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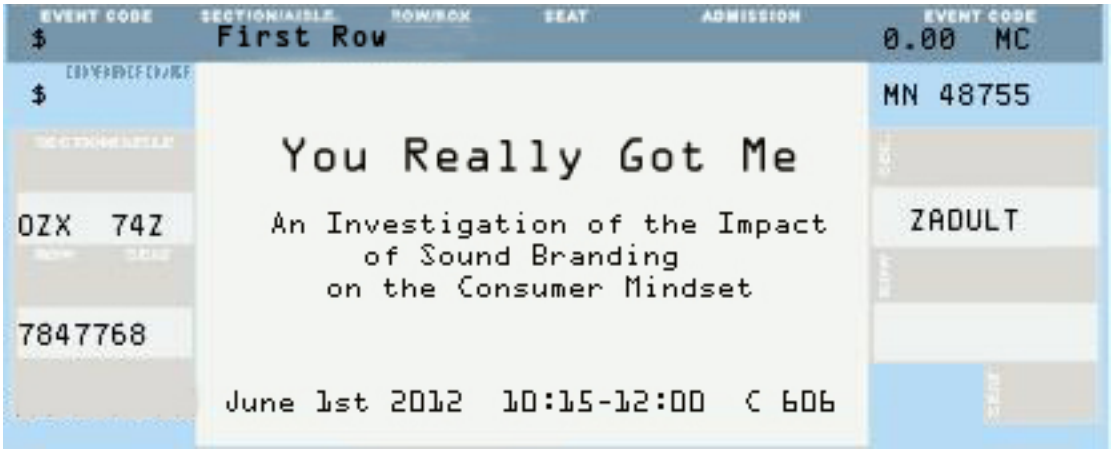

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Sound branding – working strategically with music in order to achieve the company's communication goals - has gained great importance in the last years due to visual clutter and the need to create emotional ties, as well as to interact with customers. An experimental study with 133 students from Stockholm School of Economics aims at investigating how brand fit, personal music taste and music relevance can impact brand associations and attitudes. The study points out that there is an interaction effect between brand fit and personal music taste on brand attitude, the former being stronger than the latter. Sound branding is concluded to be an important tool for establishing, changing and supporting brand associations, and personal music taste is identified to affect fit perceptions. The degree of music relevance is also shown to affect brand attitude.

Keywords: Brand Fit, Music Relevance, Music Taste, Sound Branding, Product Involvement, Associations, Fit Perceptions

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Warning Sign

The authors felt that reading about music without being provided with any audible support would miss something. Therefore, to make this journey more pleasant, a playlist has been set up on the music streaming service Spotify. It includes the title song of this thesis, as well as all the chapter songs. You will find the link for the playlist as a footnote on this page[1].

Additionally, the first chapter – Start me Up – includes many real life examples accompanied by footnotes. The footnotes refer to links where illustrative videos can be found.

[1] http://open.spotify.com/user/lukasro/playlist/7d4rnkgCv1LZEGm7crYYvP

Thank you for the Music

For every band that is performing live, there is a whole group of managers and roadies helping them along the way. Many thanks to the ones that made this tour possible:

Sara Rosengren for being the tour manager, and helping us in not missing important stops along the road.

Hans Iwarsson and Heartbeats for helping us tuning the instruments and deciding on the set list.

Erik Modig for the very much needed emergency help session.

Babel Deli, for taking care of our caffeine intake along the tour in an affordable way.

The students that, as our audience, actively participated in our pre- and main gigs.

Alexandra Drissner and Sofia Kjellström for being awesome music critics.

"Music can noble hints impart,
Engender fury, kindle love,
With unsuspected eloquence can move,
And manage all the man with secret heart"
Joseph Addison

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1 Start Me Up

This part introduces the concept of sound branding and its importance for consumers and brands by explaining the importance of strategic sound branding and assessing the status quo of research in this field. Consequentially, the focus of research is pointed out, as well as how the study intends to provide value to practitioners and what limitations have to be made for this research project.

1.1 Sound Branding - What it is

We humans are not only a linguistic species, but also a musical one and our appreciation of music comes often together with deep emotional reactions. Music can affect us in an auditory and an emotional level, as well as in a motoric one: it can calm us or animate us, it can synchronize our movements as we involuntarily keep the music rhythm, and provoke posture and facial responses according to the feelings the music evokes. Music has such effects on most people, regardless of their music knowledge and culture (Sacks, 2008). Beyond personal effects, music also has a primary social function: it binds people together by rhythm (Storr, 1992).

The importance of music in peoples' lives demonstrates why music is so present in marketing activities and is nothing new for business communications. The relation between a brand and its sound is one of the first connections a consumer makes on a conscious or subconscious level (Zander & Kapp, 2007).

Brands have started using music as early as in 1926, when the first radio jingle was aired by General Mills[2] (Modesto Radio Museum, 2004; Youtube, 2012c). Since then, applications ranged from partnerships such as Michael Jackson singing about the "Pepsi Generation" in the 80's[3] to the integration of a Veronica Maggio song in the ringbacktone of Tele2's customers mobile phones[4], thereby penetrating ever more areas of customers' lives (Almer, 2011; Lusensky, 2011; Youtube, 2008b; Youtube, 2011a). In the last years, brands have greatly diversified how they work with music, past the single-communication or event

[2] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLy5tANvXhY
[3] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqJbucFTSjg
[4] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8f_qcxYa3A

sponsorship spectrum. Examples include Converse having its own music studio[5], Mountain Dew and Red Bull having their own record label, and Intel associating itself with Vice Magazine to create the series of event "Creators Project"[6], uniting music and technology (Hampp, 2011a; Youtube, 2010a; Youtube, 2010b).

All of these activities belong to the field of sound branding, also referred to as audio-, sonic-, acoustic- or auditory branding. Sound branding means working with music and artists strategically in order to achieve the company's communication goals (Lusensky, 2011). It requires a structured process to develop, implement and manage a sound identity that is used in all brand communications to create a clear and consistent identity.

Simply put, a sound identity is the "audible equivalent of a visual identity" (Groves, 2011, e-book loc:135-139). The sound identity answers to the question "how does your brand sound?" by developing a number of sound elements and engaging the brand in music-related activities.

Sound elements include sound logos, jingles, and brand songs, among others. They can be used in a variety of touch points, such as music on hold, ringtones, in-store soundtracks, advertisements, websites, and during the consumption of products (Groves, 2011). These elements do not have to be famous tunes copyrighted from a 3rd party; they can be adapted from existing music or be composed specifically for the brand. Widely known examples of sound elements are the start-up sound of the operating system Windows, Nokia's standard ringtone, the sound logo of Intel and the sound of an e-mail - a leaving paper plane - sent from an Apple device. However, sound branding is more than just using a fun tune or music from a famous band. Even though many brands use sounds in their communication, not all of them integrate this tool strategically. The benefits of a more strategic approach towards sound branding, as well as the risks of not doing it strategically, will be assessed in the following.

1.2 The Strategic Use of Music

The key for successful sound branding is strategic integration. Sound branding means putting the strategic management of music in the center of

[5] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBasrgg49zc
[6] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_0UflkdvQw

attention, instead of focusing on single events such as associations with artists or festivals. Comparing sound branding to advertising music, for instance, one can say that the choice of the latter is done many times as a complement of the images used in the 30-second commercial and holds no relation to the brand beyond the single-piece communication level. The intention of sound branding, on the other hand, is to have a long-term music identity that will allow the brand to take a clear position and engage the audience (Lusensky, 2011). As put by Annabel Rawsom, Global Brand Director of Smirnoff: "Gone are the days when it was cool to badge an event with a logo, consumers can see that a mile away and anyone can write a check." (Lusensky, 2011, p.127).

Sound branding, if done well, provides customers with a consistent auditory impression of the brand throughout time, regardless of the channel the consumer is using (Groves, 2011). That entails that sound branding needs to be adjusted along with the development of the brand – it needs to be altered over time to make sure that it helps consumers to perceive the brand in the desired way (Franus, 2007).

On a more conceptual level, strategic sound branding can be categorized into three distinct fields (Lusensky, 2011).

1.2.1 Associating the Brand with a Subculture

Through sound branding, a brand can associate with a lifestyle and the music that style is connected to. The footwear-brand Vans is an example of this strategy: a producer of tennis shoes targeting a young audience who is interested in skating, surfing and snowboarding, Vans has successfully connected itself to street culture and a specific music genre: punk rock. Every year since 1995, the brand sponsors the Warped Tour[7], a punk rock festival that tours for almost two whole months in over 40 cities in the USA (Vans, 2012; Youtube, 2011c).

1.2.2 Engaging in Artist Alliances

Engaging in an artist alliance means working strategically with artists that express the brand values and can thus credibly serve as brand ambassadors. This strategy is widespread and can be seen in cases such as the association between

[7] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfGOhx4GNuQ

David Guetta and Renault to promote the launch of the new car Twizy[8], or between the band Swedish House Mafia and vodka-brand Absolut to promote the drink-mix Greyhound[9] (Absolut Vodka, 2012; Renault, 2012; Youtube, 2012a; Youtube, 2012b). Even though the aforementioned brands may change their partners, the image they portray with their branding strategy remains the same over time.

1.2.3 Providing Music Platforms

Lastly, brands can let customers explore new sounds through online platforms, where they can also serve as a music advisor and provide guidance. Coca-Cola recently announced a collaboration with the music streaming service Spotify as part of its Olympic Games 2012 campaign (Social Times, 2012). Here, Coca-Cola will launch an application within Spotify's platform, where it plans to present new music for its fans. To widen the reach, this app will furthermore be integrated into the brand's Facebook page.

1.3 Why Companies are using it

Companies are increasingly becoming aware of the merits of strategic sound branding, as the following quotation by Umut Ozaydinli, the Global Music Marketing Manager of Coca-Cola, shows:

"In recent years technology has changed how people consume music and this has created a lot of new opportunities for us, especially working with social media and learning from how our customers interact with music on these platforms."

Several things about this quotation are striking and also symptomatic for the increasing attention sound branding has received: firstly, companies have become more aware of their customers' media consumption and presence and shifted their activities to these channels accordingly. As one example, corporate spending on online advertising is expected to grow by 15.1% in 2012, totaling 83bn US Dollars, while newspapers are experiencing a steady decline in advertising revenues (The Economist, 2011). Also, the focus on platform interaction is relatively new: marketing is not unidirectional anymore, and companies are focusing on a mutual exchange, i.e. providing something of value

[8] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mts4H1gZf88
[9] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NV1ll9Nkc-Q

that customers will be willing to share among themselves (Kozinets, De Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010).

Lastly, looking at Mr. Ozaydinli's job title, companies – and with Coca-Cola the most valuable brand in the world - seem to feel the need for a dedicated position for a music-marketing manager (Interbrand, 2012).

All these points show that sound branding can be seen as an attempt of brands to communicate in a more meaningful way with consumers. It is not surprising that they choose music to achieve this: in a representative survey, 61% of respondents state that music is important or very important in their lives, and ranked it third in the list of what they could not live without, just behind internet and mobile phones (Heartbeats International AB, 2011a). Moreover, a survey conducted by the consultancy Bands & Brands points out that 80% of people between 16-24 years listen to music every day, and 41% of these listen to it between one and two hours daily (Marketing, 2008). Therefore, roughly 70% of brands say that music will become more important for their brand communication in the future (Heartbeats International AB, 2011b).

Of course, one should keep in mind that companies that have an interest in promoting the use of music conducted these studies. Nonetheless, other research can support these findings by identifying several simultaneous developments as responsible for the high relevance, which are examined more closely in the following (Lusensky, 2011).

1.3.1 Music is the soundtrack of our lives

We live in the first era where music is easily available to anyone, anywhere, anytime. Long gone are the days when people had to play instruments or go to concerts to hear it. The first time music was recorded was in 1878; it was not until 40 years later, though, that it became available to a broader public through the invention of radio channels in 1921 (Audio Engineering Society, 1999). Even though availability and portability increased through the invention of portable cassettes and CD-players, it is MP3 that worked as a game changer within the industry. Entire music libraries could now be taken anywhere and music was just a button away. The consequent integration of MP3 functionality into other portable devices, such as mobile phones, further supported this development.

Consumers listen to music on average on five to six different devices (Marketing, 2008). Music has thus become a natural part in everyday culture – and companies will have to address this phenomenon if they want to stay meaningful.

1.3.2 It's getting more difficult to be heard.

Media fragmentation and visual clutter make it difficult for companies to reach their target customers - each day, consumers are exposed to between 254 and 5000 communication messages fighting for their attention (Rosengren, 2008). Moreover, the number of communications channels has increased, forcing companies to communicate on a multitude of channels and compete for their target customers' attention. Consumers are simply unable to process all the information they are presented with. For companies, this means that working with different media channels needs to become much more strategic and meaningful in order to have an impact on consumers.

1.3.3 Emotions are becoming more important in marketing

Purchase decisions might seem rational, but often consumers are just trying to make sense of an emotional decision (Cohen & Goldberg, 1970). Facing a great amount of stimuli, consumers become less likely to rationally process information depicted in communications, but rather let their emotions decide (Hansen, 2005). This makes triggering (the right) positive emotions and establishing an emotional tie between consumers and the brand more important than ever. Music, as a major emotional trigger, can contribute in this context.

1.3.4 Brands are becoming experiences

To be able to better appeal to emotions and establish clear and strong associations, brands set up holistic experiences (Brodsky, 2011). Such experiences are created with the support of sensory marketing: that means using the five senses of sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing to engage consumers and avoid clutter.

1.3.5 Marketing is not talk, it is conversation

Appealing to emotions and creating experiences refers to a brand interacting with its customers. Digitalization has greatly simplified such

interaction and music can provide a platform for the interaction to take place – be it on festivals, through web platforms, or through supporting bands the target audience admires. All these options serve as potential touch points for brands and consumers. By sponsoring music festivals, for instance companies could interact with customers during the event, i.e. when the consumers are in a positive mood already (Darby, 2008). No wonder American companies were estimated to spend $1.2 billion dollars in 2011 on music venues, festivals and tours (Hampp, 2011b).

1.3.6 Purpose

The aforementioned points underline the need for a strategic use of sound branding. The effectiveness of sound branding measures –particularly within an advertising context - has been proven in various studies and research, as will be shown in the following section. However, there is a lack of research of how sound branding can impact brand image, which requires one to look beneath the 30-seconds contact between a customer and a brand provided by a commercial.

Thus, the main purpose of this study is to look at how three different factors can impact brand attitude of brands that use sound branding strategies: the fit between the strategy and the brand, the personal music taste of the customer and the relevance of music in the life of the customer.

In order to develop the study's approach, previous research has been explored. The main contributions are discussed in the next section.

1.3.7 What has been explored

Music has been in the scope of business-related research for a long time. Not long after the first radio advertisement had aired, research became interested in the effects of this marketing tool on customers (Guest & Brown, 1939). This was also the time when other effects of music, e.g. on work motivation, became areas of interest and research (Kerr, 1945).

Despite this early curiosity, it would take some time for music to become more of a strategic tool: it was Gorn (1982) who used music for conditioning consumers towards preferring a particular product. He found that listening to music one likes while being exposed to an advertisement would significantly increase product preferences due to classical conditioning. However, other

researchers failed to reproduce this effect in several independent studies, thus questioning the validity of Gorn's findings. To date, this effect still remains a subject of discussion (Kellaris & Cox, 1989; Oakes, 2007).

Even though the impact of music taste is still open to debate, there are other factors that research agrees upon, one of the main ones being brand fit. Fit means that a brand uses a branding activity that is appropriate for it, thereby creating emergent meaning for the consumer (Yeoh & North, 2010; Zander & Kapp, 2007). Galan (2009) conceptualized how an "appropriate" strategy can be achieved by using two criteria: relevancy and expectancy. Relevancy deals with the similarity of the meaning of the musical stimulus and the meaning of the message the branding sets out to portray. This is to help the understanding and processing of the message.

Expectancy, on the other hand, takes into account that a particular branding activity has to be put into perspective of a broader context of the company's previous branding activities, because all the branding activities build the brand identity. Expectancy is thus an indicator for how well the actual branding approach matches consumers' expectations of the company's branding efforts. If fit is to be perceived, sound branding needs to be congruent with customers' expectations and their view of that company's branding approaches in general (Groves, 2011).

However, fit is not the sole determinant of attitudes. Repeated music exposure in advertisements, for instance, was found to trigger music liking, and could consequentially lead to liking the advertising and the brand (Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Zajonc, 1968). However, there are some limits to this, as overexposure can be detrimental for the perception of an advertisement, too, as can be seen by looking at Nokia's famous mobile phone ringtone (Craton & Lantos, 2011): Long-established, the ringtone spread with the distribution of Nokia cellphones and today is estimated to be heard about one billion times per day (BBC, 2011). Not surprisingly, consumers started associating the sound with duty calls and thus associated it with intrusion, disruption, and feelings of annoyance – it was "killing the brand" (Lindström, 2008). Consequentially, Nokia crowd-sourced a new ringtone to replace the old one and a dubstep

interpretation of the original tone won the contest[10] (TheNextWeb, 2011; Youtube, 2011b).

Going further down the cause-effect chain of sound branding, researchers have been interested in finding out what aspects would impact consumer perceptions more strongly – the technical ones of music tone and structure, or the strategic implementation of the branding approach. Craton and Lantos (2012) looked closely at these effects. Their research synthesized existing findings and segmented the attitude formation process towards advertising music into four parts: the listening situation, the musical stimulus, listener characteristics and the listener's advertising processing strategy. While the former three determine preconditions, the advertisement processing strategy is key for attitude formation towards the ad itself. In the following, these four parts are going to be briefly discussed, adding other researcher's views on the matter.

1.3.7.1 Sound Branding and the Listening Situation

The listening situation determines how receptive the consumer is to processing the ad and the music in it, which in turn is determined by the program within which the advertisement is aired, the mood it induces and the type of exposure to it (voluntary or involuntary). Research in this area shows that brands can never fully control the listening situation in regular advertisements. Customers might thus reject branding approaches for reasons such as inappropriateness in the current situation of exposure (e.g. it is unfit to their current mood or the situation in which they are in) (Craton & Lantos, 2011).

Sound branding in an online environment adds even more layers to this, as brands neither have control over the situation in which it is received, nor over the device through which it is consumed: low-quality or no speakers at all and background noise are just a few examples that have to be thought of when conducting it. Therefore, research advises to build-in options to for the consumer to adjust the sound of the branding, for example by changing the volume of the sound or opting to not be exposed to auditory cues altogether (Waters, 1997). This possibility to "opt out" is particularly important, as forced exposure has

[10] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-mMMVhruJo

been found to trigger negative attitudes to the music indifferent of personal characteristics (North, Hargreaves, Mackenzie &, Law, 2004).

1.3.7.2 Sound Branding and the Musical Stimulus

The second sub-step for music attitude formation deals with the musical stimulus. One factor is the technical structure such as time, pitch, texture and complexity. High music tempo, for example, was found to inhibit processing the message in an advertisement, as too much cognitive capability is needed to process the sound (Galan, 2009). However, the effects of such characteristics are hard to generalize, as how they are perceived varies according to personal characteristics (North & Hargreaves 2007b).

A more controllable factor is music originality. This concerns the three options a brand has when using sound: it can license an existing song in its original version, use this song, but alter the lyrics, or create its own song or sound. An example for the use of well-known music is Pepsi's affiliation with the Spice Girls for the Pepsi ad "Generation Next" in the late 1990's[11] (YouTube, 2008c). Affiliations like this, in general, have proven to be very effective, because popular music is a "blending of personal, social, and cultural significance" that is consequentially transferred from the song to the brand (Allan, 2006).

Altering existing music to make it fit to the brand message, on the other hand, received mixed reviews: it can lead to a more in-depth processing due to the consumer being surprised to hear unexpected lyrics, but also to disliking (Klein, 2010). The latter can occur when fans of the music are experiencing a dissonance of what they have come to expect from a song and the actual experience. This also holds true for original lyrics if the meaning of a song is unfit to the brand image (Klein, 2010). Pepsi, again, serves as an example here: in 1989, the brand used the song "Like A Prayer" by Madonna in its advertisement[12], but had to take it back after protests from religious groups that felt offended by the music video of this song featuring burning crosses and stigmata (TvTropes, 2012; Youtube, 2009).

Using instrumental songs might be a way to strike a balance between using famous artists and avoiding the risks of that strategy. Purely instrumental songs,

[11] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4GR0Zv0hm0
[12] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8qtsUaoVak

however, have been found to be not as strong in transferring associations than other music, which increases the need for multiple exposure – which, in turn, increases the risk of exposure overkill, causing annoyance (Craton & Lantos, 2011).

Another important factor to be considered when licensing from famous artists is that the brand puts itself in the hands of that artist – for good or for worse. Research on the use of famous artists for sound branding shows that negative information about the artist has the largest impact on celebrity endorsement effectiveness among all factors in advertising evaluation (Amos, Holmes, & Strutton, 2008). For chewing gum producer Wrigley, an artist association with Chris Brown turned sour after the artist had been convicted for an act of domestic violence. Even though Wrigley immediately put all communications activities on hold and did not suffer from bad public relations due to this collaboration, their investments into the campaign –including the production of a dedicated Wrigley's Doublemint song[13], as well as an adaptation of that song for a corporate tune - were lost (CNN, 2009; Youtube, 2008a). These risks are also the reason why research advocates the creation of own songs for brands when planning to integrate them into their activities long-term and not for a single campaign (Groves, 2011).

1.3.7.3 Sound Branding and Personal Characteristics

The third part for music attitude formation deals with listeners' personal characteristics. An extensive sociological assessment of music tastes showed that music and consumer lifestyles are correlated (North & Hargreaves, 2007a, 2007b). Knowing about a music-lifestyle correlation is powerful for targeting specific subcultures as the previously stated example of Vans shows.

To these findings, Craton and Lantos (2012) add the dimensions of life-cycle effects (i.e. that the age of a person determines their susceptibility to listening to and liking a particular type and style of music), and cohort effects (which link age to liking of a specific medium). Generally, they hypothesize that younger audiences tend to prefer music as a medium, and fun and excitement in the tone of the advertisement. Several studies elaborate on the importance of

[13] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enJbXlb4zqo

music according to the age of the listener. Adolescents and young adults are regarded as the segments with the highest music importance ratings. One reason for this music involvement is that they see other benefits in music besides auditory satisfaction, e.g. the possibility to differentiate themselves from other groups, and develop their identity, by showing their personal values and beliefs through their music (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006; Schafer & Sedlmeier, 2009). Furthermore, a survey conducted by the sound branding consultancy Heartbeats shows that 74% of people from 16-24 years old say music is important or very important in their lives – against 61% for the whole sample (Heartbeats International AB, 2011c).

1.3.7.4 Sound Branding and the Processing Strategy

How advertisements are processed differs depending on consumers' involvement with the product (Percy & Elliott, 2009). In addition, Galan (2009) found that it is music perception (congruency and liking), rather than music structure (such as tempo and key) that is the strongest determinant of how advertising is perceived. Music has also been found to play a different role in processing an advertisement depending on the product involvement and on the route through which the message is processed (Park & Young, 1986; Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). Message processing can occur centrally, i.e. on a conscious level with a focus on information, or peripherally, that is on a subconscious level and more emotionally.

For low-involvement products, liking the music is important, because the advertisement is processed through the peripheral route. This, of course, makes the use of music very effective, as researchers found (Celsi & Olson, 1988; Macinnis & Park, 1991; Petty et al., 1983).

For high-involvement situations, Petty et al. define that processing is more central (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). In these situations, the music-message fit is more relevant – the music must not distract from processing the message.

If there is a fit between the advertisement message and the music, then favorable associations towards the advertisement and the brand are established,

and various studies underline the importance of fit for increasing awareness and establishing, supporting, or changing brand associations (Craton & Lantos, 2012; Groves, 2011; Macinnis & Park, 1991; Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011; North et al., 2004; Yeoh & North, 2010; Zander & Kapp, 2007). Still, there is no study on whether it is internal consistency –the fit between the music used and the consumer's music taste - or external consistency – the fit between the brand and the music it uses - that is more important.

If fit is important, brands face the challenge of establishing it for the whole target audience that can comprise very different characters with different tastes in music. How fit is perceived is still subject to discussion, though: some pointed out that consumers can objectively judge fit –indifferent of their music taste (North et al., 2004). The objectivity of fit has to be put into perspective: since fit is an individual evaluation that cannot be measured in the narrow sense, fit cannot be objective. A more appropriate term for a perception of fit that is agreed upon by a large group of individuals would thus be an intersubjective perception of fit. This is in line with Holzkamp (1991), who states that the conclusions an individual arrives from assessing stimulus conditions can be said to be intersubjectively accessible. An intersubjective perception would accordingly be a perception that a group of individuals agree upon. In the following, this term will be used instead of the term objective, as it more precisely describes the case of brand fit. Other resarchers, however, point out that what determines if consumers perceive a branding as fit or not is still not fully clear; it has been proven that music structure itself is not enough to guarantee fit and that subjective definitions of fit might thus be better than intersubjective ones (Yeoh & North, 2010).

1.3.7.5 Sound Branding and other Areas of Application

Apart from external communications, music can also be used to alter in-store behavior. Research has proven that music can alter perceptions of waiting times or the likelihood of impulse buying (Garlin & Owen, 2006; North & Hargreaves, 1997; North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick, 2000; Argo, Popa, & Smith, 2010). A study on music in public spaces conducted by the sound branding consultancy Heartbeats points out that when music that consumers like is

played, they stay longer, and are more willing to re-visit a place (Heartbeats AB, 2008). Music can also influence product choice and the willingness to pay (North & Hargreaves, 1997; North et al., 2000). For example, customers can be induced to choose a product based on reason (e.g. a fruit salad) instead of emotion (chocolate) or to prefer German over French wine depending on the music played (Argo et al., 2010; Lindström, 2008).

Music even plays a role for such technical areas as service hotlines. According to a study about on-hold telephone waiting times under different circumstances (no background music, instrumental music and songs), customers will hold the line significantly longer if there is music on hold and even more so if they perceive the music to fit their expectations (North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick, 1999).

Sponsorships of artists and music festivals have also received more attention in the last years: music sponsorships require a great understanding of the fit between the event and both the brand and target market. Considering the great variance in lifestyles for different music genres, reaching the right target audience becomes a difficult task (Marketing, 2008). On the other hand, music festivals are great arenas for brands, as 87% of festival visitors have been found to have positive attitudes towards sponsors exposed there (Marketing Week, 2007).

As can be seen by this chapter, sound branding - like all branding activities - is not a silver bullet in itself; it needs to be done right to achieve the desired outcomes. It is a classic example of “no risk, no fun” – and researchers –just as this thesis - try to reduce the former, and maximize the latter. To provide a better overview, the existing findings are summarized below.

Table 1: Research on Factors Influencing Sound Branding Processing

Attribute	Description – What exactly affects the Evaluation of Sound Branding		Sources
Personality Traits	Age, sex, culture, social class, social groups, personality		(Craton & Lantos, 2012; Percy & Elliott, 2009)
Music Taste	Music taste is an expression for the belonging to a certain lifestyle group		(North & Hargreaves, 2007a, 2007b)
Music Importance	Personal music relevance affects the attention someone will give to music in general		(Celsi & Olson, 1988; Malär et al., 2011)
Listening Situation	Social context, interfering activities, voluntary vs. involuntary exposure		(Craton & Lantos, 2012)
Musical Stimulus	Musical source, structural music characteristics, genre, style, artist		(Amos et al., 2008; Craton & Lantos, 2012; Groves, 2011; Lusensky, 2011)
Quality Perceptions	Quality evaluation of the sound branding approach affects consumer mindset		(Cobb-Walgren, Ruble, & Donthu, 1995)
Self-referencing	Self-referencing leads to a better message elaboration, thus increasing communication effectiveness		(Burnkrant & Unnava, 1995)
Cases – Involvement	How involvement and purchasing motives affect marketing communications processing		(Percy & Elliott, 2009; Zaichkowsky, 1985)
Cases – Processing	How the processing route affects whether information processing is done objectively (central) or emotionally (peripheral)		(Petty et al., 1983)
Strong Music Liking	Low Involvement / Peripheral: Increased communication effectiveness, as it triggers emotions	High involvement / Central: Liked music disturbs message processing, is detrimental for evaluation	(Bierley, McSweeney, & Vannieywkerk, 1985; Celsi & Olson, 1988; Gorn, 1982; Macinnis & Park, 1991; Petty et al., 1983)
Weak Music Liking	Low Involvement / Peripheral: Detrimental for evaluation	High involvement / Central: No effect, focus on objective measures	
Fit Perception	Low Involvement / Peripheral: Cues requiring little processing are most important, e.g. liking of the music	High involvement / Central: High music-message fit facilitates message processing	(Craton & Lantos, 2012; Galan, 2009; Groves, 2011; Park & Young, 1986)

1.4 The best is yet to come

While previous research has singled out several beneficial effects of music for marketing, this often had a narrow focus: it concentrated on advertising and in-store activities.

This is only one part of the multitude of sound branding opportunities, as sound branding has previously been defined as any music-related branding activity and encompasses thus much more. If holistically implemented, music branding should have an effect not only on advertisement attitudes, but also on brands in general. This would increase the strategic importance of music – and thus be an effective marketing tool.

Another limitation of previous studies is that they have treated the importance of fit between a brand, the music and the personal music taste of consumers separately. Especially when it comes to fit, studies have not been clear on how intersubjective the perception of fit can be. Finally, previous research has looked at how attitudes can vary depending on product involvement, but has not accounted for the effect of personal music involvement. Thus, the main goal of this study is to measure whether there is any interaction effect between brand fit and personal music taste, and what the outcomes of sound branding strategies on brand attitude and associations are. Beginning on this point, the research questions are presented:

1. Can sound branding create *brand associations* even when they contradict other brand communication activities?
2. Does *brand fit* of sound branding strategies affect *brand attitudes*?
3. Is the *perception of sound branding fit* intersubjective, and if not, does *personal music taste* influence fit perception?
4. Does *personal music taste* of sound branding strategies affect *brand attitudes*?
5. Is there an interaction effect of *personal music taste* and *brand fit* of sound branding strategies on consumer *brand attitudes*?
6. Does *brand attitude* change depending on how *personally relevant* music is to consumers?

1.5 Contribution to the Real World

As outlined, there is a need for assessing the effect of more comprehensive branding approaches that go beyond studying the effect of music in advertisements and in-store activities. This study provides such a holistic marketing approach, which will support marketers in building a strong brand and positioning it. Another benefit of a complete approach is that it will create more opportunities for customer interaction – which increases the occasions for gathering more information about customer preferences and allows for refining marketing activities.

Marketers will, with the help of this study, be better able to determine how they should design their sound branding strategy and what aspects are most important to consider within it and thus increase the efficiency of their marketing efforts. Examples of benefits would be gaining an understanding of what music to play in advertisements, what events to sponsor and what music to play in a store.

Lastly, it provides marketers with important information when dealing with sound designers, as they are made aware of what aspects in the sound branding design are most important to focus on. Therefore, this study aims to make marketing more efficient and reduce marketing clutter.

1.6 Limitations

Albeit this study aims to deliver broadly useful results, some factors have to be considered that affect the generalizability of the findings – namely time, monetary resources and the response base. The limited time available for the study made it impossible to look at long-term branding affects, such as the build-up of brand attachment, or to establish and alter associations for brands over time. However, the main purpose of the study was to look at the effects sound branding exerts on brand attitudes and brand associations, not attachment and loyalty. Moreover, consumer activities, such as purchase intentions and willingness to pay were not included.

Additionally, had there been no monetary constraints, the products this study uses for assessing associations and attitudes could have been developed in reality, and the experiment could have been conducted in a more controlled

setting. This could have ensured that consumers perceive the product in a natural setting and thus supported the evaluation as a low-involvement purchasing situation. While the former would have allowed respondents to get a better understanding of the brand, the latter would have controlled for external factors affecting the survey completion. However, the study was only interested in sound branding and all external cues were to be reduced to a minimum – which is why the lack of a physical product is deemed acceptable in this case. The lack of a controlled environment, while bothersome for researchers, actually makes sound branding research more realistic. In reality, brands rarely have full control over the environment within which their activities are processed, albeit the risk of a more active processing of the purchasing process than in a natural setting.

There are several factors affecting the generalizability of this study: Firstly, it uses products belonging to the food and beverages category. Therefore, the findings can only be said to hold true within this category. Another limiting factor is the selection of the respondent base – i.e. students from Stockholm School of Economics. An international study with respondents from different age groups and different occupations would have improved the general applicability of the findings. However, this would have made it very difficult to determine comparable products against which the products of this study are positioned. Moreover, students comprise the age group for which music is most important, which is why the effects of sound branding activities are expected to be most pronounced here.

1.7 Words to know

Speaking of sound – some words used throughout this thesis might sound strange or unfamiliar to the reader. Most of them should be explained below.

Brand song: Corporate song normally created for internal use such as motivational purposes, with lyrics directed at employees or partners. The lyrics can contain information about products, services and benefits offered (Groves, 2011).

Central Route Processing: Information processing strategy based on actively processing information. Considered to be more rationally established, to create long-lasting attitudes and be predictive of behavior. Linked to high involvement situations (Petty et al., 1983).

High Involvement Products: Products for which a purchase decision involves great perceived risks, leading customers to actively look for product information and to process them extensively (Percy & Elliott, 2009).

In-store soundtrack: Music played at the point of sale (Groves, 2011).

Jingle: A short, catchy verse often used in musical advertising (Groves, 2011).

Low Involvement Products: Products for which a purchase decision involves little risk, leading customers to not extensively look for information and decide based on feelings (Percy & Elliott, 2009).

Media Fragmentation: Great increase of the amount of communication channels available for companies, both in traditional media (due to increasing number of TV channels, radio stations, magazine titles) and in newer digital media (social media, websites, video-on-demand) making it hard for business communications to achieve a high reach (Aris & Bughin, 2009).

Music on Hold: Music or messages played in the telephone while the caller is waiting (VoiceMailTel, 2012).

Peripheral Route Processing: Information processing strategy based on subconscious assessment, rather than a conscious analysis of the subject. Less time and relevance is given to the matter, it is normally more emotionally conducted and it is linked to low involvement situations (Petty et al., 1983).

Sound Branding: The strategic use of sound and music to establish or strengthen a link between a brand and its customers. It requires a structured process to develop, implement and manage the sounds a brand uses in all of its communications. Also referred to as audio-, sonic-, acoustic- or auditory branding (Lusensky, 2011).

Sound Elements: Every single sound produced for the sound branding strategy. Together they form the sound identity of the brand. Examples are sound logos, music on hold and ringtones (Groves, 2011).

Sound Hypothesis: A statement of what the brand wants to communicate with the sound branding strategy in music terms. E.g. “a traditional sounding,

premium quality sound identity, that leaves an active but still cool impression" (Groves, 2011, loc. 2088).

Sound Identity: The audible equivalent of a visual identity. It defines how the brand should use music in its communications and it consists of brand sound elements (Groves, 2011).

Sound Logo: Short distinctive melody, lasting from three to five seconds, normally used in the beginning or end of an advertisement (Groves, 2011).

Visual clutter: Excess exposure to visual communication messages, making it impossible for customers to process everything that is being displayed (Rosengren, 2008).

1.8 Thesis Outline

This study is divided into five parts: "Start me Up" (the introduction) - which you have just read through- explains the background of sound branding, advocates for its use in marketing activities, shows what has already been studied on the topic, what is missing and what is the specific theme of interest for this research, finishing with important terms on the subject.

In part two, "Imagine", the deductive approach of the thesis is outlined; this is done by presenting the study variables and formulating the research hypotheses.

The methodology comprises the third part, "That is How it Goes". It explains how the research process was conducted and why the hypotheses were translated into questions in the way they are, as well as gives reasons for the selection of the respondent base, distribution of the survey and analysis method.

As a fourth part, "Ways & Means", the research findings are analyzed by using statistical tools. The conduct of this process and the acceptance or rejection of the respective hypotheses is what this part comprises.

Finally, part five, "When the Music is Over", discusses the findings of the study and puts them into perspective against the study design and other external criteria. Based on this, managerial implications, as well as areas for future research are explained.

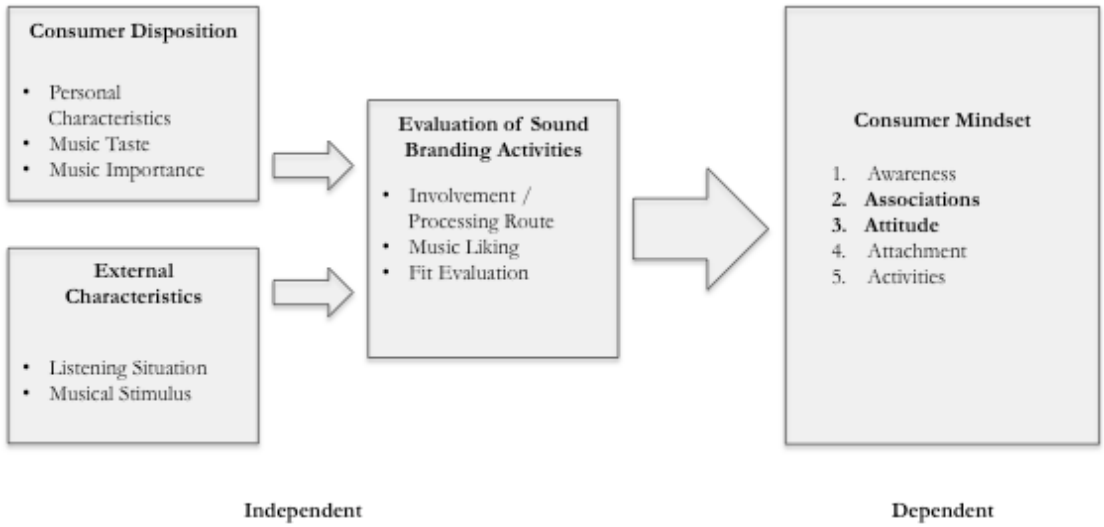
2 Imagine - Hypothesis Generation

In the following chapter, the variables this study focuses on are presented and categorized into a conceptual model that can be used for guidance throughout the thesis. This is followed by the reasoning for and presentation of the study hypotheses.

2.1 Sound Branding Effect Model

The study variables are explored based on their relevance for key measures in marketing, as well as their utility for evaluating mock brands in an experimental setting. The following model (Figure 1) is an appropriation of Keller's consumer mindset model and the consumer response model by Craton and Lantos (Craton & Lantos, 2012; Keller et al., 2008). The consumer disposition part comprises personal consumer characteristics, which are controlled for in the study by choosing a respondent base that is as homogenous as possible. The other two factors of this part are the personal music taste and the perceived importance of music - both of which have been included as independent variables in this study (the latter, music taste, in connection with music liking, a part of the evaluation step of this model). The external characteristics, i.e. the listening situation and the musical stimulus, are not controlled for due to the nature of this study being an online survey. Regarding the evaluation strategy, involvement can be said to be accounted for by the brands this study uses. Fit evaluation is -in this study- an independent variable, too, as it is pre-tested in a survey prior to the main experiment. Lastly, the consumer mindset includes the dependent variables that are in the focus of interest: associations and attitudes. Awareness is accounted for through the experimental setting, while attachment and consumer activities have been excluded, because they would require a long-term study.

Figure 1: Sound Branding Effect Model



2.2 Independent Variables

The three independent variables -*fi*t of the brand with the branding strategy, *personal music taste* and *music relevance*- are important for marketing effectiveness, as numerous existing research has proven in the context of advertisement (Pelsmacker & Geuens, 2002; Zander, 2006). Brand *fit* is based on congruency theory and, as the previously mentioned studies on fit between music and the message portrayed in advertising state, plays an important role for the success and effectiveness of a branding approach. A better fit can lead to more positive attitudes towards the music displayed, as well as towards the brand, and thus serves to increase purchase intentions (Craton & Lantos, 2012; Galan, 2009).

The other factors affecting the formation of brand attitudes are the external environment, other personal characteristics and previously established brand attitudes, as well as all other branding activities a brand undergoes. All of these are controlled for in this study.

The two elements of interest in the context of sound branding are the *personal music taste* and the *personal music relevance* of a respondent. *Personal music relevance* is an important aspect, because it affects the attitude towards the medium of interest. The type of media used, in turn, significantly affects brand perceptions (Dahlén, Friberg, & Nilsson, 2009).

The second aspect, *personal taste* and preference, have been proven to be affected by branding approaches in experiments, e.g. for perceptions of beer brands or taste distinctions between Coca-Cola and Pepsi (Keller et al., 2008; McClure et al., 2004). However, taste preferences –and music taste in particular- are the outcome of an affiliation with a certain lifestyle, and are thus the result of a multitude of influences that have been built up over time (McClure et al., 2004; North & Hargreaves, 2007a). Therefore, exposure to a previously unknown brand will not immediately affect personal music tastes. As will be explained in the methodology part, this study uses fictional brands that are new to the survey respondent, which is why this variable is treated as independent.

The following section will explain the importance of the variables that are affected by the different treatment conditions of the experiment.

2.3 Dependent Variables

The dependent variables, *brand attitudes and brand associations*, belong to the consumer mindset (Figure 1). The consumer mindset is a sequential model, meaning that attitudes are formed through a process that starts with awareness, followed by establishing associations that can lead to brand attitudes. These could translate into brand attachment and ultimately into brand activities such as purchase.

In an experimental setting, awareness is guaranteed. Associations, as well as attitudes, are the product of a holistic impression of several branding activities, such as the quality of the marketing approach, its distinctiveness, clarity and relevance (Keller et al., 2008). Brand attachment is the outcome of exposure to a multitude of branding activities over time, rather related to high involvement situations and limited to only very few brands, as well as unlikely to occur for mock brands (Thomson & MacInnis, 2005). All the above are believed to trigger purchase intentions and, ultimately, translate into behavior – which comprise the fifth part of the consumer mindset model (Keller et al., 2008).

2.4 Research Hypotheses

Based on the previously outlined model, several interactions become interesting to look at. Specifically, the dependent and independent variables can be used to answer the previously stated research questions.

2.4.1 Can Sound Branding Create and Change Brand Associations?

The first step towards changing the consumer mindset that can be tested in the environment of this study is the impact of sound branding on brand associations. Looking at this effect becomes particularly interesting when activities aim at changing associations or adding new ones to an existing brand. Advertising music has in previous research been proven to be capable of reinforcing existing associations and creating new ones (Park & Young, 1986).

Moreover, consumers have particular emotions towards specific types of music (North & Hargreaves, 2007a, 2007b). If associations exist towards a music style, consumers are likely to transfer them to the brand that uses that particular music, a concept also referred to as indexicality (Macinnis & Park, 1991).

Existing research has focused on the impact of music in advertisement. It should however be expected that the transfer of associations will still hold true for holistic sound branding activities, which is why the following hypothesis is created:

H1 *Brand associations differ according to the sound branding strategy presented to a consumer.*

2.4.2 Is There an Effect of Sound Branding Strategy Fit on Brand Attitudes?

One of the independent variables of the aforementioned model that affects how a branding strategy is processed is the fit of the brand and the branding approach it uses. Fit, as explained before, is built on relevancy and expectancy (Galan, 2009). Brands that use a sound branding that fits their image are 96% more likely to be recalled than those that use music that does not fit (North & Hargreaves, 1997). If fit is not established, sound branding leads to a significantly lower recognition of the branding approach – a waste of resources, especially since it has become hard for brands to gain attention in the first place (Katsnelson, 2011). Moreover, a lack of alignment between the sound branding strategy and brand identity can even lead consumers to experience incongruence, resulting in the establishment of negative brand perceptions (Lavack, Thakor, & Bottausci, 2008).

As fit affects brands attitudes in general, it is an important factor to consider when evaluating sound branding strategies. Therefore, the following hypothesis is constituted:

H2	*Fit between the music identity and the brand affects brand attitudes.*

2.4.3 Is Brand Fit Intersubjective?

Since fit is hypothesized to have an influence on brand attitudes, it is relevant to determine how intersubjective the assessment of fit is. If fit is intersubjective, brands could design a general fitting branding strategy – if not, it would have to match the perception of a certain target audience.

Research is not unanimous on this matter. Some studies point out that consumers can intersubjectively assess whether a branding approach is in line with the company's previous branding activities and associations (Craton & Lantos, 2011; Groves, 2011; North et al., 2004). The main argumentation is that the assessment is solely based on relevancy and expectancy (Galan, 2009). Others, however, state that there is no clear evidence of what it is in a music that makes it fit, and, as musical structure alone is insufficient to establish fit, one should prioritize subjective approaches of fit rather than intersubjective ones (Yeoh & North, 2010).

An important factor on how subjective or intersubjective a consumer will assess fit could be linked to the processing strategy. As previously discussed, high involvement products are centrally processed, making the information processing more extensive and objective. On the other hand, low involvement products, which are in the focus of this study, are processed through the peripheral route. In this route, consumers make decisions based on simple inferences and associations established according to the cues received (Petty et al., 1983). Fit would, according to these theories, be perceived differently depending on whether a consumer likes or dislikes a branding approach.

In the context of sound branding, music is seen as an important cue, one that, if perceived positively, can influence attitudes towards low involvement products (Celsi & Olson, 1988; Macinnis & Park, 1991; Petty et al., 1983). Fit perception would accordingly be a rather subjective process, dependent on the consumer's personal music taste.

A substantial difference of this study compared to the previous research is the focus on branding strategies (as opposed to commercials), which comprise many different activities. A strategy should give a consumer more information and cues to process and create associations in order to determine if there is congruence not. Consequently, for holistic branding approaches for low involvement products, it is expected that consumers cannot intersubjectively assess fit. Therefore, the following is expected to hold true:

H3 *Personal music taste affects the perception of fit of a sound branding strategy*.

2.4.4 What is the Effect of Music Taste on Brand Attitudes?

If music taste has an impact on fit perceptions, and brand fit influences brand attitude, music taste could be expected to affect brand attitudes.

An extensive study conducted by North & Hargreaves (2007a, 2007b, 2007c) points to a correlation between personal music taste and different aspects of participants' lifestyles, such as media preference, beliefs, leisure activities, and education, among others. Hence, there is an indication that the musical preference is both a reason for a broader pattern of lifestyle choices and a consequence of a specific lifestyle. It is important to point out that, even though most people enjoy more than one particular music style, there is normally one music genre that people see as their prime music preference (North & Hargreaves, 2007a). Such music preference is often seen as an extension of oneself: it expresses one's personality, and the belonging to a certain group (Groves, 2011).

Just as music taste is used to express one's lifestyle, brand preference communicates who we are, helps us to satisfy our need for identity formation, belonging to a group, status and self-fulfillment (Chitturi & Raghunathan, 2008; Lusensky, 2011). If music is an approximation for one's lifestyle and group membership, could it be inferred that music taste can affect brand attitudes? Previous studies and literature have different findings on this question.

According to Oakes (2007), the choice of a music genre for an advertising approach is important, as different genres have completely different appeals depending on the customer segment. Groves (2011) argues that it is always

positive and important that the target group likes the music. He, however, also states that liking is no requirement for positive brand attitudes.

Not everyone shares this opinion, though: studies have shown that, if music alienates the target market, the consumer would see the communication as irrelevant and not feel addressed by the campaign. Additionally, stronger results to disliking the music employed by a brand have been found: for the case of TV commercials, negative attitudes due to disliked music styles have been found to influence brand attitudes just as strongly as positive attitudes resulting from liked music styles – not even considering other factors like music fit (Craton & Lantos, 2011; North & Hargreaves, 2007).

These thoughts suggest that, even if it is not possible to please every customer by using her/his favorite music genre, the brand still has to do its best not to displease her/him with the choice of music. In any case, the hypothesis below is put to test:

H4 *Personal music taste affects brand attitude.*

2.4.5 What is the Effect of Brand Fit and Music Taste, Taken Together, on Brand Attitudes?

Having established distinct effects for two of the independent variables on brand attitudes, the question arouses whether there is also an interaction effect of their influence on brand attitudes. In that case, taking a closer look at the expected interaction effects will give valuable insights about which variable plays a stronger role in this process. First of all, though, one has to determine whether an interaction effect can in fact be expected.

Existing research has been unanimously in support of this theory. As brought before, brand fit is an assessment by the consumer of whether the music branding reflects the brand associations that were previously established. Personal taste has been categorized as a personal characteristic and is a sub-step of the attitude formation, too (Craton & Lantos, 2012).

Researching about interactions, Galan (2009) proved that there are combined effects of likeability and congruency on responses towards advertisements.

Craton and Lantos (2012) arrive at the same point in their model of

consumer response towards advertising music, where they conclude that the attitude towards the advertisement comprises many different factors and hypothesize that an interaction between personal characteristics and the music-message fit exists. Thus, it is expected that the concept holds true in the branding context, too:

H5: *Music taste and perceived brand fit interact on their impact on brand attitudes*.

If an interaction between the two variables is expected, it is interesting to find out in which way the interaction takes place. In total, there are four scenarios based on the two main independent variables, strategy fit and music taste (Table 2):

Table 2: Cases according to Strategy Fit and Music Liking

Strategy fit / Liking of the music genre	**Like**	**Do not like**
Fit	I	III
Unfit	II	IV

The most interesting of these cases, naturally, are the ones that are not clear-cut, i.e. cases II (unfit strategy, but liking the music) and III (fit strategy, but disliking the music) and their impact on brand attitudes.

In these cases, cognitive dissonance occurs when consumers are exposed to a strategy, because they evaluate one information cue positively, but the other negatively. Theory on cognitive dissonance argues that it triggers psychological discomfort, which leads the consumer to change attitudes in order to reestablish congruence (Elliot & Devine, 1994; Russell & Stern, 2006).

For case II, where consumers like the music, but there is no fit between the branding approach and the brand, the effect of music liking is important to look at: research has shown that consumers can transfer meanings from music they like in an advertisement to the advertisement itself (Macinnis & Park, 1991). This would lead to a higher awareness of the lack of fit between the music and the message, as consumers try to transfer the associations of the music they like to the branding, but these do not fit the brand (Galan, 2009).

Still, a brand's music identity also gives consumers the opportunity to have a sense of belonging, as they can identify with the brand through the common music genre (North & Hargreaves, 2007a). It is therefore hypothesized that if consumers like the music, their liking has a mediating effect on brand attitudes that softens the impact of a lack of fit.

The opposite scenario (case III), when there is a fit strategy, but consumers dislike the music, should be equally affected by balancing theory. As outlined, disliking the music of a branding approach can trigger negative emotions towards the advertisement and, ultimately, to the brand.

However, a fit branding approach is hypothesized to raise brand attitudes – meaning that a mediating effect should hold true in this scenario, too. Therefore, it is expected that in order to prevent negative attitudes towards a brand, it is sufficient if either fit or music liking are evaluated favorably, as either positive cue will help to mediate negative attitudes resulting from either an unfit strategy or a disliked music.

H5.1 *Music taste and perceived brand fit have interchangeable effects on preventing negative brand attitudes.*

2.4.6 What is the Effect of Personal Music Relevance on Brand Attitude?

Besides perceived brand fit and personal music taste, another aspect that plays a role in attitude formation is the personal relevance of music. According to Celsi & Olson (1988), perceived personal relevance determines the degree of consumer involvement with an object, situation or action. Involvement is associated with consumer information processing and it is dependent on how important the customer considers the product to be.

It is expected that the importance of using a sound branding strategy will differ depending on the involvement customers have with music – i.e. how personally relevant music is to them. A high relative importance of music will lead to a greater appreciation of the sound branding efforts a brand undergoes – indifferent of the personal liking of this approach. Perceiving music to be personally relevant will lead to a "gratification" of the use of sound branding, resulting in a more positive brand attitude.

Moreover, the more important music is, the more important will the personal taste become for the evaluation of sound branding activities – and thus for brand attitudes. Therefore, the following two hypotheses are stated:

H6	*Consumers for whom music is more personally relevant have higher attitudes towards brands that use sound branding than other consumers.*
H6.1	*Brand attitude is affected by music taste when music is highly relevant for consumers.*

To allow for a better overview, the hypotheses (H 1-6.1) are summarized below:

Table 3: Summary of Hypotheses

H	**Description**
1	*Brand associations differ according to the sound branding strategy presented to a consumer.*
2	*Fit between the music identity and the brand affects brand attitudes.*
3	*Personal music taste affects the perception of fit of a sound branding strategy.*
4	*Personal music taste affects brand attitude.*
5	*Music taste and perceived brand fit interact on their impact on brand attitudes*.
5.1	*Music taste and perceived brand fit have interchangeable effects on preventing negative brand attitudes.*
6	*Consumers for whom music is more personally relevant have higher attitudes towards brands that use sound branding than other consumers.*
6.1	*Brand attitude is affected by music taste when music is highly relevant for consumers.*

3 That's How it Goes - Methodology

In the following, the design of the brands and sound branding strategies used for the experiment of this study are outlined. Moreover, necessary pre-tests for the final questionnaire are reported and reasons for including the respective dependent and independent variables are given. Lastly, precautions that have been made to achieve valid sampling and sufficient data quality are explained.

3.1 Research Approach

The following findings are based on a deductive approach and grounded on the theory and research outlined in the previous chapters (Malhotra, 2010). The study is explanatory, in that it explains the findings and their underlying causes– i.e. how differing types and fit-scenarios of sound branding affect consumers in a controlled environment and for low-involvement products. For this, an experiment conducted through a quantitative study is deemed most appropriate (Malhotra, 2010).

3.2 Designing Brands…

In order to control for expectancy (expected branding approaches inferred from a consumer's previous experiences with the brand), "mock brands" were used in the experiment (Galan, 2009; Keller et al., 2008). This allowed for isolating the perception of sound branding strategies from these expectations.

Two brands were designed: 70° North, a bottled water brand (Appendix 1 and 2) and Suflair, a chocolate bar (Appendix 1 and 3). Both categories, bottled water and chocolate bars, can be characterized as being low-involvement and transformational in their purchasing process, which makes customers focus more on the communications activities than on product attributes and makes it easier to transfer music-related associations compared to a high-involvement product (Hoyer & McGinnis, 2007; Percy & Elliott, 2009; Zhu & Meyers-Levy, 2005). Moreover, low-involvement products increase the likelihood that the respondents see themselves as potential customers of the product and they can therefore give more valuable answers regarding their feelings and opinions.

The two brands, Suflair and 70° North, are adaptations of existing concepts or brands (Nestlé, 2012; Tank, 2010). Suflair is based on a chocolate bar brand

from Brazil, while 70° North uses an existing design study. This choice was made to make the products appeal more real to the respondents by providing them with a realistic packaging example (Appendix 1).

The risk that respondents know about Suflair was minimized through the survey distribution process – it was only sent out to respondents residing in Sweden. In addition, the brand image for Suflair used in this survey differs largely from the one of the real brand, both in terms of communication activities and the target group. A third measure to minimize the risk of existing associations was to clearly state that the brands are fictional, rather than adaptations of brands.

For 70° North, respondents could only know the image of the design study, but not have any associations to the brand.

For each of the two brands, a complete brand strategy was designed (Appendix 2 and 3). It was deemed necessary to create two brands with differing images and target groups, so that the effect of personal taste towards the brands on the evaluation of brand attitudes could be accounted for.

Guiding concepts for the brand strategies were the customer based brand equity pyramid put forth by Keller, as well as the widely used concept of 4P (Keller et al., 2008; McCarthy, 1990). Moreover, a brand mantra, positioning statement, and target group were created according to literature (Keller et al., 2008). Even though not each element of the branding was finally presented to the respondents, it was required to create all these parts in order to design consistent and appropriate sound branding strategies.

3.3 ...and Sound Branding Strategies

In a second step after creating the brands, a respective sound branding strategy was designed according to Groves' guidelines (2011) for sound branding for 70° North (Appendix 4), as well as for Suflair (Appendix 5).

In line with this, the brand associations that are to be expressed by the sound identity have to be prioritized, be incorporated in a sound hypothesis and, ultimately, transferred into a sound identity statement.

The sound identity statement can consequently be used to select a song that expresses the intended identity through an appropriate tempo, style and instrumentation.

To clarify the sound branding strategy, three sound branding activities, as well as a song were presented in the survey. While the song was selected through the previously described process, sound branding activities were chosen to match three criteria for holistic sound branding, as explained by Lusensky (2011) and described in this study before. One activity associated the brand with a specific music genre, another was based on an artist collaboration and the third one was to set up a platform for users to interact with the brand through a specific music genre.

After the design of the brands and their respective sound strategies, these were presented to Hans Iwarsson, consultant at the sound branding consultancy Heartbeats. His input was used to refine the brand positioning and sound branding strategies.

In line with his recommendations, it was chosen to create a brand history and include this in the survey. Moreover, the unfit strategies were made more pronounced, i.e. the difference between the brand image and the sound branding identity was increased.

Still, in order to make both sound identities seem credible, it was decided to only alter certain characteristics in the sound hypothesis, i.e. to create a sound hypothesis that is internally consistent, just not congruent with the brand.

3.4 Pre-test: Testing Perceptions of Fit and Unfit

In order to ensure that the sound branding strategies that were to be used in the experiment would be perceived as unfitting and fitting by respondents, a pre-test was deemed necessary. The pre-test included the two brands Suflair and 70° North, for which a respective fit and unfit sound branding strategy had been designed.

Respondents of the pre-test comprised a convenience sample of 60 students from Stockholm. The sample was selected due to its similarity with the population of the final study, but the ones who partook in the pre-test were not asked to complete the main study, so that response biases could be avoided.

A further measure to mitigate response biases was to not disclose the purpose of the survey. In the survey, respondents were randomly assigned to either one brand (Suflair or 70° North), presented with information regarding the brand, its (fictional) history, competitors and distribution, and consequently asked to evaluate the two sound branding strategies (Appendix 6).

In order to account for order biases and to mitigate the effect the order of appearance of the branding strategies has on the respondent, the order of appearance of the branding strategy (fit and unfit) was randomized.

Moreover, to use the pre-test sample as a control group and compare it to the final experiment to measure differences in brand attitude and associations, respondents were asked to rate their attitudes towards the brand after having read the brand descriptions, but before being presented with the sound identity. To measure attitudes, three seven-point bipolar scales were used: "good/bad", "favorable/unfavorable" and "likable/dislikable". These have been widely used before and proven to be reliable (Aaker, 2000; Aylesworth, Goodstein, & Kalra, 1999).

The fit perceptions were assessed through scales that had been designed to measure congruence. Again, three seven-point bipolar-scale items, namely "not compatible/compatible", "not a good fit/good fit" and "not congruent/congruent" were used that had been established previously (Trimble & Rifon, 2004). Lastly, all respondents were asked to provide their demographics, so that the homogeneity of the response sample could be ensured.

For the analysis, brand attitude questions were indexed, after having tested their internal validity through a Cronbach's alpha test that indicated a value of 0.97. Values above 0.6 are internally valid enough to be indexed (Malhotra, 2010). The same test was conducted for fit perceptions, again generating a validity higher than 0.6, namely 0.96.

To determine whether the mean fit perceptions differ with statistical significance between the fit and the unfit strategy, a paired-samples test compared the mean fit perceptions index of the two strategies for each brand. For 70° North, the unfit strategy (mean fit rating: 2.99) received fit scores that were 2.43 scale-points lower, on average, than the fit strategy (mean fit rating: 5.42) (Table 4). This is statistically significant on a 0.01 level.

While the results for Suflair showed a statistically significant difference, too (on a 0.01 level), it was relatively small: the fit strategy (mean: 5.66) received 1.44 scale-points higher ratings than the unfit one (Table 4 and Table 5).

Moreover, the mean score for the unfit strategy of 4.21 is not yet a negative fit rating. Therefore, the unfit strategy was redesigned. It was decided to increase the contrast by moving the sound branding strategy further away from the recommended consistency Groves (2011) and Lusensky (2011) suggest to receive higher unfit scores (Appendix 7). Consequentially, the Suflair survey was sent out again and answered by 33 respondents (who had not yet answered the initial pre-test survey). After the redesign, fit questions could still be indexed due to a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.99. The new unfit strategy (mean: 1.56) received 3.93 scale points lower fit-ratings, on average, than the fit strategy (mean: 5.49) (significant at the 0.01 level) (Table 4 and Table 5).

Table 4: Pre-test I: Fit Ratings of Brand Image and Sound Branding Strategy

Case	Mean Fit Rating	Std. Dev.	N
Suflair Initial Fit	5.66	0.97	30
Suflair Initial Unfit	4.21	1.69	30
Suflair Redesign Fit	5.49	1.20	33
Suflair Redesign Unfit	1.56	0.62	33
70° North Fit	5.42	1.35	32
70° North Unfit	2.99	1.56	32

Table 5: Pre-test I: Mean Differences in Fit Evaluations Fit vs. Unfit

Strategy	Mean Difference Fit vs. Unfit Scenario	t	Sig.
Suflair Initial	1.44	4.35	0.00
Suflair Redesign	3.93	17.24	0.00
70° North	2.43	8.38	0.00

3.5 Pre-test II: Testing Associations

After the correct assessment of fit perceptions for the designed brands were assured, a second pre-test was conducted to enable the measurement of associations in the experiment (Appendix 8). In this pre-test, respondents were presented with the four sound branding strategies only – the brands to which they belong were not disclosed. Respondents of the second pre-test also

comprised a convenience sample of 30 students from Stockholm, and did not answer to either the first pre-test or the experiment. Once again, the sound branding strategies had their order or appearance randomized to mitigate any effect that the order could have on respondents.

After each sound branding strategy was exhibited, respondents ranked how well specific associations describe the sound branding strategy on a seven-point Likert-scale. For the two sound branding strategies of Suflair, the associations tested were: male, female, retro, modern, independent, approval-seeking, warm and cold. For 70° North, the water brand, extrovert, introvert, calm, excited, curious and indifferent were used as associations. These associations are based on the branding strategies developed for each brand by the authors.

The means of the associations for the fit and unfit strategy for each product (Table 6 and Table 7) were compared by paired-samples t-tests.

The Suflair fit strategy is perceived as statistically significant more female, retro and warm than its unfit strategy (on a 0.05 level) (Table 8). The unfit strategy, in turn, received stronger ratings for male-, modern- and cold-perceptions than the fit strategy. Both are perceived equally in terms of approval seeking and independent associations.

Table 6: Pre-test II: Suflair Brand Association Ratings Fit vs. Unfit

	Suflair - Fit		Suflair - Unfit	
Association	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Male	2.63	1.07	5.67	0.99
Female	5.67	1.12	2.93	1.11
Retro	4.23	1.52	2.57	0.97
Modern	4.47	1.61	5.23	1.04
Independent	4.10	1.40	4.73	1.48
Approval Seeking	4.37	1.61	4.37	1.50
Warm	5.43	1.14	3.63	1.13
Cold	2.23	1.01	3.77	1.48

Table 7: Pre-test II: 70° North Brand Association Ratings Fit vs. Unfit

	70° North - Fit		70° North - Unfit	
Association	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Extrovert	3.47	1.38	5.53	1.11
Introvert	4.67	1.42	2.47	1.14
Calm	5.80	1.10	3.70	1.60
Excited	2.67	1.24	4.97	1.10
Curious	4.10	1.77	4.73	1.05
Indifferent	2.87	1.36	2.57	1.41

Table 8: Pre-test II: Mean Comparisons Suflair Associations Fit vs. Unfit

Suflair Associations	Mean Difference Fit vs. Unfit Strategy	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	-3.03	1.61	0.01
Female	2.73	1.72	0.01
Retro	1.67	2.09	0.01
Modern	-0.77	1.68	0.02
Independent	-0.63	1.81	0.07
Approval-Seeking	0.00	2.10	1
Warm	1.80	1.52	0.01
Cold	-1.53	1.78	0.01

As for the 70° North fit strategy, it is perceived as statistically significant more introvert and calm than the unfit one, which on the other hand is perceived to be more extrovert, excited and curious than the fit strategy (all on a 0.05 significance level, respectively) (Table 9). However they are not perceived differently in terms of the "indifferent" association.

Table 9: Pre-test II: Mean Comparisons 70° North Associations Fit vs. Unfit

70° North Associations	Mean Difference Fit vs. Unfit Strategy	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Extrovert	-2.07	1.70	0.01
Introvert	2.20	1.81	0.01
Calm	2.10	1.92	0.01
Excited	-2.30	1.73	0.01
Curious	-0.63	1.59	0.04
Indifferent	0.30	1.62	0.32

3.6 The Experiment

The experiment is a test of how the dependent variables are influenced by the independent ones. The independent variables are preference for the music genre displayed in the sound branding (like or dislike), the actual fit of the sound branding strategy (fit or unfit) and personal relevance of music, respectively. The dependent variables tested in this study are brand associations and brand attitudes, respectively.

Respondents answered to two sound branding strategies. To avoid response biases based on the first manipulation, each brand appeared only once (Malhotra, 2010).

3.7 Manipulation

The point of manipulation was the fit of the sound branding strategy: A homogenous group of consumers was exposed to either a fit or unfit strategy for a respective brand, allowing to determine the effects of differing states of congruency on brand attitudes. The perception of fit and unfit of the respective strategies had been assessed in pre-test I, and the associations in pre-test II.

Every respondent was subjected to the same brand strategy, including a packaging picture, a description of the target audience, communication efforts and a brand history, and responded to one of two sound branding strategies:

The sound branding strategy either matched this brand image (for the “fit” treatment) or differed from it (for the “unfit” treatment) (Appendix 4 and Appendix 5). Moreover, an audio file that was expressive of the respective sound branding strategy was added and played during the evaluation of the survey to support the experience. To facilitate the experience, respondents were made aware of the fact that the survey uses sound at the beginning of the survey (Appendix 9).

Consequentially, each respondent answered to one sound branding strategy for each brand. Respondents were not made aware of the fact that one strategy was designed to fit and another to not fit the image, in order to not bias responses. During the analysis, respondents for the two brands were pooled according to the strategy fit (fit/unfit). This was in accordance with the tutor of

this thesis, as well as because of the fact that both brands can be categorized as low-involvement, transformational products (Percy & Elliott, 2009).

3.8 Sampling

The main goal for the sampling approach was to gain homogenous groups to be able to compare results and simultaneously minimize the risk of type II errors (accepting a false null-hypothesis) (Malhotra, 2010). Moreover, respondents were to be potential members of the brands' respective target groups, as well as be familiar with the Swedish market for bottled water and candy bars. The latter criterion was necessary for respondents to better evaluate the products against competitors. An additional criterion was that the sample should be comprised of people interested in music. As pointed out in section 1.3.7.3, younger demographics are more interested in music than adults. To achieve all the criteria, the targeted respondents were students from Stockholm School of Economics, a factor that was assessed by determining demographics at the end of the survey – and answered questions for product categories that were likely to be of low-involvement for them. Respondents that were not part of this group were excluded from the analysis ex-post. Moreover, during subsequent analyses, it was accounted for that every group complied with the central limit theorem, so that a statistical analysis could be performed (Szafran, 2012). This means that no group could comprise less than 30 individuals.

Respondents were gathered through an e-mail message that asked to participate in a survey (without naming the purpose of the survey). Moreover, an incentive was offered for completion of the survey. A follow-up mail was sent out to motivate respondents that had not yet responded to the survey in order to increase response rates (Malhotra, 2010). To increase the generalizability of the results, marketing students were excluded from the survey, which was ensured by assessing the respective student's focus of study prior to including her/him in the mailing list. In total, 1254 individuals were targeted through direct mailings.

The total sample included 140 respondents, resulting in a response rate of 11.2%. After excluding cases that did not match the aforementioned criteria, the sample included 133 respondents, all of which were students from Stockholm School of Economics. 70 (52.6%) were male and 63 (47.4%) were female, all

between 18 and 34 years old, with an age mean of 23.27 and standard deviation of 3.14. Since every respondent answered to two strategies, this leads to a total of 266 responses, which are the basis for analysis. A group-wise demographic comparison leads to the conclusion that the goal of homogeneity has been reached, since the groups were similar regarding their demographics: the group responding to the unfit scenario comprised 121 responses, with an age-range of 19-34, and 90% being in the 19-27 year age-range. The gender distribution was slightly more skewed towards male (58.7%) than female (41.3%). In the fit scenario, 145 cases were included, ranging from 18-34, with 91.7% within the 18-27 year age-range. Gender distribution was more equal for this scenario, with 47.6% male and 52.4% female.

3.9 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was a self-completion questionnaire consisting mainly of structured questions (Malhotra, 2010). One unstructured question was included, namely the one asking for the respondent's age. Moreover, a comment field and a field where respondents could leave their email addresses were part of the survey.

The effects of sound branding strategy fit and of personal music taste on brand attitude were assessed through scale questions. Since many of the questions were expected to include cases that are indifferent in their attitude towards them, an "indifferent" field was implicitly included by using a seven-point scale – either of a bipolar- or Likert-type (Malhotra, 2010). The choice of a seven-point scale was executed throughout the entire survey to provide consistency for the respondents. Every respondent was subject to the same set of questions, but answered these for the different stimuli of sound branding strategy fit. The following concepts were covered in the survey questionnaire (Appendix 9):

3.9.1 Brand Attitude

The questions for measuring brand attitude are the same as in the pre-test I and based on established scales (Aaker, 2000; Aylesworth et al., 1999). The three questions hold a high internal reliability, indicated through a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94 and could consequentially be indexed.

3.9.2 Brand Associations

It is generally accepted that branding activities influence brand perceptions (Keller et al., 2008; Percy & Elliott, 2009). In addition, music and sound branding have been found to be particularly effective in influencing them (Park & Young, 1986).

In order to determine how sound branding can affect brand perception and the processing of the brand image, several associations for each brand were tested on a seven-point bipolar scale. For Suflair, these were: *male-female; retro-modern, independent-approval seeking; warm-cold*. For 70° North, respondents assessed how they perceived the following statements: *extrovert-introvert; calm-excited; curious-indifferent*. The tested items were the characteristics that differed between the fit and unfit sound branding strategy of the respective brands (Appendix 4 and Appendix 5).

3.9.3 Personal Music Relevance

Personal music relevance is used to control for different states of involvement. Music relevance was assessed by asking three seven-point bipolar questions: *For me, music… is unimportant-is important; is irrelevant-is relevant; means nothing to me-means a lot to me.* These questions were combined into an index, as their Cronbach's alpha value was sufficiently high (0.95).

3.9.4 Fit Perceptions

Fit perceptions had previously been assessed through the pre-test. However, as the individuals in the sample differed, a question about perceived fit was added to ensure the validity of the pre-test finding for the actual survey. It is based on the same scales as the one in the pre-test (Bezjian-Avery et al., 1998). Specifically, respondents were asked to assess the following on a seven-point bipolar scale: *The brand, the song you listened to, and the three music activities are: not a good fit-a good fit*.

3.10 Analysis Tools

The questions were compiled into a survey that was created with the online-based survey software Qualtrics. This software allows for several specifications, such as randomization of questions and exporting the survey

answers to a file that can be read by the statistics software SPSS. Versions 19 and 20 have been used of this program to analyze data sets.

Where necessary, questions were recoded to ensure a consistent analysis (i.e. from low to high, or negative to positive) and questions measuring the same underlying phenomenon were merged into indices where applicable (Szafran, 2012).

In order to analyze the broader concepts of brand strategy fit/unfit, a respective variable was assigned to responses for either case, depending on what strategy was answered. Next, for analyzing the different conditions of sound branding-brand fit and music taste match/mismatch, responses were coded into cases. The number of respondents per case and what each case scenario comprises is shown in the table below:

Table 10: Strategy-Fit and Music-Liking Cases

Case	Explanation	N
I	Strategy fit, likes the music	85
II	Strategy unfit, likes the music	70
III	Strategy fit, does not like the music	33
IV	Strategy unfit, does not like the music	32
Total		220

A total of 46 respondents had been neutral to the music and were therefore not assigned to any of the groups above. They were still included in analyses done for the whole sample population.

The previously coded cases were consequently compared against each other using independent-samples t-tests or analyses of variance (ANOVA). Where more than two cases were compared against each other, a post-hoc test was necessary; the Scheffe-post-hoc test was used, as groups differed in sizes. Correlations were measured using either bivariate (for two variables) or multiple regressions (to determine interaction effects of more than two variables). For multiple regressions, the standardized beta is reported as opposed to the unstandardized one, as this is necessary to make inferences about the strength of relationships (Szafran, 2012). An importance note must be

made to clarify that a 5% significance level was accepted throughout the thesis if not stated otherwise.

3.11 Data Quality

The survey responses have to meet standards of both reliability and validity. Reliability is the consistency of results a scale delivers if multiple measurements are made over time (Malhotra, 2010). It thus measures the degree to which random error affects responses. As a test-retest reliability and alternative-forms reliability were not feasible for this study due to the value of newness of the brand (respondents were not supposed to have ex-ante attitude about either brand in order to account for expectancy), only internal consistency reliability was measured. This, as previously outlined, was determined through Cronbach's alpha test for scales, which were only indexed if the value was above 0.6.

Validity concerns the degree to which differences in measurement can be traced back to actual differences among respondents and characteristics, rather than to systematic or random error (Malhotra, 2010). Content validity, the degree to which scales cover all aspects of the topic that is supposed to be measured, has been ensured through the use of established and tested question scales. Nomological validity, the degree to which findings match theoretically predicted findings, has been ensured through the design of research hypotheses that were based on existing research findings. Moreover, systematic and random errors were reduced through the survey design: the brands were unknown to respondents and the survey questions were the same for everyone, reducing external variables as much as possible. Generalizability – the degree to which findings of this study can be generalized for a broader population, can only be guaranteed for a similar group as the sample group (Malhotra, 2010). Excluding students with specific knowledge in marketing from the survey was one measure taken to not bias results due to inferences from professional knowledge that could affect answers and thus helped to raise generalizability of results. Still, as the sample group was chosen to be as homogenous as possible to guarantee a high internal reliability, generalizability of the findings is reduced. Therefore, the findings can be said to hold true only for Swedish students aged 18-27.

4 Ways & Means - Results

This chapter shows the results of the analyses of the experiment conducted with SPSS. Before the results are presented, the manipulation of fit is assessed to see if respondents perceived the strategies as fit according to the design. This is followed by the discussion of each study hypothesis separately.

4.1 Manipulation Check: Brand Fit

To validate the pre-test findings, a question about fit perceptions was included in the final questionnaire. In the whole sample, fit perceptions for the fit strategies were higher than for unfit strategies, with a mean difference of 1.72 (statistically significant at the 0.01 level), thus, according to the research plans, respondents of the experiment perceived the fit and unfit strategies as such (Table 11).

Table 11: Manipulation Check for Fit Perceptions – Experiment

Fit Perception Fit Strategy	Stand. Dev.	N	Fit Perception Unfit Strategy	Stand. Dev.	N	Mean Difference Fit vs. Unfit	Sig.
4.94	1.46	145	3.22	1.73	121	-1.72	0.01

4.2 Hypothesis 1: Sound Branding Strategies and Brand Associations

Independent t-tests were employed to investigate if different sound branding strategies lead to different brand associations. These results were then compared to what was first observed in pre-test II. Pre-test II thus serves as a control group, as no brands were disclosed during this test and any changes within brand associations between the two groups should be due to the brand image.

For the chocolate brand Suflair, those who evaluated the unfit strategy perceived the brand as statistically significant more male, colder and more modern (male and colder on a 0.05 level, modern on a 0.01 level) than respondents who were exposed to the fit strategy (Table 12). These results are consistent with the ones found in the pre-test II, where respondents also perceived differences in the same associations with statistical significance.

In neither the pre-test nor the experiment, respondents could see differences between strategies in terms of "independent" and "approval-seeking" associations. Therefore, the brand associations perceived in the experiment for the chocolate brand are in accordance with the associations perceived in the pre-test II for the sound branding strategies.

Table 12: Experiment: Suflair Associations Mean Comparisons Fit vs. Unfit

Association Scale	Mean Fit	Stand. Dev.	N	Mean Unfit	Stand. Dev.	N	Mean Difference Fit vs Unfit	Sig.
Male - Female	5.57	1.31	75	4.36	1.74	61	1.21	0.01
Modern - Retro	4.63	1.61	75	4.11	1.5	61	0.51	0.06
Independent - Approval Seeking	5.01	1.41	75	5.11	1.39	61	-0.1	0.67
Cold - Warm	5.37	0.96	75	4.89	1.51	61	0.49	0.02

For 70° North, respondents perceived the brand as statistically significant calmer when exposed to the fit strategy (on a 0.05 level), which is consistent with the results achieved in pre-test II. Both in the experiment and in pre-test II, respondents did not perceive any difference between the two strategies in the "indifferent" association. However, in pre-test II they found the fit strategy to be less curious, more excited and more extrovert than the unfit strategy (statistically significant on a 0.05 level), which was not found in the experiment (Table 13).

Even though the perceived associations of Suflair in the experiment are in complete accordance with what was noted in the pre-test II for both strategies, the same cannot be said about 70° North. Thus, hypothesis I is partially accepted.

Table 13: Experiment: 70° North Associations Mean Comparisons Unfit vs. Fit

Association Scale	Mean Fit	Stand. Dev.	N	Mean Unfit	Stand. Dev.	N	Mean Difference Fit vs Unfit	Sig.
Extrovert - Introvert	4.13	1.53	70	3.78	1.53	60	0.34	0.2
Excited - Calm	5.07	1.6	70	3.9	1.48	60	1.17	0.01
Indifferent - Curious	4.44	1.4	70	4.55	1.5	60	-0.11	0.68

H1 *Brand associations differ according to the sound branding strategy presented to a consumer.*

PARTIALLY ACCEPTED

4.3 Hypothesis 2: Fit and Brand Attitude

The second hypothesis concerns the impact of fit between sound branding and the brand on brand attitude. An analysis of variance was used to compare the answers of respondents who received an unfit strategy (mean: 4.63) to the ones that saw a fit strategy (mean: 5.08) and to the ones who did not receive any sound brand strategy at all (pre-test, mean: 4.89) and revealed a statistically significant difference (on a 0.05 level) between the fit and unfit cases (Table 14, Table 15). The pre-test comparison thus serves as a control group for brand attitudes – since respondents evaluated their brand attitude before being exposed to sound branding in this questionnaire, any differences in brand attitudes between the pre-test and the main study should be due to sound branding activities. Concluding, a sound branding identity that fits the brand image will generate more positive brand attitudes than an unfit one, which makes Hypothesis 2 accepted.

Table 14: Brand Attitude Means for Fit, Unfit and Pre-test

Strategy	Brand Attitude		N
	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Fit	5.08	1.24	145
Unfit	4.63	1.46	121
Pre-test	4.89	1.29	62

Table 15: Brand Attitude Mean Difference Fit vs. Unfit vs. Pre-test

Difference on Brand Attitude	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
Between Groups	6.7*	0.02
Fit vs. Unfit	0.45	0.02
Fit vs. Pre-test	0.20	0.65
Unfit vs. Pre-test	-0.26	0.45

*mean squares

H2	*Fit between the music identity and the brand affects brand attitudes.*	ACCEPTED

4.4 Hypothesis 3: Music Taste and Fit Perceptions

Hypothesis three looks deeper into the concept of fit and fit perception, as it questions whether respondents can intersubjectively assess fit. The first step to analyze hypothesis three is the manipulation check presented in the beginning of this chapter, where one can see that there is a clear difference between the fit perception of strategies designed to fit to those designed to not fit the brand. The mean difference of 1.72 on a 0.01 significance level shows at first that brand fit can be assessed intersubjectively (Table 11).

The second step is a case-by-case analysis: here again, cases I (fit strategy, liking the music) (mean: 4.76) and III (fit strategy, disliking the music) (mean: 5.39), respectively, show on a 0.05 level significantly higher fit perception than cases II (unfit strategy, liking the music) (mean: 3.49) and IV (unfit strategy, disliking the music) (mean: 2.44) (Table 16). It is also important to note that, as expected, there is no statistically significant difference between cases I and III (both presented with a fit strategy). However, for the two cases that saw the unfit strategy (cases II and IV), fit perceptions still differ significantly on a 0.05 level (Table 16 and Table 17). Due to the statistically significant difference between cases II and IV, hypothesis three is accepted, as there seems to be a subjective component in fit perception.

Table 16: Fit Perception Means Case-by-Case

Case	Mean Fit Rating	Stand. Dev.
I	4.76	1.56
II	3.49	1.77
III	5.39	1.12
IV	2.44	1.56

Table 17: Fit Perception Mean Comparisons Case-by-Case

Case	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
I vs. II	1.28	0.01
I vs. III	-0.63	0.29
I vs. IV	2.33	0.01
II vs. III	-1.91	0.01
II vs. IV	1.05	0.02
III vs. IV	2.96	0.01

H3 *Personal music taste affects the perception of fit of a sound branding strategy.*

ACCEPTED

4.5 Hypothesis 4: Music Taste and Brand Attitude

To test the effect of personal music taste on brand attitude, an ANOVA was used to determine differences in brand attitude between four groups: respondents that liked (mean: 4.88), disliked (mean: 4.65), or were neutral (mean: 5.15) to the music genre portrayed in the branding strategy, as well as respondents who were not exposed to any sound branding strategy (pre-test, mean: 4.89) (Table 18 and Table 19). The difference, however, is not significant (sig.: 0.31) and thus there is not enough evidence to support hypothesis four.

Table 18: Brand Attitude Means According to Music Liking

Attitude towards the Music	Brand Attitude		N
	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Like	4.88	1.3	155
Do not Like	4.65	1.64	65
Neutral	5.15	1.04	46
Pre-Test	4.89	1.29	62

Table 19: Brand Attitude Mean Differences Like vs. Not Like vs. Neutral vs. Pre-test

Comparing Means	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
Between Groups	2.16*	0.31
Like vs. Do not like	.22	0.74
Like vs. Neutral	-0.26	0.71
Like vs. Pre-test	-0.01	1
Do not like vs. Neutral	-0.49	0.31
Do not like vs. Pre-test	-0.23	0.82
Neutral vs. Pre-test	-0.26	0.81

*Mean squares

H4 *Personal music taste affects brand attitude.*

NOT ACCEPTED

4.6 Hypothesis 5: Music Taste, Fit Perceptions and Brand Attitude

Hypothesis five is concerned with the interaction between personal music taste and perceived brand fit and their impact on brand attitude. In order to ensure that sound branding strategies affect attitudes in general, brand attitudes from the pre-test sample were compared to those from the experiment. Independent samples t-tests show only a significant difference between the pre-test and case IV on a 0.05 level (the case where a respondent is exposed to an unfit strategy and does not like the music used in the approach) (Table 20 and Table 21).

Table 20: Brand Attitude Means Case-by-Case

Case	Mean Brand Attitude	Std. Dev.	N
I	4.95	1.25	85
II	4.79	1.37	70
III	5.12	1.39	33
IV	4.18	1.75	32
Pre-Test	4.89	1.29	62

Table 21: Brand Attitude Mean Comparisons Cases vs. Pre-test

Case	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
I vs. Pre-Test	0.07	0.76
II vs. Pre-Test	-0.97	0.77
III vs. Pre-Test	0.23	0.41
IV vs. Pre-Test	-0.71	0.05

A consequent multiple regression analysis shows that the two independent variables taken together explain 11% of the variance in brand attitude variations and are moderately correlated (R: 0.34). The two variables differ, however, in their net effects on brand attitude: while the perception of fit is significantly correlated with brand attitude (beta: 0.31, sig.: 0.01), the net effect of personal music taste is only significant on a 0.1 level (beta: 0.11, sig.: 0.08) (Table 22). Due to the statistically significant interaction effect, though, hypothesis five is still supported.

Table 22: Brand Attitude Regression on Music Taste and Strategy Fit

Regression on Brand Attitude	R^2	R	Unstand. Beta	Stand. Beta	t	Sig.
Music Taste			0.09	0.11	1.78	0.08
Perceived Strategy Fit			0.24	0.31	4.86	0.00
Total Interaction	0.11	0.34				

H5 *Music taste and perceived brand fit interact on their impact on brand attitudes.*

ACCEPTED

4.7 Hypothesis 5.1: Exchanging Brand Fit for Music Taste

Hypothesis 5.1 assesses cases II and III as it expects that brand fit and personal music taste can have interchangeable effects on brand attitude (case II has an unfit strategy, but the respondent likes the music, case III is the other way around). Proceeding, the four cases were compared among themselves. An ANOVA shows that brand attitude is –on a 0.05 level- significantly not equal

between cases (Table 23). On an inter-case-level, however, only I and III show a significantly higher brand attitude (on a 0.05 level) than case IV, with a mean difference of 0.78 and 0.94, respectively (Table 23).

Different findings can be inferred from this data: First and foremost, there is neither a statistically significant difference between cases II (unfit strategy, likes the music) and III (fit strategy, dislikes the music), nor between case II and any other case for that matter, pointing out that a case that has brand fit will not lead to higher brand attitudes than a case that does not have fit if respondents like the music. In the cases where there is fit (I and III), liking or disliking the music will also not result in statistically significant different brand attitudes- fit seems to be enough to prevent a drop in brand attitudes. The most important finding lies in the sound branding strategy that neither has fit nor uses music that is liked, as it caused a significantly (on a 0.05 level) lower brand attitude than any other case (case IV) (Table 23). This proves that liking of the music can make up for a lack of fit and vice versa, thus hypothesis 5.1 is accepted.

Table 23: Brand Attitude Mean Comparisons Case-by-Case

Comparing Means	Mean Dif. Brand Attitude	Sig. (1-tailed)
Between Cases	5.92*	0.01
I vs. II	0.16	0.46
I vs. III	-0.17	0.48
I vs. IV	0.78	0.03
II vs. III	-0.33	0.37
II vs. IV	0.61	0.12
III vs. IV	0.94	0.03

*Mean squares

H5.1 *Music taste and perceived brand fit have interchangeable effects on preventing negative brand attitudes.*

ACCEPTED

4.8 Hypothesis 6: Music Relevance and Brand Attitude

Hypothesis six is concerned with whether the degree to which a respondent cares about music has an impact on brand attitudes. In order to answer this,

respondents were categorized according to how personally relevant music is to them. Three groups were created: those with the lowest scores on music relevance (Music relevance index MREL<=5), those who attributed relatively medium scores (5<MREL<7) and those with the highest score (MREL= 7), respectively.

An ANOVA reveals that the mean brand attitudes are not equal for all the groups (Table 25). The group with the lowest music relevance shows statistically significant lower brand attitudes (mean: 4.17) than the one with medium scores (mean: 4.93) (0.76 scale-points lower) and the one with the highest score (mean: 4.98) (0.82 scale-points lower) (on a 0.05 level, respectively) (Table 24 and Table 25). However, the difference in brand attitudes between the groups with medium- and high scores is not statistically significant, which only allows for a partial acceptance of this hypothesis.

Table 24: Brand Attitude Means According to Music Relevance

Music Relevance (MREL)	Brand Attitude		N
	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Lower score (MREL<=5)	4.17	1.34	30
Medium score (5<MREL<7)	4.93	1.26	100
Higher score (MREL=7)	4.98	1.39	136

Table 25: Brand Attitude Mean Comparisons Low vs. Medium vs. High Music Relevance

Comparing Means	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
Between Groups	8.47*	0.01
Lower care vs. Medium	-0.76	0.03
Lower care vs. Higher	-0.82	0.01
Medium vs. Higher	-0.05	0.96

*Mean squares

H6 *Consumers for whom music is more personally relevant have higher attitudes towards brands that use sound branding than other consumers.*

PARTIALLY ACCEPTED

4.9 Hypothesis 6.1: Music Relevance and the Correlation of Music Taste and Brand Attitude

The next step in analyzing the music relevance groups was to test whether they differ between themselves in terms of music taste and brand attitude correlations. There is a significant correlation of music taste and brand attitude for the group that cares most about music (on a 0.05 level). Here, a weak correlation (R: 0.18) can be identified (Table 26). The correlation is thus dependent on the magnitude of music relevance and provides support for accepting this hypothesis.

Table 26: Music Taste and Brand Attitude Correlations for Low, Medium and High Music Relevance

Relevance Score	Music Rel. Rating (MREL)	Correlation of Music Taste and Brand Attitude; Pearson's R	Sig.	N
Low Score	MREL<=5	-0.06	0.76	30
Medium	5<MREL<7	0.04	0.66	100
High	MREL=7	0.18	0.04	136

H6.1 *Brand attitude is affected by music taste when music is highly relevant for consumers.*

ACCEPTED

All hypotheses, as well as their respective research conclusion are depicted in the table below:

Table 27: Summary Hypotheses and Conclusion

H	Description
1	*Brand associations differ according to the sound branding strategy presented to a consumer.* **PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**
2	*Fit between the music identity and the brand affects brand attitudes.* **ACCEPTED**
3	*Personal music taste affects the perception of fit of a sound branding strategy*. **ACCEPTED**
4	*Personal music taste affects brand attitude.* **NOT ACCEPTED**
5	*Music taste and perceived brand fit interact on their impact on brand attitudes*. **ACCEPTED**
5.1	*Music taste and perceived brand fit have interchangeable effects on preventing negative brand attitudes.* **ACCEPTED**
6	*Consumers for whom music is more personally relevant have higher attitudes towards brands that use sound branding than other consumers.* **PARTIALLY ACCEPTED**
6.1	*Brand attitude is affected by music taste when music is highly relevant for consumers.* **ACCEPTED**

5 When the Music is Over - Discussion & Conclusion

This part outlines the discussion and the conclusion of the results previously analyzed. After the discussion, managerial implications are presented, followed by research limitations and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Discussion of the Results

This study contributes to the field of sound branding effectiveness in various aspects: first, by discussing how sound branding can affect brand associations. Second, by providing further information on the impact of sound branding on brand attitudes, especially when it comes to the effect of the interaction between personal music taste and brand fit perception. Third, it adds a new perspective to what can influence the consumer's sound branding fit perceptions. Finally, it provides insights into characteristics of consumers that make them more receptive to sound branding strategies.

5.1.1 The role of Sound Branding in building brand associations

The brand associations perceived by respondents varied greatly depending on which branding strategy was presented. It is necessary to note that both groups for each product (fit and unfit strategy) were presented with the same brand image, positioning, history, general marketing activities and competitors. The only stimulus that varied and could explain the different perceptions in brand associations is therefore the sound branding strategy.

For 70° North, the water brand, the unfit strategy was able to change one of the two associations that were manipulated. As for Suflair, the chocolate brand, the result shows a statistically significant difference for all the associations that were manipulated by the unfit strategy. Thus, brand associations were successfully manipulated through the presentation of different sound branding strategies.

This result is consistent with previous research findings on sound branding strategies for low-involvement products, where music-related associations can be transferred to the product (Hoyer & McGinnis, 2007; Zhu & Meyers-Levy, 2005). It thus shows the importance of sound branding when it comes to affecting brand associations: regardless of the brand's history, positioning, packaging, and general marketing activities, the sound branding strategy in itself

is able to establish, support and change associations, as supported by previous research on music in advertisements (Macinnis & Park, 1991; Zander & Kapp, 2007).

In addition, the finding underlines the importance of brand fit in order for the brand to be well understood by consumers. Using a sound branding identity that does not match the brand can cause consumers to form associations different from those intended to by the marketing strategy. It is crucial to avoid such a misunderstanding, as it results in consumers not appropriately understanding the brand and influences how they value it (Keller et al., 2008).

5.1.2 Sound Branding Impact on Brand Attitude

Overall, the results of the experiment indicate that fit exerts a stronger impact on brand attitudes than the music taste of the consumer.

This can be seen by comparing the two isolated treatment conditions of the independent variables: for brand fit, there is a statistically significant difference in brand attitude between respondents that received a fit strategy and an unfit strategy (hypothesis two). The impact of brand fit on brand attitude has already been thoroughly investigated in previous research focusing on music in advertisements, with similar results (Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011; North et al., 2004; Zander & Kapp, 2007).

On the other hand, when analyzing the impact of personal music taste on brand attitude by itself (hypothesis four), there is no difference in brand attitude. The impact of personal music taste on brand attitude achieved different results in a variety of studies – from liked music in advertisements increasing product preference to music taste not exerting any influence as long as it is not disliked by the customer (Gorn, 1982; Groves, 2011). The results of this research seem to cohoborate Groves (2011), as it indicates that personal music taste does not affect brand attitude by itself.

However, it is interesting to note that looking at the two independent variables together, one can identify a moderate interaction effect on brand attitude – even if fit perception is still the main factor (hypothesis five). This makes it interesting to look further into the interaction: comparing brand attitudes for each of the four cases with the pre-test, only case IV (unfit, disliked

music) shows a statistically significant difference. Thus, sound branding as a tool has a negative impact only when there is no fit and the consumer does not like the music - and the effect of this situation is a novelty, as this scenario has not been studied before. This also implies that case II, where there is no fit, but the music is liked, produces no statistically significant different brand attitudes from the cases that have a fit brand strategy. The importance of this finding comes from the fact that previous studies on the importance of brand fit also infer that unfit would result in negative brand attitudes (Groves, 2011; Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011; North et al., 2004; Zander & Kapp, 2007).

Also, cases I and III do not differ with statistical significance- these are the ones that like the music presented, even though one carries a fit strategy and the other an unfit strategy. Therefore, it can be concluded that liking the music will help to mediate a lack of fit, while not statistically significant deteriorating brand attitudes if not given – as long as there is brand fit.

Hence one important conclusion of this study is that, even though fit seems to have a more immediate effect on brand attitude, the impact of personal music taste should not be neglected - especially if music is of high personal relevance to the target market, as pointed out by hypothesis 6.1. This is a crucial conclusion, because the interaction of these two variables has not been extensively researched for branding efforts yet, resulting in literature focusing primarily on brand fit alone. Designing a sound branding strategy that matches the taste of the target audience can be a "joker" for brands, as it helps to alleviate an unfit strategy, but does not damage brand attitudes further if not present. The effect of music taste is limited, though; brand fit exerts a wider-ranging impact, also affecting the assimilation of brand associations. Furthermore, a marketer can design brand fit, but only approximate what the taste of the target audience will be, which enlightens why fit has received the most attention.

Finally, a note must be made about the lack of difference in brand attitude between people who were presented with the brand with no sound branding strategies (the control group in pre-test I) to people who were presented to any of the sound branding strategies. This seems to demonstrate that sound branding does not necessarily affect brand attitudes. However, as discussed

previously, sound branding does help to strengthen brand associations, which is a critical step towards forming brand attitudes.

5.1.3 Is Fit Perception Intersubjective or Subjective?

The analysis of fit perceptions shows an interesting result: In a broad context, it can be argued that fit perceptions are not subjective. A pre-test was designed to assess the fit perception for the final experiment. In addition, in the final experiment, a question about fit was placed to confirm that respondents perceived the respective fit strategies as such. The difference between the fit perception of the fit and unfit strategy is statistically significant, once again confirming the objectivity of the fit perception. Furthermore, cases I (fit, liked music) and III (fit, disliked music) have no statistically significant difference in the fit perception, meaning that brand fit is perceived somewhat equally regardless of music taste. This finding corroborates previous research that shows respondents' ability to judge fit reaching similar conclusions (North et al., 2004), i.e. intersubjectively.

Moreover, this finding is challenged by another case comparison, the one between cases II (unfit, liked music) and IV (unfit, disliked music): both cases have a mean fit-rating lower than four, meaning that both do perceive the strategy as unfit. However, the fit perception of these two cases is statistically significantly different with case II having a mean 0.95 higher than case IV (Table 16 and Table 17). Since music taste is the only variable that differs, it can be hypothesized that music taste can influence brand fit perceptions: for all respondents that were exposed to an unfit sound branding strategy, those that liked the music perceived the strategy to not be as unfitting as the ones that disliked the music. This is also in accordance with previous studies that discuss that, since there is no clear attribute in music that can be pointed out to determine brand fit, music-brand fit cannot be considered to be objectively assessed (Yeoh & North, 2010).

A potential explanation for this different fit perception could be cognitive dissonance caused by the interaction of a positive (liking the music) and a negative cue (no fit). This may lead respondents to experience cognitive discomfort, which they try to alleviate by transferring positive attitudes from the

music to the brand and thereby reducing their perception of unfit. This implies that the marketing efforts of a brand that uses music that is liked by its target market will be perceived as more consistent than one that uses music not liked, even if there is no overall fit.

5.1.4 Who is Influenced by Sound Branding Strategies?

To analyze how respondents with different music involvement are affected by the sound branding strategy presented, the sample was split according to how much relevance respondents attribute to music and how much they like the music genre that they were exposed to (low, medium, high). The intention was to see if there was a group with a stronger brand attitude response. One could argue that a respondent who ranks music relevance with a six on a seven-point scale should not be considered to have a medium-, but rather a high involvement. However, considering that 51% of the sample attributed a seven to personal music relevance – the highest grade possible – the part of the sample that ranked it between five and seven can be considered of medium involvement in relative terms, i.e. when compared to the general sample behavior. This still positive involvement (higher than four) could help to explain though why there is no statistically significant difference between this group and the high-involvement one in terms of how their brand attitude is influenced by sound branding strategies. Still, the impact of involvement on processing sound branding strategies is consistent with marketing literature (Percy & Elliott, 2009).

Seeing the analysis as a whole, the results indicate that there is such a group (the one with the lowest music relevancy score) that is negatively affected by sound branding efforts- the existence of such a group is a novelty for the area of research. While this finding could lead brands to consider not using sound branding in order to not trigger negative brand attitudes among their target group, one factor should be noted: this group comprises mere 30 respondents that ranked music relevance from zero to five (which is low only in relative terms). This underlines that overall, music is highly important in the life of the study population, which is shown by the fact that 236 cases (89% of the respondents) ranked music as medium- or highly relevant in their lives. It will thus be difficult to target a similar customer group that specifically does not care

about music. More importantly, as shown by hypothesis 6.1, the music taste of those 51% with high music relevance impacts brand attitude.

Finally, a company should be aware if its target market is mostly comprised of people with low or high music involvement, for this can change their sound branding strategy completely: from minimizing its sound branding effort to be very careful to follow the target market's taste.

5.2 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study provide important contributions to companies that already use sound branding or are considering using it.

First and foremost, brand fit is of importance not necessarily to guarantee a more positive brand attitude, but to make sure consumers understand the brand appropriately and form the right brand associations. The fact that consumers' liking for the music mitigates the negative aspects of a perceived unfit shows that music taste could make up for lack of brand fit. However, since it is very difficult to guarantee that consumers like the music, especially for brands that want to appeal to a broad target market, it becomes more important for a company to ensure fit, a factor over which a company has relatively great control. Furthermore, in a fit scenario, liking or disliking the music used in the strategy does not seem to cause any effect on brand attitude: the risk lies solely in an unfit scenario with disliked music.

It is important to recognize that sound branding is not necessarily a strategy with direct impact on brand attitudes but one of the many marketing tools that can influence brand associations (which can lead to positive brand attitude). This leads to another important managerial implication: as associations have been found in this study to be established and affected by sound branding strategies, sound branding might be a tool for repositioning or renewing a brand – both of which are activities that require altering existing brand associations. However, more research would be required to investigate the use of sound branding for such marketing strategies.

Additionally, the study pointed out that there is a risk in sound branding strategies, but that the negative impact on brand attitude only occurs in a scenario where there is neither brand fit nor music that is liked by the customer.

This is surprising since, according to previous studies, it would be expected that any case with an unfit sound branding strategy would be detrimental – and this study shows that it is not necessary so when the music is liked. This point can be especially important for companies with narrow target markets that could more easily please their customers' music taste. This also links to another implication of this study: By following the procedure for creating a brand and sound branding strategy that were used throughout this thesis, it is possible to create a sound branding strategy that is intersubjectively perceived to fit the brand. Managers can thus use the aforementioned procedure for guidance during their development of sound branding strategies.

Still, the existing risks, and the statistically not significant difference on brand attitude between the control group and the fit and unfit scenario, can incline companies to consider not using sound branding at all to avoid the risk of deteriorating brand attitudes or engaging in ineffective marketing investments. However, this is highly unadvisable, since it is nearly impossible not to have a sound identity and be a "mute" brand. It is important to note that in the real world, such "silent" companies (as the one the control group was exposed to) do not exist. Even if a brand does not sponsor events, has no alliances with artists, or has no TV or radio commercials, the company probably still has a website, a contact telephone number and the product has its own sound once it is consumed. As outlined before, sound branding is all-encompassing in terms of audio cues, and thus even the sound of a closing-car door can be (and is) subject to sound branding. These are all relevant touch points that could be used by the company to maximize the brand experience, reinforce brand associations and increase brand awareness.

Nevertheless, there are some exceptions of course, for there is a group with low music involvement, and companies need to be aware if that is the case for their target market. In this case brands should try to use music their target market is neutral to in the touch points where it is impossible to be mute, and should devote particular care to making sure that the sound branding fits the brand image.

Finally, sound branding is not anything new and there are many strong players that are well established for using this tool strategically, such as Coca-

Cola, McDonald's, Bacardi and Vans. These companies definitely set the bar high for any company that wishes to use sound branding and be noticed. To go beyond associations and increase brand awareness as well as instigate brand preference, relevance and innovation are just as important as in any other marketing activity. After all, there may come a time where consumers also face auditory clutter – that is if, we are not there yet.

5.3 Limitations

The limitations of the study are linked to the sample choice, manipulations, the presentation of the research and to music-structure aspects.

First of all, due to the time restriction of the experiment, only short-term effects could be explored, which is why brand attachment could not be further investigated.

The sample, formed by students from Stockholm School of Economics, was collected in order to preserve internal validity. Furthermore, this is an interesting group to look at for its young age – studies point out that music is more important for younger audiences than for mature ones (the age mean of this study is 23.27 with a standard deviation of 3.14). Therefore it could be questioned whether the findings hold true for different populations, especially taking into consideration that the sample of this study is characterized by a particularly high personal music relevance. Moreover, the study did not ask for category involvement; respondents that care very much about either water or chocolate brands might process information within the respective categories with high involvement. This study considers both product categories tested as low-involvement categories in a broad sense and does not account for personal differences in the purchasing involvement of the respondents. Moreover, as outlined before, the experimental setting might increase the processing effort of the communication and thus even lead respondents for whom these categories are normally of low-involvement to evaluate the products with high involvement. This would alter the implications that could be drawn from branding, as pointed out in the explanation of information processing strategies in the literature review of this study. Also, fit perceptions only hold true

intersubjectively. That means that for a different population, the evaluation of fit might be different from the one observed in this case.

Another point comes from the low rate of response (11.2%) that could bias results due to the potentially different answers that could have been achieved if non-respondents had answered the survey. This risk was mediated by having a sample that is homogeneous (students from Stockholm School of Economics) in order to make the non-respondents not to be too different from respondents, thus minimizing problems caused by non-responses (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Additionally, this study focused on low involvement products only and did not take visual aspects into consideration – e.g. the perception and liking of the packaging of the product or the logo– which is an element that can influence brand perceptions and attitude. Furthermore, the experiment was established in an artificial hypothetical settings, where respondents answered an online questionnaire about fictional brands and were asked to imagine how they would behave if such a product existed. In a real-life situation, additional factors that were not present in this study should affect the product experience.

Artificial brands make it also easier to establish and change associations than using a brand with a history. Therefore, the effect of sound branding on changing associations might be overestimated in this study. However, using existing brands would have made it difficult, if not impossible, to isolate previous brand associations and any other marketing effort from sound branding effects.

Finally, a series of limitations have to be added due to the usage of music. First of all, the listening stimulus was very different from the one consumers would experience in a real-life situation, where music is normally more passively listened to (Oakes, 2007). It can also not be guaranteed that the sound file that was part of the survey was played with good quality, due to lack of control over the sound system used by respondents. However, this is an existing limitation for any sound branding strategy, as companies can never control the listening environment. Finally, forced exposure to music can lead to disliking of the music – even if the consumer likes the music genre displayed (Lantos & Craton, 2012).

5.4 Further Research

This thesis examines different aspects of sound branding effects, but still leaves room for many new studies. First of all, it would be interesting to see how the same aspects of sound branding would influence respondents that are asked about high involvement products. Another possibility could be a different sampling approach, e.g. only asking respondents who are personally very interested in the product category. This could be done even for products that are generally regarded as low-involvement products, such as chocolate, for relevance can vary notably and the results obtained could be statistically significantly different from the ones found in this study. Additionally, looking at older target groups could bring surprising results, as most of the studies conducted so far focus on young audiences.

Another opportunity for future research would be to reproduce this experiment in a real-life situation, using established brands. Even though it is difficult to isolate sound branding efforts from different marketing activities, it would still be useful to determine in what way multiple marketing activities interact with each other. One possibility to test this would be to use different sound branding fit conditions for all the separate branding activities. Furthermore, such a study would be a way to go around the limitations of the lack of control over music exposure this study faced.

One interesting result of this survey that could be further looked into concerns how people respond to brands that use music they do not like, as such a scenario with a fit strategy produced a difference from the same case with no fit – and no difference was seen when the cases comprised people who like the music. Different personal characteristics, as well as product and/or category involvement may all affect the impact of this treatment condition.

Finally, a recurring survey for a real brand that is repositioning itself could provide better understanding of sound branding as a brand renewal tool. Such an experiment could show if sound branding causes cognitive dissonance, or if the new associations established are perceived as positive in such a revitalization process, thus possibly pointing out efficient ways to renew a brand. This would also allow for determining the impact of sound branding on consumer activities, such as the willingness to pay and purchase behavior.

6 Sometimes you Can't Make it on Your Own - Sources

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7 My Back Pages – Appendix

Appendix 1: Packaging Design 70° North and Suflair

Packaging 70° North:

Packaging Suflair:

Appendix 2: Branding Strategy 70° North

Brand Associations: Nordic, Serene, Recharge, Privacy, Simplicity, Purity, Blue

Brand Feelings:

- Quiet and calm, but not extremely serious
- Does exciting things, but not to show off
- Socially-approved, even if not consumed by everyone
- Feelings of inner content

Brand Mantra: Serene, Explorer, Natural, Refresher

Target Group:

- 25+, lives both in urban areas and the countryside
- Into nature and winter sports, even though not necessarily practicing them
- Enjoys the idea of having time for himself, of going to more isolated places
- Enjoys discovering new places both in real life, but also through photos
- Likes the movie into the wild

Positioning Statement:

For the explorer-at-heart, drinking 70° North spring water provides a moment of refreshing quietness, due to its heritage from the purest Nordic springs.

Communications Examples:

- Sponsor of the Dalsland Canoe Marathon, Sweden's largest canoe and kayak competition northwest of Gothenburg
- Curates photography exhibitions that have nature as a theme, such as Nick Brandt's exhibition of wild animal photos at Fotografiska Museet in Stockholm.

Distribution:

- Available in all grocery stores, to find next to its competitors Ramlösa and Loka, which sell for 12 SEK

Brand History:

- 70° North is a bottled water brand sourced from the purest Nordic springs at 70° North latitude. In addition to the purity of the spring, it is filtered through a combination of various stones, all of which come from the same latitude. This adds different minerals to it and gives it its distinct taste.

Appendix 3: Branding Strategy Suflair

Brand Associations: Light, Soft, Not really square, Smooth, Friendly, Goofy in a sweet way, Female – but not girly, Warm, Tender, Retro

Brand Feelings:

- Warmth
- Fun, in a non-euphoric, but more charming way
- Rather calm
- Reliable and socially approved – a sweetheart
- Has self-respect, but is not very independent, needs/seeks company

Brand Mantra: Tender, To-be-shared, Treat

Target Group:

- Female, 15+
- Is social and has loots of friends, she is goofy with a friendly sense of humor
- Not too independent, rather mainstream-oriented
- Seeks security and social approval in brands
- She has an idealistic view of love and relationships that is depicted in movies such as Hairspray, Dirty Dancing and the TV series Glee
- Stays home watching romantic comedies with other girl friends on Friday nights

Positioning Statement:

To the sweet girl next door, Suflair is the tender chocolate treat, because its fluffy squares make it light and easy to be shared

Communications Examples:

- Product Placement in the TV series Grey's Anatomy
- Print Advertisements in Magazines such as inStyle and Glamour

Distribution:

- Available in all grocery stores, to find next to its competitors Geisha and Plopp, which sell for 15 SEK for similar portion sizes

Brand History:

- The Suflair brand was a love story right from the beginning: A female technician who was responsible for overseeing the production of the then-called chocolate bar Suflée was in love and could not really concentrate on the production, which caused a change in the production process. To the surprise of all, when they tried the result of this accident, it tasted totally delicious. This was the birth of Suflair...

Appendix 4: Sound Branding Strategies 70° North

Fit sound branding strategy:

Sound Identity:

1. Serene
2. Explorer
3. Purity / Natural
4. Privacy

Sound Hypothesis:

- Modernity: Progressively contemporary
- Value/Quality: High
- Dynamics/Tempo: Slow
- Mood: Neutral
- Proximity: Reserved
- Texture: Round

"A progressively-contemporary sounding, high quality sound identity, that leaves a slow and cool and yet content impression."

Sound Branding Activities:

- Sponsoring a movie by the Iceland-based band Sigur Ros. The movie is a mix between a tour documentary and nature landscape scenes.
- Hosting a service where Internet users can upload their photos of nature and synchronize them with a song from 70° North's webpage. This will create a sound-supported photo stream that users can share or use for their own relaxation.
- Setup of a website where new artists for ambient and minimal music are recommended and visitors can explore them. Moreover, album and track reviews of these artists will be available there.

Brand Song: Air – African Velvet

Unfit sound branding strategy:

Sound Identity:

1. Explorer
2. Purity / Natural
3. **Group-focused**

Sound Hypothesis:

- Modernity: Progressively contemporary
- Value/Quality: High
- Dynamics/Tempo: **Mid-tempo**
- Mood: Neutral
- Proximity: **Friendly**
- Texture: **Slightly bright**

"A progressively-contemporary sounding, high quality sound identity, that leaves a mid-tempo, cool and friendly impression."

Sound Branding Activities:

- Usage of the band Kings of Leon as a brand ambassador. This includes having the band on advertisements, as well as a tour sponsorship.
- Hosting social summer music events, such as playing music on a pontoon in the water in the Stockholm/Gothenburg archipelago.
- Setup of a web platform for alternative pop/rock bands where users can upload their band's songs and share it with the brand community.

Brand Song: The Radio Dept. – Heaven's on Fire

Appendix 5: Sound Branding Strategies Suflair

Fit sound branding strategy:

Sound Identity:

1. Friendly, Sweet
2. Smooth
3. Warm
4. Retro-Female

Sound Hypothesis:

- Modernity: Retro, 50's-60's
- Value/Quality: Average
- Dynamics/Tempo: Upbeat
- Mood: Happy
- Proximity: Friendly
- Texture: Round

"A retro sounding, average quality sound identity that leaves an upbeat and happy impression."

Sound Branding Activities:

- Usage of Veronica Maggio as a brand ambassador. This includes having the artist on advertisements, as well as a tour sponsorship.
- Setup of a web service allowing consumers to express their feelings for their friends through 30-second pop song soundpieces via audio SMS. For example, texting "I'm glad we are friends" to a service number will forward a song containing this message to a friend.
- Setup of a web platform where customers can tell how they feel and Suflair will play music that matches the mood.

Brand Song: Summer Twins – I will Love You

Unfit sound branding strategy:

Sound Identity:

1. **Independent**
2. **Assertive**
3. **Male**
4. **Modern**

Sound Hypothesis:

- Modernity: **Modern**
- Value/Quality: Average
- Dynamics/Tempo: Upbeat
- Mood: **Angry-Neutral**
- Proximity: **Neutral**
- Texture: **Sharp**

"A modern sounding, average-quality sound identity that leaves an upbeat and angry-neutral impression."

Sound Branding Activities:

- Usage of Kanye West as a brand ambassador. This includes having the artist on advertisements, as well as a tour sponsorship.
- Setup a Youtube Channel wher users can upload 20-second soundpieces. Each uploaded soundpiece should link to the last one and tell a never-ending story.
- Setup of a web platform in the form of a remix studio. People can remix soundbites of famous speeches/ interviews, add sound layers to it and publish these.

Brand Song: K-Sparks feat. Kid Cudi – Take 'em high

Appendix 6: Pre-test I: Testing Fit Perceptions of Strategies

Pre-test I: 70° North Water

qualtrics.com

Hello prospective respondent :-)!

We are two students from Stockholm School of Economics and currently working on our Master Thesis. Therefore, it would be great if you could take some minutes to help us out.
Please be aware that this survey has sound - so make sure to switch your speakers on.

Thanks a lot in advance for your time. And feel free to send us any surveys that you want us to fill out in return.

Aline and Lukas

>>

qualtrics.com

Please carefully read the description of the following *fictional* brand, 70° North:

70° North is a bottled water brand sourced from the purest **Nordic** springs at 70° North latitude. In addition to the purity of the spring, it is filtered through a combination of various stones, all of which come from the same latitude. This adds different minerals to it and gives it its distinct taste.

70° North is for the **explorer** at-heart, usually male and 25 years and up, who has an appreciation for the outside - both in the urban and rural areas. He is introvert, likes taking some **time off for himself** and enjoys the **idea** of going to more isolated places.
For him, drinking 70° North spring water provides a moment of refreshing **quietness**.

70° North is available in all Swedish supermarkets, priced at 16 SEK for the 0.5 liter bottle. It is thus priced slightly above the biggest water brands in the Swedish market, Ramlösa and Lokka.

The brand sponsors the Dalsland Canoe Marathon, Sweden's largest canoe and kayak competition northwest of Gothenburg. Moreover, 70° North curates photography exhibitions that have nature as a theme, such as Nick Brandt's exhibition of wild animal photos at Fotografiska Museet in Stockholm.

The bottle looks as follows:

>>

Having read the description of the brand, please answer the following questions about 70° North.

I think 70° North is...

Good	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Bad
Likeable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Dislikeable

My feelings towards 70° North are...

Favorable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Unfavorable

>>

70° North is currently assessing its marketing strategy. One of the tools that has recently gained widespread attention is sound branding. Sound branding is the strategic usage of music and sounds in marketing activities, such as in jingles, music in advertisements, collaborations with musicians and festival sponsorships.

70° North is planning to include this in its marketing mix, because they see **sound branding as an opportunity to clarify their image for their customers.**

70° North is assessing two different sound branding strategies.
Please evaluate the following sound branding strategy based on the initial description of 70° North and what it stands for.

And don't forget to switch on your speakers now :-).

>>

When evaluating this strategy, please keep in mind that 70°North wants to clarify the current image it has:
It is the Nordic water for the **explorer at heart** who wants to take a **moment for himself in quietness** and enjoys the idea of going to more **isolated places**.
The sound branding should **support** this.

As part of the sound branding strategy, the brand has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, 70° North plans to conduct the three following sound branding activities.

1)
They are going to sponsor a movie by the Iceland-based band Sigur Ros. The band has a very calm, minimalistic sound and is strongly linked to Iceland. The movie is a mix between a tour documentary and nature landscape scenes.

2)
A service will be set up where internet users can upload their photos of nature and synchronize them with a song from 70° North's webpage. This will create a sound-supported photo stream that users can share or use for their own relaxation.

3)
70° North will set up a website where they will recommend new artists for ambient and minimal music. Moreover, album and track reviews of these artists will be available there.

70° North's image and its sound branding strategy are...

Not compatible	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Compatible
Not a good fit	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	A good fit
Not congruent	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Congruent

>>

When evaluating this strategy, please keep in mind that 70°North wants to clarify the current image it has:
It is the Nordic water for the **explorer at heart** who wants to take a **moment for himself in quietness** and enjoys the idea of going to more **isolated places**.
The sound branding should **support** this.

As part of the sound branding strategy, the brand has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, 70° North plans to conduct the three following sound branding activities.

1)
70° North wants to gain the band Kings of Leon as a brand ambassador. This will include having the band on advertisements, as well as sponsoring their tour.

2)
They will do events in summer, such as playing music on a pontoon in the water in the Stockholm/Gothenburg archipelago.

3)
70° North will provide a web platform for alternative pop/rock bands where users can upload their band's songs and share it with the brand community.

70° North's image and its sound branding strategy are...

Not compatible	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Compatible
Not a good fit	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	A good fit
Not congruent	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Congruent

>>

Finally, we'd like to get to know you a little bit better. Please answer the following questions:

Gender

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

Age

Occupation

- ○ Student
- ○ Working
- ○ Unemployed
- ○ Retired

>>

Pre-test I: Suflair Chocolate

Hello prospective respondent :-)!

We are two students from Stockholm School of Economics and currently working on our Master Thesis. Therefore, it would be great if you could take some minutes to help us out.
Please be aware that this survey has sound - so make sure to switch your speakers on.

Thanks a lot in advance for your time. And feel free to send us any surveys that you want us to fill out in return.

Aline and Lukas

>>

Please carefully read the description of the following *fictional* brand, Suflair:

Suflair is a milk chocolate bar filled with air bubbles and covered with white chocolate.

The Suflair brand was a love story right from the beginning: A female technician who was responsible for overseeing the production of the then-called chocolate bar Suflée was in love and could not really concentrate on the production, which caused a change in the production process. To the surprise of all, when they tried the result of this lapse, it tasted totally delicious. This was the birth of Suflair...

Since then, Suflair is the chocolate bar for the **sweet girl-next-door**, normally 15 years old and up, who enjoys it as a tender chocolate treat, because its fluffy squares make it light and easy to be shared. She is very **warm**, has a **friendly** sense of humor and is always with her friends. She has an **idealistic view** of love and relationships that is depicted in movies such as Hairspray, Dirty Dancing and the TV series Glee.

Suflair is available in all Swedish supermarkets at a price of 15 SEK for the 100g bar. This is priced similarly to its main competitors, Geisha and Plopp.

Marketing activities of Suflair include placing the product on Grey's Anatomy and having print advertisements in magazines such as Glamour and In Style.

The bar looks as follows:

>>

Having read the description of the brand, please answer the following questions about Suflair.

I think Suflair is...

Good	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Bad
Likeable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Dislikeable

My feelings towards Suflair are...

Favorable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Unfavorable

>>

Suflair is currently assessing its marketing strategy. One of the tools that has recently gained widespread attention is sound branding. Sound branding is the strategic usage of music and sounds in marketing activities, such as in jingles, music in advertisements, collaborations with musicians and festival sponsorships.

Suflair is planning to include this in its marketing mix, because they see **sound branding as an opportunity to clarify their image for their customers.**

Suflair is currently assessing **two different** sound branding strategies.
Please evaluate the following sound branding strategy based on the initial description of Suflair and what it stands for.

And don't forget to switch on your speakers now :-).

>>

When evaluating this strategy, please keep in mind that Suflair wants to **clarify** the current image it has:
It is a milk chocolate bar for the **sweet girl-next-door**, who is **warm**, enjoys life, has a **friendly** sense of humor and is always with her friends. She has an **idealistic** view of love, much like it is depicted in movies such as Hairspray, Dirty Dancing and the TV series Glee. The sound branding should **support** this.

As part of the sound branding strategy, Suflair has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, Suflair plans to conduct the three following sound branding activities.

1)
Suflair wants to set up a competition for female artists with powerful voices. The price will be a contract with a record label.

2)
Suflair wants to gain Adele as a brand ambassador. This will include having the artist on advertisements, as well as sponsoring her tour.

3)
Suflair wants to set up a web platform which is a music studio where female singers who do not play an instrument can compose an instrumental melody with pre-recorded sounds.

▶ 00:00 | 0 %

Suflair's image and its sound branding strategy are...

Not compatible	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Compatible
Not a good fit	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	A good fit
Not congruent	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Congruent

>>

When evaluating this strategy, please keep in mind that Suflair wants to **clarify** the current image it has:
It is a milk chocolate bar for the **sweet girl-next-door**, who is **warm**, enjoys life, has a **friendly** sense of humor and is always with her friends. She has an **idealistic** view of love, much like it is depicted in movies such as Hairspray, Dirty Dancing and the TV series Glee. The sound branding should **support** this.

As part of the sound branding strategy, Suflair has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, Suflair plans to conduct the three following sound branding activities.

1)
Suflair will set up a service allowing consumers to express their feelings for their friends through 30 second Pop song soundpieces via audio-SMS. For example, texting "I'm glad we are friends" to a service number will forward a song containing this message to a friend.

2)
Suflair wants to gain Veronica Maggio as a brand ambassador. This will include having the artist on advertisements, as well as sponsoring her tour.

3)
Suflair wants to provide a web platform where customers can inform how they are feeling and the brand plays music that matches the mood.

Suflair's image and its sound branding are...

Not compatible	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Compatible
Not a good fit	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	A good fit
Not congruent	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Congruent

>>

Finally, we'd like to get to know you a little bit better. Please answer the following questions:

Gender

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

Age

Occupation

- ○ Student
- ○ Working
- ○ Unemployed
- ○ Retired

>>

Appendix 7: Adjusted Pre-test Suflair

qualtrics.com

Hello prospective respondent :-)!

We are two students from Stockholm School of Economics and currently working on our Master Thesis. Therefore, it would be great if you could take some minutes to help us out.
Please be aware that this survey has sound - so make sure to switch your speakers on.

Thanks a lot in advance for your time. And feel free to send us any surveys that you want us to fill out in return.

Aline and Lukas

>>

qualtrics.com

Please carefully read the description of the following *fictional* brand, Suflair:

Suflair is a milk chocolate bar filled with air bubbles and covered with white chocolate.

The Suflair brand was a love story right from the beginning: A female technician who was responsible for overseeing the production of the then-called chocolate bar Suflée was in love and could not really concentrate on the production, which caused a change in the production process. To the surprise of all, when they tried the result of this lapse, it tasted totally delicious. This was the birth of Suflair...

Since then, Suflair is the chocolate bar for the **sweet girl-next-door**, normally 15 years old and up, who enjoys it as a tender chocolate treat, because its fluffy squares make it light and easy to be shared. She is very **warm**, has a **friendly** sense of humor and is always with her friends. She has an **idealistic view** of love and relationships that is depicted in movies such as Hairspray, Dirty Dancing and the TV series Glee.

Suflair is available in all Swedish supermarkets at a price of 15 SEK for the 100g bar. This is priced similarly to its main competitors, Geisha and Plopp.

Marketing activities of Suflair include placing the product on Grey's Anatomy and having print advertisements in magazines such as Glamour and In Style.

The bar looks as follows:

>>

Suflair is currently assessing its marketing strategy. One of the tools that has recently gained widespread attention is sound branding. Sound branding is the strategic usage of music and sounds in marketing activities, such as in jingles, music in advertisements, collaborations with musicians and festival sponsorships.

Suflair is planning to include this in its marketing mix, because they see **sound branding as an opportunity to clarify their image for their customers.**

Suflair is currently assessing **two different** sound branding strategies.
Please evaluate the following sound branding strategy based on the initial description of Suflair and what it stands for.

And don't forget to switch on your speakers now :-).

Suflair is currently assessing its marketing strategy. One of the tools that has recently gained widespread attention is sound branding. Sound branding is the strategic usage of music and sounds in marketing activities, such as in jingles, music in advertisements, collaborations with musicians and festival sponsorships.

Suflair is planning to include this in its marketing mix, because they see **sound branding as an opportunity to clarify their image for their customers.**

Suflair is currently assessing **two different** sound branding strategies.
Please evaluate the following sound branding strategy based on the initial description of Suflair and what it stands for.

And don't forget to switch on your speakers now :-).

>>

When evaluating this strategy, please keep in mind that Suflair wants to **clarify** the current image it has:
It is a milk chocolate bar for the **sweet girl-next-door**, who is **warm**, enjoys life, has a **friendly** sense of humor and is always with her friends. She has an **idealistic** view of love, much like it is depicted in movies such as Hairspray, Dirty Dancing and the TV series Glee. The sound branding should **support** this.

As part of the sound branding strategy, Suflair has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, Suflair plans to conduct the three following sound branding activities.

1)
Suflair will set up a service allowing consumers to express their feelings for their friends through 30 second Pop song soundpieces via audio-SMS. For example, texting "I'm glad we are friends" to a service number will forward a song containing this message to a friend.

2)
Suflair wants to gain Veronica Maggio as a brand ambassador. This will include having the artist on advertisements, as well as sponsoring her tour.

3)
Suflair wants to provide a web platform where customers can inform how they are feeling and the brand plays music that matches the mood.

00:09 | 0 %

Suflair's image and its sound branding are...

Not compatible	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Compatible
Not a good fit	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	A good fit
Not congruent	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Congruent

>>

When evaluating this strategy, please keep in mind that Suflair wants to **clarify** the current image it has:
It is a milk chocolate bar for the **sweet girl-next-door**, who is **warm**, enjoys life, has a **friendly** sense of humor and is always with her friends. She has an **idealistic** view of love, much like it is depicted in movies such as Hairspray, Dirty Dancing and the TV series Glee. The sound branding should **support** this.

As part of the sound branding strategy, Suflair has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, Suflair plans to conduct the three following sound branding activities.

1)
Suflair wants to give people the possibility to tell a never-ending story. Suflair will therefore set up a Youtube-channel where users can upload 20-second soundpieces. Each uploaded soundpiece should link to the last one and be open-ended, so that the next singer can continue.

2)
Suflair wants to gain Kanye West as a brand ambassador. This will include having the artist on advertisements, as well as sponsoring his tour.

3)
Suflair wants to set up a web platform in the form of a remix studio. People can remix soundbites of famous speeches/interviews, add sound layers to it and publish these.

Suflair's image and its sound branding strategy are...

Not compatible	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Compatible
Not a good fit	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	A good fit
Not congruent	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Congruent

>>

Finally, we'd like to get to know you a little bit better. Please answer the following questions:

Gender

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

Age

Occupation

- ○ Student
- ○ Working
- ○ Unemployed
- ○ Retired

>>

Appendix 8: Pre-test II: Testing Associations

qualtrics.com

Hello prospective respondent :-)!

We are two students from Stockholm School of Economics and currently working on our Master Thesis.
Therefore, it would be great if you could take some minutes to help us out.

In the following, you will be presented with four branding strategies.
Please be aware that this survey has sound - so make sure to switch your speakers on.

Thanks a lot in advance for your time.

Aline and Lukas

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>>

qualtrics.com

Please carefully read the description of the following branding strategy a brand is planning to use:

The brand has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, it plans to conduct the three following activities:

1)
It is going to sponsor a movie by the Iceland-based band Sigur Ros. The band has a very calm, minimalistic sound and is strongly linked to Iceland. The movie is a mix between a tour documentary and nature landscape scenes.

2)
A service will be set up where Internet users can upload their photos of nature and synchronize them with a song from the brand's web page. This will create a sound-supported photo stream that users can share or use for their own relaxation.

3)
The brand will set up a website where it will recommend new artists for ambient and minimal music. Moreover, album and track reviews of these artists will be available there.

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>>

qualtrics.com

Now, please indicate how you perceive this brand.

	1 - Disagree Completely	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Agree Completely
Extrovert	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Introvert	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Calm	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Excited	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Curious	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Indifferent	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

0% 100%

>>

Please carefully read the description of the following branding strategy a brand is planning to use:

The brand has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, it plans to conduct the three following activities:

1)
The brand will set up a service allowing consumers to express their feelings for their friends through 30 second pop song sound pieces via audio-SMS. For example, texting "I'm glad we are friends" to a service number will forward a song containing this message to a friend.

2)
It plans to gain Veronica Maggio as a brand ambassador. This will include having the artist on advertisements, as well as sponsoring her tour.

3)
It wants to provide a web platform where customers can tell how they are feeling. Then the website plays music that matches the mood.

0% 100%

>>

Now, please indicate how you personally this brand.

	1 - Disagree Completely	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Agree Completely
Male	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Female	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Retro	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Modern	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Independent	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Approval-seeking	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Warm	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cold	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

0% 100%

>>

Please carefully read the description of the following branding strategy a brand is planning to use:

The brand has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, it plans to conduct the three following activities:

1)
The brand wants to give people the possibility to tell a never-ending story. It will therefore set up a Youtube-channel where users can upload 20-second sound-pieces. Each uploaded sound-piece should link to the last one and be open-ended, so that the next singer can continue.

2)
The brand wants to gain Kanye West as a brand ambassador. This will include having the artist on advertisements, as well as sponsoring his tour.

3)
The brand wants to set up a web platform in the form of a remix studio. People can remix soundbites of famous speeches/interviews, add sound layers to it and publish these.

0% 100%

>>

Qualtrics.com

Now, please indicate how you perceive this brand.

	1 - Disagree Completely	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Agree Completely
Male	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Female	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Retro	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Modern	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Independent	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Approval-seeking	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Warm	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cold	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

0% 100%

>>

Qualtrics.com

Please carefully read the description of the following branding strategy a brand is planning to use:

The brand has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, it plans to conduct the three following activities:

1)
The brand wants to gain the band Kings of Leon as a brand ambassador. This will include having the band on advertisements, as well as sponsoring their tour.

2)
It will do events in summer, such as playing music on a pontoon in the water in the Stockholm/Gothenburg archipelago.

3)
The brand will provide a web platform for alternative pop/rock bands where users can upload their band's songs and share it with the brand community.

0% 100%

>>

Qualtrics.com

Now, please indicate how you perceive this brand.

	1 - Disagree Completely	2	3	4	5	6	7 - Agree Completely
Extrovert	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Introvert	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Calm	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Excited	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Curious	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Indifferent	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

0% 100%

>>

qualtrics.com

Finally, we'd like to get to know you a little bit better. Please answer the following questions:

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age (in numbers)

Country of Residence

Occupation

- Student
- Working
- Unemployed
- Retired

If you have any further comments or opinions, feel free to express them here!

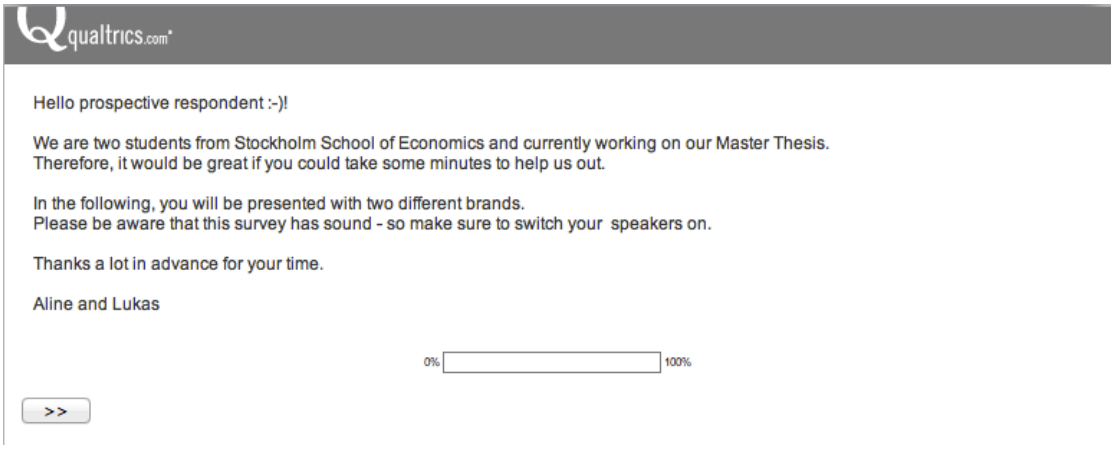
0% 100%

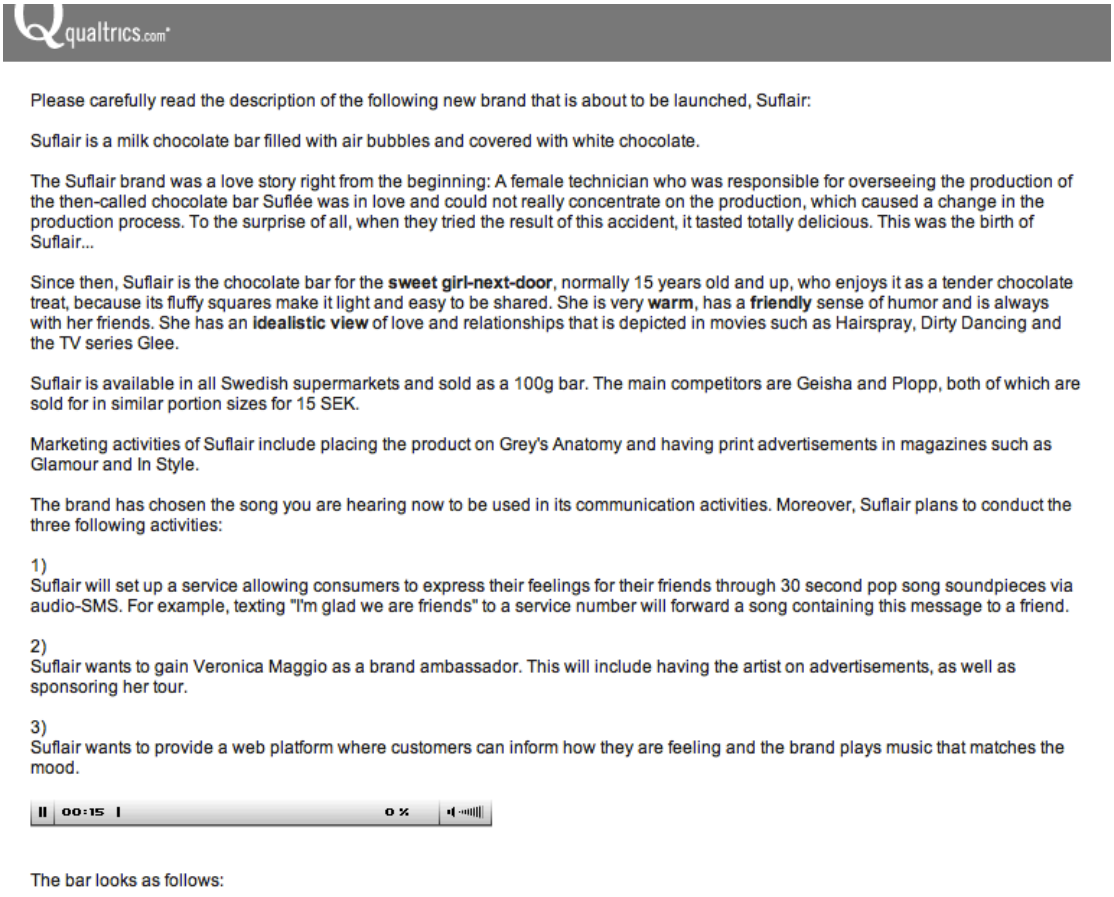
>>

Appendix 9: Final Survey

Final Survey: Suflair Fit Strategy / 70° North Fit Strategy

Please note that due to randomization, the variants Suflair Fit Strategy / 70° North Unfit Strategy and Suflair Unfit Strategy / 70° North Fit Strategy appeared to respondents. The question blocks are the same as the ones seen below.





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qualtrics.com

Having read the brand description, as well as the sound branding strategies, please rate the following:

All things considered, I think Suflair is...

Bad	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Good
Dislikeable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Likeable
Unfavorable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Favorable

Now, please indicate how you personally perceive Suflair.

Male	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Female
Retro	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Modern
Independent	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Approval-seeking
Warm	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Cold

The brand, the song you listened to, and the three music activities are...

Not a good fit	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	A good fit

0% 100%

>>

Please carefully read the description of the following new brand that is about to be launched, 70° North:

70° North is a bottled water brand sourced from the purest **Nordic** springs at 70° North latitude. In addition to the purity of the spring, it is filtered through a combination of various stones, all of which come from the same latitude. This adds different minerals to it and gives it its distinct taste.

70° North is for the **explorer** at-heart, usually male and 25 years and up, who has an appreciation for the outside - both in the urban and rural areas. He is introvert, likes taking some **time off for himself** and enjoys the **idea** of going to more isolated places.
For him, drinking 70° North spring water provides a moment of refreshing **quietness**.

70° North is available in all Swedish supermarkets in a 0.5 liter bottle. Among its competitors are Ramlösa and Loka, which are sold for 12 SEK for the same bottle size.

The brand sponsors the Dalsland Canoe Marathon, Sweden's largest canoe and kayak competition northwest of Gothenburg. Moreover, 70° North curates photography exhibitions that have nature as a theme, such as Nick Brandt's exhibition of wild animal photos at Fotografiska Museet in Stockholm.

The brand has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, 70° North plans to conduct the three following activities:

1)
They are going to sponsor a movie by the Iceland-based band Sigur Ros. The band has a very calm, minimalistic sound and is strongly linked to Iceland. The movie is a mix between a tour documentary and nature landscape scenes.

2)
A service will be set up where internet users can upload their photos of nature and synchronize them with a song from 70° North's webpage. This will create a sound-supported photo stream that users can share or use for their own relaxation.

3)
70° North will set up a website where they will recommend new artists for ambient and minimal music. Moreover, album and track reviews of these artists will be available there.

00:07 | 0 %

The bottle looks as follows:

0% 100%

>>

qualtrics.com

Having read the brand description, as well as the sound branding strategies, please rate the following:

All things considered, I think 70° North is...

Bad	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Good
Dislikeable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Likeable
Unfavorable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Favorable

Now, please indicate how you personally perceive 70° North.

Extrovert	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Introvert
Calm	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Excited
Curious	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Indifferent

The brand, the song you listened to, and the three music activities are...

Not a good fit	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	A good fit

0% 100%

>>

qualtrics.com

Please indicate how well you like the following music genres

	Hate it						Love it
Ambient-Electronic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pop	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rock	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hip Hop	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Now, please indicate your personal opinion on music. "To me, music..."

is unimportant	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	is important
is irrelevant	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	is relevant
means nothing to me	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	means a lot to me

0% 100%

>>

qualtrics.com

Finally, we'd like to get to know you a little bit better. Please answer the following questions:

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age (in numbers)

Country of Residence

Occupation

- Student
- Working
- Unemployed
- Retired

If you have any further comments or opinions, feel free to express them here!

If you would like to participate in the lottery for the 300 SEK Ticnet voucher, please add your mail address in the field below.

0% 100%

>>

Final Survey: Suflair Unfit Strategy / 70° North Unfit Strategy

Qualtrics.com

Hello prospective respondent :-)!

We are two students from Stockholm School of Economics and currently working on our Master Thesis.
Therefore, it would be great if you could take some minutes to help us out.

In the following, you will be presented with two different brands.
Please be aware that this survey has sound - so make sure to switch your speakers on.

Thanks a lot in advance for your time.

Aline and Lukas

0% 100%

>>

Qualtrics.com

Please carefully read the description of the following new brand that is about to be launched, Suflair:

Suflair is a milk chocolate bar filled with air bubbles and covered with white chocolate.

The Suflair brand was a love story right from the beginning: A female technician who was responsible for overseeing the production of the then-called chocolate bar Suflée was in love and could not really concentrate on the production, which caused a change in the production process. To the surprise of all, when they tried the result of this accident, it tasted totally delicious. This was the birth of Suflair...

Since then, Suflair is the chocolate bar for the **sweet girl-next-door**, normally 15 years old and up, who enjoys it as a tender chocolate treat, because its fluffy squares make it light and easy to be shared. She is very **warm**, has a **friendly** sense of humor and is always with her friends. She has an **idealistic view** of love and relationships that is depicted in movies such as Hairspray, Dirty Dancing and the TV series Glee.

Suflair is available in all Swedish supermarkets and sold as a 100g bar. The main competitors are Geisha and Plopp, both of which are sold for in similar portion sizes for 15 SEK.

Marketing activities of Suflair include placing the product on Grey's Anatomy and having print advertisements in magazines such as Glamour and In Style.

The brand has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, Suflair plans to conduct the three following activities:

1)
Suflair wants to give people the possibility to tell a never-ending story. Suflair will therefore set up a Youtube-channel where users can upload 20-second soundpieces. Each uploaded soundpiece should link to the last one and be open-ended, so that the next singer can continue.

2)
Suflair wants to gain Kanye West as a brand ambassador. This will include having the artist on advertisements, as well as sponsoring his tour.

3)
Suflair wants to set up a web platform in the form of a remix studio. People can remix soundbites of famous speeches/interviews, add sound layers to it and publish these.

00:06 0 %

The bar looks as follows:

0% 100%

>>

qualtrics.com

Having read the brand description, as well as the sound branding strategies, please rate the following:

All things considered, I think Suflair is...

Bad	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Good
Dislikeable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Likeable
Unfavorable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Favorable

Now, please indicate how you personally perceive Suflair.

Male	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Female
Retro	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Modern
Independent	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Approval-seeking
Warm	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Cold

The brand, the song you listened to, and the three music activities are...

Not a good fit	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	A good fit

0% 100%

>>

qualtrics.com

Please carefully read the description of the following new brand that is about to be launched, 70° North:

70° North is a bottled water brand sourced from the purest **Nordic** springs at 70° North latitude. In addition to the purity of the spring, it is filtered through a combination of various stones, all of which come from the same latitude. This adds different minerals to it and gives it its distinct taste.

70° North is for the **explorer** at-heart, usually male and 25 years and up, who has an appreciation for the outside - both in the urban and rural areas. He is introvert, likes taking some **time off for himself** and enjoys the **idea** of going to more isolated places.
For him, drinking 70° North spring water provides a moment of refreshing **quietness**.

70° North is available in all Swedish supermarkets in a 0.5 liter bottle. Among its competitors are Ramlösa and Loka, which are sold for 12 SEK for the same bottle size.

The brand sponsors the Dalsland Canoe Marathon, Sweden's largest canoe and kayak competition northwest of Gothenburg. Moreover, 70° North curates photography exhibitions that have nature as a theme, such as Nick Brandt's exhibition of wild animal photos at Fotografiska Museet in Stockholm.

The brand has chosen the song you are hearing now to be used in its communication activities. Moreover, 70° North plans to conduct the three following activities:

1)
70° North wants to gain the band Kings of Leon as a brand ambassador. This will include having the band on advertisements, as well as sponsoring their tour.

2)
They will do events in summer, such as playing music on a pontoon in the water in the Stockholm/Gothenburg archipelago.

3)
70° North will provide a web platform for alternative pop/rock bands where users can upload their band's songs and share it with the brand community.

00:21 0 %

The bottle looks as follows:

0% 100%

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qualtrics.com

Having read the brand description, as well as the sound branding strategies, please rate the following:

All things considered, I think 70° North is...

Bad	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Good
Dislikeable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Likeable
Unfavorable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Favorable

Now, please indicate how you personally perceive 70° North.

Extrovert	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Introvert
Calm	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Excited
Curious	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Indifferent

The brand, the song you listened to, and the three music activities are...

Not a good fit	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	A good fit

0% 100%

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Please indicate how well you like the following music genres

	Hate it						Love it
Ambient-Electronic	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pop	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rock	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hip Hop	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Now, please indicate your personal opinion on music. "To me, music..."

is unimportant	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	is important
is irrelevant	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	is relevant
means nothing to me	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	means a lot to me

0% 100%

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qualtrics.com

Finally, we'd like to get to know you a little bit better. Please answer the following questions:

Gender

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

Age (in numbers)

Country of Residence

Occupation

- ○ Student
- ○ Working
- ○ Unemployed
- ○ Retired

If you have any further comments or opinions, feel free to express them here!

If you would like to participate in the lottery for the 300 SEK Ticnet voucher, please add your mail address in the field below.

0% 100%

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