Sharing Without Caring

An experimental study comparing the generational differences in effectiveness of viral videos used for online advertising

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Abstract and keywords

Consumers used to accept commercials on television as a mandatory interruption of what they were watching. On the Internet, however, many advertisements can be avoided if the viewer wants to. Consequently, viral commercials emerged that are meant to entertain the viewer instead of interrupting them. Viral commercials are intended to be an online destination for the viewer, something they can enjoy and share online with peers. However, it is unclear whether this type of advertising is effective at all, let alone whether it is more effective than traditional, television advertising. Therefore, this study compared consumer responses to viral and traditional commercials. Additionally, this study researched possible differences in consumer responses from generation X, the generation that grew up with television, and generation Y, the generation that grew up with the Internet. The research question that was used to study this was *'How does a viral commercial influence brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand liking, brand preference, brand conviction, commercial liking and the willingness to share differently than a traditional commercial does for consumers from generation X and generation Y in the Netherlands?* To answer this research question, an online experiment was conducted using a 2 (generation X and generation Y) by 3 (viral, traditional, and control conditions) between-subjects design. The survey was completed by 185 respondents, equally divided over the six conditions of which two watched a viral commercial, two watched a traditional commercial, and two served as control conditions. Surprisingly, it was found that brand knowledge decreases after viewing a commercial, and more so after watching a viral commercial than a traditional commercial. Also, within the viral commercial condition, brand knowledge decreases more for generation Y than generation X. In line with the expectations, the results showed that viral commercials increase commercial liking and the willingness to share more than traditional commercials, and that the level of commercial liking has a positive influence on the willingness to share a commercial. The results generally showed little differences between the effectiveness of viral and traditional commercials, as well as little differences between the consumer responses of generation X and generation Y. Thus, it can be concluded that when it comes to viral commercials, consumers do *share*, but consumer behavior responses show that they do not really *care*.

KEYWORDS: viral advertising, traditional advertising, generational comparison, hierarchy-of-effects, sharing online

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Preface

For me, this thesis serves as the work in which all knowledge I have gained during this Master's program came together. It shows where my interests lay within the field of Media and Business, and it touches upon many subjects that I have learned about over the past year. I want to thank my supervisor, Dr. Sanne Opree, for her support and advice over the past months. Her positive attitude and valuable insights have guided me through the writing process, and my thesis would not have been the same without her. Additionally, I would like to thank my parents and my friends for their support and for helping me by recruiting as many respondents for me as they could. Lastly, I want to thank my boyfriend for the nights he spent proofreading my work, and for allowing me to take it out on him when I was stuck or stressed.

Chapter 1 Introduction

The dynamics of communication between brands and customers have changed drastically with the rise of the Internet. Before the Internet, commercials were a mandatory part of watching television. The content of advertisements has been ever-changing since their emergence in the 1950s, but the concept stayed the same: Consumers were obligated to take the commercials in a one-package deal with their favorite television shows, there was no going around them. This resulted in a negative attitude of the viewer towards television commercials (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1994), despite advertisers' aims to make commercials entertaining and memorable as well as providing information about the product. Some reasons suggested for disliking television advertising as an institution are that it interrupts TV programming or is repetitious, offensive or irritating (Aaker & Bruzzone, 1985; Barnes & Dotson, 1990).

However, in the 80s and 90s, options to re-watch a television show after airing started to emerge with VCR and DVR, allowing viewers to fast-forward through commercials (Wilbur, 2008). Over the past decades the Internet developed rapidly, offering consumers a variety of different platforms to watch their favorite TV shows whenever they wanted. As a consequence, consumers did not need to be in contact with television advertising at all anymore. This trend expanded with the rise of on-demand television platforms like Netflix and HBO that offer commercial-free TV shows and movies in exchange for a paid membership. The consumer increasingly started to use alternatives to television for watching TV shows, taking traditional commercials for granted. Today, television advertising is still considered the most effective means of mass communication to consumers, but it is unclear if the commercials are actually being watched (Ionova, 2016; Plunkett, 2010).

Inevitably, the development of the Internet brought along the emergence of advertisements on this medium as well. However, consumers seem to be a lot more pro-active when it comes to watching advertisements on the Internet, which is reflected in the rapid increase in the use of ad-blockers (Scott, 2016). When browsing online, consumers have become aware of their power and freedom to watch whatever they want, whenever they want to. Consequently, businesses had to find new ways to reach the online consumer with commercials that they would not block or skip if they wanted to continue the use of advertising for revenue. A recent trend that has developed concerning this, is businesses have started to create commercials that

consumers actually want to watch, since consumers do not have to watch them anymore and will find a way to avoid them if they are pushed on them (Southgate, Westoby, & Page, 2010).

Thus, one thing that can be observed is a change in the content of commercials: "In response to changing TV consumption habits, the advertising industry is embracing more targeted, interactive and engaging advertisements" (Nath, 2015). However, another challenge for advertisers is to deal with the places where commercials are shown. The use of cable television is decreasing, since alternatives provide more personalized ways to watch what people want to watch. Thus, fragmentation is a concern for advertisers, since the options for consumers are increasing and it therefore becomes harder to reach a unified target audience (Ibid.). Thus, an alternative is found online: Platforms such as YouTube and Facebook offer businesses access to a wide and comprehensive audience, where the goal is to make the target consumer come to them. Businesses have to make the commercial the online destination: Something consumers will search, watch, and share on social media so the video goes 'viral'.

1.1 Key Concepts

In this subsection, the key concepts that are central in this study will be further elaborated. It is essential to clarify these concepts so that the meaning of different terms and variables is aligned throughout the complete study.

The first recognizable concept of focus in this study is a viral commercial. Porter and Golan (2006) define viral advertising in the context of video as follows: "Viral advertising is unpaid peer-to- peer communication of […] content originating from an identified sponsor using the Internet to persuade or influence an audience to pass along the content to others". What going 'viral' means depends on the brand and the size of its target audience; it cannot be expressed in a number. As a result, commercials turn into tiny movies that consumers want to see, and that are meant to digitally reach as much of the target audience as possible. To achieve this goal, commercials have increased in length and scope: Traditional commercials are about 30 seconds long and have an informative angle towards a product, but viral commercials can be anywhere from a few minutes up to even half an hour (Waterhouse, 2012; Wolk, 2015). Their point is not to inform the consumer, since consumers can and will search online for information on products they are interested in themselves. Instead, advertisers are aiming to entertain the consumer and give them a taste of what life would be like using a brand (Karp, n.d.; Kirby, 2014).

When looking at this trend, different responses may be witnessed from different types of people. One interesting distinction can be made based on age: It seems plausible that consumers who have spent their entire lives in the digital era react differently to viral commercials than consumers who know what life was like before the Internet. Previous findings state that the former, the Millennial generation, is 112% more likely to share advertisements they like online and they are 27% more likely to feel happy and inspired by video advertisements than other generations (Unruly, 2016a). These Millennials, also referred to as members of generation Y, were born between 1981 and 1999 (Bolton, et al., 2013). The generation before them, which has spent a significant part of their lives without using the Internet, is referred to as generation X. These are people born between 1965 and 1980, who have experienced a shift towards the Internet in their child and teen years (Williams, Coupland, Folwell, & Sparks, 1997), which gives them an interesting perspective on all things digital, very different of that of generation Y.

A classic model used to measure consumer responses to advertising, is the hierarchy-of-effects model designed by Lavidge and Steiner (1961). The model consists of six stages the consumer is supposed to go through after seeing an advertisement: Brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand liking, brand preference, brand conviction and purchase. Over time, many variations on the model have developed and it has been criticized regularly. However, discussions often focus on the order in which the different stages appear in. Most scholars still agree that at one point all stages appear in consumer responses to advertising (Hoyer & Brown, 1990). Therefore, these six stages are used in this study to measure consumer behavior, without taking their order into account. Additionally, commercial liking and the willingness to share a commercial are important components in this study, since the number of likes and shares can be considered a representative of the engagement consumers have with the advertisement, and thus its potential effectiveness (Hodgins, 2016).

The focus on differences between these two generations relating to their responses towards viral versus traditional advertising, has resulted in the construction of the following research question: *'How does a viral commercial influence brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand liking, brand preference, brand conviction, commercial liking and the willingness to share differently than a traditional commercial does for consumers from generation X and generation Y in the Netherlands?'* This research question will be studied through an online experiment.

1.2 Societal and Academic Relevance

The viral commercial trend is relatively new and not extensively researched (Hodgins, 2016). When the phenomenon is being discussed in existing literature, the focus is often on the way in which these commercials are being distributed and shared. Most studies focusing on viral commercials aim to find out where on the Internet they are found and shared; This is mostly through social media (Mills, 2012; Plangger & Mills, 2013). Existing studies have less of a focus on the content of viral commercials, which is notably different from that of traditional television commercials. In addition to that, there is a lack of focus on what it is exactly that consumers like or dislike about viral commercials, and how they are affected by them. Because of this it is not clear how effective viral commercials actually are and if they are more effective than traditional commercials at triggering a response with the consumer (Ibid.). It is important to prioritize a focus on consumer responses and effects in scientific research because these are at the core of advertising. If a commercial is not effective at engaging the consumer with the brand, the advertisement is essentially useless, and it is just a form of entertainment (or annoyance) for the viewer. Therefore, the most important focus in this study is whether commercials increase consumers' brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand liking, brand preference and brand conviction, which can be considered important goals of advertising since these eventually can lead to the actual purchase (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). In the case of viral commercials, however, the liking of the commercials and a willingness to share the commercial online could also be considered a goal since without these, this type of commercial loses its value. If a viral commercial is not shared on the Internet, it will not be seen by the consumer and thus it cannot influence consumer responses at all. By adding to literature on viral commercials and helping to fill the gap of studies on effectiveness in the existing literature on viral commercials, this study is *academically relevant*.

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of viral commercials and to compare it with the effectiveness of traditional commercials. From previous studies it is known that traditional commercials have a bias towards informing the viewer while viral commercials focus more on entertaining the viewer (Nath, 2015). Therefore, more information on this topic can be useful for businesses that are considering creating a commercial, to help them with making the decision to go for a traditional or a viral commercial. This makes this study *socially relevant*: Consumers as well as viral commercial distribution platforms such as YouTube or Facebook can benefit from

the results of such a study, since this informs them on the influence that different types of commercials can have on consumers. This can be interesting for consumers themselves as they can be more aware of the ways advertising influences them in the future. For online platforms such as YouTube and Facebook, additional information can provide insights as to what type of videos users prefer and which types of commercials generate additional activity (i.e., liking and sharing) on the platforms. However, the results are considered most relevant to businesses who want to create a commercial. For them, it is crucial to know whether a viral commercial has a different or larger impact on the consumer than a traditional commercial. If the viral commercial is more successful at engaging the consumer and increasing consumer responses, it is highly possible that this type of commercial will lead to more purchase as well. However, if viral commercials are equally or less successful than traditional commercials at engaging consumers, the risk of producing them is very high because the chances that they will reach a large, widespread audience are a lot lower than with traditional commercials spread through television. Therefore, additional information on the differences in effectiveness of these types of commercials is highly needed for businesses and advertisers.

1.3 Thesis Outline

This study focuses on the consumer responses following the observation of two different types of commercials. An overview of the relationships between consumers and the varying responses they have to different commercials are discussed in chapter two. The chapter outlines what phases consumers go through during and after observing a commercial, how different types of commercials can cause different types of behavioural responses with consumers, and how their responses can vary depending on the generation they are a part of. Additionally, this chapter discusses the importance of the consumer's attitude towards a commercial and the importance of sharing advertisements online in a digital society. Based on this theory, a set of hypotheses are presented in the Theory chapter that are used to answer the research question.

Afterwards, the Methods chapter presents the methodology used to test the previously proposed hypotheses. The chapter discusses the experimental research design that this study is built on, the practical details of the way the experiment was conducted are explained here, and the sampling method used to gather respondents is specified. Finally, the measurements that are used to test the proposed hypotheses are tested for validity and reliability in this chapter. The

scales used to test the hypotheses are all based on previously used items and their factorial structure and reliability is tested before using them for analysis.

The Results chapter goes on to use these scales to test each hypothesis proposed in the Theory chapter. The chapter starts out by outlining descriptive details of the data set and elaborating on the assumptions that have to be met in order to be able to conduct the tests. After all assumptions are met and solutions for violated assumptions are found, each hypothesis is tested using either a one-way ANOVA, a two-way ANOVA, or a correlation test. After each test it is specified whether the hypothesis was accepted or rejected.

The final chapter, the Conclusion, goes on to further discuss the accepted and rejected hypotheses. The focus here is on rejected hypotheses and an alternative explanation for these findings is presented, clarifying possible reasons why the findings contradict the theory provided in the Theory chapter. This way, this chapter finds new insights that are valuable to the advertising industry as well as the consumers themselves, but also to academics interested in related topics. Furthermore, the chapter discusses societal and practical implications of the study, the limitations this study had, and relevant suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2 Theory

In order to be able to understand the various effects advertisement can have on different kinds of audiences, it is necessary to clarify how the different concepts in this field relate to each other. First of all, to understand the behaviors that advertisements can cause for consumers, the different phases that consumers go through after observing an advertisement need to be analyzed theoretically. Secondly, it is important to understand the fundamental differences between different types of advertisements and how they, because of their specific characteristics, can cause different effects with the consumer. Thirdly, it is important to understand how these effects can vary for different types of consumers: Consumers that are part of generation Y have different behaviors and responses than consumers that are part of generation X, and this is no different for advertising related behaviors.

2.1 The Effects of Advertising

For the past decades, advertising effects have been predominantly explained with the *hierarchy-of-effects* (HOE) model. This model states that audiences of advertising respond to the messages in a structurally ordered way: Audiences first respond *cognitively*, in which they memorize the advertisement or brand; Then *affectively*, in which they form attitudes towards the advertisement or brand; And lastly *conatively*, in which their behaviors are shaped, such as buying the advertised product (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). In other literature, these three dimensions have been referred to as the *think-feel-do* (TFD) model (Akpan, Okon, Obukoadata, Okugo, & Ihechu, 2012). Recently, the sequential aspect of the HOE and the TFD models has increasingly been criticized, as their different aspects are argued to be so closely interwoven that it is unclear which of the responses comes first. Consequently, an alternative view developed which states that all stages within the models can overlap and occur simultaneously (Weilbacher, 2001). This view agrees that all stages will at one point be covered during the interaction between an advertisement and its audience, however, whether they occur strictly in the order proposed is doubted in this view (Barry & Howard, 1990). Following this view, this study focuses on the different components proposed in the HOE model without focusing on the order in which these components are covered by the audience.

Lavidge and Steiners (1961) HOE model divides the three previously defined dimensions into seven specific stages, starting with the state prior to being exposed to an advertisement: This

stage consists of potential purchasers who are *unaware* of the existence of the product in question. In this situation, an advertisement can be used to gain the consumer's attention, so they will guide their cognitive resources towards processing the advertisement and brand (Greenwald & Leavitt, 1984). The first step from this unaware stage is creating *awareness*, which refers to the strength of a brand's presence in the consumer's mind (Gerber, Terblanche-Smit, & Crommelin, 2014). This is an often overlooked but crucial step; It is the buyer's ability to identify a brand in an advertisement and without this step, the purpose of the advertisement would be defeated (Percy & Rossiter, 1992). The second step in Lavidge and Steiners model is expanding *knowledge*, which is when the audience knows what the advertised brand has to offer. This step is a more developed form of brand awareness (Hoyer & Brown, 1990), and together, the two can also be categorized as the *think* dimension of the TFD model (Akpan, et al., 2012). The brand awareness and brand knowledge steps of the HOE model together form the cognitive aspect of a consumer's behavior when being in contact with an advertisement.

The third step is increasing *liking*, which focuses on an audience that has developed favorable attitudes towards the product (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). When an advertisement is creative, this leads to more favorable attitudes towards the advertisement, since creative advertisements are perceived to be more intrinsically pleasing to process for consumers. Consequently, this will also lead to a more positive attitude towards the product and the brand itself, since favorable attitudes are often carried through (Smith, Chen, & Yang, 2008). The fourth step in the HOE model is developing *preference* and happens when these positive attitudes develop to the point where the product is preferred over all other possibilities (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). Brand preference can only exist if the consumer has also developed favorable brand attitudes, and thus it can be perceived as a more developed form of brand liking. Together, the two steps can also be categorized as the *feel* dimension of the TFD model (Akpan, et al., 2012). The brand liking and brand preference steps of the HOE model together form the affective aspect of a consumer's behavior when being in contact with an advertisement.

The fifth step in the model developed by Lavidge and Steiner is stimulating *conviction*, which happens when the desire to buy the product develops and the consumer persuades themselves purchase would be wise (Barry & Howard, 1990). This step focuses on the real life intentions of the consumer in relation to the brand, based on previously formed attitude: It can also be defined as purchase intention of a consumer. The sixth step, *purchase*, translates the

desire or intention to buy a product into actual purchase (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). This final step is a more developed form of brand conviction, and together, the two can also be categorized as the *do* dimension of the TFD model (Akpan, et al., 2012). The brand conviction and purchase steps of the HOE model together form the conative aspect of a consumer's behavior when being in contact with an advertisement.

2.2 Traditional versus Viral Commercials

Different types of advertisements have different effects on their audience and the phases of the HOE model. While traditional television commercials also have an emotional component and try to entertain the consumer with heuristic cues, these are often presented in combination with brand name information, which forms the central part of the message (Singh & Cole, 1993). In viral commercials, the emotional and entertaining focus is more compelling. Traditional commercials often present and repeat facts (Ibid.), which would not be very likely to happen in a viral commercial. Although traditional commercials also try to activate involvement, enjoyment and branding with the audience, viral commercials have a stronger focus on such components (Southgate, Westoby, & Page, 2010). Viral commercials additionally have a high need for total distinctiveness from other viral commercials, and a buzz: The likelihood to share it with others. Emotion is a key concept in shaping virality: Commercials that evoke high-arousal positive, like awe, or negative emotions, like anger or anxiety, are more likely to be shared than content that evokes low-arousal emotions, like sadness (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Botha & Reyneke, 2013). Another distinctive characteristic is that traditional commercials generally emphasize naming the brand, while in viral commercials the brand logo is shown subtly and sometimes only gets shown after 30 seconds (Waterhouse, 2012). Viral commercials are often also lengthier than traditional commercials, and are not as focused on selling a particular product or service as traditional commercials are (Kirby, 2014; Wolk, 2015).

Based on the differences in these two types of commercials, it is expected that they also cause different responses from their audience when measured using the different components of the HOE model. As explained before, the first two steps in the HOE model, brand awareness and brand knowledge, are based on cognitive behaviors of the audience: What the audience thinks when the advertisement is first presented to them. These first responses are partly dependent on the attitude the consumer has even before the commercial starts: When consumers choose to

watch a commercial themselves, as is the case with viral commercials, there is a greater chance of increasing brand awareness, since the viewer is already interested in the video (Southgate, Westoby, & Page, 2010). Additionally, consumers are found to be 68% more likely to remember a commercial that was endorsed by someone they know, for instance by being shared on social media (Hosea, 2011). Based on these theories, the expectation is that watching a viral commercial increases *brand awareness* more than watching a traditional commercial (**H1**). In addition to that, it is expected that watching a viral commercial increases *brand knowledge* more than watching a traditional commercial (**H2**).

The third and fourth step in the HOE model, brand liking and brand preference, are focused on the affective responses audiences have after seeing an advertisement. As mentioned previously, consumers' attitudes towards advertising are changing: Instead of being interrupted by one, nowadays they will try to avoid an advertisement if they do not enjoy it (Unruly, 2016b). Therefore, affective responses towards advertisements have become even more important. All types of emotion can increase brand affection with the viewer after seeing an advertisement; Happiness or joy as well as sadness or anger. However, with traditional television commercials, the emotions are often related to irritation since the viewer did not want to see the commercial in the first place. Consequently, this will lower the brand liking for the traditional commercial (Vejačka, 2012). In addition to that, since viral commercials are more focused on emotions than traditional commercials, viral videos often evoke stronger emotions with the viewer, and consequently the viewer will like the video, which leads to a stronger sense of brand favoring (Huang, Su, Zhou, & Liu, 2013). Based on these theories, the expectation is that watching a viral commercial increases *brand liking* more than watching a traditional commercial (**H3**). In addition to that, it is expected that watching a viral commercial increases *brand preference* more than watching a traditional commercial (**H4**).

The last two steps in the HOE model, brand conviction and purchase, focus on conative behavior of the audience, which focuses on the actions they take after seeing an advertisement. To convince consumers to take action and proceed to purchase after seeing a commercial, the emotional appeal, informativeness and creativity of the commercial are found to be the biggest positive influencers (Lee & Hong, 2016). Out of these factors, informativeness is often found to a larger extend in traditional commercials than in viral commercials (Singh & Cole, 1993). However, the other two factors, emotional appeal and advertisement creativity, are of greater

importance in viral commercials than in traditional commercials (Southgate, Westoby, & Page, 2010). This means that two out of the three factors that are important to lead consumers to purchase after viewing a commercial are more prominent in viral commercials than in traditional commercials. Therefore, the expectation is that watching a viral commercial increases *brand conviction* more than watching a traditional commercial (**H5**). In addition to that, it is expected that watching a viral commercial will increase purchase behavior more than watching a traditional commercial. However, such actions cannot be recorded in the scope of this study and therefore, this expectation will not be taken into account as a hypothesis. Based on the theory and these hypotheses, a model was created that can be observed in Figure 2.1:

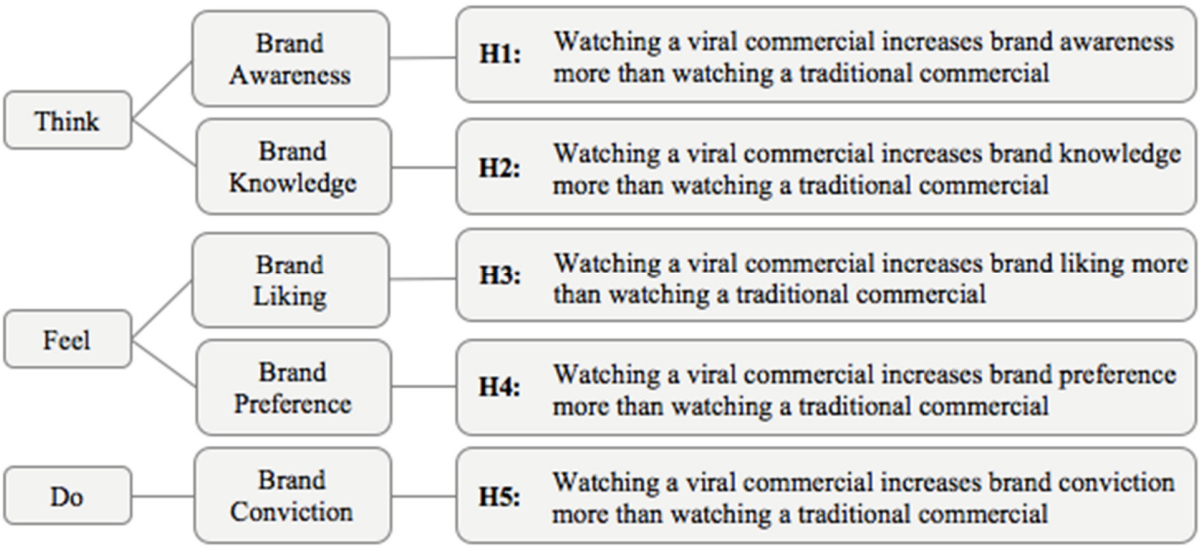

Figure 2.1. Structure TFD and HOE models and commercial types.

2.3 Generational Differences

Based on events that happen during the pre-adult years, different generations are believed to behave in distinctive different ways and different sets of values, beliefs and expectations that remain constant throughout a generation's lifetime (Jackson, Stoel, & Brantley, 2011). Over the past thirty years, dramatic changes have taken place for young people in terms of demographics: More people pursue higher education, and the median age of marriage and the first child birth went up rapidly (Arnett, 2000). Because of such changes, the generations that grew up during these years, generation X and generation Y, are an interesting focus of study. Generation X members were born between 1965 and 1980, and generation Y members were born between

1981 and 1999 (Bolton, et al., 2013; Williams, Coupland, Folwell, & Sparks, 1997). For these generations, the patterns of life have become less typical and accordingly, consumer preferences and tastes have become more varied. Being a highly educated generation, generation X is said to value autonomy and independence, thrive to open communication and seek to acquire skills and expertise (Jorgensen, 2003). Generation Y, or the Millennial generation, is the first generation that does not need authority figures to gain access to information, which resulted in an advanced and unique group of workers. This is the first generation that is globally connected by the Internet and social media (Ordun, 2015).

Based on the differences in generation X and generation Y, it is expected that these generations also respond differently towards advertisements when measured using the HOE model. Following the same structure as before, the awareness and knowledge steps in the model can again be captured in the *think* component of the TFD model. When comparing the behavior of the two generations, it can be observed that generation Y is harder to persuade through television advertising than generation X, and members of generation X are more attentive of television commercials than generation Y (Crang, 2012). Crang (2012) also shows that when generation Y chooses to watch content, as is the case with viral commercials, they are more aware than generation X. Generation X, on the other hand, is found to have stronger responses towards television commercials than generation Y (Ibid.). This could mean that generation Y is less receptive of traditional commercials, they did not choose to watch them, while generation X responds stronger to the interruption that traditional commercials bring to watching television. Additionally, Goot, Rozendaal, Opree, Ketelaar, and Smit (2017) found that generations react more strongly to commercials on the medium most used by them, which would explain why generation Y is more responsive to viral commercials and generation X more to traditional commercials. Based on these theories, the expectation is that watching a traditional commercial increases *brand awareness* more for generation X than for generation Y (**H6a**). In addition to that, it is expected that watching a viral commercial increases *brand awareness* more for generation Y than for generation X (**H6b**), that watching a traditional commercial increases *brand knowledge* more for generation X than for generation Y (**H7a**), and that watching a viral commercial increases *brand knowledge* more for generation Y than for generation X (**H7b**).

Consumers from different generations are also expected to have different affective responses when seeing an advertisement. Following the same model as before, the liking and

preference steps in de HOE model can be captured in the *feel* component of the TFD model. When comparing the behavior of the generations, it can be observed that generation Y members are more likely to feel happy or inspired by viral commercials than members of generation X (Unruly, 2016a). In addition to that, it is found that generation X has stronger emotional responses towards television commercials than generation Y (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1994; Crang, 2012). These findings can again be explained by the theory that generation Y has stronger responses to commercials that have a viral, online character while generation X is influenced more strongly by more traditional commercials, since these are the most used media by the respective generations (Goot et al., 2017). These theories lead to the expectation that watching a traditional commercial increases *brand liking* more for generation X than for generation Y (**H8a**). Also, it is expected that watching a viral commercial increases *brand liking* more for generation Y than for generation X (**H8b**), that watching a traditional commercial increases *brand preference* more for generation X than for generation Y (**H9a**), and that watching a viral commercial increases *brand preference* more for generation Y than for generation X (**H9b**).

Lastly, consumers from differing generations are also expected to respond differently with respect to their conative behaviors after seeing an advertisement. Following the same model as before, the conviction and purchase steps in de HOE model can again be captured in the *do* component of the TFD model. When comparing the behavior of the two generations, it can be observed that again, generation X members are more likely to be persuaded to go to purchasing action by television commercials than members of generation Y (Crang, 2012). However, generation Y is tempted to move towards product purchase when a commercial has a high *stickiness* factor or when the content is provocative (Keller, 2013; Porter & Golan, 2006), which is more likely to be the case with viral commercials than with traditional commercials. Again, a possible explanation for these findings is that both generations respond more strongly to the medium most used by them. Thus, generation Y has stronger responses to commercials to viral commercials while generation X is persuaded more easily by traditional commercials (Goot et al., 2017). Based on these theories, the expectation is that watching a traditional commercial increases *brand conviction* more for generation Y than for generation X (**H10a**). In addition to that, it is expected that watching a viral commercial increases *brand conviction* more for generation Y than for generation X (**H10b**). Also, it is expected that watching a traditional commercial increases purchase behavior more for generation Y than for generation X, and that

watching a viral commercial increases purchase behavior more for generation Y than for generation X. However, such actions cannot be recorded in the scope of this study since it requires following respondents while they go shopping and therefore, they will not be taken into account as hypotheses. Based on this theory and these hypotheses, a model was created that can be observed in Figure 2.2:

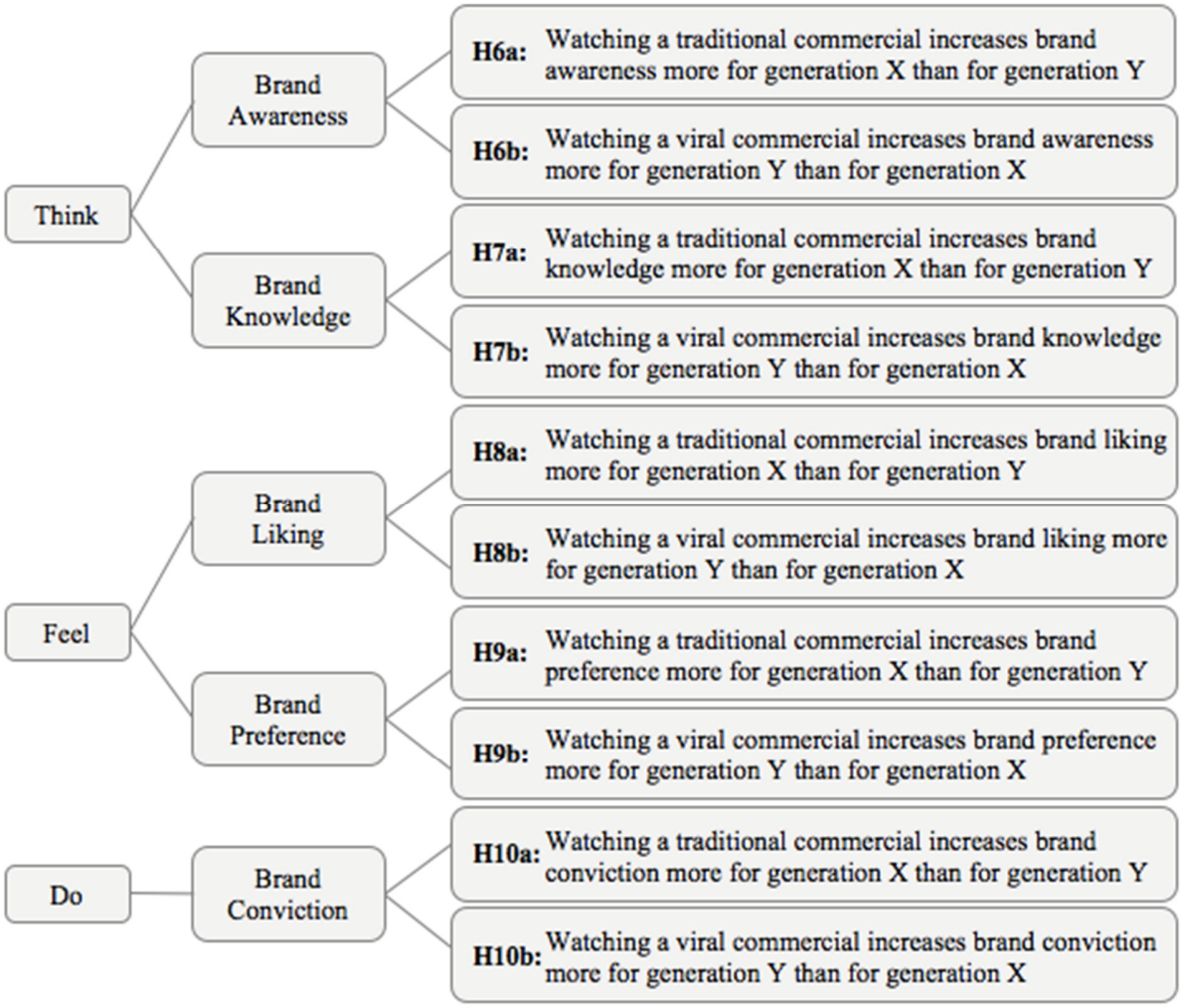

Figure 2.2. Structure TFD and HOE models, commercial types and generations.

2.4 No 'Viral' Without Liking and Sharing

Besides attitudes that the consumer develops towards a brand that is presented to them in an advertisement, the consumer also develops attitudes directly towards the advertisement itself. Since traditional commercials and viral commercials use differing approaches to engage the viewer, they have different tactics when it comes to increasing commercial liking. One tactic for

traditional commercials to engage the viewer is through the use of advertisements that annoy or irritate the consumer. The idea behind this approach is that it is effective because it succeeds at making the consumer remember the commercial (Leger & Scholz, 2002). However, it can be argued that this strategy is not applicable for viral commercials. Since viral advertising gives consumers a sense of control over their advertising experience through the use of like and share buttons on social media, commercial liking is more important to this type of commercial (Hosea, 2011). This sense of control also gives consumers the option to stop watching a commercial if it is not entertaining or likeable to them, which highlights the importance of likeable viral commercials once more (Scott, 2016). Because of this, it can be argued that the content of viral commercials is adapted to the idea that the viewer should be entertained and have a positive attitude towards the commercial, where this is less of an incentive for traditional commercials (Nath, 2015). Based on this, the expectation is that watching a viral commercial increases *commercial liking* more than watching a traditional commercial **(H11)**.

In accordance with brand-related consumer responses after seeing a commercial, it can also be argued that different types of consumers have different responses with regards to commercial liking. A global study on advertisement responses of different generations shows that members of generation Y have a more negative attitude towards traditional forms of advertising than older consumers, particularly in terms of television commercials. In turn, members of generation X have a more negative attitude towards online advertisements than younger consumers, particularly in terms of viral commercials (Kantar Millward Brown, 2017). Since a larger part of generation X members is actively watching television and a larger part of generation Y members is actively using social media, commercials on the respective platforms are often targeted towards their main audiences (Goot et al., 2017). Thus, the expectation is that traditional commercials appeal more to generation X while viral commercials appeal more to generation Y, as each commercial is targeted towards this specific audience (Aaker, Brumbaugh, & Grier, 2000). Based on these theories, the expectation is that watching a traditional commercial increases *commercial liking* more for generation X than for generation Y (**H12a**). Additionally, it is expected that watching a viral commercial increases *commercial liking* more for generation Y than for generation X (**H12b**).

Next, the extent to which a consumer likes an advertisement can explain other types of behaviour the consumer has in relation to the advertisement, such as their willingness to share it

online. The willingness to share a commercial is a particularly interesting type of behaviour to observe, since this is what gives viral commercials their success. If a viral commercial is liked by each viewer, but no viewer continues to share the commercial afterwards, the commercial cannot go viral (Shehu, Bijmolt, & Clement, 2016). This means the commercial will not be viewed by a large audience, and its purpose will be defeated. Where traditional commercials often are spread to a large audience because they are displayed on television, the step towards sharing is essential for the spreading and thus the succeeding of a viral commercial (Plangger & Mills, 2013). Word-of-mouth research suggests that a higher level of commercial liking increases the chances of consumer sharing (DeAngelis, Bonezzi, Peluso, Rucker, & Costabile, 2011; King, Racherla, & Bush, 2014). This shows that a general measure of positive emotionality in a commercial increases the commercial's viral potential. Particularly likeability at the beginning and end of an advertisement enhances its viral potential, and likeability dynamics influence the intention to share a commercial beyond the overall liking effect (Shehu, Bijmolt, & Clement, 2016). These theories led to the expectation is that the level of commercial liking of a consumer has a positive influence on their *willingness to share* the commercial online **(H13)**.

As explained previously the buzz, or the willingness to share, of a video is an important feature of a viral commercial. If consumers would see a viral commercial and would experience an increase on all components of the previously discussed HOE model, this would still be useless if they are not inclined to share the video online afterwards (Plangger & Mills, 2013). Consequently, the number of shares represents the engagement the consumer has with the video, and thus can potentially represent the effectiveness of the advertisement (Hodgins, 2016). As mentioned before, when a viral commercial has a large influence on the viewer's emotions, this will significantly increase the willingness to share (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Botha & Reyneke, 2013). However, traditional commercials often also have a focus on emotions to get the attention of the audience. Nevertheless, in traditional commercials there is a second focus on informing the viewer, whereas in viral commercials evoking emotions is a main goal (Southgate, Westoby, & Page, 2010). Based on the expectations following from H11 and H13 and based on these theories, the expectation is that watching a viral commercial increases the *willingness to share* it online more than a traditional commercial (**H14**).

Additionally, the willingness to share a commercial variates depending on the generation the viewer is a part of: Millennials, or members of generation Y, are 112% more likely to share a

viral commercial they like online than members of generation X (Unruly, 2016a). Zeitgeist is the top reason millennials share videos: They want to know what is going on online so that they can participate in conversations and discuss about it later (Ibid.). A certain zeitgeist is particularly present in viral commercials, since getting the audience to share the video is one of the aims for advertisers when the video is created. In addition to that, it is expected that viral commercials are more tailored towards generation Y members and traditional commercials are more tailored towards generation X members, which increases the willingness to share viral commercials more strongly for generation Y members while it does so more strongly for traditional commercials for generation X members (Aaker, Brumbaugh, & Grier, 2000). Again, this can be explained by the study by Goot et al. (2017) which states that members of different generations respond more strongly to commercials spread through the medium most used by this generation. Based on these theories, and following from the expectations given for H13 and H14, the expectation is that watching a traditional commercial increases the *willingness to share* more for generation X than for generation Y (**H15a)**. Additionally, the expectation is that watching a viral commercial increases the *willingness to share* more for generation Y than for generation X (**H15b)**. Based on the theory and these hypotheses, a model was created that can be observed in Figure 2.3:

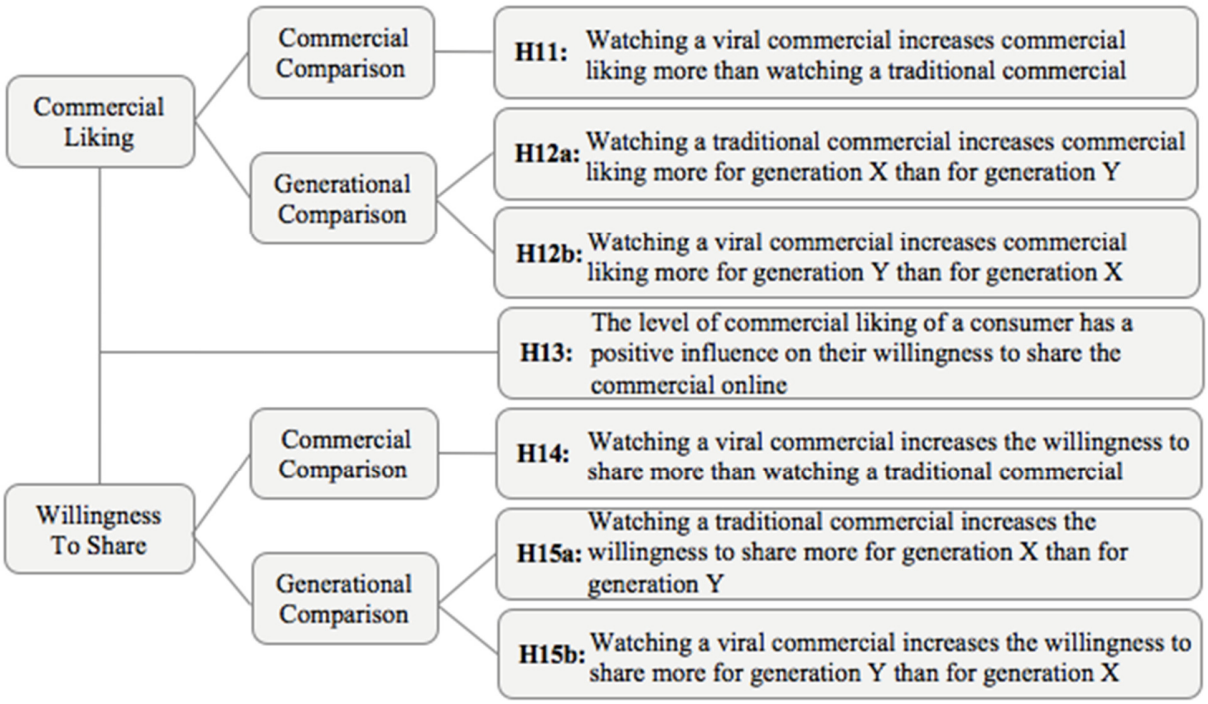

Figure 2.3. Structure willingness to share, commercial types and generations.

Chapter 3 Methods

To test the hypotheses proposed in the previous chapter, this empirical study examined each phase of consumer behaviour that takes place after observing a commercial. In this chapter, the methodologies used to complete this study are justified, the details of the experiment are clarified, more information about the sample is provided and the measurements for each scale used in this study are operationalized.

3.1 Research Design

This study has a quantitative approach. An online experiment was conducted to help research the effects of the manipulated variables and to study causal relationships (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002), since these are primary aims of this study. An experimental method fits this study best because it matches the inductive character of the study. As Fisher (1935) said, an experiment is an "experience carefully planned in advance" (p. 8): An experimental study measures how different people respond to different stimuli, which means that respondents are presented with a certain planned experience to measure how they respond to this afterwards. The conducted experiment is a quasi-experiment since the respondents are grouped based on their age – a given statistic. The data is collected online instead of offline because this offers the researcher easy access to data from a greater, more varying sample.

All respondents that participated in the survey were members from two different generations: Generation X and generation Y. Generation X is defined as anyone born between 1965 and 1980 (Williams, Coupland, Folwell, & Sparks, 1997), while generation Y is defined as anyone born between 1981 and 1999 (Bolton, et al., 2013). However, since studying under aged participants would require parental consent, this study only focused on adults, which means that people born in 1999 with the age of 17 were excluded from participation. The experiment in this study has a 2 (generation X and generation Y) by 3 (viral, traditional, and control conditions) mixed design: Both generations were divided into three groups, and each group was subjected to different stimulus material, resulting in six conditions of which two watched a viral commercial, two watched a traditional commercial, and two served as control conditions. For each condition, the aim was to collect at least 25 to 30 responses, resulting in a total minimum sample of 150 to 180. This minimum is following the central limit theorem, which states that 25 to 30 is the lowest number needed to create a representative sample of each respective group (Roscoe, 1975).

Participants could participate via their smartphone, tablet, or computer. A link was distributed via social media that respondents could follow to participate when and where suited them, as long as they had access to sound and complete the survey at once. Before entering the real survey, the participants were shown a three second video of a ball changing into a bird, with music in the background. Afterwards, they were asked into what type of animal the ball changed. If they answered this question wrongly, they were redirected back to the end of the survey. This way, it was ensured that everyone who participated had the means to properly see and hear the commercials displayed in the survey. The stimulus material used for this study consisted of two different commercials that were created by Knorr. The first condition of each generation was subjected to a traditional commercial such as would appear on television. In this commercial a woman is preparing a Knorr dish, Lebanese falafel, in the kitchen together with her daughters, clearly presenting and selling this specific product to the viewer. This commercial has a duration of 30 seconds, and a link and stills of the commercial can be found in Appendix A. The second condition of each generation has observed a viral commercial in which a group of young strangers meet and go on dates together, where they have dinner. There is only one rule: They have to feed each other. This video focuses more on human experiences than on the food itself, and clearly has a goal of entertaining the viewer. The brand Knorr is mentioned more subtly than in the traditional commercial. Originally, the video had a duration of 179 seconds, however, it was shortened to 64 seconds. This was done to ensure that participants kept their attention throughout the video and to reduce the difference in duration with the traditional commercial. A link and stills of the viral commercial can be found in Appendix B. The third condition of each generation functioned as a control group, and was subjected to the traditional commercial only after having completed the survey questions focusing about Knorr. These conditions functioned to test the effects of the viral as well as the traditional commercial: If results found in the viral or traditional condition are no different from those found in a control condition, this means that the stimulus material had no true effect on the participants.

3.2 Sampling

For the collection of the data snowball sampling was used, which is also known as chain-referral sampling. With this type of sampling, the researcher works their way into a network of similar people that fit the requirements to participate. Once a person from the network has

participated in the study, they will refer the researcher to other members in the network that might be willing to participate (Coleman, 1958; Heckathorn, 2011). This type of sampling was chosen because the researcher already had access to such networks, containing members of each generation, which could speed up the process of data collection. The use of this type of sampling was also a reason for this research to focus solely on the population of the Netherlands. Another reason for the use of snowball sampling is that the focus was primarily on respondents that have an interest in and make use of social media, since this is an important aspect of being subjected to viral commercials. Therefore, it made sense to look for respondents through an online sampling method, since these respondents would have a bigger chance of having previous experience with watching and possibly sharing viral commercials. Respondents were approached through the social platform Facebook and the messaging application WhatsApp.

Before filling out the survey, each respondent was shown a form of consent, which can be found in Appendix C. This form ensured that all respondents filled out the survey voluntarily, and they were informed about the confidentiality of the study, their rights, and the cover story. Since this study is an experiment, the respondents could not know that they were being manipulated. Thus, the study needed a cover story. The cover story in this study was that participants would be shown a video and were asked to give their opinion about what they saw, without specifying any details relating to the video. Participants in the control group were told the study would focus on different opinions about multiple brands. The complete surveys can be found in Appendix D for the experimental conditions (i.e., viral commercial and traditional commercial conditions) and in Appendix E for the control condition.

After ten days of collecting data, from 17 April until 27 April 2017, a total of 343 respondents had partially or completely completed the survey. After transferring all data to SPSS, first 79 unfinished responses were deleted from the file. Following, 24 responses were deleted because they had not passed the test at the start of the survey. After that, 27 respondents were deleted because they did not fit into the required age category set for the study. Another 16 responses were deleted because they were filled out by persons of a nationality other than Dutch. Lastly, 12 control group respondents were deleted because they did not know Knorr, the brand of focus in the study. Hereafter, a total of 185 respondents was left in the data set, being 94 respondents from generation Y and 91 respondents from generation X. From this group, 62 respondents had been shown the traditional commercial (32 from generation Y and 30 from

generation X); 61 respondents had been shown the viral commercial (31 from generation Y and 30 from generation X); and 62 respondents were assigned to the control group (31 from generation Y and 31 from generation X) (See Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Respondents per Condition

Generation	TV commercial	Viral commercial	Control group	Total
X	30	30	31	91
Y	32	31	31	94
Total	62	61	62	185

As mentioned before, 185 respondents met the requirements and managed to completely fill out the survey. Out of this sample, 107 respondents, or 57.8%, were female and 78, or 42,2%, were male. All respondents had the Dutch nationality and were between the age of 18 and 56, with 94 participants belonging to generation Y while 91 participants belonged to generation X. The youngest participant in the study was 19 while the oldest was 54, with an average age of 35.01. In addition to that, 46.5% of the respondents has at the highest level studied at university level, while 38.9% of the respondents answered to have participated in applied sciences university at the highest. Another 7.6% has participated in vocational level education and 5.4% has participated in high school education at the highest level. Lastly, 0.5% of the respondents has only participated in primary school education and 1.1% of the respondents has participated in other forms of education at the highest level.

3.3 Measurements

To analyze whether all scales used in the survey were appropriate and the items fit well together, the factor structure of each scale was tested. Additionally, the reliability of each scale was tested and based on this, for some scales the decision was made to delete an item to improve the scale reliability. Since the survey made use of a control condition in which participants only viewed a commercial after filling out the survey questions, separate (but nearly identical) items

had to be developed for some scales for the control condition to make sure they were phrased properly. For these specific scales (i.e., brand awareness and brand knowledge), separate factor and reliability analyses were performed first on the items for the experimental and the control conditions, to ensure that the scales worked in all conditions. After this was confirmed the scales were merged, and to test the complete scale, their overall factorial structure and reliability was tested again. All items in all scales in the survey were measured with a 7-points Likert scale ranging from *Completely agree* to *Completely disagree*, but were recoded so that 1 represented *Completely disagree* and 7 represented *Completely agree*.

3.3.1 Brand Awareness

In the survey, brand awareness was measured in the same way as Smith, Chen and Yang (2008). For the experimental conditions, this measurement consists of three items: "I am aware of Knorr," "I can recall Knorr," and "I can recognize Knorr." Factor analysis showed that all items have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.930; 0.899; 0.882) and form a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.887, which was not higher if one item was deleted. For the control condition, separate but identical items were used: "I am aware of Knorr," "I can recall Knorr," and "I can recognize Knorr." Because the introduction to the items differed between the experimental and control conditions, the items were measured separately. A factor analysis for the items in the control condition showed that they also have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.859; 0.752; 0.840) and form a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.741, which was not higher if one item was deleted. Hereafter, the six items were merged into three items for brand awareness. A factor analysis shows that these items have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.871; 0.895; 0.889) and form a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.862, which was not higher if one item was deleted. Finally, the three items were merged into one brand awareness scale. The mean found in the sample for brand awareness (M=5.914, SD=0.934) shows that the respondents were quite aware of Knorr.

3.3.2 Brand Knowledge

Since no appropriate scale to measure brand knowledge was found in existing literature, a scale was created to measure this variable. According to Hyman, Lamb, and Bulmer (2006), a good understanding of the original study and high correspondence with the current study is

needed to be able to re-use existing survey items. Since, for brand knowledge, these criteria were not met with existing literature, it was chosen to develop new items instead. Thus, the scale was based on theory on the characteristics of brand knowledge by Lavidge and Steiner (1961). For the experimental conditions, the brand knowledge scale consists of three items: "This advertisement gave me a better idea of the food that Knorr sells," "This advertisement improved my knowledge of Knorr as a brand," and "This advertisement improved my knowledge about the assortment that Knorr offers." Factor analysis showed that all items have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.929; 0.868; 0.916) and form a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.888. However, Cronbach's alpha showed to be higher if one item, "This advertisement improved my knowledge of Knorr as a brand," was deleted: 0.895.

For the control condition, separate but nearly identical items were used: "I have a good idea of the food that Knorr sells," "I have knowledge of Knorr as a brand," and "I have knowledge of the assortment that Knorr offers." They were measured separately because the participants in the control condition had not yet observed an advertisement when they were asked to answer these statements. A factor analysis for these items showed that they have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.849; 0.543; 0.806) and form a scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.589. However, again, Cronbach's alpha showed to be higher if one item, "I have knowledge of Knorr as a brand," was deleted: 0.678.

Because in both instances the reliability of the scale was higher after deleting the item focusing on Knorr as a brand, it was chosen to delete this item for both the experimental and the control conditions. Hereafter, each of the items that remained for the experimental conditions could be merged with a nearly identical item used for the control condition. This resulted in two items for brand knowledge: One focusing on the food that Knorr sells and the other focusing on the assortment that Knorr offers. A factor analysis shows that these items have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.946; 0.946) and form a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.883. Finally, the two items were merged into one brand knowledge scale. The mean found in the sample for brand knowledge (M = 4.303, SD = 1.628) shows that respondents had an average level of knowledge of Knorr.

3.3.3 Brand Liking

Brand liking was measured in the same way as Silvera and Austad (2004). This measurement consists of four items: “Knorr is an interesting brand,” “Knorr is a pleasant brand,” “Knorr is a likeable brand,” and “Knorr is a good brand.” For this scale, no separate items were used for the control condition. Factor analysis showed that all items used for this scale have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.858; 0.922; 0.877; 0.866) and form a reliable scale with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.904, which was not higher after one item was deleted. The mean found in the sample for brand liking (M = 4.562, SD = 1.209) shows that the respondents slightly liked Knorr.

3.3.4 Brand Preference

Brand preference was also measured with items based on the scale used by as Silvera and Austad (2004). This measurement consists of four items: “Knorr is more interesting than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli or Maggi),” “Knorr is more pleasant than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli or Maggi),” “Knorr is more pleasant than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli or Maggi),” and “Knorr is better than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli or Maggi).” The exemplary brands Honig, Bertolli, and Maggi were used because these are food brands that have a similar assortment to Knorr. For this scale, no separate items were used for the control condition. Factor analysis showed that all items used for this scale have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.926; 0.957; 0.925; 0.922) and form a reliable scale with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.950, which was not higher if one of the items was deleted. The mean found in the sample for brand preference (M = 3.551, SD = 1.234) shows that the respondents slightly preferred other brands over Knorr.

3.3.5 Brand Conviction

Brand conviction was measured in the same way as Seiders, Voss, Grewal, and Godfrey (2005) and Tudoran, Olsen, and Dopico (2012). This measurement consists of three items: “In the next week, I intend to purchase a Knorr product,” “In the next week, I expect to purchase a Knorr product,” and “In the next week, I want to purchase a Knorr product,” For this scale, no separate items were used for the control condition. Factor analysis showed that all items used for this scale have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.967; 0.964; 0.967) and form a

reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.964, which was not higher if one of the items was deleted. The mean found in the sample for brand conviction (M = 2.910, SD = 1.539) shows that the respondents did not have a strong interest in buying a Knorr product in the near future.

3.3.6 Commercial Liking

Commercial liking was measured in the same way as Silvera and Austad (2004). This measurement consists of four items: "This advertisement was interesting," "This advertisement was pleasant," "This advertisement was likeable," and "This advertisement was good." For this scale, no separate items were used for the control condition. However, the control condition only saw these items in the end of the survey, after observing the advertisement. Factor analysis showed that all items used for this scale have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.867; 0.945; 0.927; 0.897) and form a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.929, which was not higher after one item was deleted. The mean found in the sample for commercial liking (M = 4.703, SD = 1.368) shows that the respondents liked the advertisements presented to them in the survey.

3.3.7 Willingness to Share

The willingness to share an advertisement was measured in the same way as Hodgins (2016). This measurement consists of three items: "I would share this video publicly on my most used social media channels," "I would share this video directly to a friend or friends using a messaging service," and "I would share this video directly to a friend or friends using email." For this scale, no separate items were used for the control condition. Factor analysis showed that all items used for this scale have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.838; 0.928; 0.877) and form a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.858, which was not higher if one of the items was deleted. The mean found in the sample for the willingness to share (M = 1.717, SD = 1.025) shows that the respondents did not have an interest in sharing a Knorr commercial online.

Chapter 4 Results

To continue this study, the scales presented in the Methods chapter were used to test the hypotheses proposed in the Theory chapter, of which the results will be presented in this chapter. To test hypotheses H1 up to H5 and H11, the commercial type was manipulated. This means that to test these hypotheses, a comparison was made between consumer responses to traditional and viral commercials. To test hypotheses H7a up to H10b, H12a and H12b, the target consumer generation was the test variable. This means that to test these hypotheses, a comparison was made between consumer behavior of generation X and generation Y. To test H13, the impact of commercial liking on the willingness to share a commercial was measured. To test hypotheses H14, H15a and H15b, an interaction-effect of the commercial type and target consumer generation was taken to measure the willingness to share. Thus, to test these, a comparison was made between consumer responses to traditional and viral commercials as well as consumer behavior of generation X and generation Y.

The analysis was done in SPSS using a variety of different tests, including a one-way between-subjects analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) to test hypotheses H1 up to H5, H11 and H14. To test hypotheses H6a up to H10b, H12a, H12b, H15a and H15b, a two-way between-subjects analysis of variance (two-way ANOVA) was used. Additionally, to test hypothesis H13, a simple linear regression test was used. Generally, an ANOVA is conducted to compare the differences in means between multiple groups, while regression analysis is done to examine whether one variable has a direct influence on the outcomes of another. This chapter will present the outcomes of these tests and states whether, based on these tests, the proposed hypotheses are accepted or rejected. For H1 up to H13, all respondents (N = 185) were divided into viral commercial (N = 61), traditional commercial (N = 62) and control (N = 62) conditions. For H6a up to H10b, H12a and H12b, the respondents were additionally divided into generation Y (N = 94) and generation X (N = 91) conditions. For H14, H15a and H15b, however, only the responses of respondents who make use of social media were recorded (N = 158), divided into viral commercial (N = 50), traditional commercial (N = 53) and control (N = 55) conditions.

There are five assumptions underlying ANOVA tests that have to be met when performing analysis. The first assumption is the *level of measurement*: The dependent variable should always be at ratio or interval level (Pallant, 2010). In this study, all dependent variables used were based on a continuous 7-points Likert scale, which means the assumption was met.

The second assumption is *random sampling*: A random sample of the population should be used to collect the data for an ANOVA test (Ibid.). In this study, the data was collected with a random snowball sampling method, which in essence is never random. However, Pallant (2010) states that research is hardly ever truly random and that instead this assumption can be controlled for by using at least 30 respondents per condition. Therefore, this assumption is still considered to be met, since all conditions in this study contained over 30 respondents. The third assumption is *independence of observations*, which means that none of the measurements or observations can be influenced by other measurements or observations. Since all respondents filled out the survey online and individually, this assumption was met in this study.

A fourth assumption that is important is that of *normal distribution*. For parametric tests such as an ANOVA, it is assumed that the analysed data is normally distributed in the shape of a bell curve. However, many techniques are quite tolerant to violation of this assumption as long as the sample size is larger than 30 (Ibid.). In this study, all dependent variables were tested for normal distribution and have shown to not be normally distributed. Yet, fortunately, the sample size in each condition is 30 or higher. Additionally, to control for the violation of this assumption, non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed to check the outcomes of the one-way ANOVA tests. Each Kruskal-Wallis test has provided the same outcome as was found in the parametric ANOVA tests, which means that the ANOVA tests have shown trustworthy outcomes. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov values for normal distribution, as well as the Kruskal-Wallis outcomes, are reported in endnotes for each test, which are presented after the References chapter. Additionally, in Appendix F, the histograms and Q-Q plots can be found for each dependent variable.

The fifth and final assumption is that of *homogeneity of variance*. For parametric tests such as an ANOVA, it is assumed that the analysed samples are obtained from populations of equal variances. To test whether this is the case, ANOVA tests always present Levene's statistic that has the null hypothesis that the samples in the test are obtained from populations of equal variances. Thus, if the Levene's statistic shows to be significant ($p < 0.050$), the assumption of homogeneity of variance is violated (Ibid). For one-way ANOVA tests, this problem can be solved by using the Robust tests table instead of the ANOVA table for interpreting outcomes. For post hoc tests, it is appropriate to analyze the Games-Howell test instead of the Bonferroni test to interpret the outcomes. For two-way ANOVA tests, there is no alternative table that can

be used in the case of unequal variances. However, the significance level of Levene's statistic can be lowered to $p < 0.010$ to help ensure that this assumption is not violated (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Yet, in this study, the assumption was still violated twice after using this rule (i.e., when testing H6a and H6b as well as when testing H15a and H15b). In these cases, instead of doing a two-way ANOVA, a one-way ANOVA was performed where six new groups were created that represented the groups used in the original two-way ANOVA: A traditional, viral, and control group for generation Y as well as generation X separately. In this chapter, the consequences of the first significant and first non-significant Levene's test outcome are each mentioned for extra clarification. Also, regardless of the significance of the ANOVA tests, post hoc tests were performed after each test to confirm the outcome found in the analysis.

4.1 Commercials and Brand Awareness

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare brand awareness in the viral, traditional, and control conditions. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 4.384 at $p = 0.014$. This means that Levene's statistic was significant, the null hypothesis was rejected, and samples in this analysis were not obtained from populations of equal variances. Thus, the values from the Robust Tests of Equality of Means were used for the analysis. The Robust Welch test showed no significant difference between brand awareness in the viral, traditional, and control conditions: *Welch F* (2, 115.607) = 1.214, $p = 0.301$.[i]

Hereafter, a post hoc Games-Howell test confirmed the outcome found in the Robust test and showed that brand awareness did not differ between the viral commercial ($M = 5.760$, $SD = 1.240$) and traditional commercial ($M = 5.941$, $SD = 0.786$) conditions: $p = 0.599$. Additionally, this test showed that brand awareness did not differ between the viral commercial ($M = 5.760$, $SD = 1.240$) and control ($M = 6.038$, $SD = 0.678$) conditions: $p = 0.277$. Thirdly, this test showed that brand awareness did not differ between the traditional commercial ($M = 5.941$, $SD = 0.786$) and control ($M = 6.038$, $SD = 0.678$) conditions: $p = 0.744$.

Thus, no differences were found between the control condition on the one hand and the experimental conditions on the other. Therefore, H1 (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases brand awareness more than watching a traditional commercial) has to be rejected.

4.2 Commercials and Brand Knowledge

To compare brand knowledge in the viral commercial, traditional, and control conditions, another one-way ANOVA was conducted. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 1.401 at $p = 0.249$. This means that Levene's statistic was not significant, the null hypothesis was accepted, and samples in this analysis were obtained from populations of equal variances. Thus, the values from the ANOVA test were used for the analysis. The ANOVA test showed a significant difference between brand knowledge in the viral, traditional, and control conditions: $F\ (2, 182) = 96.813$, $p < 0.001$.[ii]

Hereafter, a post hoc Bonferroni test confirmed the outcome found in the ANOVA test and showed that brand knowledge significantly differed between the a viral commercial ($M = 2.491$, $SD = 1.212$) and traditional commercial ($M = 5.065$, $SD = 1.362$) conditions: $p < 0.001$. Also, this test showed that brand knowledge significantly differed between the viral commercial ($M = 2.491$, $SD = 1.212$) and control ($M = 5.226$, $SD = 1.070$) conditions: $p < 0.001$. Finally, this test showed that brand knowledge did not differ between the traditional commercial ($M = 5.065$, $SD = 1.362$) and control ($M = 5.226$, $SD = 1.070$) conditions: $p = 1.000$.

It can be observed that the level of brand knowledge is 2.735 point lower in the viral condition than in the control condition. Additionally, the level of brand knowledge is 0.161 point lower in the traditional condition than in the control condition. Thus, it can be concluded that watching a viral commercial decreased the level of brand knowledge more than watching a traditional commercial did. Secondly, it can be concluded that watching a viral commercial decreased the level of brand knowledge, compared to the control condition (not watching a commercial). Thirdly, it can be concluded that watching a traditional commercial did not affect brand knowledge differently than the control condition (not watching a commercial). Therefore, H2 (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases brand knowledge more than watching a traditional commercial) has to be rejected.

4.3 Commercials and Brand Liking

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare brand liking in the viral, traditional, and control conditions. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 1.320 at $p = 0.270$. The ANOVA test showed no significant difference between brand liking in the viral, traditional, and control conditions: $F\ (2, 182) = 0.153$, $p = 0.858$.[iii] Hereafter, a post hoc

Bonferroni test confirmed the outcome found in the ANOVA test and showed that brand liking did not differ between the viral commercial (M = 4.631, SD = 1.164) and traditional commercial (M = 4.540, SD = 1.335) conditions: p = 1.000. In addition to that, this test showed that brand liking did not differ between the viral commercial (M = 4.631, SD = 1.164) and control (M = 4.516, SD = 1.133) conditions: p = 1.000. Lastly, this test showed that brand liking did not differ between the traditional commercial (M = 4.516, SD = 1.133) and control (M = 5.350, SD = 0.914) conditions: p = 1.000.

Thus, no differences were found between the control condition on the one hand and the experimental conditions on the other. Therefore, H3 (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases brand liking more than watching a traditional commercial) has to be rejected.

4.4 Commercials and Brand Preference

Another one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare brand preference in the viral, traditional, and control conditions. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 1.817 at p = 0.165. The ANOVA test showed no significant difference between brand preference in the viral, traditional, and control conditions: F (2, 182) = 0.011, p = 0.989.[iv] Hereafter, a post hoc Bonferroni test confirmed the outcome found in the ANOVA test and showed that brand preference did not differ between the viral commercial (M = 3.570, SD = 1.168) and traditional commercial (M = 3.548, SD = 1.397) conditions: p = 1.000. Secondly, this test showed that brand preference did not differ between the viral commercial (M = 3.570, SD = 1.168) and control (M = 3.536, SD = 1.139) conditions: p = 1.000. Thirdly, this test showed that brand preference did not differ between the traditional commercial (M = 3.548, SD = 1.397) and control (M = 3.536, SD = 1.139) conditions: p = 1.000.

Thus, no differences were found between the control condition on the one hand and the experimental conditions on the other. Therefore, H4 (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases brand preference more than watching a traditional commercial) has to be rejected.

4.5 Commercials and Brand Conviction

To compare brand conviction in the viral, traditional, and control conditions, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 1.817 at p = 0.165. The ANOVA test showed no significant difference between brand conviction

in the viral, traditional, and control conditions: F (2, 182) = 0.011, p = 0.977.[v] Hereafter, a post hoc Bonferroni test confirmed the outcome found in the ANOVA test and showed that brand conviction did not differ between the viral commercial (M = 3.570, SD = 1.168) and traditional commercial (M = 3.548, SD = 1.397) conditions: p = 1.000. Additionally, this test showed that brand conviction did not differ between the viral commercial (M = 3.570, SD = 1.168) and control (M = 3.536, SD = 1.139) conditions: p = 1.000. Finally, this test showed that brand conviction did not differ between the traditional commercial (M = 3.548, SD = 1.397) and control (M = 3.536, SD = 1.139) conditions: p = 1.000.

Thus, no differences were found between the control condition on the one hand and the experimental conditions on the other. Therefore, H5 (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases brand conviction more than watching a traditional commercial) has to be rejected.

4.6 Generations and Brand Awareness

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to compare brand awareness in the viral, traditional, and control conditions, as well as in generation X and generation Y conditions. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 3.235 at p = 0.008. Therefore, as explained previously, six groups were created in which both generations were matched with the viral commercial, traditional commercial a control conditions. Afterwards, these groups were compared using a one-way ANOVA to recreate the comparison normally made in a two-way between-subjects analysis of variance.

This analysis was conducted to compare brand awareness in the viral, traditional, and control conditions, as well as in the generation Y and generation X conditions. As established previously, the test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 3.235 at p = 0.008. The Robust Welch test showed a marginally ($p < 0.100$) significant difference between brand awareness for the viral, traditional and control conditions: *Welch* F (2, 82.931) = 2.055, p = 0.079.[vi]

Hereafter, a post hoc Games-Howell test contradicted the outcome found in the Robust test and showed that the level of brand awareness did not differ between generation Y's viral commercial (M = 6.094, SD = 0.877) condition and any of the other groups. Second, this test showed that the level of brand awareness did not differ between generation Y's traditional commercial (M =5.839, SD = 1.513) condition and any of the other groups. Third, this test

showed that the level of brand awareness did not differ between generation Y's control (M = 6.194, SD = 0.643) condition and any of the other groups. Fourth, this test showed that the level of brand awareness did not differ between generation X's viral commercial (M = 5.778, SD = 0.651) condition and any of the other groups. Fifth, this test showed that the level of brand awareness did not differ between generation X's traditional commercial (M =5.678, SD = 0.895) condition and any of the other groups. Sixth, this test showed that the level of brand awareness did not differ between the control (M = 5.882, SD = 0.934) condition and any of the other groups. The p-levels for these post hoc tests are not provided because this is a lengthy procedure that does not provide extensive additional information.

Since no significant differences were found, it is unnecessary to explore the relationship between the conditions further. The results show that watching a viral commercial does not affect brand awareness differently for generation X than for generation Y. Consequently, H6a (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases brand awareness more for generation X than for generation Y) has to be rejected.

Additionally, the results show that watching a traditional commercial does not affect brand awareness differently for generation X than for generation Y. Therefore, H6b (i.e., watching a traditional commercial increases brand awareness more for generation Y than for generation X) has to be rejected too.

4.7 Generations and Brand Knowledge

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to compare brand knowledge in the viral, traditional, and control conditions, as well as in generation X and generation Y conditions. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 1.343 at p = 0.248. Thus, the values from the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects were used to continue this analysis.

The test showed no statistically significant main effect for generations: F (2,179) = 0.376, p = 0.541. This means that there was no significant difference in brand knowledge levels for generation Y and generation X. Additionally, a statistically significant main effect was found for commercials: F (2,179) = 99.618, p < 0.001. The effect size for this effect was η^2 = 0.527, which, using Cohen's (1988) criterion, can be classified as very large. This means that there was a significant difference between brand knowledge in the viral, traditional and control conditions. Proof for this main effect was also found when testing for H2. Lastly, the interaction effect

between commercials and generations on brand knowledge was statistically significant: F (2,179) = 4.628, p = 0.011. The effect size for this effect was η^2 = 0.049, which, using Cohen's (1988) criterion, can be classified as small. This means that there was a significant difference between brand knowledge levels when comparing the commercials and the generations together, which can also be observed in Figure 4.1. This figure shows that the difference between the brand knowledge levels of generation Y and generation X was largest when comparing the viral condition values, while the brand knowledge levels for the two generations were far closer together when comparing the traditional and control conditions. Additionally, it can be observed that the brand knowledge levels are quite stable for the traditional and control conditions, while a large decline can be observed for the brand knowledge levels after watching a viral commercial.

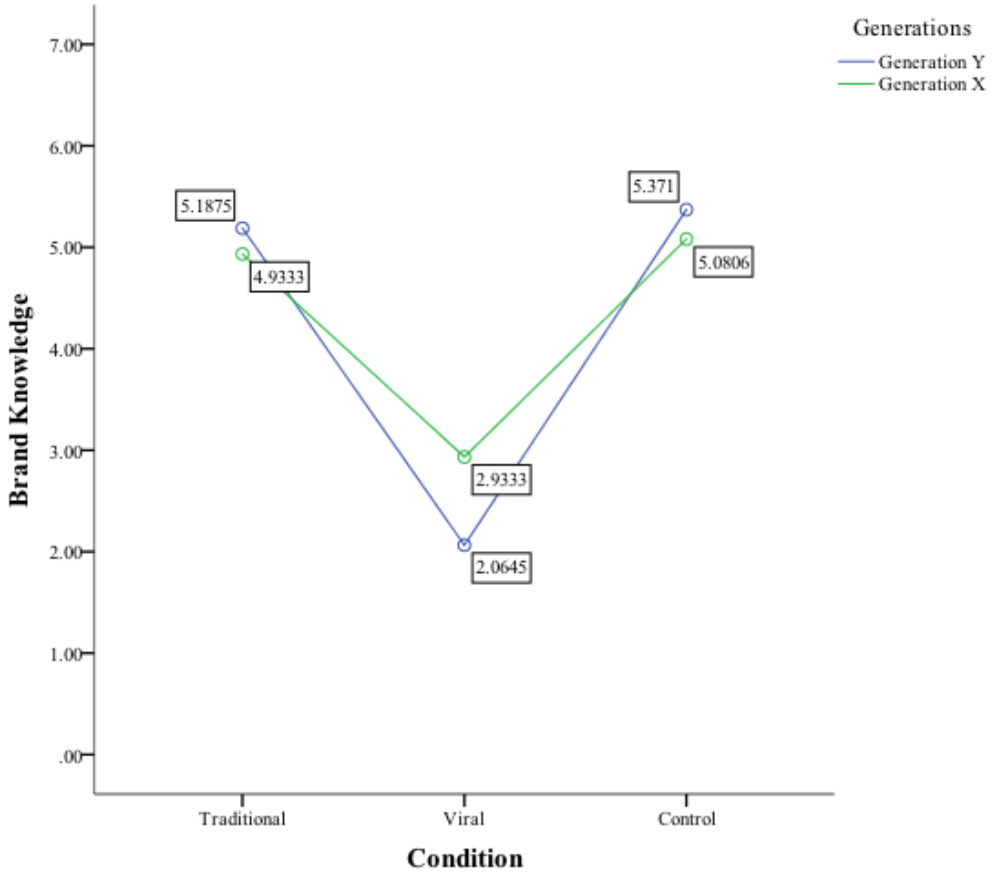

Figure 4.1. Means for brand knowledge specified by commercial and generation type.

Since a significant interaction effect was found, it is interesting to explore the relationship between the conditions further, to study which specific differences were found to be significant. To do so, a follow-up analysis of simple effects was done by splitting the file by generation and conducting a one-way between-subjects analysis of variance. This was done to look at brand knowledge for generation X and generation Y separately, using the viral, traditional and control conditions. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 0.388 at p = 0.680 for generation Y. The ANOVA test showed a significant difference between brand knowledge in the viral, traditional, and control conditions: F (2, 91) = 93.428, $p < 0.001$.[vii]

Hereafter, a post hoc Bonferroni test confirmed the outcome found in the ANOVA test and showed that for generation Y, brand knowledge significantly differed between the viral commercial (M = 2.065, SD = 1.124) and traditional commercial (M = 5.186, SD = 1.091) conditions: $p < 0.001$. Additionally, this test showed that for generation Y, brand knowledge differed significantly between the viral commercial (M = 2.065, SD = 1.124) and control (M = 5.371, SD = 1.000) conditions: $p < 0.001$. Thirdly, this test showed that for generation Y, brand knowledge did not differ between the traditional commercial (M = 5.186, SD = 1.091) and control (M = 5.371, SD = 1.000) conditions: p = 1.000.

For generation X, the test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 1.356 at p = 0.263. The ANOVA test showed a significant difference between brand knowledge in the viral, traditional, and control conditions: F (2, 88) = 25.028, $p < 0.001$.[viii] Hereafter, a post hoc Games-Howell test confirmed the outcome found in the Robust test and showed that for generation X, brand knowledge significantly differed between the viral commercial (M = 2.933, SD = 1.158) and traditional commercial (M = 4.933, SD = 1.612) conditions: $p < 0.001$. Additionally, this test showed that for generation X, brand knowledge significantly differed between the viral commercial (M = 2.933, SD = 1.158) and control (M = 5.081, SD = 1.133) conditions: $p < 0.001$. Thirdly, this test showed that for generation X, brand knowledge did not differ between the traditional commercial (M = 4.933, SD = 1.612) and control (M = 5.081, SD = 1.133) conditions: p = 1.000.

It can be observed that for generation Y, brand knowledge is 3.306 point lower in the viral condition than in the control condition. For generation X, brand knowledge is 2.148 point lower in the viral condition than in the control condition. This means that watching a viral commercial decreases brand knowledge less for generation X than for generation Y. Therefore,

H7a (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases brand knowledge more for generation X than for generation Y) has to be rejected.

It can also be observed that for generation Y, brand knowledge is 0.183 point lower in the traditional condition than in the control condition. For generation X, brand knowledge is 0.148 point lower in the traditional condition than in the control condition. This means that watching a viral commercial decreases brand knowledge less for generation Y than for generation X. Consequently, H7b (i.e., watching a traditional commercial increases brand knowledge more for generation Y than for generation X) has to be rejected too.

4.8 Generations and Brand Liking

To compare brand liking in the viral, traditional, and control conditions, as well as in generation Y and generation X conditions, a two-way ANOVA was conducted. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 1.550 at $p = 0.177$. The test showed no statistically significant main effect for generations: F (2,179) = 0.217, $p = 0.642$. This means that there was no significant difference in brand liking for generation Y and generation X. Also, no statistically significant main effect was found for commercials: F (2,179) = 0.169, $p = 0.845$. This means that there was no significant difference between brand liking in the viral, traditional and control conditions. Proof for this main effect was also found when testing H3. Lastly, the interaction effect between commercials and generations on brand liking was not statistically significant: F (2,179) = 2.074, $p = 0.129$. This means that there was no significant difference between brand liking levels when comparing the commercials and the generations together.

Since no significant interaction effect was found, it is unnecessary to explore the relationship between the different conditions further. The results show that watching a viral commercial does not affect brand liking differently for generation X than for generation Y. Consequently, H8a (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases brand liking more for generation X than for generation Y) has to be rejected.

Additionally, the results show that watching a traditional commercial does not affect brand liking differently for generation X than for generation Y. Therefore, H8b (i.e., watching a traditional commercial increases brand liking more for generation Y than for generation X) has to be rejected too.

4.9 Generations and Brand Preference

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to compare brand preference in the viral, traditional, and control conditions, as well as in generation Y and generation X conditions. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 1.228 at $p = 0.298$. The test showed no statistically significant main effect for generations: F (2,179) = 0.116, $p = 0.733$. This means that there was no significant difference in brand preference levels for generation Y and generation X. Furthermore, no statistically significant main effect was found for commercials: F (2,179) = 0.012, $p = 0.988$. This means that there was no significant difference between brand preference in the viral, traditional and control conditions. Proof for this main effect was also found when testing H4. Lastly, the interaction effect between commercials and generations on brand preference was not statistically significant: F (2,179) = 0.074, $p = 0.929$. This means that there was no significant difference between brand preference levels when comparing the different commercials and the different generations together.

It is unnecessary to explore the relationship between the different conditions further because no significant interaction effect was found. The results show that watching a viral commercial does not affect brand preference differently for generation X than for generation Y. Consequently, H9a (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases brand preference more for generation X than for generation Y) has to be rejected.

Moreover, the results show that watching a traditional commercial does not affect brand preference differently for generation X than for generation Y. Therefore, H9b (i.e., watching a traditional commercial increases brand preference more for generation Y than for generation X) has to be rejected too.

4.10 Generations and Brand Conviction

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to compare brand conviction in the viral, traditional, and control conditions, as well as in generation Y and generation X conditions. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 2.080 at $p = 0.070$. The test showed a statistically significant main effect for generations: F (2,179) = 5.179, $p = 0.024$. The effect size for this effect was $\eta^2 = 0.028$, which, using Cohen's (1988) criterion, can be classified as small. This means that there was a significant difference in brand conviction levels for generation Y and generation X. In addition to that, no statistically significant main effect was found for

commercials: F (2,179) = 0.012, p = 0.988. This means that there was no significant difference between brand conviction in the viral, traditional and control conditions. Proof for this main effect was also found when testing H5. Also, the interaction effect between commercials and generations on brand conviction was not statistically significant: F (2,179) = 1.074, p = 0.344. This means that there was no significant difference between brand conviction levels when comparing the commercials and the generations together.

Since no significant interaction effect was found, it is unnecessary to explore the relationship between the different conditions further. The results show that watching a viral commercial does not affect brand conviction differently for generation X than for generation Y. Consequently, H10a (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases brand conviction more for generation X than for generation Y) has to be rejected.

Furthermore, the results show that watching a traditional commercial does not affect brand conviction differently for generation X than for generation Y. Therefore, H10b (i.e., watching a traditional commercial increases brand conviction more for generation Y than for generation X) has to be rejected too.

4.11 Commercials and Commercial Liking

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare commercial liking in the viral commercial, traditional, and control conditions. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 1.202 at p = 0.303. The ANOVA test showed a significant difference between commercial liking in viral, traditional, and control conditions: F (2, 182) = 8.357, $p <$ 0.001.[ix] Hereafter, a post hoc Bonferroni test confirmed the outcome found in the ANOVA test and showed that commercial liking significantly differed between the viral commercial (M = 5.267, SD = 1.188) and traditional commercial (M = 4.403, SD = 1.485) conditions: $p < 0.001$. Secondly, this test showed that commercial liking significantly differed between the viral commercial (M = 5.267, SD = 1.188) and control (M = 4.448, SD = 1.256) conditions: p = 0.002. Thirdly, it showed that commercial liking did not differ between the traditional commercial (M = 4.403, SD = 1.485) and control (M = 4.448, SD = 1.256) conditions: p = 1.000.

It can be observed that the level of commercial liking is 0.819 point higher in the viral condition than in the control condition. Additionally, the level of commercial liking is 0.045 point lower in the traditional condition than in the control condition. Thus, it can be concluded

that watching a viral commercial increased commercial liking more than watching a traditional commercial did. Secondly, it can be concluded that watching a viral commercial increased commercial liking, compared to the control condition (not watching a commercial). Third, it can be concluded that watching a traditional commercial did not affect commercial liking differently than the control condition (not watching a commercial). Consequently, H11 (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases commercial liking more than watching a traditional commercial) is accepted.

4.12 Generations and Commercial Liking

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to compare commercial liking in the viral, traditional, and control conditions, as well as in generation Y and generation X conditions. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 0.926 at $p = 0.465$. The test showed no statistically significant main effect for generations: F (2,179) = 1.370, $p = 0.243$. This means that there was no significant difference in commercial liking levels for generation Y and generation X. In addition to that, a statistically significant main effect was found for commercials: F (2,179) = 8.381, $p < 0.001$. The effect size for this effect was $\eta^2 = 0.086$, which, using Cohen's (1988) criterion, can be classified as small. This means that there was a significant difference between commercial liking in the viral, traditional and control conditions. Proof for this main effect was also found earlier, when testing H11. Finally, the interaction effect between commercials and generations on commercial liking was not statistically significant: F (2,179) = 0.738, $p = 0.479$. This means that there was no significant difference in commercial liking levels when comparing the commercials and the generations together.

Since no significant interaction effect was found, it is unnecessary to explore the relationship between the different conditions further. The results show that watching a viral commercial does not affect commercial liking differently for generation X than for generation Y. Consequently, H12a (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases commercial liking more for generation X than for generation Y) has to be rejected.

Furthermore, the results show that watching a traditional commercial does not affect commercial liking differently generation X than for generation Y. Therefore, H12b (i.e., watching a traditional commercial increases commercial liking more for generation Y than for generation X) has to be rejected too.

4.13 Commercial Liking and the Willingness to Share

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to study the relationship between the liking of a commercial and the willingness to share the commercial online. The regression was calculated to predict the willingness to share a commercial based on commercial liking. The ANOVA table showed a significant regression equation: F (1,156) = 33.108, $p < 0.001$, with an R^2 of 0.175. This means that 17.5% of the variance of the willingness to share a commercial can be explained by the level of commercial liking of a consumer. Commercial liking significantly predicts the willingness to share a commercial ($\beta = 0.418$, $p < 0.001$). According to Cohen's (1988) criterion, this effect size can be classified as moderately strong. It can be observed that for every step increase in commercial liking on the 7-points Likert scale, the willingness to share will increase with 0.308. The difference between the willingness to share levels of the highest and lowest recorded respondent is 1.848.

Thus, it can be concluded that commercial liking influences the willingness to share a commercial online in a positive manner. Therefore, H13 (i.e., the level of commercial liking of a consumer has a positive influence on their willingness to share the commercial online) is accepted. The results of this analysis can also be observed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the Willingness to Share

Variable	B	SE (B)	β	t	Sig. (p)
Commercial Liking	0.308	0.053	0.418	5.754	0.000

4.14 Commercials and the Willingness to Share

To compare the willingness to share a commercial online in the viral, traditional, and control conditions, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 6.048 at $p = 0.003$. The Robust Welch test showed a significant difference between the willingness to share in the viral, traditional, and control conditions: *Welch* F (2, 95.537) = 101.276, $p = 0.025$.[x] Hereafter, a post hoc Games-Howell test confirmed the outcome found in the Robust test and showed that that the willingness to share significantly differed between the viral commercial ($M = 2.040$, $SD = 1.319$) and traditional commercial ($M =$

1.472, *SD* = 0.674) conditions: $p = 0.022$. In addition to that, this test showed that the willingness to share did not differ between the viral commercial (*M* = 2.040, *SD* = 1.319) and control (*M* = 1.661, *SD* = 0.937) conditions: $p = 0.217$. Thirdly, this test showed that the willingness to share did not differ between the traditional commercial (*M* = 1.472, *SD* = 0.674) and control (*M* = 1.661, *SD* = 0.937) conditions: $p = 0.453$.

Thus, it can be concluded that watching a viral commercial significantly increased willingness to share it online more than watching a traditional commercial did. Therefore, H14 (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases the willingness to share it online more than watching a traditional commercial) is accepted.

4.15 Generations and the Willingness to Share

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the willingness to share a commercial online in the viral, traditional, and control conditions, as well as in the generation X and generation Y conditions. The test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 3.393 at $p = 0.006$. Therefore, as explained previously, six groups were created in which both generations were matched with the viral commercial, traditional commercial a control conditions. Afterwards, these groups were compared using a one-way ANOVA, to recreate the comparison normally made in a two-way ANOVA.

This analysis was conducted to compare the willingness to share in viral, traditional, and control conditions, as well as in generation Y and generation X conditions. As established previously, the test of homogeneity of variances showed a Levene's statistic of 3.393 at $p = 0.006$. The Robust Welch test showed a marginally ($p < 0.100$) significant difference between the willingness to share for the viral, traditional and control conditions: *Welch F* (2, 66.144) = 2.013, $p = 0.088$.[xi]

Hereafter, a post hoc Games-Howell test contradicted the outcome found in the Robust test and showed that the willingness to share did not differ between generation Y's viral commercial (*M* = 1.478, *SD* = 0.635) condition and any of the other groups. Second, this test showed that the willingness to share did not differ between generation Y's traditional commercial (*M* =2.118, *SD* = 1.465) condition and any of the other groups. Third, this test showed that the willingness to share did not differ between generation Y's control (*M* =1.462, *SD* = 0.792) condition and any of the other groups. Fourth, this test showed that the willingness

to share did not differ between generation X's viral commercial (M = 1.464, SD = 0.737) condition and any of the other groups. Fifth, this test showed that the willingness to share did not differ between generation X's traditional commercial (M =1.912, SD = 1.065) condition and any of the other groups. Sixth, this test showed that the willingness to share did not differ between generation X's control (M = 1.717, SD = 1.025) condition and any of the other groups. The p-levels for the post hoc tests are not provided because this is a lengthy procedure that does not provide extensive additional information.

Since no significant differences were found, it is unnecessary to explore the relationship between the conditions further. The results show that watching a viral commercial does not affect the willingness to share differently for generation X than for generation Y. Consequently, H15a (i.e., watching a viral commercial increases the willingness to share it online more for generation X than for generation Y) has to be rejected.

Moreover, the results show that watching a traditional commercial does not affect the willingness to share differently for generation X than for generation Y. Therefore, H15b (i.e., watching a traditional commercial increases the willingness to share it online more for generation Y than for generation X) has to be rejected.

In sum, hypotheses 1 up to 10b, 12a, 12b, 15a and 15b are rejected, while hypotheses 11, 13 and 14 are accepted. In Figure 4.2, an overview of all hypotheses can be observed, in which the red blocks mark rejected hypotheses and the green blocks mark accepted hypotheses.

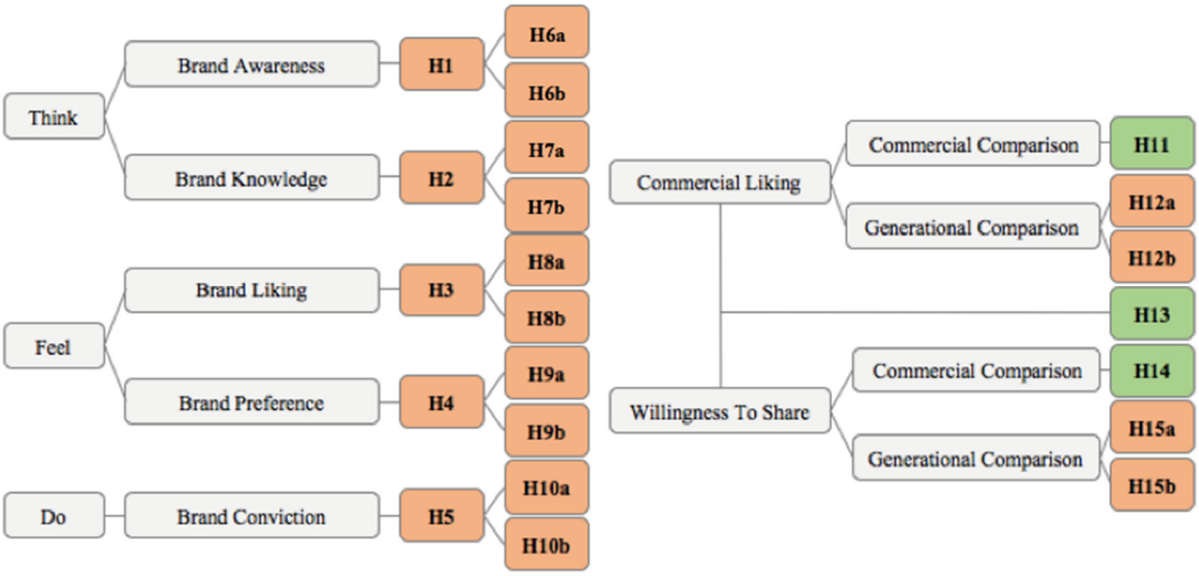

Figure 4.2. Overview of all accepted and rejected hypotheses.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

The dynamics of communication between brands and their customers have changed drastically with the rise of the Internet. Consumers used to accept commercials on television as a mandatory interruption of what they were watching (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1994). On the Internet, however, many different types of advertising exist, and most of them can be avoided if the viewer wants to. Ad-blockers, freemium models and "skip this video" buttons are just a few examples of ways in which people can avoid watching a commercial online (Southgate, Westoby, & Page, 2010; Scott, 2016). Therefore, in order to keep consumers from avoiding commercials, advertisers had to come up with ways to entertain the viewer with a commercial instead of interrupting them, so that they would want to watch the commercial. This is how viral commercials emerged: Commercials that are meant as an online destination for the viewer, something they can enjoy and share online with peers (Nath, 2015).

Considering this, this quantitative study sought to explore the effectiveness of viral commercials as well as traditional commercials, and to compare the two commercial types in terms of effect on brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand liking, brand preference, and brand conviction, as well as respondents' liking and the willingness to share the two commercial types. Also, the behavior of two generations was compared within this study. Since generation X grew up with television as the main media channel, and generation Y has lived with the Internet all their lives, the behavioral differences of these generations were interesting to compare in the scope of this study (Bolton et al., 2013; Williams, Coupland, Folwell, & Sparks, 1997). Accordingly, this study has attempted to answer the following research question: *How does a viral commercial influence brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand liking, brand preference, brand conviction, commercial liking and the willingness to share differently than a traditional commercial does for consumers from generation X and generation Y in the Netherlands?*

The first part of this study compared the effect of a viral and traditional commercial on brand awareness, brand knowledge, brand liking, brand preference, and brand conviction. No effect but one was found: Watching a commercial decreases brand knowledge, and viral commercials do more so than traditional commercials. The second part of this study examined whether these effects differed between consumers of generation X and generation Y. Again, for both commercial types, no differences were found between brand awareness, brand liking, brand preference and brand conviction levels. However, brand knowledge was found to decrease

stronger for generation Y than for generation X after watching a viral commercial. Yet, no differences were found when comparing brand knowledge levels of the two generations for the traditional commercial. The third part of this study focused on commercial liking and sharing. The results show that the levels of commercial liking and the willingness to share a commercial are higher for viral commercials than for traditional commercials, and that the the level of commercial liking of a consumer has a positive influence on their willingness to share the commercial online. Yet, these effects were not found to differ when comparing consumer responses of generation X and generation Y.

In this chapter, the results that led to this conclusion and their theoretical implications are examined in more detail. Afterwards, this chapter provides limitations, recommendations for future research and the practical implications for advertisers, consumers and academics.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The results presented in the Results chapter have implications for the theory they were founded on. If a result contradicts the theory that was used to create the hypothesis, an alternative explanation is necessary to clarify what could have caused the results found. Since most of the hypotheses proposed in this study were rejected, it is important that this is done systematically and thoroughly. Therefore, the hypotheses on the effects of advertising comparing viral and traditional commercials are discussed first. Afterwards, the hypotheses focussing on generational differences in consumer responses are discussed. Finally, the hypotheses on the effects of commercial liking and the willingness to share a commercial are discussed.

5.1.1 Traditional versus Viral Commercials

The first five hypotheses in this study predicted that viral commercials would give higher levels of brand awareness (H1), brand knowledge (H2), brand liking (H3), brand preference (H4), and brand conviction (H5) than traditional commercials. The analyses showed no support for any of these hypotheses, except for H2, of which the results were in the opposed direction of the hypothesis. No differences were found between the effects of viral commercials and traditional commercials for brand awareness, brand liking, brand preference and brand conviction.

A possible explanation for these results could be that the brand used, Knorr, is an established and well-known brand in the Netherlands. It has a long history and has gained an image of selling products for family households, and the kind of soups and flavour enhancers grandma uses (Knorr, n.d.). Thus, it could be argued that one commercial does not change the consumer's view a lot, since Knorr already has a strong brand association. Brand associations are the types of assets and liabilities a brand has that are linked to the brand in the consumer's memory (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). The stronger and more developed such brand associations already are before a consumer views an advertisement, the less succesful a singular advertisement is in influencing the image that a consumer has of the brand (Ibid.).

Additionally, as mentioned previously, the results for H2 were found to be significant. It was found that brand knowledge decreased after watching a commercial, and more so after watching a viral commercial than after watching a traditional commercial. The finding that both commercials decreased in brand knowledge could have been found because the commercials possibly did not match the ideas the respondents had of Knorr previous to seeing the commercial. Sjödin and Törn (2006) show that the incongruence of new brand information with established brand associations can cause confusion with the consumer, and consequently lower the level of brand knowledge. Thus, if a Knorr commercial shows the consumer a different image than they think they know of Knorr, their brand knowledge will be lower than when respondents are asked about their brand knowledge of Knorr without seeing a commercial at all.

In addition to that, a possible explanation for the brand knowledge levels being even lower in the viral commercial condition could be that viral commercials are often not perceived as advertising but as entertainment by the viewer. Huang, Su, Zhou, and Liu (2013) show that people often separate the content and the product shown in viral commercials, which causes these commercials to fail as a purchasing persuaders. Others argue that viral commercials' only function is to grab the public's attention, and that they are not useful for leading the consumer all the way through the consumer response journey to purchase (Teixeira, 2014). Thus, when consumers view a traditional commercial their attention goes to the brand cues provided in the commercial, while when viewing a viral commercial, the consumer's mind is not focused on registering brand information, because it is perceived as entertainment.

5.1.2 Generational Differences

The next set of hypotheses proposed in this study predicted that when watching a viral commercial, generation Y would have higher levels of brand awareness (H6a), brand knowledge (H7a), brand liking (H8a), brand preference (H9a), and brand conviction (H10a) than generation X. It was also predicted that when watching a traditional commercial, generation X would have higher levels of brand awareness (H6b), brand knowledge (H7b), brand liking (H8b), brand preference (H9b), and brand conviction (H10b) than generation Y. The analyses did not show significant results for any of these hypotheses, except for H7a, of which the results were in the opposed direction of the hypothesis. No differences were found between generation X and generation Y when comparing them in terms of brand awareness, brand liking, brand preference and brand conviction for viral commercials as well as traditional commercials.

A possible explanation for this could be that generation X is no longer less active online than generation Y (Bromwich, 2017). Many studies show that members of generation X are highly digital and that they are eminently reachable online. Especially in terms of online TV watching and online shopping, generation X members are very active (eMarketer, 2017; KPMG, 2017), which means that they are frequently subjects to viral commercials. The misconception that generation X is a lot less online than their younger peers causes the idea that they are less open to viral commercials, but the results show that these two generations have very similar responses towards viral commercials. In line with this, the idea that generation Y spends all their time online and never uses the television anymore should also be nuanced. Some argue that watching television is not generation-related but age-related, and that generation Y members also go back to watching more television once they get older (Huff, 2016). In sum, it can be concluded that generation Y members are not done with television, and that it is a misconception to believe that they would be less open to television commercials than generation X members.

Additionally, as mentioned previously, the results for H7a were found to be significant. It was found that brand knowledge decreased more for generation Y than for generation X after watching the viral commercial. This could possibly be explained by the fact that, as mentioned previously, Knorr is a very established brand in the Netherlands (Knorr, n.d.). Because of this, the viral commercial could have been confusing for the consumer because it did not match the image they knew from Knorr: The viral commercial features young, hip people going on dates and having fun, while the respondents previously viewed Knorr as an old-fashioned and family-

targeted brand. The expectation is that the image set in the commercial is an image of an audience that generation Y members can relate to and identify with well (Freifeld, 2012), because they are also young and more concerned with dating than generation X members, who are more commonly settled down and have started a family. Therefore, it could be argued that the confusion was especially strong for generation Y members, since they could now suddenly relate to Knorr's image a lot better. Previous research shows that a match of the consumers' brand associations and the associations intended by the brand is very important to avoid confusion (Koll & Wallpach, 2014). If a brand shows the consumer a completely different image than the consumer is expecting, it will make them doubt everything they thought they knew about the brand and thus decrease brand knowledge. Moreover, it can even have more permanent negative effects and decrease brand trust and loyalty (Ibid.).

5.1.3 No 'Viral' Without Liking and Sharing

The final set of hypotheses proposed in this study predicted that viral commercials would have higher levels of commercial liking (H11) and the willingness to share a commercial (H14) than traditional commercials. Additionally, it was predicted that the level of commercial liking has a positive influence on their willingness to share the commercial online (H13). The analysis showed support for all of these hypotheses and concluded that they should be accepted.

As presented in the theory, commercial liking is more important to viral commercials because of the liking and sharing possibilities that invite the consumer to form a strong opinion on the commercial (Hosea, 2011). It can be argued that the content of viral commercials is adapted to the idea that the viewer should be entertained and have a positive attitude towards the commercial, where this is less of an incentive for traditional commercials (Nath, 2015). Additionally, the willingness to share a viral commercial is important because if a viral commercial is liked by each viewer, but no viewer continues to share the commercial afterwards, the commercial cannot go viral (Shehu, Bijmolt, & Clement, 2016). Thus, general measure of positive emotionality in a commercial increases the commercial's viral potential. However, an alternative explanation would be that possibly, viewers share would the content because they perceive the viral commercial to be interesting content rather than to communicate product information or recommend the product to others (Ho & Dempsey, 2010; Porter & Golan, 2006).

Additionally, this final set of hypotheses predicted that when watching a viral commercial, generation Y would have higher levels of commercial liking (H12a) and the willingness to share a commercial (H15a) than generation X, whereas it was predicted that when watching a traditional commercial, generation X would have higher levels of commercial liking (H12b) and the willingness to share a commercial (H15b) than generation Y. The analysis showed no support for any of these hypotheses and concluded that they should all be rejected. No difference between the two generations was found when comparing commercial liking and the willingness to share a commercial for viral commercials as well as traditional commercials.

These results could be explained by the same reason as mentioned earlier: The idea that generation X is no longer less active online than generation Y (Bromwich, 2017). Many studies show that members of generation X are highly digital and that they are eminently reachable online. This could mean that online, generation X and generation Y behave fairly similar, which could explain why there are no generational differences in the level of commercial liking and the willingness to share commercials found between them. Especially because one of the social media where sharing viral videos is most common, Facebook, has been gaining more and more older users over the past years, which reduces differences in viral commercial viewing between generations (Wyher, 2017).

5.2 Limitations

In addition to the theoretical explanations that were given for the absence or presence of counterintuitive effects, there are also some methodological explanations. In the first part of this study, the main focus was on the comparison of viral and traditional commercials and their influence on consumer behaviour. An important limitation to this part of the study was the choice of stimulus material used. The commercials used to measure consumer behavior were made by Knorr, a brand that is very well known in the Netherlands and all respondents were already familiar with before participation. Moreover, 41.1% had already seen the specific commercials used in this study before participating. Research shows that consumers have more confidence in a brand if they are already familiar with it, which could influence their attitudes towards the brand (Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1996). Also, this reduces the effect a singular commercial has on the image of the consumer, since they already have a stable image of the brand (Homer, 2006). Since the respondents already had high familiarity with Knorr and its commercials, this possibly

impacted the way they responded towards the commercials. This means that the results found should be interpreted with care and might not be generalizable to other, lesser known brands or commercials. Such limitations could explain the absence of findings in the first part of this study.

In the second part of this study, the main focus was on the generational differences that could occur when consumers are viewing traditional and viral commercials. An important limitation to this part of the study was the use of only two generations. The use of a wider age range or more generations could possibly have provided different results for this study. If the younger generation Z, or the older Baby Boomer generation were also considered in this study, more different comparisons could have been made. Consequently, more explanations could be given for the similarities found between generation X and generation Y, since their similarities become even clearer when compared with the differences these generations have with their older and younger peers. All respondents in this study were approached through social media, which means that only the digital-savvy members of both generations were approached. The collection method chosen in this study biases the dataset since it completely excluded potential respondents that are not interested in using social media regularly. Possibly, different results would be found if a different part of the generations were approached, and therefore it is important that the respondents are a representative selection of the population. In such cases it can be problematic to use quantitative research because is generalizes all results that are found. Therefore, a good addition would to conduct qualitative research as well, to find more personal opinions of consumers and possibly uncover differences between the generations that are not directly visible when conducting quantitative research. By combining the results found in quantitative and qualitative research, the possibly distorted images provided by both types can be nuanced. In sum, such limitations could explain the absence of findings in the first part of this study.

Despite the fact that this study has aimed to provide generalizable findings, some more general limitations can also be observed. With regards to the research sample it should be noted that it is not representative of the complete population of the Netherlands. In total, 85.4% of the sample has participated in university or applied sciences level education, which is a large overrepresentation. Statistics from the Central Bureau for Statistics show that less than 25% of the Dutch population has completed an education on this level (CBS, 2017). This means that the results found in this study can differ with regards to the total population of the Netherlands, and generalization of the findings should be handled with care.

Another issue that makes the sample less representative is the type of sampling that was used to gather respondents. This was done through snowball sampling, using social media to recruit respondents online, where they were asked to participate and share the survey with their own network afterwards. Despite the fact that this is a relatively costless and effective sampling method, it can be considered a limitation because it does not provide a representative sample of the population (Fricker, 2008). Snowball sampling violates the assumption of random sampling of this study, because chances of participation are based on proximity in the network (Ibid.). However, snowball sampling through social media ensured that the respondents had experience with an important topic of this study; watching and sharing viral commercials.

Additionally, doing an online experiments can cause limitations since the researcher has no control over the surroundings in which respondents participate in the experiment (Reips, 2000). By using this method, the researcher could not ensure that the respondent was completely focused on the experiment, or whether the respondent was being distracted or getting help from others while participating. In a true experiment, performed in a laboratory, such situations could have been controlled for (Ibid.). However, a true experiment does not mimic respondents' natural setting, which can also be considered a limitation. In this online experiment, respondents filled out the survey on their own phone or laptop, which is how they would normally view viral commercials as well. This can be considered an advantage and it increases the external validity of this study, since it makes the experimental situation more easily transferrable to real world situations (Martin, 1996).

5.3 Future Directions

This research touches upon subjects that have not been extensively researched yet. Thus, it would be wise to conduct more similar research in the future to elaborate further on the topic and find out more about the differences between advertising through traditional channels versus new channels. For doing so, several recommendations can be provided based on lessons learned from the conduction of this study.

First of all, the commercials used to measure consumer behavior were by Knorr, a very well-known brand in the Netherlands. Since this was considered a limitation to the study, it would be wise to conduct new research in the future that focuses on commercials by less well-known or even completely unknown brands, or perhaps comparing multiple brands with different

levels of familiarity. This would give more depth to the results since it shows the extent to which commercials from less well-known brands influence consumer responses differently. It can be observed that a singular commercial does influence the image of well-established brands such as Knorr heavily. However, it could be interesting to test this for lesser known brands, to test whether the consumer's opinion is more easily influenced when no stable image of the brand has formed yet. Another interesting focus would be on new brands that are completely unknown to the consumer, to test to what extent sharing viral commercials online contributes to increasing the brand awareness levels of their target audience.

Additionally, since the use of two generations was considered a limitation to this study, it could be interesting to include more different generations in future research. In this study, a comparison was made between generation X and generation Y. However, few differences were found between these two generations. Perhaps this can be explained by the idea that generation X is increasingly becoming active online and is almost at the same level as generation Y, if not more active than generation Y (Bromwich, 2017). Therefore, to elaborate further on generational differences within consumer responses, it would be interesting to include more generations younger and older than generation X and Y. This way, more in-depth generational comparisons can be made, which can explain a lot with regards to targeting different groups of consumers with tailored commercials that appeal to them most.

An important advice for future research is to conduct similar studies on consumer responses, but to do so with a qualitative approach. This way, it can be researched whether there are truly no differences in the consumer responses of generation X and generation Y, or whether this only seems to be the case due to the generalizing character of quantitative research. Doing a qualitative study could further uncover the opinions of different consumers after observing different commercials, which would be valuable information to the industry. By combining the results found in quantitative and qualitative studies, misleading findings can perhaps be nuanced.

In addition to that, in future research it would be wise to dig deeper into the results found about the liking and sharing of viral commercials. It was found that these consumer responses significantly differ for viral and traditional commercials, but it would be interesting to focus more on the liking aspect and what this exactly means. This way the success formula of a viral commercials could be uncovered.

5.4 Practical Implications

In addition to consequences this study has for future theory and methodologies, it also has some societal implications. The results can teach consumers about their behaviour with regards to viral commercials since they often seem to like and share them, but they do not realize that they are commercials; Instead they view it as entertainment. This study could make consumers more aware of the fact that they are viewing a commercial in the future. Previous research shows that if consumers are not aware of the fact that they are observing a commercial when they are doing so, the commercial will not increase brand responses with the consumer (Gillespie & Joireman, 2016). Thus, the only responses the consumer can have to the commercial are related to the commercial itself, and not to the brand that sponsored the content. Accordingly, the commercial will not serve its purpose, which makes it useless for all parties involved.

Additionally, this study can be interesting to the online platforms that distribute viral commercials, such as Facebook and YouTube, since it teaches them that viral commercials are a lot more effective in terms of the consumer's willingness to share content on the platforms. However, it could be argued that too much sponsored content on the platforms can make the user lose trust in the platform, and thus the platforms should prefer to encourage users to share more private content instead (Castillo, 2016). Yet, the distribution of viral advertising on the platforms does not seem to damage them, since consumers rather like it than dislike it.

Furthermore, this study can be extremely interesting to advertisers, since some of the main focuses for advertisers are what types of advertisements to use for different audiences, which channels to distribute advertisements through, and what type of advertisements are most effective to reach the desired goals (Keller, 2013). Even though commercial liking is found to be a lot higher in viral commercials, the question is whether this matters. If it is true that viral commercials are unsuccessful at making the viewer aware of the advertised brand, it is highly likely that other consumer response phases are also lost and this type of commercial does not serve as a commercial, but merely as entertainment.

Despite the fact that online television consumption is vastly increasing, this does not mean the era of the television and its commercials is over (Vermanen, 2015). Television is still being watched in great numbers (Hovenden, 2017) and the findings in this study suggest that its commercials are not more or less (in)effective than viral commercials are. Consequently, such

findings could explain why there is still a lot of disagreement within the advertising field about which type of commercials to use to reach the most effective consumer responses. In real life cases, advertisers hold opposing views with regards to the use of traditional commercials, viral commercials or both: Earlier this year, sports brand Adidas even announced that over the next few years, it will stop advertising through television completely (Heerde, 2017). However, others claim television is still the most effective way to reach the consumer (Ionova, 2016). Most are not worried by Adidas' announcement; They argue it is hard to reach a large audience online and think television will continue to be a big player in the advertising industry (Heerde, 2017).

To sum up, it cannot be denied that the use of online advertisements keeps increasing, but at this moment it cannot be concluded that the increase of this type of commercials proves that they are more effective than traditional commercials. In fact, since viral commercials often are perceived as entertainment more so than as commercials, they might not be effective at all. Thus, it can be concluded that when it comes to viral commercials, consumers do *share*, but consumer behavior responses show that they do not really *care*.

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Endnote

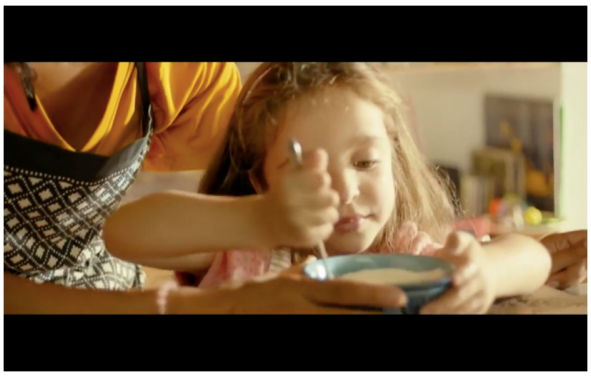
[i] A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that brand awareness was not normally distributed: D (185) = 0.218, $p < 0.001$. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test showed no statistically significant difference between brand awareness in the viral, traditional and control conditions: $X^2 = 0.487$, $p = 0.784$.
[ii] A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that brand knowledge was not normally distributed: D (185) = 0.203, $p < 0.001$. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test showed a statistically significant difference between brand knowledge in the viral, traditional and control conditions: $X^2 = 87.442$, $p < 0.001$.
[iii] A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that brand liking was not normally distributed: D (185) = 0.117, $p < 0.001$. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test showed no statistically significant difference between brand liking in the viral, traditional and control conditions: $X^2 = 0.336$, $p = 0.846$.
[iv] A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that brand preference was not normally distributed: D (185) = 0.166, $p < 0.001$. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test showed no statistically significant difference between brand preference in the viral, traditional and control conditions: $X^2 = 0.441$, $p = 0.802$.
[v] A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that brand conviction was not normally distributed: D (185) = 0.182, $p < 0.001$. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test showed no statistically significant difference between brand conviction in the viral, traditional and control conditions: $X^2 = 0.119$, $p = 0.942$.
[vi] A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that brand awareness was not normally distributed: D (185) = 0.218, $p < 0.001$. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test showed a statistically significant difference between brand awareness in the viral, traditional and control conditions: $X^2 = 11.686$, $p = 0.039$.
[vii] For generation Y, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that brand knowledge was not normally distributed: D (94) = 0.238, $p < 0.001$. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test also showed a statistically significant difference between brand knowledge in the viral, traditional and control conditions: $X^2 = 53.762$, $p < 0.001$.
[viii] For generation X, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that brand knowledge was not normally distributed: D (91) = 0.166, $p < 0.001$. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test showed a statistically significant difference between brand knowledge in the viral, traditional and control conditions: $X^2 = 33.698$, $p < 0.001$.
[ix] A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that commercial liking was not normally distributed: D (185) = 0.120, $p < 0.001$. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test also showed a statistically significant difference between commercial liking in the viral, traditional and control conditions: $X^2 = 16.131$, $p < 0.001$.
[x] A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the willingness to share was not normally distributed: D (158) = 0.264, $p < 0.001$. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test showed a (marginally) statistically significant difference between the willingness to share in the viral, traditional and control conditions: $X^2 = 5.292$, $p = 0.071$.
[xi] A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the willingness to share was not normally distributed: D (158) = 0.264, $p < 0.001$. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test showed a (marginally) statistically significant difference between the willingness to share in the viral, traditional and control conditions: $X^2 = 9.434$, $p = 0.093$.

Appendix A Stills Viral Commercial

Link to the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QP2xvior5Fc

Appendix B Stills Traditional Commercial

Link to the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHCfiOWvRVA#t=30.047662666



Appendix C Consent Form

Dear participant,

Thank you very much for participating in this survey. This survey is conducted by a Master student of the Media master's programme of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. The survey is an online experiment in which we investigate consumers' reactions towards different brands.

For this experiment you are going to watch a small video and you will be asked some questions.

Please be aware that your participation is completely voluntary, meaning that you can quit at any time during your participation. Furthermore, your personal information will be kept strictly confidential and the findings of this survey will be used solely for research purposes. Hence, your anonymity is guaranteed at any time.

This research will last approximately 5-10 minutes. If you have any questions during or after your participation, please feel free to contact the researcher: Sanne Bouwmeester (446771sb@student.eur.nl).

I understand the above and agree in participating in this research.

Appendix D Survey for Viral and Traditional Conditions

This survey includes video material. Therefore, on the next page, you are shown a short test video in order to check whether you are able to see the video and hear the sound. Please check whether your audio is turned on. Be aware that the video will start immediately and you can only go to the next page once the video has completed.

Q1: Were you able to see and hear the video?

- Yes
- No

[If the participant answers wrongly, they will not be allowed to continue the survey]

Q2: What did you see in the video?

- A ball turning into a mouse
- A ball turning into a bird
- A ball turning into a dog

[If the participant answers wrongly, they will not be allowed to continue the survey]

Because your computer system supports the video, you are able to participate in this survey. Please fill out a few questions about yourself. First of all, what is your age?

- Drop down menu with “17 years or younger”, 18, 19…, 56, and “57 years or older”.

[If the participant answers “17 years or younger” or “57 years or older”, they will not be allowed to continue the survey]

Q3: What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

Q4: Where are you from?

- The Netherlands
- Other

[If the participant answers "Other", they will not be allowed to continue the survey]

Q5: What is your highest level of participated education?

- Primary school
- High school
- Vocational school (such as MBO)
- University of applied sciences (such as HBO)
- University
- Other

On the next page, you will be presented with a short video. After watching the video, you will be asked to answer a few questions about your viewing experience. Please be aware that the video starts immediately.

[The participants will randomly be assigned to the viral or traditional commercial]

Q6: This video contained a brand. Did you notice any?

- Yes
- No

[If the participant answers "No", they will skip Q7 and Q8]

Q7: Which brand did you notice?

Q8: To help remind you, we present a list of brands below. Please select the brand that you remember seeing in the video.

- Honig

- Knorr
- Bertolli
- Maggi

Q9: The video you just saw was an advertisement by the German food and beverage brand Knorr. Next, we will provide you with some statements about Knorr and about the advertisement. Please answer to what extent you agree with each statement. Based on this advertisement...

[All statements are based on an answering scale ranging from (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Somewhat agree, (4) Neither agree nor disagree, (5) Somewhat disagree, (6) Disagree, and (7) Strongly disagree]

Q10: I am aware of Knorr
Q11: I can recall Knorr
Q12: I can recognize Knorr

Q13: This advertisement gave me a better idea of the food Knorr sells
Q14: This advertisement improved my knowledge of Knorr as a brand
Q15: This advertisement improved my knowledge of the assortment that Knorr offers

Q16: Knorr is an interesting brand
Q17: Knorr is a pleasant brand
Q18: Knorr is a likeable brand
Q19: Knorr is a good brand

Q20: Knorr is more interesting than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli, or Maggi)
Q21: Knorr is more pleasant than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli, or Maggi)
Q22: Knorr is more likeable than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli, or Maggi)
Q23: Knorr is better than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli, or Maggi)

Q24: In the next week, I intend to purchase a Knorr product

Q25: In the next week, I expect to purchase a Knorr product

Q26: In the next week, I want to purchase a Knorr product

Q27: Do you use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram?

- Yes
- No

[If the participant answers "No", they will skip Q28 and Q29]

Q28: In general, I regularly share content on my social media channels

Q29: I would share this Knorr advertisement publicly on my social media channels

Q30: In general, I regularly share content directly with friends online (for example through e-mail or a messaging service)

Q31: I would share this Knorr advertisement directly with friends online using a private messaging service

Q32: I would share this Knorr advertisement directly with friends online using e-mail

Q33: This advertisement was interesting

Q34: This advertisement was pleasant

Q35: This advertisement was likeable

Q36: This advertisement was good

Q37: Did you already know the brand Knorr before participating in this survey?

- Yes
- No

Q38: Did you already know this advertisement before participating in this survey?

- Yes
- No

Q39: Where did you see the advertisement before? You can select more than one answer.

- On television
- As a YouTube video
- It was publicly shared on social media
- A friend shared it with me directly
- As advertising on the internet
- Other:

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your response has been recorded.

Appendix E Survey for Control Condition

This survey includes video material. Therefore, on the next page, you are shown a short test video in order to check whether you are able to see the video and hear the sound. Please check whether your audio is turned on. Be aware that the video will start immediately and you can only go to the next page once the video has completed.

Q1: Were you able to see and hear the video?

- Yes
- No

[If the participant answers wrongly, they will not be allowed to continue the survey]

Q2: What did you see in the video?

- A ball turning into a mouse
- A ball turning into a bird
- A ball turning into a dog

[If the participant answers wrongly, they will not be allowed to continue the survey]

Because your computer system supports the video, you are able to participate in this survey. Please fill out a few questions about yourself. First of all, what is your age?

- Drop down menu with “17 years or younger”, 18, 19…, 56, and “57 years or older”.

[If the participant answers “17 years or younger” or “57 years or older”, they will not be allowed to continue the survey]

Q3: What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

Q4: Where are you from?

- The Netherlands
- Other

[If the participant answers “Other”, they will not be allowed to continue the survey]

Q5: What is your highest level of participated education?

- Primary school
- High school
- Vocational school (such as MBO)
- University of applied sciences (such as HBO)
- University
- Other

As a part of this research, we are trying to measure the familiarity and opinion of different brands. You have been selected to answer some questions about the German food and beverage brand Knorr. Knorr is known for selling dry soup mixes, sauces and ingredients for international dishes. First you will be asked some questions and afterwards you will be presented with a short video. Finally, you will be asked a few questions about your viewing experience.

Q6: Do you know the brand Knorr?

- Yes
- No

[If the participant answers “No”, they will not be allowed to continue the survey]

Next, we will provide you with some statements about Knorr. Please answer to what extent you agree with each statement.

[All statements are based on an answering scale ranging from (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree, (3) Somewhat agree, (4) Neither agree nor disagree, (5) Somewhat disagree, (6) Disagree, and (7) Strongly disagree]

Q7: I am aware of Knorr
Q8: I can recall Knorr
Q9: I can recognize Knorr

Q10: I have a good idea of the food Knorr sells
Q11: I have knowledge of Knorr as a brand
Q12: I have knowledge of the assortment that Knorr offers

Q13: Knorr is an interesting brand
Q14: Knorr is a pleasant brand
Q15: Knorr is a likeable brand
Q16: Knorr is a good brand

Q17: Knorr is more interesting than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli, or Maggi)
Q18: Knorr is more pleasant than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli, or Maggi)
Q19: Knorr is more likeable than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli, or Maggi)
Q20: Knorr is better than other food brands (such as Honig, Bertolli, or Maggi)

Q21: In the next week, I intend to purchase a Knorr product
Q22: In the next week, I expect to purchase a Knorr product
Q23: In the next week, I want to purchase a Knorr product

On the next page, we will show you a video made by Knorr. After watching the video, you will be asked to answer a few questions about your viewing experience. Please be aware that the video starts immediately.

Q24: Do you use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram?

- Yes
- No

[If the participant answers “No”, they will skip Q28 and Q29]

Q25: In general, I regularly share content on my social media channels
Q26: I would share this Knorr advertisement publicly on my social media channels

Q27: In general, I regularly share content directly with friends online (for example through e-mail or a messaging service)
Q28: I would share this Knorr advertisement directly with friends online using a private messaging service
Q29: I would share this Knorr advertisement directly with friends online using e-mail

Q30: This advertisement was interesting
Q31: This advertisement was pleasant
Q32: This advertisement was likeable
Q33: This advertisement was good

Q34: Did you already know the brand Knorr before participating in this survey?

- Yes
- No

Q35: Did you already know this advertisement before participating in this survey?

- Yes
- No

Q36: Where did you see the advertisement before? You can select more than one answer.

- On television
- As a YouTube video
- It was publicly shared on social media
- A friend shared it with me directly

- As advertising on the internet
- Other:

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your response has been recorded.

Appendix F Normal Distribution Scales

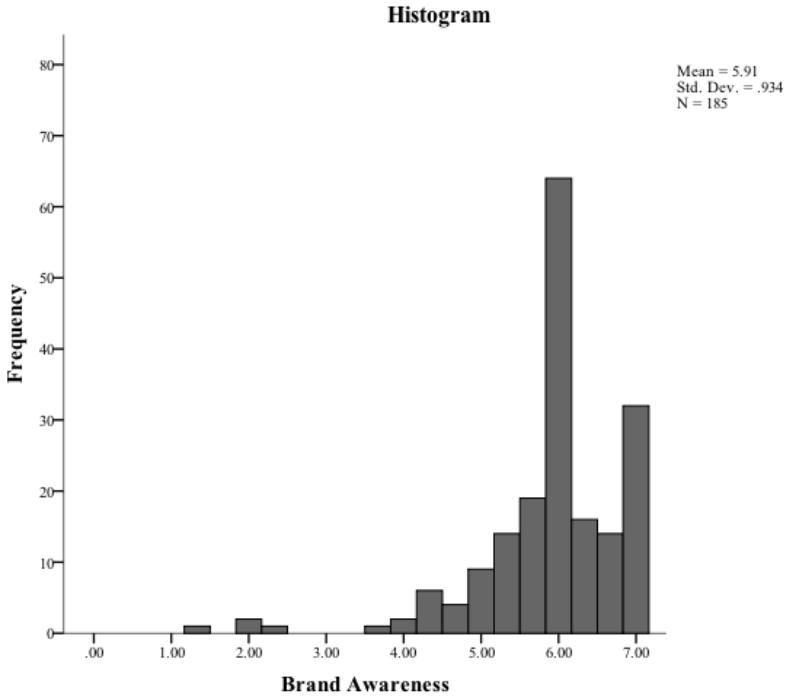


Figure AF.1. Histogram displaying the distribution scale of brand awareness.

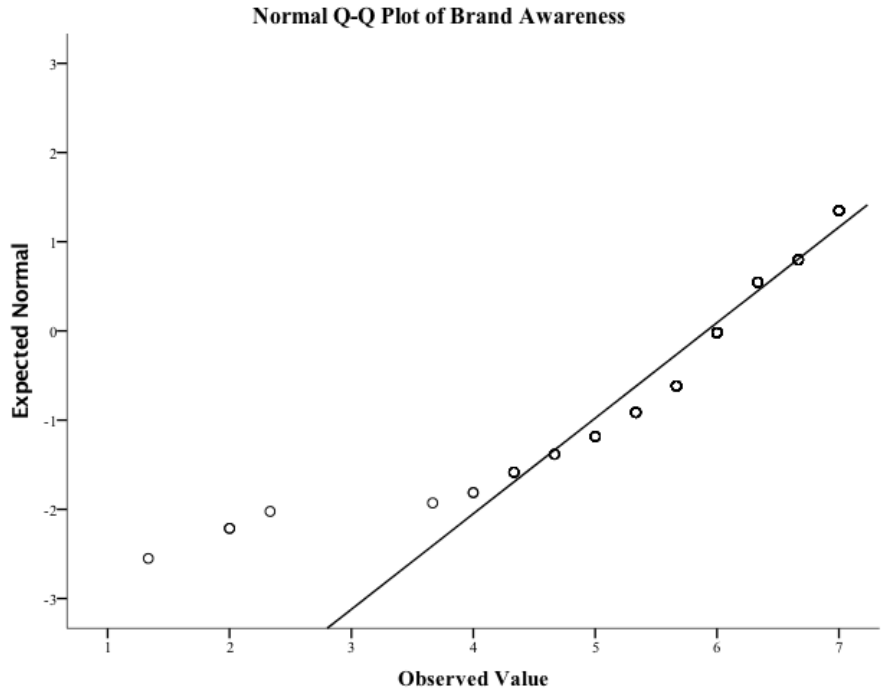


Figure AF.2. Q-Q plot displaying deviation from the expected normal of brand awareness.

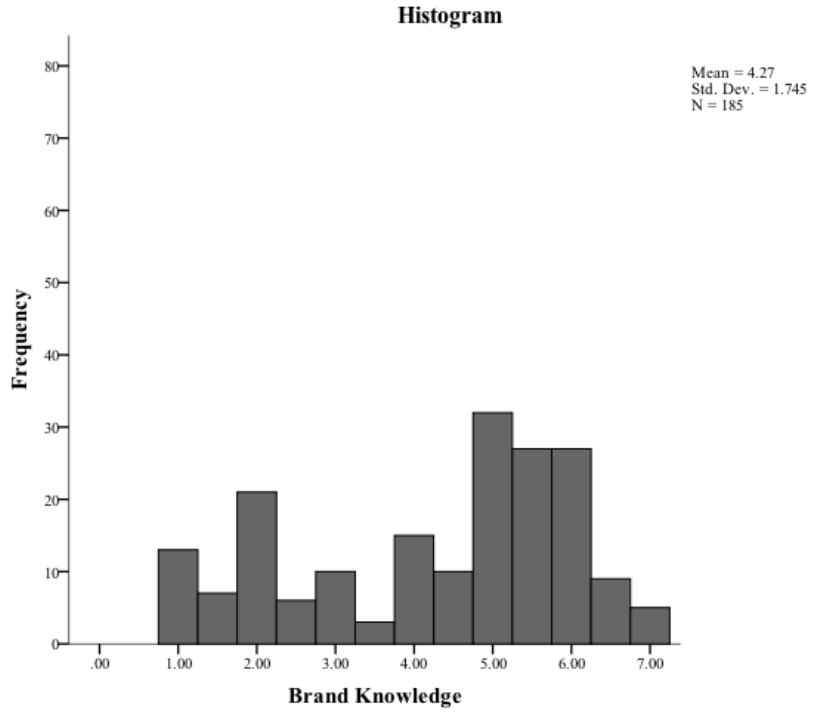


Figure AF.3. Histogram displaying the distribution scale of brand knowledge.

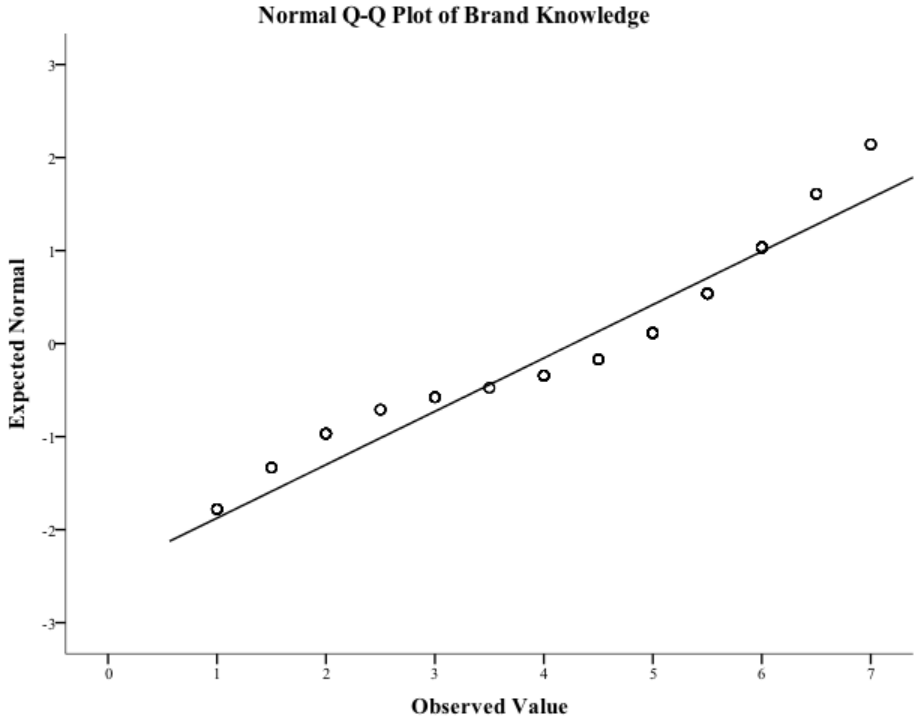


Figure AF.4. Q-Q plot displaying deviation from the expected normal of brand knowledge.

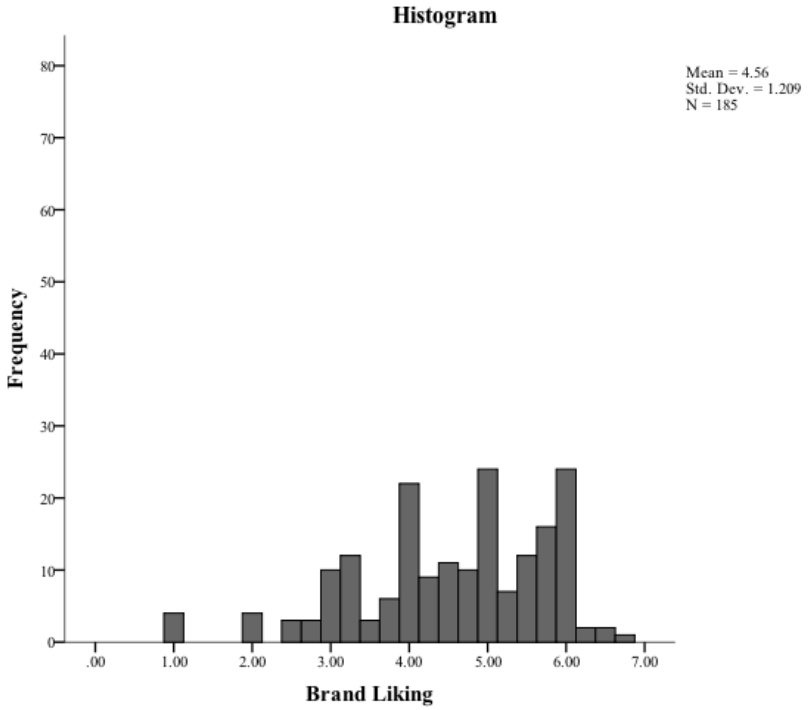


Figure AF.5. Histogram displaying the distribution scale of brand liking.

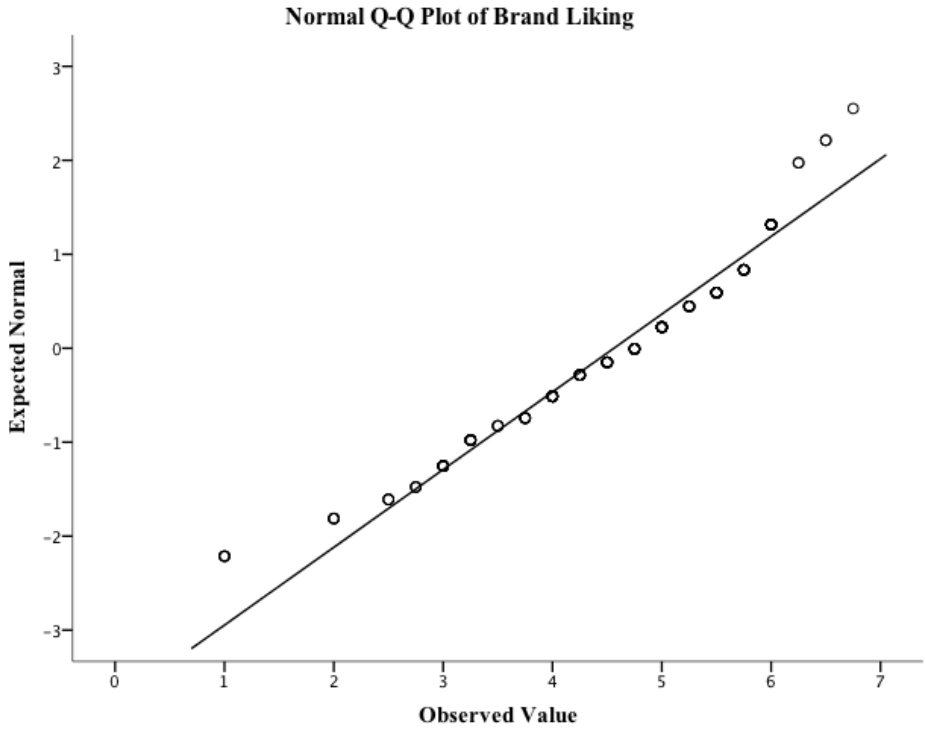


Figure AF.6. Q-Q plot displaying deviation from the expected normal of brand liking.

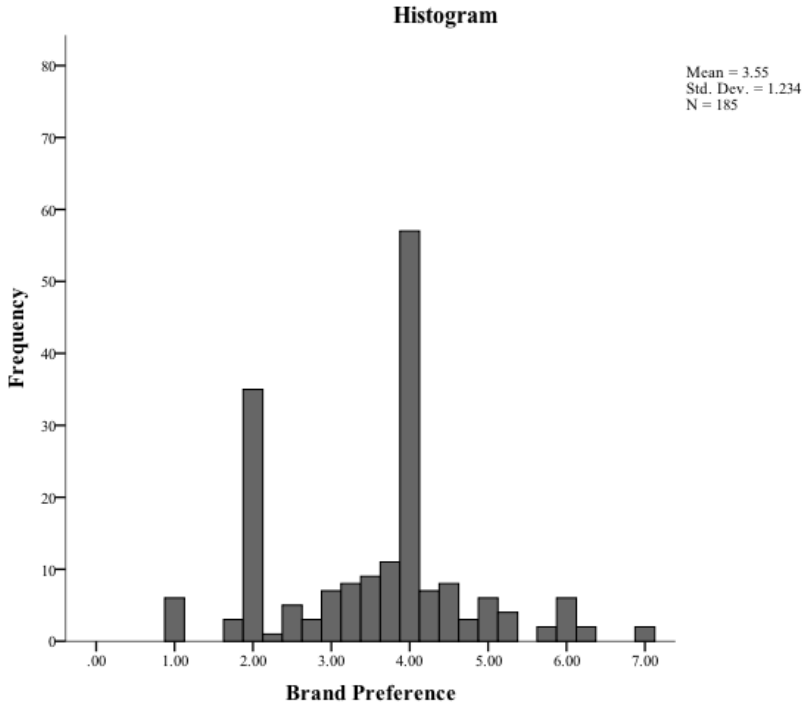


Figure AF.7. Histogram displaying the distribution scale of brand preference.

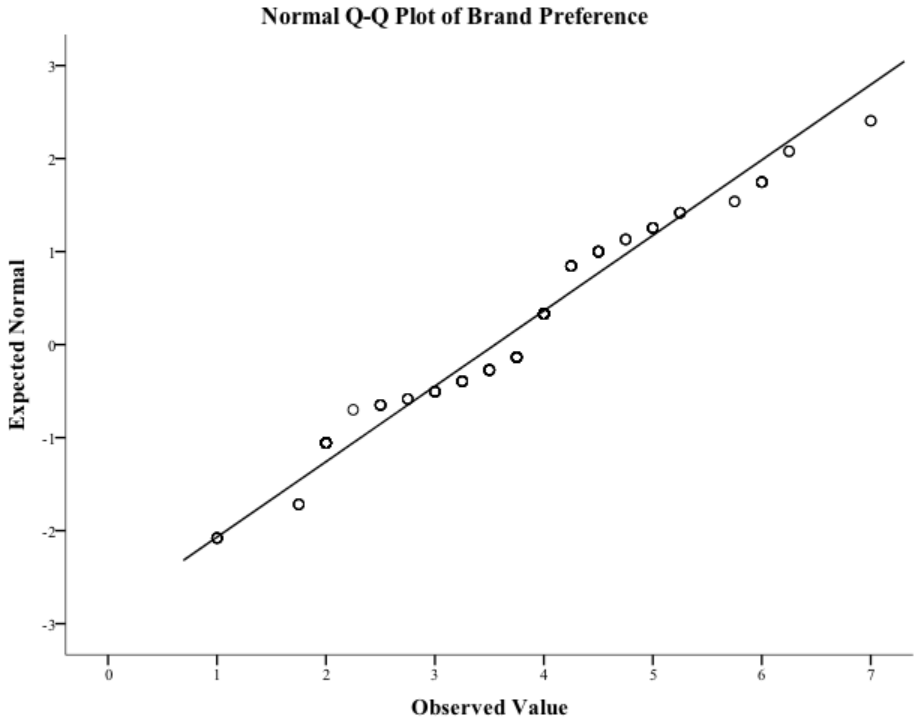


Figure AF.8. Q-Q plot displaying deviation from the expected normal of brand preference.

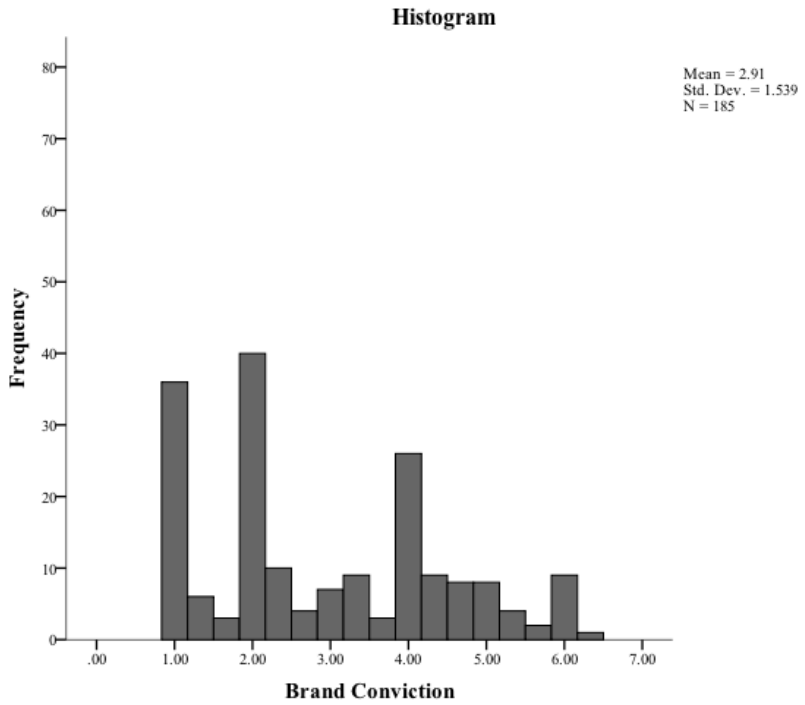


Figure AF.9. Histogram displaying the distribution scale of brand conviction.

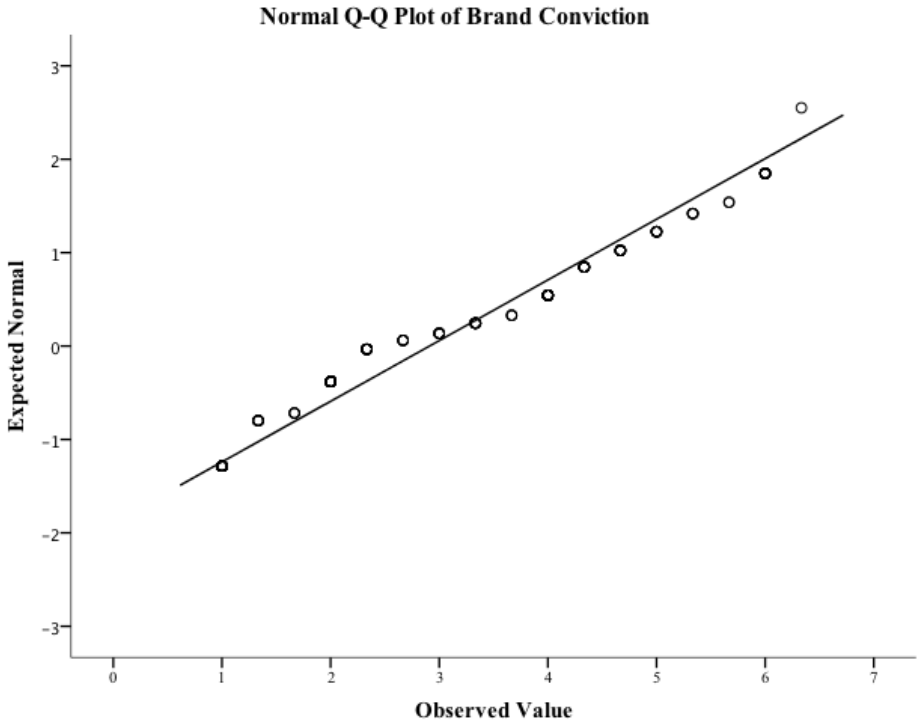


Figure AF.10. Q-Q plot displaying deviation from the expected normal of brand conviction.

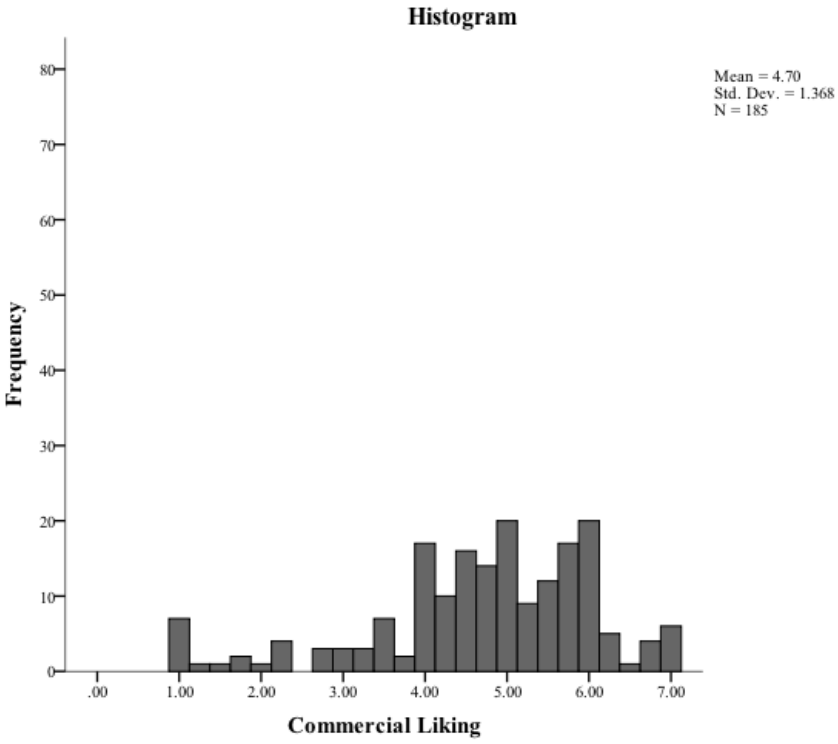


Figure AF.11. Histogram displaying the distribution scale of commercial liking.

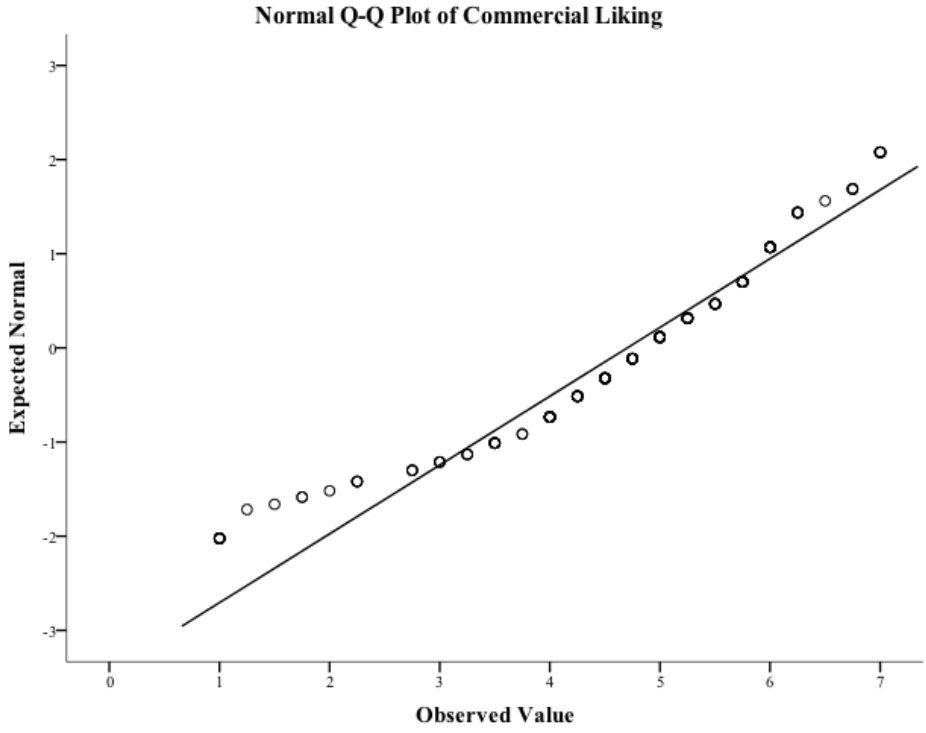


Figure AF.12. Q-Q plot displaying deviation from the expected normal of commercial liking.

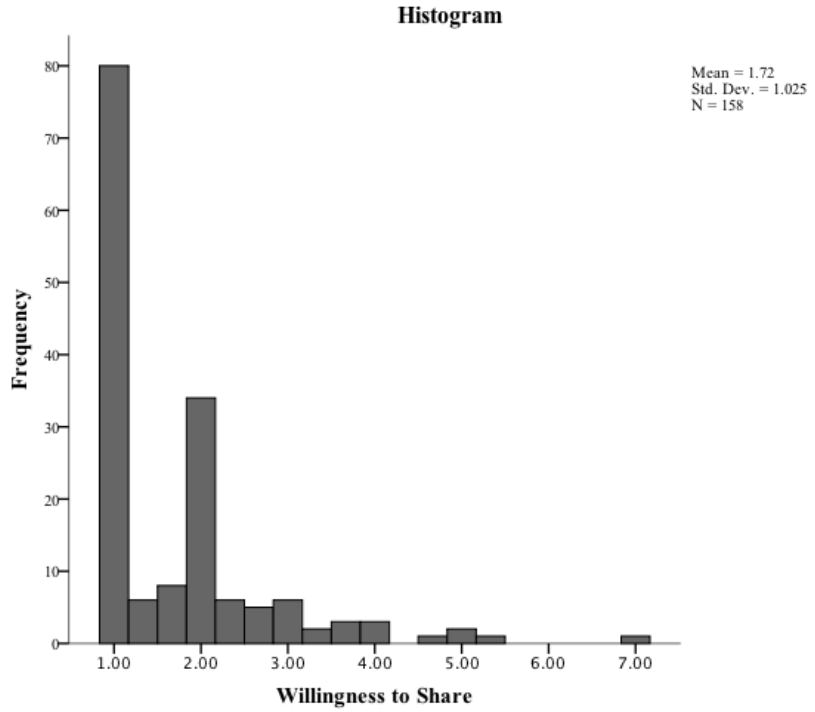


Figure AF.13. Histogram displaying the distribution scale of willingness to share.

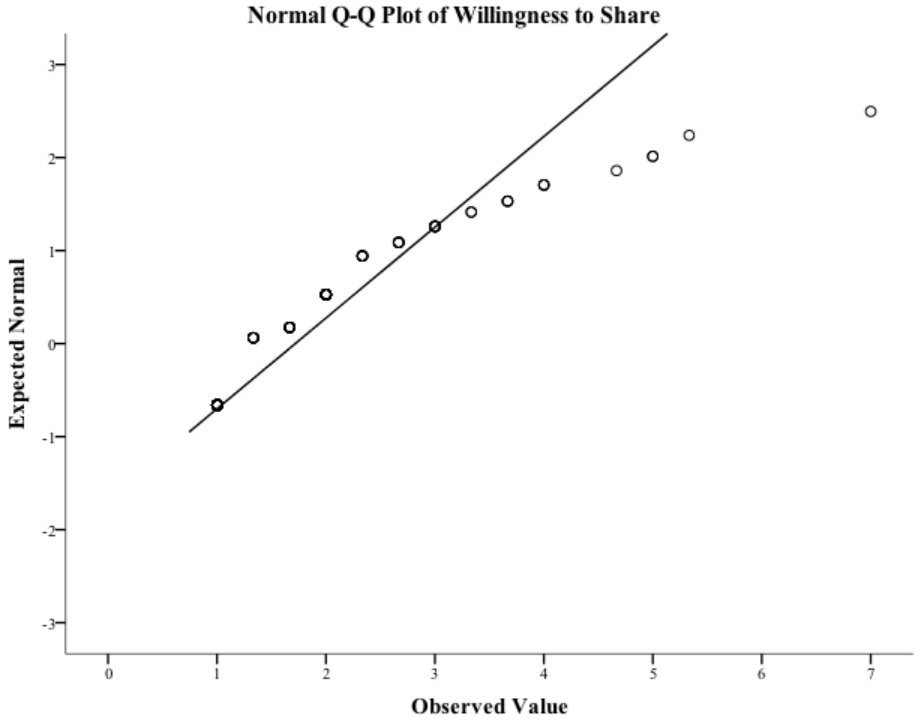


Figure AF.14. Q-Q plot displaying deviation from the expected normal of willingness to share.