

Finnish Design Brand Collaborations: Testing the Effects of Brand Familiarity on Consumers' Purchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis was to research whether Finnish design brand collaborations can work as an effective brand strategy for companies' economic growth. To study this, a 2x3 between-subjects experimental research design was utilised to measure whether Finnish design brand collaborations and brand familiarity have an effect on consumers' purchase intention. This thesis addressed the research question: *How does the degree of a collaboration (yes or no) between Finnish design brands and the level of brand familiarity (high, low, or none) impact consumers' purchase intention?* To answer this question, three hypotheses were formed: H1 (A brand collaboration between Finnish design brands has a more positive effect on purchase intention compared to when there is no collaboration), H2 (High brand familiarity has a more positive effect on purchase intention than low or no brand familiarity), and H3 (A brand collaboration has a stronger positive effect on purchase intention for consumers with high brand familiarity compared to those with low or no brand familiarity). Moreover, H2 needed to be divided into a sub-hypothesis H2a (Low brand familiarity has a more positive effect on purchase intention than no brand familiarity). The hypotheses were tested through a two-way ANOVA. H1 was rejected, meaning brand collaborations were not found to have a more significant effect on purchase intention compared to the absence of a collaboration in this context. Contrary, H2 was partly accepted. High brand familiarity had a more significant effect on purchase intention compared to no brand familiarity. Low brand familiarity had no significant effects in this context. Finally, H3 was accepted. Brand collaborations have a stronger positive effect on purchase intention for consumers with high brand familiarity compared to those with low or no brand familiarity in an online shopping situation. Thus, in line with previous research, brand collaborations can be effective brand strategies for growth if executed well. As collaborations seem to be particularly effective for established audiences, brands leveraging collaborations need to mind consumers' brand familiarity levels when aiming to influence their purchase intention.

KEYWORDS: *Finnish design, brands, brand collaborations, brand familiarity, purchase intention*

PREFACE

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Emma Vartiainen

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List of abbreviations

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
BC	Brand collaboration
BF	Brand familiarity
DV	Dependent variable
H	Hypothesis
IV	Independent variable
<i>M</i>	Mean score (average)
<i>N</i>	Number of research units
PI	Purchase intention
<i>SD</i>	Standard deviation

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1. Introduction

When Kalevala and Marimekko revealed their up-coming collaboration in April 2024, the audience response was positive (Wightman-Stone, 2024, para. 4). The two beloved Finnish design brands will join forces to combine Kalevala's silver jewellery with the iconic Unikko-design of Marimekko to create limited edition jewellery pieces for design fans (Kalevala, n.d., para. 2). This joint jewellery collection is an excellent example of a brand collaboration, which can be considered as the process of two or more brands teaming up for a project, such as creating a new product or a service (Cooke & Ryan, 2000, p. 36). While not a new phenomenon, collaborations have become an important brand strategy during the past few decades for brands to differentiate themselves in dynamic markets with constantly evolving consumer patterns and preferences (Kim et al., 2014, p. 350). The novelty of brand collaborations can cause excitement in consumers, and drive the sales of a company (Childs and Jin, 2016, p. 1). This makes them important strategies for differentiation.

Brand collaborations can be permanently offered or limited edition, meaning they are not a part of a brand's permanent collection. Limited edition products and services often increase their perceived rarity making them more desirable to a consumer (Diaz Ruiz & Cruz, 2023, p. 9). If successful, collaboration products can still become a part of the permanent offerings of a brand, like in the case of the Kivi votives of the collaborating brands, Iittala and Marimekko (Iittala, n.d.a, para. 1). Regardless, both permanent and limited edition collaborations can engage audiences and enhance consumers' value proposition of the brands (Diaz Ruiz & Cruz, 2023, p. 9). This is why collaborations can be effective strategies for companies' financial growth.

While prior research on brand collaborations has predominantly focused on the fashion industry (Kim et al., 2014, p. 352), this thesis focuses on *design brand collaborations*. Design practices are used in various fields nowadays, such as in medical technology and retail banking (Sheppard et al., 2018, p. 4). While these fields use design practices in parts of their businesses, such as website creation, this thesis focuses specifically on *the tangible design industry*. While an ambiguous term, this thesis employs the definition used by Salimäki and Gabrielsson (2005, p. 17) where design refers to physical objects that trained and educated designers have created. Thus, design brands can be defined as brands that focus on creating household goods with a substantial design element, such as glassware, ceramics, furniture, and textiles. Design items can also be considered as a form of luxury (Waldek, n.d., para. 2). Design, and other luxury items, are often characterised by their

exclusivity, quality, established identity, and prestige (Kowalczyk & Mitchell, 2022, p. 440). These elements make design items desirable to consumers. Moreover, this thesis focuses specifically on design brands from Finland, as design has been crucial in creating a national identity and international image for the relatively young and small country (Ashby, 2010, pp. 351-352).

Researching the effects of brand collaborations is essential for various fields, such as marketing and consumer behaviour (Uggla & Åkberg, 2010, pp. 35-36). Uggla and Åkberg (2010, pp. 35-36) also explain that studying brand collaborations can help gaining insights into the complexities of strategic decision-making of businesses to stay competitive and innovative in the market. Despite the importance of the design industry for the Finnish economy (Perttula, 2022, para. 9), no previous research has focused on Finnish design brand collaborations. This could be due to the reason that collaborations between Finnish design brands have been relatively limited. Finnish design brands have focused more on collaborating with individual artists and designers, such as Artek with the architect and designer Alvar Aalto, and Marimekko with Maija Isola, a designer of printed textiles (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 258). Regardless, the limited number of collaborations have proven to be popular among consumers as seen from Iittala and Marimekko's past collaborations. Both Kivi votives and Mariskooli bowls have become common items in Finnish households (Iittala, n.d.a, para. 1; n.d.c, para. 1). Both items are beloved symbols of Finnish design through their distinctive aesthetics and functionality. All in all, it can still be said that brand collaborations as business strategies are a rather underexplored area for Finnish design brands. Therefore, the academic relevance of this thesis to close this gap in brand collaboration research.

As design is used in various fields in Finland, it makes the industry highly valuable for the domestic market (Ornamo, 2021, p. 7). While also an important export product, Finnish design makes up a small share of the large European market (Salimäki & Gabrielsson, 2005, p. 18). While some design brands, such as Iittala and Marimekko, have achieved a strong international market position, the internationalisation of Finnish design has been mostly modest (Salimäki & Gabrielsson, 2005 p. 18). Consequently, this study aims to provide a way for Finnish design firms to find success not only in the domestic but also international markets through carefully curated collaborations. As a result, the societal value of this thesis is to provide valuable information for Finnish businesses as collaborations can have significant benefits for brands' financial performance (Uggla & Åsberg, 2010, pp. 37-38) such as positively impacting consumers's purchase intention (Park & Stoel, 2005, p.

151). This study aims to prove the effectiveness of collaborations for brands in comparison to those not employing them in their operations.

Based on the aforementioned reasons, the guiding research question for this thesis is: *How does the degree of a collaboration (yes or no) between Finnish design brands and the level of brand familiarity (high, low or none) impact consumers' purchase intention?* As purchase intention can be considered as a key indicator of firms' financial success (Kim et al., 2023, p. 2285), it makes the concept important to study in this context. Moreover, consumers have various motivations for buying design items, such as displaying one's socioeconomic status, which can affect their purchase intention (Kowalczyk & Mitchell, 2022, p. 440). Kowalczyk and Mitchell (2022, p. 448) continue by explaining that consumers are also influenced by their previous familiarity of brands while evaluating luxury items. This is why collaborations are studied to be more successful among well-established brands, and brand familiarity is noted to positively impact consumer's purchase intention (Hou et al., 2017, p. 633). For instance, the limited edition jewellery collection from Kalevala and Marimekko can already be expected to become a memorable design classic in the Finnish design scene. Thus, both purchase intention and brand familiarity are crucial concepts in brand collaboration research.

The research question of this thesis was answered through collecting empirical data by conducting a 2x3 experiment online. Based on three hypotheses, the experiment focused on measuring whether the presence of brand collaborations affected consumers' purchase intention more compared to the absence of one. Additionally, the experiment measured whether a higher brand familiarity had a bigger effect on purchase intention compared to a lower one. As a 2x3 experimental design was employed, the experiment measured brand collaborations in two levels, the absence or presence of one, whereas brand familiarity was measured in three levels, namely high, low or none. Since most shopping happens online nowadays (Shaw et al., 2022, p. 1), the experiment focused on the online shopping environment rather than in-person shopping. Finally, the experiment had no strict target population but was shared widely online to everyone with a previous familiarity with Finnish design. More detailed information about the experiment can be found from Chapter 3, Methodology.

1.1 Structure of thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Following this introduction, the reader will be introduced to the existing knowledge of the Finnish design industry, and the various other concepts measured in this thesis, such as brand collaborations, brand familiarity and purchase intention. The second chapter, Theoretical framework, will also introduce the reader to the three hypotheses set out in this study, H1, H2 (including sub-hypothesis H2a), and H3. The third chapter, Methodology, will explain how the 2x3 experimental design of this thesis was conducted, and describe the characteristics of the final sample of respondents. This will be followed by the fourth chapter, Results, which focuses on answering the three hypotheses of this study. Finally, the remaining chapter, Chapter 5, Discussion and conclusion, will explain the meaning of the results in a broader sense as well as conclude the study by listing some limitations and future recommendations in the realm of brand collaboration research.

2. Theoretical framework

This section works as the structural support for this thesis. The reader will be introduced to the existing knowledge in the field as the key concepts and relevant theories for this thesis will be explained. This section is divided into five sections, namely *Finnish design industry* (2.1), *brands* (2.2), *brand collaborations* (2.3), *brand familiarity* (2.4), and *purchase intention* (2.5). The three hypotheses of this thesis will be introduced at the end of this chapter.

2.1 Finnish design industry

2.1.1 A short history

In previous decades, design was referred to as 'applied art' in Finland (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 9). Only in 1950, the term 'Finnish design' was coined by Olavi Gummerus, the head of Ornamo, or the Finnish Society of Arts and Crafts (te Velde, 2013, pp. 74-75). While Finland had gained its independence from Russia already in 1917, its national identity was established only after the Second World War. This is roughly the same time when the industry got its name (te Velde, 2013, p. 73). The national identity in Finland was found partly through the country's focus on design and architecture as Finland consciously branded itself as a pioneer of design by promoting Finnish artists globally in exhibitions, expositions, and competitions (Solitander, 2010, p. 50). Most notably, Finnish design found its global success at the Milan Triennial Exhibition of Decorative Arts in 1951 as 25 medals were won by the country (te Velde, 2013, p. 74). This period became known as the 'golden age' of Finnish design. It also helped to create a positive image of Finland to the rest of the world (te Velde, 2013, p. 72). This is also seen in the fact that design is still seen as Finland's national competitive advantage (Solitander, 2010, p. 52). Another reason for the significance of Finnish design is the comprehensive arts and design education offered in Finland since the late 19th century (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 319). A strong focus on providing quality education in the field of arts and design has had a major impact on how the field is seen nationally and internationally.

To conclude this short introduction to the history of Finnish design, it can be said that finding an identity in the field of design helped to create an identity for the Finns. These cultural developments also helped to unite Finns as a population after the long-lasting division of Whites and Reds in the Finnish Civil War of 1918 (te Velde, 2013, p. 74). The

historical events introduced in this section are among the most important reasons for the significance of Finnish design for the country's identity, culture, and economy.

2.1.2 Aesthetics of Finnish design

As Finnish design is the main focus of this thesis, the common aesthetics of it must be reflected upon. To this day, Finnish design from the country's golden age is still popular, and the forms are often recycled into the current Finnish design landscape (te Velde, 2013, p. 75). Te Velde (2013, p. 75) explains that Finnish design is often characterised by its simplicity, functionality, and emphasis on natural materials, such as different types of woods. This is because cotton, glass, and ceramics have been manufactured on a large scale in Finland for centuries (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 320). Moreover, Finnish design items are often minimalistic yet practical. The usage of clean lines is also common, and the typical organic shapes are said to be derived from nature (te Velde, 2013, p. 75). Most notably, Alvar Aalto's famous glass vase, *Aalto vase* (originally named as the 'Savoy' vase after the iconic restaurant in Helsinki, Finland), mimics the organic shapes of waves. The name 'Aalto' also literally translates to a 'wave'.

2.1.3 Economics of Finnish design

In addition to being a central aspect to Finnish culture, design and applied arts are also central for the Finnish economy (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 7). Design has also been an important strategic tool for businesses from the 1990s onwards (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 305). This is because the potential for growth and long-term performance from design practices is enormous for companies (Sheppard et al., 2018, p. 7). The design industry also stimulates other sectors such as tourism and hospitality as people are attracted to visit and experience Finnish design firsthand. For instance, the capital of Finland, Helsinki, was named as the World Design Capital in 2012 (City of Helsinki, 2023, p. 4). These factors make design important for the Finnish economy.

As the internationalisation of Finnish design has been rather modest (Salimäki & Gabriellson, 2005 p. 18), the current landscape of design remains competitive. This is due to Finland having a strong design heritage and only a few internationally established brands, like Iittala and Marimekko. Hence, the internationalisation process can be a challenge for younger and smaller artists and brands (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 326). This is why there is also an emphasis on innovation to differentiate oneself in the thriving industry (Perttula,

2022, para. 21), and only the very best can stand out (Sheppard et al., 2018, p. 3). Currently, Design Forum Finland is the main body supporting the growth, internationalisation, and competitiveness of Finnish design (Design Forum Finland, n.d.b, para. 1). In short, the Forum aims to stress the importance of design in all sectors in Finland.

While the country is facing economic recession, the turnover for the Finnish design industry, especially digital design, has been on the rise since the start of the new decade. The turnover of the industry was around 13,000 million euros in 2019 (Ornamo, 2021, p. 5). This makes the design industry also a large employer as more than 68 000 people work in the field as of 2020 (Perttula, 2022, para. 9). The economy of Finnish design remains dynamic and thriving due to these factors.

2.2 Brands

There are various definitions for *brands* (Ramchand, 2021, para. 1). While often used interchangeably with a ‘company’ or ‘firm’, brands are products or concepts manufactured under a specific company with a particular name (Design Forum Finland, n.d.a, para. 1). Moreover, branding can be said to be synonymous to the reputation of a company or even to the managing of one’s public image (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 306). The concept of ‘brand’ includes all aspects and operations of a company (Design Forum Finland, n.d.a, para. 1). Brands include several elements such as the name, logo, and visuals like fonts and colour schemes (Ramchand, 2021, para. 9). For instance, Coca Cola’s red cursive font and curvy lines are known worldwide making their branding extremely recognisable. To foster customer loyalty, the ultimate goal of branding is to convey the brand’s purpose, vision and mission (Design Forum Finland, n.d.a, para. 3). Therefore, branding is essential for the existence of companies.

Brands became popular in the Finnish design landscape during the early 2000s (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 306). Korvenmaa explains that this phenomenon was related to the development and popularisation of digital communications and new media. The different elements of branding started to be used to differentiate one’s offerings in the market (Design Forum Finland, n.d.a, para. 4). Therefore, branding within the design industry refers to the process of establishing a recognisable identity for design-related products or services. For instance, Iittala focuses on promoting its Finnish identity and heritage as well as its strong focus on originality and handcrafted items (Iittala, n.d.b, para. 1). While branding is vital for communicating these characteristics to domestic and international audiences (Design Forum

Finland, n.d.a, para. 7), audiences are ultimately the ones creating the image of a brand. Brands can try to convey a specific image of themselves but it is not fully in their control. Therefore, authentic and transparent communication is important for brands.

2.3 Brand collaborations

Brand collaborations can be divided into two primary forms, reputation endorsements and collaborations on core competencies (Cooke and Ryan, 2000, p. 36). When enhancing a brand's image is the primary objective of a brand collaboration, it is referred to as a reputation endorsement. Alternatively, collaborating on core competencies refers to the act of leveraging the attributes of the collaborating brands to offer a new or improved product or service to consumers (Cooke and Ryan, 2000, p. 36). When this thesis addresses brand collaborations, the focus lies on *collaborating on core competencies* rather than *reputation endorsements*. Therefore, collaborations can be seen as strategic alliances for differentiation and growth in this context.

Brand collaborations have to be carefully executed for them to be successful (Uggla & Åsberg, 2010, p. 46). If successful, there are many benefits of brand collaborations. Uggla and Åsberg (2010, pp. 37-38) have listed four categories of benefits of brand collaborations, namely financial, functional, emotional, and self-expressive. Financial benefits of brand collaborations include an increased cash flow to companies whereas the functional benefits focus on aspects such as differentiation in the market and increasing the awareness of the brands. The emotional and self-expressive benefits of brand collaborations include the increasing of brand credibility and trust among consumers.

It is also important to choose the right brand to collaborate with (Hou et al., 2017, p. 641). While differences can be complimentary, the collaborating brands have to share the same brand values to succeed (Uggla & Åsberg, 2010, p. 41). Consequently, there are various challenges of collaborations as listed by Uggla and Åsberg (2010, p. 41). Firstly, consumers can be overexposed to the brands if they execute too many collaborations. A brand can also be overshadowed by its partner and lose its distinctive features. Finally, if collaborating with a stronger brand, the other brand can easily lose focus of its target audiences. Therefore, to execute effective collaborations, brands need to be mindful in the process. While brand collaborations can seem attractive, they do not come without a risk and careful assessment is necessary beforehand.

While not a collaboration, two of the most established firms in the Finnish design landscape, Iittala and Arabia, were acquired by the same parent company, Hackman during the 1990s (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 299). While Arabia had previously focused on ceramics, Iittala was known for its artisan glassware. Hackman is another Finnish design firm, and it focuses on making design cutlery. From 2002 to 2003, Iittala had become the force of Hackman, and this is why the company was now named after the brand (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 299). Iittala now owned Arabia, Hackman, and other brands focusing on producing design items. In 2007, Iittala was bought out by Fiskars (Nordic Investment Bank, 2008, para. 1), a design company known for its orange-handled scissors and other objects relating to cooking and outdoor activities. Fiskars is also one of the oldest companies in the Western world, and the oldest company in Finland (Fiskars, n.d.b, para. 4). Fiskars now owned the most established Finnish design brands, and became the leader in the Nordic market of home products (Korvenmaa, 2009, p. 299). While there are other interesting and successful mergers during the long history of Finnish design firms and brands, the merging of these brands is the most notable one.

Currently, Fiskars works as the parent company that owns Iittala, Arabia, Hackman, and many other design firms outside Finland (Fiskars, n.d.a, para. 3). While owned by the same company, namely Fiskars, all of the brands remain as their own individual brands. This means that many legendary Finnish design brands are now under the same parent company. The merger has also made design collaborations easier within these brands, and Iittala has for instance collaborated with Fiskars in the form of scissors (Iittala, n.d.d, para. 1). Thus, to create a second coming for Finnish design internationally, collaborations could be a viable strategy.

2.4 Brand familiarity

Brand familiarity refers to the degree of how well-known a brand is to consumers (Park & Stoel, 2005, p. 150). According to Park and Stoel (2005, p. 150), brand familiarity consists of brand experiences, which can be anything from being exposed to the brand's advertisements to purchasing or using the brand's products or services. These experiences can be divided to be either direct or indirect (Chun et al., 2020, p. 957). A direct experience of brand familiarity could be the purchasing experience of a consumer whereas an indirect experience could be the exposure to their advertising. According to Chun et al. (2020, p. 957), brand familiarity can be considered as the relationship that consumers have created with

a brand through these experiences. Consequently, frequent exposure to a brand through marketing activities enhances brand familiarity. Additionally, brand familiarity increases the confidence and goodwill of consumers towards that brand (Chun et al., 2020, p. 957). This makes brand familiarity essential for maintaining long-term relationships and enhancing brand loyalty with one's customers.

In many cases, brand familiarity can affect the buying behaviour of consumers as they tend to buy from well-established and familiar brands rather than unknown brands (Hou et al., 2017, p. 632). This is because familiarity signals availability to consumers (Park & Stoel, 2005, p. 150). This is true even in cases when the unfamiliar brand's products might perform better (Hou et al., 2017, p. 633). Through high brand familiarity, consumers are also less affected by the advertisements of competing brands (Chun et al., 2020, p. 957). Therefore, brand familiarity can be seen as an important aspect of brand collaborations (Childs & Jin, 2016, p. 1). Childs and Jin (2016, p. 1) also explain that the novelty of a brand collaboration with familiar brands can create excitement to consumers, and push the sales of the collaboration. Consequently, brands that are less familiar for consumers often fail to excite consumers through collaborating. This makes brand familiarity extremely important in relation to the buying behaviour of consumers as through brand familiarity, there is less of a perceived risk of the product (Chun et al., 2020, p. 958). Chun et al. (2020, p. 962) continue by explaining that this raises the purchase intention and revisit intention of consumers. Additionally, brand familiarity often establishes consumer trust, as positive past experiences with a brand increase its desirability (Kuo & Nagasawa, 2020, p. 16). Again, this leads to higher levels of purchase intention and more positive purchasing behaviour which in turn enhances customer loyalty.

Recent brand collaborations have also emerged a new phenomenon, namely the democratisation of luxury (Diaz Ruiz & Cruz, 2023, p. 5). When luxury brands collaborate with more accessible priced retail brands, they simultaneously tap into a wider audience. These brand collaborations can make luxury items more attainable to the masses, which is seen in the case of Marimekko and Uniqlo's collaboration to bring out a collection of Marimekko's iconic prints in Uniqlo's inexpensive prices (Marimekko, n.d.c, para. 3). This is a new form of luxury consumption. Established luxury brands can find new audiences while smaller brands benefit from the masses interested in less expensive luxury items. Much like limited edition collaborations, democratisation of luxury often builds a sense of novelty and rarity in consumers making them financially successful branding strategies (Diaz Ruiz & Cruz, 2023, p. 10). Diaz Ruiz and Cruz (2023, p. 16) continue by explaining that this

emerging phenomenon does not replace luxury consumption but makes it more complex and the consumer base larger for the collaborating brands. Thus, it can be said that luxury consumption is being reshaped through brand collaborations.

2.5 Purchase intention

Collaborations have been studied to be effective brand strategies for financial growth as they can affect consumers' purchase intention significantly (Childs & Jin, 2016, p. 1). Purchase intention refers to the behavioural tendency of a consumer to buy a product or service in the future, which makes it an important factor to measure the financial performance of a company (Kim et al., 2023, p. 2285). In this thesis, the focus lies on purchase intention in the online environment as nowadays most consumers are shopping online due to its convenience and efficiency (Shaw et al., 2022, p. 1). There are big differences between shopping online compared to shopping in-person, which affects consumers' purchase behaviour significantly (Wang et al., 2022, p. 2). Wang et al. (2023, pp. 1-2) continue by explaining how online shopping is often characterised by its convenience and availability whereas in-person shopping can offer tangible product experiences as well as better customer experiences through stronger personal relationships with staff. Purchase intention is also often much higher for online shopping as prices can be lower and purchasing impulses and frequency higher (Wang et al., 2022, p. 9). Therefore, this thesis defines purchase intention as the likelihood of a consumer purchasing a product or a service through an online platform. It is highly probable that this likelihood, or *intention*, is then transferred to behaviour, or the actual buying of a product or service (Chun et al., 2020, p. 957). This makes purchase intention a crucial concept to marketing and studying consumer behaviour. Understanding purchase intention helps businesses to tailor their marketing activities, such as collaborations, to enhance and drive sales (Uggla and Åsberg, 2010, pp. 37-38). Thus, to study whether brand collaborations have the power to influence purchase intention in this context, the following hypothesis was created:

H1: A brand collaboration between Finnish design brands has a more positive effect on purchase intention compared to when there is no collaboration.

As mentioned before, this study employed a 2x3 factorial design. Independent variables, or treatments, can have two types of effects on the dependent variable in a factorial

design: main and interaction effects (Neuman, 2014, p. 296). As this study has two independent variables, namely brand collaborations and brand familiarity, there were two main effects and one interaction effect measured in this study. The first main effect was measured in the first hypothesis (H1) for brand collaborations whereas the second hypothesis (H2) focused on the other independent variable, brand familiarity. This is because high brand familiarity has been studied to positively impact the online purchase intention of consumers (Park & Stoel, 2005, p. 151). The more familiar consumers are of a brand, the more they trust and desire the brand (Kuo & Nagasawa, 2020, p. 4). Consequently, this leads to higher purchase intentions. The same can be assumed for Finnish design brands, and this is why this study proposed the following hypothesis:

H2: High brand familiarity has a more positive effect on purchase intention than low or no brand familiarity.

While not studied before, this research aimed to investigate whether having low brand familiarity affected a consumer's purchase intention more positively than having no brand familiarity. Thus, this thesis measured brand familiarity in three levels; high, low, and none. Previous studies have focused on measuring brand familiarity in two levels; high or low or high or no brand familiarity (e.g. Childs & Jin, 2020; Park & Stoel, 2005). Contrary, this thesis measured familiarity in all three levels while aiming to investigate whether the added third level made a difference in the results. Investigating the third level was done to get a more comprehensive understanding of how the different levels of familiarity impact consumers' purchasing behaviour. It also has to be mentioned that the participant was either familiar with both of the brands or neither. There were no situations where the participant was familiar with one brand and not the other. Consequently, to measure the differences between the three brand familiarity levels, the second hypothesis (H2) needed to be divided into a sub-hypothesis:

H2a: Low brand familiarity has a more positive effect on purchase intention than no brand familiarity.

As this study employed a 2x3 experimental design, an interaction hypothesis (H3) was formulated in addition to the two main effect hypotheses, H1 and H2. An interaction occurs when two independent variables produce an effect beyond their individual effects

(Neuman, 2014, p. 296). When the two independent variables, brand collaborations and brand familiarity, interact, it can be expected to influence the dependent variable, purchase intention. This can be assumed as high brand familiarity within brand collaborations has been studied to have a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention (Hou et al., 2017, p. 633). Therefore, it can be said that the impact of a brand collaboration on consumers' purchase intention depends on the level of brand familiarity. The following interaction hypothesis was formulated to study this interaction:

H3: A brand collaboration has a stronger positive effect on purchase intention for consumers with high brand familiarity compared to those with low or no brand familiarity.

The next chapter of this thesis will explain how these hypotheses were studied.

3. Methods

This section focuses on the methodology of this thesis. Firstly, a justification for choosing an experimental design for this research will be given. This will be followed by a section focusing on the sampling methods as well as a detailed description of the final sample of the respondents. The operationalisation section explains how the different concepts of this study were measured in the experiment. This section is followed by a description of the pilot test conducted. This is followed by explaining the procedure, or how the experiment was carried out. Finally, the validity, reliability, and ethics of this research will be reflected upon.

3.1 Justification of methods

Quantitative research in social sciences is often broad and deductive in nature, which means that it focuses on observing general patterns and relations in society by using statistical approaches and then predicting more specific observations (Babbie, 2017, p. 28). Based on the previously introduced literature, the hypotheses of this thesis are theoretically grounded and they were empirically tested as a basis for this research. Thus, a quantitative research method was chosen for this thesis as it aimed to gather generalisable results from measuring brand collaborations, brand familiarity, and purchase intention in the context of Finnish design.

As this thesis was concerned with examining the causal effects of Finnish design brand collaborations and the level of brand familiarity on purchase intention, an experimental design was deemed appropriate. Experiments focus on comparing two or more groups by measuring whether changes in one variable affect the other (Neuman, 2014, p. 282). In other words, experiments test whether the independent variables, or predictor variables, can cause a change in the dependent variables, or the outcome variables.

In this case, a 2x3 between-subjects quasi-factorial experiment was conducted. In a between-subjects experimental design, participants see only one treatment condition whereas a quasi-factorial design aims to establish a causal relationship between an independent and dependent variable (Vargas et al., 2017, pp. 108-110). This study compared six equivalent groups on their level of brand familiarity (high, low or none) and the presence of brand collaboration (yes or no) in influencing purchase intention. Thus, through experimental manipulation of the independent variables (brand collaboration and brand familiarity), strict control was maintained to eliminate alternative explanations and establish causality in the results (Neuman, 2014, pp. 290-291). Neuman (2014, p. 299) also explains that this approach

isolates the effects of the experimental manipulation, allowing for a clear assessment of differences in the dependent variable (purchase intention) across the six experimental conditions. Hence, the possible treatment effects are discoverable for the causal relationship.

The between-subjects experimental design was chosen over a within-subjects design as it offers many advantages. Firstly, the between-subjects design minimises biases in the results as respondents cannot transfer knowledge to one another and no learning effects are present (Neuman, 2014, pp. 300-303). This means that respondents cannot influence each other's responses. Neuman (2014, pp. 300-303) also explains that these types of experiments are typically completed more quickly, which can enhance the validity of the research as participant focus is maintained. For instance, the completion of this experiment took roughly 2 to 4 minutes. Finally, a between-subjects design avoids concerns about order effects, further strengthening the validity of the findings (Vargas et al., 2017, pp. 110-111). Order effects refer to the sequence of the manipulations introduced to the participants. All in all, this type of experimental design was the most ideal for this research.

3.2 Sample

There was no strict target population for this study, and it worked on a voluntary basis for all individuals over the age of 18 with an interest in the Finnish design industry. Participants were asked whether they were previously familiar with Finnish design to filter out participants with no previous knowledge or interest in the industry. Moreover, the age limit ensured that there would be no serious ethical considerations for this study, such as asking for the consent of minor's parents. Finally, having no strict requirements for participation was used to aim for a diversity of respondents in terms of socio-demographic indicators.

Due to limited resources and timeline, purposive sampling and snowball sampling methods were used to reach participants. Purposive sampling means that the experiment was shared to everyone who fit the sampling criteria (Babbie, 2017, p. 196). Additionally, the experiment was shared widely online on social media platforms, Facebook and Reddit. Different Facebook groups and subreddits focusing on (Finnish) design were used to reach suitable participants. Contrary, the snowball sampling method works through asking the initial participants to share the survey with others who fit the sampling criteria and through referrals (Babbie, 2017, pp. 196-197). This meant that at the end of the experiment,

participants were asked to share the experiment forward to their contacts with an interest in Finnish design.

It is important to note that these two sampling methods are non-random sampling methods which can cause biases in the results of the study. It is more difficult to represent the whole population of the study through these sampling methods which in turn can reduce the generalisability of the results (Babbie, 2017, pp. 195-196). Regardless, these two sampling methods were the most appropriate in this context as the sampling size was to be at least 180. This is due to the fact that each six groups of the 2x3 experiment aimed to have at least 30 participants to reach generalisable results (Janssen & Verboord, 2024, p. 11).

The final sample size consisted of 193 participants ($N = 193$), which were divided between the control group ($N = 32$) and five experimental groups ($N = 161$). Experimental groups 1 and 2 had 29 participants, group 3 had 37 participants, group 4 had 31 participants and finally, group 5 had 35 participants. While Qualtrics was set to equally divide the participants, the division did not turn out equal. This could be due to the fact that the experiment had many incomplete results, some participants were filtered out before the start of the experiment, and the manipulations did not work on every participant. All in all, the final sample size ($N = 193$) was adequate to reach generalisable results (Janssen & Verboord, 2024, p. 11).

This study was also interested in various socio-demographic indicators (see Appendix A, Tables A.1, A.2, and A.3). Firstly, this study asked about the gender, age, nationality and educational background of the participant. Moreover, as this study focused on design brands, the income of participants was of interest. Design items can often be more pricey than non-design items (Wayfarer Design Studio, n.d.), and thus the income level of participants was of interest in the context of this study.

The majority of the respondents were females ($N = 177$) as percentually there were almost 92% females in the experiment. This means that there were 15 males (7.8%) and one person who preferred not to disclose their gender (0.5%). There was also an option for non-binary, or third gender, but no respondents chose this option. Furthermore, the age of respondents ranged from 21 to 78 while the average age of a respondent was around 45 years old ($M = 44.76$). The respondents also came from 21 different countries and four different continents, namely Asia, Europe, North America, and Oceania (see Appendix A, Table A.3). Still, most of the respondents had a (partly) Finnish background ($N = 168$). This means that roughly 87% of the respondents had at least partly a Finnish background. The majority of the respondents were also relatively highly educated as almost half of them had finished a

Master's degree ($N = 96$). Other educational levels included primary education ($N = 1$), high school graduate or equivalent ($N = 16$), Bachelor's degree ($N = 66$), PhD or a professional degree ($N = 10$), and finally, other ($N = 4$). In the other category, the answers were asked to be written out by participants. With a closer examination, each answer from the 'other'-category could be placed within the 'high school graduate or equivalent' - category. Finally, the majority of the respondents in this study had a relatively high annual net income as almost 40% received over 50 000 € annually (See Appendix A, Table A.1).

3.3 Operationalisation

This section explains how the different concepts of this study were measured in the online experiment on Qualtrics.

Brand collaborations. Previous studies have predominantly focused on using existing brands, and their collaborations, as their stimulus material (e.g. Hou et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2023). As the existing brand collaborations between Finnish design brands are rather limited, not enough material was found to be used in this experiment. Therefore, this study presented hypothetical written scenarios to the participants where brand collaborations were measured in two levels; either an absence or a presence of a brand collaboration. The manipulation of these two levels was done through differences in wording which means that the condition aimed to paint a picture of a hypothetical shopping situation for the participant where there was either a brand collaboration present or absent (see Appendix B).

Brand familiarity. Brand familiarity was measured either in high, low, or none in the experiment. Again, the manipulation of these levels was done through differences in wording which means that the condition aimed to create an image of a hypothetical shopping situation for the participant. In the situation, the participant was asked to imagine a situation where they were browsing an online platform where they came across different brands that they had different levels of familiarity with. To explain this further, the familiarity levels of this study must be reflected in more depth. Firstly, high brand familiarity referred to a state when the consumer was highly aware of the brands in question. They might have had purchased from the brands in the past, and they were highly familiar with the products the brands had to offer. When consumers had low familiarity with the brands, it meant that they might have heard or seen the brands a few times in the past. Additionally, the consumers may have purchased from the brands before, but they were not fully aware of the brands or their offerings. The

final level, no familiarity with the brands, referred to a situation where the consumer had not heard of the brands before, nor had they purchased anything knowingly from the brands before. Finally, it also has to be pointed out again that there were no situations where the participant was familiar with one brand and not the other. The participant was either familiar with both of the brands or neither. To read the different stimulus materials used in the experiment, see Appendix B.

Purchase intention. Purchase intention was measured on a four-item scale adapted from a similar study by Kim et al. (2023, p. 2289) focusing on the online game and fashion industry collaborations. Minor modifications were made to the questions to fit the purpose of this study, and they focused on aspects such as the willingness of participants to purchase items from the hypothetical collaboration (see Table 3.1). The answers were presented on a five-point Likert scale which ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The items were presented in forms of statements, and participants were asked to point out the extent they agree with the presented statements.

Manipulation checks. The study utilised two manipulation checks to ensure that participants maintained the condition in mind during the experimental procedure and understood the manipulation as intended. The manipulation checks focused on brand collaborations and brand familiarity, and they were presented in forms of statements. Participants were asked to point out the extent they agree with the presented statements on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The manipulation checks assessed whether the participant had kept in mind the presence or absence of a collaboration and how familiar (high, low or none) they were with the brands during the experiment.

Table 3.1

Four-item purchase intention scale modified from Kim et al. (2023).

Variable	Item	Measurement
Purchase intention (PI)	PI1	I am willing to purchase products of this [collaboration/brands].
	PI2	I prefer products from this [collaboration/brands].
	PI3	I would consider the products of this [collaboration/brands] first.
	PI4	I would recommend products from this [collaboration/brands] to others.

3.4 Pilot test

Before the distribution of the experiment, a pilot test was conducted to test the entirety of the research as well as to see whether the written scenarios were effective to manipulate the brand collaboration type and brand familiarity levels for participants. In total, 6 respondents participated in the pilot test. The pilot test revealed the mean scores for the manipulation checks on a five point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The mean scores of the manipulation checks were 3.83 ($SD = 1.60$) for brand collaborations and 3.67 ($SD = 1.75$) for brand familiarity. The mean scores revealed that the conditions were not understood as well as hoped, as 3 on the Likert scale indicates that the participants neither agreed or disagreed to understand the conditions. Based on the results, some modifications to the original written hypothetical scenarios were made to make them clearer and more effective. These modifications included things such as specifying the different manipulations further. Additionally, some small typographical errors were noted during the pilot test as well as some technical issues with Qualtrics. The usage of a pilot test helped to make the experiment more effective as the mean scores rose from 3.83 ($SD = 1.60$) to 4.15 ($SD = .73$) for brand collaborations and from 3.67 ($SD = 1.75$) to 4.33 ($SD = .67$) for brand familiarity. For a more detailed discussion of the risen mean scores, see Chapter 4,

section 4.2 Manipulation checks. When deemed successful, the experiment was then shared to volunteer participants.

3.5 Procedure

Qualtrics, an online software for survey-making, was utilised to conduct the experiment. The experiment started by asking for informed consent from the participants, where the contact details of the researcher were shared. Additionally, a question focusing on the previous familiarity of Finnish design of participants was asked to filter out unsuitable candidates for this experiment. If one was not previously familiar with Finnish design, they were taken to the end of the survey. This research focused solely on people with previous familiarity with Finnish design, and other candidates were excluded from the study. There were 64 participants that were not previously familiar with Finnish design, and these respondents were removed from the final sample during the data analysis.

As the participant started out the experiment, a short cover story was utilised to hide the true meaning of the experiment to combat demand characteristics and participants giving out socially desirable answers (Neuman, 2014, p. 292). By demand characteristics, Neuman refers to a situation where participants understand the true purpose of the study and then modify their behaviour to fit the study better (2014, p. 292). This is why cover stories are utilised to reduce demand characteristics. In this study, the cover story explained that the experiment would focus on purchase intention in an online shopping situation rather than revealing the true focus on brand collaborations and brand familiarity. The short cover story can be found from Appendix B. The slight deception used to hide the aim of the study was not expected to be a concern for ethical issues as a debrief was held at the end of the study to share the true purpose of the research (Neuman, 2014, p. 310).

After the cover story, precise instructions for the experiment were shared to participants to ensure reliability and that the experiment was done correctly (Neuman, 2014, p. 291). In the instructions, participants were informed about a forthcoming written hypothetical shopping situation, and they were asked to read the scenario closely and carefully. Additionally, participants were informed that the written situation would be followed by questions related to what they had read as well as some socio-demographic questions. Qualtrics then randomly assigned which of the six conditions the participant would fill out as well as that there was an equal distribution of participants for each of the six conditions. Random assignment was used as it is an unplanned process to help reduce bias

since it ensures that each participant has an equal chance to be assigned to any of the experimental conditions (Vargas et al., 2017, p. 108). Vargas et al. (2017, pp. 108-109) also explain that random assignment also guarantees that any differences in the outcome variables can be explained by the independent variables rather than aspects such as the personality characteristics or the mood of a participant.

As the experiment started out, a different hypothetical written scenario was introduced to the participant in each of the six conditions where they were asked to imagine an online shopping situation related to Finnish design. This means that the participants in the control group received a scenario where there was no collaboration between two hypothetical Finnish design brands and the participant also had no previous familiarity with the brands. The first experimental group read a scenario of a brand collaboration between two hypothetical Finnish brands, but the participants had no previous familiarity with the two brands. The second experimental group was exposed to a situation where there was no collaboration of two hypothetical Finnish design brands but they had low prior familiarity with the two brands whereas the third group had a collaboration of two hypothetical Finnish design brands that they had low familiarity with. The fourth experimental group was exposed to a scenario focusing on no brand collaborations but they had high previous familiarity of the two hypothetical Finnish brands. The final group read a situation where there was a collaboration of two hypothetical Finnish design brands that they were highly familiar with. The specific scenarios presented to the participants can be found from Appendix B. To visualise the six conditions, a table is also presented below (see Table 3.2).

The scenario was then followed by four questions in relation to the previously introduced concept of *purchase intention*. The questions were followed by the manipulation checks which determined whether the participants maintained the conditions in mind during the experiment and understood the manipulations as intended (see Appendix B). The manipulation checks also helped to increase internal validity (Vargas et al., 2017, p. 107). As mentioned before, each participant had to answer two manipulation checks; one focused on brand collaboration and one on brand familiarity (see Appendix B).

The experiment ended with demographic questions which focused on aspects such as the gender and age of the participant. To make the experiment seem less invasive, the demographic questions were placed at the end of the survey (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 212). Finally, a debrief was held where the true purpose of the experiment was shared. The true purpose of the experiment was also asked not to be shared forward with others to combat biased results (Neuman, 2014, p. 292). Participants were also provided with an opportunity

to leave any possible comments or remarks to the researcher, and the contact details of the researcher were provided again. The full online experiment can be found from Appendix D.

Table 3.2

Visualisation of the six experimental conditions.

	Type of brand collaboration (no)	Type of brand collaboration (yes)
No brand familiarity	Group 1	Group 2
Low brand familiarity	Group 3	Group 4
High brand familiarity	Group 5	Group 6

3.6 Validity, reliability, and ethics

Before moving onto the results section of this thesis, validity and reliability of this research has to be reflected upon. Validity in quantitative research refers to the accuracy in the measured concepts whereas reliability to the replicability of the research (Babbie, 2017, pp. 149-152). To ensure a valid and reliable study, various measures were taken into account.

Pretests often take place to increase the reliability and validity of an experimental design (Babbie, 2017, p. 149). Conducting a traditional pre-test, where participants are assessed before and after exposure to a manipulation, was deemed impractical and potentially invalid in this study due to several reasons related to the nature of the research design as well as the stimulus material. Pre- and post-tests were not conducted in this case as the usage of written hypothetical scenarios as the stimulus material was thought to present a challenge for assessing participants' initial baseline levels of knowledge as responses may vary widely based on their interpretation and individual perspective (Bryman, 2012, p. 54). Thus, alternative approaches, namely conducting a pilot test and utilising manipulation checks, were used to control potential confound variables and to ensure a valid and reliable outcome (Vargas et al., 2017, p. 101). Before the main study, a pilot test was conducted with a small sample of participants to assess whether participants understood the experiment and its questions. Furthermore, the manipulation checks assessed if the participants were mindful of the experimental conditions, such as their perceptions of the collaboration between the

brands. These questions helped to ensure that participants understood and responded to the manipulation as intended (Vargas et al., 2017, p. 106). Finally, it must be stated that the purchase intention scale from Kim et al. (2023) used in this study had a high reliability score which will be further reflected upon in the next chapter (see Chapter 4, section 4.3 Reliability analysis).

Moreover, this study posed no serious ethical concerns for its participants, as it focused on (adult) participants' purchase intentions with Finnish design brands. The answers to the experiments were treated completely anonymously, and thus the study remained relatively unobtrusive. Participants were also reassured throughout the experiment of their voluntary participation, and that there would be no repercussions of ending the survey prematurely. As previously mentioned, the slight deception used in this experiment was also no cause for concern. This was further ensured by holding a debrief at the end of the experiment (Neuman, 2014, p. 303).

4. Results

This section focuses on the results of the online experiment conducted on Qualtrics. The survey ran from March 7 to April 3, 2024, and had 411 initial respondents. The data gathered through the questionnaire was exported from Qualtrics and then uploaded to IBM SPSS Statistics, an online software for statistical analyses. The data was analysed by using multiple statistical techniques on SPSS' version 29. Firstly, descriptive statistics and frequencies were looked at to describe the final sample. These results were discussed in the previous chapter. The three hypotheses of this research H1, H2 (including its sub-hypothesis H2a), and H3 were analysed through conducting a two-way analysis of variance (abbreviated as 'ANOVA'). More detailed information about the statistical tests are presented below.

4.1 Data preparation

Various measures had to be taken before the analyses on SPSS took place. Firstly, the responses had to be checked to be complete. Out of 411 initial responses, 213 responses ($N = 213$) were deemed complete as some respondents had either stopped the experiment before its completion or the filter question excluded them from completing the survey fully. As previously mentioned, the filter question measured participants' previous familiarity with Finnish design, and if one was not familiar, the answer took them to the end of the survey. There were 64 participants not previously familiar with Finnish design, and these results were removed from the final sample. The remaining 149 respondents had stopped the experiment before its completion, and these responses were removed too.

Checking for incomplete responses was followed by inspecting the manipulation checks focusing on brand collaborations and brand familiarity. If participants failed to match their perception of the condition with the actual condition, this data was removed from the SPSS dataset. In other words, if participants failed to recall whether they were exposed to a situation with a presence or absence of a brand collaboration and whether they had a high, low or no familiarity with the brands, they were excluded from the results. Out of 213 respondents, 193 respondents were accepted ($N = 193$). The other 20 respondents had not understood the manipulations as intended, and they were removed from the final sample. As the manipulation checks were measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), only respondents who answered 3 (*neither agree or disagree*), 4 (*agree*), or 5 (*strongly agree*) were included in the final sample.

4.2 Manipulation checks

The two manipulation checks of the experiment were measured on a five-point Likert scale in order to receive a mean score for both independent variables, brand collaborations and brand familiarity. The mean score for brand collaborations was 4.15 ($SD = .73$) whereas brand familiarity had a mean score of 4.33 ($SD = .67$). Furthermore, the mean scores for the three levels of brand familiarity were 4.27 ($SD = .76$) for high, 4.21 ($SD = .57$) for low, and 4.5 ($SD = .65$) for no. The mean score for the presence of a brand collaboration was 4.4 ($SD = .64$) whereas for the absence 3.85 ($SD = .74$). Based on these scores, the manipulations worked as intended, as (4) on the Likert scale indicates that participants *agreed* that they kept in mind the presence or absence of a collaboration as well as how familiar (high, low or none) they were with the brands during the experiment. Thus, the mean scores reveal that the conditions were perceived accordingly among the participants.

4.3 Reliability analysis

To test whether the four items from the purchase intention scale from Kim et al. (2023) measured the same thing, a reliability analysis was conducted before conducting any other analyses on SPSS. According to Pallant (2020, p. 102), Cronbach's Alpha has to be higher than .7 ($\alpha < .7$) for the scale to be considered reliable. Originally, the purchase intention scale from Kim et al. (2023) was found to be reliable ($\alpha = .87$). In this context, the scale was also found to be reliable ($\alpha = .77$). Thus, no item had to be removed from the scale to improve its internal consistency (Pallant, 2020, p. 102). As purchase intention was the only concept to be measured on a scale in this thesis, no other reliability analyses had to be conducted.

4.4 ANOVA

Two-way ANOVAs are conducted in cases when the interactions of two independent variables and their effects on the dependent variable are measured. Additionally, two-way ANOVAs help to understand the impact of each variable individually as well as their combined effect on the outcome (Pallant, 2020, p. 281). In other words, testing the main effects for both independent variables and their possible interaction effect is achievable by conducting a two-way ANOVA. As this study measured whether two independent variables, namely brand collaborations and brand familiarity, have an effect on the dependent variable, namely purchase intention, a two-way ANOVA was deemed the most appropriate test.

Therefore, for the three hypotheses H1, H2 (including its sub-hypothesis H2a), and H3, a two-way ANOVA was run on SPSS. H1 measured whether the presence of a brand collaboration has a more positive effect on purchase intention compared to the absence of a collaboration. Conversely, H2 (including its sub-hypothesis H2a) studied whether the level of brand familiarity (high, low or none) positively affects purchase intention. Finally, H3 measured whether brand collaborations and brand familiarity interact to influence purchase intention.

4.4.1 Assumptions of parametric techniques

As a two-way ANOVA is a parametric technique, there are various assumptions that the test makes of its population and data (Pallant, 2020, p. 212). Pallant (2020, pp. 212-215) lists five general assumptions of parametric techniques: the levels of measurement, random sampling, independence of observations, normal distribution, and homogeneity of variance. If violated, these assumptions can affect the validity and reliability of the study (Pallant, 2020, p. 212). Additionally, as conducting a two-way ANOVA was ideal for this study, a non-parametric technique could not be used to combat violating these stringent assumptions. Thus, various measures had to be taken to ensure a more valid and reliable study. To limit the scope of this thesis, only violations of the general assumptions were examined.

This thesis tested for violations of each of the five general assumptions. Firstly, parametric tests assume that the dependent variable of the test is measured on a continuous scale (Pallant, 2020, p. 213). The dependent variable in this study, namely purchase intention, is an ordinal variable and therefore it was measured as *scale* on SPSS. This means that this assumption was not violated. Secondly, random sampling does not often happen in real world research, and violating this assumption is no cause for serious consequences in the results (Pallant, 2020, p. 213). As mentioned in Chapter 3, non-random sampling methods were used in this study as well. Thus, while this assumption was violated, it was thought not to be a cause for concern. Thirdly, contrary to the second assumption, the independence of observations in this study was not violated. The participants of the experiment were not in contact with each other, meaning the observations made from the data were independent from one another and not influenced by other observations or measurements. Fourthly, it is said that the experimental groups have to have more than 30 participants so that the violation of the assumption of normal distribution does not cause any serious issues to the study (Pallant, 2020, p. 214). As there were groups with fewer than 30 participants in this study, additional

steps had to be taken. The distribution of the different scores were checked on SPSS by using histograms (see Appendix C, Figures C.1 and C.2). The distribution was deemed normal, and the assumption not greatly violated. Finally, not having equal group sizes can cause issues with the two-way ANOVA as it can affect the validity of the results and cause issues with the homogeneity of variance (Pallant, 2020, p. 215). There was not an equal distribution of participants across the six different conditions. When there was an absence of a brand collaboration, there were 32 participants in the no brand familiarity condition, 29 in the low brand familiarity condition, and 31 in high brand familiarity condition. Contrary, when there was a presence of a brand collaboration, there were 29 participants in the no brand familiarity condition, 37 in the low brand familiarity condition, and 35 in high brand familiarity condition. To combat violating this assumption, Levene's test of equality of error variances was conducted to test whether the variability scores were similar across the six conditions. Levene's test revealed that $F(5, 187) = 1.85, p = .104$. This means that the results are not significant which suggests that the assumption of homogeneity of variance is met, and the results of the two-way ANOVA could be interpreted without major concerns about violating this assumption. As evidenced by this section, checking for the five general assumptions ensured a more valid and reliable study.

4.4.2 Hypothesis testing

After checking for the violations of the general assumptions, the two-way ANOVA was performed to evaluate the effects of brand collaboration and brand familiarity on purchase intention. The means scores and standard deviations for purchase intention are presented in Table 4.1 below. The results from the two-way ANOVA indicated no significant main effect for H1 (A brand collaboration between Finnish design brands has a more positive effect on purchase intention compared to when there is no collaboration), $F(1, 185) = .39, p = .534$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$. A significant main effect was found for H2 (High brand familiarity has a more positive effect on purchase intention than low or no brand familiarity), $F(2, 185) = 5.38, p = .005$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. Finally, a significant interaction effect was found for H3 (A brand collaboration has a stronger positive effect on purchase intention for consumers with high brand familiarity compared to those with low or no brand familiarity), $F(2, 185) = 4.05, p = .019$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. As the majority of respondents were females and had a relatively high net annual income, 'income' and 'gender' were set as covariates. 'Income' as a covariate revealed $F(1, 186) = 2.22, p = .138$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$ whereas 'gender', $F(1, 185) = 1.21, p = .271$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. These analyses suggest that 'income' and 'gender' do not

have a statistically significant effect on purchase intention after controlling for the effects of brand familiarity and brand collaborations. Additionally, the effect sizes of 'income' and 'gender' as covariates are small, which indicates their limited practical significance in the outcome.

As the second main effect (H2) was found to be significant, a follow-up test was conducted to explore this relationship further. Tukey's post-hoc comparisons indicated that purchase intention was significantly higher with participants that were highly familiar with brands than participants that had low ($p = .047$) or no brand familiarity ($p = .013$). No other comparisons reached significance as participants that were not familiar with brands had a significance level of $p = .859$ (\neq H2a). Furthermore, Tukey's test was chosen among the various post-hoc tests due to its popularity with ANOVAs and its powerful analyses of comparisons of the groups (Lee & Lee, 2018, p. 355). These results suggest that brand familiarity plays a crucial role in influencing the relationship between brand collaborations and purchase intention.

A short reflection on type I and II errors must be made. Maier and Lakens (2022, p. 1) explain that type I error refers to a situation where the null hypothesis is rejected while actually true, whereas type II refers to a situation where the null hypothesis is wrongly accepted. In this thesis, the alpha level was set on .05 on SPSS as it helps control for type I and II errors in social scientific research (Maier & Lakens, 2022, p. 1). Thus, the potential for these errors to occur was small, and not a cause for concern.

To conclude this section, it can be said that hypothesis H1 was rejected. This means that a brand collaboration does not seemingly have a more positive effect on purchase intention than having no brand collaboration. Contrary, the second hypothesis (H2) was partly accepted as H2 was accepted but its sub-hypothesis H2a rejected. Participants that had low brand familiarity were not significantly more likely to purchase items than participants that were not familiar with the brands. Finally, H3 was accepted. When brand collaborations and brand familiarity interact, they positively affect purchase intention. A more detailed discussion of the results is found from the following chapter, Chapter 5.

Table 4.1

Descriptive statistics for purchase intention (where IV = independent variable).

Brand collaboration (IV1)	Brand familiarity (IV2)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
No brand collaboration	No brand familiarity	3.15	.83
	Low brand familiarity	3.35	.57
	High brand familiarity	3.82	.64
Brand collaboration	No brand familiarity	3.42	.61
	Low brand familiarity	3.33	.55
	High brand familiarity	3.44	.75

5. Discussion and conclusion

This chapter focuses on explaining the results of the study in relation to the research question set out. Firstly, this section discusses the demographic characteristics of the sample which will be followed by a general discussion of the results of the study in relation to previous studies and literature. Some theoretical and practical implications will also be reflected upon. Finally, there will be a discussion of the limitations of this study as well as some directions and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Discussion of sample

The sample of this research must be discussed in more depth as there are various interesting aspects to it. As respondents with no previous familiarity with Finnish design were excluded from the final sample, it can be concluded that the final sample consisted of people with at least some level of interest in the design industry. The sample primarily consisted of middle-aged Finnish women (around 45 years old) with a relatively high annual net income (more than 50 000 € annually). The division between the genders in the final sample was unequal as the majority of respondents were females (91.7%). This was to be expected as females are more inclined to buy luxury items than males (Shahid & Paul, 2021, p. 7). Additionally, the majority of the respondents having a relatively high annual net income makes sense, as most design items, and luxury in general, tend to be pricier than non-design items. Design is often more time consuming to create and the manufacturing and materials are often more expensive than for mass produced items (Wayfarer Design Studio, n.d., paras. 1-5). Brand reputation can also raise the prices of design products (Luca & Reshef, 2020, p. 2). Thus, people with a higher income tend to be more willing to pay for pricier items (Shahid & Paul, 2021, p. 8). One also requires some financial capabilities to be able to afford design items. The high income level of respondents can also be explained by the relatively high education of respondents as advanced degrees can lead to higher salaries in most cases (Niemi, 2024, para. 1). Finally, it must be stated again that buying and owning luxury items are often used to display one's higher socioeconomic status (Kowalczyk & Mitchell, 2022, p. 440). Considering everything, the limited sociodemographic variability in the sample of this study is in line with previous research.

5.2 Discussion of the results

This section focuses on answering the research question of this thesis by discussing the results of the experiment in relation to previous studies and literature. To answer the research question ‘*How does the degree of a collaboration (yes or no) between Finnish design brands and the level of brand familiarity (high, low or none) impact consumers’ purchase intention?*’, each of the three hypotheses needs to be discussed individually. The hypotheses will be discussed in order, from the first hypothesis (H1) to the third (H3).

The first hypothesis (H1) of this research was rejected. The reason a brand collaboration between Finnish design brands might not have had a more positive impact on purchase intention compared to the absence of a collaboration could be due to various reasons. Firstly, the participants of the experiment may have not perceived the collaboration as adding value or uniqueness to the design products. While the manipulation checks revealed that participants perceived the scenarios accordingly, the collaboration perhaps failed to excite them to be willing to make a purchase. It is possible that the hypothetical scenario failed to create a compelling narrative that resonated with the participants to further drive their purchase intention within the collaboration. Additionally, previous studies have focused on using existing brand collaborations as their stimulus material (Hou et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2023), and this could be another reason why these studies found a more positive impact on participants’ purchase intention during a brand collaboration than this thesis. Visuals have been studied to engage participants more than text as they can create more immersive experiences (Robson & Banerjee, 2023, p. 489). Therefore, in order to have a more positive impact on purchase intention in comparison to the absence of one, the written scenario of a collaboration would have needed to make a meaningful impact on the participants’ purchase intention.

The ‘spontaneity’ of the collaboration condition in the online experiment must also be reflected upon. As this study has aimed to prove, consumers’ purchase behaviour is complex and composed of many elements (Park & Stoel, 2005, p. 151). In the experiment, participants exposed to the conditions with a presence of a brand collaboration were asked to imagine a scenario where they came across a brand collaboration that they had no previous knowledge about. This could have negatively affected their purchase intention. Since brand familiarity is an important influence for purchase intention (Hou et al., 2017, p. 633), the same can be assumed for brand collaborations. Previous familiarity with the brands, as well as their collaboration, could have had a more positive impact on consumers’ purchase intention.

Some consumers' might need more time to make a decision of a purchase than was given in the experiment. All in all, if the participants had heard about the hypothetical collaboration earlier in their purchasing journey, it could have positively affected their purchase intention. Even a few dozen minutes can increase consumers' purchase decisions, and lead to decreased levels of purchase regret (Moon & Lee, 2013, p. 117). Moreover, while the hypothetical shopping scenarios were rather neutral-toned (see Appendix B), if participants have a strong preference for specific design aesthetics, this could possibly affect their responses. It would have also been different to see the collaboration in a natural setting rather than hypothetically in an online experiment. Seeing a brand collaboration in the real world could affect how much attention consumers would have placed on it (Vargas et al., 2017, p. 110).

While the first hypothesis (H1) was rejected, it does not mean that collaborations are not a viable brand strategy. The rejection of this hypothesis highlights the differences and complexities of consumer behaviour which could explain why the positive effect of a collaboration was not found in this context. While there can be many disadvantages of a badly conducted brand collaboration, companies also need to continuously adapt and evolve their strategies in response to changing market dynamics and consumer preferences (Kim et al., 2014, p. 350). Even if well conducted, a brand collaboration can still fail. Many factors can play into it, such as a bad economic situation within a market (Uggla & Åsberg, 2010, p. 41). Additionally, many other factors in addition to purchase intention matter during a consumers' purchasing journey. While important, purchase intention is also only one measure of a successful brand collaboration.

In the second hypothesis (H2) and its sub-hypothesis H2a, an additional level of brand familiarity was measured. Accordingly, brand familiarity was measured in three levels: high, low, or none. Previous research has predominantly focused on measuring brand familiarity in either high and none, or high and low (Park & Stoel, 2005, p. 155). In the context of this research, the additional level brought no insights to the results. High brand familiarity affected purchase intention more than having low or no brand familiarity. While low brand familiarity was expected to have a more positive effect on purchase intention than having no brand familiarity in the sub-hypothesis (H2a), these results were not insightful in this context. This could be due to various reasons. Perhaps the 'low' condition did not measure low brand familiarity well enough, which is why participants did not deem it to have a bigger impact on purchase intention compared to not having any brand familiarity. Some participants could have even thought that the low brand familiarity situation was too similar to having no brand familiarity, affecting their answers. While the perceived realism of the scenarios could have

affected the results, the manipulation check for brand familiarity accounted for this. Running descriptive statistics on SPSS revealed the manipulation check for the ‘low’ condition to have a mean score of 4.21 ($SD = .57$). This means that the majority of the participants understood the condition as intended during the experiment, as they *agreed* that they kept the ‘low’ familiarity level in mind while filling out the questions. It can be concluded that the perceived realism was not an issue in this study, and not a possible confounding variable. Regardless, these results strengthen previous research where high brand familiarity has been studied to positively affect purchase intention (Park & Stoel, 2005, p. 151). When consumers have previous familiarity with a brand, they are more inclined to buy from that brand, even unconsciously (Hou et al., 2017, p. 632). Consumers also respond more strongly to established brands. Thus, these results highlight the importance of considering brand familiarity when designing and implementing brand collaborations as brand strategies, as they can notably influence consumers’ purchase intention and behaviour.

The final hypothesis (H3) was accepted which is especially interesting if compared to the rejection of the first hypothesis (H1). Based on H1, brand collaborations seemingly do not have a more positive effect on purchase intention compared to the absence of one. Then again, when combined with high brand familiarity, collaborations appear to have a positive influence on purchase intention. This means that the impact of a brand collaboration on consumers’ purchase intention depends on the level of brand familiarity. For instance, a brand collaboration has a stronger positive effect on purchase intention for consumers with high brand familiarity compared to those with low or no brand familiarity in a shopping situation. This is also in line with previous research as high brand familiarity within brand collaborations has been studied to have a positive impact on consumers’ purchase intention (Hou et al., 2017, p. 633). Hence, brands leveraging collaborations need to mind consumers’ brand familiarity levels when aiming to influence their purchase intention. If profit is the end goal, brand familiarity is a crucial aspect to mind as collaborations seem to be particularly effective for established audiences. Therefore, based on previous research (e.g. Hou et al., 2017) as well as the acceptance of H3, brand collaborations can be said to have a positive effect on consumers’ purchase intention.

Finally, the experiment focused on the online space as most shopping happens online nowadays (Shaw et al., 2022, p. 1). While the majority of consumers prefer shopping online due to its convenience (Wang et al., 2022, pp. 1-2), having the experiment focus on the online space could have affected the results of this study as some respondents could have placed importance to the hypothetical shopping situation happening online rather than in-person. As

mentioned in Chapter 2, Section 2.5 Purchase intention, shopping online differs from shopping in-person widely. While previous research has shown that purchase intention tends to be higher for online shopping (Wang et al., 2022, p. 9), the buying behaviour for design and luxury products might differ from day-to-day shopping. As prices are higher for luxury (Wayfarer Design Studio, n.d., paras. 1-5), consumers might prefer seeing the products in person before they decide on the purchase. Having exceptional customer service experiences while shopping can also be a part of the luxury buying experience (Holmqvist et al., 2020, p. 114). Therefore, if this thesis had focused on in-person shopping, perhaps the first hypothesis (H1) would have been found statistically significant. In luxury buying, perhaps collaborations affect consumers' purchase intention more positively in-person rather than online.

Finally, to conclude this section, it can be said that brand collaborations and familiarity positively affect consumers' purchase intention the most when combined. Brand collaborations are complex processes as evidenced by the rejection of hypothesis (H1) and acceptance of the interaction hypothesis (H3). The acceptance of H2 points to the direction that brand collaborations seem to be particularly effective for established audiences, and brands leveraging collaborations need to mind consumers' brand familiarity levels when aiming to influence their purchase intention.

5.3 Theoretical and practical implications

To close the gap in academic research, this thesis focused on studying Finnish design brand collaborations as brand strategies for economic growth. This thesis builds on previous brand collaboration research in a few ways. While the findings of this experiment indicate that brand collaborations between Finnish design brands do not affect the purchase intention of consumers, previous research has proven brand collaborations to be successful brand strategies (e.g. Uggla & Åsberg, 2010). The same can still be assumed in this context, as brand collaborations were found to be effective for consumers with high levels of brand familiarity. Evidently, brand collaborations have a positive effect on consumers' purchase intention for established brands. As a result, this thesis found that brand familiarity is an essential concept for brand collaboration research.

In addition to furthering academic research on the topic, empirical evidence of brand collaborations was provided for Finnish design firms by measuring concepts such as brand familiarity and purchase intention. Therefore, in regards to practical implications, a few conclusions can be made. Firstly, in line with previous research (e.g. Childs & Jin, 2016; Hou

et al., 2017; Park & Stoel, 2005), high brand familiarity was found to play an important role during Finnish design brand collaborations. Therefore, established Finnish design brands should consider whether collaborating could be a viable strategy for their financial growth. While brands with larger audiences can help smaller ones reach a more significant market position, they can simultaneously tap into new audiences through collaborating with smaller brands. Brands could also explore the phenomenon of democratisation of luxury, and reach new audiences in this way as well. For instance, Marimekko's successful collaborations with Uniqlo, Adidas and Ikea made their offerings more attainable to the masses while reaching financial success (Marimekko, n.d.a, para. 1; Marimekko, n.d.b, para. 1, Marimekko n.d.c, para. 3). Finally, focus should also be placed on promoting and fostering customer loyalty in order to stay competitive within the market. This is also due to the fact that this study found that brand collaborations affect purchase intention more for consumers with high brand familiarity compared to those with low or no brand familiarity in an online shopping situation. As evidenced by this thesis, brands need to remain cautious and mindful of collaborations.

By providing these results, this thesis simultaneously succeeded in its academic aim to further brand collaboration research as well as its societal aim to provide important empirical evidence for Finnish design brands evaluating the possibilities of brand collaborations.

5.4 Limitations and future recommendations

While an experimental design offers control within a study (Vargas et al., 2017, p. 101), there are some other confounding variables (in addition to the perceived realism of the hypothetical scenarios) that could have affected the results of this study subtly. These include demand characteristics and experimental mortality (Neuman, 2014, p. 300). While demand characteristics can never be fully eliminated, they were thought not to be a cause for concern in this study as a between-subjects experimental design and a cover story were utilised to combat the tendency of participants responding in a socially desirable manner (Neuman, 2014, p. 292). Conversely, experimental mortality could have affected the results as many participants, namely 149, were excluded from the study due to their incomplete results. Experimental mortality refers to a situation where participants do not finish the experiment, which can cause issues as it is not known whether the results would differ if they had stayed until the end of the experiment (Neuman, 2014, p. 301). While these confounding variables

could have subtly influenced the main outcome of the study, various measures were taken to decrease their influence on the validity and reliability of this study. Therefore it can be said that their influence is thought not to be a cause for serious concern.

This thesis focused on manipulating the brand familiarity levels of participants during the experiment. In the six conditions, the participants had either high, low, or no familiarity with both of the brands. This means that this thesis cannot conclude whether there would be a difference in the results if the participant was only familiar with one of the brands, whether high or low. In the end, there was also no equal division of participants within the six conditions. A more equal division could have made the results more generalisable to the wider population.

While the limited demographic variability among the respondents of this research was to be expected to a certain extent (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1 Discussion of sample), it must be stated that the final sample of this study remains rather nonrepresentative due to a high number of middle-aged Finnish female respondents with a high annual net income. While ‘income’ and ‘gender’ were added as covariates in the two-way ANOVA, they were found not to have an effect in the main outcome of the study. Regardless, the results of this study might not be fully generalisable for the larger population. Having a more varied socio-demographic sample could have yielded different results. A nonrepresentative sample can also create some biases in the results making it another slight limitation of this study.

It also has to be mentioned that participants who answered 3 on the 5 point Likert scale of the two manipulation checks were included in the final sample. 3 indicates that participants neither agreed or disagreed to have kept the type of collaboration and the level of brand familiarity in mind. While the mean scores of the manipulation checks were deemed appropriate (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2 Manipulation checks), it could have been more reliable to only include respondents who answered 4 (*agree*) or 5 (*strongly agree*). This could have raised the mean scores further. Additionally, assessing the cover story in the experiment would have measured whether the cover story worked as intended on the participants. While the study’s two manipulation checks were used to measure the effectiveness of the research, an additional control question could have provided more specific information on the cover story, and made the study even more reliable and valid.

While traditional pre- and post-tests were thought to be impractical and invalid in this study, conducting them could have increased the validity and reliability of this study further (Neuman, 2014, p. 296). While various measures were taken to compensate for the absence of conducting them, such as utilising a cover story, manipulation checks and a debrief, pre-

and post-tests would have offered more control in the study. Finally, utilising random sampling methods instead of non-random sampling methods could have made the study more reliable and valid (Babbie, 2017, pp. 195-196). Considering everything, while this thesis included some slight limitations, the overall results of this study are thought to be valid and reliable enough.

In the light of the results and limitations of this thesis, some recommendations for future research are given. Firstly, other researchers could focus on whether a well-known, or even a moderately known, brand can raise the purchase intention of a consumer for a lesser known brand during a (Finnish design) brand collaboration. As mentioned before, this thesis only measured a situation where the consumer either had high, low, or no familiarity with both of the hypothetical brands. Hou et al. (2017) studied brand awareness in the context of luxury fashion and mobile phone brands, and the researchers found that brands with a high level of familiarity can raise consumers' purchase intention for a lesser known brand. The findings of Hou et al. (2017) could indicate that similar results could be found within different contexts as well, such as (Finnish design) brand collaborations. Thus, this study could be replicated by comparing whether the influence of higher levels of brand familiarity can raise consumers' purchase intention for lower levels of brand familiarity.

In the future, this study could also be conducted by utilising images or videos as stimulus material instead of written hypothetical scenarios. Especially videos are studied to have a stronger impact on participants compared to text in a social media setting (Robson & Banerjee, 2023, p. 489), which can be applied to other situations as well. Visuals can be more engaging, and they can create a more immersive experience for participants than having to read a short text. Utilising existing brand visuals and collaborations could potentially yield different results as well. While questions of brand attitude, likeability, and other moderating variables could cause issues, using existing material is common and easily controlled in social scientific research (e.g. Hou et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2014). Finally, it could be viable to see whether the results of this study would differ if instead of focusing on the online environment, the experiment would focus on in-person shopping. Thus, to advance brand collaboration research, future studies should focus on the aforementioned aspects.

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Appendix A

Table A.1

Sociodemographic characteristics of participants.

Variable	<i>N</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender	193		1.9	.31
Male	15	7.8%		
Female	177	91.7%		
Non-binary / Third gender	0	0%		
Prefer not to say	1	0.5%		
Education	193		3.6	.82
Primary education	1	0.5%		
High school graduate or equivalent	16	8.3%		
Bachelor's degree	66	34.2%		
Master's degree	96	49.7%		
PhD or professional degree (MD, JD etc.)	10	5.2%		
Other (please specify)	4	2.1%		
Annual net income level	193		4.2	1.8
0 - 10 000 €	22	11.4%		
10 000 - 20 000 €	21	10.9%		
20 000 - 30 000 €	23	11.9%		
30 000 - 40 000 €	29	15.0%		
40 000 - 50 000 €	22	11.4%		
Over 50 000 €	76	39.4%		

Table A.2*The ages of participants.*

Age	Amount
21	2
22	4
23	11
24	4
25	2
27	1
29	3
30	3
31	4
32	2
33	4
34	5
35	3
36	4
37	3
38	5
39	4
40	7
41	3
42	5
43	12
44	2
45	3
46	7
47	3

48	8
49	7
50	7
51	3
52	5
53	3
54	6
55	4
56	4
57	4
58	5
59	5
60	3
61	3
62	3
63	2
64	2
65	1
67	4
68	1
69	1
70	1
75	2
76	1
77	1
78	1

Table A.3*The different nationalities of participants.*

Nationality	Amount
American	2
Australian	1
British	7
Bulgarian	1
Danish	1
Dutch	4
EU	1
Finnish	127
Finnish & American	10
Finnish & Australian	8
Finnish & British	5
Finnish & Canadian	2
Finnish & Dutch	1
Finnish & French	1
Finnish & German	4
Finnish & Italian	2
Finnish & Norwegian	1
Finnish & Swedish	5
Finnish & Swiss	1
German	1
Indian	1
Indonesian	1
Italian	1
Nepalese	1
Polish	1

Swedish 1

Thai 1

Ukrainian 1

Appendix B

Examples of the different conditions

Control group: Imagine a scenario where you are browsing an online platform focusing on design products. You come across a new Finnish design brand for you, FinnDesigns. You are encountering the brand for the first time, and you have no prior knowledge on them. As you explore the platform further, you find out that the brand seemingly specialises in contemporary furniture and home decor inspired by the Finnish design principles. You notice another Finnish design brand, NordicCraft, while navigating the page further. This is the first time you have encountered NordicCraft. Similarly to FinnDesigns, this brand also focuses on following the Finnish design principles.

Experimental group 1 (collaboration, no familiarity): Imagine a scenario where you are browsing an online platform focusing on design products. You come across a new Finnish design brand for you, FinnDesigns. You are encountering the brand for the first time, and you have no prior knowledge on them. As you explore the platform further, you find out that the brand seemingly specialises in contemporary furniture and home decor inspired by the Finnish design principles. As you navigate the platform further, you notice that FinnDesigns has recently collaborated with another Finnish design brand, NordicCraft. This is the first time you have encountered NordicCraft. Similarly to FinnDesigns, this brand also focuses on following the Finnish design principles. You find out that the two brands have collaborated to create a collection of home decor items showcasing the fusion of their design philosophies.

Experimental group 2 (no collaboration, low familiarity): Imagine a scenario where you are browsing an online platform focusing on design products. You come across a Finnish design brand called FinnDesigns. You have basic awareness of this brand, but you have no in-depth familiarity with their products. This is the first time you have actively explored their products. As you navigate the platform further, you notice another Finnish design brand, NordicCraft. While you have a general awareness of NordicCraft, you are not too familiar with their offerings either.

Experimental group 3 (collaboration, low familiarity): Imagine a scenario where you are browsing an online platform focusing on design products. You come across a Finnish design

brand called FinnDesigns. You have basic awareness of this brand, but you have no in-depth familiarity with their products. This is the first time you have actively explored their products. As you navigate the platform further, you notice that FinnDesigns has recently collaborated with another Finnish design brand, NordicCraft. While you have a general awareness of NordicCraft, you are not too familiar with their offerings either. You find out that the two brands have collaborated to create a collection of home decor items showcasing the fusion of their design philosophies.

Experimental group 4: (no collaboration, high familiarity): Imagine a scenario where you are browsing an online platform focusing on design products. You come across a Finnish design brand called FinnDesigns. You are highly familiar with this brand as you have often encountered their products in the past. As you navigate the platform further, you notice another Finnish design brand, NordicCraft. You know this brand and their products well too.

Experimental group 5: (collaboration, high familiarity): Imagine a scenario where you are browsing an online platform focusing on design products. You come across a Finnish design brand called FinnDesigns. You are highly familiar with this brand as you have often encountered their products in the past. As you navigate the platform further, you notice that FinnDesigns has recently collaborated with another Finnish design brand, NordicCraft. You know this brand and their products well too. You find out that the two brands have collaborated to create a collection of home decor items showcasing the fusion of their design philosophies.

Example of a manipulation check (high familiarity): I kept in mind that I was highly familiar with the brands while filling out the questions (Answers on a 5-point Likert scale).

Example of a manipulation check (collaboration): I kept in mind the collaboration between the brands while filling out the questions (Answers on a 5-point Likert scale).

Appendix C

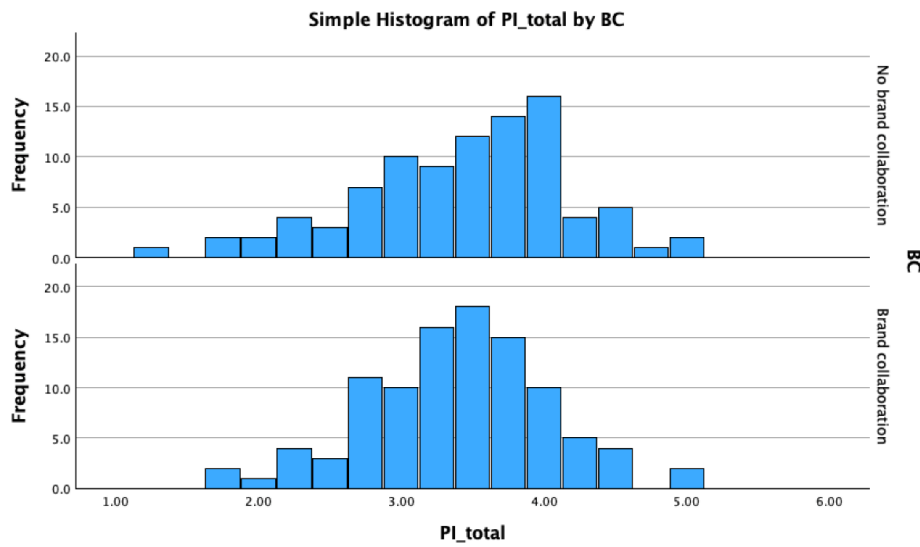


Figure C.1

Simple histogram of purchase intention and type of brand collaboration (where PI_{total} = purchase intention and BC = brand collaboration).

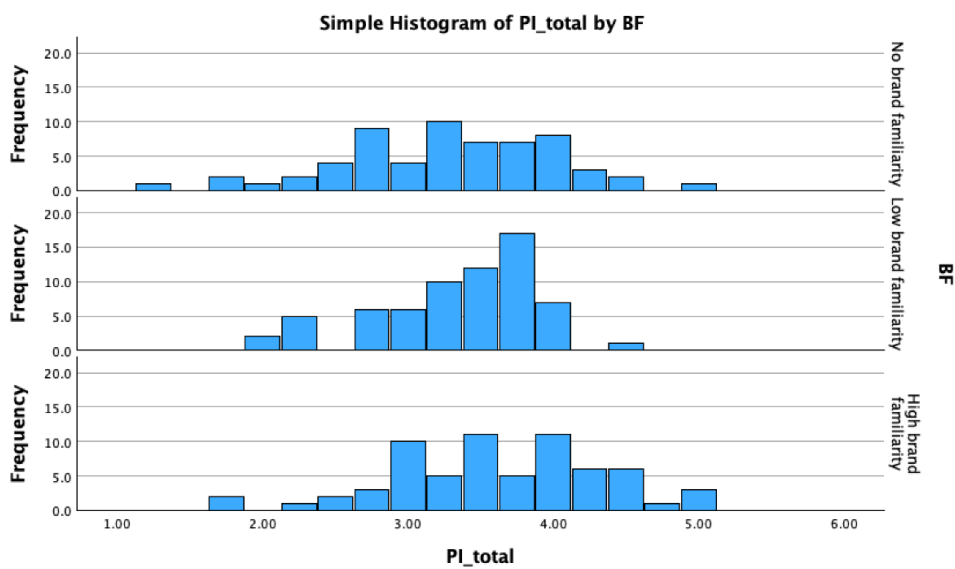


Figure C.2

Simple histogram of purchase intention and brand familiarity levels (where PI_{total} = purchase intention and BF = brand familiarity).

Appendix D

Link to online experiment:

https://erasmusuniversity.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9yitCNZs5vodeQe

The full experiment:

1. Informed consent

“CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH:

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT: Emma Vartiainen, 656422ev@eur.nl

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in research about Finnish design brands. Finnish design brands can refer to brands that focus on creating different household items, such as furniture, glassware, ceramics or textiles. Finnish design is often characterised by its simplicity, functionality, and emphasis on natural materials. It often features clean lines, minimalistic aesthetics, and practicality. Some iconic Finnish design brands include Marimekko, Artek, and Iittala. Furthermore, the purpose of the study is to measure consumers' purchase intention with Finnish design brands.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: As far as I can tell, there are no risks associated with participating in this research as the answers are completely anonymous. I will not ask for your name or other identifying information in the study. The participants in the study will only be referred to with pseudonyms, and in terms of general characteristics such as age and gender. You are always free not to answer any particular question, and/or stop participating at any point. The material from this survey exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings and publications.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation in this study will take about 2 minutes. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

PAYMENT: There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS: If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS: If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact –anonymously, if you wish— Dr. P. Tenbült (tenbult@eshcc.eur.nl).

SIGNING THE CONSENT: Before proceeding, I kindly ask for your consent to participate in this study.”

2. **Filter question:** participants' previous familiarity with Finnish design

“Are you previously familiar with Finnish design? (yes/maybe/no)”

3. **Experiment instructions/cover story**

“In the next section, a written hypothetical situation will be introduced to you. The situations relate to online shopping of Finnish design brands and consumer preferences.

Please read the following paragraph closely and carefully. After reading it, a few questions will be presented in regards to what you have read. Finally, some sociodemographic questions will be asked.”

4. **Stimulus material (different for each 6 conditions; the following was for the control group)**

“Please read the following paragraph closely:

Imagine a situation where you are browsing an online platform focusing on design products. You come across a new Finnish design brand for you, FinnDesigns. You are encountering the brand for the first time, and you have no prior knowledge on them. As you explore the platform further, you find out that the brand seemingly specialises in contemporary furniture and home decor inspired by the Finnish design principles. You notice another Finnish design

brand, NordicCraft, while navigating the page further. This is the first time you have encountered NordicCraft. Similarly to FinnDesigns, this brand also focuses on following the Finnish design principles.”

5. 4 item purchase intention scale (the following one was for the control group)

“On a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), please answer how relevant the following statements are for the hypothetical situation you just read.

I am willing to purchase products from these two brands.

I prefer products from these two brands.

I would consider products from these two brands first.

I would recommend products from these two brands to others.”

6. Manipulation checks (2 for each participant - one for brand collaborations, one for brand familiarity; the following one was for the control group)

“I kept in mind the brands did not collaborate while filling out the questions.

I kept in mind I was not familiar with the brands while filling out the questions.”

7. Socio-demographic questions:

- Gender (male/female/third gender or non-binary/prefer not to say)
- Age (write as numbers)
- Nationality (write out)
- Educational level (primary education/high school graduate or equivalent/BA/MA/professional degree/other)
- Annual net income level (0-10 000€/10 000 - 20 000€/ 20 000 - 30 000€/30 000 - 40 000€/ 40 000 - 50 000€/over 50 000€)

8. Debrief & end of survey

“Dear participants,

Thank you for your participation in this research.

Lastly, I would like to address the deception used in this study. To hide the true meaning of this study, slight deception was used. Instead of focusing on online shopping, this study actually measured whether the presence of a collaboration and the level of brand familiarity

affect the purchase intention of a consumer. I want to assure you that the deception was necessary to maintain the integrity of the study and obtain accurate insights. I understand this may have caused some confusion or discomfort, and I apologise for any inconvenience. You can still withdraw your data without any consequences.

I would also like to ask you to not share the true purpose of this study with others.

If you have any further questions or concerns, you can leave them here, or contact me at 656422ev@eur.nl. You are also welcome to share this survey with others that might find the topic interesting.

Thank you again for your valuable participation.

Please remember to press the blue arrow to submit your answers.

Sincerely,

Emma Vartiainen”

Appendix E

Erasmus School of
History, Culture and
Communication

Declaration Page: Use of Generative AI Tools in Thesis

Student Information

Name: Emma Vartiainen

Student ID: 656422

Course Name: Master Thesis CM5000

Supervisor Name: P. M. A. Tenbült, PhD

Date: June 26, 2024

Declaration: Generative AI, namely Grammarly, was used in this thesis for basic grammar and spelling corrections. In regards to conducting different tests on SPSS, help was inquired from ChatGPT, another generative AI system. The specific commands concerning the SPSS tests are not listed in this declaration as the results from ChatGPT were inaccurate, and therefore not used in the final thesis. Finally, ChatGPT was also used to gather ideas on creating the stimulus material for the experiment. The command "If I am conducting a 2x3 study about Finnish design brand collaborations, what could be an example of the stimuli material that I will use? It will be a written hypothetical scenario where the condition is that there is no familiarity with the brands and no collaborations between the brands" was used. Regardless, all final ideas and text were written by me, Emma Vartiainen.

Acknowledgment of Generative AI Tools

I acknowledge that I am aware of the existence and functionality of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, which are capable of producing content such as text, images, and other creative works autonomously.

GenAI use would include, but not limited to:

- Generated content (e.g., ChatGPT, Quillbot) limited strictly to content that is not assessed (e.g., thesis title).
- ~~Writing improvements, including~~ grammar and spelling corrections (e.g., Grammarly)
- Language translation (e.g., DeepL), without generative AI alterations/improvements.
- Research task assistance (e.g., finding survey scales, qualitative coding verification, debugging code)
- Using GenAI as a search engine tool to find academic articles or books (e.g.,

I declare that I have used generative AI tools, specifically Grammarly and ChatGPT, in the process of creating parts or components of my thesis. The purpose of using these tools was to aid in generating content or assisting with specific aspects of thesis work.

I declare that I have NOT used any generative AI tools and that the assignment concerned is my original work.

Signature: [digital signature]

Date of Signature: [Date of Submission]

Extent of AI Usage

I confirm that while I utilized generative AI tools to aid in content creation, the majority of the intellectual

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History, Culture and
Communication**

effort, creative input, and decision-making involved in completing the thesis were undertaken by me. I have enclosed the prompts/logging of the GenAI tool use in an appendix.

Ethical and Academic Integrity

I understand the ethical implications and academic integrity concerns related to the use of AI tools in coursework. I assure that the AI-generated content was used responsibly, and any content derived from these tools has been appropriately cited and attributed according to the guidelines provided by the instructor and the course. I have taken necessary steps to distinguish between my original work and the AI-generated contributions. Any direct quotations, paraphrased content, or other forms of AI-generated material have been properly referenced in accordance with academic conventions.

By signing this declaration, I affirm that this declaration is accurate and truthful. I take full responsibility for the integrity of my assignment and am prepared to discuss and explain the role of generative AI tools in my creative process if required by the instructor or the Examination Board. I further affirm that I have used generative AI tools in accordance with ethical standards and academic integrity expectations.

Signature:



Emma Vartiainen

Date of Signature: June 26, 2024