



**MS thesis**  
**Marketing and International Business**

**Brand image of EVE Online**  
Users, non-users and fans

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Supervisor: Auður Hermannsdóttir, adjunct professor

School of Business

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**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**

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Brand image of EVE Online: Users, non-users and fans.

This thesis corresponds to 30 ECTS credits and is the final thesis for a MS degree in Marketing and International Business at the School of Business, School of Social Sciences, University of Iceland.

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## **Preface**

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## **Abstract**

EVE Online is a massively multiplayer online game (*MMO*) published by the Icelandic game developer, CCP. *MMOs* are games that allow a great number of players scattered all over the world to play together via the Internet. The current study aims to measure EVE Online's brand image among four different groups: 1) users, 2) non-users, which are then categorized into two subgroups: 3) non-users who are not fans of the brand and 4) non-users who are fans of the brand.

The concept of customer-based brand equity is put forward. Keller's approach is applied, where the source of brand equity is defined as consumer knowledge about the brand and consisting of two dimensions: brand awareness and brand image. Studies by Ehrenberg and colleagues have shown a systematic and predictable relationship between usage levels of brands and their image. Brands with larger market-shares (more users) tend to elicit more favorable responses from consumers, meaning that big brands have a better brand image. Since brand image is an essential part of customer-based brand equity, it follows that brands with larger market-shares will also have higher levels of brand equity. Meaning, high brand equity is not a driver of market-share, but a result of it. Here, this relationship was studied on a single-brand level.

Three hypotheses were tested. The first stated that users of EVE Online have a more positive image of the brand than non-users. The hypothesis was not supported by the data and the overall brand image did not differ between the two groups. However, when brand image statements were investigated more closely, a pattern emerged which showed that users were more likely than non-users to agree with positive statements about the brand. The second hypothesis stated that non-users who are fans of the brand have a more positive image of the brand than non-users who are not fans. The hypothesis was not supported by the data but the data exhibited the same pattern which showed that non-users who are fans were much more likely to agree with positive statements about the brand than non-users who are not fans. The third hypothesis stated that non-users who are fans have a more positive image of the brand than current users. The hypothesis was not supported by the data. This would seem to suggest that even if there existed a sub-set of consumers who are passionate about the brand, behavior (usage) will still be a more reliable predictor of its image.

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