Brand Personality Dimensions in Sweden

Developing a Brand Personality Scale among Swedish Consumers

by

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Abstract

Title:	Brand Personality Dimensions in Sweden: Developing a Brand Personality Scale among Swedish Consumers
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Purpose:	The purpose of this thesis is to examine how Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale functions in a culture outside of its country of origin and develop a deeper understanding of how Swedish consumers ascribe commercial brands symbolic values in terms of human personality traits.
Methodology:	This thesis applies a quantitative research approach where data aggregation and analysis is conducted in a total of three interlinked studies. Study 1 tests the validity of Aaker's (1997) original brand personality scale via exploratory factor analysis. Study 2 generates brand personality items from Swedish consumers in a free-association task. Study 3 analyzes these items in an exploratory factor analysis to develop a Swedish brand personality scale, which is followed by a confirmatory factor analysis to validate the scale. In addition, a multiple regression analysis is applied to explore consumer attitudes towards the Swedish brand personality dimension, ending with an assessment of 13 fashion retailers' Swedish brand personalities via analysis of variance.
Findings:	Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale is not valid in Sweden. Thus, a Swedish brand personality scale is developed, consisting of the dimensions: Freshness, Sympathy, Stability and Emotionality. Whereas, Freshness and Stability have the strongest positive correlations with consumer attitudes.
Research Implications:	The Swedish brand personality scale fills the theoretical gap of Aaker's (1997) original scale's lack of cross-cultural validity in Sweden. These insights are valuable for researchers, marketers and other stakeholders who wish to explore present and future brand personalities in Sweden.
Keywords:	Brand personality; brand management; culture; consumer attitudes; Sweden

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1   Introduction

Has it ever struck you that when being faced by two rather similar products with the same function but different brands, you seem to relate to one of them more than the other? The fact is, as suggested by Fournier (2014), that a brand is like a person. Further, as Gilmore (1919) points out, human beings want to develop relationships with others and as McDougall (1915) suggests we also feel the need of connecting inanimate objects to this nonmaterial world. Thus, by giving brands human characters we as humans, according to Fournier (2014), also humanize and personalize brands. This phenomenon occurs in all societies, Brown (1991) propose, and results in humans creating various brand preferences (Fournier, 2014). Hence, all brands, just as the individuals' in a person's network, have different personalities that relate to us in different ways.

Relationships with brands are based on the norms and expectations that we have and are surrounded by (Marketing Science Institute, 2014). For example, perhaps you have a partnership with the fast fashion retailer H&M, however, you consider the high-end fashion brand Chanel your best friend, but deep inside you have a secret affair with the private label at your nearest clothing outlet. These three brands have two things in common: they all label products with similar or even the same functions, and they also possess distinguished brand personalities that you and everyone around you develop relationships with. This fact does not only consider fashion retail brands, the phenomena happens within all product and service categories and you as a consumer always have a relationship towards all existing brands in your sphere, regardless of whether or not you want it (Fournier, 2014). Just like your best friend in high school that is no longer your friend, or the ex that is now an embarrassment. In the context of brand relationships: "[b]reakups are never the end of the relationship. Rather, they redefine the type of relationship and are part of a never-ending cycle of change" (Fournier, 2014, p.32).

This phenomenon, brand personality, that further on is referred to as BP, is defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p.347), and is something that marketers are highly aware of, as stated by Plummer (2000). The fact is, BP makes it easier for consumers to identify themselves with a brand and to relate their individual personality with the personality of the brand (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2017). Thus, Aaker (1996) points out that BP has been seen as an important tool for brand differentiation and strengthening of the brand among marketers, which Aaker and Fournier (1995) adds on by stating that BP is a good utility for building relationships with consumers. As Fournier (Marketing Science Institute, 2014, n.p.) express it: "[t]here is profit potential in all types of relationships … the trick is to understand the specific relationship contract and the implicit rules that govern consumers' brand interactions".

The understanding of the relationships between brands and consumers has been explored since the beginning of the 20th century, when researchers began to gain insights into how to conceptualize the concept of BP with variables retrieved from human personality research (Endler & Rosenstein, 1997). Today, in the early 21th century, BP research is often related to Aaker's (1997) BP scale, a measurement that identifies five general BP dimensions that are suggested to be applicable to all brands within all product and service categories. However, consumers are unique, as stated by Daun and Teeland (1996), and belong to different cultures that have emerged from multiple social and historical factors (Allik & McCrae, 2002). Therefore, human beings perceive and interpret their surroundings in different ways, as proposed by Allik and McCrae (2002), resulting in brands being attributed with shifting BPs depending on where in the world we are positioned (e.g. Bosnjak, Bochmann & Hufschmidt, 2007; Ferrandi, Valette-Florence & Fine-Falcy, 2000; Aaker, Benet-Martínez & Garolera, 2001; Supphellen & Grønhaug, 2003; Sung & Tinkham, 2005).

1.1   Problematization

The suggestions that consumers are unique in their preferences and behavior raise the question if Aaker's (1997) BP scale, developed in North America, has a cross-cultural validity when being applied to consumers living in other parts of the world. Since Aaker (1997) published her article 'Dimensions of Brand Personality' in the late 1990's, many researchers have argued for it not being a valid cross-cultural measurement (Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009). This has generated a number of new culture specific scales applicable to various countries and cultures, such as Japan (Aaker, Benet-Martínez & Garolera, 2001), Spain (Aaker, Benet-Martínez & Garolera, 2001), Russia (Supphellen & Grønhaug, 2003), China (Chu & Sung, 2011) and India (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2017). However, no attempts of developing Aaker's (1997) BP scale in the Nordics have been made (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004). As this part of the world is highly developed in socioeconomic terms, as noted by for example Gray (2017), consumers in this region appreciate the symbolism of brands in a much grander way than lower developed countries, where the function of a product rather is in focus (Supphellen & Grønhaug, 2003). Thus, it is of relevance to, for the first time within the literature stream of BP, identify cultural-specific BP dimensions in the Nordics, which in this thesis will be determined in a Swedish context.

1.2   Research Aims

Based on prior background and problematization, this study has two aims. First, it aims to test the validity of Aaker's (1997) BP scale in a Swedish context and second, to develop a BP scale that examines how Swedish consumers ascribe human personality traits to commercial brands.

1.3   Research Purpose

The purpose with this thesis is therefore to examine how Aaker's (1997) BP scale functions in a culture outside of its country of origin and develop a deeper understanding of how Swedish consumers ascribe commercial brands symbolic values in terms of human personality traits. In order to reach the aims of this thesis the theoretical approach will be based on Aaker's (1997) BP scale and further applied to a Swedish setting with the usage of a quantitative method applying factor analysis, multiple regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

The insights from this thesis are to be considered highly valuable for both researchers within the field of BP and marketing interested in cross-cultural differences and moreover, for practitioners who wishes to generate a deeper understanding about their consumers and prospects in Sweden. Furthermore, the ambition is to inspire researchers to further extend the scale in other Nordic countries. Thus, the theoretical contribution is an extension of Aaker's (1997) BP theory by strengthening her scale cross-culturally. This will consequently expand the BP literature and fill the theoretical gap, that is to confirm whether Aaker's BP scale is valid in Sweden and moreover, to contribute with a new Swedish BP scale.

Nonetheless, BP is not only of concern for academics wishing to understand how consumers use brands as symbolic means. The interest in BP is also present among marketers wishing to maximize brand value and profit (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2017). In this context, BP functions as a tool for attracting and developing relationships with consumers (Aaker and Fournier, 1995). Hence, the aspiration is to practically contribute with insights to all professional groups interested in the possibility of identifying BPs in the Swedish market. The scale that is developed will narrow the conceptualization and improve the accuracy and functionality of the insights generated from Aaker's (1997) BP scale for marketers targeting Swedish consumers. Hence, the findings will have important implications for current and future marketing activities by making them more effective.

In summary, by generating a Swedish BP scale for the first time, using Aaker's (1997) study as a base, we intend to fill the presented research gap of the lacking knowledge about BP in a Swedish context and deliver valuable theoretical and practical contributions.

1.4   Delimitations

For the purpose of this study, the thesis will only focus on Sweden and therefore the developed BP scale will only be applicable in the Swedish market. Hence, no comparative study will take place where other countries are compared to Sweden. Thus, it will only examine how Swedish consumers ascribe human personality traits to commercial brands. Moreover, a delimitation will be made to only let Swedish students at Lund University participate in the studies. Furthermore, as this study focuses on Swedish consumers in a holistic way, gender or any other types of demographics are not taken into consideration.

Lastly, a scope covering only the fashion retail industry will be applied, as this product category is considered much dependent on symbolism and hence, also brands.

1.5   Outline of the Thesis

The thesis starts with a literature review exploring previous research within the field of BP. This will identify and illustrate the thesis theoretical framework, which is graphically presented in section 2.5. The following chapter will discuss the chosen research design and method based on this thesis' epistemology and ontology, and moreover, how the theoretical framework will be transferred into measurable variables with the identification of BP items suitable for determining the Swedish BP dimensions. In the two last chapters a general discussion will be given, which is followed by concluding remarks, theoretical contributions, managerial implications and potential future research.

2 Literature Review

In this chapter an overview of previous studies related to the aim and purpose of this thesis will be given. By identifying relevant concepts and studies linked to BP, supported by human personality research, a measurable theoretical framework will be presented. Critical aspects will be highlighted to illustrate the ambiguity of the BP literature stream and will thus, strengthen and argue for the purpose with this study.

2.1 Human and Brand Personality

Human personality has been attempted to be used as a tool for categorization of people many times (Smit, Berge & Franzen, 2002). According to Tupes and Christal (1992), a fundamental distinction of personality traits accepted by researchers within trait taxonomies, namely "a systematic framework for distinguishing, ordering, and naming types and groups within a subject field" (John, Angleitner & Ostendorf, 1988, p.172), are the broad personality dimensions: Surgency, Agreeableness, Dependability, Emotional Stability and Culture (John, Angleitner & Ostendorf, 1988). These five dimensions have later been suggested to be interpreted as: Power, Love, Work, Affect and Intellect (Peabody & Goldberg, 1989). A development of these has resulted in one of today's most cross-cultural robust model within personality psychology research: the psycho-lexical Five-Factor Model (McCrae & Allik, 2002). This model, that has received a growing acceptance and consensus among professionals, according to Mac Giolla and Kajonius (2017), conceptualizes and identifies via factor analysis five human personality traits in terms of the basic dimensions: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism (McCrae & John, 1992).

Personality traits in a human context are derived from an individual's behavior, physique, attitudes, beliefs and demographics (Sung & Tinkham, 2005). Brands, as inanimate objects, are however ascribed hypothetical personality constructs by consumers who have direct and indirect contact with the brands (Fournier, 1998). This leads to the suggestion that human personalities and BPs are not comparable due to them deriving from different impacting factors (Sung & Tinkham, 2005). However, brands are given symbolic meanings, often in the shape of human personality traits, beyond functionality and looks, according to Sung & Tinkham (2005). Thus, brands act as meaning creators in a consumer's life in the same way a partner function in a relationship (Fournier, 1998). Hence, it seems logical to apply a psychological approach with the usage of human trait taxonomies in a branding context as well (Caprara, Barbaranelli & Guido, 2001).

Brands and branding roots in humans' desire to create an identity, both on a personal and social level, and moreover, to feel a belonging to a group or to stand out from a group. Thus:

> Sign and symbol are essential ingredients of this branding phenomenon. As a form of marking, branding is richly ramified by application to oneself, to other people, and to property; it takes both material and metaphorical forms; and is perceived either positively or negatively (Bastos & Levy, 2012, p.349).

In this sense, branding has always been present in human societies and has over time developed into a field closely related to business (Bastos & Levy, 2012). However, the terms "branding" and "brand" were not coined as essential concepts in marketing up until the 20th century when market situations changed and competition grew stronger.

In the 1920's, an increased interest in personality traits emerged within the academics of human psychology. At start, researchers aim was to develop intelligence testing measures, where later on personality tests were introduced as extensions to these intelligence tests (Endler & Rosenstein, 1997). According to Endler and Rosenstein (1997) this development soon reached the field of performance prediction and moreover, into tools for systematization of human personality traits. This development did not only just occur within human psychology, the field of marketing research also found the insights intriguing when being used as additives to the previously used demographics and consumer behavior insights (Endler & Rosenstein, 1997). The robust measures of demographics, such as age, income and education, were in the 1920's standard tools of measure for marketers, Endler and Rosenstein (1997) states. However, in the 1930's this contentment reached its peak and the feeling of insufficiency grew and a demand for new and more exciting measurement tools emerged (Wells, 1975). Marketers wanted to get to know the consumers on a deeper level to be able to create stable relationships with them, as stated by Wells (1975). This demand generated a wave of studies where the aim was to find reliable tools for measuring consumer behavior and preferences in excess to the older robust measures, as exemplified by Gardner and Levy's (1955, p.35) statement: "the net results is a public image, a character or personality that may be more important for the over-all status (and sales) of the brand than many technical facts about the product", when discussing the relevance of consumers' brand perceptions (Bastos & Levy, 2012).

This wave of research was since then separated into two different research directions: personality traits theory and psychoanalytic theory (Wells, 1975). In the 1960's Koponen (1960), one of the first attempting to conceptualize personality within marketing according to Endler and Rosenstein (1997), studied classic personality trait models and their correlation with consumer behavior. However, the study received much criticism on being too limited in its usefulness within marketing and consumer behavior predictions (Endler & Rosenstein, 1997; Wells, 1975). A few years later, Dichter (1964) followed another direction by attempting to apply psychoanalytic models onto marketing. This study was later also proven to lack reliability and was moreover stated to not provide a generalizable measurement for consumer behavior (Endler & Rosenstein, 1997).

Nonetheless, it was not only academics who found research of human personality traits and its believed utility within marketing interesting; practitioners and marketers were also intrigued (Endler & Rosenstein, 1997). In 1966, Kenyon & Eckhardt and Grey-Advertising, two American advertising agencies, both developed their own tools for measuring consumer attitudes and characteristics; a measure they both decided to call psychographics (Endler & Rosenstein, 1997). This direction of personality research within marketing was to be seen as a merge of the two earlier directions by its connection of classic personality trait models to insights related to consumer behavior and preferences (Wells, 1975). Ever since, this field has continuously been developed, as exemplified by Meenaghan's (1995) statement made a few decades later when reflecting upon the symbolic meaning of brands in advertising:

> At a more emotional/symbolic level a prime function of advertising is to achieve for a brand a particular personality or character in the perception of its market. This is achieved by imbuing the brand with specific associations or values. A particular feature of all great brands is their association with specific values, both functional and symbolic (Meenaghan, 1995, p.27).

Moreover, as previously stated, many attempts to conceptualize BPs symbolic nature have been made over the years (Bastos & Levy, 2012; Radler, 2017). Some issues considering these attempts were addressed by Aaker and Fournier (1995) in their critical paper discussing three questions:

> (1) What *is* brand personality?
> (2) How can brand personality be *measured*?
> (3) What are the *implications* of (a) having a brand personality, and (b) the advocated conceptualization of brand personality?" (Aaker & Fournier, 1995, p.391).

This critical paper is considered being a crucial milestone for the BP research and was later followed by one of today's most established BP papers published by Aaker (1997), which contributed with highly relevant insights for the concept of BP (Radler, 2017). As presented in Aaker's (1997) study, she is the first researcher to establish a "reliable, valid and generalizable scale to measure brand personality" (Aaker, 1997, p.347). Noticing the weight of BP to marketers, and using the Five-Factor Model as a base, Aaker (1997) developed a BP scale to explain the way American consumers distinguish brands across both symbolic and functional products and services. Aaker's (1997) BP scale consists of five underlying dimensions (Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, Ruggedness), each of them divided as a set of items (See Figure 2.1).
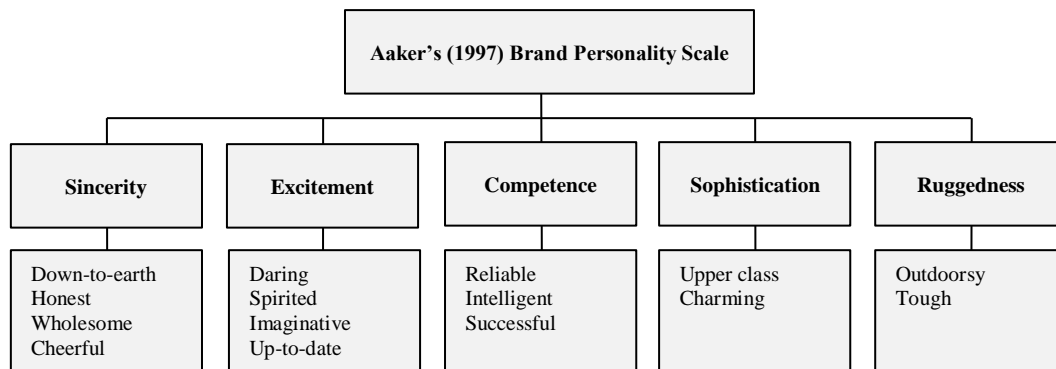
Figure 2.1 Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scale

The first BP dimension is Sincerity and often attracts family-oriented people who live in smaller cities, where function often is of importance, as suggested by Thomas and Sekar (2008). Furthermore, the authors indicate that Sincerity refers to those brands that are honest and holds their promises. The second BP dimension Excitement is defined as brands that are bold, cool, young, and exciting, whereas the third BP dimension Competence capture the idea of being bright, trustworthy and successful (Aaker, 1997). According to Aaker (1997), these three BP dimensions are all related to the Five-Factor Model, however, the last two BP dimensions, Sophistication and Ruggedness are not. Nonetheless, they are according to Supphellen and Grønhaug (2003), suggested to be very relevant for numerous brands and BPs, such as Chanel (Sophistication) and Levis (Ruggedness). Ruggedness indicates the notions of masculinity, "outdoorsiness" and roughness, while Sophistication denotes femininity, delightfulness and upper-class (Aaker, 1997). Looking deeper into all five BP dimensions, Aaker (1997) gives the following examples of representing brands: Hallmarks greeting cards (Sincerity), the alcoholic beverage Absolut Vodka (Excitement), The Wall Street Journal newspaper (Competence), Guess jeans (Sophistication), and Nike tennis shoes (Ruggedness).

Aaker's (1997) work has added important insights to the literature stream of BP and the use of her scale has contributed with both theoretical and practical insights into the effects of BP. When using the BP scale an understanding about how various variables influence BP is developed. By applying the scale in practice, marketing researchers can furthermore develop deeper understandings about how consumer use brands as symbolic tools (Aaker, 1997). These are insights considered highly valued by today's marketers, according to Aaker, Benet-Martínez and Garolera (2001).

Aaker's (1997) work has been further researched and developed by many (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2014). Fournier (1998) was one of the first doing so, when she in the study 'Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research' examined consumers relationships with brands highlighting that consumers can have relationships with brands in the same way as they have with humans. Another important publication within BP research is the work by Kim, Han and Park (2001), showing that a BP's attractiveness, distinctiveness, and self-expressive value are positively interlinked factors, which altogether have an effect on how the consumers identify themselves with a brand. This

subsequently, according to Kim, Han and Park (2001), also affect brand loyalty. The same year, Aaker, Benet-Martínez and Garolera (2001) provided a cross-cultural research, arguing for both culturally specific and culturally common aspects as ingrained in the meaning of commercial brands.

In summary, Radler (2017) in her review of extant literature of BP over 20 years marks the definite point of origin for the BP concept as when Aaker (1997), in her publication on marketing research, contributed with both theoretical and empirical insights for the concept. Furthermore, Radler (2017) identifies the work by Aaker, Fournier and Brasel (2004) as the most important contribution in the literature steam, showing "that the interactive effect of BP and transgression influences the dynamic strength of the relationship, mediated by character inferences concerning the quality of the brand as relationship partner" (Radler, 2017, p.20), that is that a human's relationship with a brand is dynamic and the quality of it is affected by the mutual interaction between the parties.

Since the development of Aaker's (1997) BP scale, numerous researchers have continued developing the BP concept (Radler, 2017). Two of the most recent studies that have received much attention are published by Sung and Kim (2010), and Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer and Nyffenegger (2011). By researching the relationships between Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions, brand trust and brand affect, Sung and Kim (2010), managed to conceptualize and investigate these relationships and find support for brand trust being evoked by BP. Their findings indicated that the BP dimensions Sincerity and Ruggedness induces greater brand trust than brand affect. Moreover, Excitement and Sophistication induces greater brand affect than brand trust. Competence has a similar impact on the two. Malär et al. (2011) further developed the idea of BP as a loyalty creator by researching if a BP should attract a consumer's actual or ideal self. What they found was that consumers' brand attachments are complex where product involvement, level of self-congruence and consumer differences are impacting variables highlighting managerial implications such as consumers preferring BPs matching their actual self, rather than their ideal self (Malär et al., 2011). In Table 2.1 below, a review of BP research is presented, starting from its point of origin in 1997.

Table 2.1 A Review of Brand Personality Research

Author(s)	Description	Method	Findings
Aaker (1997)	This study develops a theoretical BP framework, as well as a reliable, valid, and generalizable scale for measuring the dimensions of BP.	An empirical study with a non-student sample of 631 consumers in the US followed by a test-retest with confirmatory factor analysis to assess the reliability.	A BP framework consisting of five underlying dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness.
Fournier (1998)	This study highlights the importance of understanding consumers and their relationships with brands in order to improve marketing research.	An idiographic research method is applied with three in-depth case studies followed by a cross-case analysis.	Highlights the importance of understanding consumers' relationships with brands and suggests that brands can be seen as relationship partners. Moreover, she identifies the construct of brand relationship quality.
Kim, Han and Park (2001)	This study explores the effect of BP and how consumers identify themselves with a brand, as well as its effect on brand loyalty.	Using Aaker's (1997) BP scale, a survey research with 150 students in Korea was conducted.	The attractiveness, distinctiveness and self-expressive value of BP have a positive relation to each other, which have an effect on how the consumers identify themselves with a brand, and indirectly also affect brand loyalty.

Aaker, Benet-Martínez and Garolera (2001)	This study examines how commercial brands are structured and differ between three cultures; USA, Japan and Spain.	With the use of Aaker's (1997) BP scale, four studies were conducted in order to examine the different cultures by overlapping the BP dimensions in USA and Japan, as well as USA and Spain.	Both culturally specific and culturally common aspects are ingrained in the meaning of commercial brands.
Caprara, Barbaranelli and Guido (2001)	This study explores 12 mass-market brands in order to decide to what degree the Five-Factor Model of human personality can be used to describe permanent characteristics of brands.	Using the Five-Factor Model as a framework, a study with 1586 participants from Italy was conducted.	BP cannot be explained with human personality elements.
Aaker, Fournier and Brasel (2004)	This study investigates the development of consumer-brand relationships by looking at brand transgression within the BP dimensions Sincerity versus Excitement.	Applying a longitudinal field experiment with 48 participants with the mixed-factorial design 2 (brand personality) x 2 (transgression) x 3 (time), an application of Aaker's (1997) BP scale is being done.	Suggests a dynamic construal of BP and show support for previous studies by highlighting the effects of brand transgression.
Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009)	This study answers to the criticism of BP measures with focus put on Aaker's (1997) BP scale. The aim was to create a new cross-cultural BP scale.	Incorporates various lists of personality items (E.g. Aaker, 1997; Costa & McCrae 1992) in two studies to identify suitable items for a new BP scale. A total of 12 789 Belgian respondents participated.	Develops a new BP scale consisting of five dimensions (Responsibility, Activity, Aggressiveness, Simplicity, Emotionality) and provides support for the scales reliability and validity cross-culturally.
Sung and Kim (2010)	This study examines and forms a concept of the link between Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions, brand effect and brand trust.	Using Aaker's (1997) BP scale, a survey research with 135 participants was conducted.	BP can increase brand trust and induce brand effect, which shape brand loyalty.
Malär et al. (2011)	This study investigates BPs relationship to consumers' actual and ideal self.	Two empirical studies of 136 brands were conducted with more than 2200 respondents from various occupations in Switzerland.	Identifies the complexity of self-congruence when being linked to emotional brand attachment. They find support for consumers preferring BPs relating to their actual self, rather than their ideal self.

2.2   Criticism against Aaker's Brand Personality Scale

Aaker's (1997) BP scale has been criticized by many and three main critical aspects have been raised against her study, as for example noted by Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009). First of all, Aaker's (1997) definition of BP, "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p.347), is proposed to be too loose and not clear enough (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003). This has resulted in a number of issues related to her study. For example, Caprara, Barbaranelli and Guido (2001) claim that human personality elements cannot fully describe BP, thus the Five-Factor Model that Aaker (1997) applied to her study should not be used when talking about brands. Moreover, Azoulay and Kapferer (2003) claim that the BP scale does in fact measure other things than only the term "personality", for example gender and age. Adding to this statement are Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009), claiming that this affects the validity of Aaker's (1997) research. Furthermore, as discussed by Bosnjak, Bochmann and Hufschmidt (2007), is the concern regarding the fact that Aaker (1997) only focus on the positive aspects of BP held by consumers, and thus excludes the negative ones. This is something Azoulay and Kapferer (2003) also discuss by stating that Aaker's (1997) 42 chosen personality traits therefore are not correct. Moreover, the data collection of Aaker's (1997) BP scale was collected with the usage of five-point Likert scales, which is problematic according to Romaniuk (2008), who states that this way of collecting information about BP is not efficient enough since it is too difficult for the participants to make such a big amount of assessments. Accordingly, Romaniuk (2008) suggest that another, improved method should

be used, which would be highly beneficial for practitioners, namely using a free choice method instead of five-point Likert scales. However, in the literature stream of BP, Aaker's (1997) research methodology and BP definition is still highly preferred by researchers (e.g. Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2017; Bosnjak, Bochmann & Hufschmidt, 2007; Supphellen & Grønhaug, 2003).

The second critical aspect raised is the non-generalizability of the factor structure, which has been stressed by Austin, Siguaw and Mattila (2003, p.78) where they question "for what and to what the brand personality framework is generalizable". The authors noticed methodological flaws, such as the fact that all within-brand variances were removed by Aaker (1997). Thus, the results from the factor analysis were based solely on between-brand variance resulting in the BP scale having many boundaries in terms of generalizability when being applied to for example various population samples and product categories (Austin, Siguaw & Mattila, 2003).

The final critical aspect is one of the most major ones and concerns the fact that Aaker's (1997) BP scale is not replicable in other cultures, besides in North America (e.g. Supphellen & Grønhaug, 2003; Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003; Sung & Tinkham, 2005). One highly noticed article concerning this issue is the work by Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009). Their study responds to the criticism by developing a new BP scale to challenge the critics by including other aspects besides traditional BP. The result was a scale consisting of five dimensions: Responsibility, Activity, Aggressiveness, Simplicity and Emotionality (Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009). This scale has received much attention and has shown support for being both reliable and valid cross-culturally, as opposed to Aaker's (1997) BP scale (Radler, 2017; Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009).

In summary, much criticism has been raised against BP measurements, not only against Aaker (1997) BP scale, and cross-cultural validity is a reoccurring issue, which creates implications for researchers within the field of BP (Allik & McCrae, 2002). Thus, when studying BP in new cultural contexts an assurance that the scale being used is valid and reliable should be made (Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009). This is something that has been done in various cultures and countries and many of these studies have created BP scales as extensions to Aaker's (1997) scale. Thus, Aaker's (1997) BP scale, even though it has methodological flaws, is still to date one of the most applied theoretical construct within BP research and has inspired and still do inspire researchers to evaluate and evolve the scale in new various contexts, such as cultures, according to Radler (2017) and Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009) among others.

2.3   Brand Personalities across Cultures

The Five-Factor Model that Aaker (1997) used in her study suggests that there are universal personality traits that are applicable to a wide range of cultures (Allik & McCrae, 2002; McCrae & John, 1992). Agreeing upon this are Mac Giolla and Kajonius (2017) whom suggest that the model's cross-cultural personality traits are robust and that there are universal

personality traits that are unaffected by the surrounding environment. However, in other studies data indicates the opposite by suggesting that human personality traits not only are geographically bound in terms of country of origin, but are also impacted by for instance metropolitan areas (Rentfrow, Jokela & Lamb, 2015) and country region (Rentfrow, Jokela, Potter, Gosling, Stiliwell & Kosinski, 2013). Nonetheless, the literature stream of personality psychology is ambiguous. Even though Allik and McCrae (2002, p.1) pushes for the statement that "personality psychology has become an international enterprise" in the publication 'The Five-Factor Model of Personality Across Cultures', the authors still imply that personality psychology research continues to identify findings that generates an ambiguity in terms of personality traits being universal cross-culturally or not. What they moreover highlight is that studies on personality psychology are for the most parts not cross-cultural in their executions. Rather, the studies are conducted in country specific contexts, thus there is still no consensus regarding if human personality can be considered as being universal processes that overlaps languages and cultures, or if there are cultural nuances influenced by social and historical factors (Allik & McCrae, 2002). What has been noted is though that, in contrast to human personality research that often shows support for universality, cross-cultural studies of BP indicate the opposite. BPs are suggested to be highly affected by culture, namely that they are considered as not being universal, and this is regarded both in terms of number of personality dimensions and the meaning behind them (Bosnjak, Bochmann & Hufschmidt, 2007). This suggestion is aligned with Caprara, Barbaranelli and Guido's (2001) findings that human personality traits change meaning when being applied to brands.

Many researchers have attempted to transfer psycho-lexical models of human personality traits, such as the Five-Factor Model, to brands in order to generate an understanding of consumers' brand perceptions (Caprara, Barbaranelli & Guido, 2001). Caprara, Barbaranelli and Guido (2001) states that doing so can be questioned, due to characteristics being interpreted differently when ascribed to humans, versus being ascribed to inanimate brands. Due do this, many models have been created for the specific use of identifying BPs and Aaker (1997) is one researcher who has attempted this (Caprara, Barbaranelli & Guido, 2001). However, Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions, created in an American context, have been proven to lack stability when being applied to cultures outside of the US as previously discussed (e.g. Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2017; Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009). This implies that BPs should not be seen as universal entities unaffected by their surroundings, instead they are suggested to have linkage to symbolic meanings consisting of values and beliefs linked to cultural contexts (Aaker, Benet-Martínez & Garolera, 2001). Thus, cultural differences might result in brands being ascribed divergent characteristics and variations of BP dimensions (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2017). This suggestion has been tested in various studies around the world, for example in European countries such as Spain (Aaker, Benet-Martínez & Garolera, 2001), France (Ferrandi, Valette-Florence & Fine-Falcy, 2000), Norway (Tunca, 2014), the Netherlands (Smit, Berge & Franzen, 2002), Russia (Supphellen & Grønhaug, 2003) and in Asian countries such as Japan (Aaker, Benet-Martínez & Garolera, 2001), China (Chu & Sung, 2011), India (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2017) and Korea (Sung & Tinkham, 2005). The findings indicate that Aaker's (1997) BP scale lack cross-cultural robustness. Thus, by making cross-cultural comparisons of BP structures, values and needs can be identified that

are relevant when developing insights in consumers' country specific brand perceptions (Sung & Tinkham, 2005).

Table 2.2 Aaker's Brand Personality Scale Expanded in Other Cultural Contexts

Author(s)	Country of study	Country cluster according to Ronen and Shenkar (2013)	Brand personalities dimensions applied from Aaker's (1997)	Additional dimensions
Ferrandi, Valette-Florence and Fine-Falcy (2000)	France	Latin Europe	Sincerity	Dynamism Femininity Robustness User-friendliness
Aaker, Benet-Martínez and Garolera (2001)	Japan	Confucian	Sincerity Excitement Competence Sophistication	Peacefulness
	Spain	Latin Europe	Sincerity Excitement Sophistication	Peacefulness Passion
Smit, Berge and Franzen (2002)	Netherlands	Nordic	Excitement Competence Ruggedness	Gentle Distinction Annoyance
Supphellen and Grønhaug (2003)	Russia	Europe	Sincerity Excitement Sophistication Ruggedness	Successful & Contemporary
Helgeson and Supphellen (2004)	Sweden	Nordic		Modern Classic
Sung and Tinkham (2005)	Korea	Confucian	Competence Sophistication Ruggedness	Likeableness Trendiness Traditionalism Western Ascendancy
	US	Anglo	Competence Sophistication Ruggedness	Likeableness Trendiness Traditionalism White collar Androgyny
Bosnjak, Bochmann and Hufschmidt (2007)	Germany	Germanic		Drive Conscientiousness Emotion Superficiality
Chu and Sung (2011)	China	Confucian	Excitement Competence Sophistication	Traditionalism Joyfulness Trendiness
Ahmad and Thyagaraj (2017)	India	Far East	Excitement Competence Sophistication	Popularity Trendiness Integrity

Personality scales are, as stated by Allik and McCrae (2002), derived from single countries, and are by so culture-specific. With this in mind, an application of a culture-specific scale in a different cultural context can be followed by a reduction in reliability (Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009). Thus, a popular method to apply in BP research is to not fully replicate culture-specific scales when applying them to other cultural environments, as seen in Table 2.2 above. Instead the studies explore how BP dimensions might vary across cultures by applying and validating cross-cultural personality scales, such as the Five-Factor Model (Tunca, 2014). By doing this, a reduction and modification of Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions can take place for the benefit of new, country-specific dimensions (e.g. Aaker, Benet-Martínez & Garolera, 2001; Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2017; Chu & Sung, 2011; Ferrandi, Valette-Florence & Fine-Falcy, 2000; Smit, Berge & Franzen, 2002; Sung & Tinkham, 2005). As shown in Table 2.2

many culture clusters, as identified by Ronen and Shenkar (2013), have been examined in various studies. However, among these global clusters, the Nordic one, consisting of a consensus cluster divided into two local groupings: the cluster of Norway, Iceland, Sweden and the cluster of Finland, Denmark, Netherlands, lack cultural adoptions of Aaker's (1997) BP scale. Netherlands has been studied by Smit, Berge and Franzen (2002) and Sweden by Helgeson and Supphellen (2014). However, Helgeson and Supphellen (2014) only focus on the constructs of BP and self-congruity in the context of symbolism; limited focus is put on Aaker's (1997) BP scale. Hence, this motivates that more insights regarding the local grouping of Norway, Iceland and Sweden are of relevance.

2.4   Swedish National Character, Culture and Mentality

As noted by Helgeson and Supphellen (2004), no attempt of producing a Swedish BP scale has been done. However, Tunca (2014) illustrates in his study that Aaker's (1997) BP scale is weak in terms of replicability in a Norwegian context. Nonetheless, even though Sweden is only one of the countries in the northern parts of Europe, Ronen and Shenkar (2013) argues that the overall Nordic cluster can be considered similar in many ways, where languages, religious beliefs and cultures are highly interdependent. Moreover, technological development as a dimension strongly relates these countries and it has a strong homogenizing effect on the citizens' attitudes (Ronen & Shenkar, 1985). Thus, the importance of creating a BP scale that can be applied to this part of the world can be considered important, especially on the basis of the Nordic region having a high socioeconomic level (e.g. Forbes, 2018; McKenna, 2017; OECD, 2018; Schwab, 2016; The Economist, 2013; The Social Progress Initiative, 2017). Countries in later stages of socioeconomic development tend to perceive brands as more homogenous, which results in focus being led away from objective physical attributes for the benefit of subjective symbolic benefits, such as BPs. Branded products and services in this sense becomes important tools for expressing social belonging and self-development (Supphellen & Grønhaug, 2003). These insights strengthen the argument for studying how BPs are perceived in Nordic countries and furthermore, suggests that Sweden is a good option for doing so on the basis of the country's various competitive socioeconomic rankings, as listed by for example Gray (2017).

The first step of understanding how people, who consider themselves as being part of the Swedish culture, perceive BPs is to give an introduction to Swedish culture and national character. The term national character has been studied in fields like sociology, anthropology and psychology for many years and is defined as "the shared perception of personality characteristics typical of citizens of a particular nation." (McCrae & Terracciano, 2006, p.156). This term does not take into account competences, complexions or any other features associated with people of that nationality, unlike national stereotypes, according to McCrae and Terracciano (2006). When applying this to the Nordic region the characteristic of somber is often recurring, McCrae and Terracciano (2006) suggest. Moreover, the authors states that the creation of a national character happens in all cultures and creates shared perceptions of a nation. In addition, they state that the founding for these characters are derived from personality dimensions, which are ascribed by people to both individuals belonging to their

own cultures and members of other cultures and after time these personality dimensions becomes shared opinions.

In 1985, one of the most comprehensive study's regarding national character was conducted by Peabody (1985), where an applied taxonomy of personalities was used to measure how national characteristics varied between and within groups. This was later followed by Terracciano et al. (2005), whom created the National Character Survey with the usage of the measurement Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R; Costa & McCrae, 1992). This NEO-PI-R measurement is one of the most commonly used tools when doing research with the Five-Factor Model (McCrae & Terracciano, 2006), which has been a recurring model within BP research (e.g. Aaker, Benet-Martínez & Garolera, 2001; Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009). Moreover, Terracciano et al.'s (2005) analysis suggested that the generated data were significant in terms of measuring national character; however, these measurements did not converge with stated personality traits. Thus, the conclusion was made that national characters are mere unfounded stereotypes (Terracciano et al., 2005). However, by addressing national characters and studying their origin, an improvement of international relations can occur, according to McCrae and Terracciano (2006). Thus, psychologists still explore this field and how it can be utilized, which has resulted in some of the findings indicating that there actually are minor real differences between cultures related to personality traits (McCrae & Terracciano, 2006).

One study investigating Swedish personality traits has been conducted by Källmen, Wennberg and Bergman (2011). In their study, they constructed a Swedish version of the NEO-PI-R measure of the Five-Factor Model, which according to Costa and McCrae (1992) originally is based on American norms. Their findings indicated that Neuroticism and Conscientiousness were the two factors that had best fit in a Swedish context. Moreover, the factors Extraversion and Openness to experience were weaker defined. This, Källmen, Wennberg and Bergman (2011) state, could indicate that Swedes might have bigger difficulties to accept differences than other nationalities. However, in their study they also lift the fact that Openness is a complex construct and is to be considered difficult to assess and thus, they state that the insight regarding Openness can be questioned. In contrast to Källmen, Wennberg and Bergman's (2011) study, Hofstede, Minkov and Hofstede's (2010) study indicates that the Swedish culture is to be seen as universal. This means that the country holds greater respect towards other cultures and is more open to people who do not belong to the group than many other cultures (Hofstede, Minkov & Hofstede 2010).

Hofstede, Minkov and Hofstede's (2010) study, conducted over a period of 40 years covering 70 countries, is up to date one of the grandest studies to explore how perceptions are created and additionally, the impact cultural variety has on these perceptions. In their study they identify Swedish culture as being highly individualistic, which is illustrated by a comparison made between Sweden and Saudi Arabia: "for the Swedes, business is done with a company; for the Saudis, it's done with a person whom one has learned to know and trust" (Hofstede, Minkov & Hofstede, 2010, p.90). In this sense, individualistic cultures are according to the authors pertained as "societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family" (Hofstede, Minkov & Hofstede, 2010, p.92). Thus, personal time, freedom and challenges are ranked very high in both work and goal related situations and the concept of "I" is clearly distinct from other

individuals and highly valued, and furthermore, is a strong influencer on the personal identity (Hofstede, Minkov & Hofstede, 2010). Adding to this study are the insights that Bond (1988) identified in his cross-national study which indicates that individuals from individualistic countries value the following variables as particularly important: tolerance of others, harmony, non-competitiveness, close and intimate friendships, trustworthiness, contentedness with one's position in life, and lastly solidarity with others.

Furthermore, Hofstede, Minkov and Hofstede (2010) also identify Swedes as having an egalitarian mentality where inequalities in society are seen as highly problematic. Moreover, Swedish culture is to be considered feminine, which implies that quality of life and caring for others is highly valued and to not follow the group is seen as not admirable (Hofstede, Minkov & Hofstede, 2010). Hence, the concept of "lagom", defined by Zita (2017) as something just right and by so something that is not too much and not too little, runs through the culture, in combination with the "Jante Law" (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). This law is fictional and can be defined as "the cultural compass that celebrates 'everyman', discourages individual success and sets average as the goal" (Karowski, 2014, n.p.). Hofstede, Minkov and Hofstede (2010) also identifies Swedish culture as being open for new innovations and as a culture that values indulgence, referring to enjoying life and fun with an optimistic outlook on life.

In regard to history, Andersson (2009) adds to the discussion about the Swedish national character that for long was associated with a left-wing utopia, by noting that followed by the depression and financial crisis in the 1990's, a drastic character change occurred. This, Andersson (2009) states, has resulted in Sweden suffering of a type of nostalgia, where a feeling of a lost paradise has emerged. After the Millennium, the naïve beliefs of a state built on universalism and human rights were damaged; instead a new Swedish character arose were progressiveness was a key characteristic. In line with this historical change, changes in popular culture among much more emerged, which today is illustrated by many Swedish cultural expressions focusing on memories and nostalgia (Andersson, 2009).

When it comes to branding in Sweden, Helgeson and Supphellen (2004) attempts, in a study conducted on Swedish female consumers, to map how BP impact brand attitudes within the retail industry. By so, they aimed to identify the values that have the greatest impact on the symbolism of brands with the usage of the constructs BP and self-congruity. They suggested that BP and self-congruity measures different things and both affects a brand's symbolic meaning, whereas BP can create variations of congruity. Further, they noted that Aaker's (1997) BP scale does not have a counterpart suitable to use on Scandinavian consumers, thus they decided to develop their own scale with inspiration retrieved from Aaker's (1997) BP scale methodology (Helgeson & Supphellen, 2004). What they identified was two BP dimensions labelled Modern, similar to Aaker's (1997) Excitement, and Classic, similar to Aaker's (1997) Sophistication. Helgeson and Supphellen (2004) finalize their study by concluding that consumer attitudes towards retail brands are strongly affected by BP in a positive way and moreover, that the area of research would gain much if more studies focused on comparing other scales with theirs, such as Aaker's (1997) BP scale.

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2.5   Theoretical Framework

In summary, a BP literature review has been made and additional literature that this stream has retrieved inspiration from has also been touched upon, as for example the Five-Factor Model (e.g. Costa & McCrae, 1992) and the traditional personality taxonomy (e.g. Peabody, 1985). This has resulted in a somewhat scattered literature stream that merges human personality research and traditional marketing theory (Caprara & Barbaranelli & Guido, 2001). The development began already in the 1920's but it was not until the late 1990's that the literature stream blossomed, when Aaker (1997) presented her BP scale that managed to conceptualize the concept of BP in a valid and reliable way (Endler & Rosenstein, 1997; Radler, 2017). Today, this BP scale has become one of the most established scales for measuring BP. However, much criticism has been raised against it, which is much due to its inflexibility in terms of cross-cultural validity. This insight lays as a base for this thesis' further development when expanding the literature stream by developing a BP scale suitable in the, as suggested by Gray (2017), highly-developed socioeconomic country Sweden. In Figure 2.2, a presentation of the theories building the theoretical framework is given.
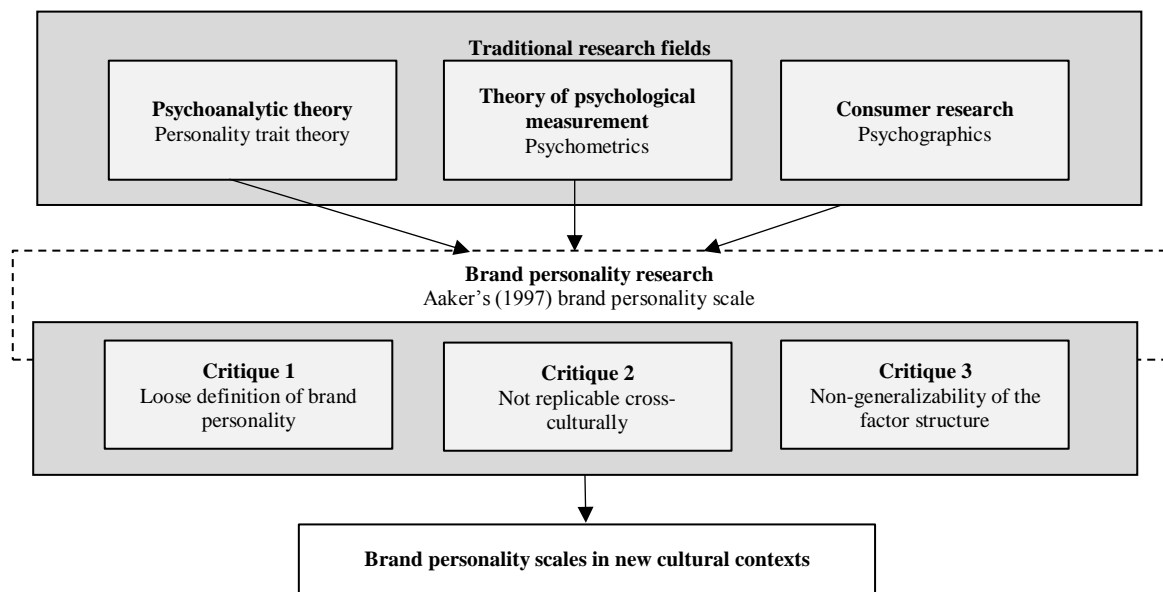

Figure 2.2 Theoretical Framework

3   Methodology and Empirical Results

In this chapter a thorough review of the methodology applied for this thesis will be presented. The first section will develop upon chosen research approach and argument for its suitability. This is followed by a detailed description of Study 1 that validates the suitability of Aaker's (1997) BP scale in a Swedish context. Subsequently, Study 2 generates BP items from consumers in Sweden. Next, Study 3 analyzes these items to develop a Swedish BP scale, explores consumer attitudes towards each Swedish BP dimension and lastly, determines 13 fashion retail brands' personalities with the Swedish scale.

3.1   Research Approach

The academic field of BP is predominantly applying a positivist epistemology in the shape of quantitative research designs inspired by the taxonomy of personalities (Avis, 2012). The positivist epistemology is derived from philosophical assumptions based on realistic ontological perspectives, namely realism or internal realism, meaning that reality and existence are both philosophically and generally assumed to be concrete and external (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). By applying this ontological perspective, the basis is that research can only be conducted when observations can have direct linkage to the investigated phenomenon (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). In this thesis the assumptions of internal realism is applied and by so the study consider the reality as having one single truth. However, as suggested by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson (2015) when discussing this ontology, this truth is not possible for the researcher to fully identify. Instead, the aim is to collect evidence for the observed phenomenon of Swedish consumers' BP perceptions, where we as researchers aspire to be as objective as possible. However, to generate completely objective results is impossible much due to us interfering in the observed phenomenon, which ultimately results in some involuntary subjective impact (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

By assuming the philosophical perspective of internal realism when examining the world, the way of acquiring knowledge is, as already stated, based on a positivist way of conducting research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Thus, the overall epistemology applied in this thesis is positivism, which relates to the assumption that reality has an external existence that can be measured with objective quantitative methods (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). With this in mind, the assumptions we make in this thesis are considered to be based on us being independent from the observed phenomenon and that the studied field of BP is grounded in objective criteria and not by personal beliefs and interests. Moreover, the various studies in this thesis are based on causality and deduction and furthermore, the covered concepts are possible to operationalize in terms of being measured with quantitative

data. The last assumption we make, grounded in the chosen positivist research approach, is that simplification via data reduction that is derived from a large randomly selected sample generates the best results for interpretation and generalization. The weaknesses for applying this epistemology is argued to be its artificial and inflexible nature and the risks of measuring something not intended to be measured (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). However, there are also many benefits for applying this epistemology. Some of them are, argued by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015), its nature of being fast, economical and generalizable, resulting in compelling and credible conclusions useful for policy makers, or as in our case, for practitioners within marketing and brand management.

The decision for applying a positivist research approach is not only based on our subjective preferences and internal realist beliefs. It is also based on the fact, as concluded by Avis (2012), that there are only two established research papers in the field of BP that apply a qualitative research approach (See Arora & Stoner, 2009; Freling & Forbes, 2005). Moreover, Avis (2012) also states that ever since 1997, factor analysis has particularly been used when exploring BP and he further highlights the importance of using this data analysis method when contributing to the stream of BP. There are thus, also strong arguments retrieved externally for applying a quantitative methodology in the shape of factor analysis, opposed to any form of qualitative methodology.

When applying the factor research method, cross-sectional surveys are often used as in the case of Aaker's (1997) BP scale and the following replications of her study in other cultural contexts, such as the one conducted by Supphellen and Grønhaug, (2003) who replicated the study in Russia. Moreover, cross-sectional survey designs are common within business and management research, according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015), and are based on data collected at a certain time with the purpose of identifying underlying relationships and patterns between multiple variables (Bryman & Bell, 2005). By doing this the researcher can, according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015), identify causality if the generated data show significant differences between the variables. To assume causality based on these differences should though be made with caution they further state. The argument for this lays in the difficulties of collecting a homogenous sample that only differ in terms of the studied variables (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). However, by securing valid samples in this thesis, the stated issue is minimized and a strengthening in the internal validity can be made. In addition, when creating a cross-sectional survey the must of having large samples must be known (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Moreover, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) further states that by having large samples it enables simultaneous measurement of many factors, which can result in the identification of reliable underlying patterns.

In summary, by accurately applying this positivist research approach, which for instance consists of a thoroughly conducted factor analysis in Study 1 and a strong cross-sectional survey design in Study 3, we can ensure reliability, validity and possibilities of replication of the thesis three interlinked studies. All made in accordance to Bryman and Bell's (2005) criteria for conducting a solid quantitative research.

3.2   Overview of Studies

The thesis is built upon three interlinked studies that will be presented in chronological order of their executions. Below, in Figure 3.1, an illustration is given that provides the reader with a clear overview of how the empirical results were generated. Study 1 only consists of a data analysis with the usage of raw data retrieved from Morinder and Silvegren's (2016) study within the same research field. The two latter studies all consists of a data collection phase followed by results and data analysis.
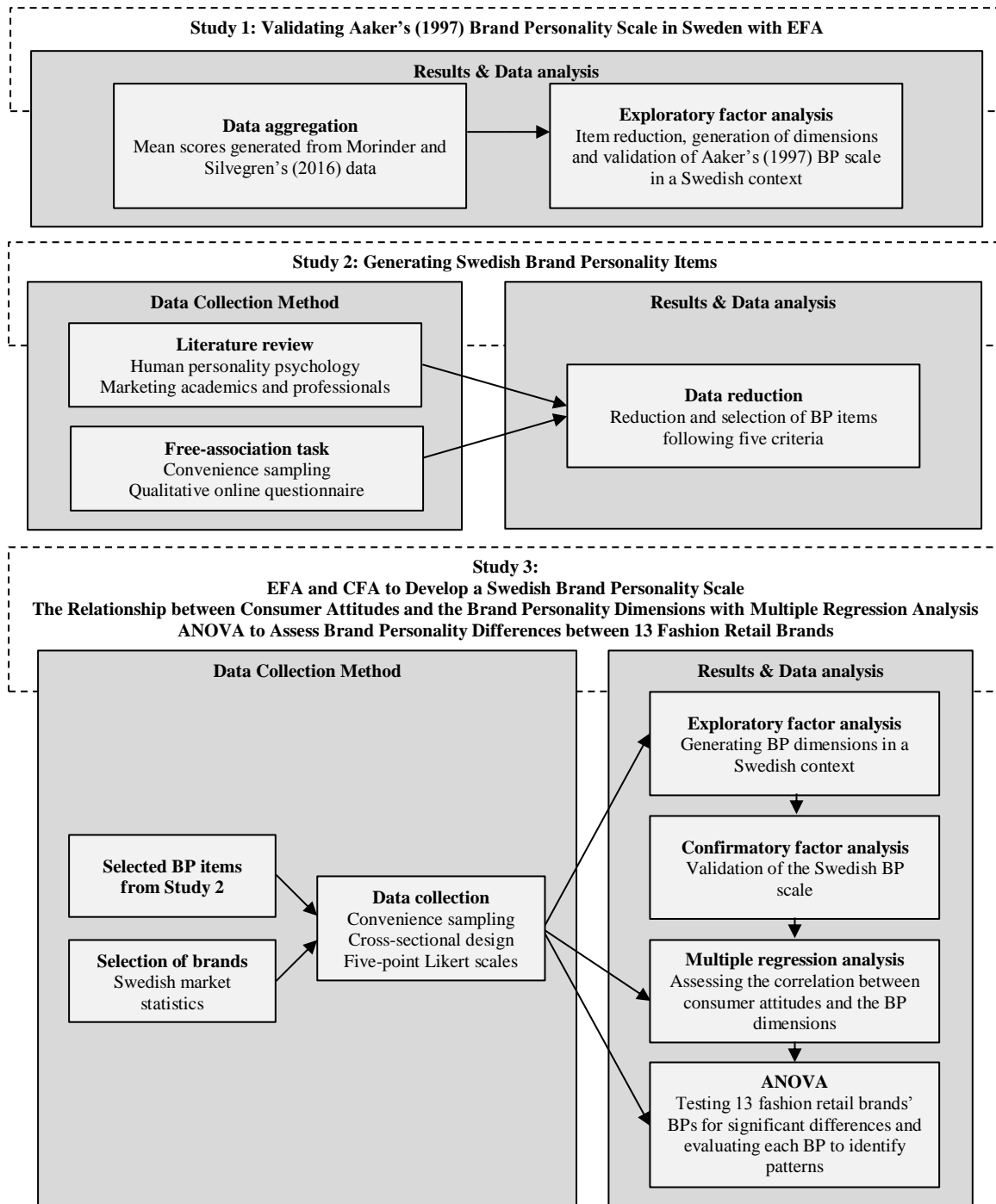

Figure 3.1 Research Design and Methods

3.3 Study 1: Validating Aaker's Brand Personality Scale in Sweden with EFA

In order to validate Aaker's (1997) BP scale in a Swedish context, Study 1 in this thesis will conduct an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to examine how good of a fit the original scale has when being used on Swedish consumers. The raw data used was retrieved from a work conducted at Lund University by Morinder and Silvegren (2016). Morinder and Silvegren's (2016) study consisted of an online self-completion questionnaire that was responded to by a representative sample of 426 Swedish citizens (55.60% male, Age $M = 44.17$, $SD = 11.70$). Out of the total number of BP items included in their questionnaire, 42 were related to Aaker's (1997) BP scale and were expressed with five-point Likert scales with alternatives going from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" where the midpoint acted as a neutral point (Morinder & Silvegren, 2016). These 42 BP items' raw data were further used for Study 1 in this thesis.

3.3.1 Procedure

In the first stage of Study 1 an aggregation of the ordinal raw data was completed. This resulted in mean scores, ranging from one to five, for each of the 42 BP items. The second stage of Study 1 consisted of an EFA to validate if Aaker's American BP scale is suitable for application in Sweden. EFA is a multivariate statistical technique that belongs to a family of factor analytical techniques, a number of different statistical data reduction techniques used for exploring how variables are related (Pallant, 2010). These techniques are considered to be versatile tools used for identifying underlying structures and by so simplifying large numbers of data generated from for instance scales (Pallant, 2010). EFA is used when there is a lack of information related to the area of study or when the studied object is unknown by the observant and follows a covariance structure model where variables are evaluated based on: factor loadings, unique variance, and factor correlations (Field, 2013). Thus, EFA is commonly used when investigating complex relationships with the aim of reducing variables into manageable dimensions (Pallant, 2010). With this notion, the argument for applying an EFA in Study 1 stands clear. This is further supported by previous studies within this research field, often inspired by Aaker (1997), applying EFA as statistical method (e.g. Aaker, Benet-Martínez & Garolera, 2001; Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2017; Chu & Sung, 2011; Supphellen & Grønhaug, 2003). Moreover, the data provided by Morinder and Silvegren (2016) are to be considered suitable for factor analysis based on its sample size of 426 respondents, making it reliable and generalizable for the Swedish population. To generate factors from smaller samples might be considered weak in terms of argumentation for generalizability (Pallant, 2010).

The EFA with a Varimax rotation was conducted on the 42 BP items matching Aaker's (1997) BP scale. The motivation for using a Varimax rotation as orthogonal factor solution, opposite to for example an oblique factor solution such as Promax rotation, is based on orthogonal factor solutions delivering data output that is easier interpreted (Pallant, 2010).

Moreover, Varimax rotation is one of the most commonly used technique within orthogonal method and aims at minimizing variables having high loading on more than one factor (Pallant, 2010). By following this methodological approach, the aim is to create a simple factor structure, as termed by Thurstone (1947), meaning that each variable only exists on one factor and these factors should consist of variables with high factor loadings.

3.3.2   Results and Discussion

The conducted EFA, presented in Table 3.1, fulfills all assumptions for performing an EFA. As already stated, the sample size is considered large enough (N = 426). Furthermore, the testing of the factorability of the data was confirmed as suitable. The sampling adequacy using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) indicates an index of .979. The KMO index is suggested to be higher than .60 to be suitable for factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The significance level of the sphericity with Bartlett's test (p <.001) also confirms the datasets factorability ($\chi 2 = 20776$, $p < .001$).

With the confirmed factorability of the data set, an extraction of five factors could follow, to make the output comparable to Aaker's (1997) five BP dimensions. The five factors presented in Table 3.1 were deemed important based on following criteria: (a) a fixed number of five factors to match Aaker's (1997) five BP dimensions, (b) inspection of scree test (Pallant, 2010), (c) loading scores > .40 due to personality traits with lower factor loadings presumably affects the pureness of the measure (Nunnally, 1978), (d) amount of explained variance (Aaker, 1997) and (e) the dimensions meaningfulness (Aaker, 1997).

To make the data output more easily interpreted a Varimax rotation was conducted to better distinguish the factor loadings, resulting in a deletion of one item on the basis of it not having a loading score above .40 (Masculine). Items with high loading scores (> .40) on more than one dimension were reduced to only load the factor with the highest loading score (Charming, Confident, Contemporary, Down-to-earth, Glamourous, Good looking, Hardworking, Independent, Intelligent, Leader, Reliable, Secure, Smooth, Successful, Trendy, Up-to-date). Moreover, the variables uniqueness varied somewhat, between .184 and .592. The uniqueness indicates the proportion of the variable's variance that cannot be associated with the factor. Thus, a high uniqueness can be interpreted as evidence for that unknown factors underlie the variable's variation and hence, that the variable has a lower relevance for the factor structure (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). The final factor rotation produced Factor 1 with a loading on 12 items accounting for 21.10% of the variance, Factor 2 loading on 15 items accounting for 19.38% of the variance, Factor 3 loading on 5 items accounting for 9.78% of the variance, Factor 4 loading on 5 items accounting for 9.17% of the variance, and Factor 5 loading on 4 items accounting for 8.16% of the variance. This resulted in a cumulative variance of 67.60%.

Table 3.1 EFA for Testing Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Dimensions in Sweden

Items	Factor					Uniqueness	Morinder and Silvegren's (2016) Swedish translations of Aaker's (1997) items
	1	2	3	4	5		
Cool (E)	0.768					0.184	Häftig
Imaginative (E)	0.752					0.200	Fantasifull
Exciting (E)	0.694					0.269	Unik
Unique (E)	0.694					0.334	Spännande
Daring (E)	0.687					0.259	Djärv
Spirited (E)	0.644					0.247	Pigg
Trendy (E)	0.625					0.227	Trendig
Young (E)	0.625					0.335	Ungdomlig
UpToDate (E)	0.623					0.238	Modern
Tough (R)	0.604					0.310	Tuff
Independent (E)	0.550					0.302	Självständig
Charming (SO)	0.533					0.329	Charmig
Real (SI)		0.751				0.229	Äkta
Honest (SI)		0.746				0.258	Uppriktig
Sincere (SI)		0.733				0.214	Hederlig
Friendly (SI)		0.672				0.278	Vänlig
Original (SI)		0.666				0.262	Genuin
Technical (C)		0.631				0.327	Saklig
Secure (C)		0.573				0.243	Trygg
DownToEarth (SI)		0.572				0.302	Jordnära
Reliable (C)		0.564				0.295	Pålitlig
FamiliyOriented (SI)		0.525				0.396	Familjeorienterad
Contemporary (E)		0.485				0.300	Nutida
Wholesome (SI)		0.484				0.383	Hälsosam
Confident (C)		0.461				0.339	Självsäker
Rugged (R)		0.454				0.325	Robust
Cheerful (SI)		0.424				0.403	Glad
Leader (C)			0.567			0.299	Ledare
Hardworking (C)			0.547			0.295	Hårt arbetande
Successful (C)			0.526			0.259	Framgångsrik
Intelligent (C)			0.517			0.251	Intelligent
Corporate (C)			0.483			0.573	Företagsorienterad
Feminine (SO)				0.594		0.372	Feminin
Smooth (SO)				0.547		0.319	Mjuk
GoodLooking (SO)				0.543		0.248	Snygg
Glamorous (SO)				0.509		0.326	Glamorös
UpperClass (SO)				0.477		0.471	Överklass
Western (R)					0.671	0.450	Lantlig
SmallTown (SI)					0.606	0.592	Småstadsaktig
Outdoorsy (R)					0.462	0.473	Friluftsmänniska
Sentimental (SI)					0.459	0.412	Känslosam
Eigenvalue	*24.083*	*1.465*	*1.006*	*0.677*	*0.545*		
% of variance	*21.10*	*19.38*	*9.78*	*9.17*	*8.16*		
Cumulative %	*21.10*	*40.5*	*50.3*	*59.4*	*67.6*		

Note. Varimax rotation was used

Note. Factoring method minimum residuals was used

Note. Items matched to Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions: Excitement (E), Sincerity (SI), Competence (C), Sophistication (SO), Ruggedness (R)

In summary, the data analysis and empirical results in Study 1 indicates that Aaker's (1997) BP scale is not suitable for application in Sweden, even though many items creates a pattern that matches Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions. Factor 1 is fairly similar to the dimension Excitement. Furthermore Factor 2 has a fairly good match with the dimension Sincerity. Factor 3 and 4 do have similarities to the dimensions Competence and Sophistication. However, the BP items belonging to Aaker's (1997) dimension Ruggedness do not appear to have a good fit in the data collected from the Swedish respondents. Moreover, Factor 5

appears to be weak and ambiguous which can be linked to Supphellen and Grønhaug (2003) notion of the BP item Western having a risk of being interpreted different in cultures not linked to North America. In this case, the meaning and translation of Western in Sweden is more closely linked to small towns, sentimentalism and "outdoorsines", perhaps a dimension linked to the traditional "Swedish cottage" and closeness to nature. In the American dimension the BP item Western is in opposite linked to masculinity, toughness and ruggedness (Aaker, 1997). In summary, the conclusion that Aaker's (1997) BP scale is not valid in a Swedish context open up for Study 2 that generates Swedish BP items, in order to later on develop a Swedish BP scale.

3.4   Study 2: Generating Swedish Brand Personality Items

In 1936, Allport and Odbert (1936) identified that there are approximately 16 000 adjectives describing human characteristics in the English language. A number of this size does however not mean that there is the same amount of personality traits; many of them are synonymous and express various attitudes towards the same personality trait, according to Daun and Teeland (1996). Thus, in a study like this a manageable number of personality traits must be extracted in subjective manner (Daun & Teeland, 1996). The selection of BP items used in this thesis was generated in a two-step process, inspired by Aaker's (1997) original paper on how to develop a BP scale.

The first step consisted of conducting a thorough literature review in terms of personality scales from psychology, with connections to the Five-Factor Model and BP scales created for marketing academics and professionals. The second step was a free-association task, which will be described in detail in the two following sections. A free-association task is a conceptual implicit memory task where respondents are asked to state what first comes to their mind when being presented to an object of some sort, as stated by Zeelenberg, Shiffrin and Raaijmakers (1999). By so a type of priming takes place that can strengthen the participants associations which result in them being able to not only activate the actual object presented, it will also help them to retrieve relatable words from memory (Zeelenberg, Shiffrin & Raaijmakers, 1999). The argument for including a qualitative grounded study in the form of a free-association task is based on Aaker's (1997) original BP study, where this type of item generation was used to identify personality traits as an addition to established research and by so add BP items that these studies might have missed. Moreover, this method for generating BP items has been a recurring practice when developing Aaker's (1997) BP scale in other cultural contexts (e.g. Chu & Sung, 2011; Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2017).

3.4.1   Participants

The selection of participants was based on a snowball sampling technique within a network of Lund University students. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method and is thus based on convenience (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Even though this

sampling method, according to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) can be criticized on reducing the generalizability of the data, the decision was made that Study 2 would not be negatively affected by this. Much due to its qualitative form and moreover, it only being one out of three parts of the BP item generation. In summary, 44 anonymous participants (54.55% male, Age M = 24.90, SD = 5.67) participated in Study 2 and since this thesis study Swedish consumer perception, only Swedish respondents were asked to take part in the online questionnaire that was personally sent as a link to each individual on social media and by email.

3.4.2 Procedure

In this thesis, the free-association task consisted of two identical online questionnaires in terms of structure (See Appendix A) where the participants were separated into two homogenous groups (22 participants each) before being sent the link to the questionnaire. To split the study in two parallel studies was based on reducing participant fatigue and by so strengthen the responses. The questionnaires included five fashion retail brands each, which were chosen from a list covering Sweden's most popular brands and selected on the basis of them targeting different types of consumer segments (See GfK Sweden, 2013). Questionnaire "Brand Group 1" included the following five brands: Hennes & Mauritz (H&M), Åhlens, Stadium, Nordiska Kompaniet (NK) and JC Jeans Company (JC), and questionnaire "Brand Group 2" included the brands: Gina Tricot, Indiska, Naturkompaniet, MQ, Carlings and Stadium. The fashion retail brands were grouped based on their ascribed retail subgroup as presented in Table 3.2. The brand Stadium was used as a control item in both questionnaires to assess if the two groups of respondents varied in terms of brand perception, following Aaker, Benet-Martínez and Garolera's (2001) recommendations. No major differences were identified between the two sample groups in terms of their perceptions of the brand Stadium. Thus, the assumption was made that the two samples were to be considered homogeneous and collected data would be suitable for further analysis. For more detailed reasoning for the brand selection see section 3.5.1 Selection of Brands in Study 3.

Table 3.2 Two Brand Groups of Five and Six Brands

Subgroups	Brand Group 1	Brand Group 2
International	Hennes & Mauritz (H&M)	Gina Tricot
Sports	Stadium	Naturkompaniet
		Stadium
Luxury	Nordiska Kompaniet (NK)	MQ
Youth	JC Jeans Company (JC)	Carlings
General	Åhléns	
Alternative		Indiska

In the first section of the questionnaire detailed instructions of what was expected from the participants were given, including that the responses were anonymous. The instructions also gave a definition of the term "brand personality" and a link to a Swedish dictionary containing 650 personality traits (See Kreativt Skrivande, 2011). This dictionary was given as an optional asset due to the notion from a pilot test with five participants indicating that

individuals could have difficulties to identify words representing their perceptions. Followed by this section, the participants were presented one brand at the time and were asked to state all personality traits they associated with the presented brand. This process proceeded through all ten brands in both of the questionnaires (20 brands in total) which resulted in 65 Swedish words being generated. Moreover, due to the questionnaire being answered in Swedish a rigorous translation from Swedish to English was executed by the bilingual researchers, who are fluent in both languages.

Table 3.3 Examples of Words Extracted and Translated from the Free-Association Task

Subgroup	Brand	Examples of words from free-association task
International	H&M	Basic, trendy, Swedish, fashionable, extrovert, inflexible, cheap
	Gina Tricot	Wild, girly, mainstream, happy, summery, boring, friendly
Sports	Stadium	Brisk, comfortable, stable, cool, dedicated, busy, mediocre, family
	Naturkompaniet	Quality, dorky, adventurous, sustainable, rustic, simple, practical
Luxury	NK	Elegant, rich, luxury, posh, expensive, frightening, classic
	MQ	Ordinary, common, exclusive, established, normal, ladylike
Youth	JC	Appreciated, teenager, hipster, cocky, childish, optimistic
	Carlings	Hard, cool, rock, good looking, manly, loud, messy, relaxed
General	Åhléns	Clean, reliable, tasteful, robust, loyal, mature, altruistic, lagom
Alternative	Indiska	Fresh, bohemian, feminine, simple, different, warm, colorful, hippie

3.4.3   Results and Discussion

After the data was collected, the next step in the process of generation suitable BP items was to make the 65 words more manageable by reducing the number of items. The reduction process followed five criteria: words that were not personality traits (e.g. Stockholm, mom clothes, "Svensson"), words that were considered redundant (e.g. simple/basic, famous/well-known) or synonymous (e.g. good looking/handsome), words too ambiguous (e.g. hard, flexible, general), and words with negative connotations (e.g. boring, impersonal). Even though critics, such as Bosnjak, Bochmann and Hufschmidt (2007), have highlighted the issue concerning deletion of negative connotations when developing BP scales the decision was made to still do so in order to fully replicate Aaker's (1997) study. Aaker (1997) motivated this deletion by stating that brands mostly are linked to positive attributes and the purpose of a BP scale is to determine what attributes attract consumers (Aaker, 1997). Thus, negative attributes are to be considered irrelevant for this study's purpose as well.

Furthermore, during the whole process the researchers had in mind the issues followed by language translations from Swedish to English, which could have resulted in Swedish words having the same or similar meaning when translated to English. However, no words needed to be deleted based on this. Furthermore, to maximize the representation of words matching the Swedish culture a consideration of the words retrieved from the initial literature review were considered. This resulted in the word "lagom" being added to the list of BP items. Lastly, the emotional item "romantic" was added, a BP item belonging to Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf's (2009) Emotionality dimension. The decision to include this item was based on the

fact that Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf's (2009) BP scale is validated cross-culturally and to retrieve inspiration from this BP scale is thus highly motivated. The final list of words ended up consisting of 37 BP items and is presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Final List of Brand Personality Items in Alphabetical Order

English	Swedish	English	Swedish
Adventurous	Äventyrlig	Innovative	Innovativ
Altruistic	Altruistisk	Lagom	Lagom
Ambitious	Ambitiös	Modern	Modern
Brisk	Hurtig	Popular	Populär
Charming	Charmig	Progressive	Progressiv
Classic	Klassisk	Relaxed	Avslappnad
Confident	Självsäker	Reliable	Pålitlig
Conscientious	Plikttrogen	Romantic	Romantisk
Cool	Cool	Serious	Seriös
Down-to-earth	Jordnära	Social	Social
Elegant	Elegant	Stable	Stabil
Exciting	Spännande	Tolerant	Tolerant
Exclusive	Exklusiv	Transparent	Transparent
Feminine	Feminin	Trendy	Trendig
Fresh	Fräsch	Unique	Unik
Genuine	Genuin	Urban	Urban
Good Looking	Snygg	Warm	Varm
Happy	Glad	Youthful	Ungdomlig
Harmonic	Harmonisk		

3.5 Study 3: Developing a Swedish Brand Personality Scale and Evaluating Consumer Attitudes

The third study in this thesis is considered being the main study and aims at developing a BP scale in a Swedish context with the usage of an EFA and a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Moreover, an evaluation of consumers' attitudes towards the BP scale both in general and for each BP dimension separately will be made. The chapter is finalized with an ANOVA to test the BP scale on 13 fashion retail brands.

3.5.1 Participants

When conducting a factor analysis, which is this study's main analysis, it is of importance to have a large sample size to assure reliability. There are many suggestions on how large these sample sizes should be. Field (2013) suggest following the ratio of having at least 10-15 participants for each variable, Nunnally (1978) recommends that each variable should represent 10 participants, which is supported by Hair et al. (2010). Nonetheless, Arrindell and van der Ende (1985) points out that to base sample size on these types of ratios does not have a greater impact on the stability of the derived factors, instead overall sample size is what matters. This is further supported by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) who suggest a minimum

number of 100 participants, where 300 is considered good and 1000 as excellent. Adding to this is Guadagnoli and Velicer (1988) with their suggestion that factors having four or more loadings scoring over .60 ultimately indicates that the sample size is irrelevant. As presented in section 3.5.4 Results and Discussion this was the case for Study 3. Moreover, Field (2013) suggests that a minimum of 300 participants is needed if the researchers wish to interpret factors with few low loadings. To measure the adequacy of the sample size can also be done with the help of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measures of sampling adequacy, suggesting that a value close to 1 is desirable with a minimum .5 as acceptable level (Kaiser, 1970). This was also the case for Study 3, which is presented more in detail in section 3.5.4 Results and Data Analysis.

Subsequently, a total number of 410 questionnaires were distributed to a sampling frame consisting of Swedish undergraduate and graduate students at Lund University from the faculties of Engineering, Science, Law, Social Science, Medicine, Humanities & Theology, Economics & Management and Fine & Performing Arts. All 410 questionnaires were completed (52.30% female, Age M = 23.10, SD = 3.31). The motivation for this non-probability convenience sampling, that is, choosing a sample based on accessibility and by so limiting the possibility for every member of the populations to be chosen as participants (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015), is based on the researcher having limited resources and time. Using this type of sampling technique may result in weakened generalizability, nonetheless the valuable aspects of applying this technique lays on the fact that an adequate sample size is easily reached (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

3.5.2 Procedure

Before creating the questionnaire used for Study 3 a selection of well-chosen brands was needed. Hence, in the following section the procedure for the selection of brands will be given. This is followed by a section about how the actual raw data was collected.

Selection of Brands

As acknowledged by Ratchford (1987) and his classification of think/feel dimensions, brands can be categorized into three product categories: symbolic (e.g. apparel, alcohol), utilitarian (e.g. toothpaste, shampoo) and a combination of both (e.g. cars, soft drinks). As specified by Ratchford (1987), the symbolic function is related to the "feel" dimension and the utilitarian function to "think". This categorization was used in the selection of brands for this thesis. The first step was to decide which product categories that were to be included in the selection of brands. Supphellen and Grønhaug (2003) states that BPs mostly are of a symbolic character, thus the decision was made to only focus on this product category.

Moreover, due to the scope of this thesis, a delimitation in regard to industry was considered relevant. When deciding on industry, inspiration was retrieved from Aaker (1997). In her study she states that fashion retail brands are highly symbolic (Aaker, 1997), which led to the choice of brands belonging to the fashion retail industry. To identify relevant fashion retail brands, a list covering Sweden's most popular brands in terms of brand knowledge (shown as % in brackets) and brand power was used (See GfK Sweden, 2013). From this list a total number of ten, for Swedes well-known, commercial brands from various retail subgroups were selected: H&M (64.98%), Åhléns (64.61%), Stadium (49.22%), Indiska (42.79%), Gina

Tricot (39.00%), JC (35.61%), MQ (31.05%), NK (28.86%), Carlings (19.93%) and Naturkompaniet (15.52%). The subgroups, as seen in Table 3.5, are based on the different brands' profiling in terms of style, consumer segment and product assortment. By including brands from each subgroup, both unisex and gender specific brands, in the study a broad representation in terms of consumer attractiveness and interest could be reached and by so an assurance of tapping on as many BP traits as possible could be made.

In addition to the ten brands discussed above, that all have both a physical and digital presence, a pure ecommerce fashion retailer was decided to be of value to also include in order to broaden the brand selection. Thus, the e-tailer Nelly.com (14.24%) was added to the list. Furthermore, the choice was made to also add the fashion retail brand Lindex (54.64%), with the hope of it being associated with emotional BP items due to the retailer's wide range of lingerie; a product category often associated to femininity (Jantzen, Østergaard & Vieira, 2006). Lastly, the brand Weekday (5.67%) was added with the hope of touching upon BP items related to urbanism and coolness due to the brand's trend sensitivity. The total selection hence sums up to 13 brands.

Table 3.5 Final Selection of Brands

Subgroup						
International	*Sports*	*Luxury*	*Youth*	*General*	*Alternative*	*E-Commerce*
H&M	Stadium	NK	JC	Åhléns	Indiska	Nelly.com
Gina Tricot	Naturkompaniet	MQ	Carlings	Lindex	Weekday	

Data Collection

Before conducting the official data collection an example questionnaire was pre-tested by five Lund University students to secure the quality and correctness of it. After this, the study was divided into 13 different questionnaires each covering one of the chosen brands (See Table 3.5) and included background questions about the respondent, all 37 personality items (See Table 3.4), as well three attitude questions. An example of the questionnaires is exhibited in Appendix B. To only assign one participant with one brand was based on the fact that if more brands were included in one questionnaire the risk of participant fatigue could occur and by so reduce the participants' willingness to take part in the study. Moreover, in order to minimize biases four versions of the item order were randomly created for each of the 13 questionnaires, that is 13 questionnaires á four randomized item orders. This summed up to a total of 52 unique questionnaires.

Participants were randomly asked to anonymously take part in a study about commercial brands by completing a questionnaire given to them on a two-sided piece of paper. After the participants were introduced to the subject of the questionnaire and fashion retail brand, they were asked to state their gender, age and faculty belonging. Thereafter, the participants were asked to rate each of the 37 personality items on five-point Likert scales ranging from "Not at all descriptive" (1) to "Extremely Descriptive" (5) where the midpoint (3) acted as a neutral option, based on Aaker's (1997) original BP study. The motivation for using five-point Likert scales, rather than for example a seven-point Likert scale, is based on the suggestion that if a broader scale is used the risks of weakening data quality can occur due to participants' lack of

knowledge and volition (Revilla, Saris & Krosnick, 2014). After the ranking of personality items the participants were given three semantic differential scales where they were asked to state their overall attitude about the brand in question. These items were adapted from Spears and Singh's (2004) paper about how to measure brand attitudes and purchase intentions and resulted in the statement "I think the brand is…" followed by the three five-point Likert scales: Bad (1)/Good (5), Unappealing (1)/Appealing (5) and Unlikable (1)/Likable (5). The data collected from the three semantic differential scales will be further analyzed in the sections related to the multiple regression analysis and the one-way ANOVA.

3.5.3 Results and Discussion

In order to develop the Swedish BP scale, firstly, the data was explored with an EFA. Secondly, the EFA was followed by testing the scale with a CFA to confirm its robustness. Thirdly, a multiple regression analysis was applied and lastly, a one-way ANOVA. Thus, this section is divided in four parts: EFA, CFA, multiple regression analysis and ANOVA.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The item reduction and generation of dimensions in Study 3 followed the same structure as Study 2. Thus, an EFA with a Varimax rotation was conducted to identify the 37 items' underlying relationships, where Aaker's (1997) original BP study was replicated in terms of data analysis methodology. Before the factor extraction was conducted a validation of the data's suitability for factoring was pursued. This initial data analysis indicated that an EFA was suitable on the basis of an adequate KMO index over the threshold of .06 (Overall KMO = .879, span between items .636 and .927), a significant level of the sphericity with Bartlett's test ($\chi2 = 6158$, $p < .001$) and finally, a large enough sample size (N = 410).

Due to there not being any existing quantitative criteria for choosing the amount of factors, the decision was made to follow criteria of both conceptual foundations and empirical evidence based on Hair et al.'s (2010) suggestions. Firstly, the criterion of latent root was followed, where it is suggested that each individual factor should account for a minimum of at least one item, meaning that only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 are to be extracted. Secondly, a compliment to the latent root criterion was used in the shape of a scree test evaluation. By implementing this criterion it is often common that additional one or two factors are added to the original factor structure (Hair et al. 2010). Hence, on the basis of the criterion of latent root, indicating that four factor should be extracted and with additional inspection of the scree test, the conclusion was made that one more factor would be suitable to add. This resulted in an initial factor structure consisting of five factors.

As in Study 2, a Varimax rotation was used for Study 3 to amplify the factors. This resulted in a deletion of four items; one item due to it having a loading score below the threshold of .40 (Lagom) and three items due to cross-loadings over the threshold of .40 (Unique, Elegant, Charming). Due to this item reduction, the final factor structure only consists of four factors where the forth factor (EM) includes a negative factor loading (Brisk). This indeterminacy factor scored item should be interpreted as having negative associations to the factor in question (Hair et al., 2010). Moreover, the final EFA indicates that the remaining items have uniqueness with a variation between .312 and .746. However, even though some items score

fairly high in uniqueness the decision has been made to keep them in this EFA due to their importance to the overall study.

Table 3.6 EFA of the Generated Swedish Brand Personality Dimensions

Items	Factor				Uniqueness	Swedish translations
	FR	**SY**	**ST**	**EM**		
Modern	0.783				0.377	Modern
Trendy	0.772				0.379	Trendig
Cool	0.705				0.460	Cool
Youthful	0.623				0.435	Ungdomlig
GoodLooking	0.620				0.442	Snygg
Popular	0.607				0.581	Populär
Fresh	0.540				0.514	Fräsch
Exciting	0.480				0.609	Spännande
Social	0.470				0.724	Social
Urban	0.468				0.736	Urban
Confident	0.448				0.668	Självsäker
Innovative	0.443				0.691	Innovativ
Progressive	0.426				0.732	Progressiv
DownToEarth		0.694			0.476	Jordnära
Warm		0.668			0.478	Varm
Genuine		0.666			0.427	Genuin
Harmonic		0.606			0.449	Harmonisk
Tolerant		0.584			0.613	Tolerant
Altruistic		0.571			0.637	Altruistisk
Adventurous		0.566			0.462	Äventyrlig
Relaxed		0.530			0.654	Avslappnad
Happy		0.486			0.660	Glad
Transparent		0.415			0.710	Transparent
Serious			0.752		0.423	Seriös
Stable			0.645		0.531	Stabil
Conscientiousness			0.632		0.516	Plikttrogen
Classic			0.622		0.600	Klassisk
Reliable			0.611		0.507	Pålitlig
Exclusive			0.560		0.519	Exklusiv
Ambitious			0.555		0.570	Ambitiös
Romantic				0.640	0.517	Romantisk
Feminine				0.620	0.608	Feminin
Brisk				-0.434	0.601	Hurtig
Eigenvalue	*6.206*	*3.551*	*2.357*	*1.411*		
% of variance	*14.69*	*13.02*	*11.35*	*5.47*		
Cumulative %	*14.7*	*27.7*	*39.1*	*44.5*		

Note. Varimax rotation was used

Note. Factoring method minimum residuals was used

Note. N = 410 randomly chosen from Lund University faculties, factor loadings higher than +/-.40 are shown

Note. FR = Freshness, SY = Sympathy, ST = Stability, EM = Emotionality

I summary, the four factors shown in Table 3.6 have been deemed important based on the following conceptual and empirical criteria: (a) eigenvalues greater than 1 (Hair et al. 2010), (b) inspection of scree test (Hair et al. 2010), (c) loading scores > .40 due to items loading lower possibly can have negative effects on the pureness of the measure (Nunnally, 1978), (d) amount of explained variance (Aaker, 1997) and (e) the dimensions meaningfulness (Aaker, 1997).

Nonetheless, to assign a greater meaning to each of the four factors a labeling of each factor in the final factor solution has been made, in accordance to Hair et al. (2010). The factors Freshness and Stability both have some factor loadings over .70. These factor loadings are thus, considered having a particular significance within each factor, by following Hair et al.'s

(2010) guidelines. Hence, these items have been used as indicators for the labeling of each factor in question. The remaining two factors, Sympathy and Emotionality, have been labeled based on interpretation of the included items and aims at capturing the full essence of the two factors.

The most powerful factor, that accounts for 14.69% of the variance consists of 13 items, has been labeled Freshness. The second factor, that accounts for 13.02% of the variance consists of ten items, has been labeled Sympathy. The third factor, that accounts for 11.35% of the variance consists of seven items, has been labeled Stability. Lastly, the fourth factor, that accounts for 5.47% of the variance consists of three items, has been labeled Emotionality.

Before concluding that these factors are valid to use as BP dimensions for a Swedish BP scale a post analysis in the shape of a CFA must be performed. By doing this we can reduce the items and strengthen the factors even more and moreover, test the validity of the factor structure. In accordance to Hair et al. (2010), this is highly relevant and is seen as a critical step before accepting the generated dimensions.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Up until now, an exploration of the data has been done and it has resulted in four well-defined factors in a simple factor structure. The next step in Study 3 is a CFA, one of the most common methods for objective evaluation of factor structures' robustness, to test how well the grouped variables represent each factor, in accordance to Hair et al. (2010) guidelines.

When developing an overall measurement model with CFA the decision must be made regarding how many items one factor should consist of. To include many items can be appealing due the feeling of a better representation of the factor and a maximized reliability, however, parsimony is of relevance and to reduce the number of items representing the factors is encouraged (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014). By doing this, truly unidimensional factors can be produced, according to Hair et al. (2014). After a performed CFA the recommended number of items included in one factor is a minimum of three, the optimal number is four. Nonetheless, if necessary, factors represented by one or two items are acceptable (Hair et al., 2014).

The first step when assessing the BP scale's validity, in accordance to Hair et al. (2014), is to compare the scale with reality, which in this case is represented by the sample of 410 respondents. Hence, in Table 3.7 below follows a presentation of the initial models overall fit and factor validity. There are multiple key fit statistics and in this model fit analysis the fit indices included are the incremental fit index chi-square statistics (χ^2) with an addition of one more incremental fit index (CFI: comparative fit index) and two absolute fit indices (SRMR: standardized root mean residual, RMSEA: root mean square error of approximation). The choices of these indices are based on their commonness when pursuing this type of CFA and the rule of thumb of having a minimum of one incremental fit and one absolute fit index as a compliment to the chi-square statistics (χ^2), all suggested by Hair et al. (2014). Moreover, the thresholds used in this analysis follows Hair et al.'s (2014) guidelines of χ^2 being significant if p-value $< .05$, the CFI being accepted if greater the .90, the SRMR being accepted if being below or close to the conservative value of .05 and lastly, the need for RMSEA to have an index below the threshold of .08.

Table 3.7 Model Fit of Initial CFA

Model Fit							
Test for Exact Fit			**Fit Measures**				
						RMSEA 90% CI	
χ²	**df**	**p**	**CFI**	**SRMR**	**RMSEA**	**Lower**	**Upper**
2320	489	< .001	0.659	0.120	0.0956	0.0917	0.0995

As seen in Table 3.7, the incremental fit index χ² is 2320 and has a significant *p*-value (< .001), which indicates that the observed covariance matrix and estimated covariance matrix are significantly different and thus, suggests a model fit. Nonetheless, due to having the large sample size of 410 respondents this fit index is not enough alone when evaluating the model fit. Thus, as suggested by Hair et al. (2014), additional fit indices are included, as mentioned in previous paragraph. The first fit indices presented in Table 3.7 is the incremental CFI (.659) which is below the threshold of .90 and thus, suggest that there is a lack of support for model fit. This index is additionally supported by the unacceptably high SRMR index (.12 > .05) and RMSEA (.0956 > .08). With these insights the conclusion can be made that the factor structure is in need of improvement and modification to achieve a model fit.

Table 3.8 CFA before Modification

Factor Loadings						
Factor	**Items**	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Z**	**p**	**Stand. Estimate**
Freshness	Cool	1.000[a]				0.6944
	Social	0.585	0.0677	8.64	< .001	0.4589
	Progressive	0.593	0.0683	8.68	< .001	0.4681
	Exciting	0.711	0.0746	9.53	< .001	0.5029
	Innovative	0.630	0.0729	8.64	< .001	0.4600
	Fresh	0.780	0.0715	10.91	< .001	0.6047
	GoodLooking	0.847	0.0711	11.91	< .001	0.6573
	Modern	1.032	0.0740	13.93	< .001	0.7749
	Urban	0.653	0.0856	7.63	< .001	0.4049
	Popular	0.824	0.0720	11.44	< .001	0.6270
	Youthful	0.817	0.0866	9.44	< .001	0.5011
	Trendy	1.060	0.0749	14.15	< .001	0.7765
	Confident	0.666	0.0687	9.70	< .001	0.5204
Sympathy	Warm	1.000[a]				0.6842
	Adventurous	0.800	0.0971	8.24	< .001	0.4542
	Happy	0.588	0.0698	8.43	< .001	0.4517
	Relaxed	0.731	0.0846	8.64	< .001	0.4699
	Transparent	0.589	0.0707	8.33	< .001	0.4706
	Harmonic	0.945	0.0789	11.98	< .001	0.6638
	Altruistic	0.771	0.0761	10.13	< .001	0.5756
	Genuine	1.120	0.0876	12.79	< .001	0.7468
	DownToEarth	1.155	0.0936	12.34	< .001	0.7016
	Tolerant	0.799	0.0741	10.77	< .001	0.6061
Stability	Ambitious	1.000[a]				0.6233
	Classic	1.010	0.1133	8.91	< .001	0.5359
	Conscientious	1.239	0.1110	11.16	< .001	0.7137
	Reliable	1.184	0.1055	11.22	< .001	0.7224
	Serious	1.263	0.1103	11.45	< .001	0.7189
	Stable	1.056	0.1020	10.35	< .001	0.6675
	Exclusive	0.892	0.1045	8.54	< .001	0.4827
Emotionality	Feminine	1.000[a]				0.3342
	Romantic	3.854	2.5558	1.51	0.132	1.3407
	Brisk	-0.265	0.1282	-2.07	0.038	-0.0825

Note. [a] fixed parameter

By examining the factor loadings in the initial CFA (See Table 3.8) all items with standardized factor loadings below .50 (Urban, Happy, Innovative, Progressive, Adventurous, Exciting, Relaxed, Transparent, Exclusive, Brisk, Youthful) were remove one at a time starting with the lowest factor loading followed by an analysis re-run and an examination of the effect the deletion had on the model fit indices. Optimally a cut-off point at .70 is suggested when reducing standardized factor loadings; however the lower cut-off point of .50 is acceptable (Hair et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the decision was made to save the high loaded item Romantic and the low loaded item Feminine with the wishes of improved loadings due to the hopes of keeping the factor Emotionality. A decision motivated on the basis of not reducing the data into a too limited scope, in this case three factors, which could result in not having sufficient material for a useful Swedish BP scale.

After evaluating the path estimates that resulted in a reduction of 11 items, a model fit had still not been reached. Thus, the next diagnostics measure to evaluate was the modification index (MI). When examining the MIs a pair-wise deletion of items with greater MI values was conducted, starting with the greatest. This was followed by an analysis re-run after every modification. Item pairs loading on separate factors were prioritized for deletion, which resulted in a removal of the pairs, presented in order of deletion: Altruistic - Cool (MI = 17.74), Classic - Modern (MI = 16.35), Ambitious - Trendy (MI = 9.89), Down-to-earth - Serious (MI = 4.50), Genuine - Popular (MI = 9.28).

Table 3.9 Model Fit for Final CFA

Model Fit							
Test for Exact Fit				**Fit Measures**			
						RMSEA 90% CI	
	df	**p**		**CFI**	**SRMR**	**RMSEA**	**Lower**	**Upper**
124	38	< .001						
				0.927	0.0573	0.0741	0.0598	0.0889

With these modifications, following the diagnostic measures of path estimates and MIs, a model fit was achieved as presented in Table 3.9 (χ^2 = 124, p < .001, CFI = .927, SRMR = .057, RMSEA = .074). As a result the final Swedish BP scale, with proven model validity, consists of 11 BP items loading on four BP dimensions. In Table 3.10 below, the modified CFA is presented and is followed by a visual presentation of the final BP scale in Figure 3.2. In Table 3.10 the internal consistency (Cronbach's α) is shown, indicating how well the BP scale's items measures the same hidden constructs with the usage of correlation (Burns & Burns, 2008). The higher Cronbach's α, the better internal reliability, and the rule of thumb is that α > .7 is acceptable (Burns & Burns, 2008). Two of the BP dimensions have a Cronbach's α well above the threshold. However, two do not, nonetheless their levels are close to the limit and are thus, also regarded as acceptable even though they should be treated with caution in further data analysis.

Table 3.10 Final CFA of the Swedish Brand Personality Dimensions

		Factor Loadings					
Factor	**Cronbach's α**	**Items**	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Z**	**p**	**Stand. Estimate**
Freshness	0.73	Fresh	1.000[a]				0.756
		Confident	0.778	0.0818	9.52	<.001	0.593
		GoodLooking	0.976	0.0904	10.80	<.001	0.738
Sympathy	0.70	Warm	1.000[a]				0.682
		Harmonic	1.077	0.1005	10.72	<.001	0.754
		Tolerant	0.718	0.0814	8.81	<.001	0.543
Stability	0.76	Conscientious	1.000[a]				0.715
		Reliable	1.005	0.0837	12.01	<.001	0.762
		Stable	0.861	0.0772	11.16	<.001	0.677
Emotionality	0.63	Feminine	1.000[a]				0.522
		Romantic	1.616	0.2777	5.82	<.001	0.879

Note. [a] fixed parameter

When examining the final factor structure some interpretations can be made for each factor. The factor Freshness has some resemblance to Aaker's (1997) BP dimension Excitement with five out of its 13 items (Modern, Trendy, Cool, Youthful, Exciting) from the EFA having a good match against the original dimension. The final CFA has reduced these resemblances, but the same essence is still captured. The second factor, Sympathy, is to be considered unique for this BP scale, as no resemblances can be found when compared to both Aaker's (1997) BP scale and the cross-culturally validated BP scale presented by Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009). The third factor, Stability, has some similarities to Aaker's (1997) BP dimension Competence, but in terms of items matching, only one does (Reliable). However, many of the initial seven items in the EFA and also the three items in the final CFA do capture the same essence as Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions Competence. The last factor, Emotionality, shares resemblance to Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf's (2009) BP dimension Emotionality and thus, explains its labeling. On this factor the item Brisk loads negatively, as seen in the EFA, and could hence be interpreted as negatively associated with the Emotionality factor.

In the two following sections further analysis with the new scale will be presented and discussed. This will provide in-depth insights on how the BP scale can be useful in practice.
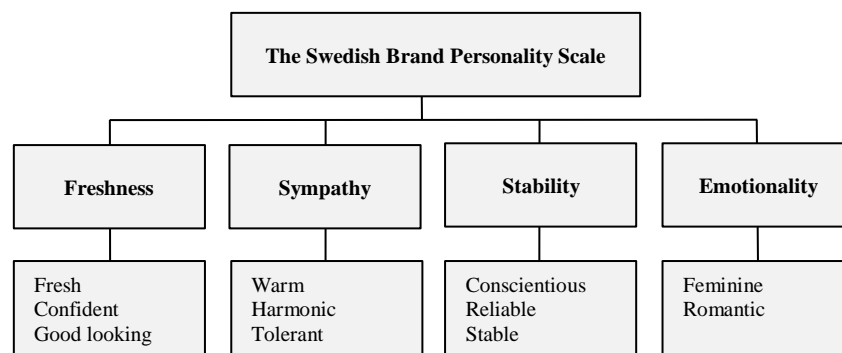

Figure 3.2 The Swedish Brand Personality Scale

Evaluation of the Relationship between Consumer Attitudes and the Brand Personality Dimensions with Multiple Regression Analysis

Next, a multiple regression analysis will be conducted to explore the statistical relationship that Swedish consumers have with the four identified BP dimensions. By doing this a prediction of how consumers attitudes can vary depending on which BP dimensions a brand employ can be made; a prediction that can be highly useful for companies and marketer working in the Swedish market or wishing to establish themselves in this region of the world.

The data used for this analysis is retrieved from the three semantic differential scales included as a last section in the questionnaire (See Appendix B). The three scales consisted of the statement "I think the brand is…" followed by the three five-point Likert scales Bad (1)/Good (5) (Cronbach's α = .74), Unappealing (1)/Appealing (5) (Cronbach's α = .71) and Unlikable (1)/Likable (5) (Cronbach's α = .81), where (3) acted as a neutral point.

Multiple regression analysis, a statistical technique based on one or many factors that are put in relation to specific outcomes to make predictions, is to be considered an important tool within business research (Hair et al., 2014). Moreover, the analytical tool is often the key when solving business challenges, such as forecasting and consumers behavior and attitudes predictions (Hair et al., 2014). Thus, this analytical tool will be applied in this section where consumer attitudes, aggregated as mean scores for each respondent, act as dependent variable and the four BP dimensions act as independent variables. That is, the identified and validated BP dimensions, that together create a regression variate, are used for predicting the Swedish consumers' attitudes towards them.

Before the regression analysis a variety of assumption checks must be made to secure that there are no issues with the data set. This will be done by following Hair et al.'s (2014) and Burns and Burn's (2008) guidelines which are: (a) that at least 15 times more cases for each independent variable are included in the data set, (b) an identification and deletion of outliers is made as they affect the output negatively, (c) that an evaluation of the datasets homoscedastic is made, (d) a confirmation of linearity, and lastly, (e) an assessment of the multicollinearity.

First of all, as this study contains four BP dimensions (Freshness, Sympathy, Stability, Emotionality) it is suggested that at least 60 cases are included in the analysis (4 x 15 = 60 cases). With a total number of respondents reaching a level over 400 this assumption is met. Second of all, due to the study's usage of semantic differential scales with five predetermined levels, outliers would not be an issue. However, a thorough review of the data set was made to identify if there were any responses that had been inserted wrongly and thus, perhaps having a score over five or below one. Nonetheless, this was not the case.

The third step was an evaluation of the homoscedasticity by assessing the generated quantile-quantile plot (Q-Q plot), where a comparison of two probability distributions is made. In this case the sample data (vertical axis) and the statistical population (horizontal axis) are set against each other. As seen in Figure 3.3, the inspection of the graph indicates that the data is normally distributed. In this figure, an assessment of the significance level of the multiple regression linear equation is also made to evaluate the relationship between the dependent variable (consumer attitude) and the independent variables (BP dimensions) and how they are

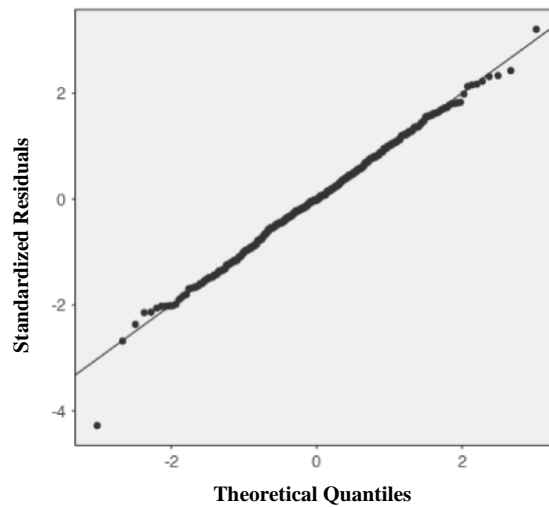associated. As Figure 3.3 indicates, a positive linear relationship emerges between the residuals.

Figure 3.3 Q-Q Plot

Lastly, an inspection is needed to evaluate if there are any issues related to multicollinearity, namely to secure that there are no correlations between the independent variables (Hair et al., 2014). The perfect data set should have independent variables that are highly correlated with the dependent variable and furthermore, a minimal amount of correlation between the independent variables (Hair et al., 2014). Hair et al. (2014) recommend using orthogonal factor scores to achieve this, which is what is being used in this thesis throughout, as discussed and motivated in section 3.3.1 Procedure. Table 3.11 presents the collinearity statistics Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and its inverse Tolerance. VIF measures the variability of an independent variable that can be explained by other independent variables and is suggested to not be greater than 10. As tolerance is the inverse of VIF, the recommended level to reach is at least .10. In this study's data set, there are no issues related to multicollinearity as both the VIF and tolerance indices reach the right levels.

Table 3.11 Model Coefficients Used for Evaluation of Data Set

					Statistical Significance		Collinearity Statistics	
Predictor	**Cronbach's α**	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Stand. Estimate**	**t**	**p**	**VIF**	**Tolerance**
Intercept		0.53531	0.1958		2.7341	0.007		
Freshness	0.73	0.51865	0.0451	0.49034	11.4957	< .001	1.19	0.842
Stability	0.76	0.18369	0.0453	0.18940	4.0542	< .001	1.43	0.702
Sympathy	0.70	0.15434	0.0493	0.14407	3.1295	0.002	1.38	0.723
Emotionality	0.63	0.00295	0.0363	0.00345	0.0811	0.935	1.18	0.847

The assumption of no multicollinearity issues is also verified in the correlation matrix (Table 3.12) where none of the independent variables seems to have high correlations between each other. Hair et al.'s (2014) recommendation is to be cautious if correlations are .90 or higher.

Furthermore, the correlation matrix gives us insights about the relationships between the individual BP dimensions and their correlations to consumer attitude. When inspecting the correlation matrix (Table 3.12) the revelation is that the dimension Freshness has the highest positive correlation with consumer attitude (Person's r = .568, sig. < .001), whereas Stability also is to be considered strongly correlated to positive consumer attitude. Moreover, what is revealed is that the correlation between the dimension Emotionality and positive consumer attitude appears to be less significant in comparison to the three other BP dimensions (Person's r = .146, sig. = .003). However, the relationship between Emotionality and positive consumer attitude is still to be considered significant due to it being below the significance level of $p < .05$. The reasons behind the BP dimensions ranking in the correlation analysis are probably affected by the delimited sample used that consisted of students with a low mean age. To assume that these insights can be generalizable to the Swedish population should hence be made with caution.

Table 3.12 Correlation Matrix of Brand Personality Dimensions and Consumer Attitude

		Freshness	Stability	Sympathy	Emotionality	Attitudes
		Correlation Matrix				
Freshness	Pearson's r	—	0.324	0.121	0.218	0.568
	p-value	—	< .001	0.015	< .001	< .001
Stability	Pearson's r		—	0.434	-0.010	0.412
	p-value		—	< .001	0.846	< .001
Sympathy	Pearson's r			—	0.277	0.290
	p-value			—	< .001	< .001
Emotionality	Pearson's r				—	0.146
	p-value				—	0.003
Attitudes	Pearson's r					—
	p-value					—

As all assumptions for performing a multiple regression analysis are met, no corrective actions are needed and an assessment of the overall model fit can thus follow. This will assess the level of explanation that the overall Swedish BP scale delivers when predicting consumer attitudes related to BP. As seen in Table 3.13 below, the coefficient of determination (R^2) has a value of .40. This indicates that 40% of the total variation of consumer attitudes can be explained by the BP scale. The adjusted R^2 indicates that 39.4% of the variance can be explained by the BP scale; a measure that is more conservative and gives a more realistic estimate when evaluation the overall model fit, as suggested by Burns and Burns (2008). The higher R^2 the better, as it gives more insights into the causes of the variance (Hair et al., 2014). The reason for the fairly low R^2 in this analysis can be based on the complexity of BP. This complexity results in a difficulty to successfully identify and include all predictors that can explain the consumers' attitudes towards BPs. Thus, an explained variance of 39.4% that in general is considered somewhat low, in this case still is seen as acceptable and relevant to use for further discussion.

Table 3.13 Evaluation of the Relationship Between the BP Scale and Consumer Attitude

Model Fit Measures			
Model	**R**	**R²**	**Adjusted R²**
1	0.632	0.400	0.394

Note. Independent variables: Freshness, Stability, Sympathy, Emotionality

Note. Dependent variable: Attitude

The next and last part of this study examines how the Swedish BP scale acts when being applied to a variety of brands within the fashion retail industry. By doing this a visualization of how the BP scale can be utilized is made, which deliver a deeper understanding of how BPs can be expressed in the Swedish market.

ANOVA to Assess Brand Personality Differences Between 13 Fashion Retail Brands

As this final study aims to illustrate BP in a more substantial way, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is applied to each of the four BP dimensions and the 13 retail brands used for the study (See section 3.5.1 Selection of Brands). The ANOVA will allow us to test how significant the differences are between the chosen fashion retail brands' personalities and if they are, to explore what personality each brand is ascribed.

Before producing the four ANOVAs for each BP dimension, a table of brand descriptives is presented in Table 3.14. In this table, the reader can assess sample size (N), mean scores (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*), linked to the BP scale and the 13 retail brands. See section 3.5.2 Participants and section 3.5.3 Procedure for detailed information about the sampling and data collection.

Table 3.14 Descriptive Brand Personality Data Split by Fashion Retail Brands

Descriptives										
	Freshness		**Stability**		**Sympathy**		**Emotionality**		**Attitudes**	
Brand	**N**	**Mean (*SD*)**	**N**	**Mean (*SD*)**	**N**	**Mean (*SD*)**	**N**	**Mean (*SD*)**	**N**	**Mean (*SD*)**
H&M	31	3.32 (0.782)	31	3.20 (0.763)	31	2.88 (0.593)	31	3.02 (0.652)	30	3.28 (0.867)
Gina Tricot	32	3.21 (0.811)	31	2.46 (0.797)	32	2.54 (0.638)	32	3.42 (0.763)	32	3.10 (0.878)
Stadium	39	3.65 (0.692)	39	3.68 (0.538)	39	2.77 (0.547)	39	1.99 (0.644)	39	3.78 (0.870)
Naturkompaniet	32	3.23 (0.769)	33	4.29 (0.525)	33	3.86 (0.707)	33	1.97 (0.661)	33	3.82 (0.708)
NK	31	4.31 (0.537)	31	3.89 (0.669)	32	2.53 (0.785)	31	3.13 (0.866)	32	3.60 (0.759)
MQ	31	3.61 (0.839)	30	3.54 (0.761)	31	2.91 (0.471)	31	2.97 (1.02)	31	3.38 (0.906)
JC	32	3.34 (0.711)	32	3.28 (1.01)	32	2.89 (0.736)	32	2.28 (0.729)	32	3.10 (0.792)
Carlings	31	3.14 (0.703)	29	2.87 (0.794)	29	2.82 (0.759)	30	2.07 (0.666)	29	3.05 (0.876)
Åhlens	29	3.63 (0.803)	28	3.92 (0.695)	29	3.40 (0.742)	29	3.31 (0.891)	29	3.83 (0.722)
Indiska	30	3.10 (0.769)	30	2.93 (0.814)	30	4.06 (0.601)	30	3.87 (0.706)	30	3.22 (0.755)
Weekday	29	3.74 (0.768)	29	2.89 (0.619)	28	2.86 (0.631)	29	2.45 (0.794)	29	3.61 (0.767)
Lindex	27	3.07 (0.724)	27	3.52 (0.718)	27	3.28 (0.744)	27	3.39 (0.776)	27	3.12 (0.873)
Nelly.com	34	3.78 (0.619)	33	3.16 (0.842)	33	2.87 (0.692)	33	3.64 (0.721)	33	3.59 (0.731)

The way that the one-way ANOVA function is that it tests the differences of the independent variable, split in different categories (fashion retail brands), on the dependent variable (BP

dimension). By so, the data set's variability can be measured and evaluate if the variance is caused by chance or if there are significant differences between the observed independent groups (Burns & Burns, 2008). This means, that if significant differences between any of the 13 chosen fashion retail brands are identified, we can reject the idea that the differences could be caused by chance, due to for example sampling error or anything alike creating differences.

To have in mind when performing these ANOVAs are the assumption checks suggested by Hair et al. (2014) that are: (a) normally distributed data, which has already been confirmed in Figure 3.3 (Q-Q Plot), (b) homogeneity of variance, that is that the F ratio is significant ($F > 1$, $p < .001$) and (c) that there is an independency between the groups' responses to the dependent variable. To test the independency among the groups is difficult according to Hair et al. (2014), however in this study the assumption is made that there are no issues with dependency. Moreover, the assumption of homogeneity will be discussed throughout the data analysis when assessing each BP dimension.

Starting off with the dimension Freshness (Included items: Fresh, Confident, Good Looking), homogeneity can be assumed ($F = 7.24$, $p < .001$), which means that there are significant differences between one or more of the studied fashion retail brands in terms of the characteristic freshness. To identify where this or these significant differences lays a post hoc analysis is needed, in accordance to Hair et al.'s (2014) recommendations. In this study, the post hoc test that will be used is Tukey's honest significant differences (Tukey's HSD). The argument for this lays in this method's power when wishing to compare samples that are very similar in size (Burns & Burns, 2004), which is the case in this study when examining the sample sizes in Table 3.14. Moreover, Tukey's HSD method is fairly conservative regarding Type 1 error, that is the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis (i.e. no significant differences) when an acceptance should be made (Hair et al., 2014). To make this mistake is not admirable and is thus taken into account for by applying this conservative post hoc method. When examining the post hoc test for Freshness the brand NK ($M = 4.31$) stands out with its high mean score, especially when being compared to the statistically significant different brands Indiska ($M = 3.10$, $t = 6.44$, $p < .001$), Lindex ($M = 3.07$, $t = 6.40$, $p < .001$), Carlings ($M = 3.14$, $t = 6.28$, $p < .001$) and JC ($M = 3.34$, $t = 5.22$, $p < .001$). Two brands that also score high on freshness, along with NK, are Nelly.com ($M = 3.78$) and Stadium ($M = 3.65$). However, the statistics indicates that all studied fashion retail brands are perceived as fairly fresh, where the mean scores spans between $M = 3.07$ (Lindex) and $M = 4.31$ (NK). Thus, no brand goes below the neutral value of three, which indicates that freshness is a common BP trait that consumers ascribe to brands in the fashion retail industry.

The second BP dimension to be evaluated is Sympathy (Included items: Warm, Harmonic, Tolerant). The ANOVA indicates an F ratio of 15.5 ($p < .001$), meaning that homogeneity can be assumed and a post hoc analysis can follow. In this analysis only four brands have a mean score reaching above the neutral point of three, which could be interpreted as most of the brands not being perceived as sympathetic. The brand having the highest mean score is Indiska ($M = 4.06$), followed by Naturkompaniet ($M = 3.86$), Åhléns ($M = 3.40$) and Lindex ($M = 3.28$). When comparing Indiska to the other brands the results indicates that the grandest differences are between the brands NK ($M = 2.54$, $t = -8.97$, $p < .001$), Gina Tricot ($M = 2.54$, $t = -8.91$, $p < .001$), Stadium ($M = 2.77$, $t = 7.93$, $p < .001$) and Nelly.com ($M = 2.87$, $t = -7.04$, $p < .001$). The BPs mostly perceived as sympathetic can in this context of fashion retail

be linked to brands that have marketing communication focusing on for example CSR, such as Naturkompaniet's care for nature, Åhléns' communication against inequalities, and Lindex' passion for ethical responsibility (Lindex, 2017; Naturkompaniet, 2018a; Åhléns, 2018a). Indiska does not communicate a clear CSR strategy, however, their bohemian expression might be perceived as related to sympathy (Indiska, n.d.a).

The next dimension to be evaluated is Stability (Included items: Conscientious, Reliable, Stable), which has an F ratio of 14.8 ($p < .001$) and thus, indicates that homogeneity can be assumed. The examination of the post hoc analysis for this BP dimension suggests that the brand Naturkompaniet ($M = 4.29$) is the most closely associated with stability among the Swedish consumers, followed by Åhléns ($M = 3.92$) and NK ($M = 3.89$). When comparing Naturkompaniet to the remaining 12 brands the significantly different brands are Carlings ($M = 2.87$, $t = 7.52$, $p < .001$), Weekday ($M = 2.89$, $t = 7.47$, $p < .001$), Indiska ($M = 2.93$, $t = 7.27$, $p < .001$), Nelly.com ($M = 3.16$, $t = 6.20$, $p < .001$) and JC ($M = 3.28$, $t = 5.50$, $p < .001$). In this dimension, Carlings, Weekday and Indiska, three young brands in the Swedish fashion retail industry (Carlings, n.d.; H&M n.d.; Indiska, n.d.b), have mean values below the neutral point of three, indicating that they are perceived as less conscientious, reliable and stable. In opposite, the brands scoring high in Stability are retailers that have been present in the Swedish retail industry since a century back (Naturkompaniet, 2018b; NK, n.d.; Åhléns, 2018b). It could hence be interpreted that time is a contributing factor for perceiving a BP as stable or not.

The last dimension to evaluate is Emotionality (Items included: Feminine, Romantic), which fulfills all assumption for conducting an ANOVA (F = 23.9, $p < .001$). In this dimension, most brands included reaches above the neutral level of three; however none passes the level of four. The brands having the highest mean scores are Indiska ($M = 3.87$), followed by Nelly.com ($M = 3.64$), Gina Tricot ($M = 3.42$) and Lindex ($M = 3.39$). The brand with the lowest mean score is Naturkompaniet with merely a value of 1.97. When comparing Indiska to the other brands, the largest and most significant differences are identified to be between Stadium ($M = 1.99$, $t = -10.13$, $p < .001$), Naturkompaniet ($M = 1.97$, $t = -9.84$, $p < .001$) and Carlings ($M = 2.07$, $t = -9.13$, $p < .001$). An insight to note within this dimension's ANOVA is the pattern of purely female brands being ranked high in Emotionality, whereas unisex brands with sporty influences are ranked very low.

The conclusion that can be made after the four ANOVAs is that many of the fashion retailers are considered, by the Swedish consumers, to possess the characteristic fresh (dimension Freshness), which also is the highest valued BP dimension according to the multiple regression analysis. Nonetheless, the BP dimension Sympathy is rarer when assessing the fashion retailers BPs, even though this personality trait also is considered valued among the Swedish consumers. Brands being perceived as possessing the characteristic sympathetic are those with a niche communication and expression of caring for others. Furthermore, the dimension Stability seems to be associated with older fashion retail brands and time is therefore a factor affecting the perception of a stable BP. Lastly, as already concluded, retailers offering only female clothing are more commonly ascribes the personality dimensions of Emotionality, whereas more male related retailers scores low.

To illustrate these BP patterns graphically for a simple and final assessment, a radar chart (See Figure 3.4) has been created, showing each of the 13 brands connected to the four BP dimensions. The chart has a maximum of five and a minimum of one, in accordance to the 5-point Likert scales used in the questionnaire. Moreover, the consumer attitude data used are aggregated mean scores for the brands linked to each of the dimensions, data that also can be found in Table 3.14. The higher the mean score the closer to the outskirts of the radar chart, whereas the center of the radar chart illustrates a mean score of one.
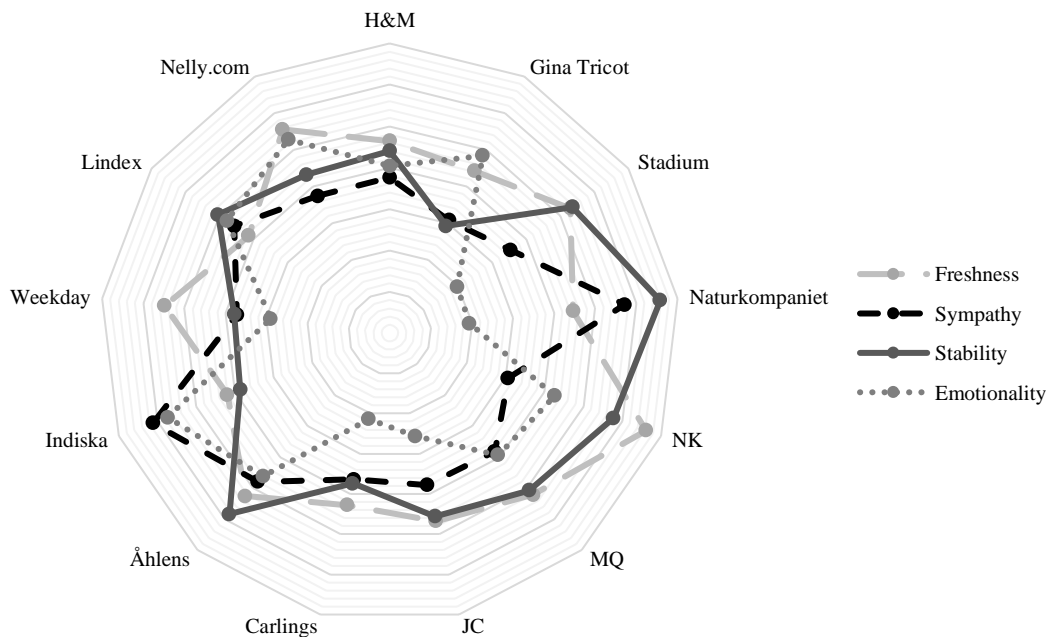
Figure 3.4 Radar Chart Illustrating 13 Fashion Retail Brands' Personalities

3.6 Methodology Limitations

As this thesis is part of the International Marketing and Brand Management Master's programme at Lund University School of Economics and Management, there are some concerns related to the limitations to have in mind, both for researchers and other future readers who wish to retrieve insights or further develop the thesis findings.

First, there are some noted limitations in the data sampling. The samples in Study 2 (*M* age = 24.9) and Study 3 (*M* age = 23.1) only consist of students in their 20s from Lund University, hence the findings cannot be considered generalizable to the Swedish population. As the respondents are both young and studies on a higher level of education this might color the results, whereas for example a broader age spectrum could have produced other correlations between the BP dimensions and consumer attitudes in the multiple regression analysis. However, the samples do have a good distribution in terms of gender and moreover, it has a great representation of individuals from all of Lund University's faculties, which empowers the samples.

Second, this thesis only focuses on the fashion retail industry in Sweden, on the basis of fashion retail brands having a highly symbolic function. This limitation raises the question if the BP scale is valid when applied to other industries and product categories. Thus, to assume that the BP scale can be used in a valid way beyond the fashion industry is not suggested. In summary, these methodology limitations open up for future research, which is discussed in section 5.3 Future Research.

4   General Discussion

In this chapter a general discussion will be provided, meaning that the outcomes from the three studies will be discussed more holistic by applying the presented literature stream of BP. By so the relevance of this thesis' outcomes will be reinforced. The chapter is divided in two parts. It starts with a discussion about BP in Sweden and ends with discussing the impact of globalization on consumers BP perceptions.

4.1   Brand Personality in Sweden

This thesis started off with a study to validate Aaker's (1997) BP scale. Consistent with other research studies, the results of the Swedish study support the fact that Aaker's (1997) scale lacks cross-cultural validity. Subsequently, this gave motivation for the development of a Swedish BP scale that, as concluded, never has been done in a Swedish context, as noted by Helgeson and Supphellen (2004). The final Swedish BP scale identified four BP dimensions, where the dimensions Freshness and Stability are similar to Aaker's (1997) dimensions Excitement and Competence and the dimension Emotionality is similar to Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf's (2009) dimension sharing the same name. However, the dimension Sympathy is quite different in comparison to Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions, and is thus considered specific for Swedish consumers. To extend the BP scale a link to consumer attitudes was made to develop easy interpreted managerial implications, where an identification of more and less preferred BP traits were made. The results indicated, among other, that consumers are the most positive towards Freshness and Stability.

When combining above mentioned results and discussions with a linkage to the insights generated about Swedish national character, culture and mentality some important patterns can be found. These will be discussed in detail for each dimension in the following paragraphs. But first, a brief glance at how the BP scale relates to the Five-Factor model and its universal human personality dimensions will be made, due to the model's close connection to Aaker's (1997) BP scale, and thus also ours. Our Freshness BP dimension has similarities to the dimensions Openness to Experience and Extraversion and the BP dimensions Sympathy and Emotionality shares resemblance with Agreeableness. Further, the BP dimension Stability is similar to the Five-Factor model's dimension Conscientiousness. However, as Caprara, Barbaranelli and Guido (2001) concluded, BP cannot fully be explained with human personality traits due to them changing meaning when being applied to brands. Thus, no deeper discussion about our BP scale's similarities with the Five-Factor model will be made. Instead, focus will be put on the reasoning behind the BP dimensions emergence based on Swedish culture and society.

Starting off with the BP dimension Freshness, the dimension correlating the strongest with positive consumer attitudes, a close link can be made to the Swedish progressive and innovative spirit where perhaps originality and trendiness are highly valued when it comes to brands. As seen in the examination of consumer attitudes it seems like the BP trait of freshness is common among brands in Sweden, at least within the fashion retail industry. An insight that makes sense due to the industry's trend sensitivity and focus on aesthetically pleasing and symbolic products, where functionality often has minor importance. If another product category had been used, perhaps freshness would be less common.

Furthermore, Stability, the second most preferred BP dimension among Swedish consumers, could be linked to Sweden's well-developed socioeconomic status. The Swedish society is to be considered very stable and it has been so for many years, nevertheless some speed bumps have been met, such as the depression and financial crisis in the 1990's (Andersson, 2009). Even though this crisis changed the society at large the nostalgia of the now gone left-wing utopia lives on, according to Andersson (2009). That Swedish consumers value stability, reliability and conscientiousness when it comes to BPs hence makes sense. Thus, they expect and prefer brands that act in a reliable and trustful way, as illustrated by the consumers' perception of the old and established brand Naturkompaniet.

Continuing with the BP dimension Sympathy, a close connection can be made to Sweden's feminine culture. This type of culture is not directly linked to the adjective "femininity", which could be associated with gender. In this case, the feminine culture refers to the imbued vitality of caring for others and quality of life, as suggested by Hofstede, Minkov and Hofstede (2010), where harmony and tolerance could be interpreted as being important BP traits to possess as a brand if the wish is to be perceived in a positive way by consumers. Something else of interest to link to the dimension of Sympathy is the Swedish society's advocation of mellowness and tolerance, as suggested by the "Jante Law", the popular concept "lagom" and the country's acceptance of other cultures, discussed by Hofstede Insights (n.d.). To stand out from the crowd is not admirable, inequalities are looked down upon and everyone should be treated equal (Hofstede, Minkov & Hofstede, 2010). This is something that perhaps can be connected to the country's history of democracy and equality. Moreover, it could also explain the rising demand and trend for companies to work with CSR related issues where traits such as authenticity and credibility are valued, as pointed out by Vallaster, Lindgreen and Maon (2012). All in all, it is no surprise that Sympathy is a dimension that correlates with positive consumer attitudes. The included BP items Warm, Harmonic and Tolerant are easily put into this context and thus, reflect the Swedish society at large in many articulate ways and could also explain why this dimension is unique for Sweden.

The fourth and last BP dimension Emotionality is not as significant as the three prior ones when it comes to its relationship to consumers' positive BP attitudes. Nonetheless, it is not as strong in the actual CFA either. This can be explained by the weak links to the Swedish mentality and culture, where for example somberness has a stronger presence, as suggested by McCrae and Terracciano (2006). This is perhaps, a trait that does not go hand in hand with the dimension's items feminine and romantic. However, one link could be found in the Swede's fondness of nostalgia and the romanticizing of the past. Furthermore, as the BP scale has been developed with the usage of fashion retail brands another interesting pattern can be seen. That

is, purely female fashion retail brands are perceived as more emotional compared to for example the analyzed unisex brands. This pattern makes sense in many ways on the basis of the personality items included in the dimension (Feminine and Romantic). These two adjectives are often transmitted to the female gender and the clothing this segment of the population is expected to wear; an insight that more in detail is discussed by for example Jantzen, Østergaard and Vieira (2006) in their research about clothing consumption and feminine identity. In total, many logical linkages between the BP scale and the Swedish national character, culture and mentality can be made.

Nonetheless, when looking beyond the Swedish borders, some insights regarding the BP scale's similarities to many other developed BP scales have emerged. In the following section a reflection about globalization will be made and will further problematize the idea of cultural specific BP scales in a world where, as suggested by Mac Giolla and Kajonius (2017), cultures travel and mixes in a rapid pace.

4.2   Globalization and its Effect on Brand Personalities

Even though Aaker's (1997) BP scale lacks cross-cultural validity in Sweden, as concluded in Study 1, it can be discussed why there are rather clear similarities between the developed Swedish BP scale and Aaker's BP scale. As earlier mentioned, the Swedish BP dimensions Freshness and Stability are similar to Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions Excitement and Competence, which also appears in other studies that have extended Aaker's (1997) BP scale in other cultural contexts. Why this pattern is emerging can be interpreted from two different perspectives; globalization versus polarization.

When arguing for the globalizing perspective we can find reasoning based on globalization and its effect on how consumers perceive brands in their surroundings. Globalization has resulted in an increase of migration of both people and cultures (Mac Giolla & Kajonius, 2017). A consequence of this is an integration of many cultures into one society, leading to people from one culture connecting with people with other cultural origins, as suggested by Hermans and Kempen (1998). Independent, stable and coherent cultures are thus losing relevance, for the benefit of cultural hybridization where such as popular culture, communities and institutions are shared globally with independency on time and space. Hence, globalization undermines internal homogeneity and external distinctiveness, which results in transformations of old cultures into new ones (Hermans & Kempen, 1998). As seen in Study 1, many BP items are placed in similar factors as Aaker's (1997) original study conducted in North America. The same is the case in the final Swedish BP scale, where also many similarities can be found (e.g. Freshness versus Excitement). Moreover, this is not unique for this thesis. When looking at the literature review and Table 2.2 many factors are reoccurring, especially the dimensions Excitement, Competence and Sophistication. To argue that there are some universal elements of Aaker's (1997) BP scale can thus be justified. However, to find universal patterns as made by for example Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf (2009), is out of reach for this thesis, nonetheless some similarities and tendencies related to Aaker's (1997) BP scale should be brought forward. For example, Sweden as a Western

country is highly open and welcoming to new cultures and might be affected by American culture. This can explain why the Swedish consumers perceive BPs in a similar way as American consumers, which can also be the case in the other studies highlighted in Table 2.2.

One the other hand, when arguing for the polarizing effects we can find reasoning for the varying BP dimensions in Aaker, Benet-Martínez and Garolera's (2001) study, which suggest that there are both culturally specific and culturally common aspects ingrained in brands. Hence, the interpretation of globalizing effects, namely that globalization undermines culturally specific elements, can be argued against in the context of BP. As noticed by Robertson (1992), the effect of an increased globalization is a rising polarity and consumer resistance against it. Consequently, polarity gives rise to individuals defending local cultures against globalization and homogenization (Robertson, 1992). This might explain why the Swedish BP dimension Stability and other included BP items closely linked to the Swedish culture (e.g. Fresh and Tolerant) are specific for Sweden, and thus not similar to Aaker's (1997) North American dimensions and items. It has actually been suggested by Hermans and Kempen (1998) that globalization facilitates the creation of locality. This suggestion can be used for explaining the variance of BP dimensions in the various BP studies listed in Table 2.2.

In summary, BP is a complex phenomenon and the reasoning for why BP dimensions shift in different cultures has its base in many influencing factor that can be difficult to grasp. To find concrete and true arguments for why the Swedish BP scale has the four dimensions Freshness, Sympathy, Stability and Emotionality is thus impossible. Hence, in accordance to the applied internal realism, the patterns that have been identified via the BP scale gives suggestions, but no hard truths, about how Swedish consumers ascribe human personality traits to commercial brands.

5 Concluding Remarks

Recapitulate to the first paragraph in this thesis, where you were asked to reflect upon how you relate to one brand more than another even though the products are rather similar, and now reflect upon why you feel the way you do toward a brand of your choice. After reading this thesis you will hopefully have a better understanding how this phenomenon, namely BP, affects you and everyone around you.

The aim with this thesis was split in two parts. First, it aimed to validate Aaker's (1997) BP scale in a Swedish context and second, to develop a BP scale that examine how Swedish consumers ascribe human personality traits to commercial brands. The thesis began with an introduction to the literature stream and highlighted the issues with Aaker's (1997) highly appreciated BP scale, where focus was put on its lack of cross-cultural robustness. Moreover, an identification of the lack of insights connected to the Nordics, with focus put on Sweden, was made. This gave us the motivation for a creation of a BP scale that could be applied to one of the worlds most developed regions where products' and services' symbolism, rather than their function, is a crucial part for the daily lives of the consumers. After several studies, a valid Swedish BP scale was developed and further studied with additional statistical tools to explore the BP scale's dimensions in detail. By so, the aims and purpose with this thesis have been fulfilled and the noted theoretical gap of Aaker's (1997) original scale's lack of cross-cultural validity in Sweden has been eliminated with a powerful theoretical contribution to the literature stream of BP.

Table 5.1 Concluding Findings Summarized

Insights	Main findings
BP research	• Aaker's (1997) BP scale lacks robustness in Sweden, however similarities between American and Swedish consumers exist • The Swedish BP scale consists of four dimensions, including a total of eleven items: Freshness: Shares similarities with Aaker's (1997) dimension Excitement Stability: Shares similarities with Aaker's (1997) dimension Competence Sympathy: Is unique for the Swedish BP scale and reflects a vital part of the Swedish mentality and culture Emotionality: Shares similarities with Geuens, Weijters and De Wulf's (2009) dimension Emotionality The four dimensions together creates as simplified pattern of how Swedish consumers ascribe human personality traits to commercial brands • Aaker's (1997) BP dimensions Excitement, Competence and Sophistication are reoccurring within many cultural clusters
Swedish consumer attitudes	• The dimensions Freshness and Stability have the highest positive correlation with Swedish consumer attitudes • The dimension Emotionality has a weaker positive correlation with Swedish consumer attitudes • Freshness is a common BP characteristic within the Swedish retail fashion industry • Sympathy is a rare BP characteristic within the Swedish retail fashion industry • Stability is often ascribed to fashion retail brands with a far-reaching history • Emotionality is predominantly ascribed to fashion retail brands in Sweden purely targeting female consumers

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

As shown in Table 5.1, there are many theoretical contributions that are of interest for researchers within the field of BP and marketing who are interested in how culture might affect both consumers and brands. For the first time Aaker's (1997) BP scale has been tested and proven not valid in a Swedish context, which is something that was expected prior to this concluding remark, due to the critique that has been raised against the BP scale's lack of cross-cultural robustness. Thus, this supports existing theory that argues for the scale's culturally bound nature. However, as briefly discussed, there are some similarities that have been noted during the data analysis that point towards Aaker's (1997) North American BP scale still possessing some validity in Sweden. This is a suggestion that we will not dig deeper into in this thesis due to it not being a comparative study. However, it is still a concluding remark that is to be seen as valuable for the BP literature stream when being related to globalization.

Another theoretical contribution is the actual Swedish BP scale that has both been validated and furthermore, tested against established fashion retail brands in the Swedish market. This BP scale is a great contributor to the collection of BP scales developed in different regions of the world and highlights how culture can be related to consumers' BP perceptions. Thus, the overall theoretical contribution is an extension of Aaker's (1997) BP theory that strengthens her BP scale cross-culturally. This is a contribution that provides new insights to the BP literature stream and fills the theoretical gap of not having a BP scale that is suitable for applying to Swedish consumers.

5.2 Managerial Implications

The aspiration was to practically contribute with insights to all professional groups interested in the possibility of measuring BP in the Swedish market. The gap elimination has provided various practical insights relevant for marketing practitioners and other business functions. The Swedish BP scale is simple to interpret and apply to brands, independently of prior knowledge about BP theory. However, due to the scale's theoretical nature some practical illustrations for the fashion retail industry have been produced to deliver solid managerial implications that contribute with insights and confirmations about the Swedish consumers' attitudes related to BPs. The implications may also be applied to other industries, however as the insights are based on statistics retrieved from fashion retail brands we cannot assure its validity in other cases.

As Fournier (2014) points out, consumers have relationships to all brands in their surroundings, both linked to positive and negative attitudes. This further highlights the importance of avoiding brand transgression, namely to avoid having a not distinct and inconsistent BP (Aaker, Fournier & Brasel, 2004). For a marketer this implicitly suggests that a distinct BP, consisting of BP traits preferred by the target segment, in accordance to Kim, Han and Park (2001), is a valuable tool for creating brand loyalty, as well as, according to

Ahmad and Thyagaraj (2017), for brand value and profit increase. Hence, as brands target different consumer segments, the marketer can decide to enhance some BP traits to increase the positive consumer attitudes. Thus, in below section we will provide brief guidelines on how a marketer can utilize the four BP dimensions in their marketing communication strategy.

If a marketer wishes to target young consumers in Sweden, it is recommended to incorporate the essence of the BP trait freshness in the marketing communication, in other words to convey the characteristics of good looks, confidence and freshness. However, as freshness is a common BP trait within the fashion retail industry, it is suggested that some of the other three dimensions also are applied, to create uniqueness. This is something that for example NK has successfully made by combining the traits freshness and stability. By communicating a brand's heritage and age, just like NK, consumers' perception of stability subsequently increases. In addition, if the wish instead is to convey a sympathetic BP a recommendation could be to apply social marketing in the marketing communication strategy to highlight the brand's caring for society. Furthermore, the BP trait of emotionality is closely connected to femininity in the context of fashion retail, hence the simplest way of being ascribed this BP trait is to only offer female clothing. To achieve a high BP score on this trait is, as suggested by our data, a challenge for unisex and sporty fashion retailers.

In summary, there is much a marketer can do to affect consumers' perceptions of a brand. However, as seen in this thesis, how consumers ascribe human personality traits to commercial brands is a complex phenomenon and thus, the creation of a desired BP is not done overnight.

5.3   Future Research

Even though this thesis has its limitations we believe it to be highly relevant for the literature stream of BP and marketers due to it being the first BP research in this setting conducted in Sweden. Thus, this opens up to further explorations of the scales validity when applying it to other product categories and industries. A suggestion would be to replicate this thesis three studies in the context of utilitarian products such as various groceries, and combinational products such as cars, as the scale is developed based on the symbolic product category of fashion. Perhaps this would result in the need of adding new dimensions to the BP scale or manipulation of the four existing dimensions.

Moreover, as the Nordic countries are suggested to have cultural similarities and mentality, the Swedish BP scale should presumably also have some validity in the neighboring countries. Thus, we encourage that a validation of the scale is made in the remaining Nordic countries and moreover, to make a comparative study to identify if there are any significant differences within the Nordics in terms of BP perception and consumers' attitudes to the various BP dimensions.

Furthermore, as noted by Avis (2012), there are few qualitative studies within the literature stream of BP. Thus, it would be relevant to apply such research approach to expand the

concept of BP beyond its normal epistemology of positivism. As Romaniuk (2008) suggests, to use five-point Likert scales can limit the scope negatively. To instead apply a free choice method, as pointed out by Romaniuk (2008), could thus be of interest for constructivist researchers.

To conclude, we encourage future research to explore beyond the scope of this thesis to develop greater insights about BP in different cultural contexts and to test if the Swedish BP scale has validity when being applied to a generalizable Swedish sample and moreover, in other industries, Nordic countries and product categories beyond fashion retailing.

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Appendix A

First page of the online questionnaire "Brand Group 1" used for the free-association task in Study 2.

Varumärkens personligheter

Hej!

Vad roligt att du vill hjälpa oss med pilotstudien för vår masteruppsats som handlar om brand personalities i Sverige.

Det som kommer att ske i den här studien är att du ombedes att helt fritt skriva ner de personlighetsdrag som du associerar med ett visst varumärke. Personlighetsdrag syftar till adjektiv som vanligtvis tillskrivs människor, men vi vill istället att du tillskriver varumärken personlighetsdrag. Med andra ord ska du utvärdera varumärkena på samma vis som du utvärderar en person.

Vi kommer att presentera fem olika svenska varumärken och i textrutorna får du skriva precis allt du tänker på, det finns inga restriktioner, dock ser vi gärna att du håller dig till adjektiv men om du har svårigheter att formulera dig får du gärna förklara med andra ord.

Behöver du hjälp med att hitta adjektiven? Kolla in den här listan:
http://kreativtskrivande.blogspot.se/2011/08/karaktarsdrag.html

Om du har några frågor tveka inte att höra av dig till oss.

Lycka till och tack för hjälpen!

/Selena & Evelina

*Obligatorisk

1. **Hur gammal är du?** *

   _____

2. **Kön:** *
   Markera endast en oval.

   ◯ Kvinna

   ◯ Man

Vilka personlighetsdrag associerar du med nedan varumärke?

Appendix B

Example of a questionnaire used for Study 3.

Tack för att du vill hjälpa oss med den här studien!

I den här enkäten ombes du att ange hur du uppfattar varumärket H&M. Föreställ dig att varumärket är en person där din uppgift är att värdera hur väl nedan adjektiv beskriver denna/denne. Det finns inga rätt eller fel, bara följ din magkänsla.

H&M

Kön   Ålder

☐ Kvinna | ☐ Man   _____

Fakultetstillhörighet
☐ Humanistiska & Teologiska | ☐ Juridiska | ☐ LTH
☐ Konstnärliga | ☐ Medicinska | ☐ Ekonomihögskolan
☐ Naturvetenskapliga | ☐ Samhällsvetenskapliga

Inte alls beskrivande (1)			Mycket väl beskrivande (5)	

Unik

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Seriös

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Transparent

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Hurtig

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Altruistisk

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Avslappnad

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Snygg

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Jordnära

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Modern

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Feminin

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Social

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Självsäker

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Innovativ

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Tolerant

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Exklusiv

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Elegant

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Ambitiös

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Äventyrlig

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Trendig

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Stabil

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Fräsch

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Cool

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Charmig

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Populär

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Pålitlig

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

Vänd blad →

		Genuin		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

		Harmonisk		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

		Glad		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

		Spännande		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

		Plikttrogen		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

		Progressiv		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

		Romantisk		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

		Ungdomlig		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

		Urban		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

		Varm		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

		Lagom		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

		Klassisk		
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Beskriv dina övergripande känslor om varumärket som du nyss rankat.

Jag tycker att varumärket är...

Dåligt				Bra
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Inte tilltalande				Tilltalande
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Inte omtyckt				Omtyckt
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Tack för din hjälp!