



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

Consumer Brand Touch Points

A Case Study of Hennes & Mauritz in Sweden and Germany

Master Thesis in Marketing
– Spring 2009

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Preface

This is a master thesis written within marketing communication and brand strategy at the School of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg. The process of the thesis has been highly interesting and educating especially since the subject of the thesis is rather new and up to date. Moreover, it has been an entertaining and stimulating journey.

We would like to thank all participants in the personal interviews and in the surveys in both Sweden and Germany. Without them, the thesis would not have been possible to write.

Special thanks are also pointed to Christoph Spengler, founder and Managing Director at Accelerom AG in Zürich, for providing us with information and kindly answering our questions.

We would also like to send special thanks to our supervisor, Rita Mårtenson, Professor in Marketing at Gothenburg School of Business, Economics and Law, for helping and guiding us throughout the thesis.

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Sammanfattning

Företag har igenom alla tider försökt att nå konsumenter genom en mängd olika marknadsföringsaktiviteter. Fokus har ofta legat på att nå så många potentiella kunder som möjligt till en så låg kostnad som möjligt. Under senare år har dock denna fokusering börjat förändras allt eftersom företagen har börjat förstå och lyssna mer på konsumenterna. Detta har fått dem att inse att även faktorer utöver traditionella marknadsföringsaktiviteter bidrar till konsumenternas märkesupplevelser. Alla kontaktpunkter, från word-of-mouth till produkt, är av betydelse för konsumenternas märkesupplevelser. För att ett företag ska kunna precisera de viktigaste kontaktpunkterna och rationalisera sin hantering av sina dessa är det därför viktigt att förstå hur de olika kontaktpunkterna uppfattas av konsumenterna. I denna uppsats har vi valt att exemplifiera detta genom en fallstudie av det internationella modeföretaget Hennes & Mauritz.

Vårt huvudsyfte har varit att avgöra vilka av Hennes & Mauritz kontaktpunkter som är viktigast på den svenska och tyska marknaden med avseende på konsumenternas upplevelser för att undersöka huruvida samma de kan hanteras på samma sätt på båda marknaderna. Vårt andra syfte var att påvisa skillnaden i olika kontaktpunkters betydelse.

För att kunna besvara dessa frågor har vi utfört deskriptiva kvalitativa intervjuer och deskriptiva kvantitativa enkätundersökningar kring kontaktpunkter bland svenska och tyska konsumenter. Resultatet ifrån dessa har analyserats med hänsyn till kontaktpunkternas informations-, attraktions- och transaktionsvärden.

Av de 32 kontaktpunkter som analyserades var det slutligen tolv stycken som ansågs vara viktiga för Hennes & Mauritz på den tyska marknaden medan tretton stycken ansågs vara viktiga på den svenska. Bland dessa återfanns bland annat word-of-mouth, produktpris och utomhusreklam. Det var inga stora skillnader mellan vilka kontaktpunkter som var viktigast och varför de var viktiga på den svenska och tyska marknaden. Det fanns dock skillnader, vilket ledde oss till slutsatsen att inte alla av Hennes & Mauritz viktiga kontaktpunkter i Sverige är rättfärdigade i Tyskland och vice versa.

Resultatet av denna uppsats är enbart baserat på konsumenternas upplevelser och tar därför inte hänsyn till marknadsspecifika data eller Hennes & Mauritz samtliga intressen. Det kan därför finnas ytterligare faktorer som Hennes & Mauritz bör ta hänsyn till vid en utvärdering av sina kontaktpunkter. Vi hoppas att resultatet av denna uppsats skall vara av intresse för företag som arbetar med kontaktpunktshantering men även för akademiker med inriktning mot marknadsföring.

Summary

Companies of all kinds have always tried to communicate with consumers through different kinds of marketing activities. Focus has been on reaching as many potential customers as possible at as low cost as possible. However, during recent year, this focus has begun to change as companies have begun to understand and listen more to consumers and their experiences. This has made them realize that besides marketing activities there are other factors, which contribute to customer brand experience. Every indirect or direct contact consumers have with the brand, from word-of-mouth to the product, shape their experience, making every touch point count. In order for a company to rationalize its touch point management it is important to understand how the different touch points are perceived by the company's consumers in order to pinpoint the most important touch points. In this thesis, we have chosen to exemplify this by studying the international fashion company Hennes & Mauritz.

Our main purpose has been to determine which of Hennes & Mauritz' touch points that are the most important at the Swedish and German markets according to consumer experiences and whether the same kind of touch point management is justified in both countries. *The second purpose* was to show that touch points differ in their importance.

In order to answer this we have conducted descriptive qualitative personal interviews and descriptive quantitative surveys among both Swedish and German consumers. The results have then been analyzed with regard to the different touch points' information value, attractiveness value and transaction value.

Out of the 32 analysed touch points, only twelve were found to be important in the German market and thirteen were considered as important to Hennes & Mauritz in the Swedish market. For instance, Word-of-mouth, the product price and outdoor advertisement were all found to be crucial to consumer experience. There are not any big differences between the touch points most important in Germany and those most important in Sweden. However, there are still differences, which bring us to the conclusion that not all of Hennes & Mauritz' important touch points in Sweden are justified in Germany and vice versa.

This thesis is based purely upon consumers' perceived experiences and takes neither any market specific facts, nor all of Hennes & Mauritz' interests into consideration. Because of this, there might be other facts Hennes & Mauritz should take into consideration when evaluating different touch points opportunities. We hope that the results of this thesis will be of interest to companies working with touch point management as well as to academics with a special interest in marketing.

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Abbreviations

H&M	Hennes & Mauritz
Ger	Germany
Swe	Sweden
Ad.	Advertisement
TP	Touch Points
Info.	Information
Attract.	Attractiveness
Trans.	Transaction

1 INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM AREA AND PURPOSE

This chapter aims to give an introduction and insight to the problem of the thesis. We start by giving a short review over touch points. Thereupon, problem discussion, problem definition, purpose, limitations and perspective follow. At the end of the chapter, we present the general outline of the thesis.

1.1 Introduction

Companies have always tried to communicate with consumers through different kinds of marketing activities, striving to reach as many potential customers as possible (Spengler and Müller, 2008). Until recently, the primary attention of marketers has been within traditional marketing activities, focusing on how the company would like to communicate with their customers (Schultz, 2003). However, due to changed consumer behaviour, an increase in communication ways and an increase in actors on the market the times have changed (Spengler and Müller, 2008). Companies have begun to recognize the need to listen to how the *customers* want to be communicated with (Schultz, 2003). With this new insight, marketers begin to realize that not only planned efforts, such as advertisement, contribute to build customer brand experience, but rather *all* possible touch points the customers have with the brand matter (Kotler, et al. 2005; Spengler, 2009). Those firms aware of this have gained a competitive advantage compared to those that remain in the old way of thinking (Spengler and Wirth, 2009).

There are a number of different definitions of brand touch points. Spengler and With (2009) explain touch points to be all the different contact points at which brands are experienced by customers, non-customers and other stakeholders. Websites, employees, call centres, recommendations from friends, products, physical stores and annual reports are all examples of this. Due to the variety of touch point definitions available and the lack of a single generally accepted one, this study follows its own definition: *“Touch points include all contacts with a company or the brand of the company where the consumer is sure of which company or brand he is dealing with.”*¹

Every company has customer touch points and it is important to manage them in the right way (Spengler and Wirth, 2009). One example is the Swedish multinational fashion company Hennes & Mauritz (H&M, 2008a) that we have applied as case in our study. Their business idea is to offer fashion of good quality to the best price with a consistent message in all their different markets (H&M, 2009a). This study focuses on Hennes & Mauritz’ touch points in two different markets: the German and the Swedish. Germany is Hennes & Mauritz’ biggest market and stands for 24 % of their net sales (H&M E-pages, 2008), which is why it is of interest to investigate German consumers in comparison to Swedish.

¹ This definition bases upon the discussion of the gathered theories found at the end of chapter two.

1.2 Problem Discussion and Problem Definition

In order to perform effective touch point management, an international company needs to know which touch points that are the most important to consumers in all its markets (Spengler, 2009; Spengler and Müller, 2008). However, this may sound easier than it is. The recent shift within marketing towards a more customer-based view has led to a state, in which many companies are not aware of different touch points' effects on customers. This has sometimes even resulted in customers signing up to different registers, such as the Swedish NIX-registry, in order to prevent companies from contacting them (Mårtenson, 2008). This may be because of the fact that companies do not always know essential facts about their customers in different markets. They may be aware of their target group's purchasing behaviour and income levels but do not know a thing about consumers' thoughts and emotions during their different contacts with the company's touch points (Meyer and Schwanger, 2007). All touch points contribute to building customer brand experience (Kotler, et al. 2005; Spengler, 2009), but a strategy focusing on many different touch points is no guarantee for success (Spengler and Wirth, 2009). Furthermore, touch points differ in their importance (Boatwright et al., 2009). Hennes & Mauritz is present through a large number of touch points in both Sweden and Germany; this means that they need to know how the touch points influence customers in order to know which that are the most important ones. This implies the need of a touch point analysis, checking whether customers recall experiencing Hennes & Mauritz in different touch points and the touch points' influence on the customers. By analysing their touch points and pinpoint those most important to consumer experience and focus upon those, Hennes & Mauritz may be able to create more satisfied customers. This customer satisfaction can in the long run result in brand loyalty, which has been known to boost companies' financial results (Torres-Moraga, V'asquez-Parraga and Zamora-González, 2008).

Hennes & Mauritz also faces the challenge to provide the same touch points in both Sweden and Germany in order to live up to its idea of transmitting a consistent message. However, consumer preferences may differ among between different countries and those being important touch points in the Swedish market may not be so in the German market. Sweden and Germany are two countries situated near each other, but is this fact enough to justify the same kind of touch points in both countries or do consumer preferences and experience differ too much?

Based on the problem discussion, we have identified the problem of this thesis as follows:

Problem: *Which consumer brand touch points are the most important for Hennes & Mauritz in Sweden and Germany and are the same justified in both markets?*

1.3 Purpose

The main purpose is to compare Swedish and German consumer touch point experience in order to decide upon which Hennes & Mauritz' most important touch points are in Sweden and Germany and explain why they are important. By most important, we mean those consumer brand touch points that have the highest value, based on consumer experience in both markets.

The second purpose is to show that touch points differ in their importance.

1.4 Limitations

The subject of the thesis has required some limitations in order to keep the study focused.

- Due to the numerous number of touch points, we have not been able to perform a comprising market audit including all touch points, therefore, we have decided to include only the most obvious touch points for one of Hennes & Mauritz' target groups: the students. The selection is performed by the authors at the end of chapter two.
- The information about Hennes & Mauritz' touch points in the pre-study is based on public sources. This means we have not had full access to all relevant information about their touch points.
- The study is based on customer experiences in Sweden and Germany only. This means, we have neither regarded other market relevant facts such as culture, competitors, market prices etc. nor Hennes & Mauritz' interest in different touch points.
- The surveys and personal interviews are based on non-probability samples.

1.5 Perspective

This thesis has a company perspective. However, companies benefit from satisfied customers, and therefore it is important to know what customers appreciate.

We believe that this thesis may be of interest to companies working with touch point management as well as for those trying to implement it. Furthermore, this thesis may also be appreciated among marketing students and marketing researchers since it provides information about a rather new research area.

1.6 General Outline of the Thesis

Figure 1.1 presents the general outline of the thesis. We have specified the most important issues, choices and findings in the outline. With this, we wish to create an overview over the entire thesis that facilitates the reading.

Figure 1.1 General Outline of the Thesis

Chapter		
1	Introduction Problem Area Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to touch points • Why is this area interesting to research? • Purpose: to compare H&M's consumer touch points on the Swedish and German markets and decide upon which are the most important and why they are important on both markets.
2	Frame of References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper review of touch points, touch points and the target market and touch point management • Discussion of frame of reference and presentation of research model
3	Research Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hermeneutic perspective, inductive approach • Research design: case study design • Data collection: personal interviews, surveys • Evaluation of the study
4	Pre-Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To find out information regarding those of Hennes & Mauritz' touch points that we have included in the research model
5	Results and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of results regarding the researched touch points • Analysis according to information value, attractiveness value and transaction value
6	Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusions regarding which <i>consumer brand touch points are the most important for Hennes & Mauritz in Sweden and Germany and are they the same in both markets?</i>
7	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion regarding the thesis and its evaluation • Recommendations for future research

2 FRAME OF REFERENCES

This chapter presents the frame of references relevant for the matter of this thesis. At the beginning, we show an overview over the reviewed theories and its authors. Thereupon, we review touch points, touch point categorization, touch points and target groups, and touch point management. At the end, we present a discussion regarding the frame of reference, the research model and information need of the thesis.

2.1 Overview of Frame of References

In order to get an overview over the used theories in the frame of reference, we have summarized Table 2.1 that includes the name of the authors, theory and section.

Table 2.1 Overview of Frame of References

Ch	Author	Theory
2.2	Accelerom AG, (2008), <i>"Touchpoint-Management mit BrandConnex"</i> , Boatwright, P., Cagan, J., Kapur, D. and Saltiel, A., (2009) <i>A step-by-step process to build valued brands</i> Dunn, M. and Davis, S., (2004), <i>Creating the brand-driven business</i> Hallward, J., (2008), <i>"Make Measurable What Is Not So": Consumer Mix Modeling for the Evolving Media World</i> Mårtenson, R., (2008), <i>Marknadskommunikation. Kunden. Varumärket. Lönsamheten</i> Spengler, C. and Wirth, W., (2009), <i>Maximising the impact of marketing and sales activities</i> Stone, M., Hobbs, M. and Khaleeli, M., (2002), <i>Multichannel Customer Management</i>	Brand Touch Points and Touch Point Categorization
2.3	Hogan, S., Almquist, E. and Glynn S. E., (2005), <i>Brand-building: finding the touchpoints that count</i> Spengler, C. and Müller, J. (2008), <i>Marktkommunikation im Wandel: Wlecher Marken-Touchpoint zählt?</i>	Touch Points and Target Group
2.4	Aaker, D. A., (2008), <i>Strategic Market Management</i> Chan, J., (2005), <i>Toward a Unified View of Customer Relationship Management</i> Dunn, M. and Davis, S., (2004), <i>Creating the brand-driven business</i> Edwards, H., (2009), <i>Who's fighting for your brand?</i> Hogan, S., Almquist, E. and Glynn S. E., (2005), <i>Brand-building: finding the touchpoints that count</i> Hughes, C., (2008), <i>Serve your customers</i> Meyer, C. and Schwanger, A., (2008), <i>Understanding Consumer Experience</i> Mårtenson, R., (2008), <i>Marknadskommunikation. Kunden. Varumärket. Lönsamheten</i> Phillips, S., (2006), <i>Snakes and Ladders Marketing</i> Spengler, C., (2009), <i>Unterlagen Touch Point Management</i> , e-mail in the author's possession Spengler, C., (2009), <i>Rotstift: Wie weiter in Vertrieb und Marketing?</i> Spengler, C. and Müller, J. (2008), <i>Marktkommunikation im Wandel: Wlecher Marken-Touchpoint zählt?</i> Spengler, C. and Wirth, W., (2009), <i>Maximising the impact of marketing and sales activities</i>	Touch Point Management

2.2 Brand Touch Points

It is not until recently that touch points and their contribution to a brand's image have been brought into the light and so far, the research within the field is limited. Due to this, the term "touch points" can mean different things to different researchers and the definitions we have come across during our literature studies have similarities but also differences. Stone et al. (2002 p. 40) call touch points "*the points at which products and services are purchased or serviced*". A definition that focuses on the products and/or services that a company has to offer. Mårtenson (2008) takes this definition a bit further by suggesting that touch points are every contact customers have with a company. This includes everything that brings a customer to think about the specific company: from word-of-mouth recommendation to marketing activities such as for instance a TV commercial. Spengler and Wirth (2009) expand this definition still further by including customers as well as non-customers and other stakeholders. They also talk about different touch points before, during and after a purchase. From these wide definitions, we can tell that the number of a company's touch points can be quite huge. To exemplify, mid-sized firms usually manage over one hundred touch points (Spengler and Wirth, 2009).²

Different touch points also have different roles to fulfil and these roles may vary between different companies. They also work in different ways in order to fulfil those roles (Hallward, 2008). Mårtenson (2008) exemplifies this by stating that it is important for a company to understand these different roles and purposes in order to be able to focus on those touch points influencing the consumer behaviour the most. There are various opinions on which touch points that are the most important ones. Boatwright et al. (2009) state that among all available touch points, the product itself is one of the most important ones due to its potential of creating strong relationships with the customers. Furthermore, the recent years' fusion between the on- and offline worlds has made many online activities such as for instance online-forums, become more and more important (Spengler and Wirth, 2009). About ten percent of the customers are influenced by new types of information sources, such as the Internet, e-mail, mobile phones etc, when making buying decisions. Web 2.0 and popular online communities such as Facebook and MySpace are also of bigger importance than before. Furthermore, there is also a trend going towards on-demand services such as over the mobile or digital television.

2.2.1 Touch Point Categorization

A number of researchers have come up with different categorizations of touch points. Here we present some:

Dunn and Davis (2004) sort the touch points into three different categories based upon the customer experience:

² Due to the varying definitions of touch points, we have chosen to make our own definition of touch points: *Touch points include all contacts with a company or the brand of the company where the consumer is sure of which company he is dealing with.* See 2.8 Discussion

Pre-purchase experience touch points – These touch points are of great importance regardless of whether a customer will purchase the brand in question or not. These include contact points such as word-of-mouth, the Internet and advertising.

Purchase experience touch points – Touch points that make a customer purchase a brand and not just consider it. These are touch points such as customer centre contact and physical stores.

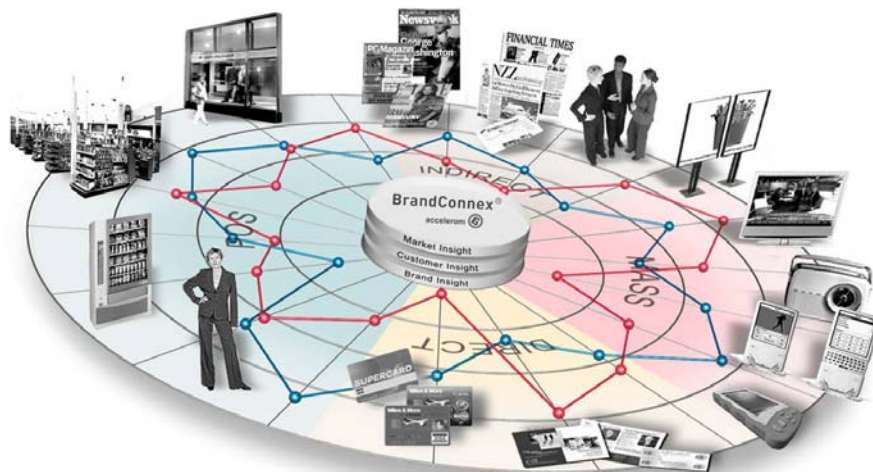
Post-purchase experience touch points – Just as the name suggests, these touch points influence customers after their purchase. Typical examples include the product itself, warranties, customer services and customer satisfaction surveys.

To exemplify the meaning of this, word-of-mouth may trigger a purchase, but during the purchase, the sales person may be the one influencing the customer's experience. Post-purchase touch points include things like billing, maintenance of products, services and so on (Mårtenson, 2008).

Mårtenson (2008) has another way of categorizing touch points. Her categories are controllable, influenceable and uncontrollable. The controllable comprises all touch points that a company is able to completely control in its implementation. Influenceable entails the touch points that the company can influence but not completely control, and finally the uncontrollable comprises all touch points that cannot be controlled at all. Mårtenson also differs between outbound touch points initiated by a company and inbound touch points initiated by customers. Both types are necessary in marketing communication but there are some differences between them. As the Internet develops, more customers can find new ways of spontaneous contacts with companies. Spengler and Wirth, (2009) states that new media technologies allow the customers to actively participate and shape their own media experiences, making inbound touch points more important than they previously have been.

Spengler and Wirth (2009) also talk about touch points from a purchase-point-of-view even though they do not sort them into categories based upon this. Instead, they use four other categories: one-to-one, point of sale (POS), indirect and mass media. Examples of touch points in the four categories can be seen in Figure 2.1 and Table 2.2. They state that around half of the consumer's subjective brand experience arises from the various touch points at the point of sale. This includes everything from shop layout to sales personnel. Around one third of customer's experience comes out of friends' recommendations and product reports from tests. Moreover, the credibility of articles and reports in print media is above average according to many customers.

Figure 2.1 Spengler and Wirth’s Categorization of Touch Points



Source: Accelerom AG (2008), "Touchpoint-Management mit BrandConnex", Technoparkstrasse 1, CH-8005, Zurich p. 5

Table 2.2 Examples of Spengler and Wirth’s Categorization of Touch Points

One to One	POS	Mass media	Indirect
Voucher	POS Promotion	Website provider	Journal reports
Direct mailing	Special offers shelves	Brochure/ catalogue	Online forum
Loyalty Card	Web shop	Attachment newspaper	Professional journal
Personal invitation events	Product sheet	Newspaper/journal advertisement	TV-reports
SMS service	Advertisements entrance	Outdoor/posters	Search engine
Special offers loyalty card	Call centre	Radio advertisement	Recommendation friends
Coupon brochure	Employee cash desk	TV-spot	Word of mouth
Company magazine	Customer service	Online advertisement	Article print media
Web shop	POS Demo		Flyer
Hotline	Stand outside shop		Testimonial
	Shop-window		
	Packaging		
	Sales person		
	Show room		

Source: Accelerom AG (2008), "Touchpoint-Management mit BrandConnex", Technoparkstrasse 1, CH-8005, Zurich, Spengler, C. and Wirth, W., (2009), *Maximising the impact of marketing and sales activities*, Io New Management, No. 3 (modified)

2.3 Touch Points and Target Group

Until recently, many companies have followed the idea “the more marketing the better” and have made use of many different forms of market communication without any particular aiming at the target group. Nevertheless, the touch points differ regarding to the segment and target group. This means that the company must know which touch points are the most important for the target group in order to invest in the right touch points (Spengler and Müller,

2008). Hogan, Almquist and Glynn (2005) agree upon and state that before developing a strategy for which touch points to invest in, the company should identify key customer segments. In order to target their target groups efficiently the companies need to consider that no single way of communication targets all target groups at the same way. They also need to differ between traditional target groups and social communities (Spengler and Müller, 2008).

2.4 Touch Point Management

Consumers' good experiences with a brand usually do not just occur on their own (Hughes, 2008), thus some sort of touch point management is needed. However, this is hardly as easy as it sounds. Companies usually know a lot about consumers' buying behaviour, income levels and so on, but hardly know anything about their thoughts and emotions when interacting with the company and its various touch points (Meyer and Schwanger, 2007). Moreover, even if they do know about customers' preferences, some companies are simply afraid to act upon these consumer actions (Meyer and Schwanger, 2007).

There are multidisciplinary goals and benefits to achieve with touch point management (Spengler and Wirth, 2009). For instance, by evaluating a firm's different touch points it is possible to optimise the company's investments and increase the quality of the various contacts with customers. Furthermore, consistency can be provided throughout the touch points, which is seen as important. Edwards (2009) states that inconsistency throughout the different touch points may cause consumers to lose trust in the company, which may lead to decreased sales and profit. Spengler and Müller agree upon the latter by saying that the way to success is to provide an integrated experience among the most important touch points.

Spengler and Wirth define touch point management as follows:

"Touch point management should be understood as a multi-disciplinary strategic approach, which results in optimised performance in all market-oriented management areas." (Spengler and Wirth, 2009, p.4)

According to Spengler (2009), there are five steps within touch point management:

1. Touch point audit: Includes screening the business for important touch points and screening the own company for important touch points. The important touch points matter regarding the business, the company and the target group with which the company wants to communicate.
2. Touch point analysis: In the second phase, the value and width of the touch points are tested out of the customer perspective. This is done through market research and is thereupon statistical evaluated.
3. Define optimizing goals according to the touch points analysis results
4. Implement the optimizing goals
5. Tracking: This phase includes checking the implemented goals in order to see whether changes have to be made.

Just as well managed touch points can contribute a lot to customers' positive brand experiences, touch points not that well managed can harm a brand extensively (Hogan, Almquist and Glynn, 2005). Philips (2006) means that touch points can influence the brand's profitability by being snakes, ladders or just part of the brand communication. Snakes are those touch points that prevent customers from purchasing a product or service whereas ladders are those that inspire customers to purchase. Every touch point can be a snake or a ladder, and it is important for companies to identify these snake and ladders in order to satisfy people's desires and the company's results.

2.4.1 Touch Point Evaluation

Mårtenson (2008) suggests that it has become necessary to discuss customers' different relationships with a brand in a sense that includes other variables besides the traditional media contacts. Furthermore, it is important for a company to analyze its touch points and their influence on the firm's customers. Dunn and Davis (2004) state that spending money on the touch points, most important to the customers, will create customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, which in the end will strengthen the brand. There are multiple benefits to receive from having a strong brand. Not only is a customer more likely to actively choose the company's goods but there are also indirect benefits such as higher return on investment to receive (Mårtenson, 2008). Because of this relationship it is important for companies to know what triggers customer satisfaction and what turns customer satisfaction into brand loyalty (Mårtenson, 2008). Firms with a successful brand loyalty management are well aware of and manage their customer touch points in order to ensure consistency in the brand's key context (Aaker, 2008).

Spengler and Wirth (2009) state that all of a company's brand touch points matter. Nevertheless, in order to become a successful brand-builder it is necessary to identify the company's most important touch points and how they influence customer experience rather than spend a lot of money in all channels available (Hogan, Almquist and Glynn, 2005). Hogan et al (2005) reports of the "do everything" approach as a common mistake made by firms seeking to satisfy their customers. In fact, a firm's inability to adapt its touch points in different channels may result in customer losses (Chan, 2005). Successful brand builders evaluate the different touch points (Hogan et al., 2005) and focus on those they believe will generate the potentially most important customers (Mårtenson, 2008). A company should therefore focus its resources upon those touch points that create the strongest brand experience and make customers change their behaviour accordingly (Spengler and Wirth, 2009).

Spengler and Müller (2008) provide a way of evaluating touch points by checking them on three indicators:

- Information value: How well does the touch point transfer the brands message to its customers
- Attractiveness value: How attractive is it for the consumers to get information regarding the brand through the touch point
- Transaction value: How much does the touch point influence customer behaviour, and especially the buying decision

Mårtenson (2008 p. 167) presents another way of evaluating touch points by asking the following questions: *How important is the touch point in question? What kind of impression do customers receive? Do customers' expectations and experiences of the touch point match? What kind of message does the touch point deliver and is this message consistent with that of the company? Are the resources spent on a touch point reasonable when looking at its importance?*

2.4.2 International Touch Point Management

When performing international touch point management, the company needs to consider the specific country and its markets to be sure how to act in order to raise awareness among consumers. Touch points in different countries and markets differ according to the rules on that specific market and to local consuming of media. Moreover, it is important to see the countries as different target groups in order to create best practice strategies for the different markets (E-mail from Spengler, 2009-05-06).

2.5 Discussion Regarding the Theory Base

There is no comprehensive literature regarding touch points and touch points management, since this is a rather new research area and most theories date only a few years back. Due to this, the number of different theories is limited. However, we have included those theories relevant to our research area and evaluated and combined them in order to create a tool helpful to us in our analysis. In the following, we discuss our view and choices regarding brand touch points, touch point categorization and touch point management.

2.5.1 Brand Touch Points

Since the reviewed theories have very different definitions of touch points varying from a narrow to a broad view, we have chosen to make our own definition of touch points based on the reviewed theories.

Definition of touch points: *Touch points include all contacts with a company or the brand of the company for which the consumer is sure of which company or brand he/she is dealing with.*

To exemplify, this definition includes active inbound actions such as calling, mailing, sending a letter, visiting the shop etc. and also active outbound actions such as advertisement, sale channels, store attributes, service offering etc. It also includes other information channels and the product itself. The definition means for example that the product is only a touch point if you are sure of from which brand or company it comes. However, if another consumer owns the product and you are not sure from which brand or company it comes, it is not a touch point.

Our definition also means that if something reminds you of a company it is not a touch point, but rather an association. To exemplify, this means if a brand's competitors or shareholders remind the consumer of the brand, it is not a touch point, but rather an association.

2.5.2 Touch Point Categorization

Because of the high number of different touch points available to Hennes & Mauritz there is a need of categorising them in order to get a clearer picture. Since touch point analysis is a rather new research area there is no standard way of dividing touch points into different groups. Rather, most researchers have their own way of categorising them. The categorisations do not necessarily contradict each other but rather study the phenomenon on different levels. Each categorisation aligns to a specific situation, which makes it hard to make a general model that works in every situation. Hence, we have created our own categorization of touch points.

Spengler and Müller state the importance of regarding the target group. This is something that we have paid attention to while creating our own categorization of the touch points that are important for our chosen target group (students). Spengler and Wirth provide the most developed classification of touch points. However, since we suspected that their categories might be difficult for consumers to understand, we chose to base our categorization on Mårtenson's three categories: controllable, influenceable and uncontrollable. We believe this classification gives a proper overview and is easier to understand. Within these three categories, we have added different subcategories as we thought this would make it easier to choose which touch points to include in the research. Some of these subcategories are highly influenced by Spengler and Wirth's categories, but occur under different names such as advertisement, special features, sales channels, in-shop and outside-shop attributes, professional information sources and consumers as information sources. We put extra emphasis on the physical store with the subcategory: in-shop and outside-shop attributes, since this is Hennes & Mauritz' biggest sales channel and since Spengler and Wirth state that around half of the consumer's subjective brand experience arises from the various touch points at the point of sale. Dunn and Davis state the importance of the product, which inspired us to add one subcategory focusing only on the product. Finally, Mårtenson's view of influenceable touch points inspired us to include the subcategory: contracted external actors, which we see as influenceable since they are being paid, but not completely controlled by Hennes & Mauritz. The contracted external actors are, however, only consumer touch points if Hennes & Mauritz is mentioned in connection with them. The subcategories are sorted into Mårtenson's categories based on the characteristics of the touch points. This subcategory division helped us to get an overview over possible touch points and to include the touch points most important to the target group (students) within each subcategory.

2.5.3 Touch Point Management

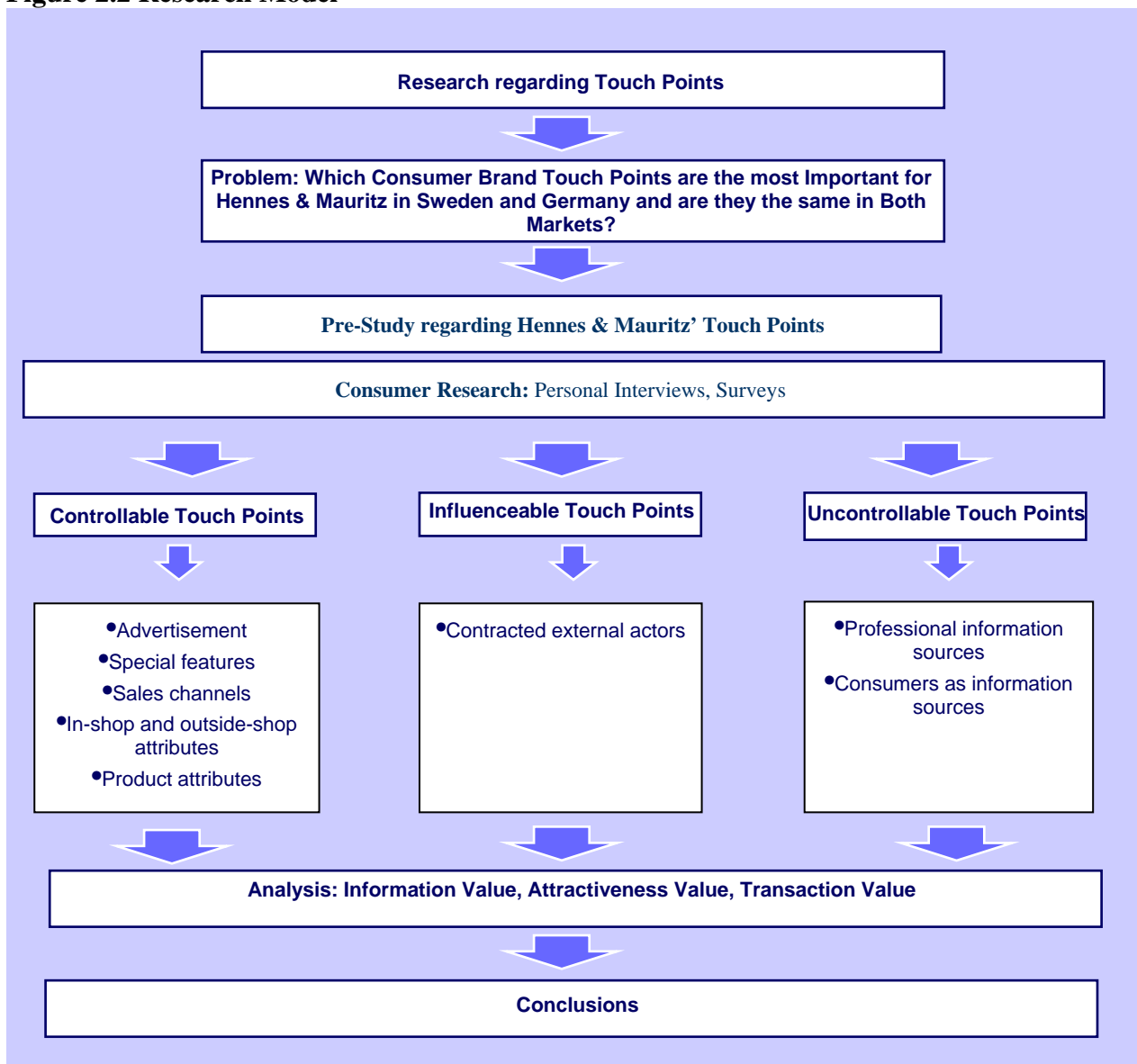
Among the viewed literature regarding touch point management, Spengler (2009), in corporation with Wirth (2008) and Müller (2008), provide the most extensive information. Some of the other researchers also add valuable information needed in order to understand its complexity. Both Mårtenson and Spengler and Müller show a technique of touch point analysis. Mårtenson's is rather comprehensive and not possible to apply in a study based on only consumer experience. In contrast, Spengler and Müller's technique is based on consumer experience, but still from a company perspective. Since our thesis is written out of a company perspective, we found their touch point analysis technique to be convenient. Hence, we choose to evaluate all researched touch points according to the three specified values: information, attractiveness and transaction. Upon these three values, we will be able to decide upon the importance of the consumer brand touch points, as stated in our purpose.

2.6 Research Model and Information Need

2.6.1 Research Model

The research model shows how we approached the matter of this thesis. We started by conducting research regarding touch points. The research ended in the specification of the problem of the thesis. Thereafter, we conducted a pre-study about Hennes & Mauritz' touch points in order to find out needed information about their touch points. The consumer research that followed was divided into the three categories: controllable, influenceable and uncontrollable touch points. These lay as ground when analysing and drawing conclusions regarding the problem of the thesis.

Figure 2.2 Research Model



2.6.2 Information Need

Problem: Which consumer brand touch points are the most important for Hennes & Mauritz in Sweden and Germany and are they the same in both markets?

In order to solve our problem, we have identified three areas of information need. By finding information regarding those areas, we will be able to answer the problem of the thesis.

Area 1: Consumers' controllable Hennes & Mauritz touch point experiences

Within the controllable category, we aim to study advertisement, special features, sales channels, in-shop and outside-shop attributes and product attributes. Table 2.3 specifies the touch points included that are the most obvious ones to our target group: the students.

Table 2.3 Specification of Controllable Touch Points Information Need

Advertisement	Special features	Sale Channels	In shop and outside shop attributes	Product attributes
Brochure ad.	Company magazine	Web shop	Advertisement in-store	Product quality
Newspaper/journal ad.	Loyalty card	Physical store	Sales people attributes	Product price
Outdoor/posters ad.	Personal invitation events	Catalogue	Product display	Product style
Radio ad.	Discount Coupons		Special offer shelves	
TV-spot ad.			Bags with the logotype	
Online ad.			Advertisement entrance	
Flyer ad.				
Direct mailing ad.				
SMS advertisement				

Area 2: Consumers' influenceable Hennes & Mauritz touch point experiences

Within the influenceable category, we aim to research contracted external actors. Table 2.4 specifies the included touch points that are the most obvious ones to our target group: the students.

Table 2.4 Specification of Influenceable Touch Points Information Need

Contracted External Actors
Suppliers and distributors

Area 3: Consumers' uncontrollable Hennes & Mauritz touch point experiences

Within the uncontrollable category, we aim to study other professional information sources and consumer information sources. Table 2.5 specifies the included touch points that are the most obvious to our target group: the students.

Table 2.5 Specification of Uncontrollable Touch Points Information Need

Professional information sources	Consumer information sources
Journals	Word of mouth
Daily newspapers	Online forum
TV-reports	Clothes worn by others

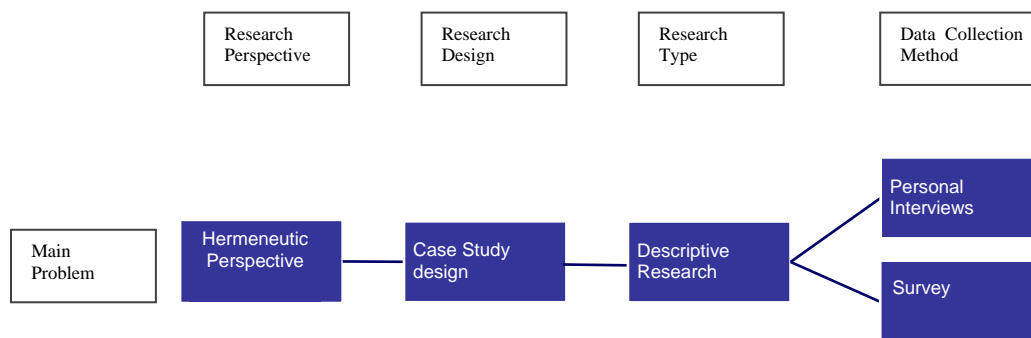
3 RESEARCH METHOD

In this section, we present our chosen method. The chapter is constructed in the same order as we have taken the decisions. It includes our choice of research perspective, research design, research type, data sources, pre-study and data collection. At the end, we present an evaluation of the study.

3.1 Overview of the Method

In order to get an overview of the research method we have conducted a figure on our most important choices (Figure 3.1). The figure presents our choices in the order that we have made the decision. To get the overview as easy as possible to follow, it does not include the choices we did not make. Our first decision was that the research perspective is hermeneutic. We proceeded by applying a case study design for which we chose a descriptive research type. Finally, we decided to collect data through personal interviews and through surveys.

Figure 3.1 Overview of the Research Method



3.2 Research Perspective – Hermeneutic

This thesis follows a hermeneutic perspective. A hermeneutic perspective supports the understanding and explanation of a research problem. The hermeneutic perspective is often referred to as subjective since the world is seen as the work of individuals and the individuals as part of the context (Patel and Davidson, 1994). We aim to explain and understand what makes a touch point important and not just state which are the most important, which is the case within the hermeneutic perspective (Patel and Davidson, 1994). This is reinforced in this thesis by our choice of making use of method triangulating using personal interviews and surveys in order to create as full understanding as possible.

Even though the applied perspective is hermeneutic, it does not mean that the research cannot have positivistic characteristics such as making use of a quantitative method and vice versa (Bell, 2000). The surveys, in which we study the consumer view of the researched consumer touch points, are performed with a quantitative method even though the overall perspective is hermeneutic.

3.3 Research Design – Case Study

There is no single appropriate research design to apply. The design varies depending on the research problem (Bell and Bryman, 2007). In this thesis, we have applied a case study, which is often used within business and management research according to Bryman and Bell (2007). A case study aims at collecting in dept knowledge about a case (Gerring, 2004) and can be applied on a single event, a happening, an organisation, a group, a market or an individual (Backman, 1998). This is appropriate, since we have made use of Hennes & Mauritz as the company from which we proceed. The case study also enables the use of many different data collection methods (Backman, 1998) which we have applied using method triangulating.

3.3.1 The Case – Hennes & Mauritz

When choosing a company to investigate in the case study, some issues were important. Our interest lies within researching consumer touch points for a Swedish company. However, since we are also interested in international marketing, we decided to add another market to our problem. This meant we had to choose an international Swedish company in order to answer to our problem. Some other criteria specified in Table 3.1 were also taken into consideration.

Table 3.1 Company Criteria

Criteria	
1	Swedish company that is active internationally
2	Be well-known in Sweden and in one more market
3	See university students as highly possible customers
4	Be known in the target group (university students) of our survey
5	Be a transparent company in the aspect of having much information published within the area of this thesis

After setting up the criteria, our choice fell on Hennes & Mauritz that fulfils all set criteria. Thereupon, our choice of second market to investigate fell on Germany, since the German market is Hennes & Mauritz' biggest market. This means the German market is of high importance to Hennes & Mauritz, which made us curious to compare Swedish and German consumers.

3.3.2 Facts – Hennes & Mauritz

Hennes & Mauritz is a Swedish global company present in 34 countries worldwide. They have 1700 stores and about 73 000 employees all over the world. Their business idea is to offer fashion of good quality to the best price. The company has an outspoken idea of transmitting the same message in all its markets (H&M, 2009b). Regarding Hennes & Mauritz' target group, it consists of women, men, young people and children (H&M, 2008a; 2008b).

Hennes & Mauritz has been active in Sweden since 1947. The Swedish market is Hennes & Mauritz' second largest and it includes 151 stores. The Swedish market's turnover was 7 400 million Swedish Kronor in 2008. Hennes & Mauritz sells products through stores, catalogues and the Internet in Sweden (H&M, 2009b).

Hennes & Mauritz entered the German market in 1980 and today it is their largest market. The number of stores in Germany is 340 and the turnover for the entire German markets was

25 487 million Swedish Kronor in 2008. As in Sweden, they sell products through stores, catalogues and the Internet in Germany (H&M, 2009b).

3.4 Research Type – Descriptive

The research in this thesis is of a descriptive type. Descriptive research is characterized by picturing and describing what the market situation looks like (Kinneer and Taylor, 1996), which also was our aim with the choice of descriptive research type. As common, within descriptive research (Kinneer and Taylor, 1996), we have made use of questionnaires and interviews to collect data that both were of descriptive character.

3.5 Data Sources – Primary and Secondary

This thesis comprises both primary and secondary data. The primary data is previously unpublished data (Dahmström, 2005) and in this thesis, it comes from the personal interviews, surveys and an e-mail. In contrast, secondary data has already been published (Dahmström, 2005), and it is attained mainly through literature research in this thesis.

3.6 The Pre-Study

As stated in the limitations, the selected touch points to study are those obvious to the target group and the authors performed the selection at the end of chapter two. Before performing the study, we needed to find out whether Hennes & Mauritz has the touch points. If they do not, we have excluded the specific touch point from the research. Regarding those touch points they have, we needed some basic knowledge. This information mainly concerns touch point characteristics and is attained through Hennes & Mauritz' homepage, mass media, and the Internet. The collected information is presented in the pre-study and lies as a base throughout the thesis.

3.7 Data Collection

In the following, we present our process of data collection through personal interviews and surveys, which we have divided into method, sampling, data collection form, procedure and data processing.

3.7.1 Methods

We have applied method triangulating using two different methods to collect data: descriptive personal interviews and descriptive surveys. Our choice of method triangulating is based on our wish to raise the reliability and our wish to collect more information.

Our choice of qualitative personal interviews is supported by our wish to find out different opinions regarding the touch points. We have chosen not to specify the number of respondents that have the different opinions, since we aim to test for quantitative opinions in the surveys.

The method is time consuming (Damström, 2005), which is why, we only performed sixteen interviews. Furthermore, the last couple of interviews did not provide us with any new knowledge since the respondents just repeated the arguments of the respondents prior to them.

Regarding the descriptive surveys testing for quantitative opinions, our choice fell on e-mail survey since it is the fastest way without having to travel to Germany to conduct it. We were aware of the high risk of a low response rate (Damström, 2005), but hoped to limit this by giving the respondents a chance to win a Hennes & Mauritz voucher worth 50 euro if they participated in our survey.

3.7.2 Sampling

This thesis applies a non-probability sampling in both the personal interviews and the surveys. A non-probability sampling is characterized by not having any strict rules and can be performed by convenience sample, judgement sample or quota sample (Körner and Wahlgren, 2006). We have chosen to study one representative target group within Hennes & Mauritz' target group, which is a mix of convenience sample and judgement sample. Our choice of representative target group fell on university students since they belong to one of Hennes & Mauritz' target groups due to their limited budget and young age.

The personal interviews are performed within two groups: Swedish and German consumers. We have deliberately chosen students within different areas of education since we wanted to cover as many different opinions as possible. All the German respondents were now in Sweden doing an exchange semester or similar.

The respondents of the surveys also consist of two groups: Swedish consumers and German consumers. To get as comparable results as possible we wanted the two groups of respondents to have as similar characteristics as possible. Therefore, we had to conduct the survey among similar students. The choice fell on psychology students in Germany at Münster University, since that is where we were able to find someone willing to help us. The following choice of the psychology students in Sweden at Gothenburg University is based on judgement.

Description of Sample – Personal Interviews

The German respondents consist of five men and three women; their ages vary between 21 and 25 years (Table 3.2). All of the respondents are currently students at different universities and the universities' home cities have at least one established physical Hennes & Mauritz store. All of the respondents have bought products at Hennes & Mauritz and their general picture of Hennes & Mauritz varies between positive, Swedish, low priced products, modish, updated, and negative press. The interest for Hennes & Mauritz among the respondents varies between large, very interested, mediocre, less and indifferent.

The Swedish respondents consist of four women and four men, all living and studying at different universities. Their ages range from 20 to 26 years (Table 3.2). All of the respondents have purchased Hennes & Mauritz' products at least once, and are aware of the chain's concept. They regard Hennes & Mauritz as a clothing company with low quality products but with good prices.

Table 3.2 Respondents in the Personal Interviews

Name	Occupation	Age	Nationality	Interview Date
Male	Student: Economics	25	German	2009-04-12
Male	Student: Business	24	German	2009-04-29
Female	Student: Linguistics	23	German	2009-04-27
Female	Student: Linguistics	23	German	2009-04-28
Female	Student: Business	25	German	2009-04-21
Male	Student: Business	21	German	2009-04-23
Male	Student: Law	23	German	2009-04-12
Male	Student: Law	25	German	2009-04-22
Male	Student: Law	24	Swedish	2009-04-10
Female	Student: Event Management	21	Swedish	2009-04-10
Female	Student: Business	25	Swedish	2009-04-20
Female	Student: Business	24	Swedish	2009-04-23
Male	Student: Business	26	Swedish	2009-04-28
Male	Student: Linguistics	24	Swedish	2009-04-26
Female	Student: Environment	20	Swedish	2009-04-29
Male	Student: Business	25	Swedish	2009-05-01

Sample – The Survey

The sample at the Gothenburg University consists of 430 respondents studying in different semesters at the psychology program. The sample at the Münster University consists of 326 respondents also studying in different semesters at the psychology program. In the Swedish survey, 88 respondents have answered and in the German survey, 100 respondents have answered. Table 3.3 provides a description over the respondents in the surveys.

Table 3.3 Description of Survey Respondents

Age	Ger	Swe	Are you a member of H&M club?	Ger	Swe
18-23	51%	18%	Yes, I am	3%	30%
24-29	45%	52%	I used to be	3%	10%
30+	4%	30%	No, I have never been	94%	60%
Gender	Ger	Swe	How large is your interest for H&M?	Ger	Swe
Man	12%	34%	No or low interest	18%	35%
Woman	88%	66%	Medium interest	45%	41%
Have you ever bought products at H&M?	Ger	Swe	High interest	37%	24%
Yes	100%	100%	How do you perceive your brand attitude towards H&M?	Ger	Swe
No	0%	0%	Negative	3%	12%
			Indifferent	27%	23%
			Positive	70%	65%

Source: E-mail survey in Germany and Sweden

As can be seen, there was a difference in ages between the different samples and the German sample consisted of more women than the Swedish one. There was also a difference in the two samples' interest in Hennes & Mauritz. We have been aware of these facts when analysing the data.

3.7.3 Procedure

We have applied different procedures for our data collection, which we present in detail in the following section divided into personal interviews and surveys.

Personal Interviews

In the personal interviews, we have used a questionnaire that is based on our theory findings regarding touch points. Since we interviewed Swedish and German consumers, we conducted one German and one Swedish version that we pre-tested prior to use in order to reduce misunderstandings and difficulties. We wanted to have an open discussion with each respondent in order to get as deep knowledge and understanding as possible, which is why we made use of semi-structured interviews with a questionnaire consisting of topics that allowed the respondent to speak somewhat freely.³ The interviews took place either at the university or at a café close by. All the respondents had been told prior to the interview that it takes about one hour in order to avoid stress situations. We divided the interviews between us, since only one of us knows German and was therefore the only one able to perform the German interviews. To avoid differences of how performing the interviews, we discussed the questionnaires thoroughly in order to know exactly what we meant with the different questions. Prior to the interviews, the German respondents were told to answer only with regard to what they had experienced in Germany and we asked them to try to exclude what they had experienced in Sweden. We did not inform about the subject of our thesis until after the interview was conducted, since we wanted to avoid the respondent having preconceptions. When possible, we have asked further questions and if the respondent has come too far away from the subject, we have tried to go on by asking the next question. Moreover, we have explained obscurities whenever it was necessary.

The Surveys

In the surveys, we have made use of a questionnaire based on our research model including questions regarding those of Hennes & Mauritz' touch points that we investigate. The questionnaire used in Sweden was conducted in Swedish and the questionnaire used in Germany in German.⁴ Before using the survey, we pre-tested both the German and the Swedish version at our selves and with the help of German and Swedish friends in order to reduce misunderstandings and difficulties. We found this to be very important since it was to be used measuring many respondents. Our aim with the surveys was primary to get quantitative information regarding awareness of the different touch points, attractiveness of the touch points and influence on the buying behaviour. When testing for awareness, we made use of multiple-cross questions. When testing for attractiveness or buying decision influence, the respondents could choose on an attitude scale with five or six alternatives varying from nothing to very high. All questions were so called closed questions, meaning that the respondents could not write an own alternative. Moreover, to avoid a low response rate, we

³ See appendix for personal interview questionnaire

⁴ See appendix for survey questionnaire

made all questions forced. This meant the respondents could not finish the survey without answering all questions.

The Swedish survey at Gothenburg University was sent out to the respondents using a web-based program called Webropol.⁵ Since we had a list of all the 430 psychology students including their name, e-mail and telephone number, we made use of personal links in the web survey. This meant that we were able to see who had answered the survey and who had not. The personal link also prohibited the respondents to answer more than once. The survey was open for 10 days and within this time, we sent the original message, two reminders and a text message to all the respondents who had their mobile number on our list, which was about half of them. At the closure of the survey, 88 respondents had answered, which was a response rate of 21% of our sample.

The survey at Münster University was also sent out to the respondents using the web-based program Webropol. However, we were not able to get all the names of the respondents, but instead we used a speed e-mail address. This meant, we could not make use of personal links, but had to make the survey public. In order to prevent someone answering the survey twice, we choose not to send any reminders. Instead, a very good friend of ours visited lectures at Münster University telling the respondents to answer. The survey was open 10 days and at the closure, we had received 100 answers, which was a response rate of 31% of the total amount of psychology students.

3.7.4 Analysis of Data

We have chosen to analyse the data coming from the personal interviews and the survey together in accordance to Spengler and Müller's three evaluation criteria: information, attractiveness and transaction value, since we believe this evaluation includes very important factors to Hennes & Mauritz. Under information value, we understand the respondents' awareness of, encounter of or attention to the different touch points and under attractiveness value, what the respondents thought about the touch point and finally under transaction value, how the buying decision was influenced. The three values are based on the results from both the personal interviews and surveys. The surveys provide information about the respondents' general opinions, while the interviews provide information on a deeper level, explaining those facts numbers are unable to explain. When the results of the surveys and the interviews contradicted each other, we have considered them both and chosen the result we believe is the accurate one. While analysing the results, we have seen the three values as being of same importance. To exemplify, this means that two high values always indicate higher importance of the touch point than one high value, regardless of the type of value. The information value was considered as quite high if about 50 % of the consumers had encountered the touch point, and as high if about 70 % or more of the respondents had encountered it. The attractiveness value and transaction value were considered as high if the combination of the interviews and the surveys suggested this.

⁵ See appendix for cover letter

3.8 Evaluation of the Study

In the process of a thesis, it is important to be aware of the evaluation of the study since it affects the study's trustworthiness. We have chosen to look into the reliability, validity and replication.

3.8.1 Reliability

The reliability tells if the study is repeatable or not with the same results. In the case of high reliability, it is possible to repeat it by using the same measures and get a consistent result (Bell and Bryman, 2007). We consider the reliability of this study to be rather high, since we have taken as many actions as possible to keep it in a high level. For example, we have been very aware of which kind of sources of secondary data to be included in the thesis. Some questions that we have considered: i) if the source is a recognized researcher, ii) if the published material has been cited, iii) what references the researcher has used or if the source needs to be double-checked, which is also recommended by Bell (2000). We have also tried to reduce all possible error sources within the different phases of a thesis by having extensive discussions, information research and caution. According to Molnár and Nilsson-Molnár (2003), and Lekvall and Wahlbin, (2001) the error sources are: the analysis of the research problem, determining the research goals, determining designs and data sources, data collection and when processing, analysing, and interpreting the data. Moreover, we have taken as much cautious actions as possible for example when evaluating sources and performing the analysis. We are aware of the fact that our choice of non-probability judgement sample lowers the reliability somewhat. However, since we have been aware of this risk, we have been very cautious to use the same procedure in both the Swedish and German interviews and surveys. Furthermore, we have applied method triangulating using different methods to test the same research question, which also increases the reliability. We believe this has raised the quality of the entire study extensively, since the results are presented based on both the quantitative results and the qualitative results.

3.8.2 Validity and Replication

The conception of validity means how well the study measures what it aims to measure. If there is a low reliability, a high validity cannot be achieved (Bell and Bryman, 2008). Regarding validity, our thesis has a high internal validity meaning that it tests what it aims to test since we laid particular effort on conducting all the questionnaires. However, we believe the results of the quantitative survey having a medium external validity meaning it is rather representative outside the analysed object. The belief of middle external validity has its ground in the fact that we only have a response frequency of 21% in the Swedish survey and 31% in the German survey. Moreover, our target population consists of all students in Sweden and Germany while our sample consists of psychology students.

The replication concerns how well and detailed the researcher has stated his way of method. This is very closely related to reliability, since if the researcher has not stated his method detailed, it is impossible to reach reliability (Bell and Bryman, 2007). The replication of the quantitative survey is considered high since we have presented all taken steps with the aim of making it easy for the reader to understand and follow our reasoning.

4 PRE-STUDY

This chapter presents information regarding those of Hennes & Mauritz' touch points that we have included in our research model. The chapter is divided into controllable, influenceable and uncontrollable touch points. All sections start with an overview over the touch points. Thereupon, relevant information follows that are needed to get an understanding of the different touch points.

4.1 H&M and Touch Points

Since Hennes & Mauritz is a multinational company with the goal of being consistent in all its markets (H&M, 2008a; 2008b), most company features look the same regardless of the market. Therefore, we have chosen to display our company findings regarding Hennes & Mauritz as a whole instead of treating Sweden and Germany in two different sections. However, some differences still exist between the markets and we will pinpoint those in order to provide a more accurate picture of Hennes & Mauritz in Sweden and Germany.⁶

4.1.1 Controllable Touch Points

We have identified five different important areas within Hennes & Mauritz' controllable touch point management: advertisement, special features, sale channels, in-store & outside-store attributes and product attributes.

Advertisement

Hennes & Mauritz provides all researched touch points within the advertisement category (see table 4.1).

Table 4.1 H&M Advertisement offering

Advertisement	Germany	Sweden
Advertisement brochure	Yes	Yes
Newspaper/journal advertisement	Yes	Yes
Outdoor/posters advertisement	Yes	Yes
Radio advertisement	Yes	Yes
TV-spot advertisement	Yes	Yes
Online advertisement	Yes	Yes
Flyer advertisement	Yes	Yes
Direct mailing advertisement	Newsletter	Newsletter
SMS advertisement	N/A*	To club members

*N/A not available, **Sources:** H&M 2008a; H&M 2008b; H&M, 2009a; H&M, 2009c; GP, 2009; ZMG, 2008; Graficareklam.se, 2009; Youtube, 2009; Dagens Nyheter, 2006; Fz.se, 2009; Facebook, 2009; Twitter, 2009; Youtube, 2009a; Uppsaladirekt.com, 2006; More-radio.de, 2009

⁶ See appendix for illustrative examples of Hennes & Mauritz' touch points

Regarding newspapers, Hennes & Mauritz advertises in daily papers such as Göteborgs Posten in Sweden (GP, 2009). In Germany, they have even won prizes for creative newspaper advertisement (ZMG, 2008). They are especially famous for their Christmas outdoor campaigns (Graficareklam.se, 2009). However, in Germany, the use of outdoor posters with famous models has encountered problems such as people stealing the posters (Schuler, I., 2006). Moreover, they put a lot of effort into advertising their special collections from famous designers (Youtube, 2009b; Youtube, 2009c; Dagens Nyheter, 2006). Hennes & Mauritz also has an e-mail newsletter that is available to both club members and regular customers. By signing up to this, customers receive fashion news, additional offers and prior information about upcoming events and sales as well as other important information to their emails (H&M, 2009a). Hennes & Mauritz also makes use of flyer advertisement in the city when opening a new store.

Furthermore, Hennes & Mauritz is present on the Internet the matter of online advertisement in The Sims 2 (see figure 4.1), where the player can buy and dress its character in H&M clothes (Fz.se, 2009). The Internet user also faces Hennes & Mauritz' advertisement in their online shop (H&M, 2009c) and in online advertisement in popular communities such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube (Facebook, 2009; Twitter, 2009; Youtube, 2009a).

Figure 4.1 Hennes & Mauritz Online in the Sims 2



Source: Fz (2009), <<http://www.fz.se/spel/the-sims-2-hm-fashion>> Acc. 2009-05-01)

Regarding radio commercial, it was hard to find out if Hennes & Mauritz makes use of it and in what form. Nevertheless, according to Uppsala Direkt Hennes & Mauritz does make use of radio commercials in Sweden (Uppsaladirekt.com, 2006). In Germany, Hennes & Mauritz has even won a price as the most promising radio commercial in the category of commendatory junior reference (More-radio.de, 2009).

We have not found anything that suggests that Hennes & Mauritz make use of SMS advertisement in Germany. However, they do make use of it within the H&M club in Sweden in order to remind club members about different happenings.

Special feature

Hennes & Mauritz offers the same researched special features in Sweden and Germany (see table 4.2), except for loyalty card that is not available in Germany, since they do not have the H&M club (H&M, 2009d).

Table 4.2 H&M Special Features Offering

Special features	Germany	Sweden
Company magazine	H&M Magazine	H&M Magazine
Loyalty card	No, H&M Club not available in Germany	Yes, in H&M club
Personal invitation events	N/A*	To club members
Discount Coupons	Yes	Yes

*N/A not available, **Source:** H&M, 2009a; H&M, 2009c; H&M, 2009d; Gutscheinz.com, 2009; Ebay.com, 2009

The H&M magazine covers fashion news, trends, articles and styling tips from professionals and is meant to work as an invitation next to all other communication activities pointed at customers and to help in the long-term brand building process (H&M, 2009c). Hennes & Mauritz in Sweden offers personal invitations to events to their club members. They can for instance be invited to different kinds of VIP-shopping. For example, Hennes & Mauritz creates special shopping days for members and their children. These include discount shopping combined with different activities, celebrities and popular cartoon figures (H&M, 2009d). Hennes & Mauritz also provides discount coupons that can be used when purchasing products (Gutscheinz.com, 2009; Ebay.com, 2009)

Sale Channels

Hennes & Mauritz provides three different sales channels (see table 4.3). The physical stores are Hennes & Mauritz most important sales channel with the web shop and catalogue working as complements. The catalogue and web shop are meant to raise the consumers' interest for the different collections and to increase the customers' perceived services (H&M, 2008a).

Table 4.3 H&M Sales Channels Offering

Sale Channels	Germany	Sweden
Web shop	Yes, since Jul 2007	Yes, since 1998
Physical store	340	151
Catalogue	Yes, since Jan 2008	Yes, since 25 years

Source: H&M 2008a; H&M 2008b

In-Store and Outside Store Attributes

Regarding in-store and outside store attributes, Hennes & Mauritz provides the same offering in Sweden and Germany (see table 4.4); however there can be local differences due to local taste. The physical stores should have a cosy environment, which should provide customers with inspiration and ideas. Shop windows, torsos and tables should always have the latest fashion in order to be attractive to the consumers (H&M, 2008a). Hennes & Mauritz' advertisement at the entrance such as shopping windows and Hennes & Mauritz' sign are

important when trying to attract consumers into the stores and stimulate purchases (H&M, 2008b).

Table 4.4 H&M In-store and Outside-store Offering

In-store and outside attributes	Germany	Sweden
Bags with the logotype	Same policy	Same policy
Advertisement entrance	Same policy	Same policy
Advertisement in the store	Same policy	Same policy
Sales people attributes	Same policy	Same policy
Product display	Same policy	Same policy

Source: H&M, 2008a; H&M, 2008b

Product attributes

Hennes & Mauritz focuses a lot on the products and provides the same type of product attributes in both Sweden and Germany (see table 4.5). The range of products covers everything from basic clothing to high fashion reflecting international trends (H&M, 2009c). As an example of this, Hennes & Mauritz has had guest designers, such as Karl Lagerfeld and Madonna, to design limited collections especially for them. Prices are also very important to Hennes & Mauritz since their goal is to offer fashion of good quality at the best price (H&M, 2009a). The products are also tested in a number of ways to ensure quality (H&M, 2009e).

Table 4.5 H&M Product Attributes Offering

Product attributes	Germany	Sweden
Product quality	Same producer	Same producer
Product price	Same policy	Same policy
Product style	Same producer	Same producer

Source: H&M, 2009a

4.1.2 Influenceable Touch Points

We have identified two main influenceable touch points that both categorise within contracted external actors: suppliers and distributors.

Contracted External Actors

Hennes & Mauritz follows the same rules and standards regarding external suppliers and distributors in both Sweden and Germany (see table 4.6). Hennes & Mauritz does not own any factories or distributors and puts a lot of effort in choosing the right suppliers. Hennes & Mauritz has extensive methods within this area including checking the quality, price, quantity, lead time, safety, chemical tests and also that the suppliers follow Hennes & Mauritz' CSR policy (H&M, 2008a). They require a very advanced distribution system and a well functioning logistics. They do not own its distributors, but they do perform controls of every part of the chain from idea to the store (H&M, 2008a).

Table 4.6 H&M Contracted External Actors

External actors	Germany	Sweden
Suppliers and distributors	CSR policy	CSR policy

Source: H&M, 2008a

4.1.3 Uncontrollable Touch Points

The uncontrollable touch points are of huge importance to every company and should not be put aside due to the reason that they are uncontrollable. In the matter of Hennes & Mauritz, the uncontrollable touch points include professional information sources and consumers as information sources.

Professional Information Sources

Table 4.7 Professional Information Sources

Other information sources	Germany	Sweden
Journals	Report over H&M	Report over H&M
TV-reports	Report over H&M	Report over H&M
Daily newspapers	Report over H&M	Report over H&M

Source: H&M, 2008a; dn.se, 2009; spiegel.de, 2009, TV4, 2009; ZDF, 2009

Hennes & Mauritz values a dense contact with media to increase the knowledge of Hennes & Mauritz and to sell its products. They have continuous contact with professional journals, daily press and the financial market (H&M, 2008a). The printed media in Sweden⁷ and Germany⁸ often writes about Hennes & Mauritz and it concerns almost everything they do (dn.se, 2009; spiegel.de, 2009) and so does television (TV4, 2009; ZDF, 2009). To exemplify, Hennes & Mauritz' special campaigns often create much publicity (dn.se, 2006).

Consumers as Information Sources

This subcategory entails consumers in online forum, word of mouth and H&M products carried by other consumers. Nevertheless, since it is difficult to characterize these touch points, we satisfy by saying Hennes & Mauritz puts the customer in focus and works to reach satisfied customers (H&M, 2008a).

⁷ A search in one of Sweden's biggest daily newspapers on the Internet (www.dn.se) gives 1019 hits on the name Hennes & Mauritz between 2002 and 2009-04-17

⁸ A search in one of Germany's biggest daily newspapers on the Internet (www.spiegel.de) gives 80 full articles on the name Hennes & Mauritz between 1999-07-01 and 2009-04-28 and 71 financial articles on the name Hennes & Mauritz between 1994-09-01 and 2009-04-28

5 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the results and analysis. The chapter is divided into the three categories: controllable, influenceable and uncontrollable touch points. As stated in the method chapter, the analysis is performed in accordance to Spengler and Müller's three evaluation criteria: information, attractiveness and transaction value. Under information value, we understand the respondents' awareness of the different touch points and under attractiveness value, what the respondents thought about the touch point and finally under transaction value, how the buying decision was influenced. The three values are based on the results from both the qualitative personal interviews and quantitative surveys.

5.1 Controllable Touch Points

Within the category of controllable touch points, we present the results and analysis regarding the touch points included in the subcategories: advertisement, special features, sale channels, in-store and outside store attributes, and product attributes. Some of the subcategories start with a summarized presentation of the awareness results and the influence on buying decision results. However, the analyses are performed on touch point level under each touch point that follows.

5.1.1 Subcategory: Advertisement

Within this subcategory, we present the results and analyses regarding the touch points: brochure, newspaper/journal, outdoor/poster, radio, TV-spot, online, flyer, direct mail, SMS advertisement.

Results: Within the advertisement subcategory, Hennes & Mauritz' outdoor advertisement was the most recognized form of advertisement in both the Swedish and the German survey (Table 5.1). The advertisement's influence on consumers' shopping behaviour was, on the other hand, quite low in both surveys (Table 5.2).

	Ger	Swe		Ger	Swe
Brochure ad.	49%	76%	Online ad.	25%	52%
Newspaper/journal ad.	53%	77%	Flyer ad.	2%	5%
Outdoor/posters ad.	85%	96%	Direct mailing ad.	7%	24%
Radio ad.	1%	0%	SMS ad.	0%	23%
TV-spot ad.	38%	61%	None	7%	2%

Source: E-mail Surveys

	Ger	Swe
No or little influence	51%	48%
Medium influence	38%	42%
Much influence	11%	10%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Brochure/Catalogue Advertisement

Table 5.3 Attractiveness of Brochure/ Catalogue Ad.	Ger	Swe
Dislike	9%	19%
Indifferent	47%	40%
Like	44%	41%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Results: Regarding brochure/catalogue advertisement, the survey results show similar results with emphasis on the indifferent and positive side (Table 5.3). However, the respondents in the personal interviews had varying thoughts. Some meant it is positive and interesting with

brochure/catalogue advertisement and it is always positive to have it at home, in case one wants to study it. Nevertheless, it was also said that one often does not look in it, but rather throw it away. It was said, that the advertised products often do not fall into the category of clothes to wear, but rather seem to be meant to create image. Regarding the question if the brochure/catalogue advertisement influences the respondents' buying decisions it was said that it does not influence directly.

Analysis: The analysis of advertisement in brochures and catalogues shows a high *information value* among the respondents in the Swedish survey. The *information value* among the German respondents was lower with only 49% awareness, which is probably because of the fact that the catalogue has only been available to German consumers for a few years of time. The Swedish survey also shows a quite high *attractiveness value* having about half of the respondents liking the brochure advertisement. However, the Germans were also positive, which also suggests a quite high *attractiveness value*. This may be due to the convenience of having an advertisement brochure at home. However, the fact that the respondents do not think either advertisement overall or brochure advertisement influence their buying decisions implies a low *transaction value*. The touch point's ability to create awareness especially in Sweden, as well as approval in both countries suggests the touch point to be important. However, it seems to be of more importance in Sweden than Germany.

Newspaper/Journal Advertisement

Table 5.4 Attractiveness of Newspaper/journal Ad.	Ger	Swe
Dislike	12%	20%
Indifferent	40%	40%
Like	48%	40%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Results: Concerning newspaper/journal advertisement, the survey shows emphasize on positive opinions (Table 5.4). The personal interviews also present a positive picture. They stated that the ads often look nice and are easy to recognise and because of this, they have a positive impact on some of the

respondents' shopping behaviour. Some meant that the ads only affected them occasionally when they display something the respondent really likes. The ads also provide the customers with information about which products that can be found in stores and ongoing sales. On the other hand, it was also said that the newspaper commercials hardly ever show specific products and therefore it is easy to just turn the page without looking.

Analysis: Newspaper/journal advertisement has a high *information value* among both Swedish and German consumers, even though it is slightly higher among the Swedes. This ability of creating awareness indicates the touch point to be of importance. Nevertheless, since the results showed that most consumers think that advertisements in newspapers have a very low *transaction value* it also suggests the contrary. The *attractiveness value* is quite high in both countries. This, together with the high *information value*, makes this an important touch point for Hennes & Mauritz in Sweden and Germany.

Outdoor Advertisement

Table 5.5 Attractiveness of Outdoor/posters Advertisement	Ger	Swe
Dislike	3%	33%
Indifferent	41%	37%
Like	56%	30%

Source: E-mail Surveys

but there were some different opinions on whether they make an impact on consumers' purchasing behaviour or not. It was said that the use of famous actors could trigger a purchasing decision if the consumer was aware of and fond of the actor in question. If consumers found the advertisements' layout and design appealing, this was thought to influence their purchasing pattern in a positive way. On the other hand, during the German interviews it was said that the use of too thin models creates a negative image. There were also comments about posters only appealing to women, leaving men uninterested in its content.

Results: In the matter of outdoor advertisement, the German survey shows more positive opinions (Table 5.5). This picture was somewhat different within the personal interviews. The general impression was that they were nice to look at and easy to recognise

Analysis: Outdoor advertisement was the most recognised form of advertisement in both Sweden and Germany, thus giving the touch point a high *information value*. The *information value* was a bit higher among the Swedish consumers, which most likely is because of the fact that Hennes & Mauritz is a Swedish company making the Swedish consumers more frequently exposed to messages from the company. However, the *attractiveness value* of this touch point was much higher among the German consumers, which most likely is due to the fact that the German respondents in our survey had a larger interest in Hennes & Mauritz. This suggests the touch point is of higher importance in Germany than in Sweden. Concerning both the *information value* and *attractiveness value*, it seems as though outdoor advertisement may be of more importance in Germany than in Sweden, but still of importance in Sweden as well. It is however, important to be aware of the fact that the success of the outdoor advertisement depends on how the posters are designed.

Radio Advertisement

Table 5.6 Attractiveness of Radio Ad.	Ger	Swe
Dislike	50%	53%
Indifferent	48%	42%
Like	2%	5%

Source: E-mail Surveys

when displaying clothes, it could be used to inform customers of special sales etc.

Analysis: The *information value* of radio advertisement was extremely low since only one percent among the German consumers and none among the Swedish consumers had encountered such advertisement from Hennes & Mauritz. This suggests the touch point to be very unimportant. The *attractiveness value* of the touch point was low as well since almost all of the respondents in the surveys were indifferent or thought negatively about this way of contact. During the interviews, it was said that Hennes & Mauritz' radio advertisement has a low *transaction* and *attractiveness value*, because one cannot display clothes over the radio. In other words, its inability of creating awareness, approval and influencing buying decisions implies radio advertisement is not an important touch point for Hennes & Mauritz.

Results: The surveys show strong dislike of radio advertisement (Table 5.6). This depiction was reinforced by the personal interviews. It was said to be a too direct way to connect with the customers and it is perceived as a low-budget alternative. Even though, it was said that radio is not the ultimate media choice

TV-Spot Advertisement

Table 5.7 Attractiveness of TV-Spot Ad.	Ger	Swe
Dislike	23%	32%
Indifferent	42%	44%
Like	35%	24%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Results: Regarding TV-spot advertisement, the surveys show emphasizes on being indifferent towards it (Table 5.7). Despite this, the personal interviews show different opinions. Some liked it and were very much aware of the TV-spots influence on their purchasing behaviour. In contrast, during the German

interviews, it was said TV-spots disturb the TV-watching, are annoying, do not appeal to people, the customer does not look at them and some respondents preferred advertisement-free TV. Some of the respondents were not aware of the commercial's influence upon them, since they would visit the store anyway. However, some thought that they very well might be affected on a subconscious level. In the Swedish interviews Hennes & Mauritz' TV advertisement was regarded as one among many others, without any special features.

Analysis: The *information value* of Hennes & Mauritz' TV-spots was rather high among the Swedish consumers, but not that high among the Germans implying the touch point's ability to create awareness in Sweden but not in Germany. However, since most of the respondents in both surveys are indifferent and the German interviews expressed rather negative opinions, the *attractiveness value* of TV-spots seems to be low, especially among the Germans. TV-advertisement also seems to have a low *transaction value*, reinforcing the unimportance of the touch point. Even though the high *information value*, especially among the Swedes, the low *transaction value* and low attractiveness suggest the touch point to be quite unimportant.

Online Advertisement

Table 5.8 Attractiveness of Online Advertisement	Ger	Swe
Dislike	25%	32%
Indifferent	56%	48%
Like	19%	20%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Results: Concerning online advertisement, the surveys emphasize on the indifferent opinions (Table 5.8). This was reinforced by the Swedish personal interviews. It was said that one usually ignores online advertisement and hardly ever follows direct links to a company's website. However, during the German

interviews, it was stated that the form of advertisement appeals to consumers since it is visual and it creates images. Nobody among the Swedish respondents felt that their purchasing behaviour was affected in any way although there was some speculation about whether there might be some influence on a subconscious level.

Analysis: The fact that the *information value* of Hennes & Mauritz' online advertisement was twice as high among the Swedish consumers as it was among the Germans, suggests the importance of the touch point to be higher in Sweden than in Germany. However, the awareness in Sweden was still only 52%, which points toward the direction of only being rather important. Most of the respondents are indifferent toward online advertisement, which may be due to respondents ignoring online advertisement. This implies the touch point has a low *attractiveness value*. Since it was only stated that online advertisement influences the buying decision on a subconscious level it implies the *transaction value* to be low. The low values in attractiveness and transaction suggest online advertisement to be an unimportant touch point for Hennes & Mauritz in both Sweden and Germany.

Flyer Advertisement

Table 5.9 Attractiveness of Flyer Advertisement	Ger	Swe
Dislike	51%	64%
Indifferent	41%	33%
Like	8%	3%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Results: In the matter of flyer advertisement, the surveys show strong dislikes (Table 5.9). Despite this, the personal interviews stated a rather positive picture. Flyers regarding special offerings were very much appreciated and were said to inspire to visit the stores and to get the consumers to purchase more.

On the other hand, flyers were also considered a somewhat desperate attempt to attract consumers and were therefore disliked. During the German interviews, it was said that flyers only are thrown away and that it is annoying to receive such advertisement.

Analysis: Flyers have low *information value* since hardly any of the Swedish nor German consumers had encountered flyer advertisement from Hennes & Mauritz. The low *attractiveness value* also indicated that they never wish to do so either. Due to the various opinions, regarding whether flyers influence the buying decision or not the *transaction value* seems to be mediocre. However, with regard to the low *attractiveness value* and *information value*, Hennes & Mauritz can probably find other, more efficient ways of promoting such offers, which implies the touch point to be rather unimportant in both countries.

Direct Mail Advertisement

Table 5.10 Attractiveness of Direct Mailing Advertisement	Ger	Swe
Dislike	75%	76%
Indifferent	18%	15%
Like	7%	9%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Results: Regarding direct mailing, the surveys show very strong emphasizes on the negative side (Table 5.10). However, the personal interviews stated different opinions regarding it. Some respondents found it positive to be able to get special offers and news directly to the mail while

others would consider it as spam and throw it away. During the German interviews, it was said to be a meaningful way to advertise especially towards loyal customers, but for the unloyal customers, it can be rather annoying or is of no importance. According to the Swedish interviews, the attitude could depend on the amount of time the consumers have at their hands. With plenty of time to read mails they considered this as something positive while a stressful consumer would consider them time consuming.

Analysis: The awareness of direct mail advertisement is almost non-existing among the Germans and very low among the Swedes, which suggests a low *information value*. Furthermore, it has a low *attractiveness value* with few respondents liking it. This implies the touch point's inability to create awareness and approval among customers; hence, the touch point is probably unimportant for Hennes & Mauritz in both Sweden and Germany.

SMS Advertisement

Table 5.11 Attractiveness of SMS advertisement	Ger	Swe
Dislike	92%	84%
Indifferent	8%	8%
Like	0%	8%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Results: Concerning SMS advertisement, the surveys show a very strong dislike (Table 5.11). This picture was reinforced by the personal interviews. Some said that such advertisement would only make them irritated since it intrudes heavily on privacy. Commercials of this kind would only trigger irritation

according to the respondents. Moreover, it is hard to promote clothes over the phone. During

the German interviews, the question was raised if it is even possible to make proper SMS advertisement.

Analysis: The advertisement form with the lowest *attractiveness value* was SMS advertisement, which probably is, because it was thought of as violating privacy. The *information value* of SMS advertisement was extremely low in Germany, where almost no consumers had encountered it. It was however, a bit higher among the Swedish respondents with one quarter being aware of these forms of advertisement. The low *attractiveness value* and *information value* imply SMS advertisement to be of unimportance.

5.1.2 Subcategory: Special Features

Within this subcategory, we present the results and analyses regarding the touch points: company magazine, loyalty card, personal invitation events and discount coupons.

Results: Regarding the group of special features, the surveys show varying results between the different touch points and between Sweden and Germany. Most respondents are of the opinion that the group of special features has no or little influence on the buying decision (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12 Awareness Special Features	Ger	Swe	Buying Decision Influence: Special Features	Ger	Swe
Company magazine	25%	55%	No or little influence	41%	37%
Personal invitation events	2%	41%	Medium influence	26%	33%
Discount coupons	14%	55%	Much influence	33%	30%
Loyalty card	N/A*	77%	Source: E-mail Surveys		
None	4%	11%	*N/A= not available		

Company Magazine

Results: Regarding the customer magazine, the surveys show most respondents are uninterested (Table 5.13). However, within the personal interviews there were mixed feelings. There were positive feelings among the Swedish respondents regarding the fact that H&M Magazine does not just focus upon advertisement.

The customer magazine was said to provide a good mix between products and fashion reports

Table 5.13 Attractiveness of Customer Magazine	Ger	Swe
Uninteresting	82%	66%
Medium interest	12%	25%
Interesting	6%	9%

Source: E-mail Surveys

that inspire consumers to purchase Hennes & Mauritz' products. However, during the German interviews some negative opinions regarding the thin models and the need for a company magazine was stated. It was also thought to be of more use to loyal customers with a large interest in Hennes & Mauritz.

Analysis: The *attractiveness value* of H&M Magazine is very low in both Sweden and Germany. The *information value* of the touch point is also quite low among the German consumers while about half of the Swedish consumers are aware of the magazine, which implies the touch point is of higher importance in Sweden than in Germany. However, in combination with the low *attractiveness value* and low *transaction value* of the entire

subcategory, it suggests that this may not be one of Hennes & Mauritz’ most important touch points neither in Sweden nor in Germany. Rather, as suggested by the interviews, it may be of more use to loyal customers with an interest in Hennes & Mauritz.

Personal Invitation to Events

Results: Regarding special events, the surveys show most respondents to be uninterested (Table 5.14). Despite this, the personal interviews showed a positive picture to the idea of personal invitation events, if they include something of interest. Events were also thought to create excitement and show the customer’s value.

Table 5.14 Attractiveness of Personal Invitation to Special Events	Ger	Swe
Uninteresting	65%	72%
Medium interest	20%	19%
Interesting	15%	9%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: Since personal invitations to events normally are sent to members in the H&M Club, the low *information value* among the German consumers is hardly surprising as the club is not available in Germany. In Sweden, the *information value* is mediocre implying the touch point to matter. However, the *attractiveness value* was very low in both groups and the *transaction value* for the entire subcategory is mediocre. Overall, these values combined make personal invitations an unimportant touch point to Hennes & Mauritz, even though the touch point has the ability to create excitement. These invitations could however, as suggested from the interviews, show loyal customers their value and thus stimulate customer loyalty.

Discount Coupons

Results: Concerning discount coupons, the Swedish survey shows a larger interest than the German (Table 5.15). Regardless of this, both the Swedish and German respondents in the personal interviews were positive to the idea since it means saving some money. The German respondents said it influences the buying decision towards buying more products and the customer buys products that it would not had bought in case of no discount coupons. However, it was also said that some Germans prefer to get the discounts in the store.

Table 5.15 Attractiveness of Discount Coupons	Ger	Swe
Uninteresting	44%	18%
Medium interest	23%	22%
Interesting	33%	60%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: One can be surprised that discount coupons had a low *attractiveness value* among the German consumers since people normally would approve of things that save them money. This may be since they rather prefer to get the discounts in the stores. The *attractiveness value* was much higher among the Swedish respondents implying its importance in Sweden. The *information value* was rather high among the Swedish consumers while it was quite low among the German, yet again implying its importance in Sweden but not in Germany. Based on this, discount coupons seem to be an unimportant touch point in Germany while important to Hennes & Mauritz in Sweden.

Loyalty Card

Results: In the matter of loyalty card, the surveys show very similar results with emphasize on being uninteresting (Table 5.16). Despite this, the personal interviews showed the Swedish respondents regarded it as something positive, at least under the first free year. However, it was said that the card is easily forgotten and therefore loses its purpose. Someone thought it

was nice that Hennes & Mauritz keep track of their customers and reward them with additional discounts. The loyalty card was said to play a major part when consumers choose between two different stores. If they have a Hennes & Mauritz' card they would rather visit a Hennes & Mauritz store than another competitive store. However, the German respondents stated that it does not influence the buying process at all and that one would not want Hennes & Mauritz to collect information about the customers.

Table 5.16 Attractiveness of Loyalty Card	Ger	Swe
Uninteresting	58%	57%
Middle interest	21%	23%
Interesting	21%	20%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: Loyalty cards have a rather high *information value* according to the Swedish consumers; however, since Hennes & Mauritz does not provide loyalty cards in Germany, its *information value* is non-existing in Germany. In the interviews, it was implied that loyalty cards have a high *transaction value* due to its ability of influencing the buying decision. The *attractiveness value* of loyalty cards was quite low for both groups of respondents. This lack of interest may be due to the fact that consumers do not like companies saving information about them, as was implied in the German interviews, or a general lack of interest for Hennes & Mauritz. The analysis suggests it is an important touch point for Hennes & Mauritz in Sweden because of its ability of creating awareness and buying decision influence. In Germany, however, it seems to be unimportant due to lower *transaction value* and low *attractiveness value*.

5.1.3 Subcategory: Sale channels

Within this subcategory, we present the results and analyses regarding the physical store, web shop and catalogue.

Results: Regarding the sales channels, the surveys showed higher awareness in Sweden than in Germany. Almost all respondents in both surveys are aware of the physical store (Table 5.17).

Table 5.17 Awareness of Sales Channels	Ger	Swe
Web shop	75%	76%
Physical store	94%	99%
Catalogue	46%	80%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Web Shop

Table 5.18 Attractiveness of Web shop	Ger	Swe
Unimportant	34%	47%
Indifferent	30%	23%
Important	36%	30%
Buying Decision Influence: web shop	Ger	Swe
No or little influence	57%	73%
Medium influence	30%	12%
Much influence	13%	15%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Results: The surveys show web shop is more unimportant in Sweden than in Germany (Table 5.18). In the personal interviews, some thought of it as being convenient, although with a much more limited range of products than in the regular stores. It was said that the customer sees the products available at the web shop, but usually goes to a

physical store to make the purchase in order to be able to try the clothes on beforehand. The respondents liked the possibility to purchase online even though they might not do so themselves. Therefore, they did not believe that the web shop influences their shopping behaviour in a direct way.

Analysis: The fact that the awareness of the web shop is high among both the Germans and the Swedes suggests it has a high *information value*. However, even though having a high *information value*, it seem to be neither important nor influencing the buying decision, which implies a low *attractiveness value*, as well as a low *transaction value*. This may be due to the customers wanting to try on the products before buying. Nevertheless, it has a slightly higher *attractiveness value* and *transaction value* among the German consumers than among the Swedish ones, but still the values can be seen as low. Having both a low *transaction value* and a low *attractiveness value* in both Sweden and Germany implies that the touch point is rather unimportant for Hennes & Mauritz, even though it has a high *information value*.

Physical Store

Results: Regarding physical stores, the surveys show they are very important and influence the buying decision very much (Table 5.19). This is reinforced by the personal interviews that meant it gives the possibility to see, feel and try the products. During the Swedish interviews, it was even said to be the most crucial thing influencing purchasing behaviour. The fact that almost all physical stores look the same was considered an advantage.

Table 5.19 Attractiveness of Physical Store	Ger	Swe
Unimportant	2%	3%
Indifferent	4%	6%
Important	94%	91%
Buying Decision Influence: physical store	Ger	Swe
No or little influence	7%	7%
Medium influence	9%	25%
Much influence	84%	68%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: The almost complete awareness of the physical store suggests a high *information value*. Furthermore, its high importance is probably due to its possibility to see, feel and try the products, which implies a high *attractiveness value*. It also has a high buying decision influence pointing at a high *transaction value*. These high values together imply that the physical store is a very important touch point. It is also the touch point with the highest *information value*, *attractiveness value* and *transaction value* among all researched touch points, which furthermore emphasizes its importance.

Catalogue

Table 5.20 Attractiveness of Catalogue	Ger	Swe
Unimportant	46%	65%
Indifferent	22%	23%
Important	32%	12%
Buying Decision Influence: Catalogue	Ger	Swe
No or little influence	68%	86%
Medium influence	21%	12%
Much influence	11%	2%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Results: In the matter of catalogue, the surveys show that most respondents find it unimportant and with low buying decision influence. However, it is more important in Germany (Table 5.20). The same was found in the personal interviews, which meant they would want to try the clothes on before purchasing them. As in the case of the web shop, the Swedish respondents thought negatively about the narrow range of products but regarded catalogue shopping as a convenient way to receive the goods. During the German interviews, it was also said that catalogue

shopping does not fit Hennes & Mauritz since consumers buy their products impulsively and it takes a while to receive products ordered from a catalogue. Two of the Germans also meant that catalogues are a proper way to get an overview over the assortment.

Analysis: The Swedish consumers are very aware of Hennes & Mauritz' catalogue, suggesting it has a high *information value* to them. The fact that not as many German

consumers seem to notice the catalogue is probably because it has not been available to them for more than a year. The low importance of the catalogue is probably due to the fact that most consumers make their purchases at physical stores, implying the catalogue has a low *attractiveness value* to them. Since consumers are not very interested in the catalogue, it also does not influence their buying decision much, implying it has a low *transaction value* as well. Even though the German respondents generally seem to have a more positive opinion about the catalogues than the Swedish ones do, this fact is not enough, making this an unimportant touch point in both markets.

5.1.4 Subcategory: In-Store Attributes and Outside-Store Attributes

Within this subcategory, we present the results and analyses regarding advertisement in-store, sales people, product display, special offer shelves, bags with logotype, and advertisement at the entrance.

Table 5.21 Buying Decision Influence: Attributes in Store	Ger	Swe
No or little influence	9%	23%
Medium influence	23%	25%
Much influence	68%	52%
Buying Decision Influence: Attributes Outside the Store	Ger	Swe
No or little influence	52%	67%
Medium influence	37%	25%
Much influence	11%	8%

Results: The surveys show having the right attributes inside the store has high buying decision influence. It also shows it has low buying decision influence to have the researched attributes outside the store (Table 5.21).

Source: E-mail Surveys

Advertisement in the Store

Results: Concerning advertisement in the store, the surveys show that most respondents pay no or low attention towards it (Table 5.22). In the personal interviews, it was stated that advertisement in the store is desirable, if it is performed well, is interesting, and is good-looking. Pictures of clothes were thought to make the customer eager to go looking for them, thus influencing the buying decision.

Table 5.22 Awareness of Advertisement in the Store	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	50%	56%
Medium attention	30%	33%
High attention	20%	11%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: The lack of attention towards advertisement in the store, suggests advertisement in the store has a low *information value*. Its importance is, however, strengthened by the fact that nice looking pictures are said to make people interested in the clothes displayed, thus suggesting it has a high *transaction value*. However, the *transaction value* is of less importance if no one recognizes the touch point. Because of this, advertisement inside a Hennes & Mauritz store is not an important touch point.

Sales People

Results: Regarding the sales people, the surveys show low attention toward the people, but high attention toward customer service (Table 5.23). This is reinforced by the personal

interviews, that meant one needs to have someone to ask questions if needed and to provide service. The sales people reinforce the total impression of the store. However, some meant the sales people are not that important, since they seem to be in stress all the time, do not focus on the customer and are always busy folding clothes. A sales person attempting to actively help the customers was seen as something positive, while it did not influence the respondents negatively if they were left on their own.

Analysis: The low attention toward sales people attributes suggests this touch point has low *information value*. The *information value* of the service the sales people provide could on the other hand be considered as rather high, reinforcing the sales people's importance. During the interviews, good service was said to stimulate shopping behaviour while a bad service did not. This suggests

that customer service can be seen as an opportunity to influence consumers purchasing decision, implying that it can have a high *transaction value* if well managed. This in combination with the high *information value* suggests this is an important touch point to Hennes & Mauritz in both countries.

Special Offer Shelves

Results: In the matter of special offer shelves, the surveys show higher attention in Germany than in Sweden (Table 5.24). The personal interviews showed special offer shelves as being both positive and negative. Some of the respondents meant it influences the buying decision positively to have special offer shelves, since the customer buys more and automatically turns to the discounted products. Those who dislike them regard them as somewhat chaotic, dealing with clothes that no one wants to buy.

Analysis: The German consumers pay quite much attention to special offer shelves, suggesting they have a high *information value*. This value is rather low among the Swedish consumers, meaning special offer shelves might not be as an important touch point to them. Because of the low prices, special offer shelves are said to make consumers shop more, suggesting they have a high *transaction value*. This is of high importance to Hennes & Mauritz since this affects the sales directly. The mixed feelings regarding whether the consumers approved of the shelves or not make their *attractiveness value* hard to measure. However, the high *information value* and *transaction value* among the German consumers suggest that this is an important touch point to Hennes & Mauritz in Germany. Even though it only has mediocre *information value* in Sweden, it must still be considered as important because of it also has high *transaction value*.

Table 5.23 Awareness of Sales People Attributes	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	42%	36%
Medium attention	36%	30%
High attention	22%	34%
Awareness of Customer Service	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	23%	14%
Medium attention	19%	27%
High attention	58%	59%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Table 5.24 Awareness of Special Offer Shelves	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	10%	29%
Medium attention	26%	35%
High attention	64%	36%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Product Display

Results: Regarding product display, the surveys picture higher attention in Germany, than in Sweden (Table 5.25). In the personal interviews, some meant the product display is very important, since the customer gets inspired from it and it provides information about how to wear the products. Most of the respondents said it influences the buying decision positively, if the product display is well performed, if it is easy to find the products and if the clothes worn by the tailor's dummies look nice. However, the respondents meant the buying decision is influenced negatively if the product display is chaotic.

	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	15%	27%
Medium attention	30%	40%
High attention	55%	33%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: German consumers give product display a higher *information value* than Swedish consumers do, suggesting it may be an important touch point in Germany. The interviews imply that the product display has a high *transaction value* since a good display may inspire consumers to purchase products, while a bad one would make it harder for them to find what they are looking for, thus preventing purchases. The *transaction value* is however, somewhat decreased by the fact that the in store attributes overall were not thought to influence the buying decision very much. However, it can still be considered as high and together with the high *information value* among the German consumers this implies that product display is an important touch point in Germany, while the low value among the Swedish respondents suggests this is not the case in Sweden.

Logotype on the Carrying Bag

Results: Regarding the logotype on the carrying bags, the surveys show that a majority has no or low attention towards it (Table 5.26). The personal interviews show a similar picture. Hennes & Mauritz' bags were not thought to influence the respondents' purchasing behaviour in any particular way. Rather, during the Swedish interviews it was said that Hennes & Mauritz' bags normally are stuffed inside another bag to prevent people from seeing it. However, some respondents were positive about the bags concerning their high recognition rate and some German respondents said that seeing Hennes & Mauritz' logotype would make them search for the nearest Hennes & Mauritz store.

	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	56%	63%
Medium attention	29%	27%
High attention	15%	10%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: The low level of attention towards Hennes & Mauritz' shopping bags suggests that this is a touch point with low *information value*. The picture given during the interviews undermines its importance even more, since the respondents state that they do not wish to be seen carrying Hennes & Mauritz bags. Since they did not think the shopping bags had any influence upon their shopping behaviour, the *transaction value* must also be regarded as low. These values added together suggest that this is not an important touch point for Hennes & Mauritz.

Advertisement at the Entrance

Results: The surveys show, that most of the respondents have no or low attention towards advertisement at the entrance and towards the logotype at the entrance (Table 5.27). On the contrary, the personal interviews showed that most of the respondents found advertisement at the entrance and shop window to be important meaning it is a proper way of attracting customers into the store if well managed. The logotype at the entrance was seen as being very important, since it makes you recognise the store even from far away and makes you go enter. However, some complains were made among the Swedish consumers regarding non-human looking tailor's dummies making the clothes look loosely and unattractive.

Table 5.27 Awareness of Advertisement at the Entrance		
	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	57%	51%
Medium attention	24%	41%
High attention	19%	8%
Awareness of Logotype at the Entrance		
	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	62%	49%
Medium attention	26%	27%
High attention	12%	24%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: During the interviews the advertisement and logotype at the entrance of a Hennes & Mauritz physical store, were said to make consumers recognize the store, giving them a high *information value*. However, in the two surveys, the respondents give these features low *information values*, meaning they do not seem to take notice of them. This difference is most likely because most people already know where to find their closest Hennes & Mauritz store. This suggests that these features may be of more importance when trying to attract new customers to a store. Since the attributes outside the store, according to the surveys, do not influence upon the consumers' shopping behaviour very much, this implies that they have a low *transaction value*. This low *transaction value* and the fact that advertisement at the entrance only seems to attract new customers, suggest this to be an unimportant touch point in both countries.

5.1.5 Subcategory: Product Attributes

Within this subcategory, we present the results and analyses regarding the touch points: product quality, product price and product design.

Product Quality

Results: Regarding the product quality, the surveys picture high attention toward it (Table 5.28). The personal interviews also show that the respondents pay high attention toward it. However, some meant the quality is poor, which makes them buy only cheaper products and standard products at Hennes & Mauritz.

Table 5.28 Awareness of Product Quality		
	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	3%	7%
Medium attention	13%	26%
High attention	84%	67%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Others meant the quality is high in relation to the price. The respondents said the quality of the products influences the buying decision very much, since if, having a good quality experience one will buy more and if having a bad quality experience one will not buy anything.

Analysis: The high awareness among the respondents in both surveys implies that the quality of Hennes & Mauritz' products has a high *information value*. Even though the German consumers seem to rate it slightly higher than the Swedish consumers do, it seems to be of importance in both countries. The quality itself was considered to have a low *attractiveness value*, while in combination with Hennes & Mauritz' low prices, the *attractiveness value* was seen as quite high, suggesting that Hennes & Mauritz' combination of quality and price is important to consumers. Good quality was said to make the consumer buy more while bad quality would have the opposite effect, implying the quality has a high *transaction value*. The three high values suggest this is an important touch point to Hennes & Mauritz in both countries.

Product Price

Results: In the matter of product price, the surveys show very high attention toward it (Table 5.29). This is reinforced by the personal interviews, that meant it is positive with low prices, but it may lead to customers buying products they do not really need. The price was also said to match the quality of the products and that a higher product price could be justified with better product quality or better fitting clothes.

Table 5.29 Awareness of Product Price	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	1%	6%
Medium attention	8%	12%
High attention	91%	82%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: The respondents in the two surveys pay much attention to the product price, implying it has a very high *information value*. The fact that the low product price was said to stimulate impulse shopping behaviour, also suggests it has a high *transaction value*. This can be seen as important to Hennes & Mauritz since it affects the company's result in a direct way. Since the respondents spoke positively about the low prices, those can be seen as having high *attractiveness value*. This fact, in combination with the high *information value* and *transaction value*, points out that the product price is a very important touch point to Hennes & Mauritz in both markets.

Product Design

Results: The surveys also show high attention toward the product design (Table 5.30). However, within the personal interviews, there were mixed feelings regarding Hennes & Mauritz' product design. It was considered as important for the buying decision, since if the customer does not like it the customer will not buy the product. It was also said, that one might not buy Hennes & Mauritz' products because many people may have the same outfit. At the same time, some of the German respondents said that they only buy basic clothing at Hennes & Mauritz, making the design less important.

Table 5.30 Awareness of Product Design	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	3%	8%
Medium attention	17%	19%
High attention	80%	73%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: The high awareness among the respondents implies that the product design has a high *information value* to both Swedish and German consumers. The fact that the product design was considered as important for the buying decision also indicates it has a high *transaction value*, suggesting this is an important touch point to Hennes & Mauritz. Many of the respondents also spoke positively about the product design, which suggests it has a rather high *attractiveness value*. The three high values imply the touch point to be important in both markets.

5.2 Influenceable Touch Points

Within the category of influenceable touch points, we present the results and analysis regarding the touch points included in the subcategory: contracted external actors.

5.2.1 Subcategory: Contracted External Actors

Results: Within the group of contracted external actors, the Swedish survey shows a high awareness of Hennes & Mauritz in connection with their suppliers or distributors and the German survey shows a low awareness. Both surveys show that the respondents value information about Hennes & Mauritz' suppliers high and if the suppliers or distributors would be involved in a scandal it would have high influence on the buying decision (Table 5.31). This picture is reinforced by the personal interviews stating the information says a lot about the company and forces them to take responsibility. However, during the Swedish interviews it was also said that consumers should not have to check on these things because there are certain regulations and laws that Hennes & Mauritz must follow. A couple of the German respondents said this kind of information is not important, since their interest is too small and they do not need the kind of information when deciding what to buy. It was said that even though the respondents do not approve of child labour or poor working conditions for employees, such a scandal would hardly affect their purchasing behaviour. However, some of the German respondents did think that this would influence their shopping behaviour if the scandal was large enough. If Hennes & Mauritz was known to have good working conditions and follows all laws and restrictions that would influence the respondents shopping behaviour in a good way.

Table 5.31 Contracted External Actors		
Awareness of H&M in Connection with their Suppliers or Distributors?	Ger	Swe
Have heard/seen/read	28%	72%
Have not heard/seen/read	72%	28%
Attractiveness of Information Regarding H&M and their Suppliers/Distributors?	Ger	Swe
No or little value	27%	23%
Medium value	33%	25%
High value	40%	52%
Buying Decision Influence if H&M' Suppliers/Distributors are Involved in a Scandal?	Ger	Swe
No or little influence	13%	12%
Medium influence	18%	15%
High influence	69%	73%
Buying Decision Influence if Hennes & Mauritz' Suppliers/Distributors follow all Laws and Rules and have Good Standards?	Ger	Swe
No or little influence	11%	10%
Medium influence	14%	10%
High influence	75%	80%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: A clear majority of the Swedish respondents had encountered information about Hennes & Mauritz' suppliers or distributors, while a clear majority of the German respondents had not. This suggests that the *information value* is high among the Swedish

consumers, while low among the German consumers. This difference is most likely due to the fact that Hennes & Mauritz is a Swedish company and consequently Swedish consumers are more exposed to these kinds of news. A majority of the Swedish consumers say that they approve of the opportunity to receive information about Hennes & Mauritz’ suppliers, suggesting the touch point has a high *attractiveness value*. This value was a bit lower among the German consumers, but could still be considered as high. In both Sweden and Germany, the surveys showed that the respondents’ buying decisions are highly influenced if Hennes & Mauritz’ suppliers are involved with a scandal or if they have good working standards, which implies that the touch point has a high *transaction value*. All three values combined, suggest that Hennes & Mauritz’ suppliers and distributors are a very important touch point.

5.3 Uncontrollable Touch Points

Within the category of uncontrollable touch points, we present the results and analysis regarding the touch points included in the subcategories: professional information sources and other consumers as information sources. The subcategories start with a summarized presentation of awareness results and influence on buying decision results. However, the analyses are performed on touch point level under each touch point that follows.

5.3.1 Subcategory: Professional Information Sources

Within this subcategory, presentation of results and analyses regarding journals, TV-reports and daily newspaper is followed.

Results: The surveys show word of mouth and journals to have high rate of encounter. In Sweden, daily newspaper is significant higher than in Germany. Most respondents regarded professional information sources to have low buying decision influence on them (Table 5.32).

Table 5.32 Professional Information Sources: Awareness of Reports over H&M?	Ger	Swe	Buying Decision Influence: Professional Information Sources	Ger	Swe
Daily newspapers	12%	76%	No or little influence	52%	44%
Journals	69%	69%	Medium influence	35%	39%
TV-reports	16%	47%	Much influence	13%	17%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Daily Newspapers and Journals

Results: The surveys show that daily newspaper is more important to Swedish consumers (Table 5.33). They also show a proportionate allocation of the opinions regarding journals. In the personal interviews, the respondents found it positive when Hennes & Mauritz gets critical, objective reviews in different journals and newspapers, but there were different opinions on whether this affected them or not. Positive writing was thought to influence purchasing behaviour

Table 5.33 Attractiveness of Daily Newspaper	Ger	Swe
Unimportant	54%	15%
Indifferent	18%	31%
Important	28%	44%
Attractiveness of Journals	Ger	Swe
Unimportant	36%	35%
Indifferent	37%	32%
Important	27%	33%

Source: E-mail Surveys

in a positive way, while negative writing was thought to influence in a negative way. During the Swedish interviews it was also said that articles of this kind could be interesting reading but that they do not influence shopping behaviour at all since people want to create their own opinion through experience.

Analysis: The Swedish respondents had a high rate of encountering Hennes & Mauritz in newspapers while the German consumers had a very low rate of encountering. This suggests that this touch point has a high *information value* in Sweden, while a low one in Germany. When regarding journals instead, there seems to be a high and equal *information value* in Sweden and in Germany. According to the interviews, many consumers seem to regard newspapers and journals as good tools for getting updates about Hennes & Mauritz when something has happened, but otherwise the *attractiveness value* of the touch point seems to be low. Even though newspapers and journals have a rather high *information value* in at least Sweden, the respondents did not believe that professional information sources influence their buying decision much, implying they have a low *transaction value*. This suggests that these might not be important touch points to Hennes & Mauritz.

TV-Reports

Results: Regarding TV-reports, the surveys show it to be slightly more important in Sweden than Germany, but still the opinions are proportionate among the alternatives (Table 5.34). In the personal interviews it was said, it is positive for the consumer to have this information source, especially if Hennes & Mauritz is involved in a scandal or if the company does something of interest. TV increases the transparency, which is desirable.

Table 5.34 Attractiveness of TV-reports	Ger	Swe
Unimportant	49%	30%
Indifferent	27%	34%
Important	24%	36%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Moreover, TV is an important actor and can educate both the company and the customer. According to the German interviews, TV reports probably influences the buying decision a lot if reporting about negative items and less if reporting about positive items.

Analysis: There was a much higher encountering of TV-reports regarding Hennes & Mauritz among the Swedish consumers than the German ones, which implies that this touch point has higher *information value* in Sweden. This is probably because Swedish TV reports about Hennes & Mauritz more frequently since it is a Swedish company. Despite this, not even the Swedish *information value* could be considered as remarkably high. Furthermore, TV-reports were not thought to be of any special importance to the consumers, suggesting they have a low *attractiveness value*, further decreasing the touch point's importance. The fact that TV-reports over scandals, according to the interviews, influence shopping behaviour a lot, while positive news do not seem to matter as much, makes the *transaction value* hard to measure. However, the overall *transaction value* from professional information was thought to have a rather low *transaction value*. All these values point at the fact that TV-reports are an unimportant touch point to Hennes & Mauritz.

5.3.2 Subcategory: Other Consumers as Information Sources

Within this subcategory, we present results and analyses concerning online forum and word of mouth/recommendation from friends.

Results: The respondents in both surveys found it common to hear about Hennes & Mauritz through word of mouth or through recommendation from friends (Table 5.35). A majority of the German respondents thought other consumers influence their buying decision a great deal. This was supported by the Swedish consumers as well, but to a lesser extent.

Table 5.35 Consumer Information Sources: Awareness of Talk about H&M?	Ger	Swe	Buying Decision Influence: Other Consumers	Ger	Swe
Online Forum	9%	18%	No or little influence	17%	32%
Word of mouth/recom. Friends	87%	68%	Medium influence	29%	31%
			Much influence	54%	37%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Online Forum

Results: The surveys show online forums to be rather unimportant (Table 5.36). Despite this, some of the respondents in the Swedish personal interviews meant that they influence purchasing behaviour in a good way since a product becomes more desirable the more people

Table 5.36 Attractiveness of Online-Forum	Ger	Swe
Unimportant	52%	61%
Indifferent	35%	30%
Important	13%	9%

Source: E-mail Surveys

discuss it. It was also said that not all consumers visit these forums and the German respondents stated that they much rather would like to get information from professional sources or from friends. It was, however, thought to be a good information source for people with a large interest in the company.

Analysis: Not many respondents had read about Hennes & Mauritz in online forums, which suggests that the *information value* is low. Furthermore, a majority of the consumers did not think that online forums were of any special importance to them, which implies they have a low *attractiveness value* as well. This can explain why, according to the interviews, not all consumers visit these kinds of forums. These two low values suggest that online forums are an unimportant touch point to Hennes & Mauritz.

Word of Mouth/ Recommendation from Friends

Results: Regarding word of mouth/recommendation from friends, the surveys picture this to be very important when forming an image about Hennes & Mauritz, especially in Germany (Table 5.37). This is reinforced by the personal interviews that even stated it is the single most important factor influencing shopping behaviour. Positive word of mouth influences in a positive way, while negative word of mouth makes the consumer more restrictive towards Hennes & Mauritz and the products. It was also said by the Swedish respondents that tips might boost shopping frequency but it do not change the perceived image of Hennes & Mauritz.

Table 5.37 Attractiveness of Word of Mouth/Recommendation Friends	Ger	Swe
Unimportant	5%	10%
Indifferent	12%	10%
Important	83%	80%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: A majority of the respondents in both surveys had encountered word of mouth or friends' recommendation of Hennes & Mauritz. This indicates that the touch point has a high *information value*. According to the interviews, both the Swedish and German consumers also thought friends' recommendation/word of mouth to be the touch point influencing their shopping behaviour the most. This implies that it also has a high *transaction value*. The fact that both Swedish and German consumers found friend's recommendation/word of mouth to be of high importance when forming an image toward Hennes & Mauritz suggests that it has a high *attractiveness value*. All these high values point to the fact that word of mouth is a very important touch point to Hennes & Mauritz.

H&M Products Worn by Other consumers

Results: The surveys show that most respondents have no or low attention toward H&M products worn by other consumers (Table 5.38). However, the respondents in the personal interviews stated H&M clothes carried by others do matter. Nice fitting and nice looking clothes would make the customer want to buy them, while unfitting clothes would have the opposite effect. It was also said that one might not want to wear the same clothes as everyone else and therefore it may affect consumers negatively. During the German interviews it was said that one normally cannot tell whether clothes are from Hennes & Mauritz or not, thus making it hard to associate the clothes with the company.

Table 5.38 Awareness of H&M Clothes Carried by Other Consumers	Ger	Swe
No or low attention	48%	57%
Medium attention	29%	35%
High attention	23%	8%

Source: E-mail Surveys

Analysis: The fact that some respondents say that consumers wearing nice looking clothes trigger purchases suggests that the touch point has a high *transaction value*. However, a high *transaction value* can be both a positive and a negative factor in this case. For example it was also said that clothes worn by a lot of consumers would prevent the respondents from buying Hennes & Mauritz' products since they would not want to wear the same clothes as everyone else. The low recognition rate among the respondents of consumers wearing Hennes & Mauritz clothes implies that the *information value* of this touch point is quite low. This, in combination with the mixed messages about the *transaction value* suggests that this is an unimportant touch point to Hennes & Mauritz.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents our conclusions regarding which consumer brand touch points are the most important for Hennes & Mauritz in Sweden and Germany, their reasons to importance, whether the same are justified in both markets and regarding touch points' different importance. At the end, we present some recommendations for Hennes & Mauritz and for companies in general based upon the conclusions.

We started by introducing the reader to the shift from traditional marketing towards marketing where all touch points matter. However, at the same time, we acknowledged that a strategy focusing on all touch points is no guarantee for success and that touch points differ in their importance. Our analysis shows that not all of Hennes & Mauritz' touch points are important. This brings us to the conclusion, that some of Hennes & Mauritz' touch points are more important than others are. Some are very important and some even very unimportant. In Sweden, we pinpointed thirteen important touch points based on their high information value, attractiveness value or transaction value and in Germany, twelve. The reasons why the touch points are important are very similar in both markets (Table 6.1). Among the important touch points, some stand out to be particularly important in both Sweden and Germany having high information value, attractiveness value and transaction value in both markets. Those are the physical store, product quality, product price, product design and word of mouth. In Sweden, distributors and suppliers also are of particular importance.

Table 6.1 Important Touch Points and Their Reasons to Importance

Controllable TP	Germany			Sweden		
	Info. V.	Attract. V.	Trans. V.	Info. V.	Attract. V.	Trans. V.
Catalogue/Bro ad.	Quite high	High		High	High	
Newspap/journ ad.	High	Quite high		High	Quite high	
Outdoor ad.	High	High		High	Quite high	
Discount coupons				High	High	
Loyalty card				High		High
Physical Store	High	High	High	High	High	High
Sales People	High		High	High		High
Special Offer Shelve	High		High	Quite high		High
Product Display	High		Quite high			
Product Quality	High	High	High	High	High	High
Product Price	High	High	High	High	High	High
Product Design	High	High	High	High	High	High
Influenceable TP	Germany			Sweden		
Distribut/Suppliers		High	High	High	High	High
Uncontrollable TP	Germany			Sweden		
WoM/recom.	High	High	High	High	High	High

Furthermore, we asked whether the fact that Sweden and Germany are two countries situated near each other, is enough to justify the same kind of touch points in both countries, or whether the consumers' preferences and experiences differ too much. Our analysis shows that

among the research touch points; there is little difference between the consumer preference and experience in Sweden and Germany and little difference regarding which touch points are important. However, there are still differences, which brings us to the conclusion that not all Hennes & Mauritz' important touch points in Sweden are justified in Germany and not all Hennes & Mauritz' important touch points in Germany are justified in Sweden.

By researching 32 of Hennes & Mauritz' touch points and concluding that only thirteen are important in Sweden and twelve in Germany, we have showed that touch points differ in their importance. However, even though not all of Hennes & Mauritz' touch points are important; it does not mean Hennes & Mauritz can ignore them. As stated before, in order to be a successful brand builder it is important to focus most of the attention on the most important touch points. However, all touch points matter, and ignoring some of them completely just because they are less important might be unwise.

Recommendations

Based on our conclusions, we recommend Hennes & Mauritz in Sweden and Germany to focus on and be aware of their stated important touch points. They should take extra notice about those touch points having all three values high in both markets. However, even though their touch points differ in importance, they should not completely forget about those being less important, since all touch points contribute to build customer brand experience.

It is also natural to assume that our findings may not be as accurate in a few years time as they are today. The conditions for Hennes & Mauritz and their customers are constantly changing, which makes us recommend Hennes & Mauritz to constantly re-evaluate their touch points in order to meet consumer needs in a satisfactory manner.

This thesis contributes to research by reinforcing that touch points differ in their importance, implying the magnitude for companies to be aware of their important touch points. It is, however, essential to regard that the importance of different touch points differ between companies, which is why we recommend companies to thoroughly research their customers' preferences and experiences in order to find out their important touch points.

7 DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a discussion regarding the entire thesis and its contribution. It also presents some recommendations for future research.

The result of a thesis is always influenced by the different choices the researcher has made during the process of the thesis. For instance, one choice of method may not necessarily lead to the same result as another (Bryman and Bell, 2007), making this an important decision. In order to conquer this problem, we have made use of triangulation in this thesis. We believe that this has eliminated some of the risks associated with relying on only one choice of method. Looking back, we notice there have been some parts of the study we could have conducted differently. For instance, we only discovered Spengler and Müller's three evaluation criteria of touch points after our interviews and surveys had already been conducted. Had we discovered them earlier, we could have based our questions in the interviews and surveys upon them, making the designing a whole lot easier. We do not believe that the results of this thesis have been affected of this in any particular way, since the questions asked in the interviews and in the surveys cover the same aspects as Spengler and Müller's three criteria. An earlier discovery would however have made our questions more specific, making the interviews and surveys take less time to conduct. Moreover, the limited amount of time at our disposal when writing the thesis has most likely influenced the results. More time would have made it possible for us to evaluate every decision even more thoroughly, which would have strengthened the results of the thesis. We have however, tried to overcome this short period by planning and leaving room for unexpected happenings.

Recommendations for future research

During the work with this thesis, some questions suitable for future research have been raised. Firstly, when making our limitations, some possible research areas were excluded in order to make our research question more specific. For instance, we chose to only study a small part of Hennes & Mauritz' target group, which might raise the question:

- *Are Hennes & Mauritz' touch points equally important between their consumers of different ages and/or occupations?*

Furthermore, the choice to base our study only on consumer experience has also left us wondering:

- *Would the results differ if Hennes & Mauritz' company interests and market facts were to be regarded as well?*

Lastly, theory states that all touch points matter (Spengler and Wirth, 2009), making us wonder:

- *How important is the total impression of Hennes & Mauritz' touch points to consumer experience?*

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Questionnaire Personal Interviews

Age?

Sex?

Have you ever bought products in Hennes & Mauritz? How often?

How do you value your general image of Hennes & Mauritz?

How do you value your interest for Hennes & Mauritz? H&M Club?

1. Controllable Touch Points

Advertisement

Do you know if Hennes & Mauritz' has advertisement?

Advertisement Brochure/ catalogue • Newspaper/journal advertisement • Outdoor/posters advertisement • Radio advertisement • TV-spot advertisement • Online advertisement • Flyer advertisement • Direct mailing advertisement • SMS advertisement

-If no, do you find it desirable? Why/ why not?

-If yes, 1. Have you ever encountered Hennes & Mauritz through it?, 2. What do you think about the brand contact possibility? Describe. 3. How does the contact influence your buying behaviour (ex. still buy if bad experience)? Describe.

Special features

Do you know if Hennes & Mauritz' has?

Company magazine • Loyalty card • Personal invitation events • Coupon brochures

-If no, do you find it desirable? Why/ why not?

-If yes, 1. Have you ever encountered Hennes & Mauritz through it?, 2. What is your opinion about the brand contact possibility? Describe. 3. How does the contact influence your buying behaviour (ex. still buy if bad experience)? Describe.

Sale Channels

Do you know if Hennes & Mauritz' has?

Web shop • Physical store • Catalogue

-If no, do you find it desirable? Why/ why not?

-If yes, 1. Have you ever encountered Hennes & Mauritz through it?, 2. What do you think about the brand contact possibility? Describe. 3. How does the contact influence your buying behaviour (ex. still buy if bad experience)? Describe.

In shop attributes

Do you know if Hennes & Mauritz' makes use of

Bags with the logotype on • Advertisement entrance (Logotype, stand outside shop, Shop-window) • Promotion/advertisement in the store (posters etc) • Sales person (, attributes of the personnel – age, look etc) • Special offers shelves • product display (tailor's dummies, how the wares are placed etc)

-If no, do you find it desirable? Why/ why not?

-If yes, 1. Have you ever encountered Hennes & Mauritz through it?, 2. What do you think about the brand contact possibility? Describe. 3. How does the contact influence your buying behaviour (ex. still buy if bad experience)? Describe.

Product attributes

Are you familiar with Hennes & Mauritz'

Product quality • Product price • Product style

-If no, why?

-If yes, 3. How does it influence your buying behaviour (ex. still buy if bad experience)? Describe.

2. Influenceable Touch Points

External actors

Have you ever heard/seen/read anything about Hennes & Mauritz in connection with its suppliers and distributors and how much do you value to get information regarding Hennes & Mauritz and its suppliers and distributors?

-If no, do you find it desirable? Why/ why not?

How much does it influence your buying decision if Hennes & Mauritz' suppliers or distributors are involved in a scandal? (e.g. bad working conditions, child labour). Please, describe.

How much does it influence your buying decision if Hennes & Mauritz' suppliers or distributors follow all laws and rules and have good standards? (e.g. good working conditions) Please, describe.

3. Non-controllable Touch Points

Other information sources

Do you know ifreport about Hennes & Mauritz?

-If no, do you find it desirable? Why/ why not?

-If yes, 1. Have you ever heard/read/seen Hennes & Mauritz through it?, 2. What do you think about the brand contact possibility? Describe. 3. How does the contact influence your buying behaviour (ex. still buy if bad experience)? Describe.

Journals • TV-reports • Daily newspapers • Other consumer opinions (online-forum) • Friends recommending/ Word of mouth

Other consumers

Have you ever seen Hennes & Mauritz products on other consumers?

-If no, do you find it desirable? Why/ why not?

-If yes, 2. What do you think about the brand contact possibility? Describe. 3. How does the contact influence your buying behaviour (ex. still buy if bad experience)? Describe.

Surveys

Cover Letter

Master Thesis in Marketing: Participate in our Survey –Win a Voucher at Hennes & Mauritz Worth 50 Euro.

The survey takes about 5-10 minutes and is composed by only cross-in questions. The purpose with the survey is to study how consumers in Sweden and Germany perceive Hennes & Mauritz as company and brand. All participants have the chance to win a voucher at Hennes & Mauritz worth 50 Euro. Since there are not too many recipients the chances to win are good. All answers will be given anonymity.

To participate, please follow the link

About us: We are currently studying marketing at the master level at the School of Business, Economics and Law in Gothenburg. The survey is part of our master thesis within the subject marketing communication and brand strategy.

We really appreciate your participating and hope you have the time to help us. Since, we will compare the Swedish and German samples, every answer is of high importance and value to us. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,

Karin Waller, karin.waller@gmail.com

and

Erika Rosén, erika_rosen@yahoo.se

Questionnaire

Part 1

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Have you ever bought products at Hennes & Mauritz? Yes or no
4. Are you a member of H&M club?

1= yes, I am 2= I used to be 3= No, I have never been

5. How large is your interest for Hennes & Mauritz?

1= No interest 2= very low 3= low 4= middle 5= high 6= very high

6. How do you perceive your brand attitude towards Hennes & Mauritz?

1= very negative 2= negative 3= indifferent 4= positive 5= very positive

Part 2

7. In which of the following advertisement channels have you encountered the brand Hennes & Mauritz?

Brochure/ catalogue advertisement
Newspaper/journal advertisement
Outdoor/posters advertisement
Radio advertisement
TV-spot advertisement
Online Advertisement
Flyer advertisement
Direct mailing advertisement
SMS advertisement
None

How much do you like to see Hennes & Mauritz in the following channels? Grade each on the following scale: 1= very much dislike 2= dislike 3= Don't care 4= like much 5= like very much

8. Brochure/ catalogue advertisement
9. Newspaper/journal advertisement
10. Outdoor/posters advertisement
11. Radio advertisement
12. TV-spot advertisement

- 13. Online Advertisement
- 14. Flyer advertisement
- 15. Direct mailing advertisement
- 16. SMS advertisement

Part 3

17. Which of the following special offers do you know that Hennes & Mauritz offers?

- Customer magazine
- Loyalty Card
- Personal invitation to special events
- Discount Coupons
- None

How interesting are the following offers to you? Grade each on the following scale: 1= very uninteresting 2= uninteresting 3= Middle interest 4= interesting 5= very interesting

- 18. Customer magazine
- 19. Personal invitation to special events
- 20. Discount Coupons
- 21. Loyalty Card

Part 4

22. In which of the following channels do Hennes & Mauritz offers products according to you?

- Physical store
- Web shop
- Catalogue

How important is the channel to you? Grade each on the following scale: 1= very unimportant 2= unimportant 3= I don't care 4= important 5= very important

- 23. Physical store
- 24. Web shop
- 25. Catalogue

Part 5

To which of the following in-shop aspects do you pay attention when you are visiting a Hennes & Mauritz physical store? Grade each on the following scale: 1= No attention 2= very low attention 3= low attention 4= medium attention 5= high attention 6= very high attention

26. Promotion/advertisement in the store (posters etc)
27. Sales people attributes (age, look etc)
28. Customer service (do you get help etc.)
29. Special offer shelves
30. Product display (tailor's dummy, how the wares are placed etc)
31. Product price
32. Product quality
33. Product style

To which of the following aspects do you pay attention when you are outside a Hennes & Mauritz physical store? Grade each on the following scale: 1= No attention 2= very low attention 3= low attention 4= medium attention 5= high attention 6= very high attention

34. H&M Logotype on the plastic carrying bag
35. Advertisement at the entrance (stand outside shop, Shop-window)
36. Logotype at the entrance
37. H&M clothes carried by other consumers

Part 6

38. In which of the following other information sources have you read/heard/seen about Hennes & Mauritz?

- Journal reports
- TV-reports
- Daily newspaper
- Online-forum (ex. Chat room)
- Word of mouth/recommendation from friends
- None

How important is the following sources for you when forming an opinion about Hennes & Mauritz? Grade each on the following scale: 1= very unimportant 2= unimportant 3= I don't care 4= important 5= very important

39. Journal reports
40. TV-reports

- 41. Daily newspaper
- 42. Online-forum (ex. Chat room)
- 43. Word of mouth/recommendation from friends

Part 7

44. Have you ever heard/seen/read anything about Hennes & Mauritz in connection with its suppliers and distributors?

1= Have heard/seen/read 2= Have not heard/seen/read

45. How much do you value to get information regarding Hennes & Mauritz and their suppliers and distributors?

1= not at all 2= very little 3= little 4= medium 5= much 6= very much

46. How much does it influence your buying decision if Hennes & Mauritz' suppliers or distributors are involved in a scandal? (e.g. bad working conditions, child labour)

1= not at all 2= very little 3= little 4= medium 5= much 6= very much

47. How much does it influence your buying decision if Hennes & Mauritz' suppliers or distributors follow all laws and rules and have good standards? (e.g. good working conditions)

1= not at all 2= very little 3= little 4= medium 5= much 6= very much

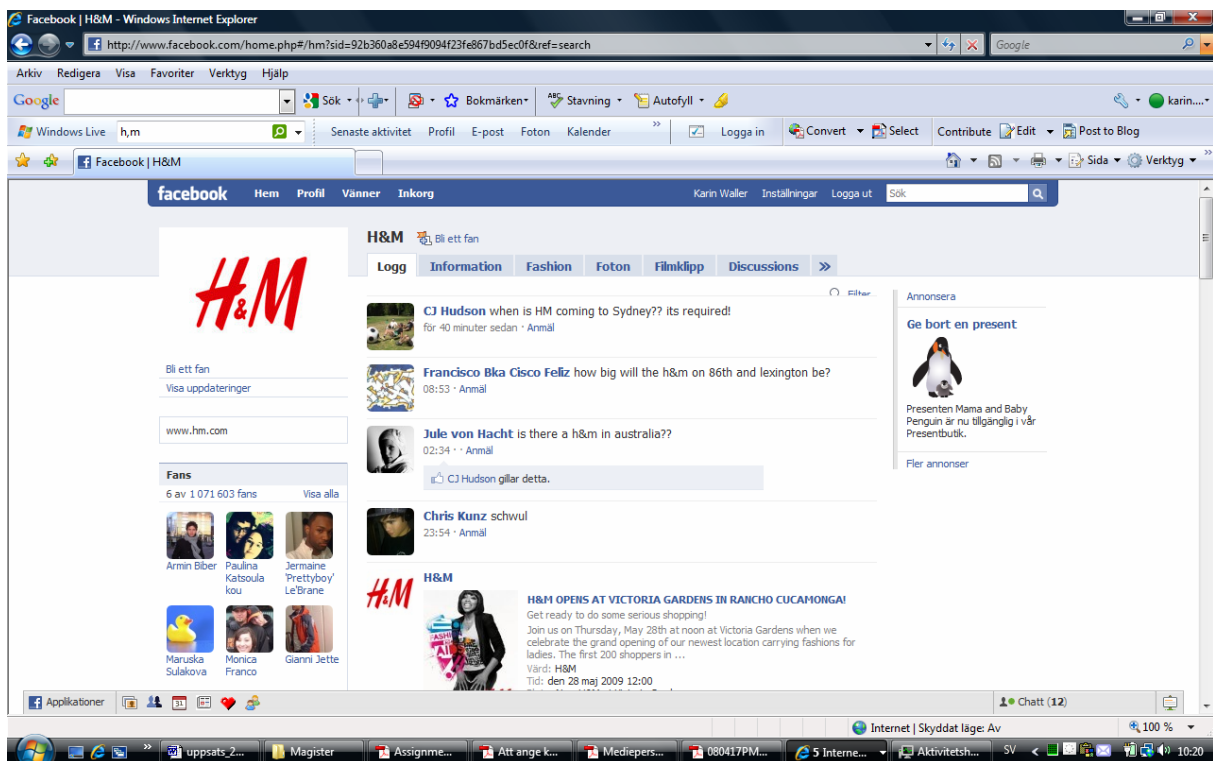
Part 8

How much do the following factors regarding Hennes & Mauritz influence you in your buying decision? Grade each on the following scale: 1= not at all 2= very little 3= little 4= Medium 5= much 6= very much

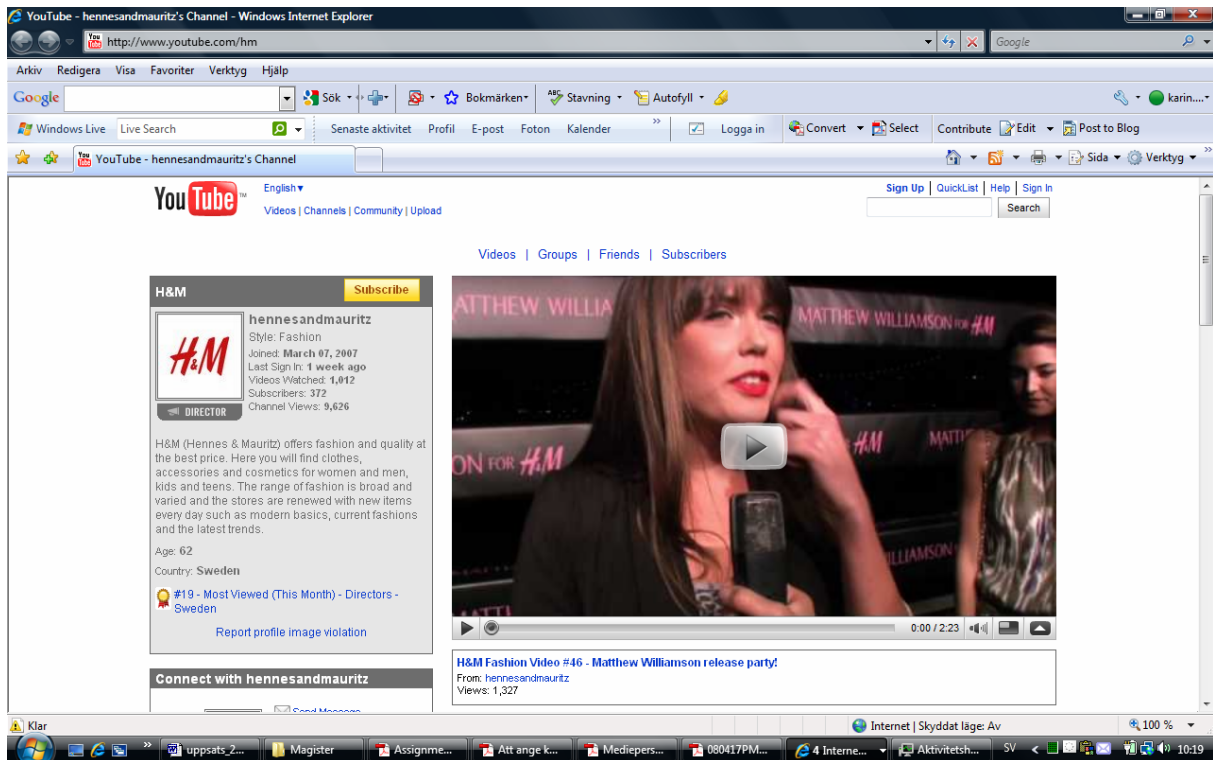
- 48. To see Hennes & Mauritz in advertisement (online, newspaper, TV, radio, telephone)
- 49. That Hennes & Mauritz offers special services (vouchers, loyalty card, test products, coupons, personal events, company magazine)
- 50. The possibility to purchase in a physical store
- 51. The possibility to purchase in a web shop
- 52. The possibility to purchase in a call centre
- 53. The possibility to purchase from a catalogue
- 54. That Hennes & Mauritz has good attributes in store (Promotion/advertisement in the store, Sales people attributes, Customer service, Special offer shelves, Product display, Overall impression of the store, Product price, Product quality, product style)

55. That Hennes & Mauritz has good attributes outside the store (H&M Logotype on the plastic carrying bag, Advertisement at the entrance, logotype at the entrance, H&M clothes carried by other consumers)
56. To hear about Hennes & Mauritz from professional information channels (Journal reports, TV-reports, Daily newspaper)
57. To hear about Hennes & Mauritz from other consumers (Online-forum, Recommendation friends, Word of mouth)

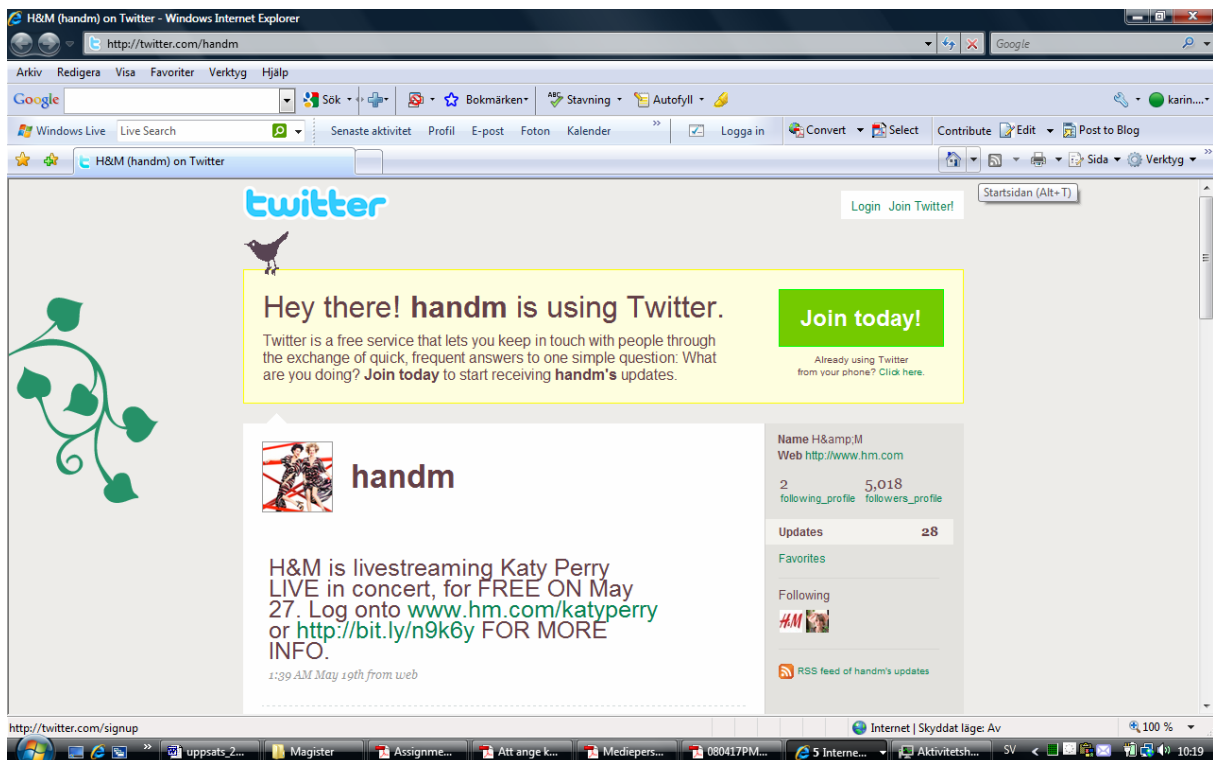
Specification of Internet Sources



Hennes & Mauritz at Facebook, (2009), <www.facebook.com>, Acc. 2009-05-21



Hennes & Mauritz at Youtube, (2009a) <http://www.youtube.com/hm>, Acc. 2009-05-21



Hennes & Mauritz at Twitter, (2009), < <http://twitter.com/handm> >, Acc. 2009-05-21

Illustrative Examples of Touch Points

The following section provides illustrative examples of some of the researched touch points.

Advertisement posters



Source:

http://search.ebay.de/search/search.dll?from=R40&_trksid=m37&satitle=h%26m+madonna&category0=, Acc. 2009-05-28



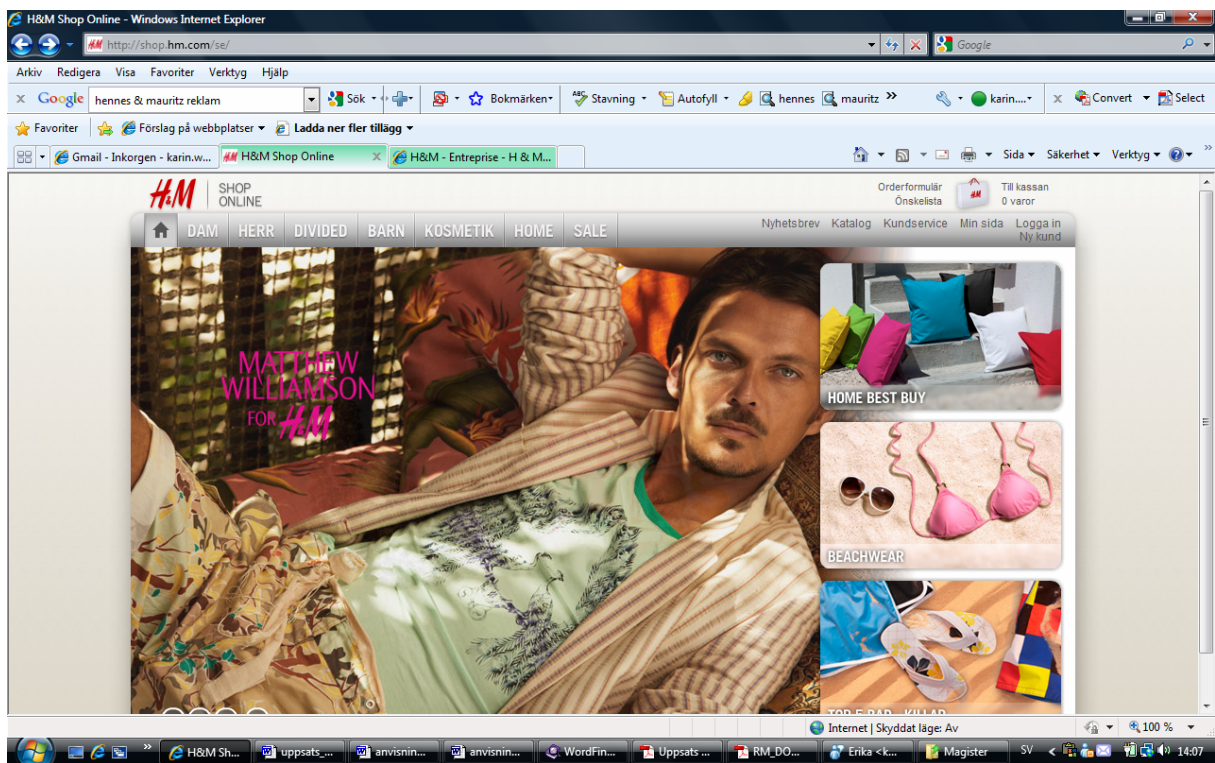
Source: http://www.hm.com/de/berhm/faktenberhm/unseremodekonzepte_concepts.nhtml, Acc. 2009-05-28

Outdoor advertisement



Source: http://www.hm.com/de/berhm/faktenberhm/diemarkehmt_hhmbrand.nhtml, Acc. 2009-05-28

Web shop



Source: <http://shop.hm.com/se/>, Acc. 2009-05-28

Advertisement at the entrance: Logotype, Shop window



Source: http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fil:Obchod_hm.jpg, Acc. 2009-05-28



Source: http://www.hm.com/de/berhm/faktenberhm/hminkrze_hminbreif.nhtml, Acc. 2009-05-28

Shopping bags with logotype



Source: http://www.hm.com/de/berhm_aboutm.nhtml, Acc. 2009-05-28

Product display



Source:

http://www.hm.com/de/berhm/faktenberhm/vonderideebisinsgeschft/geschfte_fromideatostorestores.nhtml
Acc. 2009-05-28

Sales people



Source: http://www.hm.com/de/berhm/faktenberhm/unseremitarbeiter_ouremployees.nhtml Acc. 2009-05-28

Product design



Source:

<http://search.ebay.de/search/search.dll?from=R40&trksid=p3907.m37.11313&satitle=h%26m+viktor&category Q=>
Acc. 2009-05-28

Product quality



Source: http://www.hm.com/de/unternehmerischeverantwortung_responsability.nhtml Acc. 2009-05-28

Newspapers

A screenshot of a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the DN.se website. The address bar shows the search URL: http://www.dn.se/sok?s=hennes+%26+mauritz&searchsource=dn. The page features a search bar with the text 'Sök...' and a search button. Below the search bar, there are navigation tabs for various sections: Förstasidan, STHLM, Ekonomi, Sport, Kultur & Noje, Opinion, Bostad, Resor, Mat & Dryck, and Livsstil. The main content area shows search results for 'hennes & mauritz', including a link to an article titled 'Börsen segade sig över nollstrecket' and a list of related articles under 'TRÄFFAR PER SEKTION'. The right sidebar contains a 'SENASTE NYTT' section with a list of recent news items and their timestamps. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows several open applications, including Gmail, hennes..., uppsats..., anvisnin..., WordFin..., Adob..., Erika <..., and Magister.

Source: <http://www.dn.se/sok?s=hennes+%26+mauritz&searchsource=dn> Acc. 2009-05-28