Communication works for those who work at it – John Powell

An empirical study investigating the influence of corporate brand identity on brand performance

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Prologue

The year 2020 will most likely be remembered to everyone as the year when the Covid-19 virus spread globally and affected the world more aggressively than we could imagine. In February 2020 the World Health Organization labelled the virus as a pandemic and in March almost 13 000 death cases were established worldwide as a cause of the virus (World Health Organization, 2020). During the same time period, the Swedish School regulation announced that education will be digital starting March 18 (Skolverket, 2020) which affects school, education, and students, thus ourselves. What is more, as a consequence of Covid-19 the economy as well as several business sectors are facing numerous difficulties and unfortunately this affected this study in several ways which will be discussed further in the *Methodology and empirical data* chapter of this thesis. The extraordinary circumstances under which this study have been conducted have hence coloured the study and challenged us as researchers. However, despite this, interesting results have been received and we have very much enjoyed contributing to the field of corporate branding. Furthermore, we hope to inspire other researchers to explore the field further.

Abstract

In recent years, corporate branding and its potential benefits on brand performance has become an increased area of interest for both researchers and communication professionals. This study aims to deepen and increase knowledge about the concept of corporate brand identity and its influence on brand performance in the communications sector and answer the research question; *How do the dimensions of corporate brand identity influence brand performance within the communications sector?* To achieve this, a quantitative approach was employed and the B2B service brand identity scale as well as the Brand performance scale was used to measure the influence through a digital survey in 14 Swedish agencies with a total of N=105 respondents. The first scale includes five dimensions; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications, and human resource initiatives, which constitutes the independent variables of this study. Some adjustments were made to the B2B service brand identity scale which was why an exploratory factor analysis was used to make sure the measurement was appropriate. A standard multiple regression was conducted to analyse the potential influence of corporate brand identity on brand performance. The result showed that two of the five independent variables, consistent communications (β=.399) and brand personality (β= .297), had a significant ($p<.05$), positive influence on brand performance. This result hence supports parts of the hypothesis model and previous research while it challenges the implication that the remaining three variables should be predictors of brand performance. A concluding discussion highlights the theoretical explanation of the result and practical implications for corporate brand identity as a managerial tool for driving brand performance.

Keywords: corporate brand identity, brand performance, corporate branding, brand management

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1. Introduction

Organizations that present and build a cohesive, distinctive and relevant brand identity can create beneficial preference in the marketplace, as well as it creates differentiations from similar and competitive organizations (Ghodeswar, 2008). Accordingly, it is in their best interest to create and maintain a strong corporate brand identity and it is an increased priority much thanks to the variety of imperative and positive benefits. According to recent studies, one of these benefits could lead to a better result in brand performance (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). The study aspires to further explore the relationship between the two concepts corporate brand identity and brand performance and to investigate the influential ability of corporate brand identity.

The field of corporate branding has been growing significantly over the last couple of years and many scholars, as well as practitioners, have engaged in trying to disentangle the complexity of the concept (Balmer, 2017). A strong corporate brand is much more than a service or a product, it is a unique combination of an organization's promises, interactions, and experiences with clients or customers that could affect long term business (Xara-Brasil, Hamza & Marquina, 2018). Drawing from that, "a strong corporate brand comprises the conceptualization and operationalization of a very sophisticated brand strategy that meets the challenges of the different environments where brands are present" (Xara-Brasil, et al., 2018, p.1-2). Hence, it is clear that having a strong corporate brand identity is crucial for an organization to thrive.

Corporate branding in relation to the concept of identity has received a remarkable amount of attention in scholarly literature and research (Balmer, 2017). However, according to Balmer (2001), it is a concept that is rather hard to define. One contributing factor to the complexity could be due to the many different perspectives that scholars and studies have included it in. He further argues that it is much caused by the growing interest of business and therefore exploring the business identity, with the help of corporate brand identity, in order to achieve performance driven results. Moreover, researchers argue that a strong corporate brand identity has multiple potential benefits for an organization such as "adding value to increasingly similar products, generating consumer confidence and loyalty, stimulating investments, attracting high-quality personnel, and breeding employee motivation" (Thøger Christensen & Askegaard, 2001, p.293). Hence, these benefits are likely to have a positive influence on an organization's performance, and there are several findings suggesting a positive relationship between the two constructs of corporate brand identity and brand performance.

Hoeffler and Keller (2003), argue that brand performance is associated with many marketing advantages. Accordingly, Ittner and Larcker (2003) argue that by measuring non-financial performance areas, managers can enhance understanding of their business progress before the financial verdict is pronounced. Brand performance henceforth provides insight into specific actions needed in order to achieve strategic goals and objectives. According to Farris, Bendle, Pfeifer, and Reibstein (2017), as mentioned previously amongst others, to comprehend how brands can benefit from such performance, is becoming an interest amongst researchers, not only in the field of corporate branding but in brand management as well. Nonetheless, the relationship between corporate brand identity and brand performance has, as previously noted, been explored and confirmed. However, there is a lack of empirical research (Coleman, de Chernatony & Christodoulides, 2011), resulting in empirical evidence. Even though the level of interest for studying and learning more about the relationship of corporate brand identity and brand performance, amongst researchers and scholars have increased, the subject still remains somewhat shattered and undefined. One potential reason for this being could be the many different takes on branding, identity, and performance that scholars take, focusing on a variety of marketing metrics (Farris et al., 2017) within the broad field of strategic communication. However, this thesis acknowledges corporate brand identity as well as brand performance, as incorporated into strategic communication. Thus, the scope of this study will focus on the communication business sector.

Accordingly, Falkheimer and Sandberg (2018) state that the role of communication professionals has changed to involve a much more complex mix of corporate communication, corporate branding and communication. Brand communication and corporate brand identity involve multiple aspects that communication practitioners need to be aware of and consider when developing brand communication strategies, especially when these strategies aim to contribute to the overall performance of the company. However, having tools for understanding how these aspects operate and influence brand performance then becomes crucial. Falkheimer and Sandberg (2018) mean that for communication professionals and practitioners to succeed in this new, fast-developing, and complex environment, they need models and theories to help them navigate. Accordingly, many communication practitioners have recognized the relationship between corporate brand identity and brand performance and have tried to utilize it by incorporating it into their business models. Helping clients to identify, develop and communicate their corporate brand identity through different methods is part of their business offer (Sveriges Kommunikatörer, n.d.). Drawing from this, literature within this field, has failed

to provide empirical research for theoretical ground on how corporate brand identity actually can influence the company's brand performance.

As previously stated, several studies have investigated the concept of corporate brand identity and there seem to be a common perception of its importance when it comes to a successful organization and a successful brand. However, identity is a complex concept comprising a variety of elements. Some researchers view corporate brand identity as an interplay between internal, managerial and external factors (Hatch & Schultz, 2002). Others view it as a core and extended identity (Ghodeswar, 2008) and these are only a few. In this study, (which will be elaborated on further on in this thesis) the concept of corporate brand identity will be based on Coleman et al. (2011) scale for measuring the concept and will hence be considered to include the five dimensions; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications and lastly, human resource initiatives. Furthermore, the concept of brand performance will be defined through the Brand performance scale developed by Coleman (2011). The theories and scales of Coleman (2011) and Coleman et al. (2011) have not yet been applied to the communications sector and hence, the theory needs to be further elaborated within this framework to fulfil the aim of this study. This study thus sought to further investigate the dynamic and possible influence of corporate brand identity on brand performance within the communications sector.

1.1 Research gap
This study aims to contribute to the literary field of corporate branding, more specifically focusing on corporate brand identity and brand performance. The context of the thesis is within the faculty of strategic communication, hence the two constructs that are being studied are considered from a strategic communication perspective. Thus, acknowledging the overall context, the study is positioned within the theoretical framework of corporate brand identity and brand performance.

The aim of strategic communication within a company can be defined as communicating in a way that is beneficial to its corporate mission (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Verčič & Sriramesh, 2007). In order to do so, understanding corporate brand identity and its impact on brand performance is an important perspective within the different fields of strategic communication which is in need of further examination. As of today, there are many challenges to be found when considering corporate identity (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Thus, acknowledging the practical problematics, there is as previously stated a lack of theoretical and empirical contributions regarding research in corporate brand identity and its impact on brand performance in the communication sector. This should be of interest for both academic reasons as well as for practical reasons, especially for communication practitioners and/or organizations wanting to understand and potentially improve brand performance through corporate brand identity. Measuring corporate brand identity and brand performance, can thus function as a tool to structure, plan and hopefully improve aspects regarding the dimensions of the scales. Similar research has previously been done in the UK IT service sector (Coleman, de Chernatony & Christodoulides, 2015), where findings suggested that two of the five summarized dimensions of corporate brand identity; brand personality and human resource initiative, had a positive and significant influence on brand performance. The authors suggested that future research should be done in other countries as well as in other sectors in order to develop and strengthen the findings. Our ambition is thus to fill the research gap acknowledged by Coleman, et al (2015), regarding whether or how corporate brand identity has an impact on brand performance, exploring new business sectors, as well as a new country. This study will hence contribute to filling the gap of empirical research of corporate brand identity and brand performance, providing valuable research and empirical findings to further comprehend the relationship between the two concepts.

1.2 Relevance

It is a vital step within the framework of branding for companies to construct and preserve a strong corporate brand identity. This contributes to the creation of beneficial corporate branding which could then be used in advantage and as an asset for the company, on how to deal with and develop the corporate brand identity further as opposed to if there is a lack of knowledge. Thus, depending on how strategically well the corporate brand is being planned for and performed, the company will have created a stronger or weaker corporate brand identity (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). The practical field of branding is a highly competitive field where it is imperative to be aware and adapt to the constant changes. Sveriges Kommuniktionsbyrårer (n.d), is Sweden's largest association for communication agencies and have 247 current members. Hence, since there are at least 247 agencies competing on the market, this indicates a competitiveness is likely to occur. Developing the company's brand identity could, therefore, be a huge advantage when positioning the company against the competitors, as well as it drives performance (Coleman, 2011). Thus, this research covers academic fields and provides further

deepened and theoretical findings that could be utilized in practical fields as well. Accordingly, research that provides any support and insights within the subject of corporate brand identity, is of interest for further research and academic studies.

Corporate brand identity has its roots in marketing and communication and corporate communication, in particular, is related to the various outbound of communication means that is implemented by organizations to strategically communicate internally as well as externally (Balmer & Greyser, 2006). Thus, it is arguable that this study is relevant in theoretical aspects of corporate brand identity as well as in strategic communication (which is the faculty of where this master thesis is conducted). Furthermore, Balmer and Greyser (2006), argue that many of today's perceptions and conceptualizations of communication, in fact, involves more affecting and including aspects, as for example corporate branding and/or corporate identity. Additionally, because of how extensive the field of communication has grown to become, it has been recognized by others outside the disciplinary of marketing and communication, very much due to the broad contributions and insights provided by scholars. Consequently, by investigating how corporate brand identity impacts brand performance, we aim to contribute to the literature within that field, as well as hoping to inspire even other fields.

1.3 Aim

The overall aim of this study is to deepen and increase knowledge about the concept of corporate brand identity and its influence on brand performance in the communications sector. In order to achieve this aim, the study will investigate the potential influence of corporate brand identity as an entity using the B2B service brand identity scale (Coleman, et al., 2011) on brand performance by using the measurement developed by Coleman (2011), within the communications sector in Sweden. Furthermore, it also aims to explore whether any of the different corporate brand identity dimensions can be individual significant predictors of brand performance.

As a result, this will generate new insights and deeper knowledge about the potential impact corporate brand identity has on brand performance, within the communications sector in Sweden and thus help understand how organizations can benefit from dimensions of strong corporate brand identity. Additionally, it will result in potential findings of a significant corporate brand identity predictor of brand performance, consequently adding valuable findings to the field of corporate branding, as well as to the research of strategic communication. The

study also contributes to practical implications for communication professionals working with corporate brand identity management.

1.4 Research question

How do the dimensions of corporate brand identity influence brand performance within the communications sector?

To investigate this question each dimension within corporate brand identity (employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications, and human resource initiatives) will be analysed in regard to its influence on brand performance and is presented with individual hypotheses for each dimension in the *Model Development* chapter. The research question mentioned above will guide the process of contributing to the subject of corporate branding and brand performance.

1.5 Demarcation

To fulfil the purpose of this study, 14 communication agencies participated in a survey, hence the first delimitation of this research is the employees of 14 Swedish organizations within the communications sector. The survey specifically focused on the employee's personal and individual opinions and perceptions thus, it is important to highlight that this research will not take into account the opinions, perspectives and/or assessments of any external actors such as stakeholders or consumers. Secondly, the result of this study is based on findings from the studied communications sector and do not take into account other potential business sectors in Sweden. The third limitation of this research is the targeted country of the study. Sweden was chosen primarily for empirical, geographically access as well as for language reasons. Hence, scholars applying the results of this study should also be aware of the fact of the potential cultural differences that may have affected the findings. Moreover, the communications sector was chosen in this study for the purpose of, together with the results and findings, being able to generalize, draw conclusions and fill the research gap of empirical studies of corporate brand identity and brand performance in this sector. Consequently, the findings of this study may not be in full accordance with a representative and complete generalization of every country's communications sector or other business sectors. Lastly, only communication agencies with between 20 and 100 employees were included in the study, which makes it generalizable only to organizations of equivalent character.

In accordance with the stated delimitations, it should be noted that the primary focus is to investigate if the dimensions of corporate brand identity indeed has an impact on brand performance, as it has been confirmed in the UK IT-service sector (Coleman et al., 2011) and how the potential influence is operating for the different dimensions of corporate brand identity. What is more, this study will not take into account the external views and/or perceptions of corporate brand identity, however, we understand its importance and potential impact it could have on the findings. However, the internal perception of how the employees believe their company is being perceived will be included. Nevertheless, because of the scope of this research, the decision was made to solidary focus on the internal factors and elements of corporate brand identity and the potential impact on brand performance.

Thus, this thesis emphasizes the comprehension of the two concepts of corporate brand identity and brand performance within the sector of communications. It is reasonable to assume that similar organizations with similar market structures and cultures, will benefit from these findings if the generalisability of the results is taken into consideration.

1.6 Disposition

The next chapter to be presented in this thesis is the *Literature Review* which will outline previous research relevant for the context of this thesis. The presentation will follow a structure were corporate branding will be reviewed and explained. The following section will link corporate branding to corporate brand identity and will similarly present relevant literature within the field. The fourth section of the *Literature Review* will introduce the second of the two main concepts of this thesis namely; brand performance. The chapter will close with a summary of the Coleman et al. (2015) study which has been highly influential in the design of this study and a precursor in exploring the relationship between corporate brand identity and brand performance. The third chapter, *Model Development* presents five hypotheses together with theoretically grounded support. Here, all the dimensions of corporate brand identity will be presented together with the associated items of the scale, as well as newly added items for developing the corporate brand identity scale together with arguments for why they were added. Then follows the *Methodology and empirical data* where the survey design and the quantitative procedure of the study will be presented. Furthermore, the chapter also includes a discussion of potential biases and ethical considerations taken throughout the research process. Next, is the *Result* chapter which provides a presentation of the results received through standard multiple regression. Following the result, is the *Result discussion* chapter where each of the hypotheses

will be discussed, i.e. the dimensions of corporate brand identity, in relation to the result of the study as well as previous literature and compared to the study by Coleman et al. (2015). The *Discussion* chapter which follows, will provide a discussion of the overall impact of corporate brand identity on brand performance, grounded in previous literature. Furthermore, practical implications and future research will be presented. Lastly, the *Conclusion* chapter will summarise the findings received through this study, and directly address the research question.

2. Literature review

This chapter covers previous research on the subject of corporate brand identity and brand performance as well as discussing and availing the prominent research gap in corporate brand identity, within the disciplinary field of Strategic Communication. The presented studies in this chapter will be the key elements and guide the clarification of this thesis subject together with its conceptual terms, process the gap in the corporate brand identity literature and attain theoretical support with regards to brand performance. The *Literature review* chapter will start by providing information about the relevance of the subject and for the field of corporate branding. It will then continue on following a structure of previous research, anchored in corporate brand identity and brand performance.

To conclude, the *Literature review* chapter's key points of relevance for the study and key elements will be reviewed and defined in order to highlight their importance of the theoretical framework of this thesis as well as the position in corporate brand identity and brand performance will be established. The chapter will end with a summary from the *B2B service brand identity and brand performance* study by Coleman et al. (2015).

2.1 Corporate branding

Branding is a, compared to others, fairly indefinite discipline, not in the sense of being undiscovered, rather being explained differently over the years and through various perspectives. What is more, the subject comes with multiple different standpoints and fields, including corporate branding being one of them. Hence, with corporate branding being studied in various of fields, it is more understandable that the terms within branding such as brand communication, corporate branding, etc., as well as the meaning and interpretation, has developed over the years, creating a somewhat multiple understanding both in practice and in theoretical terms (Christensen & Christensen, 2018). All though the details of the different definitions could differ depending on the specific field it is being applied in, the overall

understanding of implementing branding to the organization is to facilitate the process of transforming beneficial assets into relationship assets (Ghodeswar, 2008).

Today we are living in a society that is in a dynamic self-process of being re-shaped by globalization among other changes, and through this, branding is adopting new forms from primarily being about the product to now shifting its way into corporate branding (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). These processes of change and rationalities are not something completely new, on the contrary, we have seen the pattern repeat itself over time. Due to the rapid progress of digitalization, it is fundamental for companies to be able to adapt and constantly strive towards this new era that is emerging. Whilst product branding puts emphasis on the actual product, corporate branding, on the other hand, incorporates every quality and employee of the company, resulting in attracting not only the desirable customers but numerous profitable stakeholders as well (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). However, as earlier mentioned, this could be considered a risk as well as an opportunity because of how the company, with the help of corporate branding, is being portrayed. Hence, it requires that what is being communicated to stakeholders and potential customers is in line with the desired vision the company is striving towards. What is more, Hatch and Schultz (2003) argue that corporate branding, as oppose to product branding, gives a much more deepened knowledge due to the perspectives that include scrutinizing the whole organization and its members. This includes organizational behaviour and employee interactions which potentially, if the organization studies its own corporate brand, according to Hatch and Schultz (2003) may result in a healthier organization. An additional contrast between product branding and corporate branding is that corporate branding relates to more than consumers and customers, but also contributes at a higher organizational level; as to employees, members, investors, and other stakeholders involved with the image of the company. Thus, corporate branding relates to and includes a summarized perspective of all the organization's different stakeholders, as well as the product or service it provides in a dynamic relationship with the corporation.

Corporate branding is a research subject that is becoming more and more relevant and there is an extensive amount of research to be found on the particular subject covering various parts and relations of communication. There are several various definitions for defining brands and according to Kapferer (2008), when defining a brand is where most disagreements and confusions are made. This consequently results in an ambiguous understanding of what it actually entails. What is more, even though the literature is expanding, in practice,

communication managers have few tools and assets available for improving competitive advantages or successful development for that specific matter. Additionally, managers are forced to deal with strategic, tactical or operative work, which eventually makes it harder to do things right, rather than to do the right things (Falkheimer, Heide, Simonsson, Zerfass & Verhoeven, 2015). Nonetheless, companies still want to have a strong brand and even though communication is a great way to start, it is not sufficient, and particularly not solely one way. Ghodeswar (2008), states that a powerful and strong brand helps provide long-term development and growth, is cost-efficient and helps increase asset value. Accordingly, Kapferer (2008), means that you need to build your brand as much as you need to build your business, thus corporate brand incorporates many imperative aspects.

2.2 Corporate brand identity

Corporate brand identity is the combined process of the forces and factors interacting with the organization, such as environment, competitors and customers. When a strong brand identity has been established, this generates trust amongst stakeholders while it also nurtures brand differentiation (Ghodeswar, 2008). Ghodeswar's (2008) definition of brand identity is "a unique set of brand associations implying a promise to customers and includes a core and extended identity" (p.5). Correspondingly, Balmer, Powell, Kernstock, and Brewendorf (2017), have a similar definition although it is more recent. They referred to corporate identity as an organization's individual quality that distinguishes it and separates it from its opponents, subsequently proving the foundations for the establishment of the corporate brand. Contrary to product branding, corporate brand identity reflects the company's qualities and attributes as long as it operates, whilst product branding only is relevant for the specific lifetime of that product (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). Doyle (2002), argues that a product brand has more to it than simply the symbols, design and particular attributes that distinguish it from its competitors, but also argues for the many physiological dimensions that belong. The specific name, logo or qualities that characterize the products are individual interpretations made that cannot be controlled or predicted, despite the aspirations of the organization. Those characterizations will in turn, together with other attributes, develop the identity of the company (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

According to Aaker (1997), research on brand identity has rapidly increased since the beginning of the 1990s. In today's busy market a clear corporate brand identity is crucial. Balmer and Greyser (2006), argues that what once was simply referred to as marketing, today incorporates

corporate identity, corporate branding, and corporate communication. This type of integration is considered necessary in order to reach further corporate development. McMurrian and Washburn (2008), uses the phrase "Pretty is as pretty does" (2008, p.1) to emphasize the importance of actions rather than appearance. They further argue that customers base their perception and image of the company on the actions and behaviours, rather than what the company says it will do, or even aspires to do (McMurrian & Washburn, 2008). Hatch and Schultz (2002), makes a similar parable when describing corporate brand identity as a triadic model, defining the company's *vision*, *image* and *culture*. According to Ghodeswar (2008), the brand identity has to follow a vision of how it wants to be perceived as by its customers. In order to do so, the brand needs to be communicated in a proper and profitable manner. As previously mentioned, Aaker and Joachimsthaler, (2000) stated that challenges amongst companies trying to build their corporate brand identity are: to be noticed on the market, to be considered, to change already made up perceptions, to reinforce attitudes, and to generate valuable customer relationships.

Hatch and Schultz (2003), has developed a well-established model for corporate branding and identity where they emphasize the cross-functional importance. The model is a framework and provides the basis for successful corporate branding, where the three elements, strategic vision, organizational culture, and corporate image, interconnect with one another in a dynamic process of identity creation. The strategic vision refers to the idea and desired achievements and aspirations of the company, from a top management perspective. The organizational culture is the reflection of values and internal attitudes of employees. The culture is mirrored in how employees feel about the organization. Lastly, the corporate image is the external view of the organization and is constituted by the impressions of stakeholders, customers, media, etc. What is more, Ghodeswar (2008) also argues that in order to build a successful brand one also needs to take into consideration how to build brand identity. The brand identity is what the brand stands for and the company's aim should, therefore, be to strive to effectively spread the specific identity (Aaker, 1997). Additionally, a strong brand identity, that is understood, cherished and well experienced by consumers, is more likely to develop trustworthy and loyal customers, and standing out in the crowd from competitors.

Iglesias, Landgraf, Ind, Markovic, and Koporcic (2020), states that the branding literature has mainly focused on business to consumer context and product brands. However, there is an increased interest in, as well as findings supporting, the beneficial insights that corporate brand

identity may provide in the context of business-to-business. According to Kapferer (2008), the essential element in corporate branding is the actual identity of the brand. Furthermore, he argues that when compared to other competing organizations, the corporate brand identity is what makes a corporate brand significant and relevant to its external audience and stakeholders. In order to enhance the organization's competitive advantage, a strong corporate brand identity is to prefer. Accordingly, the corporate brand identity is fundamentally what creates differentiation between organizations (de Chernatony, 1999). What is more, Iglesias et al. (2020), argues for the importance of considering the external views which cannot be fully controlled by managers and internal influences. Many organization's external image may be influenced by how they portray themselves on social media as well as in online brand communities, but also by how others portray them. Consequently, this creates possibilities for organizations seeking to improve their brand identity by creating forums for interacting with and engaging stakeholders even more (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Drawing from this, corporate brand identity is a summary of a dynamic interplay between internal and external audiences (Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Iglesias et al., 2020). According to da Silveira, Lages, and Simões (2013), the traditional and perhaps more dated perspective on corporate brand identity is the belief that it proceeds from top management and down the hierarchy, in a stable period of time. However, as earlier described, this is not the belief of most researchers today as they emphasize on a much more dynamic process and interaction of internal and external actors (Iglesias et al. (2020).

To conclude, even though there has been, and still are to this day, a variety of definitions of corporate brand identity and what is to be included, to be able to refer to this term, it is imperative to come to a conclusion of how corporate brand identity will be defined in this study. As previously mentioned, when analysing, studying and investigating corporate brand identity in this thesis, the concept will be defined within the framework developed by Coleman et al. (2011) including the dimensions; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications and human resource initiatives, and will be measured based on his B2B service brand identity scale. Hence the definition adopted in this study aligns with the idea of corporate brand identity as a dynamic interplay between different dimensions, much like in the definition implemented by Hatch and Schutz (2003) including the components; strategic vision, organizational culture and corporate image. However, in this study, only internal aspects, equivalent to strategic vision and organizational culture are taken into consideration. Thus, in accordance with Coleman et al.'s (2011) definition of B2B service brand

identity, corporate brand identity will, in this thesis, be defined as "the strategists' vision of how a service brand should be perceived by its stakeholders" (p.1152).

2.3 Brand performance

Kucharska (2020), means that brand is one of the key subtle strengths of an organization and because of a strong brand, the organization can increase its competitive advantages and income. Furthermore, Coleman (2011) defines brand performance through the eight items; market share, net profit, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, organization reputation, brand awareness, employee loyalty and employee satisfaction. What is more, Kucharska (2020), states that there is a connection between employees' brand commitment and corporate brand performance. However, measuring brand performance accurately and to capture the essence of the concept can be challenging (Harris, 2002; Coleman et al, 2015).

Despite the concept being challenging to measure, many researchers have investigated what different aspects and components brand performance is composed of. One of them is Aaker (1997), who introduced two key elements that were beneficial in the process of measuring brand performance; employee engagement and customer engagement, which are similar to the items proposed by Coleman (2011). What is more, an empirical study from 2010 presented findings which indicated positive effects of organizational reputation on brand performance (Lai, Chiu, Yang, & Pai, 2010). Additional arguments have been made by Farris and de Chernatony (2001)**,** where they state that organizational as well as managerial internal branding should drive favourable brand reputation. Furthermore, they mean that employees play a crucial role in not only the organization's reputation, but also in how satisfied the customer are and how they perceive the organization. In the process of employees being an important part in brand performance, Farris and de Chernatonty (2001) argue that studies indicate that employees' interaction with customers, enhances the brand performance. Furthermore, successful management for brand performance, includes enhancing even the satisfaction amongst employees, as well as making sure their perception of the organization's brand is coherent (Farris & de Chernatony, 2001). Similarly, Buil, Catalán and Martínez (2016) has found that employee commitment is closely connected to brand performance.

Furthermore, in a cross-industrial study conducted by Homburg, Klarmann and Schmitt (2010), brand awareness was proven to be an essential factor in performance within a B2B context. They argue that building brand awareness is a key element of many B2B branding strategies.

Similarly, Huang and Sarigöllü (2014) argue that brand awareness influences consumer decision making due to the learning advantage that it provides. Drawing from this, brand awareness seems to be central to the concept of brand performance not only in a B2C context which has been proven by several previous studies (Homburg et al., 2010; Huang & Sarigöllü, 2014), but also in a B2B context.

Market share is a common approach for measuring brand performance, especially in reference to other brands (Roth, 1995). Moreover, according to O'Cass and Ngo (2007), "brand performance refers to the relative measurement of a brand's success in the marketplace. For example, it has been argued that market share is a measure of brand performance, as brand success is created with high market share" (p.876). Furthermore, connections can be seen that it is strong brands that are the ones having higher market shares in their segments (Doyle, 1989). Moreover, Ngo and Loi (2008) argue that net profit is an important aspect of market-related performance. Hence, in a sense, net profit can be a type of indicator for how satisfied customers are, meaning that the larger net profit the company holds, it is likely that profit comes from customers who are satisfied with what the company has to offer. Furthermore, Salinas and Ambler (2009) argue that net profit is the return of marketing initiatives and is one way of evaluating a brand's performance. The concept of net profit hence "seeks to bridge the gap between marketing and finance by justifying marketing investment and resource allocation in financial terms and then using the same method for judging performance" (p.40).

Coleman, et al. (2015), argues that there are many definitions as well as extensive research on the term of brand performance. There is, however, a lack of empirical studies investigating what brand performance actually includes and how it is influenced by corporate brand identity (Coleman, et al. 2015). In this study, as mentioned above, brand performance will be defined as by Coleman et al. (2015) by the three dimensions; financial, customer and employee. These dimensions are summarized with eight items; market share, net profits, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, organizational reputation, brand awareness, employee loyalty, and employee satisfaction. In his study, the scale of the items was based on a thorough, theoretical literature review and together they measure what will be the brand performance. However, as stated by Parker, Lehmann, Keller, and Schleicher (2018), there are a lot of brand variety creating different types of brand extensions such as brand performance as well as other associations and dimensions, thus resulting in the awareness that this brand performance scale

might not fully capture the depth of what it aims to measure, neither can it be completely generalized with other brand performances if not well argued for.

According to Bengtsson and Servais (2005), research focuses on the industrial purchasers, resulting in the demand of wanting to explore and understand the perception of brand and images. What is more, they believe this demand has led to an increased interest in exploring the different brand strategies and its potential effects and performances. Berry (2000) describes a strong service brand as a mix of customers' belief of what the company says the brand is, what others believe it is and how the company actually performs. One of the eight items included in brand performance is, as mentioned above, brand awareness, which Berry (2000) defines as the customer's ability to identify and recall the brand when provided an indication. Nonetheless, as stated by Harris (2002), as well as Coleman, et al. (2015), not much empirical research has been made on brand performance and the scale used for measuring those attributes in brand performance may differ. Thus, the argument of conducting research where this particular scale is being used is to further investigate how the scale functions in the communications sector of Swedish marketing, PR and strategic communication agencies and hence contribute with empirical research to the field. Drawing from the previous literature presented above, the components of brand performance suggested by Coleman (2011), seems to be accurate core elements when studying the literature of brand performance. Thus, in accordance with the thorough literature review done by Coleman in 2011, a similar review has been done, confirming the well-aimed items of brand performance.

2.4 Corporate brand identity and brand performance study

In a recent study, Coleman et al. (2015), conducted empirical quantitative research of how the corporate brand identity, or what they refer to as business to business (B2B) service brand identity, influence brand performance in the UK IT service sector. The aim of the study was to investigate how the B2B service brand identity influenced brand performance and if so, which dimensions of service brand identity had significant impact. The research was based on an extensive amount of data collected from 421 senior marketing executives in the UK IT service sector. The authors also highlighted the study being the first of its kind, investigating this relationship empirically.

Two scales were implemented in the study, one for measuring B2B service brand identity and one for measuring brand performance. The B2B service brand identity scale included the five

dimensions; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications and human resource initiatives. The brand performance scale included the three dimensions; financial measures, employee measures and consumer measures.

Five hypotheses were presented in the study, one for each specific dimension of the B2B service brand identity scale. Furthermore, each hypothesis indicated an expected positive and significant influence on brand performance. All hypotheses were based on relevant literature indicating such a relationship. The result presented in the study, showed that two of the five hypotheses could be confirmed. These were the hypotheses related to the two dimensions brand personality and human resource initiatives. Furthermore, the result showed a significant, however, negative influence of consistent communications on brand performance. According to Coleman et al. (2015), this was a surprising result since, based on previous literature indicating such a relationship, they were expecting the influence to be positive. Hence, the hypothesis related to consistent communications was rejected. Furthermore, also the two hypotheses related to the dimensions corporate visual identity and employee and client focus were rejected due to the result showing an insignificant influence on brand performance.

The method and result of the Coleman et al. (2015) study has served as inspiration and will be relevant for comparison to and analysis of the result obtained by this study. However, this study does not aim to replicate the Coleman et al. (2015) study.

3. Model development

Guided by the literature and research from the previous chapter, this chapter aims to theoretically discuss the five dimensions of corporate brand identity and how they could potentially influence brand performance. Before presenting the theoretical underpinning of the hypotheses, a model visualizing an overview of the hypothesis-framework is provided.

For each dimension, drawing from the theoretical discussion, a hypothesis will be formulated indicating the expected relationship. There will hence be five hypotheses in total concerning the five dimensions; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications and lastly human resource initiatives. Together, the five dimensions constitute the framework for measuring corporate brand identity as an entity. Thus, by exploring the separate and combined influence of these dimensions on brand performance, we hope to be

able to contribute with knowledge on if and how corporate brand identity influences brand performance.

In the following section, all hypotheses will be presented together with the associated items from the survey. These five hypotheses combined constitute the expected influence of corporate brand identity. Furthermore, each hypothesis will be followed by an argumentation, based on previous literature, as of why or why not, new survey questions were added. The added survey questions are marked in *italic*.

Next, a table providing an overview of the newly added items, what dimension they belong to and what literature was used in the development of each new item will be presented. The chapter ends with a presentation of the items included in the brand performance scale, as well as a discussion of how reliability was increased through a reassurance question.

3.1 Hypotheses

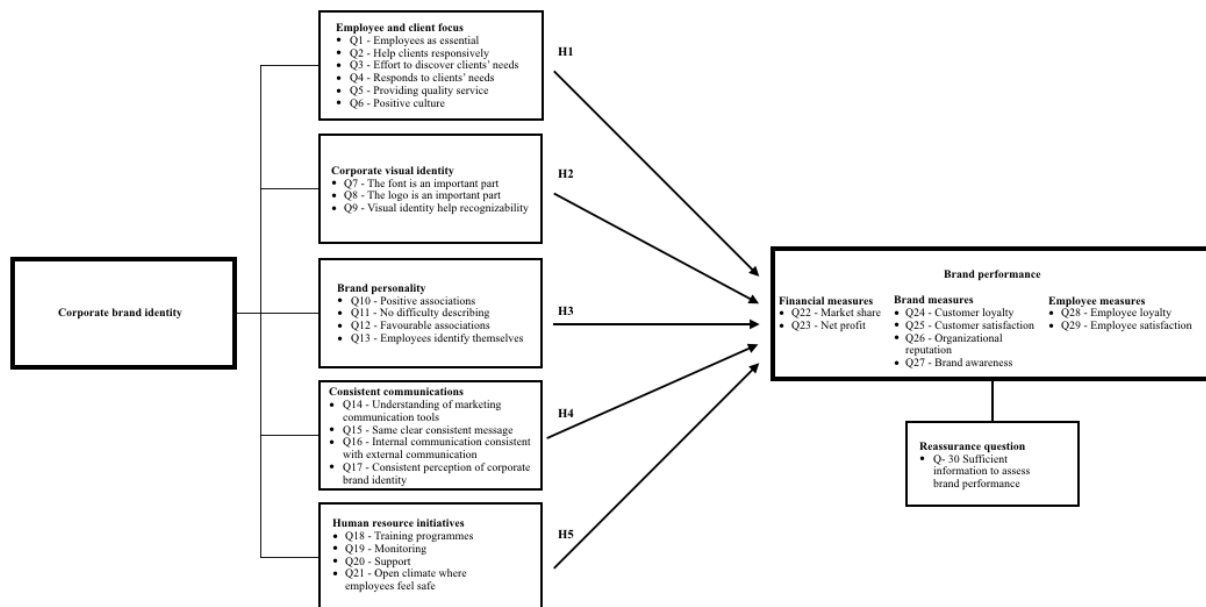Figure 1. *Model presenting the hypothesis-framework. Visualizes the expected influence of corporate brand identity (through its five dimensions) on brand performance, controlled by a reassurance question.*

3.1.1 Employee and client focus
Even as early as in the 1990s Aaker argued customer as well as employee engagement and satisfaction were considered valuable aspects in measuring brand performance (Aaker, 1997).

Drawing from that, Yeung and Ennew (2000), stated that a high level of customer satisfaction consequently may result in enhanced financial profitability. It is reasonable to believe that this will hence create an outcome where employees are encouraged to continue working in good spirits whilst managers are pleased with good results and henceforth emphasize the importance and good work of the employee. What is more, Yeung and Ennew (2000), also came to the conclusion that loyalty is highly important for employees to continually drive to performance which additionally adds to the hypothesis of why brand performance could be explained by employee and client focus. Cameron and Quinn (2006) claims that there could be a significant importance when conducting studies like these, between focusing on either employees or clients or focusing on the relationship between them. They further mean there could be a connection between employees and clients and that the relationship should be acknowledged. Hence, the questions included in the survey of this study focuses on both.

Drawing from the theoretical underpinning presented above, the following hypothesis was made:

H1: Employee and client focus has a positive significant influence on brand performance.

Survey questions:

Q1 - Our organization treats each employee as an essential part of the organization.

Q2 - Employees will help clients in a responsive manner.

Q3 - Our organization makes an effort to discover our clients' needs.

Q4 - Our organization responds to our clients' needs.

Q5 - Our top management is committed to providing quality service.

Q6 - Our organization has a positive culture.

The last question was added in this study to complement the remaining questions with important information that could influence the brand performance. Culture has become a substantial part of an organization, and an extensive amount of research has been done where the variance in organizations, regarding employees, are depending on the organizational culture. By understanding how the culture is perceived in the environment in which it exists, a clearer sense-making can be made of the dynamic cultural system within the organization (Cheney, Thøger Christensen, Zorn & Ganesh, 2011). Even so, when an organization is multicultural, which is not unusual today, it is reasonable to believe that the organizational culture is even more complex, resulting in a potential impact on employee and client focus, depending on how it is

perceived. Furthermore, according to Cheney et al. (2011), the culture of the organization can also be affected by the type of existing leadership, due to the certain power a leader has to effect or even guide the culture in either a positive or less positive direction.

3.1.2 Corporate visual identity

Another dimension of corporate brand identity is the corporate visual identity (Coleman, 2011). Similar to brand and corporate branding, corporate visual identity is a term with many different definitions. McMurrian and Washburn, (2008) refer to it as image, according to Hatch and Schultz's model (2003), however, they also mention the term in situations where they discuss the company's reputation. With corporate visual identity having widespread meanings, consequently, this may create confusion for scholars but also for how the companies are supposed to develop their corporate visual identity further. Nonetheless, notably regarding the different meanings and definitions on the term, they more or less entail the same dimensions (McMurrian, & Washburn, 2008), where the core relationship is connected to the symbolic attitudes that are within the corporate identity mix (Balmer & Baker, 1997).

Literature goes as early as in 1995 when describing the importance of visual identity, and there is even a shift in how much the previous literature starts to emphasize it even more as the years go on (Balmer & Baker, 1997). Accordingly, Kapferer (2008), argues that the visual aspect of an organization, such as symbols or even when an organization changes its brand or logo, maybe the most prominent aspect of the organization. What is more, studies support this statement when exploring the relationship to brand performance (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006). Thus, making it even more important in order to achieve a well-established organization. In terms of symbols, the concept of semiotics and meaning making presented by Pierce (1998), becomes particularly notable, in the process of interpreting and communicating the visual aspect of an organization. What is more, Askegaard and Christensen (2001) argue that semiotics can be useful in order to comprehend the complexity of the relation between the organization's internal and external audiences, meaning that the visual part of the corporate brand indeed plays a vital role for the internal as well as external factors. Askegaard and Christensen (2001) use Pierce's triangular model of the sign, the interpretant, and the object to understand and clarify the complicated relationship between a corporate image and identity and how it can vary from an internal and external viewpoint. Pierce (1998) developed his theory of semiotics when describing it to be unlimited. With unlimited semiosis, he is referring to the view and opinion of an object, the procedure that goes on between the signifier and its signified, is unlimited.

Consequently, according to Pierce's theory, the interpretant of the given object can always create a new sign, a different sign or a developed sign. Thus, the ongoing procedure is never completed until there is a unified agreement between the signifier and the signified, which can be difficult to fully and consistently establish. Furthermore, communication agencies today are working a lot with symbols, brands, logos and other visual presentations and dimensions (Sprong, n.d.), making it imperative in a organization such as a communication agency.

Drawing from the theoretical underpinning presented above, the following hypothesis was made:

H2: Corporate visual identity has a positive significant influence on brand performance.

Survey questions:

Q7 - The font we use is an important part of our visual identity.

Q8 - Our logo is an important part of who we are.

Q9 - The corporate visual identity is helpful in making our organization recognizable.

To the dimension of corporate visual identity, no new items were added since the original items were perceived to capture the dimension of corporate visual identity in a sufficient way.

3.1.3 Brand personality

According to Aaker's (1997) commonly cited definition, brand personality is a "set of human personality characteristics associated with a brand" (p.347). Brand personality is one of the main components of brand identity and is a central part of successful brand management (Xara-Brasil et al., 2018). However, brand personality does not only reflect what the brand is, but also what it aspires to be, which in turn, can reflect consumers' aspirations (Dodoo, 2018). Drawing from this, building and managing a strong brand personality strategically, seem to be a powerful tool and a potential predictor of brand performance. Accordingly, previous studies have shown that brand personality can have a positive impact on many organizational aspects. For example, research by Sung and Kim (2010) indicates positive effects on levels of brand trust as well as the level of brand loyalty. Moreover, it has also been shown to positively affect willingness to pay as well as the willingness to recommend (Hayes, Capella & Alford, 2001). Similarly, brand personality seems to play a facilitating role regarding brand differentiation (Aaker 1997) and is influential in raising brand awareness (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Furthermore, Lämmlein (2014) has found that brand personality can be used as a tool for brand differentiation and as a

way to attract attention. But the effects of successful brand personalities can also be more qualitative in nature, making consumers of a brand connect more deeply since the brand personality has the potential of creating an emotional bond between the brand and the consumer of the brand (Siraj & Kumari, 2011). Previous research conducted by Coleman et al. (2015) within the UK IT service sector also strengthens the pattern outlined above which indicates that brand personality should have a positive influence on brand performance by presenting a result indicating a significant impact.

Drawing from the theoretical underpinning presented above, the following hypothesis was made:

H3: Brand personality has a positive significant influence on brand performance.

Survey questions:

Q10 - The associations making up our brand personality are extremely positive.

Q11 - Our clients have no difficulty describing our brand personality.

Q12 - Our brand personality has favourable associations.

Q13 - Employees identify themselves with our brand personality.

According to Banet-Weiser (2015), due to capitalism, globalization, and commercialization, newer and more advanced products are taking place, and self-branding is increasing. We live in a society where consumers want to have a part in other people's lives and economic structures and cultural norms form to have a strong impact on self-branding. Being your own representation of a brand requires a social relationship between yourself and everyone involved with consuming you as the brand. Moor (2007) argues that branding strategies are dependent on the culture in which they are operating in, as well as the economic aspects and possibilities. What is more, according to Kornberger (2010), brands are the consequence of certain achievements of abstracting and involving theories that are not yet to be stated. In today's branded world, different types of brand ambassadorship may have a potential influence as a part of the theme for brand personality. Hence, if employees are engaging in the process of self-branding, the chance of identification with the brand personality may increase. Drawing from that, the last question aims to cover the potential influence of brand ambassadorship, on brand performance.

3.1.4 Consistent communications

Drawing from the hypothesis above, the mentioned spiral of employees doing good work, keeping customers happy and therefore managers pleased, could be a result of how well the consistent communication is being performed within a company. As a consequence, consistent communication from top management to employees has even reach external stakeholders, fulfilling the aim of successful consistent communication (Yeung & Ennew, 2000). Additionally, Cheney et al. (2011) mean that using communication as a tool within any company can aid in the process of developing an ability to recognize and emphasize employees' different cultures and what they need in order to potentially enhance the performance and thus the brand performance of the company. According to Heide and Simonsson (2011), communication can be used in order to stimulate the ongoing development and process within an organization. However, in the study performed by Coleman et al. (2015), they argued for the same hypothesis (positive and significant influence), which was not supported by the findings. The result that was presented regarding consistent communications was a negative and significant impact on brand performance.

Drawing from the theoretical underpinning presented above, the following hypothesis was made:

H4: Consistent communications have a positive significant influence on brand performance.

Survey questions:

Q14 - The people managing the communications program for our organization have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of all major marketing communications tools.

Q15 - Our organization's advertising, PR and sales promotion all present the same clear consistent message to our stakeholders.

Q16 - The internal communication of our corporate brand identity is consistent with the external communication of our corporate brand identity.

Q17 - The corporate brand identity that our organization communicates is consistent with how clients perceive it.

Two additional questions were added to the dimension of consistent communications. The purpose of adding these questions was to extend consistent communications, with aspects of internal and external communication in regard to the triadic model of Hatch and Schultz (2003). As the survey questions are aimed for employees within the communication business, many

aspects of communication could interfere with the possible influence of consistent communications on brand performance. In other words, to fulfil the purpose of the survey questions within this theme, the original questions were not sufficient. Hatch and Schultz (2003) argue that it is vital to take into account the cross-functional and integrated aspects that are corporate branding, meaning specifically in this case, the internal perception from employees and employees believed assumption of external stakeholders' perception. What is more, Hatch and Schultz (2002), means that corporate brand identity needs to be theorized in relation to the organizational culture as well as the image of the organization, to fully comprehend how the internal and external definitions of corporate brand identity co-operate.

3.1.5 Human resource initiatives

Many studies have explored the relationship between human resource management and organizational performance and according to Katou (2012), there is a causal relationship where human resource management policies, including resourcing, development, rewards, and relations, positively influence organizational performance. Coleman et al. (2011) argue that there are two main activities within human resource initiatives that are influencing brand performance, namely employee training and development as well as monitoring employee's performance. The same has been seen in other studies and according to Chakraborty and Biswas (2020), today, human resource functions focus on value-adding and value-creating activities where activities such as professional training and development as well as job analysis, succession planning and redeployment have positive effects for an organization's overall performance.

Many previous studies have demonstrated an influential relationship between human resource development and training activities and increased brand performance. For example, Salah (2016) argues that proper training and development initiatives help achieve good results and stimulate organizational productivity in a cost-effective way. Human resource development has been broadly defined as "a process for developing and unleashing human expertise through organization development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance (Swanson & Holton, 2001, p.4). This definition clearly strengthens Coleman et al. (2015) argument of a positive relationship between human resource initiatives in terms of training and development and brand performance, if managed in a strategic way. Furthermore, employee training and development has been shown to be the most fundamental factor in regard to strategic human resource management (Sung & Choi, 2014). Supporting this,

is Otoo and Mishra (2018) who found that training and development practices had a positive influence on employee performance among small and medium scale enterprises which, in turn, contributes to organizational performance. Furthermore, when human resource initiatives to analyse employees' jobs are taken, a more explicit understanding of the job processes is developed which consequently helps determine how the quality of work can be improved (Wood, Van Veldhoven, Croon & de Menezes, 2012).

Drawing from the theoretical underpinning presented above, the following hypothesis was made:

H5: Human resource initiatives have a positive significant influence on brand performance.

Survey Questions:

Q18 - Our employee training programs are designed to develop the skills required for acquiring and deepening client relationships.

Q19 - Our organization regularly monitors employees' performance.

Q20 - Our organization supports employees in their daily work.

Q21 - Our organization has an open climate where employees feel safe.

The original two questions from the survey cover human resource initiatives about employee training programs and monitoring employee performance. In a study performed by Stavrou, Brewster, and Charalambous (2010) in European regions, they found that training and development, including other aspects, have a positive influence on performance. They argue that the relationship between human resource management and performance has increased recently and they present several studies supporting their findings on the positive influence human resource management has on performance.

However, the original two questions did not cover enough in a modern Swedish organization, and thus, two additional questions were added to cover employees perceived support and organizational climate. Stavrou et al. (2010) listed a summary of five categories of identified human resource practices with competitive advantages, were one presented "staffing bundle" of recruitment methods, job definitions and employment security and another presented "communication and participant bundle" of information sharing, reduction in staff differences, participation, and empowerment. Thus, the added questions aim to cover the two mentioned aspects of "staffing" that, among other things, involve employment security, and

"communication and participant" that involves information sharing and participation, to meet the overall possible aspects of human resource initiatives that could influence brand performance.

3.2 Corporate brand identity scale development

In Table 1, an overview of the dimensions, added item(s) and literature used for development of the corporate brand identity scale is presented.

Table 1

Corporate brand identity scale development

Dimensions	Added item(s)	Literature
Employee and client focus	Q6 – Positive culture	Cheney et al. (2011)
Brand personality	Q13 – Employees identify themselves	Banet-Weiser (2015); Kornberger (2010); Moor (2007)
Consistent communications	Q16 – Internal communication consistent with external communication Q17 – Consistent perception of corporate brand identity	Hatch & Schultz (2002); Hatch & Schultz (2013)
Human resource initiatives	Q20 – Support Q21 – Open climate where employees feel safe	Stavrou et al. (2010)

3.3 Brand performance

Brand performance in this study was measured using the Brand Performance Scale developed by Coleman (2011). The scale includes eight items measuring brand performance; market share, net profit, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, organizational reputation, brand awareness, employee loyalty, and employee satisfaction (Q22-29). The eight items are categorized into three categories; financial measures, customer measures, and employee measures. In this study, brand performance was measured as an index, meaning the eight items were not individually analysed.

However, as previously mentioned, according to Coleman, et al. (2015), and Harris (2002), no brand performance scale can fully capture the concept of brand performance. Therefore, in order to enhance the accuracy as much as possible, and to ensure employees have a sufficient amount of information from their organizations to answers these types of questions, one additional question which functioned as a reassurance question was added; *To what extent do you perceive that your organization provides you with sufficient information to answer the questions on brand performance listed above?* As argued, this question seemed imperative to add, in order to be able to rely on the responses from participants.

4. Methodology and empirical data

4.1 Research design

To fulfil the aim of this study; *to deepen and increase knowledge about the concept of corporate brand identity and its influence on brand performance in the communications sector,* a quantitative research design was adopted. A quantitative statistical analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between corporate brand identity and brand performance. Through this, it could be established whether the independent variables (the five dimensions; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications, and human resource initiatives) had any impact on the dependent variable (brand performance) and how the possible impact was operating.

The disposition of this chapter will first address extraordinary circumstances and sampling, followed by instruments used. The survey design and distribution section will then be discussed before presenting the pre-study procedure and how this influenced the finalized survey design. Next, the research procedure and quantitative data analysis method will be outlined. Finally, potential biases, as well as ethical considerations that have been taken throughout the study, will be discussed.

4.2 Extraordinary circumstances

As a consequence of Covid-19 and how it affected the economy, many business sectors are facing numerous difficulties and unfortunately, this became very clear in the process of collecting data through surveys in this study. This was due to the fact that many of the companies who agreed to take part in our survey, subsequently decided to decline. Communication with the agencies occurred via email, where they also declined to be part of

the survey on the ground of other more critical adjustments to deal with rather than answering our survey questions. This was something that was prepared and accounted for during the time realizing it was going to be an issue, between February and March when the situation escalated and it was reasonable to assume that fewer agencies were willing to participate, even the ones who had already agreed to do so. Hence, emails were sent out to every company not answering, another email to remind them about the survey, while acknowledging the strenuous situation, however, still hoping to receive their answers. Unfortunately, by March 23rd seven already confirmed agencies replied back with the decision of not participating in the survey on account of the consequences of Covid-19. It is fair to say that the Coronavirus and its consequences affected the procedure of this thesis considerably and that is the reason why it is being discussed in this study investigating something that is far from a virus, nor pandemic.

Lupton (2020), wrote a crowdsourced document in March 2020 about fieldwork in a pandemic, where she discussed the variety of implications Covid-19 has created in terms of especially face-to-face methods but also other means of collecting data. For example, digital tools are encouraged to use for collecting data, similar to the method used in this thesis. However, the document does not take into account the people on the other side of the screen receiving the survey, interview questions, etc., when having to deal with a pandemic and a potential crisis at their workplace. On one side, we believe that we received more answers than we would have if we chose a different method, for example, a face-to-face method. Since we actually did manage to collect a sufficient amount of answers and did not risk infection owing to the digital means that were applicable. On the other side, however, the situation affects not only those who did chose a face-to-face method since the experiences from this thesis data collection tells us that people are more concerned about other things, such as their employees, economic situations, etc. than to take time to answer surveys, regardless if they are digital or not.

4.3 Target population, sampling frame, sample and completed sample

Since this study aims to further investigate how corporate brand identity impacts brand performance within the Swedish communications sector, the target population for this study was defined within this framework. The communications sector was chosen to fill the identified research gap and due to the interesting dynamic of investigating communication within a sector specialized within that area. The communications sector in Sweden is diverse in character and today, at least 247 communication agencies of various sizes are operating in the Swedish market (Sveriges Kommunikationsbyråer, n.d.). However, the majority of these agencies are rather

small (less than 100 employees) (Sveriges Kommunikationsbyråer, n.d.). Drawing from this, *the target population* of this study is employees at communication agencies with a number of employees ranging from 20 to 100. The targeted agencies were limited to only working within PR, advertising and strategic communication.

The previous study by Coleman et al. (2015) targeted senior marketing executives in the UK IT-service sector because an understanding of the concept of corporate brand identity and brand performance was needed in order to be able to answer the survey. However, in the context of the communications sector, employees at communication agencies are working as consultants, helping other brands to communicate their brand identity and therefore it is reasonable to argue that these employees possess a sufficient level of understanding to participate in the study.

The sampling procedure for this study was divided into two steps which of the first addressed agencies within PR, advertising and strategic communication as a whole and the second addressed employees at each participating agency. First, the sample frame was identified through the organization Sveriges Kommunikationsbyråer's (n.d.) list of Swedish agencies who held a membership in the organization and were described as working with PR, advertising or/and strategic communication and who had between 20-100 employees. In total, there were 48 agencies matching this criterion which were hence included in the sample. Thus, in this study, the sample frame and the sample are the same. In research on response rates, Baruch and Holton (2008) showed that the mean response rates for email-distributed surveys within organizations were 54,7% (SD 23,9) and that the response rate for surveys within organizations in the service sector were 62,1% (SD 24,8). However, another study conducted by Van Mol (2016) argues that today, response rates below 10% are not unusual. Drawing from this, our sample frame was guided by the knowledge of the risk of low response rates and we, therefore, chose to include all agencies to achieve the minimum sample size for a multiple regression analysis with five independent variables which is 90 participants (N≥ 50+8m) according to the formula developed by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). Out of the 48 agencies, 14 accepted our request giving an acceptance rate of 31,3% in regard to the sample frame. The total number of employees included in the sample of the 14 agencies were 428.

Secondly, the completed sample consisted of a total of 105 survey responses which considering a sample of 428 persons, gave a response rate of 25%. The roles possessed by the participants were both managerial **(**25%) and employees (75%) at the agencies which gave the desired

coverage of both top management and employees for being able to analyse the concept of corporate brand identity more holistically. Among the participants, 46% identified as female, 48% as male and 6 % as others or didn't want to disclose. The age of the participants varied between 24-62 years, M= 40 and SD=9,5, however, there were 6 participants who chose not to share their age. The names of the participating agencies will not be reported in this study to maintain full anonymity, however, the geographical distribution included Stockholm (20%), Gothenburg (43%), Malmö (23%), Jönköping (6%) and Växjö (1%).

4.4 Instruments

Two different scales were used in this study to measure corporate brand identity and brand performance respectively. In total, there were 29 items included in the two scales. As Falkheimer, Heide, Nothhaft, von Platen, Simonsson and Andersson (2017) argue, when employees at organizations are frequently asked to participate in surveys, there is a risk of "survey fatigue." Furthermore, Macarthur and Conlan (2012) argue that survey fatigue can negatively affect non-response rates as a consequence of respondent burden. To minimize this burden and avoid survey fatigue, this study only includes two scales with a rather low number of items to make the participation experience as positive as possible.

Both of the scales included in this study were in English and even though the survey was distributed in Swedish organizations, the scales were not translated into Swedish. One reason for this was that even though most employees are probably Swedish speaking, some might not be and since English is a more common language it was chosen to not exclude any possible participants. Moreover, according to the EF English Proficiency Index (Education First, 2019), Sweden is ranked as the country with the second-best English proficiency in the world (excluding countries with English as the native language) and the consultancy sector is ranked among the top five business sectors in regard to English proficiency. Drawing from this, it was reasonable to believe that understanding and responding to a survey in English should not be a problem for the participants. Moreover, by not translating the scales into Swedish, the risk of distorting the essence of the questions was avoided.

4.4.1 B2B brand identity scale

To measure corporate brand identity, this study will use the B2B service brand identity scale founded by Coleman (2011) and developed by Coleman et al. (2011) comprising five dimensions; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent

communications, and human resource initiatives. The scale was developed in 2011 and has been used in several studies after its establishment (Coleman et al., 2015; Buil, Catalán & Martínez, 2016). The scale is based on several aspects of brand identity identified in previous literature which has been summarized into the five scale dimensions. The scale includes 21 items divided among the dimensions mentioned above. Every item is assessed on a seven-point Likert-scale ranging from "disagree very strongly" (1) to "agree very strongly" (7) with a neutral answer labelled "not sure" (4) (Coleman, 2011). Cronbach's alpha reported from the exploratory factor analysis ranged from 0.75 to 0.91 for the five factors (Coleman et al., 2011). According to the statistical guidelines regarding demarcations for Cronbach's alpha values presented by Allen (2017), the alpha values in this test indicate a correlation between the factors as well as internal consistency and the test is thereby considered reliable. However, as described in the previous *Model development* chapter, six complimentary items have been added. These items follow the same structure as the items included in the original scale. The Cronbach's Alpha values received in this study after adding the six items ranged from .816 to .920 which indicates a remaining correlation between the factors as well as internal consistency. Hence, we can consider the test to be continually reliable. A more extensive discussion about Cronbach's alpha values will be provided further down in this chapter.

4.4.2 Brand performance scale

The brand performance scale was developed by Coleman (2011) through a thorough literature review which resulted in eight items measuring brand performance; market share, net profit, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, organizational reputation, brand awareness, employee loyalty, and employee satisfaction. This scale was later implemented by Coleman et al. (2015) in their study within the UK IT-service sector. These eight items were categorized into three categories; financial measures (including items market share and net profit), customer measures (including items relative satisfaction, customer loyalty, organizational reputation and brand awareness), and employee measures (including items employee satisfaction and employee loyalty). A seven-point Likert-scale was used to rate the items by incorporating them into the following sentence; On average, over the past three years, our organization's performance in ("item") has been significantly better than our main competitor (if it is hard to recall, your best estimate is fine). The scale ranged from "disagree very strongly" (1) to "agree very strongly" (7) with a neutral answer labelled "not sure" (4). The reason for adding the neutral "not sure" instead of "don't know" is to eliminate any negative uncertainties from respondents. It is more likely the respondents do not feel less of themselves choosing "not sure" than "don't know"

regarding questions about their organization (Coleman, 2011). The Cronbach's Alpha values for the brand performance scale had an overall internal consistency of .908. As previously mentioned, an additional item was added to make sure participants were sufficiently informed by their organizations to answer the questions. However, this question only functioned as a reassurance question and was not included as part of the brand performance scale.

4.5 Survey design and distribution

The survey was designed as a digital survey using google forms and was divided into four separate sections. The first part introduced participants to practical information of the study which would make them aware of what their participation meant. This was followed by a question that asked participants to give their informed consent and described the conditions, ethical considerations, and expectations regarding their participation. Giving informed consent was mandatory for being able to participate in the study and it was not possible to continue to the next section unless consent had been given. Hence the study followed what Van de Ven (2007) describes as the generalized principle regarding informed consent for ethical research.

The second section addressed corporate brand identity and was composed by the B2B brand identity scale (Coleman et al., 2011). Following this was the third section which addressed brand performance through the Brand performance scale (Coleman, 2011). Since the five dimensions of corporate brand identity are considered the independent variables in this study, the scale measuring this concept was placed before the scale measuring brand performance. In this way, the bias of a negative/positive perception of brand performance influencing the perception of corporate brand identity was avoided. Instead, participants were primed with the awareness of corporate brand identity through the first scale, making the chance of them considering the brand performance scale items form a corporate branding perspective even stronger.

The fourth section of the survey focused on demographic factors including age, gender, workplace, and position. The reason for asking the demographic questions at the end of the survey was because, as Michaelson and Stacks (2014) argue, participants are often unwilling to share this kind of information, and therefore the risk of losing participants is bigger when the survey is opened with demographic questions. After submitting the survey, participants were thanked for their participation and informed about how to contact the researchers if they had questions or wished to get further information about the study.

4.5.1 Pre-study

A pre-study to evaluate the survey was sent out to 20 students studying the master's program in Strategic Communication at Lund University. The reason for choosing students studying strategic communication at a master's level for the pre-study was that they, like communication practitioners at communication agencies, arguably have a corresponding level of understanding of the concept of corporate branding and its importance for organizations. When asked to participate in the pre-study, they were also asked to either ground their answers in previous actual workplace experience or in fictitious workplace organizations. If they did not have any previous work experience to relate their answers to, it was not considered a problem since the aim of the pre-study was to gain insight into how the survey was perceived and hence the actual result was of minor importance. It was thus considered more critical to have a good understanding of the research topic than having insight into a specific organization. The only design-related modification made in the survey for the pre-study was that an open question, asking participants to share their opinions and any concerns regarding the design and content of the survey, was added before thanking them for their participation.

The feedback received from the pre-study was overall positive and 15 answers from students could be successfully collected. The general impression from the participants was that the questions were easy to understand and that the survey looked fine. Two comments were received as feedback where the first one addressed that it would be nice to add a progress bar so that you as a participant could see how much you had done on the survey in relation to how much was left, and the second one was a minor spelling mistake. Both comments were taken into account and adjusted.

In addition to the pre-study, a focus discussion was held in order to enhance an in-depth understanding and receive opinions about how the survey was perceived from a participant perspective. One employee from one of the communication agencies included in the study was recruited for this task. Together with the researchers, the employee went through the survey while expressing thoughts about its design and content. The focus discussion helped in considering valuable information and opinions, such as adding a demographic question about what city the organizations were operating in. Moreover, a discussion about whether to rearrange the order of the items included in the dimension corporate visual identity, was raised. However, since the researchers of this study wanted to maintain the original scale, within the

new scale including new items, the decision was made not to change the order of items. In that way, if the new scale, including new items, would not have been reliable, the original scale could still be used. No further adjustments regarding the survey was made and the participant who joined the focus discussion had no other comments to add.

4.6 Procedure and quantitative data analysis method

4.6.1 Coding

The data received from the parts of the survey measuring corporate brand identity and brand performance was ordinal data ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" with a neutral mid-answer labelled "not sure." To be able to analyse this data in a multiple regression study, it was then coded as interval data ranging from one to seven, where the number four hence represented the neutral answer. Likewise, some of the demographic questions included in the study needed to be coded to allow analysis and to maintain anonymity. The data received from the question regarding gender was coded according to the three categories female, male, other/do not want to disclose. The data for age was collected on a ratio scale and hence did not need to be coded for analysis. Answers to the question regarding organization were coded into 14 categories which represented each of the participating organizations. Lastly, the question regarding position was coded into two categories representing managers and employees.

4.6.2 Index

Before conducting further analysis, indexes were created for each of the variables. For corporate brand identity, five indexes were created representing the five variables included in the concept. The first index, employee and client focus, included item Q1-Q6, the second index corporate visual identity included item Q7-Q9, brand personality included item Q9-Q13, the fourth index for consistent communications included item Q14-Q17 and lastly the index for human resource initiatives included item Q18-Q21. Moreover, an index was created for brand performance in total including item Q22-Q29.

4.6.3 Internal consistency

As presented in the *Instruments* section, the overall Cronbach's alpha for the corporate brand identity scale (including added items) was .950 and .908 for the brand performance scale. No items were added to the brand performance scale and the Cronbach's alpha value of .908 was accepted. To investigate whether the added items to the corporate brand identity scale contributed to an increased Cronbach's alpha the table for Cronbach's alpha if Item deleted was

inspected (see Table 2). As presented in the *Instruments* section, the overall Cronbach's alpha value for the corporate brand identity scale (including added items) was higher than the Cronbach's alpha value for the original scale (α= .91). As presented in Table 2., each of the added items improved the Cronbach's alpha for that dimension. Hence, all newly added items were considered important and contributed to the internal consistency of the scale.

Table 2

Comparison of Cronbach's alpha values for dimensions of the corporate brand identity scale when including versus excluding newly added items to the scale.

Dimensions	Item	Cronbach's Alpha for dimension	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Employee and client focus	Q6	.920	.905
Brand personality	Q13	.858	.798
Consistent communications	Q16	.839	.801
Consistent communications	Q17	.839	.824
Human resource initiatives	Q20	.816	.677
Human resource initiatives	Q21	.816	.758

4.6.4 Assumptions for exploratory factor analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was made to help pool items into underlying factors. The reason for not conducting an exploratory factor analysis at the pre-test level was due to that the respondents did not have relevant work experience to ground their answers to the question in, and therefore a more qualitative approach was taken at this stage to explore the comprehensibility and perception of the test. By conducting the exploratory factor analysis on the actual empirical data, the interrelationships between items could be explored. Prior to conducting the statistical tests however, assumptions for factor analysis were checked. Pallant (2011) recommends a minimum sample size of 150 participants and a ratio of at least five cases for each variable. The sample of this study is N=105 and hence it does not meet the requirement of 150 participants. However, it does meet the limit of 105 participants (21 items x 5). Therefore, the sample size was accepted, though with an awareness that it is a small sample size. Moreover, the correlation matrix should show some correlations of at least r=.3, otherwise, factor analysis may not be appropriate. Bartlett's test of sphericity should be statistically significant (p<.05) as well as having a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of at least .6 for good factor analysis (Pallant, 2011). In this study, these assumptions were all met by having most of the correlations above r=.3. Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant p<.000 and the

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .902. Furthermore, there should be a linear relationship between variables and the data should be checked for outliers (Pallant, 2011). The empirical data of this study showed somewhat linear relationships after having conducted spot checks of some combinations of variables. Outliers were not re-coded due to the fact that they do not represent errors but rather actual deviant results from the respondents.

4.6.5 Factor analysis

The 21 items included in the corporate brand identity scale were subjected to principal components analysis (PCA). Prior to conducting the analysis, assumptions for factor analysis were checked and met as described above. The results from the PCA presented four components with eigenvalues exceeding 1. These four components explained 51,7%, 7,6%, 7% and 4,8% of the variance respectively (see Table 3). Hence, in total the four components explained 71,1% of the variance.

Table 3

Total variance explained for the four components having eigenvalues exceeding 1.

Component	Total	Initial Eigenvalues % of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10.862	51.726	51.726
2	1.592	7.580	59.305
3	1.477	7.032	66.337
4	1.001	4.765	71.103

When inspecting the scree plot there was a clear break between the first and the second component, indicating that only one factor should be retained (see Figure 2). Moreover, all items were loaded on the first factor (see Appendix 2 - Component matrix). Thus, the factor analysis gave the result that the original scale together with the newly added items, in fact, was measuring corporate brand identity. Additionally, the original scale has been validated in a previous study which supports the decision to retain all items. Since all items, including the newly added items, loaded on one factor, items were accepted as relevant to the scale, and extractions of factors were not conducted.
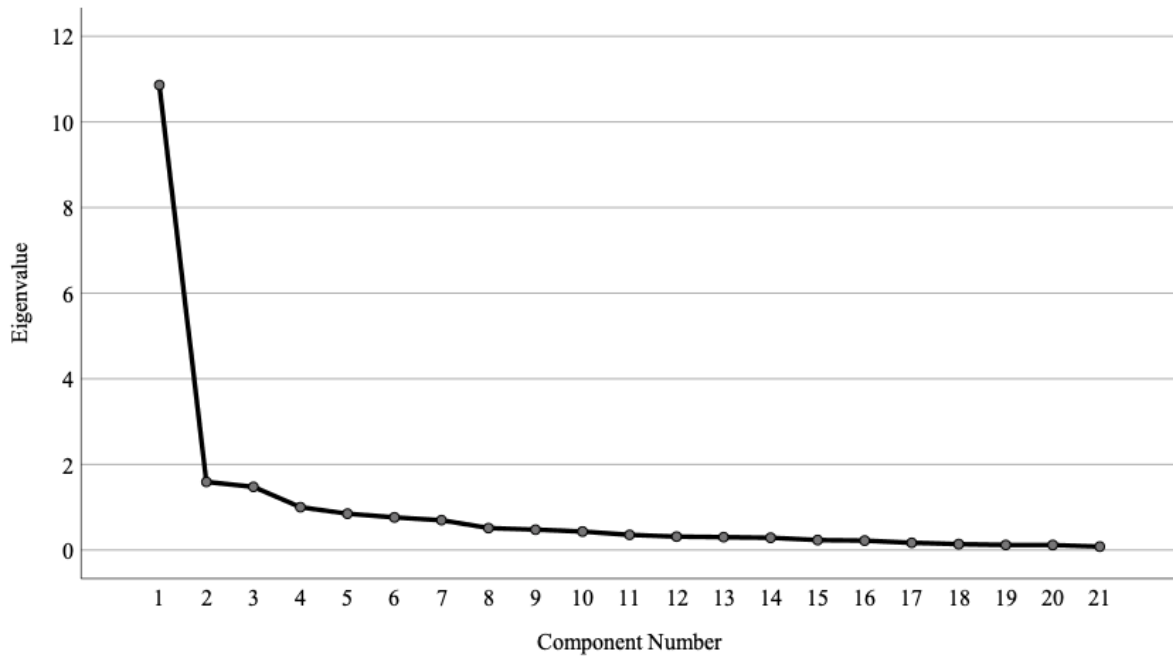
Figure 2. Scree Plot visualising a clear break between the first and second component.

Moreover, the number of participants in this study was N=105 and factor analysis benefits from having a higher number of participants (Pallant, 2011). Due to this, and the fact that all items loaded on the first factor, the decision was made not to proceed with extraction of factors. However, the analysis made gave a valuable indication, in addition to the Cronbach's Alpha value, that the items of the scale was in fact measuring the same construct; corporate brand identity.

4.6.6 Multiple regression

Multiple regression can be explained as an extension of correlation and is used when wanting to explore the predictive ability of a set of independent variables on one continuous dependent measure. Thus, multiple regression can tell you how a set of variables together, or individual, can expect a certain result (Pallant, 2011). A multiple regression analysis was used in order to establish the predictive ability of corporate brand identity on brand performance. Hence, the five dimensions of corporate brand identity; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications, and human resource initiatives, are the independent variables and predictors of brand performance. The overall fit, as well as each of the dimension's predictive ability to the total variance explained, was assessed, meaning how much of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables altogether and the unique influence of each of the independent variables.

4.6.7 Assumptions for multiple regression

Before being able to analyse the data for multiple regression, in accordance with Pallant (2011), the data was first tested to ensure multiple regression analysis could indeed be performed. The first assumption out of eight to be tested, was to have variables that were either ratio or interval, meaning that they should be measured using a continuous scale. The second assumption required was that there should be two or more independent variables and could be both continuous or categorical, as in this case was five independent variables which were continuous. The third assumption required independence of residuals which was checked for. Assumption number four referred to having a linear relationship between the dependent variable as well as in each of the independent variables. When inspecting the Normal P-P Plot, a linear relationship was confirmed. The next step involved homoscedasticity which refers to that the variance of the residuals on the predicted dependent variable, brand performance, should be the same for all predicted scores. The residuals can be explained as the differences between the obtained and the predicted dependent variable scores. Thus, the fifth assumption was checked for using a Scatterplot where a rectangular shape centralizing around 0 was observed. The next step was to make sure there were no signs of multicollinearity. Multicollinearity can occur when there are two or more independent variables that are highly correlated. As a result, that may lead to issues when understanding which independent variable contributes to the variance explained in the dependent variable. The correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable were all above .3, proving that multicollinearity could be precluded. Furthermore, the collinearity tolerance values were less than .10, and the statistics VIF values were all scored less than 10 indicating that multicollinearity was not violated. The seventh assumption that was checked for in the Scatterplot was that no outliers could be detected. However, when inspecting Mahalanobis Distances in accordance with Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) guidelines for five independent variables, two items were found to exceed the critical value of 20.52 (21.86 and 25.50). However, these values represent real-life opinions of two participants and are hence not outliers caused by errors. Furthermore, there were only two exceeding values to be found and they did not violate the critical values extensively. Drawing from this, the decision was made not to exclude these from the analysis. There were no cases having standardized residual values above 3.0 or below -3.0. Lastly, the final and eight assumption which was checked for and met was to make sure the residuals were normally distributed. As previously mentioned, these assumptions were checked for in accordance with Pallant (2011).

4.7 Considering biases

4.7.1 Sampling bias

Since the sampling of this study was based on the register of communication agencies who held a membership in the organization Sveriges Kommunikationsbyråer, this could possibly pose a bias if the agencies who have chosen to register, differ in any aspect in relation to agencies that have not. However, since Sveriges Kommunikationsbyråer is the leading organization for Swedish communication agencies, this risk is considered minimal. There is also a risk that the sampling procedure missed agencies due to outdated information about the reported number of employees or due to human error. However, the sampling was done thoroughly and was cross-checked by both researchers, so the risk of this posing a bias is also considered minimal.

4.7.2 Respondent bias

In total, there were 14 agencies participating in the study, however, the response rate among those organizations was highly varying. As discussed in the section *Extraordinary circumstances* many agencies communicated difficulties to participate due to the uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 virus outbreak. This led to an unfortunate low response rate, lower than was expected and hoped for. The result could hence have been affected by possible response rate bias if the agencies or respondents who participated in the study differed from those who did not participate. For example, if those companies who agreed upon participating did so because of an interest in the specific subject of the study, this could have affected the generalizability of the result. Furthermore, the same argument is applicable within the companies who decided to participate since participation in the study was voluntary. Hence, personal interest or position could pose possible biases. Moreover, we had no way to control that the managers who were our contact persons actually followed the agreement of sending out the survey to everyone within the company. However, since the result is not reported in reference to specific organizations, we see no benefit for managers to distort the sampling to achieve a certain result and therefore their agreement and assurance were considered sufficient.

However, social desirability bias could possibly have affected the result if employees of the participating agencies altered their answers in order to appear in a socially desirable way; which in this case would be as a person/an agency with a strong corporate brand identity and high brand performance. By making the test anonymous and not reported on an organizational level, the risk of this bias occurring was minimized. However, one factor that might have increased this risk was the fact that the survey was distributed by one of the top managers at the agencies

and the participants could hence get the impression that managers would be able to take part of individual answers. It is hence arguable that it would be better if the researchers of the study were also the ones distributing the study, however, on the contrary, the response rate was expected to be higher if the request came from a top manager. Since this was considered most important for the feasibility of the study in regard to the extraordinary circumstances, managers were chosen to be distributors.

4.7.3 Measurement bias

All participants were initially briefed about the aim of the study, to *deepen and increase knowledge about the concept of corporate brand identity and its influence on brand performance in the communications sector*, and consequently a priming effect could have affected participants to unconsciously alter their answers in a way to confirm a relationship. However, the ethical aspect of informing participants was considered more important and the possible priming effect was hence acknowledged and accepted in favour of the ethical consideration.

A tendency of a ceiling effect was observed in the result indicating that the scales used might have some issues measuring the full and nuanced range of perceptions. However, according to Pallant (2011), studies in social sciences often receive skewed results. This is not caused by errors of measurements, but rather reflects the underlying nature of the construct being measured and hence does not necessarily pose an issue.

Another aspect that could possibly result in bias is that this study does not take into account the external perception of corporate brand identity. However due to the importance of acknowledging external perceptions of brand performance, two items were added to measure employees' perception of how external stakeholders perceive the corporate brand identity. However, as will be discussed further in the *Future research* section, further exploration and incorporation of external perceptions is encouraged.

Additionally, in order to assure the comprehensibility and ability to answer the items of the brand performance scale, a reassurance question was added. The question reads: *To what extent do you perceive that your organization provides you with sufficient information to answer the questions on brand performance (listed above)*. The result from the reassurance question resulted in a mean value of 4.86. Even though a higher value would be preferred, this indicates

that the overall perception was that participants had sufficient information to answer the questions. Two thirds (66%) of the participants perceived that their organization had provided them with sufficient information to answer the questions in the brand performance test. However, 15% stated that they were not sure and 19% disagreed with having sufficient information to answer these questions which could have biased the result of the test. Drawing from this, there is some evidence that the information needed to answer the questions is not available to the employees. However, since two-thirds of the participants perceived to have sufficient information, and only 19% stated that they did not, the risk of bias was acknowledged but considered minor, and the test was hence included in the analysis. Lastly, since the brand performance scale has not been validated, there is a risk of measurement bias. However, the scale has been used in a previous study by Coleman et al. (2015) and was hence considered valid and reliable.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Throughout this study, ethical considerations have been made in order to uphold ethical and legal standards. The study has been guided by principles to achieve the three ethical goals defined by APA (2010); "to ensure the accuracy of scientific knowledge, to protect the rights and welfare of research participants, and to protect intellectual property rights" (p.11). All relevant principles have been met. The first principle regarding the accuracy of scientific knowledge is the ethical reporting of research results (APA, 2010). To achieve this, the study reported only truthful and accurate data and the results of the study have not been modified to support hypotheses. Hence the written report reflects the actual result and method that was adopted to ensure that it can be repeated and verified by others. Furthermore, in accordance with the second principle, data retention and sharing (APA, 2010), the data collected in this study as well as material and information relevant to attempt replication will be retained for a minimum of five years. In regard to the third principle, duplication and piecemeal publication of data (APA, 2010), the complete result of the study is presented in this report and even though it builds on a previous study, all empirical data and the scope for researching the influence of corporate brand identity on brand performance is original and hence, so is the contribution of the study. Plagiarism and self-plagiarism constitute the fourth and last principle to be considered to ensure the accuracy of scientific knowledge (APA, 2010). In this study, all knowledge and all ideas that are not original for this study have been cited to give full credit to the authors.

The goal, to protect the rights and welfare of research participants is guided by two principles, which of the first refers to the rights and confidentiality of research participants (APA, 2010). In this study, the decision was made not to disclose the identity of the participating organizations to ensure anonymity for them as well as individual participants. However, the demographic questions in this study were not mandatory since there was a small risk that they could be used to identify participants if they have a unique profile in regard to those questions. By making the demographic questions optional, each participant was hence allowed to decide themselves whether they would like to disclose such information or not. However, since this report does not present individual answers, participants are guaranteed full anonymity to everyone but perchance the researchers. Furthermore, all participants were asked to give their informed consent which was a prerequisite to participate in the study. They were hence informed about the purpose of the study and about their rights and obligations as stated by the Swedish council of science (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002), (See Appendix 1 - Survey). One aspect of this ethical principle that we had to consider extra carefully in this study was the organization's voluntariness and the right to withdrawal the decision to participate. As stated under the *Extraordinary circumstances* section, the gathering of data was negatively affected by the Covid-19 virus outbreak. Therefore, many organizations were uncertain whether they wanted to participate or not. And amongst the ones who did, the response rate was low. To manage this issue several reminders were sent to the contact persons requesting them to participate. Hence, one could argue that some pressure was exercised that may have affected their free will. However, the ultimate decision whether to participate or not was always respected both amongst those who declined at once, and the ones who first accepted our request and then withdrew. The second principle to consider is a conflict of interest (APA, 2010). Accordingly, both researchers' relation to the participating organizations is objective and neither has a personal economic or commercial interest in the products, services, or results of the study.

Protecting intellectual property rights is the third goal which is supported by the principles of publication credit, reviewers, and author's copyright on an unpublished manuscript (APA, 2010). Shared and equal responsibility of authors has been adopted throughout the entire research process. In regard to the use of unpublished instruments, APA (2010) states that permission is needed in order to use unpublished instruments, procedures, or data that other authors may consider their proprietary. Since the Brand Performance Scale is retrieved from an unpublished doctoral dissertation by Dr. Coleman (Coleman, 2011) the researchers contacted the aforementioned to get his permission to use the Scale (See Appendix 3 - Email

conversation). Permission was granted, and the study was hence included in the study. Even though the test is only presented in the unpublished dissertation, it has been used in a later published study by Coleman et al. (2015) which strengthened the credibility of the test and the decision to include it in the current study.

5. Result

In this chapter, the result from the standard multiple regression analysis will be presented. The result will provide insight into the influence of corporate brand identity as an entity on brand performance. Moreover, the result for the unique influence of each dimension of corporate brand identity on brand performance will be presented. This analysis indicates that two of the dimensions (the independent variables consistent communications and brand personality) are in fact unique predictors of brand performance.

Before carrying out the multiple regression, the eight assumptions were checked for as presented in the *Methodology and empirical data* chapter. A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to answer the research question; *How do the dimensions of corporate brand identity influence brand performance within the communications sector?* The R Square value obtained was $R^2 = .499$. Since the sample of this study was rather small (N=105), the Adjusted R Square gives a more accurate result and scored .474, meaning that the model explains a total of 47.4% of the variance in the dependent variable (F(5, 99)=19.73, p <.0005).

As shown in Table 4, the mean value for every variable is presented. Each variable has different numbers of items which results in different ranges of potential minimum and maximum values. The variable employee and client focus consist of six items which together with the seven-point Likert Scale gives a potential minimum of six and maximum of 42. The received mean value of 36.28 hence indicate a high mean value where many participants have scored five or above on the Likert Scale. On the contrary, corporate visual identity only consists of three items and therefore the potential minimum and maximum ranges from three to 21. As presented in Table 4, the mean value of this variable scored 15.90 which also indicates rather high scores from participants. Thus, the different ranges of minimum and maximum explains the large variety in mean scores. The same principle applies to standard deviations and partly explains the variety of scores. In general, there seem to be rather high mean values since all score on the upper half of the range between the variable's potential minimum and maximum value (see Table 4).

Table 4

Descriptive data including mean values, standard deviations and number of participants for the dependent variable as well as all independent variables

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Brand performance	41.36	7.85	105
Employee and client focus	36.28	5.76	105
Corporate visual identity	15.90	4.01	105
Brand personality	20.04	4.34	105
Consistent communications	20.73	4.06	105
Human resource initiatives	20.88	4.61	105

The variable with the highest predictive ability was consistent communications (β=.399) when the other independent variables were controlled for. The variable with the second-highest predictive ability was brand personality (β= .297). Human resource initiatives was the third-highest predictive variable (β= .164). Following this was corporate visual identity (β= -.148) and lastly, employee and client focus (β= .024). The two variables consistent communications and brand personality reached statistical significance ($p <$ .05) and hence contributed with unique influence on brand performance (see Table 5). Consistent communications uniquely explained 6% (.238 x .238) of the variance in brand performance while brand personality uniquely explained 4% (.205 x .205) of the variance in brand performance. The reason for not having any unique significant contribution of the other three remaining variables was due to the overlap and high correlations between independent variables ranging from .497-.815 (see Table 6.). According to Rice and Harris (2005), the limits for high correlation ranges between .50-1.0 and therefore the correlations in this interval were considered high.

Table 5

Standardized coefficients Beta, Significance and Correlations Part values for all independent variables

Dimensions	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig.	Correlations Part
Employee and client focus	.024	.867	.012
Corporate visual identity	-.148	.113	-.114
Brand personality	.297	.005*	.205
Consistent communications	.399	.001*	.238
Human resource initiatives	.164	.203	.091

* $p <$ .05

Table 6

Correlation values and significance values for the dependent variable as well as for all independent variables

		Brand performance	Employee and client focus	Corporate visual identity	Brand personality	Consistent communications	Human resource initiatives
Pearson Correlation	Brand performance	1.000	.555	.315	.611	.659	.534
	Employee and client focus	.555	1.000	.589	.632	.744	.815
	Corporate visual identity	.315	.589	1.000	.497	.509	.592
	Brand personality	.611	.632	.497	1.000	.696	.570
	Consistent communications	.659	.744	.509	.696	1.000	.673
	Human resource initiatives	.534	.815	.592	.570	.673	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Brand performance	.	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000
	Employee and client focus	.000	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Corporate visual identity	.001	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	Brand personality	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	Consistent communications	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	Human resource initiatives	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.

Two variables, employee and client focus, and human resource initiatives were highly correlated (r=.815). To investigate if the Adjusted *R* Square could be improved from the original result of .474, three additional tests were made. Firstly, the variable of employee and client focus was excluded which gave an Adjusted *R* Square of .479. Secondly, human resource initiatives were then excluded and gave a result of .470. Lastly, an index was created for the two variables and resulted in an Adjusted *R* Square of .477. The same procedure was made for the correlation of the two variables employee and client focus and consistent communications, which scored .744 indicating a high correlation. When excluding consistent communications, the Adjusted *R* Square gave a result of .420 and when creating an index of employee and client focus and consistent communications the Adjusted *R* Square was .455. The adjustments did not give a remarkable improvement, indicating that all of the variables are important and therefore the decision was made not to exclude variables or replace variables with the index. The Adjusted *R* Square value of .474 was thus used in this study.

To conclude, the variables for corporate brand identity; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications, and human resource initiatives explained 47.4% of the total variance in brand performance when based on the Adjusted R Square. Two variables, consistent communications and brand personality, gave a uniquely significant contribution of $\beta=.399$ and $\beta=.297$ respectively. The variable consistent communications uniquely explained 6% of the variance in brand performance and brand personality uniquely explained 4% of the variance in brand performance. These two variables were hence predictors of brand performance while the remaining variables were solely correlating with brand performance.

6. Result discussion

The previous chapter presented results on how consistent communications and brand personality had a positive significant influence on brand personality whilst employee and client focus, corporate visual identity and human resource initiatives did not. In this chapter, each of the hypotheses will be addressed and discussed in relation to the result and the context of literature. The result will also be discussed in relation to the study conducted by Coleman et al. (2015) in which a similar result was received regarding brand personality; having a positive significant influence on brand performance. However, the result regarding consistent communications differed in an interesting way. In their study, Coleman et al. (2015) received a negative significant influence of consistent communications on brand performance. Once again, it is important to emphasize that Coleman et al. (2015), conducted their research within the UK IT service sector with approximately 400 senior marketing executives, compared to this study which investigated the Swedish communications sector including approximately 100 participants from employees to top managers. Nonetheless, the presented results still reveal an interesting difference in outcome which could indicate a difference the usage of consistent communications or that the results could depend on the capacity and knowledge of communication bases on the industry (Coleman et al. 2015). In the section below, a more elaborated discussion of each hypothesis will be presented along with analysis based on previous research and literature. The last section of this chapter will provide a discussion about practical implications for the result of this study.

6.1 Employee and client focus

H1: Employee and client focus has a positive significant influence on brand performance.

The first hypothesis of this study was rejected since the variable employee and client focus did not result in significant influence on brand performance. The Beta value for this variable was $\beta= .024$ (see Table 5) and had a high correlation of r=.555 (see Table 6) with brand performance. However, the same result was presented in the study by Coleman et al. (2015) even though the expected outcome was a significant influence. They argue that the findings could be a result of the specific industry which in the study was conducted. Hence, in the IT-service sector, customers may not always know exactly what they want because of lack of deep understanding for the specific technology involved. Consequently, Coleman et al. (2015) argue that it could be problematic dealing with the results of trying to meet customer's needs when working in sectors driven by technological innovations. Nonetheless, the results from this thesis, as presented, did not show a significant positive influence on brand performance, even though the respondents in this study was not working with fast-technology innovations. However, similarly, this argument is applicable to the communication sector as well. One contributing factor to why clients of communication agencies reaches out to the agencies in the first place, is that they may not have enough knowledge or resources internally to deal with communication matters. Hence, in accordance with the arguments provided by Coleman et al. (2015), clients may not understand their specific communication needs. Drawing from this, client's themselves may not always be aware of the communication solutions they should require and therefore, this could contribute to the explanation of why employee and client focus did not have a significant influence on brand performance

Furthermore, the result challenges many studies that argued for the positive connection between employee engagement and satisfaction in relation to brand performance (Aaker, 1997; Yeung & Ennew, 2000). However, as stated by Yeung and Ennew (2000), loyalty was rated highly important for employees to drive to performance, which was not a specifically included question of the employee and client focus dimension and could hence be a contributing factor to why the hypothesis was not supported. Coleman et al. (2015) further means that how the exact item is being measured and what item is included in the dimension of employee and client focus, could be decisive. Cameron and Quinn (2006) claims that there is an important difference between focusing on either employees or clients. In this study however, as well as in the study by Coleman et al. (2015), both employees and clients have been incorporated. Furthermore, another argument driven by Coleman et al. (2015), refers to that some B2B markets are more

product focused than customer focused. In this case, it could refer to that the respondents of this study are working with projects for other organizations (clients) which can enhance their motivation to meet the requirements of the project, rather than discovering and responding to the actual needs of the client's organization. Hence, by emphasizing and clarifying the client's needs and expectations, performance regarding client factors could possibly increase. Another contributing aspect to why the hypothesis was not supported could be how the questions were framed. As presented in Figure 1, the items regarding the dimension employee and client focus, were focused on specific employee and client focus aspects, which was the intention. However, it could be of interest to add questions focusing on employee's perception of the project outcome. In that way, not only the contribution to clients over all organizational needs would be included, but also how the quality of specific projects could possibly drive brand performance.

6.2 Corporate visual identity

H2: Corporate visual identity has a positive significant influence on brand performance.
The second hypothesis, for corporate visual identity, was also rejected. This was in contrary to empirical studies showing positive effects on brand performance (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2006). Corporate visual identity received the fourth highest beta value which was $\beta= -.148$ (see Table 5), however the influence was not significant. This variable was hence one of the three independent variables that did not provide any unique contribution to the variance in brand performance due to an overlap and high correlations between independent variables. However, there was a correlation between corporate visual identity and the dependent variable brand performance (see Table 6). Compared to other correlations between independent variables and the dependent variable however, this correlation was notably lower ($r=.315$).

Even though it has been argued that visual aspects of an organization are related to stronger brand performance (Kapferer, 2008), as stated by Pierce (1998), the sensemaking of any signs or symbols is an unlimited process for the interpreter. Furthermore, Askegaard and Christensen (2001) mention how complex the phenomena can be due to the impact of how the visual aspect of organizations effects not only the external stakeholders of the organization, but also internal actors such as employees and managers. Drawing from this, this makes it even harder to measure a unified visual identity that is interpreted in the same way. Hence, trying to measure corporate visual identity based on a scale, like in this study, can be difficult. In other words, something so dynamic and personal as interpretation could be difficult to measure completely

accurately. This reasoning goes in line with how Pierce (1998) reasoned for his theory of unlimited semiotics referring to the interpretation of an object or symbol where the procedure that goes on between the signifier and its signified is unlimited. Similarly, Coleman et al. (2015) argue for the same contention when discussing the fact that the dimension in this study solely focuses on the font and logo, which only covers part of the whole corporate visual identity. However, on the other hand, there is no known universal definition of corporate visual identity, even though one can reason there is more to it than font and logo, such as texture, colour, shape, and so on. Drawing from this, the ambiguousness of corporate visual identity, especially from one organization to another, could be a contributing factor to why there was no positive and significant influence on brand performance. Furthermore, it could possibly also explain why the correlation between corporate visual identity and brand performance was considerably lower (r= .315) than other correlations between independent variables and the dependent variable. Drawing from that, as presented in Figure 1, the dimension of corporate visual identity included only three items, and because of the fact that the visual aspect is difficult to measure when generalizing it from one company to another, it could be that not only are the questions insufficient in character, they may also be too few to fully capture the influence on brand performance. Additionally, this argument goes in line with the result from Coleman et al. (2015), who also received an insignificant influence on brand performance.

It would be interesting to investigate whether including more aspects of corporate visual identity would have given a higher correlation than the result in this study, or if the result would have been different if more questions were added. However, referring back to the early developed theory by Pierce (1998), it could be an issue to use the same scale of determining corporate visual identity for different organizations, since the interpretation lies within the interpreter. On the other hand, using the same scale to measure corporate visual identity is necessary in order to be able to compare how it is perceived between different organizations. Within reasonable boundaries, there will always be human factors in surveys affecting the results since it is in fact human perception that the survey is based on.

Furthermore, an additional contributing factor to why the hypothesis was rejected could be that studies, which the hypothesis was based on, proved corporate visual identity had positive effects on brand performance related factors when combined with other attributes, meaning other contributing combinations of attributes than in this study. For example, Coleman et al. (2015) mentions in their study, when arguing for the same hypothesis as in this study (*corporate visual*

identity has a positive significant influence on brand performance), that corporate visual identity according to recent empirical studies, had a positive effect on brand awareness, which is one of the aspects included in brand performance. Drawing from this, it is possible that if the influence of corporate brand identity would have been explored only in relation to brand awareness, the result would perhaps have been positive and significant.

6.3 Brand personality

H3: Brand personality has a positive significant influence on brand performance

As presented in the *Result* chapter, brand personality is one of the two variables in the model which has unique positive and significant influence on brand personality. Hence, the third hypothesis concerning brand personality, is supported. The result showed that when other variables were controlled for, the Beta value for brand personality was $\beta = .297$ which makes brand personality the second strongest predictor of brand performance. Furthermore, 4% of the unique contribution to the variance in brand performance can be explained by brand personality. This result corresponds well to previous research by Sung and Kim (2010) who has shown that brand personality indicated positive effects on brand trust and loyalty. These factors could be considered important components of brand performance since they strengthen the bond between the brand and the receiver.

Moreover, a new contribution for this study is that it includes the aspect of self-branding as a part of identifying oneself with the brand. This process allows the consumer of a brand, to engage with the brand and make it part of their identity (Banet-Weiser, 2015), which in the communications sector includes both employees and clients. The brand personality can either correspond to the receiver's own identity, or it can be aspirational (Dodoo, 2018), which makes the person who identifies with, or tries to identify with, the brand an ambassador who has a personal interest in the brand's performance and reputation. By having a positive brand personality to which stakeholders can, or aspires to, relate to, brand performance could possibly be improved. Furthermore, another explanation which strengthens the result of this specific study conducted within the communications sector, could be related to the fact that brand personality is considered one of the main components of corporate branding and central to successful brand management (Xara-Brasil et al., 2018). Hence, it is reasonable to believe that communication professionals are aware of the importance of brand personality and hence the chance of them internalising their own corporate brand identity may increase.

Previous studies also support the result received in this study, arguing that brand personality have positive effects on the willingness to pay as well as the willingness to recommend (Hayes et al., 2001). A strong brand personality should hence increase the financial measures of brand performance as well as the aspects organizational reputation and brand awareness. This relationship could hence be part of the explanation to why brand personality had a positive significant influence on brand personality. Furthermore, this corresponds well to Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) who argues that brand personality is influential in driving brand awareness. Moreover, brand personality has the potential of increasing brand differentiation (Aaker, 1997; Lämmlein, 2014), making the brand competitive on a market where similar services are offered. In their study, Coleman et al. (2015) found that brand personality had a significant positive influence on brand performance, like in this study. Their study was conducted within the IT-service sector and while it differs in some aspects from the communications sector, there are some essential similarities. Both studies were conducted on service brands rather than product brands making the employees the actual "product." Furthermore Kornberger (2010) argues that brands are a consequence of the culture and/or environment. Since employees are an essential part of the culture, the employee's personality most likely contributes to the brand personality and chances of identification with the brand hence increases. Moreover, clients could possibly relate to and identify with the personality of employees, which consequently makes them identify with the brand personality. However, the importance of a consistent brand personality through each employee then becomes crucial.

Moreover, if employee's personality is an essential part of brand personality, this could possibly partly explain why the result differed regarding consistent communications between this study and the study conducted by Coleman, et al. (2015). In this study, only communication professionals working as consultants were included, while in Coleman et al's (2015) study, a wider range of professions within the IT-service sector were included. Hence, it is possible that personalities of employees working as consultants are more similar in character creating a more consistent brand personality. Thus, in this study, focusing on consultants within the communications sector, a consistent and favourable brand personality may be what drives brand performance. Moreover, the aspect of credibility regarding the agencies' ability to create relevant and successful communication for their clients may be another influential factor. Because if a communication agency's own brand personality is incoherent, then they might not be trusted with helping clients with theirs. Xara-Brasil et al., (2018) touches upon this when arguing that brand personality is a central part in successful branding. Therefore, it is reasonable

to believe that brands within the communications sector may put more effort into creating a strong brand personality than other sectors, such as the IT service sector to be perceived as competent within branding. Moreover, as presented in the *Result* chapter, brand personality was highly correlated with consistent communications (r= .696, see Table 6). In accordance with the previous discussion, the overlap between these two variables indicates that they are closely related and may be influencing both each other and have a combined influence on brand performance.

6.4 Consistent communications

H4: Consistent communications has a positive significant influence on brand performance.

The fourth hypothesis of this study was accepted since consistent communications resulted in a positive significant influence on brand performance. What is more, not only is it an interesting result for this study but also interesting in comparison to the study by Coleman et al. (2015). The result presented in their study showed that consistent communications had a negative significant influence on brand performance. Notably, this result was an unexpected finding, because of the many scholars beforehand claiming communication has positive effects on brand performance. As earlier mentioned, using communication as a tool can potentially result in enhancing performance driven factors (Cheney et al., 2011) and according to Heide and Simonsson (2011), communication can also result in stimulating an ongoing development that the organization is pursuing.

What should be highlighted when making the comparison between this study and the study conducted by Coleman et al. (2015) is that the studies were performed within different business sectors. The study conducted in 2015 was based on approximately 400 senior executives within the UK IT-service sector whilst this thesis established its findings on approximately 100 employees and top managers from 14 different communication agencies in Sweden. Even though the findings of Coleman et al. (2015) contradicted several other empirical studies, which constituted the foundation for their hypothesis, when comparing the two results, the impact of the difference business sectors can be discussed. It is reasonable to assume, based on the literature that founded the hypothesis for this thesis, that people within an industry that works with communication on a daily basis, would be better equipped to exercise and understand consistent communications compared to other sectors. As presented in Table 5, consistent communications showed the highest positive significant predictive ability (β= .399) when the other independent variables were controlled for and had a unique significant influence of 6%,

which could be explained by how well communication is performed and understood in an environment where communications aspects are in constant focus.

The argument by Heide and Simonsson (2011), that communication in an organization can help in the process of encouraging ongoing development and performances, comes from their report when talking about communication professionals. These are described as people educated to understand the importance of communication and how to use it in organizational situations in order to achieve desirable outcomes. The statement by Cheney et al. (2011), could be explained in a comparable matter where communication can solely be used in advantage when used in a proper and beneficial way, meaning that using communication as a tool is only valuable if you know how to use it. In this case, this would refer to how to use consistent communications to enhance brand performance. Additionally, a good indicator of this is how strongly consistent communications correlated with brand performance ($r= .659$, see Table 6). Furthermore, the correlation between the consistent communications variable and other independent variables such as for example employee and client focus was high ($r= .744$, see Table 6). This hence indicates that the unique influence of brand performance may be reduced due to overlap of independent variables.

What is more, Coleman et al. (2015) discusses the various potential reasons to why their hypothesis was not supported and one of the reasons was that two-thirds of the respondents had less associations with communication in a day to day basis. In contrast to their study, this study on the other hand focuses on employees and managers who work with communication as a part of their daily work, much like the communication professionals in Heide and Simonson's (2011) study. Drawing from this, the presented results in this study, in comparison to the study by Coleman et al. (2015), could indicate that people working with communication is better at consistent communications, at least when it concerns brand related communication matters. Like previously mentioned, it is reasonable to believe that the communication agencies included in this study are communicating more consistently than senior executives in the IT-service sector, where their roles might not include as much communication. Moreover, that could also be a contributing factor to why the result from the study made in the UK IT-service sector differed from what was expected from the study and in regard to previous empirical studies and literature. Coleman et al. (2015) are debating whether the consistency of communication has anything to do with the results given, or that the people responsible for driving brand performance did not consider consistent communications to be a key attribute for developing

that goal. To clarify, communication can always be considered an important factor for all types of business sectors (Cheney et al., 2011), whether as in this case in the communications sector or the IT-service sector. However, consistency of communication may only be a positive driver of brand performance if employees and managers of the organization have knowledge and understanding of how to properly and successfully exercise consistent communications.

6.5 Human resource initiatives

H5: Human resource initiatives have a positive significant influence on brand performance.
The fifth hypothesis of this study, regarding the influential ability of human resource initiatives on brand performance, was not supported. The Beta value of the independent variable, human resource initiatives, scored $\beta= .164$, however did not reach statistical significance and therefore the hypothesis was rejected. This result stands in contrast to Coleman, et al.'s (2015) study which received a significant positive influence of human resource initiatives on brand performance. The explanation to why the result of this study differs from Coleman, et al.'s study may partly be due to the difference in items included in the variable. In their study, Coleman et al. (2015) included two items focusing on training and monitoring respectively.

As supported by many previous researchers, these two factors are drivers of brand performance (Chakraborty & Biswas, 2020; Katou, 2012; Otoo & Mishra, 2018; Salah, 2016; Sung & Choi, 2014). However, the two additional items regarding support and culture might possibly not, in contrast to what was hypothesized, have the same direct influence on brand performance. Stavrou, et al. (2010) argue that human resource practices related to supporting employees and favouring an open climate have competitive advantages. However, while considered likely, it has not been fully established whether these are directly connected to brand performance or not. What has been established on the other hand, is that both of the two added items contributed to the internal consistency of the scale since the overall Cronbach's Alpha for the human resource initiatives dimension decreased from .816, to .677 and .758 respectively for the items related to support and climate when they were excluded from the scale. This thus indicates that they are relevant components of corporate brand identity.

Although the results of this study showed no significantly influential relationship between human resource initiatives and brand performance, the two variables were highly correlated (r=.534). In contrast to the results received by Coleman, et al. (2015) who had 421 participants in their study, these findings were based on 105 respondents, which could be another

contributing factor to why the hypothesis was not supported despite previous literature indicating a relationship (Stavrou et al., 2010). As presented in Table 5, human resource initiatives had the third-highest predictive ability with a value of β= .164. It is possible that with a larger final sample, the findings would have supported the hypothesis, in accordance with literature stating that human resource management drives performance (Stavrou, et al., 2010).

Furthermore, it is possible that the communication sector differs from the IT service sector in aspects critical for the result. One such aspect could be related to the size and structure of the communication agencies included in this study. Since the study included only agencies with between 20-100 employees, many might not have a specific HR-department or manager. Drawing from this, it is possible that employees does not view human resource initiatives as connected to HR, but rather consider it part of their personal development and evaluation. This explanation seems to correspond to previous research where scholars suggest that active human resource initiatives such as job analysis, succession planning and redeployment have positive effects on the overall performance (Chakraborty & Biswas, 2020). Hence, the experience of having someone who actively engages in HR practices, compared to taking own initiatives for personal training and development could possibly have different influence on brand performance.

7. Discussion

To conclude, this study has investigated the influential relationship between the dimensions of corporate brand identity and brand performance within the communications sector in Sweden, for agencies with between 20-100 employees. The agencies targeted are operating within PR, advertising and strategic communication. As earlier mentioned by Balmer (2001), there is an ambiguousness to the term of corporate brand identity much because its increased interest by not only scholars but by practitioners within the business and marketing sector as well. In accordance, Iglesias et al. (2020), states that the majority of branding literature today has been mainly focused on products brand, whilst as Balmer (2001), states, the interest is shifting more towards finding beneficial insights of corporate brand identity in relation to business-to-business. Thus, the reason for investigating corporate brand identity in relation to brand performance is relevant and the interest in the concepts are visible and obvious in branding literature as well as in the practical field. Moreover, the increased interest is met by the aim of this study and can hopefully lead the way for more similar studies to be conducted, with the purpose of enhancing and increasing knowledge of how the dimensions of corporate brand

identity influences brand performance in the communications sector and possibly in other sectors comparable to the communications sector.

This thesis defines corporate brand identity in very specific terms trough the five dimensions, employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications and human resource initiatives, contrary to the various of different terms that can be found in literature (Iglesias et al., 2020; Balmer, 2001; Balmer, 2017). Since the study is based on a survey where respondents of the different agencies were asked to rate items connected to the different dimension, the result of participants perception of brand identity hence reflects how it is defined in this study. In accordance with Kapferer (2008), the identity of the brand that the company holds, when compared to competing companies, the corporate brand identity is what makes a corporate brand convincing and relevant to its external audience and stakeholders. Drawing from that, by dividing corporate brand identity into five dimensions; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications and human resource initiatives, it enabled the possibility of discovering which dimension is the most important to target when wanting to increase brand performance. As stated earlier in the study, in the section *Corporate brand identity*, the definition of corporate brand identity in this thesis was, furthermore, based on Coleman et al.'s (2011) definition of B2B service brand identity as; "the strategists' vision of how a service brand should be perceived by its stakeholders"(p.1152). This definition was used due to the fact that the study was based on the study by Coleman et al. (2015), as well as implementing the same scales (with added items). Thereby, the result could be compared to the Coleman et al. (2015) study, however with a reservation for some changes in the scales.

However, as discussed throughout the *Literature review*, corporate brand identity as a term is hard to define because of how it is being used and defined in various of marketing- and business studies (Balmer & Greyser, 2006). What is more, the same applies for the general concept of corporate branding and its meaning and interpretation, which according to Christensen and Christensen (2018) has created multiple understandings in both practical and theoretical terms. Accordingly, referring to the research question; *How do the dimensions of corporate brand identity have an influence on brand performance within the communications sector?*, the answer would most likely be different with another definition of corporate brand identity, than which of the dimensions of corporate brand identity in this particular study. For instance, the triadic model of Hatch and Schultz (2003), describes corporate branding as when successfully

using three different elements than the dimensions used in this study. The model presents elements that interconnect with one another in a dynamic process between the triadic model's three elements; strategic vision, which refers to the organization's desired and aspirational vision, organizational culture, which is the relations of values and internal beliefs of the employees, and lastly, corporate image, which refers to external views of how stakeholders see and perceive the company. Thus, the general difference in definitions is mainly the third element of Hatch and Schultz (2003) model, the corporate image, i.e. the external impression of the company from stakeholders. However, as earlier stated, the employees own impressions of how they believe the external views are and correspond with their internal beliefs, are included. Moreover, considering corporate brand identity, even though the term has deviations of definitions, nonetheless, it still comes from the same foundation. More exactly, the five dimensions that are included in corporate brand identity in this study; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications and human resource initiatives, are somewhat imbedded in the three elements provided by Hatch and Schultz (2003). The organizational culture, for example, is mirrored by how the employees experience and perceive the culture in which they work, which arguably also reflects how they are being treated. Thus, this could be comparable with this studies dimensions of employee and client focus as well as brand personality and human resource initiatives. The same goes for the strategic vision of Hatch and Schultz (2003), which reflects the organization's desired view, which likewise could be comparable to mainly the dimension of consistent communications but also the dimension of corporate visual identity. As previously presented, consistent communications refer to the consistency of the internal and external brand identity and corporate visual identity refers to the visual parts of the brand such as font and logo. Hence, these two dimensions could be compared to the strategic vision since they are focusing on how the organization wants to portray itself. However, because of the complexity and the ongoing dynamic processes that occurs internally within an organization that strives for high performance, it is reasonable to believe that a definition of corporate brand identity with more attributes than three can be to prefer. Therefore, the model including five dimensions of corporate brand identity, as opposed to the model of Hatch and Schultz (2003), may even be more applicable since it breaks down the concept of identity into tangible core elements. However, the model including the five dimensions used in this study lacks the external aspect of corporate brand identity which on the other hand is included in the Hatch and Schultz (2003) model. Thus, a combined model of these two would possibly be preferable and an interesting aspect that will be discussed further in the *Future research* section.

Farris and de Chernatony (2001), states that managers and employees are likely to differ in their perceptions, especially about internal factors of the organization. In contrast to the perhaps more dated and traditional perspective on improving corporate brand identity by initiating the process from top management and down the hierarchy, in a stable period of time, (da Silveira, et al. 2013), this study encourages a more dynamic integration of all levels of hierarchies. As oppose to the study by Coleman et al. (2015), this study included all hierarchies in the organization, i.e. top managers, managers and employees. This facilitates in the process of top managers knowing more about how and what their employees think and feel, which is an important aspect in enhancing the overall internal perception of the organization. In accordance with previous literature presented in the *Brand performance* section, studies support the suggestion that organizational and managerial internal branding is beneficial in the process of improving brand performance (Farris & de Chernatony, 2001; Lai et al., 2010). This supports the argument of including all positions and hierarchies within the organization. What is more, as argued by Homburg et al. (2010), brand awareness was proven to be a fundamental aspect in performance, within a business-to-business context. Building on that, it is reasonable to assume that the brand awareness would improve, if it involves the whole organization and not solely selective parts of it. Consequently, by involving all hierarchies, the brand that the company aspires to communicate internally, will hopefully be coherent with what is perceived externally. In accordance, McMurrian & Washburn (2008), argues that customers base their perception and image of the company on the actions and behaviours, rather than the company's aspirations. As previously mentioned by Ghodeswar (2008), in order for the customer to interpret the brand identity as the company aspires, it has to follow the vision decided by the company and be communicated in a profitable manner.

According to Hoeffler and Keller (2003), brand performance is associated with various marketing advantages. Furthermore, as noted by Kucharska (2020), brand is a key factor to strengthen an organization and by strengthening the brand, the organization can hence increase its competitive advantages. In this study, brand performance was measured using the pre-develop scale by Coleman (2011), which was primarily used to measure brand performance within the UK B2B IT service sector, in contrast to its purpose in this study, namely, to measure brand performance within the communication sector. However, as stated by Parker, et al. (2018), the "brand" in brand performance has various different associations and dimensions.

Thus, the findings are based on brand performance as it is defined in this study and is only applicable in equivalent contexts.

For these findings to be applicable in managerial environments, important aspects are to be taken into account. As presented in Table 5, the dimensions of corporate brand identity are correlating with one another, indicating a type of symbiosis between dimensions. As stated by Coleman (2011), it is important for managers to consider even the contrary effects of the correlated dimensions, meaning that the lack of emphasis on one corporate brand identity dimension could consequently burden and effect other dimensions. Accordingly, for managers to successfully drive brand performance using corporate brand identity as it is defined in this thesis, a holistic and balanced view of corporate brand identity is to be acknowledged and each of these dimensions should be emphasized and given attention and resources. However, as previously presented, consistent communications and brand personality are the two variables, in this study, that can uniquely drive brand performance within the communications sector, and by emphasizing these two specifically, brand performance could be improved.

Finally, with the findings of this study, we hope to further contribute to reducing the ambiguousness and contribute to the general discussion and analysis of corporate brand identity in different environments and perspectives. Additionally, in more specific terms, provide a clearer definition of corporate brand identity in relation to the communications sector. In accordance, by understanding and analysing the definition in a more explanatory way, in reference to Falkheimer et al. (2015), perhaps it can help communication professionals to know *how* to do the right things when it comes to corporate branding rather than to do things right.

7.1 Practical implications
In addition to fulfilling the theoretical aim, this study contributes to practical implications. The findings present several aspects of how the result could be applied by managers and employees to improve brand performance and these will now be discussed and materialised.

Prior for managers to build and maintain a strong corporate brand identity, the knowledge on what it actually means and what dimensions make the construct apparent, is required. This research could provide as guidance within the communication sector, on what constitutes corporate brand identity i.e. the specific dimensions, and what activities, i.e. the items, comprising those dimensions. Ergo, when managers understand the term of corporate brand

identity, including its dimensions, a broader understanding of all different activities that are compulsory to enhance the corporate brand identity, could then be achieved. What is more, given that the communication managers are aware of the importance of each dimension, they are given a comprehension of how they can work with different aspects of corporate brand identity to drive and improve brand performance. For example, if there are enough resources, a manager of corporate brand identity could be responsible for making sure all aspects are evaluated and given the attention required for maintaining and/or enhancing the desirable result. For instance, that manager could detect a lack of consistent communications within the organization, resulting in an unfavourable impact on brand performance. Consequently, by understanding how corporate brand identity is structured, communication managers are given the possibility to manoeuvre all five dimensions in a strategic manner that successfully drives brand performance. However, drawing from the results of this study, the two dimensions that are capable to drive brand performance within the communications sector are consistent communication and brand personality. Hence, communication managers should emphasize these two dimensions when developing and implementing brand performance strategies.

The scale used in this study to measure corporate brand identity, could be used in the process of understanding the current state of the communications organization, by estimating the present identity profile and answer the question "Where are we now?". By doing so, managers can together with their employees, know more exactly what needs to develop in order to achieve the strategic goals within brand performance as well as it could give a clear picture of employee's perception of the corporate brand identity.

An important aspect of the possible implications is directed to the responsibility of communication managers to forward this substantial information to employees as well. An organization is much more than its managers, and by studying the findings of this study, the conclusion can be made that the employee's understanding and perception is very much reflected in the organization's corporate brand identity, and therefore affecting the brand performance. Accordingly, employees should receive a better understanding of how their work can influence the overall identity of the organization. Thus, the employees are given the possibilities to work strategically towards the same goals as managers, for improving brand performance.

7.2 Suggestions for future research

Because of the scope of this thesis, as well as a limited time period, the target audience was limited to Swedish communication agencies working with PR, advertising and strategic communication. As previously mentioned, a similar study was conducted on the IT service sector in the UK (Coleman et al., 2011), thus came the idea of testing the same hypothesis on Swedish communication agencies. This contributed to increased knowledge within the literary field of corporate branding.

For further knowledge and understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to the positive influence the dimensions of corporate brand identity has on brand performance, it would be interesting to consider broadening the quantitative scope with more agencies than 14, resulting in ideally a much larger completed sample than 105. By doing so the findings would have contributed to a more representative result and could be better generalised. Future studies could also include communication agencies having less than 20 employees and more than 100 employees to broaden the scope and hopefully receive a higher number of participants. By doing so, factor analysis could be conducted to further validate the scales. Moreover, it could be interesting to broaden the research to a European study, including more countries than Sweden. In that way, biases due to cultural differences could be minimized. However, while such a study would need tremendous effort in time, knowledge and resources, it would, on the other hand, contribute with interesting insights and findings. Moreover, the study could advantageously be conducted in other business sectors than the communications sector to broaden the knowledge of how corporate brand identity influences brand performance and if there are any differences due to business sectors. As stated above by Farris and de Chernatony (2001), managers and employees are likely to perceive the organization differently. This study included both managers and employees which resulted in a broader aspect of the internal process. For managers to build a coherent and strong brand identity, they need to transfer the same vision and perception to their employees (Farris & de Chernatony, 2001). Building on this, the differences of the hierarchical positions within the organization could be further explored, to deepen the understanding even more and consequently, facilitate in the process of contributing with managerial implications.

Moreover, as a complement to the quantitative methodological approach applied in this study, a qualitative approach could contribute with further understanding. For example, a qualitative method like interviews, could be alluring to add into the methodological approach. The

interviews could be applied as a triangulation, assisting the quantitative approach, to comprehend why participants responded in the way they did and thus, inspect the underlying factors contributing and affecting them. Nonetheless, there could be some issues with conducting a triangulation of this kind. On one hand, it could supply the researcher with useful information, especially for empirical findings and then later for analysis. On the other hand, however, it could become very hard for the reader of the study to understand why different approaches were taken in order to achieve the aim of the study. If a triangulation was to be used, it should be up to the researcher to clarify, both for the researcher alone, but to the reader as well, as to why specifically, a survey was not enough. Consequently, it puts a lot of responsibility on the researcher to be thorough and clear when presenting the choice of approach, for the reader to understand why it is important for the study.

Furthermore, in line with Coleman, et al. (2015), it would be interesting taking into consideration the external views of corporate brand identity. In that way, the external aspect, organizational image, of Hatch and Schultz's (2003) identity model would be included and a more holistic understanding of corporate brand identity could be adopted. Therefore, for future research we suggest development of a scale incorporating both internal, managerial and external factors of corporate brand identity. Another way of incorporating the external aspect could be by complementing the corporate brand identity scale used in this thesis with interviews with external stakeholders. In that way interviews would have a clear purpose and contribute to the quality of the study.

Moreover, an additional suggestion for broadening the quantitative research would be to conduct a similar analysis on the dimensions of brand performance (financial measures, brand measures and employee measures), as were done on corporate brand identity. Hence, in that way it would be possible to explore whether the influence of the dimensions of corporate brand identity differed in relation to specific dimensions of brand personality. This idea was plotted early on, however, unfortunately, due to the time limit of this thesis, the analysis was not possible to conduct. In addition, for future research we suggest a study that fully validates the scales. In this study six new items were added to the original B2B service brand identity scale. The decision of adding the items was based on previous literature indicating their relevance. This was confirmed by an improvement of Cronbach's Alpha values when items were added. However, legitimate development and validation of the scales is needed.

8. Conclusion

The aim of this quantitative study was; *to deepen and increase knowledge about the concept of corporate brand identity and its influence on brand performance in the communications sector*. Furthermore, it sought to answer the research question; *How do the dimensions of corporate brand identity have an influence on brand performance within the communications sector?* The purpose of this chapter is to draw a final conclusion of this study based on the presented results, guided by the aim and research question.

As presented in the *Result* chapter, the findings proclaim that the variables for corporate brand identity; employee and client focus, corporate visual identity, brand personality, consistent communications, and human resource initiatives explained 47.4% of the total variance in brand performance based on the Adjusted R Square. Amongst the five variables, consistent communications showed the highest predictive ability and gave a Beta value of β=.399 and brand personality showed the second-highest predictive ability of β=.297 (see Table 6). Hence, two of the dimensions of corporate brand identity; consistent communications and brand personality are predictors of brand performance which uniquely explains 6% and 4% of the variance in brand performance respectively, while the remaining three variables employee and client focus, corporate visual identity and human resource initiatives, are solely correlating with brand performance. Consequently, referring to the research question; *How do the dimensions of corporate brand identity have an influence on brand performance within the communications sector?* The dimensions of corporate brand identity have varying influence on brand performance within the communications sector. However, consistent communication as well as brand personality are the dimensions of corporate brand identity that gives a unique significant contribution to the influence on brand performance. The remaining three variables, however, were not predictors of brand performance. By investigating and answering the research question, this study has contributed to the theoretical field of corporate brand identity and proven results of positive influence that corporate brand identity has on brand performance. Although not all variables are unique predictors of brand performance, the model is still considered significant as the combined influence of the variables have significant influence on brand performance.

This study has provided insight for how the concepts of corporate brand identity and brand performance can be defined within the communications sector and how the dimensions of corporate brand identity influence brand performance. Thus, through this, the study has

contributed to reducing the ambiguousness within the theoretical field of corporate branding in relation to the communications sector. By applying the concepts to the communications sector and by investigating their influence, this study has offered knowledge for practical implications on how the result can be used to drive brand performance. Hence, this study has contributed to bridging the empirical gap, first identified by Coleman et al. (2015), between the concepts of corporate brand identity and brand performance.

9. References

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Appendix 1 - Survey

Corporate brand identity & Brand performance

This survey is divided into four parts and is expected to take about five minutes. On a number of statements, based on standardized branding tests, you will be asked to state the degree to which you agree.

We very much appreciate your participation!

Thank you in advance,
Adrienne Daudi & Vanja Johnson

Informed consent

The purpose of this study is to deepen and increase knowledge about the relationship between corporate brand identity and brand performance. Participation is voluntary and anonymous. The answers will only be used for the purpose of this study and individual answers will not be presented in the report. You are free to cancel your participation at any time. You will be given the possibility to read the final report when the study is conducted. These conditions are based on the Swedish Council of science's four ethical research principles regarding information, consent, confidentiality and usage.

Below is what is expected of you as a participant:
- Make sure to take your time and answer without stress
- Read each statement carefully before giving your answer
- Answer individually and truthfully
- Answer in accordance with your own perceptions

I am aware that my participation in this study is voluntary and anonymous, that I can cancel my participation at any time and that my answers will not be individually reported in the final report. *

◯ Yes

Our organization treats each employee as an essential part of the organization *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	Strongly agree
Question 1	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Employees will help clients in a responsive manner *

	Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 2	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our organization makes an effort to discover our clients' needs *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 3	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our organization responds to our clients' needs *

	1 Strongly disagree	Kolumn 2	3	4 Not Sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 4	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our top management is committed to providing quality service *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 5	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our organization has a positive culture *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 6	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

The font we use is an important part of our visual identity *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 7	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our logo is an important part of who we are *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 8	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

The corporate visual identity is helpful in making our organization recognizable *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 9	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

The associations making up our brand personality are extremely positive *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 10	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our clients have no difficulty describing our brand personality *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 11	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our brand personality has favorable associations *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 12	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Employees identify themselves with our brand personality *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 13	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

The people managing the communications program for our organization have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of all major marketing communications tools *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 14	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our organization's advertising, PR and sales promotion all present the same clear consistent message to our stakeholders *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 15	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

The internal communication of our corporate brand identity is consistent with the external communication of our corporate brand identity *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 16	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

The corporate brand identity that our organization communicates is consistent with how clients perceive it *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 17	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our employee training programmes are designed to develop skills required for acquiring and deepening client relationships *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 18	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our organization regularly monitors employees' performance *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 19	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our organization supports employees in their daily work *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 20	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Our organization has an open climate where employees feel safe *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Question 21	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

On average, over the past three years our organization's performance in the following areas has been significantly better than our main competitor (if it's hard to recall, your best estimate is fine) *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
Market share	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Net profit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Customer loyalty	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Customer satisfaction	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Organization reputation	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Brand awareness	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Employee loyalty	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Employee satisfaction	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

To what extent do you perceive that your organization provides you with sufficient information to answer the questions on brand performance (listed above) *

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4 Not sure	5	6	7 Strongly agree
.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Gender

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male
- ◯ Other/do not want to disclose

Age (in years)

Ditt svar

Organization

Ditt svar

City

Ditt svar

Position

- ◯ Manager
- ◯ Employee

Corporate brand identity & Brand performance

Thank you for your participation!

If you have any questions regarding this study you are welcome to contact us via email:
Adrienne_daudi@hotmail.com
Vanja.johnson@gmail.com

Skicka ett annat svar

Appendix 2 – Component matrix

Items	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Q6 – Positive culture	.828			-.301
Q5 – Providing quality service	.825			
Q4 – Responds to clients' needs	.801			
Q20 – Support	.796	-.305		-.312
Q1 – Employees as essential	.791			
Q21 – Open climate where employees feel safe	.782	-.301		-.342
Q3 – Effort to discover clients' needs	.773			.300
Q15 – Same clear consistent message	.765			
Q2 – Help clients' responsively	.746		-.304	
Q13 – Employees identify themselves	.739	.381		
Q16 – Internal communication consistent with external communication	.736			
Q18 – Training programmes	.722			
Q8 – The logo is an important part	.684		.552	
Q10 – Positive associations	.683	.360		
Q12 – Favorable associations	.678	.523		
Q14 – Understanding of marketing communication tools	.677		-.330	.377
Q17 – Consistent perception of corporate brand identity	.672			
Q9 – Visual identity help recognizability	.631		.559	
Q19 – Monitoring	.514			
Q11 – No difficulty describing	.548	.590		
Q7 – The font is an important part	.606		.669	

Appendix 3 - Email conversation

Brand performance test ➤ Inkorgen ×

Vanja Johnson <vanja.johnson@gmail.com>   fre 27 mars 10:27
till darren, Adrienne ▾

Dear Dr. Coleman,

Hope you are well.

We are two students currently studying the international Master of Science Program in Strategic Communication at Lund University, Sweden. We have been inspired by your work within brand identity and brand performance and would like to ask if it would be okay if we use the brand performance test included in your doctoral dissertation (2011) in our master thesis? The aim is to study how brand identity influence brand performance within the communications sector in Sweden.

We look forward to your answer!

Best regards,
Adrienne Daudi & Vanja Johnson

Darren: Wavelength Marketing <darren@wavelengt…   fre 27 mars 12:22
till mig, Adrienne ▾

   engelska ▾   ›   svenska ▾   Översätt meddelande   Inaktivera för: engelska ×

Hi Vanja & Adrienne,

Nice to hear from you. Thanks for your mail.

Yes, by all means. Please feel free to use the scale.

I'm not sure which paper you've used but I've attached the more detailed scale developments then application of the scale in the context of brand performance. It's also in the Handbook of Brand Management Scales if you're looking for a lighter touch intro. https://www.amazon.co.uk/Handbook-Brand-Management-Scales/dp/041574296X

All the best with your studies. I wish you every success. If I can help, just ask.

Keep safe out there.

Regards, Darren

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