer behaviour. The exploration of these attributes leads us to what Instagram images,
where a product is placed in a context, motivate consumers and may raise an intention to visit an apparel brands’ website. To be able to approach the research purpose of this thesis we have developed a theoretical summary based on existing theories and a combination of different concepts. The combination of concepts along with the produced empirical material will be the foundation in the analysis.

The understanding of consumer behaviour towards images will be important to create an understanding of what influence consumers’ attitudes and how. Furthermore, the effects of celebrity endorsements will be analyzed to understand how it influences and motivates consumers. To follow the AIDA-model’s first three components, attention, interest and desire, enable us to explore what images affect consumer behaviour and in what ways a consumer is influenced by an Instagram image. The three components of the AIDA-model will be treated by asking, "What was it that caught your attention in this image?" , “Do you feel interested in something special?”, and “Does the image raise any kind of desire?”. The concept of “Hook” images, along with complemented categories, semiotics and colors will be the building blocks when conducting the description and categorization of images (See Appendix 6). We believe that these together cover the important aspects we consider necessary to interpret different attributes in an image. The categories within the concept of “Hook” images, landscape, model, collage and one single product, will the basis of the image sampling, together with the complemented categories friends, fashion, selfie and activity (See Appendix 3).
5 Empirical Method

In this part the time horizon, data collection which includes selection of brands and sampling of images will be presented. Further, the choice of focus groups is argued for, as well as selection of participants and a practice of focus groups. Thereafter, the data analysis, limitations of the dissertation, ethical choices and validity will be discussed.

5.1 Time Horizon
There are two types of time horizons when a research study is executed: the longitudinal and cross-sectional. The longitudinal time horizon corresponds to exploring or measuring an object or a phenomenon over a long period of time. Contrariwise, a cross-sectional research study is conducted over a limited time span (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2012). Our thesis is a qualitative cross-sectional research study, due to the exploration of influences on consumer behaviour that is limited to a research period of 15 weeks. In addition, a cross-sectional research study is advised as the most appropriate time horizon when data is produced through focus group interviews (Hansson, 2011).

5.2 Data Collection
According to Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2012), empirical data can be either primary or secondary sources, wherein primary data counts for entirely new sources and secondary data are already existing sources. Both types of empirical data can be found in our empirical method, since data is produced from three focus groups and collected from five apparel brands’ Instagram accounts.

5.2.1 Selection of Brands
The sampling of images has been conducted through conscious selection from five different apparel brands’ Instagram accounts: Asos, Bubbleroom, Gina Tricot, Nelly and Zalando. The reason behind the selected brands is based on our pre-knowledge regarding the brands’ similarities of target groups and product lines, and they are all well-established and well-known apparel brands on the Swedish market. To the best of our knowledge the brands target the same age group and mostly women, in line with the selection of participants in this thesis. The brands also have in common to actively use Instagram, with large numbers of followers and frequent updates. In addition, the brand selection is influenced by our
preknowledge of the common use of celebrity endorsements, as well as product placement in attractive contexts on Instagram. However, the five apparel brands’ Instagram accounts differ in design, style and color scheme. We believe this diversity enable us to see the differences more clearly between which attributes are preferred and how they raise attention, interest and desire among consumers. Through this, we approach the sought to see whether the context really matters.

5.2.2 SAMPLING OF IMAGES

The selection of images has brought much discussion and reflection to ensure our consistency regarding the images’ value and relevance for the chosen theories ads the research purpose. We have categorized the selected images into eight different categories: landscape, model/lifestyle, collage, single product, fashion, friends, selfie and activity (See Appendix 3), based on the concept of “Hook” images along with complemented categories. The path of the image sampling begun with searching through the chosen apparel brands’ Instagram feeds to find images that correspond to the eight categories. In each category, two different images have been selected in order to get a greater variety without making the selection unmanageable. We have tried to choose both neutral and more distinctive images in order to create a more nuanced discussion in our focus groups. We strategically selected two images with an absence of apparel products, to explore if this influence consumers as they know the images are from apparel brands’ Instagram accounts. Besides the focus on the eight categories, different attributes such as colors, symbols and people, also played a vital role when selecting images. In our belief, a greater variety among images facilitates for the participants to account for attributes that influence their emotions, attitudes and motivation. Our definition of a varied selection is to choose images with different attributes, even if they are within the same category. As an example, when selecting two images for the landscape category, we chose one image of a summer landscape, and the other one of a winter landscape.

5.2.3 FOCUS GROUPS

This dissertation is based on empirical data from three focus groups to understand what image attributes influence and motivate consumers on Instagram. A focus group is a qualitative primary data source which consists of a small group of people, where the aim is to explore attitudes, perceptions, feeling and ideas in a specific subject area through semi-
structured interviews (Denscombe, 2016). The theme of open discussions makes focus groups a suitable research method for an exploratory research approach. The choice of conducting focus groups is based on our belief that it can avoid the discomfort that participants can experience during one-to-one interviews. In addition, focus group discussions are believed to contribute with more perspectives and enable the participants to react and respond to each other’s perceptions in a transparent way. Also, the use of focus groups facilitates to get responses we did not consider but can be important for our understanding when answering the research question (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The role of the researcher is to facilitate the interaction in the group rather than leading the discussion. This enables the researcher to explore and understand the underlying meaning of the participants’ various opinions and perceptions about the subject (Denscombe, 2016). Therefore, this method enables us to capture not only the semiotics of what the participants think, but also how and why they think in a certain way. By exploring thoughts and attitudes, it may be possible to create an in-depth understanding of people’s perceptions of image content attributes, which help us to approach the research question and purpose. Moreover, the selection of focus group participants may vary depending on the objectives with the research, where the researcher should consider which ones best suit the topic of exploration (Kumar, 2014). The selection of participants is further described in the following section.

5.2.3.1 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The criterion of choice in this dissertation is called a convenience selection, which means that participants are chosen due to their availability. A convenience selection is advantageous in smaller research studies when the researchers have limited time horizon and a small budget (Denscombe, 2014). The convenience selection was also due to difficulties in bringing together group members at the same time (Bryman & Bell, 2013). The selective process was conducted through asking people in our contact network if they wanted to participate in our focus group.

In section 1.1, it is clarified that the vast majority of Swedish Instagram users are women between the ages 16-25. Therefore, the selection of focus group participants is based on
these statistics of frequent Instagram users. Besides their gender and age, the only requirement was that they used Instagram on a daily basis. The participants in the first focus groups are between 22 and 25 years old and consist of five female preschool teacher students from Kristianstad University but not belonged to the Faculty of Business. The advantage of selecting individuals with the same schedule is that it increases the chances for them to be able to participate at the same occasion. We have chosen to exclude Business students as we believe their shared pre-knowledge may would have influenced the results. The risk could be if they would direct their answers in the direction they thought we headed for. The second focus group consists of women between the ages of 23-25, but their occupation differs from the first focus group, since all have full-time jobs and also postsecondary education. The third focus group consists of a combination of both female students and full-time workers between the ages of 22-25. There is a more detailed description of the participants in Appendix 4.

The choice to have participants with diverse occupations, both students and full-time workers, is based on our belief of their different financial conditions and views. We believe this choice may contribute to a broader and more comprehensive perspectives, thoughts and reflections. In the first focus group, all the participants are classmates and familiar with each other, but not on a personal level outside the school environment. We believe the participants to feel comfortable in each other's presence, which hopefully reduces uncomfortable situations and make them dare to participate actively in the discussion. In the second and third focus groups all the participants are friends and sometimes meet in social contexts. According to McLafferty (2004), it is beneficial with homogeneous focus groups, due to homogeneity’s removal of potential communication barriers which allow participants to engage and share their opinions.

5.2.3.2 THE PRACTICE OF FOCUS GROUPS
According to Bryman and Bell (2015), it can be difficult to keep a focus group organized, since the discussion can take an undesirable direction. Due to the knowledge of this risk, we constructed an interview guide (See Appendix 5), based on our theoretical framework, in case the group discussion would become scattered. The advantage of this interview method, instead of just open questions, is that it allows for answers to be in line with our
theoretical framework. Another advantage, according to Lind (2014), is that a conducted interview guide also facilitates the comparison of empirical interviews. To ensure that all participants would be able to express themselves in a convenient way, all the focus groups were held in Swedish. Swedish is the native language for all the participants, which hopefully would prevent potential misinterpretations.

The conducted focus group interview guide included a brief introduction about us and the aim of the project and the thesis, followed by all participants’ approval for the interview to be recorded. All empirical data were recorded, which facilitate the transcription of the focus groups. The first focus group took place in a conference room at Kristianstad University, the 26th of April 2018 and lasted for approximately one hour. The second focus group took place the 2nd of May 2018 in one of the participants’ large apartment in Hässleholm, and lasted for almost one and a half hour. The last focus group took place the 10th of May 2018 in the same apartment as in the second focus group and lasted for over an hour. The choice to organize the focus groups on different days enabled us to slightly modify some questions if needed. Due to the key general information requirement, explained in Ethical choice 5.5, we clarified the conditions that their participation is voluntary and their right to interrupt at any time without any negative consequences. We ensured the participants that there are no right or wrong answers, in order to ease the air between the participants since they mentioned their slight nervousness. We chose to not reveal which different brands it was, but only told that all images came from five different apparel brands’ Instagram accounts. This decision was based on the belief to ensure that neither recognition nor loyalty towards a brand influenced the result of the thesis.

Initially, we asked two questions of somewhat more open character, to gain a more basic knowledge of the participants’ Instagram habits. All participants agreed that Instagram was the application they opened when they were bored and had nothing to do. All participants explained that they check Instagram every day, but the time spent in the application varied among the participants. Some participants visit the application more frequently in shorter time periods, while others visit it fewer times in longer time periods. All participants agreed that they check the feed where the people they follow upload photos and do not often check what others like and comment. Beyond this, there are differences in their use of Instagram,
such as viewing the public feed and clicking on interesting images or watch Instagram stories. An important aspect is that all participants are used to Instagram and spend quite a lot of time inside the application. However, their limited use within the app may influence the result of this dissertation, since they do not utilize all Instagram features. The fact that they do not look so much on the public feed or what their friends comment and like, make them exposed to commercials to a lesser extent, since apparel brands’ images appear on a user’s public feed if the user do not follow them. Thereafter, we started targeting the discussion to enable analysis and fulfillment of the purpose of our dissertation. According to Denscombe (2016), the placement of the participants is important, and therefore all the participants were placed around a table, where they could see and interact with each other. We gave instructions about the 16 images from section 5.2.2, where we first asked them to glance through all the images individually and take short notes for each. The purpose to take individual notes was to give them the opportunity to create their own perception before being influenced by each other’s opinions.

In the first two focus groups the images were printed and put on a table, where all participants could see and freely send the images between them. Meanwhile as they glanced through the images, the participants individually noted their impressions of each image. The groups were then asked to together select at least 5 images and a maximum of 10 that captured their attention in a positive manner. During their discussion, we were given the opportunity to explore and observe their reflections and opinions. After the participants selected which images they found preferable, we went through all the images one by one, starting with the ones they excluded. We asked for the reasons why they excluded these images particularly, in order to explore what specific attributes influence them. Afterwards, we followed the same procedure with the images they preferred. At first, we let them discuss freely about their thoughts, but during their discussion we interposed 9 questions connected to the new theoretical framework in order to approach the aim of this dissertation.

In the first focus group the discussion between the participants was very natural and driven, and some of our questions were answered automatically. In the second focus group, we felt that follow-up questions were needed to maintain a discussion and to sometimes break the
silence. One challenge we faced during the second focus group was the difficulty to ignore the discussions in the first focus group. As interviewers, we almost expected them to reflect upon the same image attributes, even though we intentionally selected both students and workers as participants in the quest for different perspectives. So, in fact, we got what we sought and produced very useful data.

After completing the two focus groups, we chose to add another focus group to use this as a control group. For the most part, the third focus group followed the same structure as the previous two. Unlike the first two focus groups, the participants instead received instructions to use their smartphones and search for eriksson.frohm at Instagram. On beforehand, we had created an Instagram account where we published our 16 selected images (See Appendix 7). The participants got to glance through the feed on Instagram and take individual notes. The modification to publish the images on Instagram was believed to influence the outcomes of the third focus group discussion, since the images then are put in their true context. Contrary to our assumption of different outcomes, the answers and discussions in the third focus group were very similar to the previous two. The fact that the control groups’ discussions were similar to the previous focus groups could also strengthen the validity of our empirical findings.

5.3 DATA ANALYSIS
Both the collected and produced empirical data in this dissertation have been analyzed. At first, we highlighted all the relevant responses in the transcriptions with different colors that could be found in our theoretical framework. This was done in order to facilitate the analytical coding from the produced data, by condensating and organizing the empirical data into meaning-bearing units, meaning interpretation, codes and categories. The meaning-bearing units refers to meaningful extracts from the transcripts, and the meaning interpretation is a summarized interpretation of the meaning-bearing units in relation to the theoretical framework. The third headline, code, is the encoding of the meaning interpretations, and a subcategory for the main categories. In turn, the main categories consist of the related theories. We believe this strategy of encoding will enable us to find links between the empirical data and the theoretical framework. An extract of how the coding and categorization have been conducted is attached in Appendix 8.
5.3.1 DESCRIPTION AND CATEGORIZATION OF IMAGES
In order to organize the selected images, sort out the different attributes, and apply the relevant theories from the literature review, a description and categorization of the images was conducted from our perspectives (See Appendix 6). The description and categorization of images is included in the thesis to increase the transparency and to allow the reader to follow our interpretations and thoughts during the process of image selection. It is based on the theoretical framework and structured by the selected brands, along with colors, semiotics, brief image descriptions, and the “Hook” images categories along with complemented categories. Under the different headlines, there are more specific key words and meaning-bearing units to follow our method of the image sampling. For example, colors is divided into key words, such as hue, saturation and brightness, and semiotics into item, symbol and meaning. Further, in the image description, we tried to provide a noninterpretive explanation of the objects and colors in the image itself. We believe that a description and categorization of the image sampling simplifies the analysis of the focus group discussions and to compile the analysis into conclusions.

5.3.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL DATA
The produced material from the three focus groups, along with the selected images, were compiled into content analyzes, to facilitate analysis of what image content attributes on Instagram influence consumer behaviour. A content analysis is used to collect and analyze observed content and decompose the data into different categories in order to carry out the most meaningful attributes to identify patterns (Krippendorff, 2004). One advantage of the content analysis is the ability to produce data from social groups and contexts that are otherwise complicated to access. This advantage facilitates the process of organizing and categorizing our findings from the focus groups and helps to identify the most meaningful attributes. Furthermore, a content analysis is considered to be a transparent and objective research method due to the compilation of what have been said without the influences of the researcher’s interpretation (Bryman & Bell, 2016), which increases the aspect of validity in this dissertation.

5.4 LIMITATIONS
When exploring influences on consumer behaviour, we must bear in mind that different ages and lifestyles entail different behaviours, which likely can result in as many aspects
influencing a consumer’s behaviour as there are lifestyles and interests. An important aspect to keep in mind is that the participants’ different occupations may influence what captures their attention and how they interpret the message in the image. It is also important that we are aware of that our interpretations of the participants’ responses may affect the outcome and analysis of this thesis. Although Instagram is a world-known social media platform, one limitation is that this dissertation is based on a small selection of Swedish people only. Another limitation in this thesis is that the sample consists of women only, between the ages 22-25, which selection is supported by that this segment can be found among the vast majority of Instagram users in Sweden. Lastly, this dissertation is limited to apparel brands’ Instagram account only.

5.5 Ethical Choices
When conducting a dissertation with data collection with human involvement, such as focus groups, it is necessary to consider various key general information requirements of research (Denscombe, 2016). The researcher must inform, either verbally or written, all participants about the purpose of the project and clarify the conditions for their participation. Hence, all participants must be informed about the voluntarily of the participation and their right to interrupt their participation at any time without any negative consequences. Further, all participants have the right to decide independently about how long and under which conditions they will participate (Denscombe, 2016). How these requirements have been treated during the focus groups are further described in section 5.2.3.2. All the participants’ names in the focus groups are held anonymous, even if they did not mind if their names were published. By ethical choice and respect, we chose to refer to them as participants or the number of the focus group.

5.6 Validity
As the essence of this dissertation is qualitative, it is of interest to prove the validity of the study since it strives towards being transferable on similar contexts. According to Bryman and Bell (2016), four criteria are present within the framework of validity: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility corresponds to the trustworthiness of the findings, thus linked to the credibility of the sources of findings (Bryman & Bell, 2016). To strengthen the credibility of our findings, no prior information
was given regarding what images or attributes to be discussed, in order to prevent the participants from preparing answers. Additionally, we selected focus groups participants outside the Faculty of Business as sources of findings, to avoid the risk of receiving responses influenced by an academic pre-understanding of the economic pursuit. Avoiding this is crucial for our dissertation since it strives towards exploring influences and interpretations that could be found in the mind of any woman between the ages of 16-25.

We are aware of the fact that all the participants have an ongoing or completed postsecondary education, which could influence their opinions and the results of this thesis. The fact that we are familiar with respondents may possibly give a greater and more accurate perception of their attitudes, as they dare to be more open and honest. However, one must reflect upon the abnormal setting of focus groups, where the credibility of findings is dependent on the researchers’ success in creating a comfortable climate where participants feel secure enough to express their thoughts freely (Denscombe, 2016).

Informing all participants of the general key requirements of research, as discussed in section 5.5, is the fundamental step to create a secure focus group climate. Moreover, we ensured to keep clear of academic terms as well as keeping discussions on an easy-going level, making sure we were seen as co-participants, rather than leaders of the discussion.

The second criterion, transferability, refers to the applicability of findings on other contexts (Bryman & Bell, 2016) which is also much connected to the considerations mentioned above. Transferability is essential for the validity of our research since findings of a qualitative research may contribute to a better understanding of certain concepts (Yin, 2013). To increase the transparency, all focus group interviews were transcribed since we did not want any valuable data to disappear or let responses become influenced by our interpretations. Bryman and Bell (2016) stress the benefits of transcribing focus group interviews as the researcher can access and work through the empirical data several times.

However, when conducting research, one of the most important choices is to determine which of the collected data will be included in the analysis. Although the fundamental aim is to make our research as credible and transparent as possible, some of the produced data will automatically be excluded from the analysis since it is not possible to include all produced data (Yin, 2013).
The third criterion, *dependability*, is induced by consistency and transparency regarding important data, such as transcripts and interview guides (Bryman & Bell, 2016). In a qualitative research the achievement of credibility is essential, which can be pursued by description and documentation of all the used qualitative research methods. It is also important for all produced empirical data to be available to the public, so others can interpret, understand and judge the data (Yin, 2013). This criterion is treated by attaching all images used in the focus groups in *Appendix 5*, in addition with a description and categorization of the selected images showing our interpretation of them, followed by three content analysis of the focus group participants’ interpretations. Lastly, the criterion of *confirmability* has its focus on reassuring the study is conducted in good faith, without letting findings be affected by any personal agenda intervention (Bryman & Bell, 2015).
6 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the empirical data is presented and analyzed to be able to approach the research purpose. The empirical data are collected from apparel brands’ Instagram feed and produced through three focus groups and individual notes from all participants. The analysis is based on the different attributes of visual content and attitudes presented in the theoretical framework. The most prominent images in each category will be analyzed to enhance previous research and create new insights.

The analysis is aimed to create an in-depth understanding of what image attributes influence behaviours, in order to approach answers to the research question. The third focus group was a control group, with the aim to see if the forum where the images are displayed is of crucial importance. However, no apparent differences were shown and therefore the third focus group will be analyzed in the same way as the other two focus groups. Though, when opinions and interpretations differed in the control group, the reasons behind this have been reflected upon in the analysis.

6.1 CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT

A common way for apparel brands to capture attention, influence and motivate consumers is by making use of celebrity endorsement (Zafar & Rafique, 2015). In all focus groups, celebrity endorsements were shown to be an attribute that markedly influenced the behaviour of the participants. The idea of using a celebrity endorser is to get the consumer to shape a positive attitude and associations between the brand, the product and the endorser (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). However, as seen below, celebrity endorsement does not always influence attitudes and behaviour positively.

I had not used this as an image for commercial. If she would not look so unhappy, I think the purpose of the image would be completely different.

- Image 3, participant 14, 25 years
The celebrity endorser was recognized as the famous Victoria’s secret model, Gigi Hadid. But according to the quotation above, the presence of the celebrity did not seem to bring any benefits due to her unhappy and uncomfortable appearance. This impression aroused a discomfortable feelings and it was very clear that the image did not contribute with positive attitudes or desires and did not raise any intentions to act and visit the website (Fill & Turnbull, 2016).

I would have clicked on the image because it is her, Kenza, because that is often what catch my attention, when it is an influencer.

- Image 15, participant 9, 25 years

The first thing that captured the participants’ attention was the recognition of the celebrity present in the image, Victoria Törnegren (Image 1), Janni Delér (Image 10) and Kenza Zuiten (Image 15). Even if the Victoria Törnegren did not face the camera, the majority recognized her. However, those who did not recognize her, still preferred the image which means that the product was placed in a favourable context. All three women above are Swedish famous bloggers that have many followers on Instagram. These women are also often used by apparel brands to market their products and are considered to be celebrity endorsers, since they increase the attractiveness and attention because of their fame and presence on Instagram (Chiosa, 2012; Zafar & Rafique, 2015). The quotation above, along with the high recognition, indicate that the use of a celebrity endorser is an effective tool to capture attention in a cluttered environment (Zafar & Rafique, 2015).
She looks happy, not fake happy. It looks like she really wants this and therefore her image will be better.

- Image 10, participant 2, 23 years

It makes me happy, and because she looks so good I would click on her Instagram or blog and maybe seen some more images on the shirt and get interested.

- Image 15, participant 8, 25 years

As seen in the quotations above, it was stated in both Image 10 and 15 (p. 34) that the celebrities look really happy, seem to have fun and do not feel fake, which made them happy and felt that the image communicate positive emotions and warmth. This proves that the celebrities succeeded to arouse positive emotions among the participants, which likely is due to them being perceived as likeable (Chiosa, 2012; Zafar & Rafique, 2015). Therefore, unlike some other images, these images have succeeded in stimulating the emotional consumer behavior in a positive way (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). To create positive emotions is of great importance since they influence a consumer’s attitude towards images or products (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999; Laros & Steenkamp, 2005).

She usually has nice clothes. I trust her style.

- Image 15, participant 1, 24 years

Table 1. Extract from content analysis of focus groups 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Meaning-bearing units</th>
<th>Meaning interpretation</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 (FG2)</td>
<td>“I would look at the image because it is Kenza”, “when there is an influencer it often captures my attention”, “I did not actually look at the shirt but I looked at her because I know who she is”, “I become more interested in her and want to click further to her blog”</td>
<td>Recognition, capture attention because she is well-known, creates interest, desire &amp; action to go to her blog</td>
<td>Attention, interest, desire, action, cognitive component, affective component, conative component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (FG2)</td>
<td>“Partly because it is her, Janni”; “I recognize her”; “she has good style”; “I would have clicked further because it is her”</td>
<td>Recognition, opinions, action</td>
<td>Conative component</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fact that both Janni Delér and Kenza Zuiten were considered to be pretty and have desirable taste in clothing (See Table 1), make them trustworthy and persuasive sources of information in the context of promoting apparel (Chiosa, 2012; Silvera & Austad, 2004). According to Chiosa (2012), the use of a celebrity endorser can take various shapes, and since the celebrities use the actual products, the Levi’s jeans, the green dress and the yellow top, it can be interpreted that the celebrities have endorsed the products. In all three images, the celebrity endorsement seems to have led to positive influences towards the products.

*The product is more in a context here, they are not just lying on a bed [...] I could probably have entered [the website] because of the pants here.*

- Image 1, participant 2, 23 years

*I like the pants because they are very nice, but I did not think they fitted her ultimately, even if I heard that everyone else thought that. But if the pants would have fitted her better, I had clicked further to see what model it was.*

- Image 1, participant 9, 25 years

*This [image] I have seen on Instagram and I really liked her dress, so I went to Nelly to order it.*

- Image 10, participant 12, 21 years

There was a lot of focus put on the actual products the celebrities endorsed, the Levi’s jeans, the green dress and the yellow top, which do not particularly stand out from their
backgrounds. This contradicts the theory of Wu et al. (2016), who mean that a salient product to its background capture consumers’ attention more. Moreover, it emerged that the image with Janni Delér in the green dress would trigger the participants to visit the website to see if there was something else in their style, just because of her presence. This implies that the participants evaluated the product even though they did not have an actual need for the product in the first place (Cheung, Xiao, & Liu, 2014). A similar pattern appeared during the discussions of the image where Kenza Zuiten wears a yellow top and were considered to create more interest than the actual product (Image 15, p.42). Yet, her presence influenced some participants so much that, despite the lack of desirable products, they felt an intention to visit her blog to see if there are other things to buy. These reflections imply that the celebrity endorser added value to the image, likely since the participants admire her as a person or her lifestyle (Chiosa, 2012; Silvera & Austad, 2004). When a celebrity is admired, she is also more attention drawing, which increase the level of recall and makes the advertisement more memorable (Chiosa, 2012; Zafar & Rafique, 2015). The memorability was clarified as participant 1 mentioned: “I remember when Kenza herself posted this image on her Instagram feed”.

You have some kind of connection with her, because I for example, follow her on Instagram.

- Image 10, participant 4, 24 years

According to the quotation, participants reflected upon a personal connection to the celebrity endorser (Image 10, p. 42), since some follow her on Instagram. When the participants feel a personal connection towards the image it may increase the likelihood to influence their behaviour and attitudes in a positive way (Santaella, Summers, & Belleau, 2015). The company has benefited from the use of a celebrity endorser in combination with no verbal content to market their product in this image (Image 10). It is clear that the personal connection and associations they feel towards the celebrity, Janni Delér, have influenced the participants’ attitudes and motives in a positive way, since they want to explore more about the product (Image 10).
Victoria Törnegren. I follow both her, her partner and her sister. I think she has good style overall, a bit like Kenza. It may be a pattern why you sell via influencers.

- Image 1, participant 8, 25 years

In the image above, it was reflected upon that there might be a pattern of how companies use influencers, which reflection may be considered interesting since they are aware of the business purpose of using influencers but are still influenced by them (Image 1). It was also mentioned in Image 15 - Selfie (p.42) that it was believed to be smart to use a celebrity, since it communicates a sense of “if Kenza has this sweater, you should buy it” - Participant 8. These reflections strengthen the theory that a celebrity endorser is seen as a trustworthy, believable and persuasive source of information (Chiosa, 2012; Silvera & Austad, 2004).

Another important and interesting finding was the recognition of the product brands in the image to the left, since it seemed to be the most contributing factor as the image captured attention and interest only among the participants who recognized them (Fill & Turnbull, 2016).

I recognized the Löwengrip brand, that is what I fell for. It was the only thing I thought of, the products, that I recognized them.

- Image 5, participant 12, 21 years

Despite the absence of a physical celebrity endorser, it was clear that the awareness of the celebrity owner of the product brands made them perceive the products as trustworthy and believable sources of information. Participant 11 explained that she had two of the products in the image and was satisfied with them and would probably buy them again (Image 5). Previous satisfactory experiences lead to positive intrinsic motivations (Baines & Fill,
2014) and the participants’ product experiences showed to create strong motivation as the image triggered them to purchase the product again. Another interesting finding was in the image with the unknown woman on the tennis court (Image 13). The participants themselves declared that they would have preferred if a celebrity related to tennis would promote the products.

*Had it been Serena Williams in a colorful skirt, I would have liked it. Because then the clothes are used for the right purpose. Not a super skinny model wearing sunglasses on the tennis court.*

- Image 13, participant 14, 25 years

What appears from this quotation, is that the connection between the model and the activity does not go along at all which strengthens the impression of fake. The participants explained that it would feel more natural, trustworthy and persuasive if it was Serena Williams posing on a tennis court, since she is a world known tennis player. Serena Williams would have been more likely to increase the level of recall, attention and motivation, making the image more memorable (Chiosa, 2012; Zafar & Rafique, 2015). A person’s motivation can be created through both intrinsic and extrinsic interests, and in this case, it can be interpreted as an extrinsic interest is the factor behind the motivation. This because it is provoked by a celebrity endorser, and not from previous satisfactory experiences (Baines & Fill, 2014).

### 6.2 COLORS

In this section, some images already analyzed in section 6.1, will appear again since the analysis now will apply to the colors in the images. Colors also turned out to be an important attribute, as both colors of the images’ foreground and background were discussed extensively in the majority images. The extensive observations are in line with the findings of Chang and Lin (2010), stressing that colors are the visual elements capturing a viewer’s first impression, and the attributes that individuals base the clear majority of their judgement on.
In the image with the yellow dress (Image 3), the participants’ observations go in line with the argument of Chang and Lin’s (2010) above mentioned theory, since the first thing that captured the participants’ attention was the yellow dress, which they found ugly in both color and shape. These opinions can also be found in the theory of Singh (2006), that colors in combination with size and shape are powerful to arouse emotions and convey messages. In the image with the Levi’s jeans on the beach (Image 1), the colors were discussed and referred to as soft and pleasant, giving the participants a sense of calmness and harmony. These interpretations and feelings are in line with Singh (2006), who means that colors are emotionally powerful, and the colors blue and green are perceived as more pleasant (Hall & Hanna, 2017). The colors in the image with the green dress (Image 10), also aroused feelings as the pink and blue background was described as desirable, fun and colorful. The image’s ability arouses feelings emphasize the detection that colors influence consumer emotions. Therefore, marketers could benefit from strategically use colors to influence consumer behaviour. In that way, marketers differentiate their product from competitors in a desirable way, enabling increased purchase intentions (Singh, 2006).

Much colors always make you happy.

- Image 10, participant 1, 24 years

As further clarified in the citation above, the colors influenced the participants’ emotions, which reinforce the finding that colors are emotionally powerful (Singh, 2006). It is also discussed that the colorful dress in combination with the blue and pink background would
have caught one’s attention and interest if shown in the Instagram feed (*Image 10, p.46*). This reflection indicates that the participants tried to imagine how they would have resonated if the image had appeared in the forum it usually is displayed in, and not on a printed paper. The participants believed it would not have created attention or interest if the image was dark, such as grey and black, or if she stood in front of a brick wall. These reflections emphasize the theory of Chang and Lin (2010), that colors are the visual attributes that capture a viewer’s first impression. It also emphasizes the findings of Pelet and Papadopoulou (2012), showing that low brightness is not preferable. The participants also reflected upon that even though there are numerous intense green, blue and pink colors in the image is very clear, which they believed was due to a good combination of colors (*Image 10*). Clearly, this image has succeeded to change attitudes in a positive manner through differentiating the visual content by making use of unusual style and colors (Fill & Turnbull, 2016).

The importance of the background colors and design proves to be important also in the discussion of *Image 12 - Friends*, as its background confused the participants’ impressions of the image. The message the image was assumed to convey, happiness and friendship, did not go along with the plain, cold and grey concrete background. This shows that the strategic choice of colors is crucial to influence consumers’ attitudes and feelings in a positive way (Singh, 2006). It also strengthens the belief that a product may be emphasized advantageously if placed in a relevant context.

*If there had been a carnival or something happening in the background, you might have thought that something fun went on in the background, but here it is really just concrete, rocks and cold.*

- Image 12, participant 10, 25 years

As explained in the citation, another background would have been better and not as contradictory as the present non colorful background. Some participants in the first and
second focus group also noticed the snow in the background but discussed that if they had seen this image in the Instagram feed (Image 12, p.47), they would probably not even have noticed it. This reflection can be strengthened since none of the participants in focus group three, who saw the image on Instagram, did not reflect about the snow on the roof until they saw the printed image. This indicates that the perceptions of this image may vary depending on what forum it is displayed in. Furthermore, suggestions were given on how to improve the background, where a pair of green pants or a red sweater could bring more contrasts to the current dull background. Participants of the third focus group shared the same opinions regarding the dull and plain background as they believed nothing stood out in the image. The fact that the participants provided a concrete example of a better background shows that the background really feels misplaced and just disturbing (Image 12). This reflection strengthens the theory that an image with sharp contrast of colors to its background and salient product capture consumers’ attention more (Wu, o.a., 2016). Another finding that goes in line with the theory of Wu, *et al.* (2016), is in the right image below, where the attention was captured due to sharp contrast of colors to dark shades of colors in the background, and a salient yellow dress (Image 3).

Preferences of images with high contrasts is contradicted in the discussions of *Image 1 – Landscape*, as it was perceived to have the same color tone, without contrasts between the colors. Despite this, all participants thought that the product appeared favorably. Although previous research shows that high contrasts draw attention (Wu, o.a., 2016), it has also shown that purchase intentions are preeminent when the brightness of colors between the background and foreground are not too bold (Pelet & Papadopoulou, 2012). This detection
might explain why the perceptions of this image contradicted the theory of theory of Wu et al. (2016) (Image 1).

*It has managed to capture a feeling [...] The image is cold, but the feeling of it is warm.*

- Image 1, participant 6, 25 years

The quotation above displays an interpretation of the colors in Image 1 – Landscape (p.48), which is not consistent with findings of previous research meaning that consumers prefer images with warm tones (Pelet & Papadopoulou, 2012; Singh, 2006). The image was also perceived as being favourably bright in its entity. The grading of brightness was discussed to be important for the participants to be interested to click on an image, aligned with Pelet and Papadopoulou’s (2012) and Singh’s (2006) theories that brightness significantly affect purchase intentions.

A low degree of brightness is seen in the left image above, where both the background and foreground are dark colored (Image 4). In this image, the dark and dull colors resulted in that the products were not clearly visible according to the participants. The overall low degree of brightness in this image added on to its already complex design, and the behaviours were influenced even more negatively, in accordance with Pelet and Papadopoulou’s (2012) and Singh’s (2006) findings of consumers’ preferences of brighter images. The pattern showing preferences of brightness was again clearly shown in the right image above, Image 7 – One single product.
No light is shed in it [swimsuit] which makes it too dark in some way.

- Image 7, participant 6, 25 years

According to the citation, the product was not clearly visible, due to the lack of light shed on the swimsuit along with the too plain color of it. The participants explained that the product would capture more interest if it would have had another color, such as red, as it would make the product stand out more. However, the colors of the background were described as very intense, and the color of the ocean and nature appealed to them (Image 7, p.49). These opinions indicate that a high hue and saturation is preferable, aligned with the color theory of Pelet and Papadopoulou (2012). It also implies that the participants value the choice of colors both in the background and on the product, which strengthen the importance of strategically use colors to influence consumers’ emotions, desire and attitudes towards the image (Singh, 2006). Image 7 – One single product also shows that the colors blue and green are more pleasant (Hall & Hanna, 2007). Another good example is in the left image below, where the nice, warm weather and environment captured the eyes of the participants, particularly pointing at the beautiful colorful sunset (Image 14). This also shows that high hue and saturation influence the participants’ behaviour positively (Pelet & Papadopoulou, 2012).

If you are promoting a sports brand that is very active, I think it is better with much color.

- Image 13, participant 14, 25 years

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The degree of brightness was also brought up in *Image 13 - Activity*, and considered too dark, and that it is better with colorful surroundings when promoting a sports brand. What can be interpreted through the citation above is that a colorful background may would have made the participants pay more attention to the clothes, since the woman wears white clothes only. These reflections indicate that the image does not capture attention and the focus is not on the actual product, and do not stand out enough from the background (Wu, o.a., 2016) (*Image 13*, p.50). Neither attention nor an interest among the participants were created, since they said they would just scrolled on (Fill & Turnbull, 2016).

*There is nothing wrong with the background, it is just the shoes. The shoes does not match the background at all.*  
- Image 8, participant 12, 21 years

What can be interpreted through this quote is that some participants perceived the color as a weird type of yellow that did not go along with the shoes and together it looked awful. Yet, others believed the color selection in this image to emphasize the clarity of it. These reflections are in line with the finding that individuals base a majority of their judgment on colors only and that colors are emotionally powerful (Singh, 2006). However, yellow could be perceived as less pleasant in some contexts (Hall & Hanna, 2007), like in the image with the yellow dress, where the yellow color worsens the impression when combined with the black and brown background (*Image 3*, p.48), which colors are considered as sad (Singh, 2006). The contrast between the background and foreground was considered too bold and the brightness too low (*Image 3*), which is said to decrease the intention to act (Pelet & Papadopoulou, 2012; Singh, 2006).
The first and second focus groups reflected upon the colors in the image to the left and considered them to be non-desirable. The majority of participants reacted on the color combination of the outfit, since they meant that you cannot have purple shoes to that kind of orange handbag. The colors seem to have accounted for a decisive part of the participants' negative opinions towards it. In contrary, the third focus group appreciated the numerous colors, even though they admitted it was totally wrong colors together since nothing matched. It may be considered interesting that the participants of the third focus group were not disturbed by the numerous colors, since many colors correspond to a complex design (Wu, o.a., 2016). A possible explanation could be that the colors were not perceived as extreme when displayed on Instagram, as both shape and degree of brightness, hue and saturation can differ between mobile phones and printed images. Also, color preferences in images may vary depending on gender and age of the perceiver (Pelet & Papadopoulou, 2012; Singh, 2006).

6.3 VISUAL COMPLEXITY

*There is just so much. Too much makeup, too dark, too much clothes. It becomes a bit hard to understand and commercial-looking.*

- Image 4, participant 3, 22 years

*It is the clothes they want to sell, and she is sitting there with a candy stripe in her mouth and pout with her lips? No, it bothered me directly when I saw it because I do not understand the context.*

- Image 4, participant 6, 25 years

As clarified in the first quotation there were difficulties to understand what the image actually tried to sell, which also were evident when listening to the discussions among the
participants. This is believed to depend on the participants’ view that the image content was too much of everything. The second quotation also indicates that the participants tried to analyze the different attributes in relation to each other (Eriksson & Göthlund, 2004), but found it hard to understand the connection between the various attributes. The impressions of excessiveness connect to the theory of complex design, which are explained by consumers’ limited ability to process rich amount of information (Wu, o.a., 2016). Based on the complex design and the overflow of information (Image 4), it seems as the participants’ behaviour and attitude were influenced negatively, making the evaluation of products non-favorable. Another example of a complex design where the attitude and behaviour have been influenced in a negative way is in Image 6 - Collage, which can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Extract from content analysis of focus group 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Meaning-bearing units</th>
<th>Meaning interpretation</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 (FG1)</td>
<td>“I do not understand the message”, “there are too many different brands”, “yes it is too messy”, “too much in the image”, “it is uniform but still messy”, “what do they want to convey with the image”, “I do not get it”</td>
<td>Even if the image is well structured it is hard to understand the image and its message</td>
<td>Complex design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (FG2)</td>
<td>“It is messy”, “very messy”, “you do not see anything because there are too many things”, “it gets too much”, “too much to look at &amp; many different things”, “do not understand the connection &amp; what they want to show/sell”, “what is the thing?”</td>
<td>Hard to understand the image and its message, too many things, messy</td>
<td>Complex design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is very messy. I can feel that even though I look at this image, I would never carry on because it is so hard to sort out and figure out what is what. I would get tired of it before I understood what they sell or want to communicate with the image.

- Image 6, participant 6, 25 years

This quotation shows that the image was perceived as really messy. This was also a shared opinion among the majority of participants, since it included too many different products,
which made it hard to sort out since nothing really caught their eyes. One can believe that the image was designed to differentiate itself from others by making use of a more unusual style (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Indeed, this image increases consumers’ attention in another way than a simple design, but the use of too many attributes and products together can complicate the interpretation (Pieters, Wedel, & Batra, 2010; Wu, o.a., 2016). Even if some products were recognized by the participants, it was believed to be really messy, and caused no interest to neither explore, act nor visit the website.

Another image considered as complex in its design is in the image to the right, although due to different reasons. Firstly, it was unclear among some participants what the company wanted to sell: sunglasses or exercise clothes, while others agreed that it was a commercial for the sports brand Nike.

*She is just there to pose for the clothes, you do not even see the clothes properly, I think there is a fence in the way.*

- Image 13, participant 11, 25 years

Secondly, even though the tank top was appreciated, the fence was believed to be too close and in the way for the clothes, which opinion was shared among all participants. The fact that the fence was disturbing indicates that the image got a non-favourable complex design (Wu, o.a., 2016).

Among the images perceived as simple in their designs, was this collage, since the items were clearly visible and made it easy to understand the message, aligned with the criteria of simple design (Wu, o.a., 2016). However, other participants thought the message was hard to interpret, which may indicate of a kind of complex design. The fact that the image consists of four products only, as well as few colors, means that the
image should be categorized as a simple design according to Wu, et al. 2016. Therefore, the struggle to interpret the image was probably be more based on understanding the message itself, rather than the attributes of the image. The difficulties are more linked to struggles with analyzing the attributes’ relation to each other (Eriksson & Göthlund, 2004).

One sees what they sell. I like images where I can easily see that I like this, or I do not like that. Do not like to spend time to check if I like it or not.
- Image 8, participant 3, 22 years

If I had only seen images like this, I would have deleted Instagram.
- Image 8, participant 1, 24 years

The first quotation shows that the image was perceived as simple to interpret, which implies on a simple design, according to Wu et al. (2016). The second quotation means that a variation of images is preferable on Instagram to remain interested of its content. The two contradictory quotes indicate that it is important to apply a combination of both simple and complex design (Wu, o.a., 2016) to get noticed and maintain interest from consumers.

6.4 SEMIOTICS

The pants are nice, but I know it is Levi’s and their pants are too expensive and do not fit me.
- Image 1, participant 13, 24 years

You understand that it is the pants they want to sell, but it is not the pants that captures one’s attention.
- Image 1, participant 12, 21 years
As stated in the first quotation, the Levi’s jeans were considered to be too expensive and due to previous experiences, the participant knew the jeans would not fit her body type. However, there was still an interest and desire to explore more about other Levi’s jeans on the website. This indicates on the item being noticed (Baines & Fill, 2014) and implies on that the product is an important attribute why the image is appreciated. The second quote demonstrates the simplicity to interpret and understand the image and its message. The participants mentioned the product was put in a relevant context and believed this image to be preferable for sales purpose. These reflections clarify that the participants appreciate images with no obvious impression of being a commercial. To not be interested in images that look like commercials reinforces previous research, which means that consumers do not prefer when the intention to sell is too clear (Eckerwall, 2015). Below are quotes of the participants' views on images where the intention to sell was considered too obvious.

But somewhere I imagine a person who has removed her duvets and then 'here I have a nice top, then I have bought flowers that I put on the bed, and a duvet in a bag and then some products’. For me, it is more what normal human even do this.

- Image 5, participant 10, 25 years

I think it is a typical influencer image, that you have received a lot of products that you have to advertise at the same time.

- Image 6, participant 14, 25 years
She does not even have a tennis racket [...] If she stood in a serving pose or something, with sweat dripping or something, it had appealed to me much more.

- Image 13, participant 14, 25 years

What can be interpreted through all quotations above is that when an image looks like a commercial and expresses a too obvious intention to sell, it is not desirable (Eckerwall, 2015). Image 5 – Collage (p.56) was considered as a typical Instagram image since 90 percent of their feed were said to consist of these types of images. Together with the other collage (Image 6), were also interpreted as a collaboration, where the noticeable business purpose was not appreciated. Interestingly, even though the white and pink collage was categorized as a common image, it was shown that it succeeded to stand out in a cluttered environment and somehow differentiate itself (Image 5). The participants from the third focus group reflected similar as participants in the second focus group, which is yet a proof that this image is interpreted alike, regardless of which forum it is displayed. In the last citation it is clarified that Image 13 – Activity just feels unnatural, due to the fact that the woman does not actually play tennis. Participant 14 stated: “is she really playing tennis? She is not even sweaty”, which strengthen the belief of too much commercial and create a negative attitude. The participants’ negative attitudes, own associations, and the lack of interest and desire to indicate that the intention to sell is too obvious in all these images, which is not preferable (Eckerwall, 2015).
This image was also considered to be a typical and boring Instagram image. Still, it was discussed that some probably would click on it automatically without knowing why. It may seem interesting that the participants would click on an image without knowing why, but as Evans, Jamal and Foxall (2008) argue, individuals motivate themselves by both conscious and unconscious decisions. This strengthens the belief that actions can be provoked without being rationally founded (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Below, images that were desirable due to no noticeable sales purpose are shown.

_I think I would have preferred a company better which had more of such images that travelled away and took photos of their products, rather than those who just took them in a small room._

- Image 2, participant 1, 24 years

The quote above, shows that the participants appreciated the company’s efforts of trying to differentiate its visual content on Instagram. Sometimes, however, a total lack of an intention to sell can also lead to confusion and difficulties to find the underlying meaning of image, as seen in the quotation below (Baines & Fill, 2014).

_It could as well have been a vacation image in the Alps, but I do not understand the dog. To me it is natural to go skiing, but I do not really understand how the dog fits in there. Because dogs do not tend to be so much in the Alps._

- Image 2, participant 14, 25 years

_They definitely sell a sports brand, Fjällräven or something like that._

- Image 2, participant 13, 24 years
According to the first citation, it is a bit hard to understand what was being sold in this image, due to the absence of products along the dog’s presence. The absence of products could have been a contributor to why the environment and destination were perceived as more desirable than the clothes. Although the second quotation reflects upon that it must be a sports brand, it was explained by the majority of participants that it was hard to see the products, which gave a feeling that the company did not intend to sell a product. Another clear pattern among the participants was that negative attitudes were created when it was difficult to find a connection between the products or in relation to their background (Eriksson & Göthlund, 2004).

*It does not feel like a typical commercial image, but it is more appealing because it feels a bit more private and natural, not so fake.*

- Image 10, participant 14, 25 years

In this citation, it is clarified that image gave impression of an ordinary person on a nice summer day, dressed up to take a photo with a nice background. According to the participants, both *Image 2 – Landscape (p.58)* and *10 – Fashion*, created positive attitudes and emotions.

*I think it is weird to have bought a new facial product and then I will show it and then I add a bouquet of flowers, without water, on the bed.*

- Image 5, participant 2, 23 years
The white and pink collage below was believed to feel unnatural according to the participants, and the connection of the different items, the flowers, top, facial products and the duvets, were confusing (Image 5). It emerged through the discussions that the attributes in this image were interpreted as individual objects at first, and then a connection between them as a whole, were tried to be understood (Eriksson & Göthlund, 2004).

*It is clear, but it looks like they hang on a washstand or in a bathroom. So, I do not get it.*

- Image 8, participant 13, 24 years

These quotations reinforce the theory stressing the importance that the viewer understand the attributes individually, as well as in relation to each other (Eriksson & Göthlund, 2004). The confusion in this image may be because the symbol, the washstand, does not communicate anything relevant to the item, the shoes (Baines & Fill, 2014).

Confusion regarding connection between products were also reflected upon in Image 6 – Collage. The image was discussed to include various shapes, which increased the difficulty to understand the message and the purpose of the image. This interpretation is not quite consistent with the theory of Singh (2006), where various shapes are said to increase the likelihood of an intention to consider a purchase of the product. It was mentioned that the image might communicated some kind of Valentine’s Day offer, because of the hearts and flower prints. These reflections can be linked to trying to find the underlying meaning of the image through the item, symbol and meaning (Baines & Fill, 2014). The item represents the actual products in this image, the symbol connects to their design of hearts and roses intending to communicate something about the item, and the meaning corresponds to the way the participants interpret the message, which in this case is the impression of a Valentine’s Day offer. It may be important for an image to contain symbolism in order for the viewer to understand what
wants to be communicated about the items of it (Baines & Fill, 2014). The quotation below showcases how images with an absence of symbols can cause confusion and scattered focus.

*I could probably have gone into this image to check what the bag cost, not because I want it, but more because I can imagine it is a bag that costs 27,000 kr.*

- Image 9, participants 1, 24 years

What can be understood from the quote is how the participants have interpreted the image, which was a sense of expensiveness and very ladylike. Interestingly, it did not create a desire to purchase the products, but the curiousness about the price of the handbag succeeded to make the participant feel an intention to visit the website. It was agreed among all participants that the message was unclear, although it was believed to be the shoes or handbag they wanted to sell. The ambiguity indicates on that the participants have not been able to sort out what the different attributes communicate individually and together (Eriksson & Göthlund, 2004). Since the image to a large extent consist of clothing products, combined with a blurred background, the image may contain too few symbols that communicate something about the items, which can be a reason why the participants had a hard time to understand the meaning of the image (Baines & Fill, 2014).

*Here, it is strange to me that it is snow and she has a t-shirt on.*

- Image 12, participant 2, 23 years

The quotation about gives an example of when a background obstructs the ability to interpret a message. All participants were concerned with the unnatural environment, due to the woman who wears a t-shirt when there is snow in the
background. Here, the snow may be interpreted as a symbol, which does not go along with the item, t-shirt (Baines & Fill, 2014), which contribute with ambiguity. Since the participants believed the combination between the background and products to be confusing (Eriksson & Göthlund, 2004), it means that the products are not placed in an advantageous context.

In Image 7 – One single product, the first thing the majority of participants paid attention to was the background, which they believed was lovely due to the glimpse of an ocean, and made their thoughts drift away towards vacation. The ocean could be interpreted as the symbol in this case, where the meaning corresponds to the associations with vacation (Baines & Fill, 2014). All participants could imagine themselves in the environment, which increase the possibility to influence a consumer’s behaviour (Santaella, Summers & Belleau, 2015).

In this case, the participants’ associations were very positive and can be explained by previous satisfactory experiences (Fill & Turnbull, 2016), as the image may reminded the participants of a vacation they experienced. The participants’ reflections and opinions illustrate and emphasize the theory of Baines and Fill (2014) that due to previous experiences signs can symbolize different meanings to the viewer. The participants also believed the swimsuit to be placed in a relevant context, and that the background emphasized the product.

The image to the left was believed to communicate friendship and community, and maybe related to charity. Some participants reflected upon that the image tried to convey a message through the t-shirts with the text “Sisterhood”. The text “Sisterhood” can be interpreted as a symbol that tries to communicate something about the actual product and through this understand the underlying meaning of the message (Baines & Fill, 2014). The text “Sisterhood” created an interest among the participants to explore more about its meaning, which
implies that the image attracted an intention to visit the website. Even though the participants did not like the clothes in particular, it may be considered positive for companies to create a general interest. However, some participants did not agree with the association to friendship, as it did not look like images they take with their own friends, which made the image look a bit fake.

*Nice image but it does not appeal to me. It may be because I have two older sisters and I know that if everyone had had the same t-shirts one would be angry, one beaten and the other one very happy. It is a more family image to me than that image.*

- Image 11, participant 14, 25 years

The quotation above shows that the participant has not interpreted the symbol as a sign for friendship, but instead raised associations to her sisters (*Image 11*). Signs can symbolize different meanings to the viewer, dependent on previous experiences, which is clear with the symbol “Sisterhood” in this case (Baines & Fill, 2015). This shows that the participants tried to imagine themselves in the situation but found it hard to recognize themselves in this context, which may influence their attitude and behaviour in a negative way (Santaella, Summer, Belleau, 2015).
6.5 COGNITIVE, AFFECTIVE AND CONATIVE ATTITUDES

In this section we treat the components that constitute both the AIDA-model and consumer attitudes: the cognitive, affective and conative component. Though, the conative component will not be treated in a subcategory but continuously analyzed along with the remaining two components.

6.5.1 COGNITIVE ATTITUDE

*I find it a little strange that she does not have anything on her upper body, only jeans.*

- Image 1, participant 2, 23 years

*I barely reacted to the fact that she had no shirt, because there are so many people who upload such images now on Instagram.*

- Image 1, participant 1, 24 years

According to these two quotes, there were divided opinions among the participants regarding the image. A few participants reflected upon that it was a bit strange, while the majority were not disturbed by her bare upper body. However, it was mentioned in the second citation that these types of images are commonly seen on Instagram (Image 1). This may indicate on the habit of seeing such images make consumers not notice or get disturbed by content that is otherwise not considered to be natural. These observations imply that an image considered as common still could capture attention and interest and create both desire and motivation to visit the website. Kotler and Keller (2016) explain that a person’s need convert into motives when one researches the level of intensity that provokes an action. *Image 1 - Landscape* has proven to create motivation and intention to act, which is an important step for marketers since the motivation to visit the website leads consumers to where the actual purchase takes place.
Another image that was considered common on Instagram was the black and white collage shown on the left. According the participants these types of images are nice in an Instagram feed, although not enough interesting to make the participants feel motivated to act and visit the website. It can be interpreted that this image is not beneficial for sales purpose, because it does not capture enough attention, interest or desire (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). An assumption is that the image contains rational information only, and it would be preferable to complement with emotional information, since rational information is not always enough to stimulate consumer behaviour (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Another belief is that today’s consumers are usually independent of rational manner, since behaviour and intended actions often are guided by emotions (Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015)

Another prominent topic was the common opinion that products displayed on a human being are more preferable than other images. For example, in the image to the right, the majority of participants shared the same opinions that the swimsuit should be shown on a human being to see how it fits. The majority of participant said it would be more desirable and increase the probability of creating an intention to visit a website (Fill & Turnbull, 2016).

Likewise, in Image 8 the participants believed the product would benefit from being shown on a model. Participant 12 said: “would have liked to see them on someone to be tricked that any pretty girl uses a pair of ugly shoes”. However, other opinions regarding product placement in Image 7 were explained:
It captures my interest much more because I can see the comic that there is no good-looking model posing on the beach that promotes this wonderful trip. It is not like other commercials, where a model poses on the beach or someone in a sunbed with a drink in their hand, but it is more that I have taken a swim and ‘my swimsuit is hanging here’.

- Image 7, participant 14, 25 years

The participants also mentioned that the image with the black swimsuit (Image 7) would create more attention and interest depending on the season or if they were going on a vacation, and participant 2: “then I would have looked at all places that sold swimsuits”. This shows that the participants began to reflect rationally regarding the image and the product. The rational reflections may be based on the product’s character, that a swimsuit is limited to one season only, that prevent the participants from being motivated by emotional appeals (Fill and Turnbull, 2016).

6.5.2 AFFECTIVE ATTITUDE

Overall, the 16 images did arouse emotions in some way, both positively and negatively. The image to the left created positive and relaxed emotions, as well as a sense of envy, which raised a desire to be there and could imagine themselves in that environment. In this case, emotions and personal associations have been aroused due to feelings of envy and imaginations of being there, which influenced their affective attitudes and contributed with positive feelings towards it (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). The achievement of arousing these feelings means that the company managed to appeal the consumers by creating emotions by the feelings “I like, “I desire” and “I want”. It could be beneficial for marketers to stimulate consumers’ emotional behaviour, since rational information is not always enough to capture and maintain consumers’ attention in a cluttered environment (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Another image that created similar emotions among the participants, was Image 2 - Landscape.
It is so much relaxation for me in this image. Freedom, relaxation, and silence.

- Image 2, participant 8, 25 years

I do not get that feeling at all. I think it is unpleasant to be so lonely. It was cozy with the dog but otherwise I only felt that it was cold and lonely. If it would have been an after ski with lots of people it would have been relaxing to me.

- Image 2, participant 9, 25 years

As clarified in the citations above, the image aroused different emotions among the participants. However, the majority felt that the background stimulated senses of relaxation, calmness, healthiness and freedom, and could easily imagine themselves in that environment. The fact that the participants were able to imagine themselves in the situation means that a personal connection is created, which Santaella, Summers and Belleau (2015) argue increase the possibility to influence consumer behaviour. Unlike the majority, participant 9 felt differently and believed the image to communicate cold and loneliness. The opposite interpretation may depend on participant 9’s previous experiences, built up over her lifetime, which can shape both positive and negative perceptions towards an image (Fill & Turnbull, 2016; Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2008).

The background of Image 7 – One single product, also created positive feelings among the participants. Though, in this case, the participants of the first focus group began to reasonably argue that their occupation as students would prevent them from going there.

I do not want to be a student right now, so I can afford to go on holidays instead. It makes me happy because it is wonderful, but sad since I am not there, and annoyed by the swimsuit because I want to see what is behind.

- Image 7, participant 2, 23 years
What can be interpreted from the citation above is that a sense of envy was created due to their occupation. This interpretation is aligned with Kotler and Keller’s (2016) finding that consumer behaviour is influenced by the way of living. Among images whose background gave the opposite effect, a distinctive example was the image below:

*I can tell straight away that I was thinking of the man in the background, he looks drunk. They could have cut him off if they wanted to use this image.*

- Image 3, participant 15, 24 years

This quotation clarifies that the creepy and drunk-looking man in the background stole the attention among the participants, making him a distraction from the true focus. Once again, the choice of background shows to be an essential part to create interest and desire among the participants. If the background is not perceived in a desirable way, a negative attitude will be created. Participant 1 explained that “if I would have seen him late at night, I would run”, which indicates that a sense of discomfort was created. Additional factors that have been shown to influence affective attitudes are individuals’ personal connection and self-perception (Baines & Fill, 2014).

*I liked the feeling of this one. I thought about wanting to meet my friends.*

- Image 11, participant 2, 23 years

The quotation above shows that the image to the right reminds the participants of their own friends and that they feel a personal connection to it (Santaella, Summer, & Belleau, 2015). This
association indicates on positive emotions being aroused, and to induce positive emotions is essential to influence consumer behaviour and their intended actions (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Steenkamp, 2005). An example of when negative emotions are provoked due to self-perception can be seen in the image below:

*She feels like one who seeks attention. I do not like such images [...] probably because I am not like that. I would never take such an image.*

- Image 16, participant, 23 years

What can be interpreted from this quote is that the participants found it difficult to associate herself with this image, which created a negative perception towards it. The quotation also indicates that the participant’s self-perceived personality did influence their attitude and choice, which enhance the theory that consumers tend to prefer products that reflect their own personality (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The participants’ self-perceptions influence their reactions and behaviour (Baines & Fill, 2014), which in this case is clear. The lack of the recognition of their personality creates a negative attitude and do not neither raise an interest nor a desire to visit the website (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). It also shows that the image did not succeed to arouse feelings of “I like”, “I want” and “I desire”, which increases the negative attitude and behaviour of the participants (Fill & Turnbull, 2016).
7 Conclusion

This final chapter begins with the research question being revisited along with a thesis summary, followed by practical implications and suggestions for future research. The chapter aims to answer the research question to fulfil the purpose of the dissertation. All images mentioned can be found in Appendix 3.

7.1 Research Question Revisited

The purpose of this dissertation was to answer the research question: What image attributes, where products are placed in a context, influence and motivate consumers on Instagram? As Instagram is today’s dominating marketing tool, and executives seem to avoid it due to uncertainty of how to manage it, additional in-depth knowledge of how to place apparel products in a favourable context through images on Instagram was considered interesting for further exploration. A theoretical summary was developed to fulfil the aim of the research study, retrieved from the research fields of consumer behaviour and visual content. Primary data have been produced through three semi-structured focus group interviews along with secondary data collected from five apparel brands’ Instagram accounts. The following section presents the conclusions of this dissertation.

7.2 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to create an in-depth understanding of what image attributes influence and motivate consumers on Instagram. The most prominent findings are concluded below.

The main finding after analyzing the empirical material is the importance of placing products in relevant contexts and to visually appealing backgrounds. It was shown crucial to understand the connection between the product and the context it was placed in for the image to be appreciated and the product to be evaluated. The significance of this finding is strengthened by arguments of Eriksson and Göthlund (2004), who mean that consumers interpret and analyze the different attributes individually and in relation to each other. In cases where images were not preferred, it was often due to a confusion regarding the
background in combination with the product. Such a confusion occurred when the participants could not make sense of why a pair of white high heels hung on a washstand with a disturbing yellow background (*Image 8*). This finding was also reinforced by the importance of strategically use colors to influence consumers positively (Singh, 2006). We draw the conclusion that the context and background are decisive parts of influencing and motivating consumer behaviour through Instagram images. To understand the difference between the context and the background of an image, *Image 13* may illustrate as an example. In this image, an apparel brand is assumed to promote exercise clothes for tennis, and as this image is taken on a tennis court, the product is put in a relevant context. Though, the extract from the context, the background, was not appreciated due to the darkness of it, aligned with Pelet and Papadopoulou’s (2012) finding regarding consumers’ preferences of high brightness. In our belief, dark images appear even darker on Instagram due to the white color design of the Instagram feed. Another conclusion that can be drawn, is that this image included too many attribute, which made it difficult to understand the message it wanted to convey (Huhmann, 2009; Pieters, Wedel, & Batra, 2010). A background can be non-favourable due to numerous reasons, for example complex design or bad color combinations.

Our second main finding is that images with a noticeable sales purpose are not preferable, since the disturbance of this interpretation was pointed out in numerous images. That the participants would react and get negatively influenced by the image’s intention to sell, was a finding we did not expect, as we thought the habit of seeing images with sales purposes would decrease this effect. Based on our analysis, we have seen that images with an obvious intention to sell, was often interpreted as arranged and fake. This finding is strengthened by Ekerwall (2015) who means that this type of images are not desirable. In our belief, the strong reactions towards images with noticeable sales purpose is because currently it is not as accepted for companies to be too contentious with their intention to sell on Instagram. You do not expect to see obvious advertising in the feed if you have not chosen to follow the company yourself, which may be the reason why this was not appreciated.
It turned out to be markedly preferable when a product is shown on a human to see how it fits, also in the forum of Instagram. Images are argued to illustrate how clothes drape on the body, different ways to use the product, or remind the consumer of a specific personal moment in life. If consumers are able to recognize themselves in the situation and feel a personal connection to the image, there is a greater chance that the image influence and motivate the consumer behaviour (Santaella, Summers, & Belleau, 2015). Interestingly, it was not decisive, in terms of appreciation, whether the human present in the image was a celebrity or an unknown person. When an image was preferred as a whole, it was noticeable that the celebrity added value and increased interest towards the products. However, when an image was not considered appealing, the celebrity could not weigh up with its presence.

Findings of previous research on how visual content influence consumers, reinforced our research study even when displayed in the forum of Instagram. One conclusion is that images whose content have natural surroundings were appreciated more than others, as the majority of the images considered desirable had natural surroundings as background. This finding is believed to largely depend on the colors of the background, since all except one of the preferred images consist of the colors blue and green. Namely, blue and green are the colors that can be interpreted as happy and pleasant colors (Hall & Hanna, 2007). As Image 10 by far was considered the best of all images, much due to the appreciation of intense pink, blue and green colors, it was clear that the image succeeded to differentiate itself from others. This finding is emphasized by the argument that colors are emotionally powerful (Singh, 2006). Furthermore, the analysis noted that images with a simple design influenced the participants’ behaviour in a more positive way, rather than the ones with a complex design. However, according to the participants a variation among images are preferable, which is in line with the finding that companies may benefit from applying a combination of simple- and complex design to create more appealing images than competitors (Wu, o.a., 2016).

As mentioned in the analysis, the third focus group was a control group, with the aim to see if the forum where the images are displayed is of crucial importance. After conducting the third focus group, it was clear that no apparent differences were shown, except from one case where the reason behind the difference depended on the constraint square shape
on Instagram images. The fact that the images were interpreted similarly, independent of what forum it was displayed in, indicates on accuracy in our findings. This accuracy emphasizes the validity of our dissertation and increase its applicability onto similar contexts.

7.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
The purpose of this dissertation was to create an in-depth understanding on what image attributes, where a product is placed in a context, influence and motivate consumers on Instagram. Even though there exist previous research of consumer behaviour in relation to Instagram, executives seem to avoid social media due to absence of how to manage and learn from it. Therefore, we wanted to shed light on how various image attributes influence behaviour both positively and negatively. This could prevent companies from posting images influencing consumer behaviour negatively and increase their potential of creating an appreciated Instagram feed. The contribution of this dissertation is creation of an in-depth understanding of how apparel brands could influence consumer behaviour positively by placing products in favourable contexts through images on their Instagram account. This thesis may be useful as guidance for apparel companies using Instagram as a promotional tool, as well as for companies planning to do so. In our belief, this thesis will add value as apparel companies can learn how to differentiate their marketing efforts on Instagram and make them more efficient. The benefits of influencing consumer behaviour positively are that the company may increase satisfaction and loyalty among already existing followers, as well as potentially increase their number of followers. In turn, consumers may get a better Instagram experience and gain insights into the apparel company's pursuit of creating a desirable brand image. We believe this thesis will enable companies to establish closer and more positive relationships with their consumers as Instagram is the dominating social media platform to reach and communicate with today's consumers. Below is a compilation of what companies can keep in mind to positively influence and motivate consumers to the greatest extent:
PLACE THE PRODUCT IN A RELEVANT CONTEXT
- to convey a clear message and enhance the probability of consumers interpreting the image desirably

ENSURE THE BACKGROUND IS VISUALLY APPEALING
- it has the potential of emphasizing the product

MAKE SURE THE INTENTION TO SELL IS NOT OBVIOUS
- and barely noticeable, avoid images looking arranged

SHOW THE PRODUCTS ON A HUMAN
- rather than not

MAKE SURE THE IMAGE IS BRIGHT IN ITS ENTIRETY
- avoid dark images in to the greatest extent possible

KEEP A VARIATION WITHIN THE FEED
- use both images with simple and complex design as well as intense and non-intense colors

7.4 Future Research
To the best of our knowledge, previous research has not explored what image attributes, where a product is placed in a context, influence and motivate consumers on Instagram. During our research study, other possible aspects appeared interesting to explore further in future research. The first interesting aspect we thought to be of relevance was to not limit the research study to women only, but to study differences how behaviour is influenced between males and females. The second interesting aspect would be to study a different age group, as this certainly would influence the outcomes as people gathers experiences throughout life. The third interesting aspect would be to study a different industry than apparel, in order to see if consumer behaviour changes depending on industry. The fourth and last interesting aspect would be to study people outside of Sweden to see if the behaviour of other nationalities differs.


APPENDIX 1 – THE RESEARCH ONION

FIGURE 1: The research onion
APPENDIX 2 – “HOOK” IMAGES

**FIGURE 1:** Different types of possible Hook photos

- (a) Collage/bundle
- (b) Landscape
- (c) Model
- (d) Single product
APPENDIX 3 – IMAGE SAMPLING

IMAGE 1 – LANDSCAPE
IMAGE 2 – LANDSCAPE
IMAGE 3 – MODEL
IMAGE 4 – MODEL
IMAGE 5 – COLLAGE
IMAGE 6 – COLLAGE
IMAGE 7 – ONE SINGLE PRODUCT
IMAGE 8 – ONE SINGLE PRODUCT
IMAGE 9 – FASHION
IMAGE 10 – FASHION
IMAGE 11 – FRIENDS
IMAGE 12 – FRIENDS
IMAGE 13 – ACTIVITY
IMAGE 14 – ACTIVITY
IMAGE 15 – SELFIE
IMAGE 16 – SELFIE
APPENDIX 4 – PARTICIPANTS IN FOCUS GROUPS

Focus group 1

Participant 1
Female, 24 years old, preschool teacher student
Personal interests: My dog, massage, food

Participant 2
Female, 23 years old, preschool teacher student
Personal interests: Training, friends, food

Participant 3
Female, 22 years old, preschool teacher student
Personal interests: Food

Participant 4
Female, 24 years old, preschool teacher student
Personal interests: Football, to photograph

Participant 5
Female, 25 years old, preschool teacher student
Personal interests: Horses

Focus group 2

Participant 6
Female, 25 years old, teacher
Personal interests: Training

Participant 7
Female, 23 years old, preschool teacher
Personal interests: Soccer, training, cook, family and friends

Participant 8
Female, 25 years old, hairdresser
Personal interests: Soccer, training, fashion, hair, travelling, family and friends

Participant 9
Female, 25 years old, salesperson
Personal interests: Soccer, training, food, shoes, family, friends and travelling

Participant 10
Female, 25 years old, field assistant
Personal interests: Family, friends, movies, painting, baking, decorating

Focus group 3

Participant 11:
Female, 25, payroll specialist
Interest: soccer

Participant 12:
Female, 21, social worker student
Interest: friends, family, soccer, furnishings, flowers

Participant 13:
Female, 24, assistant in a school
Interest: soccer, real estate, travel, candy, family, friends

Participant 14:
Female, 25, student assistant
Interest: soccer, floorball, tv, movies

Participant 15:
Female, 24, assistant in a pre school
Interest: soccer, friends, animals, nature
APPENDIX 5 – FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINE

Hello everyone!

Before we start, we want to ask if all of you are fine with that the focus groups is recorded? Everything that is said today remains anonymous and will only be used as a basis for our thesis. The record will not be played for anyone other than us but will be transcribed to make our thesis more transparent. If there is something you happen to say that you do not want us to bring along, do not be afraid to say so because then we delete it!

We want to start by saying thank you for your willingness to participate in our focus group today since it enables us to explore further on our topic!

We know that we are in a rather unnatural environment today, but we really want you to feel as comfortable as possible and not feel any pressure. All your answers are good answers for us! Because there are no wrong and right answers, just spontaneously say what you think or feel. We would also like that you let each other talk and respect the speaker, even if you do agree or share the same opinions, since it is important that everybody is able to express their opinion.

We will be here as a support and guide you when necessary in the discussion, but we would like you to try to discuss on your own, so you do not get influenced by our thoughts and our pre-knowledge.

It is important for us and for you to understand what the purpose of our thesis and this focus group before we start. The aim of our dissertation is to create an in-depth understanding of how different attributes on apparel brands’ Instagram images influence and motive consumer behaviour. Do you understand our purpose, or do you want us to explain it more in detail?

First of all, we just want to get a brief understanding and idea of your own pre-knowledge and usage of Instagram.

- How often do you use Instagram usually during the day? For how long?
- What do you look at when you're on Instagram? Do you flow, search or scroll among what your friends like?
Thank you for your answers, now we know a little bit more about your knowledge. So, here are 16 pictures from various apparel brands’ Instagram accounts, where we have chosen to exclude the caption to make it easier to concentrate on the image and its content only.

The first thing we would like you to do, is to study all the 16 images and take short notes of each one, just for your own sake. Take as much time as you need!

The second thing we would like you to do now, is that you together as a group discuss, reflect and agree over at least 5 images and at tops 10 images, that captured your interest.

We will start with the images you excluded. Was it difficult? What are the reasons this image did not capture your interest? Did everyone share the same opinion?

Now we will discuss the images you have included, and even if you selected them as a group, we want everyone’s different reflections about the images. Remember, there are no right or wrong answer and different perspectives are more than welcome.

- Is there anyone you like more than the others?
- What in the image captures your attention? (Is it the product itself, the environment or the person?)
- Do you feel interested in something special in the picture? Does the picture raise any kind of desire? (Why/why not?) What do you feel that the image communicates?
- Does it make you feel something special?
- Do you feel that you have a personal connection to the image? (Why/why not?)
- Do you recognize the person in the image? (Is the image more interesting with a wellknown person, than if it had been an unknown person?)
- Do you feel like this image captured your interest and raised a desire to browse further on their website?
## APPENDIX 6 – DESCRIPTION AND CATEGORIZATION OF IMAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Colors</th>
<th>Semiotics</th>
<th>Description of image</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | Nelly | Light blue sky, white beach. Low hue, high saturation and brightness. | **Item:** Pale Levis jeans  
**Symbol:** The woman & surroundings  
**Meaning:** Calm, relaxed & comfortable feeling | A woman turned away from the camera, wearing only a pair of pale Levis jeans. The background is an idyllic white beach with clear blue sky. The image focuses on the environment and there is an absence of other people. | Landscape |
| 2     | Zalando | Light blue sky, white winter landscape. Low hue, medium saturation, high brightness. | **Item:** Sporty winter clothes  
**Symbol:** The woman & surroundings  
**Meaning:** Calm, peaceful & natural feelings | A woman turned away from the camera, wearing thick winter clothes. The woman is walking her little dog in the sun in a winter paradise surrounded by large mountains. The image focuses on the environment and there is an absence of other people. The image focuses on the environment. | Landscape |
| 3     | Nelly | Yellow dress and coat, grey concrete background. High hue and saturation, low brightness. | **Item:** Dress & coat  
**Symbol:** Gigi Hadid  
**Meaning:** Neutral, confident & powerful feelings | The famous supermodel Gigi Hadid, wearing a yellow dress, coat and nail polish. The yellow intense colors of the clothes capture attention and contrast with the darker background. Her facial expression is very neutral, but more happy than angry. There are also more people in the background in the picture. | Model |
| 4     | Nelly | Red headband and shoes, dark blue walls, golden mirrors. Medium hue and saturation. Low brightness. | **Item:** Outfit  
**Symbol:** Nelly’s own model  
**Meaning:** Elegant, vintage & luxurious feelings, the model looks a bit curious and thoughtful | One of Nelly’s “own” models, wearing a full outfit from their collection. The prominent colors are the red headband and red shoes, contrasting from the navy-blue background. The setting is elegant, yet vintage, and the model looks a bit curious and thoughtful. | Model |
| Collage | 5 | Bubbleroom | Light pink roses and lace top, white background. Low hue and saturation, high brightness. | Item: Lace top  
Symbol: Combined elements  
Meaning: Sensual, emotional & girly feelings | Four different light colored products gathered in a collage, of which only one product is from their own web site. The light pink roses and light pink lace top in combination with the white background create a sensual, emotional and girly feeling. |  
Collage |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Collage | 6 | Asos | Black and red products, white background. Medium hue and saturation, high brightness. | Item: Various products  
Symbol: Combined elements  
Meaning: Loving, rocky, tough & serious feelings | Lots of various products nicely assembled in a collage, but difficult for the viewer to focus on one single product. The red areas have shapes of hearts and roses, making one think of love, while the black gives a more rocky, tough and serious feeling. The word love also appears on many of the products. |  
Collage |
|  | 7 | Gina Tricot | Black swimsuit, white beach, turquoise ocean, green nature. High hue and saturation, high brightness. | Item: Swimsuit  
Symbol: Surroundings  
Meaning: Relaxed, dreamy, calmed, harmonious & happy feelings | Black swimsuit with white dots, hanging on a hanger in a tree. The background is a white beach with a sun bed and a turf sea, which makes one think of a relaxed, dreamy vacation, and the natural colors (green and blue) give a calm, harmonious and happy feeling. |  
One single product |
|  | 8 | Asos | White shoes, yellow background. High hue and saturation, medium brightness. | Item: Pumps  
Symbol: Colors  
Meaning: A sporty, elegant & clean impression | A pair of white, shiny, pointed pumps hanging in the heels on a white grid. The background has an intense yellow color, giving a sporty and clean impression, which is in contrast with the elegance of the shoes. |  
One single product |
|  | 9 | Zalando | Dark blue pants, multicolor handbag, purple shoes. Partly high saturation, low hue, low brightness. | Item: Outfit  
Symbol: Surroundings  
Meaning: Classy & clean impression | A woman wearing a fashionable outfit, where only the waist and down are visible. The orange detail on the bag and the purple shoes are distinctive as they are more intense colors than in the rest of the image. The focus is only on the outfit and the background is blurred. |  
Fashion |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>Green dress, pink and turquoise background. High hue and saturation, high brightness.</td>
<td>Dress</td>
<td>Janni Delér</td>
<td>Appealing, positive &amp; playful feelings</td>
<td>A well-known blogger Janni Delér, who poses in a green dress in front of turquoise and pink background. The product is the main focus in this image and the woman is laughing, which shows that she is happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>Light pink clothes, dark neutral background. High hue, low saturation, partly low brightness.</td>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>Three friends</td>
<td>Happy feelings, fun memories &amp; good times</td>
<td>Three women laughing together and wearing similar clothes as well as matching tshirts. The background is dark and neutral, which means that the products and girlfriends are in focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Gina Tricot</td>
<td>Light yellow tshirt, blue jeans, beige concrete background. Low hue and saturation, medium brightness.</td>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>Two friends</td>
<td>Happy, neutral everyday &amp; frantic feelings</td>
<td>Two girls posing next to a big wall on a street. The girls are laughing and one of them is friendly leaning on the other one's shoulder. It is apparent from the background that it is cold because of the snow, and there is no greenery. The colors are very subdued and reflect a more neutral everyday feeling. In this case, the girls do not wear similar clothes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Zalando</td>
<td>White outfit, orange tennis court. High hue and saturation, low brightness.</td>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>A woman &amp; tennis</td>
<td>Serious, sporty &amp; active impression</td>
<td>A woman wearing white tennis clothes and sunglasses. The facial expression is very serious and she is looking out of a tennis court and holding a tennis ball. The image gives a sporty and active impression, which is in accordance with the apparel shown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>Turquoise water, orange and blue sunset. High hue and saturation, low brightness.</td>
<td>No actual product</td>
<td>A loving couple &amp; the atmosphere</td>
<td>Idyllic, calm, comfortable, luxurious, cozy &amp; romantic feelings</td>
<td>A loving lying in a bed made of ropes, watching an outdoor cinema in the water. In the background there is a lovely sunset and the water is an idyllic turf and the colors are very calm and comfortable. The image gives a luxurious, cozy and romantic feel, but there are no products in focus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | Gina Tricot | Bright yellow sweater, light grey background. Low hue and saturation, medium brightness. | **Item:** Sweater  
**Symbol:** Kenza Zuiten  
**Meaning:** Happy, flirty, an everyday & earthy impression | A selfie on the Swedish famous blogger Kenza Zuiten, wearing a bright yellow top. Her facial expression is happy and almost a bit flirty. The colors are very earthy in the rest of the image, and the product appears well even though it is a selfie. | Selfie |
|---|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 15| Gina Tricot | White top, blue jeans with red stripes, white background. Low hue and saturation, high brightness. | **Item:** Jeans & top  
**Symbol:** A woman  
**Meaning:** Confident, serious & an everyday impression | A woman taking a selfie in a mirror. Her body language tells she is a confident woman and the facial expression reflects a certain serious attitude. The products are in focus, much due to the white background. The image does not look like a typical sales image, but rather as an image coming from a regular person’s Instagram. | Selfie |


APPENDIX 7 – ERIKSSON.FROHM’S INSTAGRAM FEED
## Appendix 8 – Extract of Content Analysis of Empirical Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Meaning-bearing units</th>
<th>Meaning interpretation</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>“The clothes do not appeal to me at all”, “no I did not look at the clothes at all”</td>
<td>Opinions, low attention to items,</td>
<td>Item, cognitive component</td>
<td>Semiotics, attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>“I liked this image very much”, “I liked feeling”, “I want to hang out with my friends”, “lovely”, “they look happy”, “I think about my own friends”, “nice image”, “I had stopped &amp; looked but then scrolled away”</td>
<td>Opinions, creates happy emotions, personal connection, positive attention &amp; interest, but no further action</td>
<td>Cognitive component, affective component, conative component</td>
<td>The AIDA model, attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>“Too much pink”, “do not like pink”, “would prefer a black &amp; white T-shirt instead”</td>
<td>Opinions, notice the colors</td>
<td>Cognitive component</td>
<td>Colors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>“Messy”</td>
<td>Hard to understand the image &amp; its message</td>
<td>Complex design</td>
<td>Visual complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>“I think it is work out clothes”, “she looks a bit like a mannequin”</td>
<td>Mention the actual product, interpretation of the message</td>
<td>Item, meaning/symbol</td>
<td>Semiotics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>“I think it is boring and weird”, “would have scrolled on”, “unnatural”, “that she has her nose through the fence was what I looked at first”, “I would not notice anything special here”, “I would also scroll on”, “I would not want to work out in this clothes”, “no image having that skirt in the gym”, “you do not exercise in that sunglasses”</td>
<td>Opinions, raises negative attention, shattered focus from the product, no action, low attention, personal connection</td>
<td>Attention, cognitive component, action, conative component</td>
<td>The AIDA model, attitudes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“It is not clear if it is the sunglasses or the tennis balls they sell”, “no I did not understand it either”

| 13 | Hard to understand the image and its message | Complex design | Visual complexity |