

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL BRANDING AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN RECRUITMENT

- May The Odds Be Ever In Your Favour -

Media has during the past years paid more attention to the usage of personal branding while applying for a job. This thesis aims to investigate how business graduates' personal branding efforts are perceived by recruiters, while also researching what other factors that might influence the decision of inviting a candidate to a first interview or employing a candidate.

By a qualitative pre-study and a quantitative main study, data was gathered on how important certain personal branding and social psychological factors are in the recruitment process. By six in-depth pre-study interviews and 239 respondents to the main study questionnaires, it is evident that different aspects of personal branding and social psychology are important for different types of recruiters, business fields and recruitment stages. Regardless of who and when this is received, skills and brand consistency are important personal branding aspects. The dominating factors within social psychology are personal chemistry between the candidate and the recruiter, and the recruiter's usage of intuition as a tool to decide. Similarity in personality between the candidate and the recruiter is commonly appreciated among recruiters since two out of three behave in this way, meaning that birds of a feather do flock together.

Recruiters for Marketing & Sales positions evaluate creativity efforts higher than Accounting & Finance and Consulting. The latter values candidate personality of variety seeking to a higher extent, while Accounting & Finance shows the opposite.

When investigating the differences between the two recruitment process stages, screening and final interview, the results show that most factors are more important during the final interview stage. There are however some exceptions, e.g. the candidate's usage of creativity differentiates more in the screening stage but is evaluated higher in the interview stage. Due to these results, implications can be extended to both managers and business graduates.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will introduce this thesis by presenting its research area and purpose before stating the research questions and explaining the intended knowledge contribution.

1.1 The Research Area

Personal branding has earlier been important for specifically celebrities, where the leveraging of personal branding efforts have helped their business success (Tin, 2013). Celebrities have for example been used in endorsements for companies and brands (Erdogan, 1999) in order to create strong consumer attachments. This is because human brands enhance a person's feelings of autonomy and relatedness, while not limiting feelings of competence (Thomson, 2006). The public interest for personal branding has been large during the last years, where personal branding for the commonalty is seen as the most recent topic.

1.1.1 Personal Branding and the Recruitment Process

Media has been writing a lot about the trend of how to apply branding theories to individuals searching for a job. Previous points of view have been that if an employee does his/her best at work someone will notice, but unfortunately this is usually not the truth. Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, said "*Your brand is what people say about you when you are not in the room*", which means that everyone has a personal brand, consciously or not (Purkiss, 2012). There are mainly three advantages of using personal branding in order to boost an individual's career. First, it can serve as a resume and save time during recruitment processes. Second, with a clear focus it is easier to connect with other people or become recommended for a future job. Third, personal brands attract recruiters who use social media in their daily work (Demers, 2014). In Sweden, personal branding has been noticed in newspapers where it has been acknowledged as a contributor to the success in job hunts (Metro, 2014, p. 22).

A widely discussed topic of how to manifest a personal brand within recruitment is the usage of creativity. Specifically, media has noted the usage of other medium of applications than what previously have been done. One such use of creativity is video applications that are widely adopted in recruitment for marketing and sales position (Lind, 2014, p. 33). This kind of job application has had a huge spread in social media where we have followed William dancing salsa while showing notes of his working experience (Helander, 2013) and Karl rapping his resume

(Rovira, 2013). By doing these creative videos, they have both been more successful in their job hunt. Another creative medium has been the usage of Instagram to get attention from marketing agencies (Winberg, 2015). *Veckans Affärer* has also brought forward Nina Mufleh that created her own webpage where she motivated why she was the perfect candidate for Airbnb. Instead of showing her resume she showed her knowledge and passion for the company, leading both the marketing manager and the CEO to tweet about her and invite her to an interview (*Veckans Affärer*, 2015). Using creativity might however not be an advantage during the recruitment process since some company cultures are more conservative than others, which can be seen on the company's webpage, activity in social media, marketing tone, brand personality etc. (Henderson, 2012). From an academic point of view, there is also a risk of causing irritation when advertising with mediums that are usually used for something else (Dahlén and Lange, 2009).

1.1.2 Employer Branding

Not only has the topic of branding transferred into individuals, but also to employers in order to become the employer of choice. Wilden, Gudergan and Lings (2010) found that with competitive labour markets, employers need to invest in order to attract the candidates, i.e. employer branding. Wilden, Gudergan and Lings (2010: 59) are reasoning "*Given the risk to both parties, it is in the best interests of a potential employee to find out as much as they can about a prospective employer, and for a prospective employer to signal to the employment market their competencies and characteristics*". This argument can be interpreted to also be valid for potential employees who need to signal to the employment market their competencies and characteristics, i.e. personal branding. It is further strengthened by Moy and Lam (2004: 521) stating that "*For recent graduates, getting hired can mean winning the first important battle in their career. To win, a graduate needs to know what employers demand and what he/she can supply in return.*"

1.1.3 Social Psychology Within Recruitment

A lot is already known about the recruitment process and its limitations due to social psychological issues. For example, studies have shown that an individual's name, which is the first a personal brand signals, affects the chances of being invited to a first interview (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004; Eriksson and Lagerström, 2007). Also, the gender and country of origin have been researched a lot and it is evident that we like people that remind us of ourselves, even

though this exists on an unconscious level (Argyle, 1984). In Sweden, research show that recruiters discriminate candidates that are older, non-European, non-Christian and overweight (Eriksson, Johansson and Langenskiöld, 2012). Further do Swedish managers prefer to employ candidates with similar background to themselves, e.g. native Swedes employ other native Swedes (Hensvik, Nordström Skans and Åslund, 2009). Further did Landy and Sigall (1974) show that the essays of more attractive girls were graded better than those of the less attractive ones. This leads to the conclusion that more physically attractive job candidates are assumed to be more intelligent, and therefore more desirable as colleagues and have higher employability (Landy and Sigall, 1974). The question of gender is also affecting how the candidate is judged since research shows that the most attractive women are rejected by some female recruiters because of social desirability (Krebs and Adolfini, 1975). As one can see, social psychology is strongly influencing the recruitment process, which makes it interesting to research in combination with personal branding.

1.2 The Purpose

As mentioned, branding has covered how consumers interpret celebrities and how job candidates interpret employer branding. This leads to a gap in the current research of how individual job candidates' personal branding efforts are perceived by recruiters. Since media has paid attention to personal branding and its importance in order to become employed, it is necessary to also include the intangible social psychology factors in the interaction between recruiter and candidate. The purpose of this thesis is therefore to investigate the importance of personal branding and social psychological aspects in recruitment, from a recruiter's perspective. By conducting this study we aim to contribute to 1) increase the understanding of which personal branding aspects that are of most importance for recruiters, 2) fill the research gap between branding and social psychology in the recruitment process, 3) investigate what within the recruitment process that candidates can directly influence and what is out-of-reach.

1.3 Research Questions

With the thesis's purpose in mind, three research questions are proposed.

1. How do recruiters perceive different aspects of personal branding used by business graduates in the recruitment process?

- a. Does this depend on which stage of the recruitment process, screening or interview, that is in focus?
- b. Does this depend on which business field the candidate is interested in?

2. Does social psychology have an impact on the recruitment process of business graduates? If so, in what way?

3. Are there any differences between recruiters, in terms of candidate similarity, on how they value personal branding and social psychology aspects?

1.4 Definitions

Personal branding is defined as the profile of an individual, in terms of values and qualities, e.g. skills and personality (Amoako and Adjaison, 2012) that is evaluated by recruiters.

Business graduate is defined as an individual that has studied the final semester, BSc or MSc, in business. Since this person is recently graduated, the work experience within the field is limited. The term "Candidate" is always referring to a business graduate in this thesis.

Recruiter is defined as a person involved in the recruitment of business graduates. This person does not have to hold a position within human relations (HR) in their company.

Recruitment process is defined as all the steps a candidate goes through when they are interested in a specific employer. These steps vary between companies and industries but generally include advertise vacancy, screen applications, invite candidates to a first interview and host one final interview (Arnold *et al.*, 2010). In this study the recruitment process is limited to two steps, screening and final interview, which are taken as certain in all organisations.

Screening is defined as the stage where the recruiter(s) has collected all resumes and cover letters in order to reach a decision on who to invite for a first interview.

Final interview is defined as the last step in the recruitment process, which is the final meeting between the candidate and the HR-responsible/future manager, who determines who to employ.

Business fields is defined and limited to three different areas of employment which usually differ in terms of profile of demands; Marketing & Sales, Accounting & Finance and Consulting. More detailed positions within each field are not investigated.

Social psychology is defined as the studies regarding people and how they think about, influence and relate to each other (Myers, 2008).

Similarity is in this thesis primarily defined and measured as similarity in personality (Cialdini, 2009) between recruiter and business graduate.

1.5 Intended Knowledge Contribution

This thesis aims to contribute to a wider understanding in academia of personal branding in relation to the recruitment process and employability. Several studies have shown what recruiters look for in business graduates but few have combined this with theories of branding and social psychology. Previous studies have mostly focused on what factors that impacts employment of candidates (e.g. Barker, 2014, Hodges and Burchell, 2003), what influences the chances of proceeding through the screening stage to get the first interview is however less researched.

A popular research topic has concerned employers using branding to become the employer of choice, and this thesis is broadening the discussion by researching how an individual can become the employee of choice. It is further intended to contribute to the discussions in media regarding personal branding and the aspects that are connected to the relationship between the recruiter and candidate. To summarise, we aim to contribute to the academic gap between personal branding and social psychology in the recruitment process.

1.6 Delimitations

The main delimitation in this study is the decision to only investigate two stages in the recruitment process; screening and final interview. This is due to great variety among companies where the stages most have in common are these two. We are also only researching business graduates, meaning that it is the recruitment process for the first job within business after graduation. We have also limited the study to include only the recruitment processes where the company is hiring the business graduate themselves, which means that e.g. employment agencies are excluded as respondents.

We are not investigating, and are therefore taking as certain, the effects of a candidate's country of origin, appearance, name or gender on his/her chances to be successful in the recruitment process. This is based on the fact that previous research has shown that this does have an impact (e.g. Eriksson, Johansson and Langenskiöld, 2012). The risk of idealisation among the responses to the questionnaires is also taken as certain. To modify for this bias it would have required including 30 more statements in the main study's questionnaire (Sjöberg, 2013), which was not an option due to limitations in survey length.

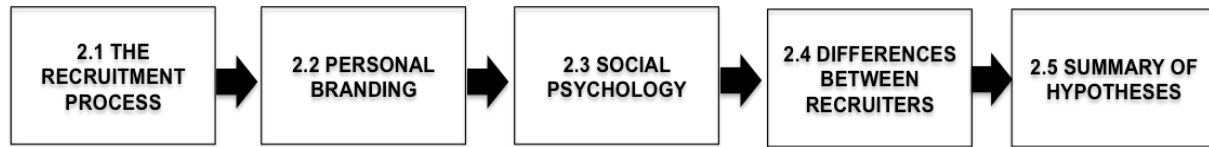
1.7 Thesis Outline



Figure 1: Main Thesis Outline

This thesis consists, in total, of seven chapters. The following chapter will describe the existing research in the areas of recruitment, personal branding and social psychology. This is made in order for the reader to be aware of the complex research area that this thesis aims to investigate and also to get explanations for the stated hypotheses. The third chapter covers methodology, including descriptions of the mixed approach, pre-test, main study and the thesis' data quality. This chapter is followed by results and analysis of the hypotheses testing. The fifth chapter will present the conclusion, which will answer the research questions. The sixth chapter will include discussions of the study's results in combination with previous research and provide implications for both managers and candidates. The final chapter will discuss this study's limitations and present suggestions for future research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



This chapter will introduce the general recruitment process, the phenomenon of personal branding and what social psychological frameworks that are of interest to answer the research questions. This is done in order to fulfil the thesis' purpose of investigating the importance of personal branding and social psychological aspects in recruitment.

2.1 The Recruitment Process

This sub-chapter will give a short description of the general recruitment process and give more in-depth information about the screening and final interview stages. This only serves as an introduction to recruitment and describes the two stages where a candidate can manifest his/her personal brand, in the application and the interview.

The recruitment process starts with an organisation having a job vacancy due to, e.g. the company is expanding; an employee retires or finds a new job. The recruitment process proceeds with a job analysis where a profile of demand is developed, which leads to the job being advertised. Once the job is advertised, candidates submit applications, which the responsible recruiter(s) in the company screens and selects a number of candidates to continue with. The company will then choose among several methods (e.g. interviews, simulations, written assessment, psychometric test, selection centre) in order to select the candidates that are more suitable for the job than others. The final step is to employ the best candidate and provide feedback to the rest. (Arnold *et al.*, 2010)

The new employee in the organisation needs to fulfil certain qualifications in order for the recruiter to feel satisfied with the decision. These demands for satisfaction continue to develop throughout the recruitment process. Further does Moser (2005) argue that in order to become satisfied the candidate needs to meet the expectations in the recruitment process. In order to find the candidates that can make the recruiter feel satisfied, companies usually use several selection methods at the same time as others only use one. Due to these differences, this thesis focuses on the first and the last stage of the recruitment process, which generally looks the same

everywhere. These stages are screening of applications (looking at competencies and personal characteristics in resume and cover letter) and final interview (one-on-one encounter between the candidate and the HR-responsible or future manager), which leads to the decision about who to employ. (Arnold *et al.*, 2010) These stages are further described below.

2.1.1 Screening

As mentioned, the screening stage exists to select which candidates to invite to a first interview. Brown and Campion (1994) researched what recruiters look for in resumes and how it can be interpreted. Their data showed that recruiters find language and math abilities by looking at education-related items; physical ability through sports-related items; leadership and intrapersonal attributes through items reflecting authority positions (e.g. dorm activities); and interpersonal abilities by items reflecting activities of social nature. Nearly all items were thought to tell something about a candidate's motivation. Roulin and Bangerter (2013) bring up the topic of students engaging in extracurricular activities to increase their attractiveness towards employers, i.e. impression management (Aronson, Wilson and Akert, 2007), and not only doing it out of internal motives. The attributes' importance also differed depending on the position in focus, with more language and interpersonal attributes perceived important when considering sales jobs and more math when considering accounting jobs (Brown and Campion, 1994). Cole *et al.* (2007) also researched this topic and confirmed the discussion by Brown and Campion (1994) by saying that recruiters' perceptions of a candidate's employability is associated with a candidate's academic grades, work experience and extracurricular activities, which are found in the resume. There is though a problem in the screening stage of not evaluating all the candidates equally, due to e.g. gender and ethnic discrimination. A study made by Åslund and Nordström Skans (2012) shows that it can be effective to use anonymous job application procedures (AAP) in order to avoid this problem. By looking at 3.500 applications they found that employers select candidates based on gender and ethnicity instead of who is the most qualified. With AAP there were no differences between the groups in the screening process, which means that it is more efficient than anti-discrimination legislation.

2.1.1.1 Application

All points of contact a candidate has with an employer of interest are a way for the candidate to manifest his/her personal brand. The first is in most cases the application, unless the candidate

has been in contact with the company earlier. Since the recruiter has limited information about the candidate during the screening stage, the application becomes an important medium of communication. It is argued that “*A clear, detailed application letter can clear the road to interviews and job offers*” (Dulek and Suchan, 1988: 70) and a majority of employers, regardless of industry, organisational size or the recruiter’s position within the company, prefer to get a cover letter together with a resume (Schullery, Ickes and Schullery, 2009). Further does an application need to be well written, be strategically structured and complement the resume. It can also be a way for a candidate to show a genuine interest towards the company by having a cover letter that is clearly written towards the company by e.g. highlighting company’s needs. (Dulek and Suchan, 1988; Barker, 2014) Finally does a good application show something about a candidate’s personality. This serves as a basis for the first interview and it is therefore important that the application and personality is not contradicting. (Dulek and Suchan, 1988)

The appearance of the application has been shown to be a deal breaker. Van Toorenburg, Oostrom and Pollet (2015) made an experiment to see the difference between using a formal versus informal e-mail address in a resume and its effect on employability perceptions. The results show that employability for resumes with informal email-addresses were significantly lower than for formal email-addresses. The effects of an inappropriate email-address were similar to spelling mistakes and the typeface used. One can therefore conclude that the appearance of the application is important for a candidate in the screening stage. Based on the discussion in this sub-chapter, no hypothesis is proposed and the importance of the application is taken as certain.

2.1.2 Final interview

Nearly every company use interviews as a means of employee selection and it has long been the most popular method, defined as “*A personally interactive process of one or more people asking questions orally to another person and evaluating the answers for the purpose of determining the qualifications of that person in order to make employment decisions* (Levashina *et al.*, 2014: 243). Some have even suggested that “*It is rare, even unthinkable, for someone to be hired without some type of interview*” (Huffcuff and Culbertson, 2010: 185, according to Levashina *et al.*, 2014: 241). One method frequently used is the situational interview where candidates are asked to indicate how they would behave in certain situations in order for the recruiter to be able

to predict future behaviour and job performance (Latham *et al.*, 1980). Another approach is to use structured interviews, which includes recruiters developing questions regarding the job analysis, asking the same questions to all candidates, using rating scales for scoring answers, recording and paying attention to fairness, and documents in combination with guidelines (Campion, Pursell and Brown, 1988; Levashina *et al.*, 2014; Skorstad, Schulze and Engen Nilsen, 2011).

Despite of its popularity, interviews are criticised for being subjective, unreliable and vulnerable to bias (Skorstad, Schulze and Engen Nilsen, 2011). In order to decrease these risks, reviews (e.g. Dipboye, 2005; Posthuma, Morgeson and Campion, 2002) show that structured interviews with trained recruiters considerably enhance the validity. Skorstad, Schulze and Engen Nilsen (2011) argue that there are other problems that can be difficult for recruiters to avoid, one being relying too much on their first impression of a candidate instead of making a complete picture based on more objective information, such as interview notes, tests and applications. Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson (1985) also found that there is a problem for the recruiters of handling a large amount of information since people cannot have more than 5-10 aspects in mind at the same time.

Due to social psychological factors and context influencing the interview, no hypothesis regarding the interview per se is proposed. See section 2.3 Social Psychology on page 25 for theory and hypotheses related to social psychology.

2.2 Personal Branding

After describing the recruitment process and the two stages screening and interview, this section will introduce personal branding. The aspects described in this chapter are all possible for a candidate to affect directly, e.g. skills and personality.

Organisations have during the past decades realised the importance of managing their brands in order to better compete in an increasingly competitive labour market (Wilden, Gudergan and Lings, 2010). Just as product markets consist of brands that want to be chosen by the consumer, the labour market consists of individuals who want to be chosen when applying for a job. The brand management phenomenon has during the last decades transferred from products to services, corporations and individuals (Bhalotia, 2004). Since personal brands have individual

differences, the recruitment process becomes an important means to select which personal brands employers value the most (Arnold *et al.*, 2010). A personal brand further needs to have a position that is appealing and sustainable over time (Thomson, 2006).

It has been stated that “*An individual’s personal brand is their clear, powerful and positive ideology that comes to their mind anytime people think of them; it constitutes their abilities, values and actions, and informs the audience of who they are, what they do and what makes them different*” (Amoako and Adjaisson, 2012: 118). Hence, personal branding in a recruitment context focuses on what an individual has to offer an employer based on values and qualities. These individual characteristics are important for a candidate to differentiate and/or dramatize in order to create a strong brand and manage it the best way possible (Gad and Rosencreutz, 2002). It has even been argued that the usage of personal branding is a goal-oriented behaviour and a motivation-increasing factor that improves the job performance of an individual. The usage of personal branding is therefore argued to result in better business success for individuals and also be beneficial for employers. (Amoako and Adjaisson, 2012)

A personal brand can be an attempt to involve in impression management where a candidate tries to get the recruiter to perceive the candidate as intended. Impression management consists of three main strategies, where self-enhancement (Aronson, Wilson and Akert, 2007) is most easily applicable to recruitment. Self-enhancement is however a risk in recruitment and some researchers have argued that personality is based on social situations and that impression management is non-existing. This since individuals constantly adapt to different situations and people. (Arnold *et al.*, 2010) By engaging in impression management, i.e. being a social chameleon, is however seen as a useful skill of a candidate, which can help to adapt to the work environment (Rosenfeld, Giacalone and Riordan, 2002).

Kristof-Brown, Barrick and Franke (2002) state that candidate aspects differ in importance depending on where in the recruitment process he/she is. For example, job experience and grade point average often determine who is invited to an interview while these aspects are less important for the final employment decision. In combination with the previous discussion about personal branding in the recruitment process, this results in the following hypothesis:

H1: Personal branding aspects differ in importance depending on if a candidate is in the screening stage or in the interview stage.

This thesis studies how important certain aspects of personal branding are in the recruitment process of business graduates. Different theoretical aspects of a personal brand, such as skills, personality and creativity, are therefore discussed below.

2.2.1 Hard and Soft Skills

Much have been studied about employability of business graduates, one factor being the skills a candidate possesses, which are a part of an individual's personal brand (Gad and Rosencreutz, 2002). Different studies have used different definitions and categorisations of skills (e.g. Barker, 2014; Hodges and Burchell, 2003; Teijeiro, Rungo and Freire, 2013), but the general definitions used in this thesis are hard and soft skills. Hard skills are specific, teachable and technical, while soft skills are intra- and interpersonal and less easily learnt (Laker and Powell, 2011). One way to evaluate the importance of hard and soft skills is to look at what companies request in job advertisements. Wahlund (2013) found that in the total amount of skills found, the number of hard skills is less in amount compared to soft skills. This can be interpreted as hard skills being more generally desirable across employers compared to soft skills, which are more company specific.

One study examined how recruiter value three categories of skills; Professional Competencies, Business Skills, and Personal Attributes, which are all important when companies are recruiting business graduates. Professional competencies are such skills as communication, computer knowledge and high grades, i.e. hard skills. Business skills are such as being a good team worker, initiative and a good problem-solver, i.e. also hard skills. Personal attributes are skills such as having enthusiasm and being self-confident and flexible, i.e. soft skills. The author also showed that candidate knowledge about the company and the reason they wanted to work there was important. So were also personality and work experience. (Barker, 2014)

Hodges and Burchell (2003) showed that skills such as ability to learn; energy and passion; and teamwork and cooperation are most important in terms of business graduates' employability. Out of the top ten skills (of 25 skills in total) of importance in the study, eight were categorised as soft skills. Hard skills were of less importance, with for example computer literacy; technical expertise; and organisational awareness being among the bottom ten skills. The study also showed that the majority of responding employers viewed work experience as an important skill (not part of the initial 25 skills), with an average of 5.34 out of 7. (Hodges and Burchell, 2003)

Research further argue that “*Professional competencies are a key factor in gauging how employable a graduate is*” (Teijeiro, Rungo and Freire, 2013: 286) and that recruiters decide who gets employed based on how well a candidate’s hard and soft skills match the needs of the company. The chances of getting employed increase as the company is in need of skills that the candidate possesses. Soft skills (e.g. motivation at work and ability to work independently) are shown to be more important than hard skills (e.g. ability to communicate and basic knowledge about the industry) in order for a graduate to become employed. It was also evident that different sectors value hard and soft skills in relatively the same way, but it can also be argued that different sectors demand different competencies in order for graduates to be successful at work (Teijeiro, Rungo and Freire, 2013). The authors conclude that the personality characteristics and soft skills are of more importance than competencies related to education, i.e. hard skills. (Teijeiro, Rungo and Freire, 2013) As previously mentioned, the importance of the skills also differs depending on which stage of the recruitment process that is in focus (Kristof-Brown, Barrick and Franke, 2002).

This shows that there is some consistency between studies on how important hard and soft skills are in order for a candidate to be invited to a first interview and to become employed. This results in the following hypotheses:

H2: Hard and soft skills are important in order for a recruiter to invite a candidate to a first interview/employ the candidate.

- a. The importance of hard and soft skills differs depending on which candidate position that is in focus.

H3: Soft skills are more important than hard skills in order for a recruiter to invite a candidate to a first interview/employ the candidate.

- a. Soft skills are more important than hard skills for all candidate positions and both recruitment stages.

2.2.2 Genuine Interest and Mere-Exposure

Barker’s (2014) study showed the importance of a candidate’s genuine interest in the company by e.g. being in contact with the company outside of the recruitment process. A candidate being in contact with a company at several points in time increases familiarity, which creates a mere-

exposure effect that is said to be positive (Kardes, Cline and Cronley, 2011), since people tend to prefer familiar objects (people) to unfamiliar ones (Hoyer and McInnis, 2008). Familiarity further increases likability (Kardes, Cline and Cronley, 2011) and decreases the risks associated with a brand (Baker, 1999). Many repetitions creates liking but does not create boredom unless it is incessant (Myers, 2008).

The mere-exposure effect has usually been tested on product brands but has during the last years also been applicable to humans (Kardes, Cline and Cronley, 2011) and it has been shown that mere-exposure i.e. increased familiarity “*Can directly influence brand choice when brands benefiting from these effects are competing against alternatives with equivalent familiarity and perceived performance characteristics*” (Baker, 1999: 44). For personal brands in recruitment, it should be beneficial that a candidate has previously contacted the company since this increases familiarity and differentiates him/her from other candidates. This continuous contact between a recruiter and a candidate should reduce uncertainty and increase the possibility for a relationship to be established (Thomson, 2006). Previous contact can also make recruiters disregard background information due to the encounter between the candidate and recruiter (Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson, 1985).

Contacting the company in advance should be a more efficient approach in the screening stage than in the final interview stage since it can be assumed that the candidates are on more equal levels of familiarity for the recruiter at this stage. This since the information about a candidate’s previous interaction should be more top-of-mind (Hoyer and McInnis, 2008) for the recruiter.

The mere exposure effect, in terms of previous contact i.e. familiarity, is hypothesised as the following:

- H4: The mere exposure effect, in terms of previous contact, is important for recruiters.

a. Its importance is larger in the screening stage than in the interview stage.

2.2.3 Personality

Research has found that recruiters screening resumes can make associations between the resume and the perceived candidate personality, which influences employability and recruiters’ judgement (Burns *et al.*, 2014; Barker, 2014). Personality is a part of the personal brand

attributes (Gad and Rosencreutz, 2002) and has been shown to be a way to predict behaviour in terms of job performance (Moy and Lam, 2004).

Studies have had different approaches to investigate human personality. During the early part of the 20th century were lexical approaches used where adjectives to describe a person were divided into categories. With the development of statistical analysis came the new approach of factor analysis. Most studies have reached the conclusion that there are mainly five broad personality factors that can be used to describe a person: Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness, found in Table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive Big Five Personality Factors	
Extroversion	Socialising and excitement-seeking
Agreeableness	Sensitivity and helpfulness
Conscientiousness	Task- and goal focused behaviour
Neuroticism	Emotional stability
Openness	Depth and breadth of the mental and experimental life
<i>Adopted from John, Naumann and Soto, 2008</i>	

These five personality factors have been discussed in terms of what they do and do not contain. There seems to be a consistency that Extroversion contains aspects of socialising and excitement seeking while Agreeableness contains aspects of sensitivity and helpfulness. Conscientiousness has been criticised for having too much in common with Agreeableness but still incorporates a task- and goal focused behaviour. (John, Naumann and Soto, 2008) The fourth factor, Neuroticism, is shown to be consistent throughout different studies in its interpretation of measuring emotional stability (Digman, 1990). The final factor, Openness, incorporates traits of creativity and openness to new experiences (John, Naumann and Soto, 2008).

There exist different instruments to measure the five personality factors, none showing a “*Golden standard*” (John, Naumann and Soto, 2008: 130). Well-known examples are the Neuroticism-Extroversion-Openness Model by Costa *et al.* (1985), the Big Five Inventory (BFI) Model by John, Donahue and Kentle (1991) and the Trait Descriptive Adjective Model by Goldberg (1992) (John, Naumann and Soto, 2008). These instruments contain different amounts of items and level of complexity, where the simplicity of BFI is good to use when respondents’ time is at premium (John, Naumann and Soto, 2008; Benet-Martinez and John, 1998).

When analysing what personal characteristics that are of most importance in recruitment, Moy and Lam (2004) found that Conscientiousness has the greatest impact on the candidate being employed, followed by Agreeableness. Wille, De Fruyt and Feys (2012) further argue that Neuroticism is the least desirable personality factor. Moy and Lam (2004) also found that

personal characteristics differ in importance between industries. English communication skills are generally important, while academic grade and Agreeableness are more important for consumer products, i.e. marketing and sales, but also important in the financial industry. (Moy and Lam, 2004)

The differences in importance of the personality factors discussed above propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Different candidate personality factors differ in importance depending on which stage of the recruitment process that is in focus.

- a. The importance of the candidate personality factors differs between candidate positions.
- b. The candidate personality trait Neuroticism is low valued by recruiters.

2.2.4 Usage of Creativity

As previously mentioned, personal branding is about differentiating one individual's attributes in order to be distinguished from other personal brands (Gad and Rosencreutz, 2002). One way to incorporate this in recruitment can be the usage of creativity in the application and during the interactions between the candidate and the recruiter. Using creativity in the application and in the following screening process has shown to thrive public attention towards personal brands (see section 1.1 Research Area, page 7). The communication channel and its content are important parts of the personal branding strategy (Gad and Rosencreutz, 2002). Dahlén, Rosengren and Törn (2008) have shown that creativity does not enhance e.g. recall, liking or comprehension of the message. Dahlén, Friberg and Nilsson (2009) have however shown that the usage of creativity can create brand associations and spontaneous reminders of a brand, compared to more traditional messages. Creativity also signals greater effort and ability of the sender, and enhances brand interest and brand quality. These final points are also found by Rosengren and Dahlén (2012), who argue that except for increased brand quality and brand evaluations, brands using creativity are perceived as innovative and smart. Dahlén, Rosengren and Törn (2008: 400) argue that “... *it is more important than ever to use creativity that really pushed the message through*”. This supports the importance of saying the right thing in the right way (Rosengren and Dahlén, 2012). These final notes correspond well to the development of creativity in job applications. Hence should creativity be positively valued by recruiters, since it signals effort and ability of the candidate, and is important in today's society. There has also been shown that creativity is

valued to different extents by different employers (Campbell, 2000; Moy and Lam, 2004). It could therefore be argued that the value of creativity differs not only between employers but also between different positions (e.g. marketing versus accounting).

Like previously mentioned, people have used Instagram, videos, webpages etc. as applications, in order to show their resume and cover letter in a way that differentiates them from other candidates. Dahlén (2005) shows that the medium may be the message if the brand and the medium match. If so, it enhances brand associations and both advertising- and brand evaluations. This can be due to the act of surprise that the medium may serve as, which in combination with congruence, enhances the effects further. Dahlén and Lange (2009) say that creative media choices draw attention just because it is unexpected and unusual. The act of surprise affects the ability of the medium to create attention and makes the message more observable since it decreases the risk of clutter. There is also a risk of irritation by advertising with a medium that usually is used for something else, which must be considered by the advertiser in advance. (Dahlén and Lange, 2009)

One creative medium of job application that has been studied during the past years is video resumes. These have been effective in showing recruiters what the candidate's potential benefits are, as well as his/her oral communication skills and energy level. Video resumes have been seen to be more positively valued by recruiters if they get to see one before making an evaluation, compared to those recruiters who had to evaluate it without exposure. The same research also shows that a majority of recruiters (89 percent) who are impressed by a candidate's video resume are more likely to invite this person to an interview. (Kemp *et al.*, 2013) Creating a video can also help build associations and salience between the candidate and its personal brand characteristics (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2004) and therefore make it easier get into the recruiter's consideration set (Ouwersloot and Duncan, 2008).

As mentioned, much has been noticed about the usage of creativity in applications, which is based on the perception that it has a large effect of differentiation. With the thesis' research questions in mind, of comparing the screening and interview stages, this is also relevant for the hypotheses testing. This in combination with the discussion concerning the importance of creativity proposes the following hypotheses:

H6: Creativity is valued higher, in terms of importance, in the screening stage than in the interview stage.

- a. The usage of creativity can differentiate one candidate from another.
- b. The candidate's usage of creativity is more positively evaluated for positions within Marketing & Sales than Accounting & Finance and Consulting.
- c. The evaluation of a candidate's usage of creativity depends on who the recruiter is and when in the recruitment process this is received.
- d. The evaluation that creativity can differentiate one candidate from another depends on who the recruiter is.
- e. The evaluation of a candidate's usage of creativity depends on if the company has the technical ability (i.e. experience) to receive creative applications.

2.2.5 Brand Consistency

Having a consistent brand throughout different encounters with the consumer is something well studied in branding research (Hoyer and McInnis, 2008) and being consistent is perceived as a beneficial personality trait (Cialdini, 2009). Just as it is important for a product brand to be consistent, so can it be hypothesised to be for personal brands. Gad and Rosencreutz (2002) argue that if the personal brand is not communicated in a consistent way, there is a risk of the personal brand being misunderstood.

In terms of brand consistency across different media channels, integrated marketing communications have been said to be important. It has been argued that this approach can make the sender's message more powerful and comprehensive. Having the same message throughout different mediums also makes people focus more on the message compared to if the message is used in the same medium. (Dahlén and Lange, 2009) Luxton, Reid and Mavondo (2014) show that using an integrated marketing communication approach can increase the market performance of the brand and the effectiveness of campaigns. It is therefore clear that a brand's consistency between different media channels is important.

The consistency of a personal brand and its messages throughout the recruitment process could be argued to be of great importance since it has been shown that brand consistency has an effect on brand attitude (Müller, 2008). This brand attitude can be the recruiter's attitude towards the candidate. Brand consistency in recruitment could be in terms of interaction channels between the candidate and the recruiter; that the application matches how the candidate performs during interviews, on assessment tests, and in contact with other recruiters etc. By following Gad and

Rosencreutzs' (2002) argument, brand consistency reduces the risk of misunderstanding what the personal brand stands for, which could be assumed to be beneficial for the candidate in the final interview stage. Hence, our hypothesis is:

H7: In order to employ a candidate, it is important for a recruiter that a candidate shows a personal brand consistency throughout the recruitment process.

2.3 Social Psychology

After describing both the recruitment process and the personal branding aspects that a candidate has direct impact on, this section will present the social psychological factors that can influence the recruitment process. These factors are per se less effectible by the candidate but still exist and are unavoidable. Similarity, personal chemistry and intuition are discussed.

Human behaviour is a mystery where social psychology exists to clarify parts of it. Social psychology can give at least partial answers to questions on how thinking drives behaviour. More precisely it can be described as "... *The scientific study of how people think about, influence, and relate to one another*" (Myers, 2008: 4). Since people interpret the same individual differently there is no easy way for a personal brand to ensure that others perceive it the same way as oneself does (Gad and Rosencreutz, 2002). This makes the social psychology phenomenon relevant in relation to personal branding.

The business psychologist Cialdini (2009) has been widely acknowledged for his studies on how people influence each other. He proposes six different ways where the ones relevant for this thesis are commitment and consistency and liking. As consistency is perceived as a beneficial personality trait, people strive towards signalling this while interacting with others. This has an impact on the practice of commitment and consistency, which states that people making an initial commitment are more likely to be consistent and make upcoming commitments to support the initial one. (Cialdini, 2009) This can be compared to chapter 2.2.5 Brand Consistency, page 24.

Cialdini (2009) further states that people are more likely to agree with someone they like, compared to someone they don't like, which can be influenced by e.g. physical attractiveness, similarity between people, compliments and familiarity. Gonzales *et al.* (1983) confirmed this theory and found that similarity leads to more liking. This also goes the opposite direction, the more you assume a person to like you, the more you like him/her as well. To connect this theory

to the recruitment process, one can say that if the recruiter likes the candidate the chance of being offered a job is greater than if the recruiter does not like the candidate. This liking origin from similarity in e.g. personality, gender, age, or education. Further does the candidate who gets employed have to fit into the already established organisational culture by i.e. being similar to co-workers. (Skorstad, Schulze and Engen Nilsen, 2011) To exemplify this even more, one can assume that the information that the candidate makes available in cover letter and resume will increase liking already before the first interview *if* it matches the recruiter's interests, attitude or personality (Byrne, 1971).

2.3.1 Personal Chemistry

One dimension within social psychology affecting the recruitment process is personal chemistry between the candidate and the recruiter during the interview stage. At this stage, personal chemistry is usually the determining factor. (Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson, 1985)

Personal chemistry can be seen as a somewhat vague concept, which comes into place when the judgement of a person is based upon unconscious information. This is a process outside of the recruiter's responsibility since "*If the personal chemistry does not fit, nothing can be done about it and nobody is to blame*" (Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson, 1985: 57). One can assume that personal chemistry is crucial in order to achieve trust and a positive attitude towards a person (Argyle, 1984; Berscheid and Walster, 1974). Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson (1985) also found that the impression a candidate makes in the interview is the most important factor for the final decision about who to employ, followed by experience and references. The impression depends in turn on e.g. humour and physical appearance, which are parts of personal chemistry. This discussion results in the following hypothesis:

H8: Personal chemistry between the recruiter and candidate is important in the interview

2.3.2 Intuition

Since recruitment processes can sometimes be large and "information heavy" for recruiters, different tools, such as job analyses, have been developed to help ease the process. There is however evidence that recruiters forgo the structured and analytical employee selection process by focusing on their own feelings and listening to their intuition (Dries, 2013; Skorstad, Schulze and Engen Nilsen, 2011), especially in situations that are complex, uncertain and time pressuring

(Burke and Miller, 1999; Klein, 2003). The reason for this is that recruiters can see assessment tests as being less valid compared to the usage of intuition (Miles and Sadler-Smith, 2014). Further do some recruiters see intuition as being of great help in the recruitment process (Skorstad, Schulze and Engen Nilsen, 2011). Even though the usage of intuition in recruitment can be valuable, research shows that it leads to results that are random since different recruiters have different intuitions. This further results in employment decisions based more on the recruiter's intuition and less on the candidate's personal competence. (Skorstad, Schulze and Engen Nilsen, 2011)

Miles and Sadler-Smith (2014) did a qualitative study regarding the use of intuition in managerial recruitment. They found that intuition might be the only feasible approach for managers if the recruitment process is resource-constrained and more rational recruitment methods are lacking. The authors also found that intuition was used as a predictor of personality, which in turn was used to predict performance (Miles and Sadler-Smith, 2014). Further has personality been shown to be of importance in the recruitment process (see section 2.2.3 Personality, page 20).

Intuition is of use for positions where it is important for employees to make a good first impression, e.g. sales people (Miles and Sadler-Smith, 2014). The first impression can also be seen as an evaluation of a candidate's competencies for e.g. sales positions where "the Elevator Pitch" is of great importance (Skorstad, Schulze and Engen Nilsen, 2011). Miles and Sadler-Smith (2014: 607, 607-608) argue that intuition's "... *salience is likely to be amplified in the non-HR specialist settings which prevail in many organisations*" and that "*The capacity to intuit is built-up over several (e.g. ten or more) years' practice, reflection and feedback*". These findings are supported by research that also shows that intuition is used more in smaller organisations (Lodato, Highhouse and Brooks, 2011). This all demonstrates that the usage of intuition in the recruitment process differs depending on who takes the decision and what background that person has, which results in the following hypotheses:

H9: The recruiter's use of intuition is highly valued as a means to decide which candidate to invite to a first interview/employ.

- a. The usage of intuition has higher value, within both screening and interview, for Marketing & Sales positions than Accounting & Finance and Consulting positions.

H10: The usage of intuition within the recruitment process differs between recruiters depending on which stage and ...

- a. Recruiter's educational background.
- b. Recruiter's position within the company.
- c. Recruiter's amount of years within recruitment and year of birth.
- d. Recruiter's gender.
- e. Recruiter's personality.
- f. Number of employees within the corporate group.

2.4 Differences Between Recruiters

This chapter has up until now presented theories regarding the recruitment process, personal branding and social psychology. In order to finalise the theoretical chapter, the following section will handle possible differences between recruiters, in terms of how they value personal branding and social psychological aspects.

Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson (1985) describe a study, which found two different types of recruiters based on what they value within a candidate; type A found social adaptation important and type B values integrity. Type B was also more rejecting than type A in especially extroversion, dress code and fit with company culture. Type A had a tendency to look for the positive aspects within a candidate, while type B focused on the negative ones. In terms of merits, type A did an overall judgement, while type B focused on work experience. In total, this corresponds well to type A preferring soft skills and type B preferring hard skills. Moy and Lam (2004) also found another two types of recruiters where one (cluster 1) had a more balanced evaluation of personality traits and skills that are important in order for employment, while recruiters in cluster 2 placed more weight on Conscientiousness and English communication skills. Cluster 1 is represented by a majority in construction, business services and privately owned firms industries, while cluster 2 recruiters are dominantly represented in manufacturing and listed companies. These results were not affected by the recruiters age or gender. (Moy and Lam, 2004)

There is another way of viewing recruiter differences, based on if they want a candidate similar to themselves or someone that complements them. Similarity means that candidates will be rated higher the more similar they are to the recruiter (Strauss, Barrick and Connerley, 2001), which can emerge in terms of attitude, demographic, attractiveness (Devendorf and Highhouse, 2008)

and personality (Kristof-Brown, Barrick and Stevens, 2005). Tett and Murphy (2002: 224) discuss similarity, which occurs when “*An individual supplements, embellishes, or possesses characteristics which are similar to other individuals in [the] environment*”. Further do individuals prefer to socialise with people similar to themselves since it makes them experience more positive outcomes (Kristof-Brown, Barrick and Stevens, 2005). Devendorf and Highhouse (2008), looking at similarity at the workplace, argue that candidates are applying for job at an employer similar to themselves because similarity facilitates social interaction and provides a sense of comfort. The reasoning about similarity is also due to individuals wanting to be seen with other people who are like them (Tett and Murphy, 2002).

On the other hand, co-workers may be most compatible when they are similar in some ways and complementary in others (Tett and Murphy, 2002). Tett and Murphy (2002) say that this exist in order to complement the characteristics of an environment and Kristof-Brown, Barrick and Franke (2002) found that complementary fit occurs, for the personality trait Extroversion, when the characteristics of an individual complete the environment by removing a weakness or filling a gap. Tett and Murphy (2002: 225) explain this by “*Personality compatibility results when one person’s trait expression offers opportunities for the other’s trait expression*”. In line with this, Dryer and Horowitz (1997) found that dominant people preferred to interact with partners who invite them to be dominant, and compliant people preferred to interact with partners who invite them to be compliant.

The discussion about differences in recruiter’s in terms of preferring skills, personality, creativity and similarity results in the following hypotheses:

H11: Most recruiters like a candidate who is similar to themselves in terms of personality.

- a. It exists different types of recruiters based on what they value, personality-wise, within a candidate.

H12: It exists different types of recruiters who ...

- a. Value a candidate’s hard and soft skills differently.
- b. Value a candidate’s personality differently.
- c. Value a candidate’s use of creativity differently.
- d. Use intuition to different extents.
- e. Evaluate personal branding and social psychology factors differently.
- f. Evaluate personal branding and social psychology factors differently depending on which stage of the recruitment process that is in focus.

2.5 Summary of Hypotheses

The hypotheses proposed in this chapter are summarised in the following figure, explaining its connections and extending it to a higher level of understanding. It is in this thesis hypothesised that different aspects of personal branding and social psychology impacts the possibility for a job candidate to be invited to a first interview and get employed after a final interview. These personal branding and social psychology aspects are influenced by the candidate position in focus and who the recruiter is. The recruiter is in turn influenced by the level of wanted similarity between candidate and themselves. Lastly do the application and the interview in itself impact the chances of invitation and employment, these are however not researched in this thesis and are taken as certain. Therefore are their boxes coloured grey in the figure below.

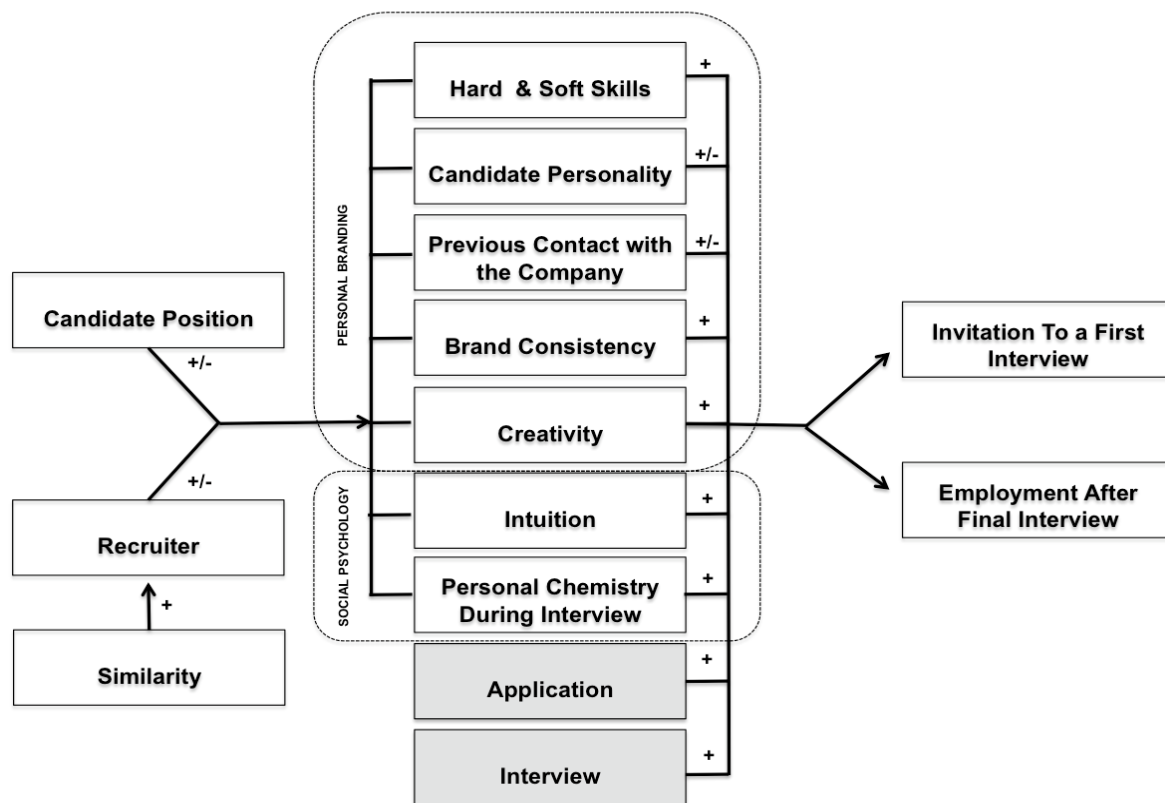


Figure 2: The Hypothesised Model

Following the hypothesised model is a summarising figure with the hypothesis divided into the three research questions.

RQ1. How do recruiters perceive different aspects of personal branding used by business graduates in the recruitment process?
a. Does this depend on which stage of the recruitment process, screening or interview, that is in focus?
b. Does this depend on which business field the candidate is interested in?
H1: Personal branding aspects differ in importance depending on if a candidate is in the screening stage or in the interview stage.
H2: Hard and soft skills are important in order for a recruiter to invite a candidate to a first interview/employ the candidate.
a. The importance of hard and soft skills differs depending on which candidate position that is in focus.
H3: Soft skills are more important than hard skills in order for a recruiter to invite a candidate to a first interview/employ the candidate.
a. Soft skills are more important than hard skills for all candidate positions and both recruitment stages.
H4: The mere exposure effect, in terms of previous contact, is important for recruiters.
a. Its importance is larger in the screening stage than in the interview stage.
H5: Different candidate personality factors differ in importance depending on which stage of the recruitment process that is in focus.
a. The importance of the candidate personality factors differs between candidate positions.
b. The candidate personality trait Neuroticism is low valued by recruiters.
H6: Creativity is valued higher, in terms of importance, in the screening stage than in the interview stage.
a. The usage of creativity can differentiate one candidate from another.
b. The candidate's usage of creativity is more positively evaluated for positions within Marketing & Sales than Accounting & Finance and Consulting.
c. The evaluation of a candidate's usage of creativity depends on who the recruiter is and when in the recruitment process this is received.
d. The evaluation that creativity can differentiate one candidate from another depends on who the recruiter is.
e. The evaluation of a candidate's usage of creativity depends on if the company has the technical ability (i.e. experience) to receive creative applications.
H7: In order to employ a candidate, it is important for a recruiter that a candidate shows a personal brand consistency throughout the recruitment process.
RQ2. Does social psychology have an impact on the recruitment process of business graduates? If so, in what way?
H8: Personal chemistry between the recruiter and candidate is important in the interview stage.
H9: The recruiter's use of intuition is highly valued as a means to decide which candidate to invite to a first interview/employ.
a. The usage of intuition has higher value, within both screening and interview, for Marketing & Sales positions than Accounting & Finance and Consulting positions.
H10: The usage of intuition within the recruitment process differs between recruiters depending on which stage and ...
a. Recruiter's educational background.
b. Recruiter's position within the company.
c. Recruiter's amount of years within recruitment and year of birth.
d. Recruiter's gender.
e. Recruiter's personality.
f. Number of employees within the corporate group.
RQ3. Are there any differences between recruiters, in terms of candidate similarity, on how they value personal branding and social psychology aspects?
H11: Most recruiters like a candidate who is similar to themselves in terms of personality
a. It exists different types of recruiters based on what they value, personality-wise, within a candidate.
H12: It exists different types of recruiters who ...
a. Value a candidate's hard and soft skills differently.
b. Value a candidate's personality differently.
c. Value a candidate's use of creativity differently.
d. Use intuition to different extents.
e. Evaluate personal branding and social psychology factors differently.
f. Evaluate personal branding and social psychology factors differently depending on which stage of the recruitment process that is in focus.

Figure 3: Hypotheses Corresponding to Research Questions

3. METHODOLOGY



This chapter will describe the methodological approach used to answer the research questions and fulfil the thesis' purpose of investigating the importance of personal branding and social psychological aspects in recruitment. A mixed approach was used with a qualitative pre-study and a quantitative two-part main-study. The approach and results from the pre-study and the development of the main-study questionnaire are presented below.

All methodology concerning this thesis is based on a deductive approach, i.e. hypotheses are based on theoretical frameworks, which are then researched qualitatively and quantitatively (Jacobsen, 2002). The study is also conclusive and descriptive, in terms of being a cross-sectional study (Bryman and Bell, 2011), by showing how the reality of recruitment looks right now (Jacobsen, 2002). Further is this thesis synthesised, i.e. the area of personal branding, social psychology and recruitment are combined in order to create an understanding for something new (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Due to these contexts, the study is also extensive (Jacobsen, 2002).

3.1 Pre-study

A qualitative pre-study was conducted to test the theoretical frameworks that were hypothesised to affect the recruitment of business graduates. The pre-study also aimed to find more factors that affect the employment decision as well as to test the willingness to answer questionnaire topics that might insult the respondent's integrity. The approach, sample and results will be discussed below.

3.1.1 Approach

A selection of interview objects that are responsible for recruitment of business graduates, were approached during Handelsdagarna (a business career fair) and asked if they could participate in an approximately one hour-long interview. During the interview a prepared interview guide was followed, based on relevant theory. For example, questions regarding the recruitment process, importance of hard and soft skills, importance of a well-written application and what makes the recruiter satisfied with a candidate was covered. In total, six interviews were conducted with

actors within different industries, present in Sweden, between March 5th and 13th 2015. The interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to 2 hours, both authors took notes during all six interviews, they were all audio recorded and transcribed. A full interview guide can be found in Appendix 1.

3.1.2 Sample

The six people that were interviewed are treated anonymously due to the small sample size. Interviews were conducted until theoretical saturation was achieved, i.e. six interviews instead of five did not add fundamentally any new insights to the research area (Bryman and Bell, 2011). All respondents had knowledge and experience of recruiting business graduates at their company. They all represented different industries, ages, genders, educational backgrounds and experiences within recruitment. This was due to the aim of getting as many insights as possible about the recruitment of business graduates, without being tied to a certain industry or person. The descriptives for the pre-study can be found in Table 2.

Table 2 Descriptives Respondents Pre-Study		
Descriptive variables	Total	
	<i>n</i>	percent
Total respondents	6	
Mean year of birth	1977	
Mean years of experience within recruitment	3	
Gender (male/female)	2 / 4	33.3% / 66.6 %
Industries represented		
Accounting	2	33.3%
Banking	1	16.7%
Management consulting	1	16.7%
Retail	1	16.7%
Telecom	1	16.7%

3.1.3 Results

The pre-study confirmed most of the theoretical frameworks that were hypothesised to affect the employability of business graduates, e.g. skills, personality, personal chemistry and use of intuition. The impacts of these aspects were said by all interview objects to depend on the type of position and department the candidate is interested in. One general conclusion regarding the recruitment process was “*All candidates should feel evaluated in the same way. [...] But still, you cannot fall in love with everyone. That is how it is. It is like any relationship.*” (Interview object, bank). This indicated that social psychology influences the employment decision. The pre-study also revealed an important aspect beyond the initial theoretical framework; that the candidate had been in contact with the company earlier, outside of the recruitment process. Several interview objects said that it showed a genuine interest towards the company and was considered beneficial for the candidate in the screening stage, however not later in the recruitment process.

The interviews also resulted in an inconclusive picture of the usage of creativity within recruitment since it was not seen as suitable or appreciated in about half of the companies. Some interview objects did not have the technical ability or the interest to receive applications in different media formats. Only one interview object positively valued creativity (banking), while several stated that creativity could be important at e.g. Spotify. Since the pre-test showed contradicting results to previous research regarding the importance of creativity (e.g. Dahlgren, Rosengren and Törn, 2009), creativity is researched as a part of the main study questionnaire.

3.2 Main Study

Based on the pre-study and theoretical frameworks, a quantitative two-part main study was performed. The questionnaire composition, pre-test and sample is discussed below.

The two parts of the main study focus on two specific stages of the recruitment process. The first handled the screening stage of applications in order to research what impacts the possibility for a candidate to be invited to a first interview. The second focused on the final stage in the recruitment process and what impacts the possibility for a candidate to get employed after a final interview. These are referred to as “Screening” and “Interview” throughout the rest of the thesis.

3.2.1 Survey

To research the two stages, two separate questionnaires were developed. These contained questions relevant to the theoretical frameworks presented as well as the importance of being in contact with the company, revealed in the pre-study. The theoretical frameworks covered in the questionnaires were mainly identical for both screening and interview. The wording of the questions did however differ, e.g. changing “screening of candidates” to “hire a candidate”, in order to make the questions more specified for the recruitment stage in focus. Copies of both questionnaires can be found in Appendix 2 and 3.

When replying to the questionnaire, the respondents first had to answer a control question regarding their own involvement in the recruitment of business graduates, adopted from Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson (1985). If the respondent was involved, the rest of the questionnaire followed. If he/she was not, they did not have to answer any further questions. The reasoning for this was that the questionnaire had to be only answered by relevant respondents with experience of recruiting business graduates.

The respondents were further asked to choose one business field that they felt comfortable recruiting for. The respondents were asked to have this choice in mind throughout the questionnaire in order to specify the questions. The possible fields to choose from were: Marketing, Sales, Accounting, Finance and Consulting. These fields were chosen as they are the ones that most business graduates from SSE are employed within (Stockholm School of Economics, 2013). These different fields were randomised in their order to not let it affect the number of respondents for each field, as it has been shown that the first answering alternative is chosen relatively more often (Söderlund, 2005). When analysing the different fields, it became evident that responses between Marketing and Sales showed no significant differences on e.g. creativity, application, interview and previous contact. The same insignificant results were also found between Accounting and Finance. These variables did however show significant differences between Marketing and Finance. All these results confirmed the possibility of turning Marketing & Sales into one field and Accounting & Finance into another. These results are further confirmed by the SSE Master Graduate Placement Report, which states that graduates are employed into one of three main business fields. These correspond to one being Accounting & Finance, one Marketing & Sales and one Consulting (Stockholm School of Economics, 2013). Further are Marketing & Sales as well as Accounting & Finance similar business disciplines, where Marketing & Sales incorporates the function of selling something (Guenzi and Troilo, 2006; Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.) and both Accounting (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.) and Finance handles financials (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.). Further, consulting works differently and can be within any of these disciplines (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.), which makes it treated as an individual business field. These divisions are also supported by the results from the pre-study. The analyses between business fields are therefore only comparing the three main ones in the rest of the thesis.

The questionnaires cover in total six hypotheses-testing topics, including statements of importance or level of agreement regarding the choice to either invite a candidate to a first interview or employ a candidate after the final interview. Statements covering the same topic were if possible turned into factors or indexes, which are described in the following sections. A full descriptive table of the statements in each factor/index can be found in Appendix 4.

3.2.1.1 General Satisfaction

The first part of the questionnaire covers the importance of satisfaction the recruiter must feel in order to invite a candidate for an interview/employ a candidate. Four statements were presented on a 7-point Likert-scale, 1=Not at all important, 7=Very important. These were adopted from Fornell (1992) who states that satisfaction can be measured by asking of overall satisfaction, confirmation to expectations and distance from an ideal. The fourth item, willingness to recommend, has been widely used in market surveys and is adopted from Reichheld (2003). This question complements Fornell's (1992) satisfaction statements by including the importance of positive word-of-mouth, which is the result of customer satisfaction.¹

3.2.1.2 Hard and Soft Skills

The first hypotheses-testing topic in the questionnaires covers the importance of a candidate's hard and soft skills in order to invite him/her to an interview/employ the candidate. These were applied from Barker's (2014) skills categories including the items' individual descriptions; Professional Competencies; Business Skills and Personal Attributes. The discovery of work experience being an important variable was added as an item into the Professional Competencies category (Barker, 2014). All items were on a 7-point Likert-scale, 1=Not at all important, 7=Very important. The categories showed to have good internal correlation which resulted in three indexes being created; Professional Competencies (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.72), Business Skills (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.74) and Personal Attributes (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.71).

3.2.1.3 Personality

John, Naumann and Soto (2008) found that the BFI-model is an efficient personality instrument. The BFI is better used when time is at a premium, has better reliability than the NEO-model, is easily understood and a compromise between the questionnaire based NEO-model and the lexically based TDA-model. (John, Naumann and Soto, 2008) The BFI-model is therefore used in this thesis' questionnaires to research personality and similarity between candidate and recruiter. The 44 original items in the instrument were narrowed down to 25 (five for each theoretical personality factor) in order to decrease questionnaire length, since it covers other topics than personality. The items removed had double-ended questions or were difficult to

¹ Due to the limitation of thesis length, these statements do not have any hypotheses. Its results are however stated in Table 4 in the results and are noted shortly in the discussion.

² There are no hypotheses covering application. The mean values are however stated in the results and the

understand according to the participants in the pre-test of the questionnaire. The removal was performed in order to avoid confusion (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In the end, the five theoretical personality factors had three positive and two negative items each. See Appendix 5 for which items that were included and removed. The respondents were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert-scale, 1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly, how desirable the different personality items are in order to invite to a first interview/employ the candidate. The respondents were later also asked to rate themselves on the same scale, in order to research similarities between respondents and desirable candidates. A factor analysis was performed and resulted in seven factors for both candidate (KMO: 0.73) and recruiter personality (KMO: 0.75), even though the individual items within them differed. Too low Cronbach's Alphas were obtained when performing reliability analyses for the original five factors. Due to this, we are not criticising the BFI-model as a measurement of personality but we have to use our seven factors throughout the thesis.

3.2.1.4 Previous Contact

Following the candidate personality topic were three statements regarding the importance of a candidate's previous contact with the company outside the recruitment process. These statements were on a 7-point Likert-scale, 1=Not at all important, 7=Very important, and originated from the pre-study with confirmation from Barker (2014). These three statements did by a reliability analysis not result in one index. Instead two of the statements correlated significantly (0.70) and was therefore turned into one index. The third statement "That the candidate has previously contacted the company (outside the recruitment process)" is treated separately.

Next covered the questionnaire different themes depending on which stage of the recruitment process that was in focus.

3.2.1.5 Application in Screening

Statements regarding application were a part of the screening questionnaire and contained how important aspects of the application were in order to invite a candidate to a first interview. These statements were on a 7-point Likert scale, 1=Not at all important, 7=Very important, and were adopted from Dulek and Suchan (1988) of good applications being well written, well structured and written towards the company (also confirmed by the pre-study). A factor analysis resulted in a two factor solution, one covering the application content and one its picture (KMO: 0.70) with

the individual statement, “Application Written Towards the Company”, not loading on any factor and is therefore treated separately.²

3.2.1.6 Personal Chemistry in Interview

In the interview questionnaire the application statements were exchanged to statements regarding personal chemistry between the candidate and the recruiter. These statements were on a 7-point Likert-scale, 1=Not at all important to 7=Very important, where some of the statements were adopted from Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson (1985), e.g. laughing together, attractiveness and “twinkle in the eyes”. Other statements were discovered during the pre-study, e.g. the candidate showing a consistent picture throughout the recruitment process, also supported by Gad and Rosencreutz (2002). A factor analysis resulted in three factors covering this topic: Interview Personal Chemistry, Interview Candidate Appearance and Interview Goes Well (KMO: 0.72).

3.2.1.7 Creativity

As creativity has been shown to differentiate a marketing effort from another, some statements were used in order to investigate creativity in recruitment. The respondents were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert-scale how much they agreed with certain aspects of a candidate’s usage of creativity, 1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly. In order to make the respondents evaluate whether the use of creativity was perceived as surprising, relevant, irritating and extreme, the measurements were inspired by Walker and Dubitsky’s (1994). The item of associations was inspired from Dahlén, Friberg and Nilsson (2009). The items regarding the respondent’s own feelings of creativity, excitement and positivity were added since it was shown during the pre-study that creativity could create these kinds of effects. These statements were confirmed by Dahlén, Rosengren and Törn (2008), Kemp *et al.* (2013) and Rosengren, Dahlén and Modig (2013). A factor analysis resulted in three factors with a total KMO of 0.83; Creativity Positive Evaluation, Creativity Differentiates and Creativity Makes The Recruiter Feel.

3.2.1.8 Intuition

In order to investigate how important the recruiter’s intuition is in the decision to invite a candidate to a first interview/employ a candidate, the questionnaire contained statements regarding intuition on a 7-point Likert-scale, 1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly. These

² There are no hypotheses covering application. The mean values are however stated in the results and the discussion in order to see how application performs in comparison to other aspects.

statements originated from a qualitative study regarding the use of intuition in recruitment. The wordings of the statements are as close to the qualitative study's statements as possible. (Miles and Sadler-Smith, 2014) The final two statements were added in order to examine the respondent's own ability as a recruiter (Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson, 1985). A factor analysis resulted in a four-factor solution with one of the statements not loading on any of them. This factor analysis had KMO of 0.81 and the separate statement "I am a good judge of character" is treated separately from the three factors Intuition Usage, Intuition Decision Making and Intuition Excessive Own Ability.

3.2.1.9 Descriptives

To finalise the questionnaire, respondents were asked some questions about themselves and the company they work for in order to research if this impacted the recruitment. Questions of who takes the final decision in the recruitment process (ordinal scale), how the respondent finds recruitment of business graduates (7-point Semantic differential scale), the recruiter's position within the company (open-ended) and total amount of years of experience within recruitment (ratio scale) were adopted from Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson (1985). Other descriptives, such as the respondent's academic area and degree (ordinal scale), gender (nominal scale), age (ratio scale), the size of the corporate group (ratio scale) and the industry the company is present within (ordinal scale), were inspired by Miles and Sadler-Smith (2014) and Lodato, Highhouse and Brooks (2011).

3.2.2 Meta Indexes of Influencing Factors

This thesis covers in total 31 indexes discussed above, 27 within personal branding and four within social psychology. In order to narrow them down, four factor analyses were performed with the indexes for personal branding treated separately from those of social psychology, application and interview. The factor analysis for personal branding resulted in seven factors (KMO: 0.67). The final personal branding factor only had one index loading on it (Index Creativity Differentiates), and is therefore treated separately. The factor analysis of the four social psychology variables resulted in one factor being created (KMO: 0.75). The indexes for application and interview were added into two separate factor analyses where two factors were found for the application (KMO: 0.50) and one factor for the interview (KMO: 0.57). However, these low KMO-values resulted in no meta indexes for either application or interview.

The factors with satisfactory KMO-levels from the factor analyses were turned into meta indexes (index of indexes) (Wahlund, 1991). The final definitions of the meta indexes for both personal branding and social psychology can be seen in Appendix 6.

3.2.3 Pre-test

Before the questionnaire was published a pre-test was performed on both questionnaires in order to find any difficulties in interpreting the questions and statements as well as getting points of improvements and to increase the quality of the questionnaire (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Eight recruiters, not part of the main study, were asked to participate in the pre-test as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2011). They were asked to read the questionnaire and comment on anything they were unsure about or did not understand. This resulted in some statements being adjusted, e.g. the word “gut feeling” was changed into “intuition”.

3.2.4 Sample

The survey was distributed to recruiters having registered themselves on the SSE Career Services Online website between March 2014 and March 2015 in order to upload job advertisements suitable for SSE business graduates. The sample included a total of approximately 800 registered email-addresses. An additional 200 email-addresses were added to the sample size when it became evident that the initial ones were not enough to reach the desirable amount of responses. These additional email-addresses were researched online with the requirement of belonging to a company active within one of the business fields of focus in this study and that it was sent to a person involved in recruitment. The risk of sending emails to the wrong people was not a problem thanks to the initial control question within the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were coded into the online survey software Qualtrics, which created a unique link to each questionnaire. Since two stages were of focus in this study, two separate surveys were created in Qualtrics and merged into a master link that would randomly assign respondents to either of the questionnaires. All responses were recorded in the Qualtrics software and then exported into IBM SPSS Statistics to perform statistical analysis.

To get respondents to complete the questionnaire an email containing a short description of the thesis’ purpose together with the master link was initially sent to the 800 email addresses. The email was sent from the SSE Career Services email-address, in order to increase the sense of authority, which can influence people (Cialdini, 2009). One reminder was also sent from SSE

Career Services and additional reminders were sent from the authors' own student email-addresses. This was in order to test if the theory of liking (Cialdini, 2009) and personal messaging could yield more responses than the previous sent authority emails. When reminders from the authors' were sent, the respondent email-addresses were divided into Swedish and English groups to further increase the sense of personal connection in the attached email. Another change was that in the second reminder the donation by the authors of 5 SEK per respondent to Swedish Hjärt- Lungfonden was added. This was a means of using reciprocity (Cialdini, 2009) where the information about the donation was thought of as being an incentive for the respondents to answer the questionnaire. Approximately two weeks after the first email to the SSE Career Services Online contacts was sent, the additional 200 email-addresses was researched and sent one email and one reminder with the same information as the previous ones. The master link was active for 18 days.

Out of the total approximately 1000 contacts, 354 fully responded questionnaires were obtained. 198 people responded to the screening questionnaire (126 being involved in recruitment) and 156 people responded to the interview questionnaire (113 being involved in recruitment), giving a total response rate of approximately 35 percent (approximately 24 percent being involved in recruitment). Full descriptives of the respondents can be found in Table 3, below.

Table 3
Descriptives Respondents Main Study

Descriptive variables	Screening		Interview		Total	
	<i>n</i>	percent	<i>n</i>	percent	<i>n</i>	percent
Total full respondents	198	100%	156	100%	354	100%
Respondents involved in recruitment	126	63.6 %	113	72.4 %	239	67.5 %
Respondents not involved in recruitment	72	36.4 %	43	27.6 %	115	32.5 %
Drop-off rate	110	35.7 %	72	31.6 %	182	34%
Gender (male/female)	72 / 54	57.1 % / 42.9 %	49 / 64	43.4 % / 56.6 %	121 / 118	50.6 % / 49.4 %
Mean year of birth	1978		1980		1979	
Mean years of experience within recruitment	4		6.7		5.35	
Mean amount of employees within the company	12 015		17 242		14 462	
Median amount of employees within the company	80		145		90	

3.3 Quality of Data

To ensure that the reliability and validity of this study was as high as possible, certain recommended procedures in methodology and questionnaire design was followed, described below.

3.3.1 Reliability

Reliability covers issues of consistency in measurements in terms of stability, internal reliability and inter-observer consistency (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In this study, internal reliability is used by multiple-indicator measurements. Many indexes can be created due to high correlations between statements within the questionnaire, e.g. skills and creativity (Söderlund, 2005). To further increase the internal reliability are only Cronbach's Alphas or KMO-values accepted above 0.65. The reliability aspect of inter-observer consistency is not completely applicable since no questionnaires had to be fully coded manually since the data was coded automatically by Qualtrics' software. Few open-ended questions were part of the questionnaire in order to decrease the risk of non-consistency between different researchers' classifications. The two authors classified the open-ended question of the respondents' position within the company at the same time. Further were the statements covering personality traits of both candidate and recruiter reduced from 44 to 25. The statements removed were double-ended or difficult to understand in order to increase the reliability, since this issue can result in difficulties to know what the respondent actually answered to (Jacobsen, 2002). The measurements' stability over time is difficult to predict, as replication of the study is not the scope for this thesis.

3.3.2 Validity

The validity of research can be divided into internal and external validity, the former one covers aspects of measuring the intended and the latter one covers the generalizability of the results (Jacobsen, 2002).

3.3.2.1 Internal Validity

The methods used in this research to increase the internal validity are face validity and construct validity (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The face validity is used in the pre-study where the importance of different aspects of application and interview for recruiters were discussed during the interviews. These answers served as basis for the questionnaire composition and were further confirmed by theories, i.e. with construct validity. The other questions and statements in the questionnaires are also a case of construct validity since they were adopted from already established theories about e.g. personal branding. In order to increase the internal validity further the questionnaires and their variables were asked to be confirmed by the supervisor before publication as a means to get an input from someone with knowledge within the area. (Jacobsen,

2002) The questionnaires also covered statements of similar meaning that were highly correlated with each other, which increases the internal validity further. (Bryman and Bell, 2011) The internal validity is further enhanced with the random distribution of either a screening or interview questionnaire as well as the randomised options of candidate positions to recruit for. (Söderlund, 2005; Bryman and Bell, 2011)

3.3.2.2 External Validity

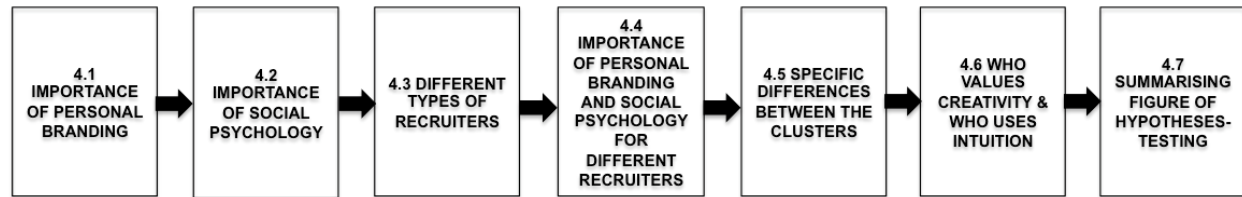
The external validity covers the topic of if the results obtained from the sample in the research can be generalised to a larger population (Jacobsen, 2002). The p-value used in this research is maximum ten percent, which means that the results need to be significant to a minimum 90 percent level in order for us to be able to accept an hypothesis and say that the results found are generalizable to a larger population. Many significant results are found, which increases the external validity. Due to the initial control question in the questionnaires, we can increase the external validity further since the respondents all have experience within recruitment.

The pre-study has six interviews with 33 percent male and 66 percent female (seen in Table 2, page 33), which corresponds well to statistics of employees involved in recruitment (Strayer, 2012; Personnel Today, 2011, Sumser, 2011). The main study has in total 354 respondents of which 239 are involved in recruitment (seen in Table 3, page 41). These respondents have a gender and age distribution similar to statistics of the area (Global HR Barometer, 2013; Strayer, 2012; Sumser, 2011). Due to these similarities between our sample and the population, the external validity increases. The external validity can however be somewhat questioned due to the usage of mostly recruiters who are interested in employing graduates from SSE due to the advertisements on the SSE Careers Online website. This can make it possible to not generalise the results beyond employers interested in SSE graduates, since the source of the contact information could be priming the respondents' answers.

3.3.3 Summary of Reliability and Validity

Data validity presumes data reliability i.e. if the measure is not reliable then it cannot be valid. Hence, both validity and reliability need to be taken into account when estimating the overall quality of the data (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Since several reliability methods were used, the sample was checked against the population and generalisation can be completed, the overall quality of the data can be said to be satisfactory.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS



This chapter will present the statistical approaches and results of the data analysis. Tests are performed in order to accept or reject the hypotheses as well as answer the general research questions and fulfil the thesis' purpose of investigating the importance of personal branding and social psychological aspects in recruitment.

The research questions were stated in the introductory chapter and are repeated below in order to increase the understanding of the statistical approaches and results presented in this chapter.

RQ 1. How do recruiters perceive different aspects of personal branding used by business graduates in the recruitment process?

- a. Does this depend on which stage of the recruitment process, screening or interview, that is in focus?
- b. Does this depend on which business field the candidate is interested in?

RQ 2. Does social psychology have an impact on the recruitment process of business graduates? If so, in what way?

RQ 3. Are there any differences between recruiters, in terms of candidate similarity, on how they value personal branding and social psychology aspects?

4.1 Importance of Personal Branding

Independent samples t-tests were performed in order to see which personal branding aspects that recruiters find important, in order for them to invite a candidate to a first interview or employ a candidate. These tests are performed between the screening and interview stages for each business field, hereafter called candidate position. All separate mean values above 4.5 are seen to be of importance and are written in black in Table 4, next page.

Table 4
Means of Dependent Variables
Personal Branding

	All				Marketing & Sales				Accounting & Finance				Consulting			
	Screening mean (S.D.)	Interview mean (S.D.)	T-value	df	Screening mean (S.D.)	Interview mean (S.D.)	T-value	df	Screening mean (S.D.)	Interview mean (S.D.)	T-value	df	Screening mean (S.D.)	Interview mean (S.D.)	T-value	df
Index Candidate Agreeableness	6.02 (0.67)	5.92 (0.79)			6.05 (0.57)	5.87 (0.87)			5.94 (0.78)	5.89 (0.77)			6.04 (0.70)	6.01 (0.72)		
Index Application Content	5.96 (0.80)				5.90 (0.72)				6.06 (0.78)				5.96 (0.93)			
Satisfaction with Candidate	6.04 (0.96)	6.12 (0.98)			5.79 (1.07)	5.90 (1.10)			6.28 (0.66)	6.15 (0.82)			6.16 (0.97)	6.33 (0.99)		
Application Written Towards the Company	6.02 (1.01)				5.98 (1.08)				6.14 (0.93)				5.95 (1.01)			
Index Personal Attributes (Soft Skills)	5.84 (0.52)	5.88 (0.53)			5.92 (0.51)	5.88 (0.57)			5.76 (0.46)	5.85 (0.56)			5.80 (0.59)	5.92 (0.45)		
Candidate Fulfills Expectations	5.82 (1.05)	6.51 (0.77)***	-5.802	237	5.75 (1.08)	6.41 (0.79)**	-3.224	89	5.97 (0.88)	6.46 (0.81)**	-2.541	72	5.76 (1.15)	6.70 (0.68)***	-4.080	69
Index Business Skills (Hard Skills)	5.57 (0.66)	5.62 (0.63)			5.69 (0.53)	5.71 (0.60)			5.45 (0.58)	5.44 (0.73)			5.53 (0.84)	5.74 (0.49)		
Index Professional Competencies (Hard skills)	5.46 (0.68)	5.61 (0.61)*	-1.765	237	5.36 (0.65)	5.44 (0.63)			5.62 (0.58)	5.64 (0.63)			5.46 (0.79)	5.77 (0.52)**	-2.012	64
Willingness to Recommend Candidate Internally	5.48 (1.38)	5.46 (1.55)			5.33 (1.23)	5.26 (1.50)			5.42 (1.54)	5.61 (1.45)			5.76 (1.40)	5.52 (1.73)		
Index Candidate Extroversion	5.12 (0.77)	5.94 (0.84)*	1.686	228	5.30 (0.73)	5.22 (0.81)			4.97 (0.67)	4.70 (0.81)			5.01 (0.88)	5.90 (0.83)		
Index Candidate Openness & Variety	5.26 (0.74)	5.24 (0.80)			5.13 (0.72)	5.41 (0.60)**	-1.985	88	5.01 (0.78)	4.79 (0.85)			5.68 (0.56)	5.60 (0.71)		
Index Candidate Creative & Openness	5.01 (1.04)	4.86 (1.09)			5.18 (1.04)	5.05 (1.13)			4.64 (1.11)	4.34 (1.09)			5.13 (0.88)	5.27 (0.89)		
Candidate is an Ideal One	4.95 (1.26)	5.33 (1.37)**	-2.189	229	5.12 (1.31)	5.13 (1.53)			4.89 (1.21)	5.49 (1.14)**	-2.220	72	4.79 (1.26)	5.36 (1.45)*	-1.767	64
Index Creativity Differentiates	4.93 (1.25)	4.58 (0.91)**	2.439	237	4.81 (1.14)	4.51 (1.10)			4.99 (1.25)	4.59 (0.75)*	1.699	75	5.05 (1.40)	4.65 (0.88)		
Index Candidate Efficient & Cool	4.79 (0.33)	4.78 (0.37)			4.77 (0.31)	4.71 (0.44)			4.85 (0.30)	4.83 (0.32)			4.75 (0.37)	4.76 (0.32)		
Index Candidate Work Focused	4.69 (0.48)	4.75 (0.47)			4.68 (0.43)	4.72 (0.52)			4.70 (0.37)	4.70 (0.44)			4.68 (0.62)	4.86 (0.44)		
Index Creativity Positive Evaluation	3.92 (1.41)	5.13 (1.06)***	-7.385	237	4.56 (1.22)	5.39 (1.00)***	-3.550	88	3.68 (1.31)	4.64 (1.02)***	-3.557	66	3.28 (1.41)	5.42 (0.99)***	-7.303	69
Index Candidate Tense & Faults	4.42 (0.85)	4.47 (0.65)			4.38 (0.88)	4.52 (0.63)			4.54 (0.84)	4.43 (0.60)			4.32 (0.81)	4.45 (0.73)		
Index Interview Candidate Appearance		4.16 (1.09)				4.19 (1.12)				4.02 (0.92)				4.30 (1.26)		
Index Creativity Makes the Recruiter Feel	3.41 (1.42)	3.96 (1.21)**	-3.177	237	3.75 (1.44)	4.09 (1.46)			3.30 (1.30)	3.78 (1.17)*	-1.707	71	3.05 (1.44)	4.01 (0.91)**	-3.295	69
Index Application Picture	3.60 (1.47)				4.04 (1.43)				3.45 (1.35)				3.12 (1.51)			
Candidate Can Be Temperamental	3.11 (1.35)	3.13 (1.24)			3.27 (1.37)	3.15 (1.11)			2.81 (1.35)	3.10 (1.32)			3.18 (1.29)	3.15 (1.30)		
Previously Contacted the Company	2.70 (1.58)	3.35 (1.30)***	-3.482	237	2.54 (1.49)	3.51 (1.25)***	-3.302	89	2.64 (1.38)	3.37 (1.32)**	-2.365	75	2.97 (1.87)	3.15 (1.33)		
Outside the Recruitment Process	2.94 (1.57)	2.90 (1.72)			2.88 (1.69)	2.32 (1.35)*	1.769	89	3.04 (1.51)	3.20 (1.81)			2.92 (1.48)	3.21 (1.86)		
Index Previous Contact																
<i>n</i>	126	113			52	39			36	41			38	33		

Measured on a 7-point Likert-scale, 1=Not at all important, 7=Very important or 1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly

* $p < 0.1$

** $p < 0.05$

*** $p < 0.01$

4.1.1 Hard and Soft Skills

Out of the different skills a candidate can possess, visible in Table 4, Personal Attributes (soft skills) are highly valued together with both Business Skills (hard skills) and Professional Competencies (hard skills), mean values between 5.46 and 5.96. This supports hypothesis 2 *“Hard and soft skills are important in order for a recruiter to invite a candidate to a first interview/employ the graduate”*. To test for hypothesis 2a *“The importance of hard and soft skills differs depending on which candidate position that is in focus”*, an ANOVA Scheffe is performed in order to see the differences in Personal Attributes versus Business Skills and Professional Competencies, between the candidate positions. In the screening stage there are no significant differences between the positions (mean for all positions; Professional Competencies 5.36-5.62; Personal Attributes 5.45-5.69; Business skills 5.76-5.92). In the interview stage there is one difference in Professional Competencies where Consulting has a higher mean value (M=5.77, SD=0.52) than Marketing & Sales (M=5.44, SD=0.63), $p=0.08$. Because of this single difference in the interview stage we can partially accept hypothesis 2a.

To test for hypothesis 3 *“Soft skills are more important than hard skills in order for a recruiter to invite a candidate to a first interview/employ the candidate”*, independent samples t-tests were performed between the soft skills (Personal Attributes) and the two different hard skills (Professional Competencies and Business Skills) for the two stages of the recruitment process. For the screening stage, Personal Attributes (M=5.84, SD=0.52) are more important than both Professional Competencies (M=5.46, SD=0.68) $t(125) = -6.81$, $p=0.00$, and Business Skills (M=5.57, SD=0.66), $t(125) = -5.80$, $p=0.00$. The same pattern is evident in the interview stage where Personal Attributes again are more important (M=5.88, SD=0.53) than both Professional Competencies (M=5.61, SD=0.61) $t(112) = -5.75$, $p=0.00$, and Business Skills (M=5.62, SD=0.63) $t(112) = -5.92$, $p=0.00$. This makes us accept hypothesis 3, stating that soft skills are more important than hard skills.

The final hypothesis regarding skills is 3a *“Soft skills are more important than hard skills, for all candidate positions and both recruitment stages”*, is tested by performing paired samples t-tests for each stage and position. For Marketing & Sales in screening, are Personal Attributes (M=5.92, SD=0.51) more important than Professional Competencies (M=5.36, SD=0.65) $t(51)=6.05$, $p=0.00$ and Business Skills (M=5.69, SD=0.53) $t(51)=3.73$, $p=0.00$. For interview

are Personal Attributes more important ($M=5.88$, $SD=0.58$) than both Professional Competencies ($M=5.44$, $SD=0.63$, $t(38)=5.21$, $p=0.00$) and Business Skills ($M=5.71$, $SD=0.60$, $t(38)=2.47$, $p=0.02$). For Accounting & Finance in screening are there no differences between Personal Attributes and Professional Competencies. Personal Attributes ($M=5.76$, $SD=0.46$) are however more important than Business Skills ($M=5.45$, $SD=0.58$, $t(35)=3.87$, $p=0.00$). In interview are Personal Attributes ($M=5.85$, $SD=0.56$) more important than both Professional Competencies ($M=5.64$, $SD=0.64$, $t(40)=2.89$, $p=0.01$) and Business Skills ($M=5.44$, $SD=0.73$, $t(40)=4.99$, $p=0.00$). Finally does Consulting show the same pattern as Marketing & Sales. In screening are Personal Attributes ($M=5.80$, $SD=0.59$) more important than both Professional Competencies ($M=5.46$, $SD=0.79$, $t(37)=3.70$, $p=0.00$) and Business Skills ($M=5.53$, $SD=0.84$, $t(37)=2.68$, $p=0.01$). In interview are Personal Attributes ($M=5.92$, $SD=0.46$) also more important than both Professional Competencies ($M=5.77$, $SD=0.52$, $t(32)=1.81$, $p=0.08$) and Business Skills ($M=5.74$, $SD=0.49$, $t(32)=2.69$, $p=0.01$). Since all tests, except for Accounting and Finance in screening, show a higher importance of Personal Attributes compared to the hard skills categories, hypothesis 3a can only be partially accepted.

4.1.2 Mere-Exposure

Hypothesis 4 *“The mere exposure effect, in terms of previous contact, is important for recruiters”*, is tested by the mean value of the index Previous Contact and the independent statement *“The candidate has previously contacted the company outside the recruitment process”* in Table 4, above. As one can see, the mean value for the index is 2.94 in screening and 2.90 in interview. For the individual question the mean is 2.70 in screening and 3.35 in interview. Since these values are on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1=Not at all important and 7=Very important, a mean value below 4 can be interpreted as not important. Hypothesis 4 is therefore rejected. For testing hypothesis 4a *“Its importance is larger in the screening stage than in the interview stage”*, independent samples t-tests are performed for the index and the individual statement, comparing the two stages. No significant differences were obtained on Index Previous Contact between the screening and interview stages. However, the test of the individual statement that the candidate had previously contacted the company, is more important in the final interview ($M=3.37$, $SD=1.30$) than the screening stage ($M=2.70$, $SD=1.58$, $t(237)=-3.48$, $p=0.00$). This result is the direct opposite of the hypothesis, which makes us reject hypothesis 4a.

4.1.3 Candidate Personality

It is hypothesised that candidate personality factors differ in importance depending on which stage of the recruitment process that is in focus. Independent samples t-tests show that it only exists one significant difference between the stages. Recruiters think that candidate Extroversion is significantly more important in the screening stage ($M=5.12$, $SD=0.77$), than in the interview stage ($M=4.94$, $SD=0.83$, $t(228)=1.69$, $p=0.09$). This makes us partially accept hypothesis 5, *“Different candidate personality factors differ in importance depending on which stage of the recruitment process that is in focus”*.

More significant differences are evident when only one stage is in focus and the candidate positions are compared in terms of the valued importance of the candidate personality factors. To test for hypothesis 5a, *“The importance of the candidate personality factors differ between candidate positions”*, an ANOVA Scheffe is performed. In the screening stage, recruiters for Marketing & Sales positions value candidate personality of Creative/Openness as more important ($M=5.18$, $SD=1.04$) than Accounting & Finance ($M=4.64$, $SD=1.11$, $p=0.05$). Further do recruiters for Consulting ($M=5.68$, $SD=0.56$) value the candidate personality Openness/Variety as more important than Marketing & Sales ($M=5.13$, $SD=0.72$, $p=0.00$). The same pattern is also evident between Consulting ($M=5.68$, $SD=0.56$) and Accounting & Finance ($M=5.01$, $SD=0.78$, $p=0.00$).

In the interview stage, the candidate personality factor Extroversion is significantly more important for recruiters within Marketing & Sales ($M=5.22$, $SD=0.81$) than Accounting & Finance ($M=4.70$, $SD=0.81$, $p=0.02$). The candidate personality factor Creative/Openness is significantly less important for recruiters for Accounting & Finance positions ($M=4.34$, $SD=1.01$) compared to Marketing & Sales positions ($M=5.05$, $SD=1.13$, $p=0.01$). The same pattern can also be found for Accounting & Finance ($M=4.34$, $SD=1.01$) and Consulting ($M=5.27$, $SD=0.89$, $p=0.00$). Openness/Variety is also significantly less important for Accounting & Finance ($M=4.79$, $SD=0.85$) compared to Marketing & Sales ($M=5.41$, $SD=0.60$, $p=0.00$) and Consulting ($M=5.61$, $SD=0.71$, $p=0.00$). All the significant differences between the candidate positions in terms of desirable candidate personality partially accepts hypothesis 5a.

The candidate personality factors Work Focused as well as Tense and Faults incorporate different Neuroticism items. These have a mean value from 4.5 to 4.75 for both recruitment

stages. The same also goes for the Neuroticism item “Tends to be Temperamental”. These mean values make us partially accept hypothesis 5b “*The candidate personality factor Neuroticism is low valued by recruiters*”, since it was valued lower than other candidate personality factors, even though the mean value is above the neutral point of 4.

4.1.4 Creativity

In order to test hypothesis 6 “*Creativity is valued higher, in terms of importance, in the screening stage than in the interview stage*”, independent samples t-tests is performed between screening and interview on the three creativity indexes; Creativity Differentiates, Creativity Positive Evaluation and Creativity Makes the Recruiter Feel. As is visible in Table 4 only Creativity Differentiates is significantly higher valued in the screening stage ($M=4.93$, $SD=1.24$) than in the interview stage ($M=4.58$, $SD=0.91$, $t(237)=2.44$, $p=0.05$). Creativity Positive Evaluation is higher in the interview stage ($M=5.13$, $SD=1.06$), compared to the screening stage ($M=3.92$, $SD=1.41$, $t(237)= -7.39$, $p=0.01$). The third index Creativity Makes the Recruiter Feel is also higher in the interview stage ($M=3.96$, $SD=1.21$), compared to the screening stage ($M=3.41$, $SD=1.42$, $t(237)= -3.18$, $p=0.05$). Since these results are contradicting, hypothesis 6 is only partially accepted. To test for hypothesis 6a “*The usage of creativity can differentiate one candidate from another*”, Table 4 shows that the mean value of Index Creativity Differentiates is close to 5, meaning that the respondents slightly agree. Hypothesis 6a is therefore accepted. An ANOVA Scheffe is further performed to test hypothesis 6b “*The candidate’s usage of creativity is more positively evaluated for positions within Marketing & Sales than Accounting & Finance and Consulting*”. The test is performed for the Index Creativity Positive Evaluation and between the three positions. Marketing & Sales evaluate the index higher ($M=4.92$, $SD=1.20$) than both Accounting & Finance ($M=4.19$, $SD=1.25$, $p=0.00$) and Consulting ($M=4.27$, $SD=1.63$, $p=0.01$), which makes hypothesis 6b accepted.

4.1.5 Brand consistency

In order to test hypothesis 7, “*That the candidate shows a personal brand consistency throughout the recruitment process is important for recruiters in order to employ the candidate*”, the specific statement “That the candidate has shown a consistent picture of himself” was separated from the index Interview Candidate Appearance. The mean value of this statement ($M=5.42$, $SD=1.37$) shows that personal brand consistency is important and thus is hypothesis 7 accepted.

To summarise these findings, one can say that hypothesis 1 “*Personal branding aspects differ in importance depending on if a candidate is in the screening stage or the interview stage*” is partially accepted, as shown by previous hypotheses-testing (H2 and H3 are accepted, H4 and H4a are rejected, H5 and H6 are partially accepted) and by Table 4.

4.2 Importance of Social Psychology

Table 5 below shows the mean values for the social psychology variables for both recruitment stages and the three candidate positions. Mean values above 4.5 are interpreted as important and are written in black. As visible in the table, personal chemistry during the final interview is valued highly by recruiters for all positions (mean value approximately 6). This makes it possible to accept hypothesis 8 “*Personal chemistry between the recruiter and candidate is important in the interview stage*”.

In order to test for hypothesis 9 “*The recruiter’s use of intuition is highly valued as a means to decide which candidate to invite to a first interview/employ*”, one can see in Table 5 that mean values are approximately 5 on Index Intuition Decision Making. Because of these high mean values we can accept hypothesis 9. To test for hypothesis 9a “*The usage of intuition has higher value, within both screening and interview, for Marketing & Sales positions than Accounting & Finance and Consulting positions*”, an ANOVA Scheffe was performed. The test showed no significant differences between the positions for Index Intuition Usage in neither of the stages, meaning that hypothesis 9a is rejected.

Table 5
Means of Dependent Variables Social
Psychology

	All		T-value	df	Marketing & Sales		T-value	df	Accounting & Finance		T-value	df	Consulting	
	Screening mean (S.D)	Interview mean (S.D)			Screening mean (S.D)	Interview mean (S.D)			Screening mean (S.D)	Interview mean (S.D)			Screening mean (S.D)	Interview mean (S.D)
Index Interview Personal Chemistry		5.93 (0.71)				5.83 (0.81)				5.99 (0.64)				5.98 (0.68)
Index Intuition Usage	5.55 (1.05)	5.45 (0.96)			5.53 (1.01)	5.36 (1.04)			5.53 (1.01)	5.43 (0.80)			5.59 (1.15)	5.59 (1.05)
Recruiter Is a Good Judge of Character	5.48 (0.88)	5.31 (1.01)			5.60 (0.77)	5.36 (1.09)			5.33 (1.01)	5.29 (0.93)			4.47 (0.89)	5.27 (1.04)
Index Intuition Decision Making	5.27 (1.22)	4.97 (1.32)*	1.848	229	5.07 (1.10)	4.85 (1.47)**	2.321	89	5.18 (1.10)	5.08 (0.99)			5.09 (1.45)	4.97 (1.50)
Index Intuition Excessive Own Ability	4.56 (0.89)	5.46 (0.79)			4.65 (0.84)	4.38 (0.86)			4.44 (0.83)	4.51 (0.61)			4.54 (1.00)	4.48 (0.90)
Interview Goes Well		2.65 (1.62)				2.26 (1.46)				2.95 (1.82)				2.73 (1.48)
n	126	113			52	39			36	41			38	33

Measured on a 7-point Likert-scale, 1=Not at all important, 7=Very important or 1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly. No t-values or degrees of freedom (df) are presented for Accounting & Finance and Consulting since no significant differences were obtained.

* $p < 0.1$

** $p < 0.05$

*** $p < 0.01$

4.3 Different Types of Recruiters

To investigate any differences between the recruiter's personality and the desirable candidate personality, the difference between these two for the 25 personality traits were calculated. By doing a cluster analysis on this difference, a three-cluster solution was found. One cluster wants a candidate that scores lower than the recruiter ($n=54$), one wants a candidate that is similar to themselves ($n=156$), and one wants a candidate that scores higher than the recruiter ($n=29$). Since 65 percent of all recruiters are within cluster 2, wanting similarity, we can accept hypothesis 11 that *"Most recruiters like a candidate who is similar to themselves in terms of personality"*. The clusters' mean values and differences for the 25 personality traits can be found in Appendix 7.

Cluster 1 (Recruiter Wants to be Better Than the Candidate) wants a candidate that is less talkative (item 1) than the recruiter, while cluster 3 (Candidate Should be Better Than the Recruiter) wants a candidate that is more talkative than the recruiter and cluster 2 (Birds of a Feather Flock Together) wants a candidate that is as talkative as the recruiter. The same pattern can be seen for example in not being reserved (item 4), imagination (item 13), tending not to be quiet (item 14) and preferring work that is routine (item 20). However, some items show the same pattern for cluster 1 and 3, that the candidate should be better than the recruiter, while cluster 2 still wants a high level of similarity. This goes for e.g. doing a thorough job (item 3) and being a reliable worker (item 8). Another pattern is that all clusters on some items point into the same direction; the candidate should have a higher value than the recruiter. These items are e.g. being full of energy (item 7), being organised (item 11), doing things efficiently (item 18) and liking to cooperate with others (item 24). These last items can be seen as important for a candidate to manifest, regardless of who the recruiter is. Since the three clusters value the candidate personality traits differently we can partially accept hypothesis 11a *"It exists different types of recruiters based on what they value, personality-wise, within a candidate"*.

A descriptive comparison between the clusters, with the help of cross-tabs and ANOVA Scheffe, shows that there are some significant differences between the clusters (seen in Table 6 below). There are for example significantly more male than female recruiters in cluster 1 and more female than male recruiters in cluster 3. The genders are equally represented in cluster 2. Recruiters within cluster 3 either have education within business, HR or engineering, while the

other two clusters have recruiters within these three academic areas as well as other academic areas. Neither recruiters' year of birth, nor years of experience within recruitment differ between the clusters. In terms of recruiter personality cluster 1 can be described as someone Extrovert and creative that likes to work in their own way. Cluster 2 can be summarised as a person who is a very desirable employee because of both his/her energy and ability to handle difficult situations. Cluster 3 can be described as an Introvert person that likes to have the same work tasks daily.

Table 6
Cluster Descriptives

	Cluster 1 - Recruiter Wants to be Better Than the Candidate	Cluster 2 - Birds of a Feather Flock Together	Cluster 3 - Candidate Should be Better Than the Recruiter
Gender	Dominated by men	Men and women equally represented	Dominated by women
Academic Area	Business, HR, Engineering or other	Business, HR, Engineering or other	Business, HR or Engineering
Year of Birth (mean)	1979	1979	1979
Years Experience within Recruitment (mean)	7	8	6
Recruiter Personality	Extrovert and Creative that like to work in their own way	Desirable employee due to energy level and ability to handle difficult situations	Introvert who likes routine
<i>n</i>	54	156	29

4.4 Importance of Personal Branding and Social Psychology for Different Recruiters

In order to see if the three clusters value different aspects of personal branding and social psychology, independent samples t-tests were performed for the meta indexes, when applicable (see section 3.2.2 Meta Indexes of Influencing Factors, page 39 for more explanation). The reason for conducting statistical analyses on the meta indexes instead of previously used indexes is that the hypotheses regarding cluster differences are on a more general level compared to the differences between candidate positions performed earlier. Hypotheses regarding candidate positions are grounded in specific theory while the theory of cluster differences are on a more aggregated level. By using meta indexes, the results become more comprehensive and compact. Results from the screening and interview stage are presented below.

4.4.1 Screening

There is one significant difference between cluster 1 and 3 in terms of the statement Application Written Towards the Company where cluster 3 thinks it is more important ($M=6.47$, $SD=0.74$) than cluster 1 ($M=5.96$, $SD=0.94$, $t(35)=-1.91$, $p=0.06$). The same difference is found between cluster 2 and 3 where cluster 3 thinks it is more important ($M=6.47$, $SD=0.74$) than cluster 2 ($M=5.95$, $SD=1.06$, $t(26)=-2.29$, $p=0.03$). There is also one difference between cluster 1 and 2 being that cluster 2 ($M=4.58$, $SD=0.39$) values Meta Index Efficient Tense more than cluster 1

($M=4.25$, $SD=0.34$, $t(49.45)=2.17$, $p=0.04$). This means that during the screening stage, there are few differences in how the three clusters value the aspects of personal branding and social psychology. This makes us partially accept hypothesis 12e *“It exists different types of recruiters who evaluate personal branding and social psychology factors differently”*.

4.4.2 Interview

Independent samples t-tests showed that there are some differences between the clusters in the interview stage, however no differences between cluster 1 and cluster 2. Between cluster 1 and cluster 3 there are three differences, one being Meta Index Previous Contact. Even though it is not important for any of the clusters, due to low mean values, it is more important for cluster 3 ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.17$) than for cluster 1 ($M=2.84$, $SD=1.22$, $t(39)=-2.11$, $p=0.04$), to have contacted the company earlier. Meta Index Intuition also differs with cluster 1 ($M=5.07$, $SD=0.65$) valuing it higher than cluster 3 ($M=4.58$, $SD=1.04$, $t(39)=1.86$, $p=0.07$). The final difference is the evaluation of Meta Index Skills Creative/Openness where cluster 3 ($M=5.76$, $SD=0.45$) scores higher than cluster 1 ($M=5.42$, $SD=0.52$, $t(30)=-2.15$, $p=0.04$).

The differences between cluster 2 and 3 are the same as between cluster 1 and 3 above. Cluster 3 values Meta Index Skills Creative/Openness higher ($M=5.76$, $SD=0.45$) than cluster 2 ($M=4.47$, $SD=0.55$, $t(21)=-2.15$, $p=0.05$). The second difference is the Meta Index Intuition where cluster 2 ($M=5.13$, $SD=0.74$) values it higher than cluster 3 ($M=4.58$, $SD=1.04$, $t(84)=2.37$, $p=0.02$). The final difference is for Index Interview Candidate Appearance where cluster 2 finds it more important ($M=4.33$, $SD=1.09$) than cluster 3 ($M=3.79$, $SD=0.95$, $t(20)=1.90$, $p=0.07$), even though it does not seem to be important for any of the clusters, due to mean values around 4.

All differences between the clusters make us partially accept hypothesis 12e *“It exists different types of recruiters who evaluate personal branding and social psychology factors differently”*, in the interview stage. To summarise, there seems to be few differences between the clusters in both screening and interview. If a candidate want to use personal branding or social psychology, the clusters differs in relevance. Using a personal brand with Skills Creative/Openness and Previous Contact will work the best for cluster 3, while intuition is valued higher in the other clusters. This makes us partially accept hypothesis 12e for both stages.

4.4.3 Differences Between Screening and Interview for Each Cluster

To investigate any differences for the meta indexes of personal branding and social psychology between the screening and interview stage, 2 independent Mann-Whitney U-tests were performed for cluster 1 and 3 (due to small sample sizes). For cluster 2 independent samples t-tests were performed. The results are visible in Appendix 8 and show that there are some differences within each cluster. In cluster 1, the only significant difference is for Meta Index Recruiter's Creativity Evaluation. The mean value is higher in the interview stage ($M=4.51$, $SD=0.96$) than in the screening stage ($M=3.73$, $SD=1.49$, $z=-2.18$, $p=0.03$). In cluster 3, there are two significant differences. The first one is for Meta Index Recruiter's Creativity Evaluation where it is higher valued in the interview stage ($M=4.72$, $SD=0.68$) than in the screening stage ($M=3.44$, $SD=1.01$) $z=-2.99$, $p=0.00$. The second difference is in Meta Index Previous Contact where it is higher valued in the interview stage ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.17$) than in the screening stage ($M=2.70$, $SD=1.65$, $z=-1.65$, $p=0.10$). For cluster 2 there are two differences between the stages. Meta Index Recruiter's Creativity Evaluation is higher in the interview stage ($M=4.52$, $SD=1.01$) than in the screening stage ($M=3.69$, $SD=1.23$, $t(154)=-4.56$, $p=0.00$). The other significant difference is found in Index Creativity Differentiates where it is valued higher in the screening stage ($M=4.84$, $SD=1.28$) than in the interview stage ($M=4.52$, $SD=0.82$, $t(154)=1.82$, $p=0.06$). All these differences within the three clusters make us partially accept hypothesis 12f *"It exists different types of recruiters who evaluate personal branding and social psychology factors differently depending on which stage of the recruitment process that is in focus"*.

4.5 Specific Differences Between the Clusters

In order to test if the three clusters value aspects of personal branding and social psychology differently, without having the stages of the recruitment process in focus, an ANOVA Scheffe was performed on the original indexes for the aspects. The original indexes are used since the following hypotheses are on a more detailed level than the previous section 4.4.

The ANOVA resulted in no significant differences between the clusters for a candidate's hard and soft skills (Personal Competencies, Business Skills and Personal Attributes). The same results were also evident for the different candidate positions, stages and when the entire data set was analysed. This makes us therefore reject hypothesis 12a *"It exists different types of recruiters who value a candidate's hard and soft skills differently"*.

Hypothesis 12b *“It exists different types of recruiters who value a candidate’s personality differently”* is partially accepted. The ANOVA Scheffe showed that there exists one significant difference on the candidate personality factor Agreeableness between cluster 2 (M=5.93, SD=0.75) and cluster 3 (M=6.26, SD=0.52, $p=0.08$). It also exist differences for the candidate personality factor Extroversion between cluster 1 (M=4.79, SD=0.78) and cluster 2 (M=5.06, SD=0.79, $p=0.09$), as well as between cluster 1 (M=4.79, SD=0.78) and cluster 3 (M=5.33, SD=0.86, $p=0.01$). Due to these significant differences, hypothesis 12b is partially accepted. There however exists no significant difference between the clusters in terms of how they evaluate the candidate’s use of creativity, which rejects hypothesis 12c, *“It exists different types of recruiters who value a candidate’s use of creativity differently”*.

The final significant differences between the clusters are for Index Intuition Usage. Recruiters within cluster 3 (M=4.98, SD=1.16) significantly use intuition less than cluster 1 (M=5.57, SD=1.06, $p=0.03$). The same is also evident between cluster 3 (M=4.98, SD=1.16) and cluster 2 (M=5.58, SD=0.93, $p=0.01$). This makes us accept hypothesis 12d *“It exists different types of recruiters who use intuition to different extents”*.

4.6 Who Values Creativity and Who Uses Intuition

Regression analyses were performed in order to investigate if hypotheses 6c and 6d, regarding creativity, and hypothesis 10, regarding intuition, could be accepted. Meta indexes were used since this analysis is performed on an aggregated level. Dependent variable for hypothesis 6c is Meta Index Creativity Positive Evaluation, for hypothesis 6d Index Creativity Differentiates and for hypothesis 10 Meta Index Intuition. The independent variables for these regressions can be found in Tables 7-9 below where some are dummy variables, used when nominal or ordinal variables are added into regression analyses (Malhotra, 2010). Two of the tables concern creativity and one concerns intuition. Linear regressions were performed with a backwards approach to result in final outputs with only significant contributing variables. The linear regressions were divided between the screening and interview stage, due to one of the thesis’ research questions of testing the different recruitment stages.

4.6.1 Creativity

The results show that in the screening stage, Creativity Evaluation is positively and significantly impacted by Extrovert recruiters as well as recruiters for Marketing & Sales positions. Due to

this, we can accept hypothesis 6c for the screening stage “*The evaluation of a candidate’s usage of creativity depends on who the recruiter is in both the screening and interview stage*”. Further is the independent variable with the highest beta value the dummy of recruiters having the technical ability to receive applications in different media formats. Due to this significant impact, we can accept hypothesis 6e “*The evaluation of a candidate’s usage of creativity depends on if the company has the technical ability, i.e. experience, to receive creative applications*”. Since the other dependent variable for creativity, Index Creativity Differentiates, did not have any impact from any of the independent variables in the screening stage, hypothesis 6d “*The evaluation that creativity can differentiate one candidate from another depends on who the recruiter is*”, is rejected in this stage and no data for it is shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7
Regression Models Screening Personal Branding

Independent variables	Meta Index Recruiter Creativity Evaluation			
	Unstandardised B	Unstandardised Std. Error	Standardised Beta	Sig.
Dummy Cluster 1 Recruiter Wants to be Better Than Candidate				
Dummy Cluster 3 Candidate Should be Better Than Recruiter				
Dummy Marketing & Sales	0.726	0.249	0.254	0.004
Dummy Accounting & Finance				
Dummy Has Technique to Receive Different Media Formats	0.775	0.246	0.275	0.002
Index Recruiter Extrovert	0.248	0.104	0.191	0.019
Index Recruiter Conscientiousness Hardworking				
Index Recruiter Neurotic				
Index Recruiter Openness				
Index Recruiter Agreeableness Variety				
Index Recruiter Team Worker				
Index Recruiter Work Focused				
Dummy Recruiter Academic Area Business				
Dummy Recruiter Academic Area HR				
Dummy Recruiter Academic Area Engineering				
Constant	1.872			0.002
Adjusted r2	0.215			
Durbin-Watson	2.123			
Multicollinearity	Moderate (13.0)			
Heteroscedasticity	No			

Dependent variables measured on a 7-point Likert-scale either 1=Not at all Important, 7=Very Important, or 1=Disagree Strongly 7=Agree Strongly. Independent variables either are dummy variables or on a 7-point Likert scale 1=Disagree Strongly, 7=Agree Strongly (Indexes of Recruiter Personality)

As visible in Table 8 below, the candidate’s usage of creativity during the interview stage is positively impacted by recruiters who score high on Openness and Agreeableness/Variety. Recruiters with education within business and recruiters for Accounting & Finance positions have however a negative impact on the evaluation of creativity in the interview stage. Due to this, we can accept hypothesis 6c for the interview stage. This means that hypothesis 6c is accepted in both screening and interview.

Two independent variables significantly and positively impact the dependent variable Meta Index Creativity Differentiates. These are recruiters within Cluster 3 and Extrovert recruiters. The explanatory value is however very low (adjusted $r^2=0.042$), which means that this dependent variable is affected by other independent variables not researched in this study. This regression is also suffering from heteroscedasticity, which means that the results are not fully reliable. Since some recruiters positively impact the dependent variable in the interview stage hypothesis 6d is accepted. For the entire data set the hypothesis is however only partially accepted since it had no significant impact in the screening stage.

Table 8
Regression Models Interview Personal Branding

Independent variables	Meta Index Recruiter Creativity Evaluation				Meta Index Creativity Differentiates			
	Unstandardised B	Unstandardised Std. Error	Standardised Beta	Sig	Unstandardised B	Unstandardised Std. Error	Standardised Beta	Sig
Dummy Cluster 1 Recruiter Wants to be Better Than Candidate					0.569	0.272	0.206	0.039
Dummy Cluster 3 Candidate Should be Better Than Recruiter								
Dummy Marketing & Sales								
Dummy Accounting & Finance	-0.608	0.191	-0.277	0.002				
Index Recruiter Extrovert					0.161	0.072	0.221	0.027
Index Recruiter Conscientiousness Hardworking								
Index Recruiter Neurotic								
Index Recruiter Openness	0.230	0.105	0.197	0.030				
Index Recruiter Agreeableness Variety	0.341	0.131	0.224	0.011				
Index Recruiter Team Worker								
Index Recruiter Work Focused								
Dummy Recruiter Academic Area Business	-0.372	0.181	-0.172	0.042				
Dummy Recruiter Academic Area HR								
Dummy Recruiter Academic Area Engineering								
Constant	2.638			0.001	3.681			0.000
Adjusted r2	0.239				0.042			
Durbin-Watson	1.847				2.043			
Multicollinearity	Moderate (22.6)				Low (9.5)			
Heteroscedasticity	No				Yes			

Dependent variables measured on a 7-point Likert-scale 1=Disagree Strongly, 7=Agree Strongly. Independent variables are either dummy variables or measured a 7-point Likert scale 1=Disagree Strongly, 7=Agree Strongly (Index of Recruiter Personality)

4.6.2 Intuition

For the dependent variable Meta Index Intuition, Table 9 shows that recruiters who score high on Extroversion, Conscientiousness/Hardworking, Team Working and with a business education have a significant and positive impact in the screening stage. Recruiters who score high on Neuroticism do not think intuition is important in this stage. Due to these results, we can only partially accept hypothesis 10 “*The usage of intuition within the recruitment process differs between recruiters depending on which stage and...*” in the screening stage since support are partially found for 10a “*Recruiter’s educational background*”, and 10f “*Recruiter’s personality*”. No support is found for 10b “*Recruiter’s position within the company*”, 10c

“Recruiter’s amount of years within recruitment and year of birth”, 10d “Recruiter’s Gender” and 10e “Number of employees within the corporate group”.

As shown in Table 9, the Meta Index Intuition is positively impacted in the interview stage by recruiters who are Extrovert and Conscientious/Hard Working, holds a partner position within the company and are educated within business. Recruiters within larger companies negatively impact the intuition meta index. These results make us partially accept H10 in the interview stage. More precisely are H10a, H10b and H10f partially accepted, H10e fully accepted and H10c and H10d rejected. This make us partially accept the entire H10 hypothesis, due to the differences of significant independent variables between screening and interview. More specifically are H10a, H10b, H10e and H10f partially accepted. H10c and H10d are rejected.

Table 9
Regression Models Screening and Interview Social Psychology

	Meta Index Intuition Screening				Meta Index Intuition Interview			
	Unstandardised B	Unstandardised Std. Error	Standardised Beta	Sig.	Unstandardised B	Unstandardised Std. Error	Standardised Beta	Sig.
Dummy Female								
Dummy Cluster 1 Recruiter Wants to be Better Than Candidate								
Dummy Cluster 3 Candidate Should be Better Than Recruiter								
Dummy Marketing & Sales								
Dummy Accounting & Finance								
Index Years								
Employees in Corporate Group					-3.048E-6	0.000	0.172	0.051
Index Recruiter Extrovert	0.183	0.054	0.256	0.001	0.183	0.053	0.297	0.001
Index Recruiter Conscientiousness Hardworking	0.310	0.093	0.259	0.001	0.250	0.088	0.242	0.006
Index Recruiter Neurotic	-0.110	0.061	-0.143	0.072				
Index Recruiter Openness								
Index Recruiter Agreeableness Variety								
Index Recruiter Team Worker	0.119	0.070	0.132	0.089				
Index Recruiter Work Focused								
Dummy Recruiter Position Partner					0.444	0.218	0.172	0.045
Dummy Recruiter Position HR								
Dummy Recruiter Position CEO								
Dummy Recruiter Position Recruiter								
Dummy Recruiter Position Manager								
Dummy Recruiter Academic Area Business	0.521	0.119	0.335	0.000	0.307	0.133	0.193	0.023
Dummy Recruiter Academic Area HR								
Dummy Recruiter Academic Area Engineering								
Constant	1.750			0.013	2.452			0.000
Adjusted r2	0.318				0.262			
Durbin-Watson	2.087				1.949			
Multicollinearity	High (33.6)				Moderate (22.8)			
Heteroscedasticity	No				No			

Dependent variables measured on a 7-point Likert-scale 1=Disagree Strongly, 7=Agree Strongly. Independent variables are either dummy variables, measured on a ratio-scale from 0 to infinity (Index Years and Number of Employees) or on a 7-point Likert scale 1=Disagree Strongly, 7=Agree Strongly (Index of Recruiter Personality)

4.7 Summarising Figure of Hypotheses-Testing

In order to show a concluding picture of the hypothesis testing, the hypothesised model proposed in the end of chapter 2 “Theoretical Frameworks” shows this thesis’ results in a comprehensive way, in Figure 4 below. The green colour symbolises accepted hypotheses. The orange colour symbolises partially accepted hypotheses and the red colour symbolises hypotheses that could

not be accepted. A summary of all the results from the hypotheses testing and the research questions can be found in Appendix 9.

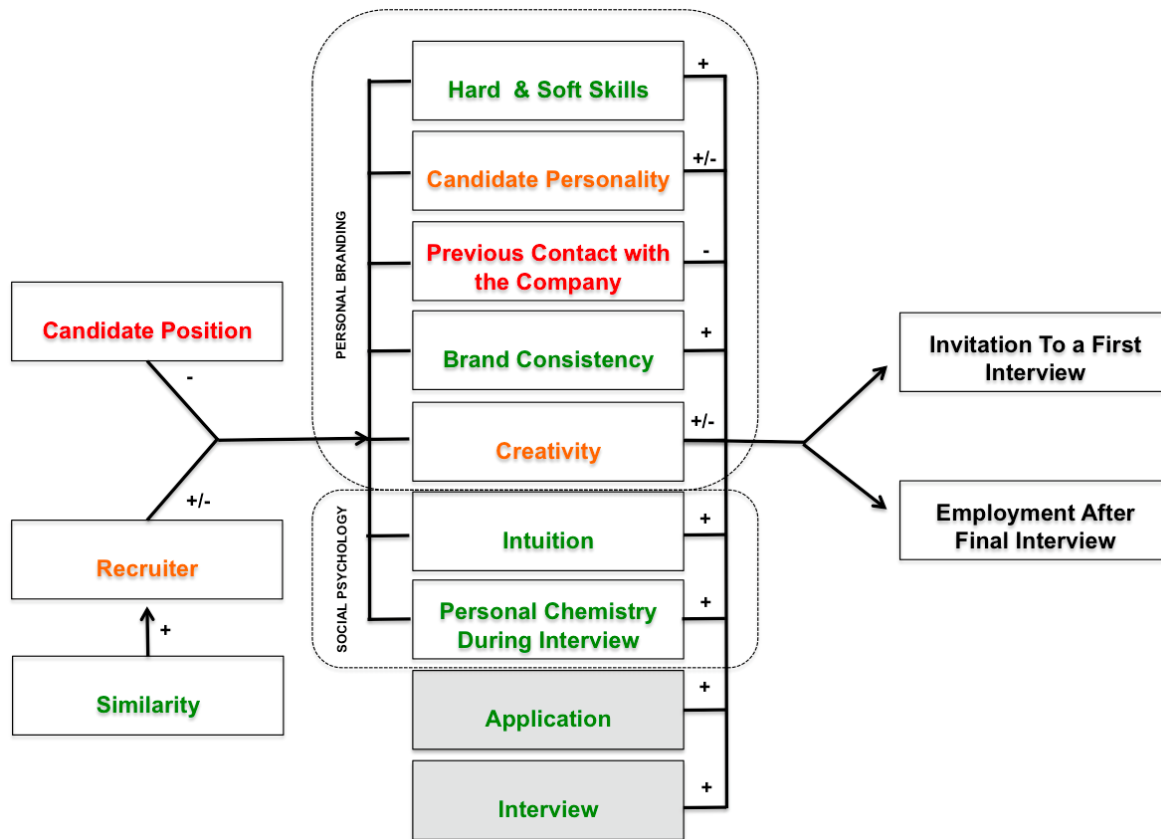


Figure 4: Confirmed Hypothesised Model

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter summarises the results of this study. The research questions will serve as structure and be shortly answered in order to fulfil the thesis' purpose of investigating the importance of personal branding and social psychological aspects in recruitment.

RQ1: How do recruiters perceive different aspects of personal branding used by business graduates in the recruitment process?

The results show that recruiters value a business graduate's skills, especially soft skills, highly in both screening and interview. A candidate does not have to contact the company outside the recruitment process in order to show a genuine interest. Personality-wise, one can say that the personality trait Neuroticism is the least important one among all factors. Also, the personality traits of being Open and Creative are not as important as media is telling us. In fact, Extroversion and primarily Agreeableness are more important, indicating that recruiters want a team player that can contribute with new and positive energy. Further, recruiters appreciate candidates showing a consistent picture of themselves throughout the recruitment process. To summarise, a business graduate may benefit from using personal branding if it is done correctly, due to the fact that recruiters value some aspects within this area highly. However, it is difficult to provide a general answer to this question since recruiters are different and social psychology has an impact on the recruitment process.

a) Does this depend on which stage of the recruitment process, screening or interview, that is in focus?

The answer is yes. The results show that a candidate's effort of previously contacting the company outside of the recruitment process is more positively evaluated in the interview stage than in the screening stage. Using creativity is also more positively evaluated if it is used in interview than screening, even though it is valued to differentiate one candidate from another more in the screening stage. An interesting finding is that it seems to be more important to signal Extroversion during the screening stage than during the interview. Also, the evaluation of creativity is more positive during the interview stage than screening stage.

b) Does this depend on which business field the candidate is interested in?

Generally no, but there are some differences between the business fields in focus. For example, creativity is evaluated higher by Marketing & Sales recruiters compared to both Accounting & Finance recruiters and Consulting recruiters. However, Consulting finds Openness/Variety as more important than the other two positions during the screening stage, and Consulting appreciates Professional Competencies more than Marketing & Sales. Also, Accounting & Finance thinks that Creative/Openness is less important than the other two positions.

RQ2: Does social psychology have an impact on the recruitment process of business graduates? If so, in what way?

Yes, social psychology does have an impact on the recruitment process. What is the most evident is the high value recruiters put on personal chemistry, which might be worrying for business graduates since “*If the personal chemistry does not fit, nothing can be done about it and nobody is to blame*” (Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson, 1985: 57). Another unavoidable factor influencing the recruitment process is the recruiters’ confirmed usage of intuition, which is used for all types of candidate positions, especially as a tool to reach a decision. Further does similarity between the recruiter and candidate have an impact on one’s chances of employment.

RQ3: Are there any differences between recruiters, in terms of candidate similarity, on how they value personal branding and social psychology aspects?

Yes, we found three clusters; Recruiter Wants to Be Better Than Candidate (cluster 1), Birds of a Feather Flock Together (cluster 2) and Recruiter Wants Candidate to Be Better (cluster 3). Cluster 2 is the largest, which two out of three recruiters belongs to. The three clusters all value skills and creativity equally but use intuition to different extents and value personality factors differently. All three clusters think it is important that a candidate is better than the recruiter in terms of being full of energy, being organised, being efficient, liking to cooperate with others and not being easily distracted. One general conclusion is though that cluster 3 values personal branding aspects a little bit more than the other clusters, while cluster 2 likes intuition and thinks creativity differentiates more during the screening stage than the interview stage than the other clusters.

6. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

With the thesis' results and conclusion just presented, discussion and implications will now follow. This is in order to fulfil the thesis' purpose of investigating the importance of personal branding and social psychological aspect in recruitment.

6.1 Discussion

This section will discuss the findings from this study and compare it to previous research within the area.

After concluding that personal branding (if done correctly) is beneficial for business graduates in the recruitment process, one can further argue that the usage of personal branding results in an overall better business success for individuals. Due to this, it should be beneficial for employers that their employees think in terms of personal branding, even if they have an employment at the moment. (Amoako and Adjaisson, 2012) Another important aspect of the recruitment of business graduates is that employers must feel satisfied with the chosen candidate by meeting the expectations (Moser, 2005). In this thesis' results it became evident that meeting expectations is especially important during the final interview. This might mean that it is difficult for recruiters to have any expectations except for fulfilling the profile of demands during the screening stage, or that the requirements are higher during the interview stage. Hence, in order for a candidate to reach an employment, an employer needs to feel satisfied about his choice. We therefore see this as an invisible hygiene factor in the final stages of the hypothesised model. The other elements of the model will be discussed separately below.

6.1.1 Hard and Soft Skills

This thesis shows that soft skills are more important than hard skills in the recruitment process, which is supported by theory (e.g. Hodges and Burchell, 2003; Teijeiro, Rungo and Freire, 2013). Soft skills can show how a candidate interacts in social situations while hard skills can show a candidate's learning ability. These differences in importance can be especially applicable for business graduates since they usually get internal education when employed, due to not having as much experience within the business. The candidate's soft skills on the other hand are difficult for the employer to improve by internal education.

One should however notice that in this study all three skills categories were valued highly by the recruiters, regardless of recruitment stage and candidate position. This is contradicting to Brown and Campion's (1994) argument of soft skills being more important for sales jobs compared to accounting, where hard skills instead is more important. Teijeiro, Rungo and Freire (2013) are leaning more towards our results of industries valuing hard and soft skills in relatively the same way even though different sectors might demand specific competencies in order to become successful. Theory states that the chances of getting employed increases if a candidate possesses skills that the company is in need of, while it also pushes soft skills as a deal-breaker when it comes to employment. (Teijeiro, Rungo and Freire, 2013)

6.1.2 Personality

Personality can be said to be a part of the soft skills that a candidate possess. Barker's (2014) definition of soft skills, used in this study's questionnaires, corresponds well to some personality items also used in this research. The neutral ranking of Neuroticism, compared to the other higher ranked personality traits, is interpreted to show an understanding for this trait among the responding recruiters. It is understandable that a recruiter does not want a neurotic person, which can also be seen in the comparison between the recruiter clusters where the items that are connected to the Neuroticism factors have a lower mean value on candidate compared to all recruiters. One must however realise that neuroticism may be a personality trait that comes natural to human beings to different extents and is therefore difficult to completely eliminate.

Further does theory state that the personality factor Conscientiousness is the one valued the highest by recruiters (Moy and Lam, 2004). This is somewhat contradicting to the results from this study since the most important personality factor was Agreeableness. The factors incorporating items of Conscientiousness, "Efficient Tense" and "Work Focused", were seen as some of the least important personality factors. Being an efficient worker does therefore not seem to be as important as being a friendly and good person. This could be due to the importance of the social aspects of work (Devendorf and Highhouse, 2008).

Human personality can be divided into five personality factors (Digman 1990; John, Naumann and Soto, 2008). However, in our study are seven personality factors found, which make it harder to perform hypothesis testing since the hypotheses were based on theory of five factors. The reason why seven factors were obtained can be the reduction of the BFI personality items

from 44 to 25 due to space limitations and to increase the understanding of the items. The items that were removed could have been important in order to create five factors. Regardless, we confirm large parts of what each factor contains (which items that belong together) (e.g. John, Naumann and Soto, 2008). We also confirm previous research stating that it is difficult to create a general model of human personality (Digman, 1990; John, Naumann and Soto, 2008). We for example find that Openness is divided into two factors, which is understandable since the items covering Openness can be divided into separate topics of creativity and new experiences.

6.1.3 Mere-exposure

The pre-study showed that it is important that a candidate has a genuine interest for the company, which was confirmed by theory (Barker, 2014). This topic was researched as the theoretical concept of mere-exposure, which in turn was measured by the importance of previous contact between the candidate and the company. The results however show by low mean values that previous contact is not that important, which can mean that recruiters find it unnerving if it goes to exaggeration and a candidate is nagging. Genuine interest might be better shown by a well-written, personally addressed cover letter (Dulek and Suchan, 1988). Since previous contact resulted in low mean values, one could question whether or not the appropriate measure of mere-exposure was used in this research and if it is better researched with an experimental approach.

6.1.4 Creativity

Creativity shows effort and ability according to theory (Dahlén, Rosengren and Törn, 2008). Our research shows that creativity can only serve as a means to differentiate candidates in the screening stage. The inflation in media that personal branding in terms of creativity is important and unique is questioned. It seems that recruiters prefer application content, as it was seen as more important than creativity in this study, which is in line with theory (Dulek and Suchan, 1988). One could therefore argue that media should not alert individuals creative attempts to get employed since it is not important for companies in the recruitment process. Media should instead focus on the content of the application so that the message is not lost in the usage of creativity.

Our research showed that creativity is somewhat valued by recruiters in general, and especially for recruiters for Marketing & Sales positions. Dahlén, Rosengren and Törn (2008) have shown that the usage of creativity does not enhance the receivers' liking, which could be the reason for

the more neutral mean values for creativity, and especially for the index “Candidate Makes Me Feel”. The question is though, if creativity is not valued highly and is not beneficial since it does not enhance liking, why are people doing creative applications and why does it receive such large public attention? Since this thesis shows that creativity can differentiate, the answer to the question is that it helps candidates break out of the clutter by doing something unexpected (Dahlén and Lange, 2009).

Interesting was also that the positive evaluation of creativity was impacted by the company having technical ability to receive application in different media formats. If one would assume that the ability to receive applications in different media formats would mean that recruiters have been exposed to creative applications before, it is supported by Kemp *et al.* (2013). The authors state that recruiters that have been primed with a video resume evaluate it better than those that have not been primed. This could be the reason to why recruiters for Marketing & Sales positions valued creativity higher than recruiters for other candidate positions. This is further supported by our data showing that 79 percent of Marketing & Sales recruiters have support for different media formats while approximately 40 percent of the other positions have it. These differences in perception of creativity between the positions are supported by theory (Campbell, 2000; Moy and Lam, 2004).

6.1.5 Brand Consistency

Brand consistency is in this study measured by a mean value, on a 7-point Likert-scale, of approximately 5, meaning that it has some degree of importance. The question is though how inconsistent a person can be. Theory states that being consistent is something natural within humans (Cialdini, 2009) and the mean value of brand consistency does in some way confirm this. Even though recruiters might want a consistent picture of a candidate during the recruitment process, one person can be different depending on e.g. situational context (Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson, 1985), which can create difficulties of signalling brand consistency. Brand consistency could further have better been measured experimentally than using a questionnaire.

6.1.6 Personal Chemistry

The results showing that personal chemistry between the recruiter and candidate was important did not come as a surprise, since e.g. the pre-study showed that “*All candidates should feel*

evaluated in the same way. [...] But still, you cannot fall in love with everybody. That is how it is. It is like any relationship." (Interview object, bank). While personal chemistry was valued the highest among the social psychology aspects, the statement "Interview goes well" had the lowest scores. The questions of these results are several. First, why did this statement not belong to any factor in any of the factor analyses? How come it did not correlate with the statements "The interview has a natural flow" or "That we laugh together"? Our interpretation is that "Interview goes well" might be connected to a candidate's actual responses to questions during the interview. The interview is used to familiarise the recruiter with the candidate and his/her motives, while the focus is no longer on the profile of demands (Kristof-Brown, Barrick and Franke, 2002; confirmed by the pre-study).

6.1.7 Intuition

As the results indicate, intuition is mainly used as a means to decide. This is probably due to the reason that it feels trustworthier to use intuition than a checklist produced by the company (Dries, 2013), and that recruiters forgo these by focusing on their own thoughts and feelings (Skorstad, Schulze and Engen Nilsen, 2011). Recruiters may also use intuition as a tool to see through attempts of using impression management and to see the real person underneath (Arnold *et al.*, 2010). The high mean values might mean that the respondents idealised their answers due to knowledge that they should not use intuition or because it is an unconscious process and it is difficult to evaluate its real extent (Skorstad, Schulze and Engen Nilsen, 2011). It might also be the case that intuition usage is unavoidable and should be taken for granted in the recruitment process. It is interesting though that Miles and Sadler-Smith's (2014) theory of who uses intuition was only partially supported in this study. We found that those with HR-education did not affect the usage of intuition, which is interesting since they should have a negative impact because of their education of not letting their subjective feelings affect the decision. Further was it found that intuition is less used in larger companies, which is understandable since larger companies due to its large amount of applications, probably has a well-structured recruitment process where the usage of intuition is limited. (Lodato, Highhouse and Brooks, 2011)

Further, we hypothesised that intuition should be of more use for Marketing & Sales positions, due to Miles and Sadler-Smith's (2014) theory saying that it is of more use when employees have to make a good first impression. In our results we did not find that recruiters for Marketing

& Sales positions used intuition more than the other ones. The reason for this might be that everyone needs to make a good first impression nowadays, independently of work task in focus.

6.1.8 Differences Between Recruiters

In line with the theories about similarity we found that most recruiters want a candidate that is similar to themselves (Kristof-Brown, Barrick and Stevens, 2005; Tett and Murphy, 2002; Devendorf and Highhouse, 2008). This might be due to the fact that recruiters know that by employing a candidate similar to themselves there will be a good atmosphere at the workplace, it will facilitate social interaction and provide a feeling of comfort both to the new-comer and the co-workers (Devendorf and Highhouse, 2008). We also found two clusters that want bigger differences between the recruiters and the candidate. This corresponds to the theory of Tett and Murphy (2002) arguing that co-workers sometimes are more compatible when they are complementary. Especially Kristof-Brown, Barrick and Franks' (2002) findings seem to be corresponding to our results for cluster 1 in terms of the personality trait Extroversion. They say that complementary fit occurs when the characteristics of an individual complete the environment by replacing a weakness, which in cluster 1 might be that they all love to talk and need someone that is less talkative. Cluster 3 on the other hand, seems to look for the complementary fit by filling a gap in personality traits since they want the candidate to be better than the recruiter, i.e. is looking for a talkative person since they are quieter themselves.

The descriptives of the clusters showed interesting results. The fact that there are Extrovert men wanting to be better than the candidate in cluster 1 and Introvert women wanting the candidate to be better than the recruiter in cluster 3, makes us wonder why we got so stereotypical results. Cluster 2 has however 50/50 in gender distribution and is the largest one in terms of size. This could mean that men and women are not that dissimilar as cluster 1 and 3 indicate. It is still interesting though that one cluster clearly consists of recruiters that want to be a bit better than the candidates. Either this depends on the fact that they have less expectations of business graduates or it might be that this group of recruiters are somewhat insecure about their ability.

6.1.9 The Hypothesised Model

To conclude this discussion, the hypothesised model in the end of chapter 2 was not fully accepted. The reasons for this can be that not all theoretical frameworks were fully applicable to the methodological approach used, e.g. creativity and brand consistency. Still, the results start to

create an understanding for how all the pieces in the hypothesised model relate to each other and impact the recruitment process.

6.2 Managerial and Candidate Implications

This sub-chapter is divided into managerial and candidate implications based on this study. Managerial implications focus on how companies can use the insights generated while candidate implications include advices on how business graduates can use personal branding in their search for a first job.

6.2.1 Managerial Implications

It is important for individual recruiters to evaluate themselves to realise what type of recruiter he/she is, since it is evident from this research that it exists three types of recruiters based on personality differences. By doing this, it will be clear what strengths and weaknesses each individual recruiter possesses, which in turn impacts the quality of recruitment within the company. Since it has been shown that different recruiters appreciate creativity and use intuition differently, information about a recruiter available online on e.g. company website or LinkedIn-profile, can be used by candidates to create their own estimation of how recruiters will evaluate creativity. This can then influence a candidate's behaviour in order for the recruiter to like him/her better due to e.g. similarity in interests or what motivates them. This is a risk for the company and is therefore important to realise and reduce.

Companies should also be aware that recruiters use intuition, which can lead to discrimination in the recruitment process meaning that the best candidate does not necessarily get employed. There however needs to be a certain match interpersonally between the co-workers and the candidate, and recruiters cannot choose the candidate that is the best according to a scorecard. This is since people in a specific context need to cooperate together and be happy at work. One possible way to reduce the impact of intuitive judgement is to have clear guidelines for the recruitment process or to use employment agencies. If the recruitment is done in-house, then a clear profile of demands should be created for each position and it should not be disregarded by e.g. a candidate's previous contact with the company. The reason for this is that previous contact, despite its low importance values in the research, is argued by both the pre-study and theory (e.g. mere-exposure lead to liking, and liking increases the chances of employment) (Kardes, Cline and Cronley, 2011; Cialdini, 2009) that it impacts the employment decision subjectively.

Another way for companies to overcome the usage of intuition and the importance of personal chemistry within the recruitment is to let several people meet a candidate, preferably already during the first meeting in order to decrease the bias (Skorstad, Schulze and Engen Nilsen, 2011). This should create more reference-points for a candidate's brand consistency in the recruitment process, since the candidate needs to be perceived in the same way by more people.

Finally should candidates' usage of creativity in applications increase if media continues to show positive attention to it. This will probably increase recruiters' liking of creativity usage since it has been evident that creativity is more positively valued if a recruiter gets to see an example of it before making an evaluation (Kemp *et al.*, 2013). Recruiters therefore need to be prepared for this development. One way of doing so is to have the technical abilities to receive applications in different media formats, which already 55 percent of recruiters within the screening stage in this study have.

6.2.2 Candidate Implications

The results of this study show that the hype in media regarding creative applications is not completely legitimate since content is still king and creativity is more positively evaluated during the interview stage. Theory also argues that creativity is more positively evaluated by recruiters who have been exposed to creative applications earlier (Kemp *et al.*, 2013). Therefore should a candidate not only show creativity in his/her application but also show it later in the recruitment process in terms of problem solving and way of thinking. Important is also to know that the recruiter's personality affects how a candidate's creativity efforts will be evaluated and if the recruiter thinks it differentiates the candidate or not. Hard and soft skills are always important for a candidate to manifest (Barker, 2014). Further should a candidate highlight Extroversion and Agreeableness since these are the personality factors that recruiters appreciate the most. In screening, this means that the candidate could show this in the cover letter and have special merits in the resume that supports it, e.g. charity work or being a part of a football team (Brown and Campion, 1994; Roulin and Bangerter, 2013). Important is though to not exaggerate and pretend to be someone he/she is not since the candidate will have to show these traits during the rest of the recruitment process too in order to have a brand consistency and increase brand attitude (Müller, 2008). If a candidate is neurotic, another advice is to tone it down both during the recruitment process and while at work (Wille, De Fruyt and Feys, 2012).

Advices for business graduates specifically interested in a position within Marketing & Sales are to show creativity and Openness in the screening stage since this is higher evaluated by the recruiters within this field. In the interview stage it is important to show Extroversion, which Brown and Campion (1994) also concluded. For positions within Consulting a candidate should show Openness and Variety and for Accounting & Finance one should show less Creativity and Openness.

Having previous contact with the company outside of the recruitment process is not important but this might pay off during the interview stage when the company is choosing between a few candidates, but make sure to not become annoying (supported by the pre-study). Put instead extra effort into the cover letter that should be personally written towards the company. Also, all candidates should be prepared to meet Cluster 2 “Birds of a Feather Flock Together” meaning that recruiters will value similarity and use intuition to some extent. What a candidate can do is to prepare and look for the recruiter in social media and the size of the company in order to see if the possibility of intuition-usage of the recruiter is high, but still the candidate has no power here. Either the recruiter chooses him/her or someone else. A candidate may though have a chance of using impression management by reflecting the recruiter’s interests and values and that way increase liking (Aronson, Wilson and Akert, 2007).

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter discusses this thesis' limitations and how the results and approach can be developed by future researches.

7.1 Limitations

Since this thesis has investigated what personal branding and social psychology aspects that are important in the recruitment process for business graduates it also contains several limitations. The primary limitation is the one of choosing only two stages of the recruitment process which in many cases consists of three or four (for example assessment centres and intelligence testing). This means that situations that arise in the middle of the process might in fact be the deciding factor of employment, not studied in this thesis. Recruitment processes and personal branding, as well as humans' behaviour and thinking, are complex leading this thesis to only give a hint of what might actually affect the employability. Further, the study is limited to only discuss the recruitment process of business graduates, meaning that it has a limited applicable area. Also, variables such as name, appearance and attractiveness have not been included in this study and have instead been taken for granted due to previous research. Including this might have given other answers to the research questions as well as given indications of the relevance of personal branding in comparison to these other factors. Still, asking control questions regarding the importance of e.g. gender and ethnicity might have indicated this relative importance, but is not seen as giving a correct answer to this. The reason originates in the problem of idealisation of responses with these kinds of questionnaire items (Sjöberg, 2013). One methodology suitable for investigating this relative importance is by conducting experiments.

Another limitation in this thesis is the questionnaires where we only asked the respondents how important different personal brand attributes are on a scale of 1 to 7 instead of asking them to rank these attributes. A ranking might have given more interesting results since the risk is now that the respondents think everything is important.

Further is this thesis limited in that personality is researched in terms of human personality traits and not brand personality traits, which could seem more suitable to the personal branding theme. The reason for this is that brand personality is developed out of human personality research

(Aaker, 1997) and since this thesis studies recruiters, it is more suitable to use the original research field of human personality.

This study's methodology can also be seen as a limitation due to the quantitative approach. Since the survey asked topics of e.g. intuition and personal chemistry directly the respondents might not have been completely honest, or aware of what actually happens during their work as recruiters. An experimental approach might in this case have been a solution to both these problems as well as the limitation of not investigating e.g. name and appearance. A quantitative study also leads to more descriptive results and not the causal relations, i.e. answers to what instead of why, which is also an interesting approach.

The sample of the study is also a limitation since it was a problem reaching out to recruiters involved in specifically recruiting business graduates. Only 60-70 percent of the ones that decided to respond to the survey were involved. Several reminders were sent but still only one out of three answered to the survey meaning that a lot of opinions were lost. An add-on to this is the fact that the survey took ten minutes to complete (sometimes even 20 minutes) leading to a high drop-off rate of approximately 30 percent. Another limitation is the fact that it is uncertain how many people that have had access to the survey since some respondents passed along the link to more suitable persons within their organisations. A limitation is concerning the questionnaire and the fact that it was sent to employers who are interested in business graduates from a Swedish university.

The results from this study also show that there is a limitation within the candidate positions. Since we did not find many differences between them, it might have been more interesting to focus on one of these areas and then specify working tasks such as controller, assistant, strategist etc. and look for the differences among them instead. This might have lead to more significant differences because it might be difficult to generalise business fields. This was however decided since the area is undeveloped and needed a start with a broader scope.

Another limitation is our choice to cluster on personality. Similarity between candidate and recruiter can be measured also in terms of age, gender, attitude, experience etc. We have also looked at other ways to cluster, besides personality, and found nothing interesting in our database. For others, it might have been more relevant to cluster on experience, who takes the final decision, what you think about recruitment, gender, age, education etc.

7.2 Future Research

The area of personal branding connected to social psychology is an interesting and undeveloped research area, meaning that there are still a lot to investigate. For example it would be interesting to do the same study but with another methodology, such as experimental design with a conjoint analysis. This could also give an answer to the topic of the relative importance of personal branding in comparison to e.g. gender and ethnicity. Experiments could lead to insights about the unconscious processes within recruitment and would be a great add-on to this thesis' results. It would also be interesting to add more stages into the study and look at e.g. personal branding at an assessment day. Still, it would also be interesting to do this study again just to increase the validity.

Since this study only concerns business graduates a future research should investigate the difference from recruiting senior positions, as well as not only within business but instead for example engineering or medical positions. It would also be interesting to study different positions within a business field instead of comparing different business fields, e.g. controller, account manager, assistant, strategist.

Another suggestion is to investigate this complex area by doing a focus group with recruiters in order to make them together come up with what it is that is important in personal branding connected to the recruitment process. This might also lead to results indicating that recruitment is all about individual decisions and that you cannot come up with generalisations.

A final suggestion is to investigate the same area but starting from social psychology instead of personal branding. Since we did the other way around, several social psychology aspects have probably been lost and therefore it would be very interesting to compare the results from two different perspectives. For example, an idea is to focus more on the relationship between the recruiter and candidate as well as the situations and contexts within a recruitment process, instead of looking at what a candidate can do to get the recruiter's attention.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview guide

1. Namn
2. Företag & industri
3. Kön
4. Ålder
5. Utbildning
6. Nuvarande befattning
7. Antal år i företaget
8. Sammanlagd tid av erfarenhet inom rekrytering
9. Hur ser du på arbete med frågor gällande rekrytering av nyexade?
 - a. svårt – lätt
 - b. enahanda - stimulerande
 - c. rutinjobb - högt kvalificerat jobb
 - d. genomgångsuppgift - slutposition
 - e. dåligt betalt - välbetalt
 - f. stressigt - ostressat
 - g. inadekvat för min utbildning - passar väl en person med min utbildning
 - h. det tar lång tid att komma fram till beslut - det går snabbt att besluta sig
10. Hos er, hur ser en generell rekryteringsprocess ut av juniora tjänster?
 - a. Hur många steg har ni och vilka är dem?
 - b. Vem/vilka är inblandade?
 - c. Vem beslutar vem som går vidare i varje steg? (Sjöbergs besluts kategorier)
11. Skiljer denna rekryteringsprocess från anställningen av seniora tjänster? Om så, hur?
12. Vilka krav har ni på anställda hos er? Junior vs senior?
13. Inom vilka funktioner/områden är juniora tjänster mest aktuella hos er?
14. Hur skiljer sig kravprofilen dessa områden emellan?

CV-screenings

1. Vad är viktigt att hitta i CV respektive personligt brev? Vad krävs för att få komma på intervju?
2. Hur viktigt är det att visa på kreativitet i sin ansökan?
3. Vilka personliga egenskaper letar du efter i en ansökan?
4. Hur ser du på erfarenhet och utbildning i detta steg?
5. Har ni någon policy för jämställdhet och mångfald? Tar du hänsyn till detta när du väljer vilka som kommer vidare för intervju?
6. Vad är det som får dig att gilla en kandidat?
7. Gillar du en kandidat mer om den påminner om dig själv?

8. Hur stor betydelse för anställningsbeslutet anser du att nedanstående egenskaper hos kandidaten har?
 - a. Utbildning
 - b. Referenser
 - c. Erfarenhet
 - d. Ålder
 - e. Intryck av ansökan
9. Hur mycket uppskattar du en kandidat har följande egenskaper för att en kandidat ska få komma på intervju?
 - a. Extroversion/introversion
 - b. Friendliness/hostility
 - c. Conscientiousness
 - d. Neuroticism/emotional stability
 - e. Intellect/openness
10. Är dessa egenskaper olika viktigt beroende vad för tjänst personen söker? Om ja, på vilket sätt då?
11. Vad brukar du tänka när du ser en bild på en kandidat i en ansökan?
 - a. Vad får dig att gilla personen?
 - b. Vad får dig att bli intresserad av att veta mer om personen?
12. Hur ser du på en ansökan som skickas via:
 - a. Brev och cv skickas via post i vanligt pappersformat
 - b. Brev och cv skickas via e-post
 - c. Ljudfil
 - d. Film/video
 - e. Personlig hemsida på nätet
 - f. LinkedIn-profil
 - g. Poster/annan kreativ lösning
13. Har du någon gång tagit emot en annorlunda ansökan? Vad för typ och vad tyckte du om det?
14. Kan kandidatens nätverk påverka din bedömning? Hur?
15. Påverkas du i intervjufasen av vad en kandidat skrivit/skickat in i sin ansökan? Om ja, på vilket sätt?
16. Om du skulle skatta vilka drivkrafter som är störst för att få komma på en intervju hos er, hur skulle den då se ut?

Anställning

1. Vad är det du letar efter under alla stegen i rekryteringsprocessen för att en kandidat ska få anställning hos er?
2. Hur viktigt är det att kandidaten visar en sammanhängande bild under hela processen?
 - a. Om kandidaten inte gör det, hur uppfattar ni det? Blir bedömningen annorlunda?

3. Vilken typ av person passar bäst in hos er?
4. Vad är det som får dig att gilla en kandidat?
 - a. Gillar du en kandidat mer om den påminner om dig själv?
5. Hur stor betydelse för anställningsbeslutet anser du att nedanstående egenskaper hos kandidaten har?
 - a. Utbildning
 - b. Referenser
 - c. Erfarenhet
 - d. Ålder
 - e. Intryck vid intervju
6. Hur mycket uppskattar du en kandidat har följande egenskaper för att en kandidat ska bli anställd?
 - a. Extroversion/introversion
 - b. Friendliness/hostility
 - c. Conscientiousness
 - d. Neuroticism/emotional stability
 - e. Intellect/openness
7. Är dessa egenskaper olika viktigt beroende vad för tjänst personen söker? Om ja, på vilket sätt då?
8. Vad är intelligens för dig?
 - a. Hur visar en kandidat detta på bästa sätt?
 - b. Är det olika viktigt med olika typer av intelligens till olika tjänster?
 - i. Praktisk
 - ii. Kreativ
 - iii. Analytisk
 - iv. Linguistisk/språk
 - v. Interpersonell/social
 - vi. Intrapersonell/självförstående
9. Kan kandidatens nätverk påverka din bedömning? Hur?
10. Om du skulle skatta vilka drivkrafter som är störst för att få en anställning hos er, hur skulle den då se ut?
11. Om du skulle få en enkät med frågor som vi har behandlat, där du garanteras full anonymitet, och ska göra en skattning av din egen personlighet, hur skulle du då reagera? Skulle du tycka det är positivt? Negativt? Jobbigt? Integritetskränkande?
 - a. Måste du veta det totala syftet för undersökningen för att utvärdera din egen personlighet?

Appendix 2: Questionnaire Screening

Thank you for taking the first step in helping us graduate by opening this survey! Responding to all the questions will take approximately 10 minutes. The aim of our study is to clarify what are looked for by employers when screening applications from business graduates for business roles. The results will remain confidential.

Thank you in advance!

*Linnéa Bergman and Emilia Köpberg
MSc students of Stockholm School of Economics*

1. Are you involved in recruitment of newly graduates? Yes/No

2. Think about a position within a field that you have been involved in recruiting for (preferably more than once so that you have a clear view of what you have been looking for). Choose a position within one of the following fields, and mark which field the position is within. Please then have this choice in mind throughout the survey!

1. Marketing
2. Sales
3. Finance
4. Accounting
5. Consulting, please specify

3. In order for me to invite a candidate for an interview, how important is it for you to ... (*1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly*)

- Be satisfied with the content of the application (CV and cover letter) for the available position
- The content of the application fulfils my expectations for the available position
- The content of the application corresponds to an ideal application for the available position
- Be willing to recommend the candidate to my colleagues

4. Please think of the **professional competencies** that you seek for your chosen position in the screening process. How important do you consider each of the following competencies to be in order for an applicant to be selected for the first interview? (1. Not at all important – 7. Very important):

COMMUNICATION SKILLS: Able to express clearly one's thoughts and information both verbally and in writing

ABILITY TO APPLY KNOWLEDGE: Able to transfer theoretical concepts to real life

LOGICAL THINKING: Thinks logically

COMPUTER PROFICIENCY: Able to generate professional spreadsheets, graphs, flowcharts, documents and presentations

CRITICAL ANALYSIS: Able to examine a problem in detail and explain one's point of view about it

RESEARCH SKILLS: Able to research independently and interpret data

ADAPT TO CHANGE: Able to adapt ideas and behaviour to meet new challenges

ABILITY TO HANDLE PRESSURE: Able to deal successfully with pressure

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: Achieved high grades in one's studies

WORK EXPERIENCE: Previous relevant experience

5. Please think of the **business skills** that you seek for your chosen position in the screening process. How important do you consider each of the following skills to be in order for an applicant to be selected for first interview? (1. Not at all important – 7. Very important):

PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS: Ability to critically assess a problem and devise a plan of action for its solution

LEADERSHIP SKILLS: Ability to influence, inspire others in ways that enhance their productivity and satisfaction

PLANNING AND ORGANISING: Ability to plan and arrange activities effectively

TEAMWORK: Ability to work in a team to achieve the team's objectives

PRESENTATION SKILLS: Ability to give a presentation in front of an audience

TIME MANAGEMENT: Ability to arrange activities on time and as scheduled

ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT: Ability to organize and manage a business undertaking and spot new opportunities

INITIATIVE: Ability to generate alternative and innovative ideas

OVERALL QUALITY OF WORK: Ability to accomplish assignments effectively

6. Please think of the **personal attributes** that you seek for your chosen position in the screening process. How important do you consider each of the following attributes to be in order for an applicant to be selected for the first interview? (1. Not at all important – 7. Very important):

ENTHUSIASM: Intense interest in work

SELF CONFIDENCE: Confidence in one's abilities

SELF RELIANCE/INDEPENDENCE: Reliance on one's own judgements, abilities etc

CREATIVITY: Innovativeness, creative ability

SELF MOTIVATION: Able to motivate oneself

MATURITY: The quality of being fully developed, not childish

FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY: Able to adjust to change

ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY: Being observant of an appointed time frame

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN: Commitment to further study

7. Here are a number of characteristics in terms of personality that can be used to describe a desirable applicant in the profile of demands for the open position. Please have in mind the earlier chosen position.

I see the future employee as someone who ... (1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly)

1. Is talkative
2. Tends to find fault with others
3. Does a thorough job
4. Is reserved

5. Handles stress well
6. Is curious about many different things
7. Is full of energy
8. Is a reliable worker
9. Can be tense
10. Having a forgiving nature
11. Tends to be disorganised
12. Worries a lot
13. Has an good imagination
14. Tends to be quiet
15. Is generally trusting
16. Is inventive
17. Can be temperamental
18. Does things efficiently
19. Remains calm in tense situations
20. Prefers work that is routine
21. Is outgoing
22. Is sometimes rude to others
23. Has few artistic values
24. Likes to cooperate with others
25. Is easily distracted

8. Please read the following statements and rate how important you think they are in the screening process for your earlier chosen position.

In order for you to invite an applicant to an interview, how important is it for you ... 1=Not at all important. 7= Very important

- That the applicant has previously contacted the company (outside the recruitment process)
- That the applicant has previously shown interest towards the company
- That the applicant has been in touch with the company several times
- That the application is good
- That the application is well written
- That the application has a clear structure
- That the application is clearly written towards the company
- That the application has a picture
- That the picture is professional
- That the picture shows something about the person

9. Please consider the following statements about the usage of a creative – **unusual** – medium of application (e.g. video, audio) for your earlier chosen position. 1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly

I feel that the usage of a creative medium of application can ...

- Be surprising
- Be relevant for the position you are hiring for
- Be favourable
- Be irritating
- Be extreme
- Differentiate an applicant for another
- Make me create more associations to the applicant
- Make me remember the applicant more easily
- Make me feel more creative
- Make me feel excited
- Make me feel positive

10. In this section are we asking you to think about yourself as an individual. Please rate the following statements: (1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly)

I see myself as someone who ...

1. Is talkative
2. Tends to find fault with others
3. Does a thorough job
4. Is reserved
5. Handles stress well
6. Is curious about many different things
7. Is full of energy
8. Is a reliable worker
9. Can be tense
10. Having a forgiving nature
11. Tends to be disorganised
12. Worries a lot
13. Has an good imagination
14. Tends to be quiet
15. Is generally trusting
16. Is inventive
17. Can be temperamental
18. Does things efficiently
19. Remains calm in tense situations
20. Prefers work that is routine
21. Is outgoing
22. Is sometimes rude to others
23. Has few artistic values

- 24. Likes to cooperate with others
- 25. Is easily distracted

11. Please consider the following statements and how well they correspond to your own thoughts and feelings about the screening process for your earlier chosen position. (1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly)

During the screening process, I feel that ...

- I need to listen to my intuition
- My intuition can be wrong
- I am comfortable listening to my intuition
- I form my opinion about the candidate pretty quickly
- I know pretty quickly who will have an organisational fit
- I trust my intuition to 100 percent
- I use my intuition when two candidates have the same qualifications
- I never listen to my intuition

The last part of the survey contains short background questions about you and the company you work for. Like all the other responses, this part will also be treated with full confidentiality.

12. Who takes the final decision regarding who to invite for an interview?

- Me alone
- I'm preparing the question for my boss or working team, but I'm not part of the decision
- Me together with my boss
- Me together with my working team
- Neither of the above, please specify

13. How do you find recruitment of newly graduates? (1-7)

- Difficult - Easy
- Monotone - Stimulating
- Routine tasks - Highly qualified tasks
- As a means to a better position - Final position
- Low salary - High salary
- Stressful - Not stressful
- Not suiting my education - Suiting my education
- Takes long time to reach a decision - Takes short time to reach a decision

14. Do you have technical systems that can support applications in several media formats (e.g. audio, video, e-mail **and** letter)? Yes/No

15. Is the company present in other countries than Sweden? Yes/No

16. Number of employees in the corporate group:

17. The company is present in the following industry:

- Manufacturer
- Retail
- Consultant
- Bank
- Insurance
- Other, please specify

18. My gender: Male/Female

19. My year of Birth:

20. My last completed academic degree:

- Upper secondary school
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Swedish Magister degree
- Phd degree
- Other, please specify

21. My academic area:

- Business
- Human relation
- Engineering
- Other, please specify

22. My position within the company:

23. My total amount of years within recruitment:

If you would like to receive the results from this study, please fill in your email address below or send an email to Linnéa Bergman, 50040@student.hhs.se

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey! The aim of our study to clarify what are looked for by employers when screening applications from business graduates for business roles. The results will remain confidential.

We wish you all a fantastic spring and Easter!

Best regards,

Linnéa Bergman and Emilia Köpberg

MSc students of Stockholm School of Economics

Appendix 3: Questionnaire Interview

Thank you for taking the first step in helping us graduate by opening this survey! Responding to all the questions will take approximately 10 minutes. The aim of our study is to clarify what are looked for by employers when interviewing business graduates for business roles. The results will remain confidential.

Thank you in advance!

*Linnéa Bergman and Emilia Köpberg
MSc students of Stockholm School of Economics*

1. Are you involved in recruitment of newly graduates? Yes/No

2. Think about a position within a field that you have been involved in recruiting for (preferably more than once so that you have a clear view of what you have been looking for). Choose a position within one of the following fields, and mark which field the position is within. Please then have this choice in mind throughout the survey!

1. Marketing
2. Sales
3. Finance
4. Accounting
5. Consulting, please specify

3. In order for you to hire a candidate after the final interview, how important is it for you to ... (1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly)

- Be satisfied with the candidate's performance during the final interview
- Feel that the candidate fulfils your expectations for the available position
- Feel that the candidate corresponds to an ideal candidate for the available position
- Be confident about your chosen candidate in front of you colleagues

4. Please think of the **professional competencies** that you seek for your chosen position in the final interview. How important do you consider each of the following competencies to be in order for the candidate to get the job? (1= Not at all important – 7= Very important):

COMMUNICATION SKILLS: Able to express clearly one's thoughts and information both verbally and in writing

ABILITY TO APPLY KNOWLEDGE: Able to transfer theoretical concepts to real life

LOGICAL THINKING: Thinks logically

COMPUTER PROFICIENCY: Able to generate professional spreadsheets, graphs, flowcharts, documents and presentations

CRITICAL ANALYSIS: Able to examine a problem in detail and explain one's point of view about it

RESEARCH SKILLS: Able to research independently and interpret data

ADAPT TO CHANGE: Able to adapt ideas and behaviour to meet new challenges

ABILITY TO HANDLE PRESSURE: Able to deal successfully with pressure

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: Achieved high grades in one's studies

WORK EXPERIENCE: Previous relevant experience

5. Please think of the **business skills** that you seek for your chosen position in the final interview. How important do you consider each of the following skills to be in order for the candidate to get the job? (1= Not at all important – 7= Very important):

PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS: Ability to critically assess a problem and devise a plan of action for its solution

LEADERSHIP SKILLS: Ability to influence, inspire others in ways that enhance their productivity and satisfaction

PLANNING AND ORGANISING: Ability to plan and arrange activities effectively

TEAMWORK: Ability to work in a team to achieve the team's objectives

PRESENTATION SKILLS: Ability to give a presentation in front of an audience

TIME MANAGEMENT: Ability to arrange activities on time and as scheduled

ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT: Ability to organize and manage a business undertaking and spot new opportunities

INITIATIVE: Ability to generate alternative and innovative ideas

OVERALL QUALITY OF WORK: Ability to accomplish assignments effectively

6. Please think of the **personal attributes** that you seek for your chosen position in the final interview. How important do you consider each of the following attributes to be in order for the candidate to get the job? (1= Not at all important – 7= Very important):

ENTHUSIASM: Intense interest in work

SELF CONFIDENCE: Confidence in one's abilities

SELF RELIANCE/INDEPENDENCE: Reliance on one's own judgements, abilities etc

CREATIVITY: Innovativeness, creative ability

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MATURITY: The quality of being fully developed, not childish

FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY: Able to adjust to change

ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY: Being observant of an appointed time frame

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN: Commitment to further study

7. Here are a number of characteristics in terms of personality that can be used to describe a candidate. Please rate a suitable candidate in the final interview for your earlier chosen position. (1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly)

I see the future employee as someone who ...

1. Is talkative
2. Tends to find fault with others
3. Does a thorough job
4. Is reserved

5. Handles stress well
6. Is curious about many different things
7. Is full of energy
8. Is a reliable worker
9. Can be tense
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16. Is inventive
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18. Does things efficiently
19. Remains calm in tense situations
20. Prefers work that is routine
21. Is outgoing
22. Is sometimes rude to others
23. Has few artistic values
24. Likes to cooperate with others
25. Is easily distracted

8. Please read the following statements and rate how important you think they are in the final interview for your earlier chosen position. (1=Not at all important, 7=Very important)

In order for you to hire a candidate after the final interview, how important is it for you ...

- That the candidate has previously contacted the company (outside the recruitment process)
 - That the candidate has previously shown interest towards the company
 - That the candidate has been in touch with the company several times
 - That the final interview goes well
 - That we have personal chemistry
 - That the candidate has shown a consistent picture of himself
 - That we laugh together
 - That the candidate has “twinkle in his eyes”
 - That the candidate is attractive
 - That the candidate has a professional appearance
 - That the candidate expresses himself in a professional way
 - That the final interview has a natural flow
 - That the candidate doesn't show nervousness
-

9. Please consider the following statements about showing creativity in the final interview (e.g. creative mindset, creative solutions, creative approach, creative presentation) for your earlier chosen position. (1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly)

I feel that the usage of creativity in the final interview ...

- Is surprising
- Is relevant for the position you are hiring for
- Is favourable
- Is irritating
- Is extreme
- Differentiates an candidate for another
- Makes me create more associations to the candidate
- Makes me remember the candidate more easily
- Makes me feel more creative
- Makes me feel excited
- Makes me feel positive

10. In this section are we asking you to think about yourself as an individual. Please rate the following statements: (1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly)

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20. Prefers work that is routine
21. Is outgoing

- 22. Is sometimes rude to others
- 23. Has few artistic values
- 24. Likes to cooperate with others
- 25. Is easily distracted

11. Please consider the following statements and how well they correspond to your own thoughts and feelings during the final interview. (1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly)

During the final interview, I feel that ...

- I need to listen to my intuition
- My intuition can be wrong
- I am comfortable listening to my intuition
- I form my opinion about the candidate pretty quickly
- I know pretty quickly who will have an organisational fit
- I trust my intuition to 100 percent
- I use my intuition when two candidates have the same qualifications
- I never listen to my intuition

The last part of the survey contains short background questions about you and the company you work for. Like all the other responses, this part will also be treated with full confidentiality.

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- I'm preparing the question for my boss or working team, but I'm not part of the decision
- Me together with my boss
- Me together with my working team
- Neither of the above, please specify

13. How do you find recruitment of newly graduates? (1-7)

- Difficult - Easy
- Monotone - Stimulating
- Routine tasks - Highly qualified tasks
- As a means to a better position - Final position
- Low salary - High salary
- Stressful - Not stressful
- Not suiting my education - Suiting my education
- Takes long time to reach a decision - Takes short time to reach a decision

14. Is the company present in other countries than Sweden? Yes/No

15. Number of employees in the corporate group:

16. The company is present in the following industry:

- Manufacturer
- Retail
- Consultant
- Bank
- Insurance
- Other, please specify

17. My gender: Male/Female

18. My year of Birth:

19. My last completed academic degree:

- Upper secondary school
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Swedish Magister degree
- Phd degree
- Other, please specify

20. My academic area:

- Business
- Human relation
- Engineering
- Other, please specify

21. My position within the company:

22. My total amount of years within recruitment:

If you would like to receive the results from this study, please fill in your email address below or send an email to Emilia Köpberg, 50081@student.hhs.se

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey! The aim of our study is to clarify what are looked for by employers when interviewing business graduates for business roles. The results will remain confidential.

We wish you all a fantastic spring and Easter!

Best regards,

*Linnéa Bergman and Emilia Köpberg
MSc students of Stockholm School of Economics*

Appendix 4: Indexes for Personal Branding and Social Psychology

Table 1

Index Satisfaction

Variables	Index	Cronbach's Alpha
Satisfaction with Candidate	Too Low Internal Correlation - No Index	0.514
Candidate Fulfills Expectations	Too Low Internal Correlation - No Index	0.514
Candidate Corresponds to an Ideal One	Too Low Internal Correlation - No Index	0.514
Willingness to Recommend Candidate Internally	Too Low Internal Correlation - No Index	0.514

Table 2

Indexes Hard and Soft Skills

Variables	Index	Cronbach's Alpha
Communication Skills	Index Professional Competencies	0.723
Ability To Apply Knowledge	Index Professional Competencies	
Logical Thinking	Index Professional Competencies	
Computer Proficiency	Index Professional Competencies	
Critical Analysis	Index Professional Competencies	
Research Skills	Index Professional Competencies	
Adapt To Change	Index Professional Competencies	
Ability To Handle Pressure	Index Professional Competencies	
Academic Excellence	Index Professional Competencies	
Work Experience	Index Professional Competencies	
Problem Solving Skills	Index Business Skills	0.741
Leadership Skills	Index Business Skills	
Planning and Organising	Index Business Skills	
Teamwork	Index Business Skills	
Presentation Skills	Index Business Skills	
Time Management	Index Business Skills	
Entrepreneurial Spirit	Index Business Skills	
Initiative	Index Business Skills	
Overall Quality of Work	Index Business Skills	
Enthusiasm	Index Personal Attributes	0.710
Self Confidence	Index Personal Attributes	
Self Reliance/Impendence	Index Personal Attributes	
Creativity	Index Personal Attributes	
Self Motivation	Index Personal Attributes	
Maturity	Index Personal Attributes	
Flexibility and Adaptability	Index Personal Attributes	
Attendance/Punctuality	Index Personal Attributes	
Willingness To Learn	Index Personal Attributes	

Table 3
Indexes Candidate Personality

Variables	Index	Variance Explained
Candidate Does a Thorough Job	Index Candidate Efficient Cool	9.8 %
Candidate Does Not Handle Stress Well	Index Candidate Efficient Cool	
Candidate Is Full Of Energy	Index Candidate Efficient Cool	
Candidate Is a Reliable Worker	Index Candidate Efficient Cool	
Candidate Does Things Efficiently	Index Candidate Efficient Cool	
Candidate Remains Not Calm In Tense Situations	Index Candidate Efficient Cool	9.7 %
Candidate Is Talkative	Index Candidate Extroversion	
Candidate Is Not Reserved	Index Candidate Extroversion	
Candidate Tends To Not Be Quiet	Index Candidate Extroversion	
Candidate Is Outgoing	Index Candidate Extroversion	
Candidate Has a Good Imagination	Index Candidate Creative Openness	8.9 %
Candidate Is Inventive	Index Candidate Creative Openness	
Candidate Is Generally Trusting	Index Candidate Agreeableness	8.3 %
Candidate Is Sometimes Not Rude To Others	Index Candidate Agreeableness	
Candidate Likes To Cooperate With Others	Index Candidate Agreeableness	
Candidate Has a Forgiving Nature	Index Candidate Work Focused	7.5 %
Candidate Tends To Be Organised	Index Candidate Work Focused	
Candidate Worries a Lot	Index Candidate Work Focused	
Candidate Is Not Easily Distracted	Index Candidate Work Focused	6.9 %
Candidate Tends To Not Find Fault With Others	Index Candidate Tense Faults	
Candidate Can Be Tense	Index Candidate Tense Faults	
Candidate Is Curious About Many Different Things	Index Candidate Openness Variety	5.8 %
Candidate Prefer Work That Is Not Routine	Index Candidate Openness Variety	
Candidate Has Not Few Artistic Values	Index Candidate Openness Variety	
Candidate Can be Temperamental	No Loading - Individual Variable	
KMO	0.729	
Total Variance Explained	57.0 %	

Table 4
Indexes Recruiter Personality

Variables	Index	Variance Explained
Recruiter Is Talkative	Index Extroversion	13.3 %
Recruiter Is Not Reserved	Index Extroversion	
Recruiter Tends To Not Be Quiet	Index Extroversion	
Recruiter Is Outgoing	Index Extroversion	
Recruiter Does a Thorough Job	Index Conscientiousness Hardworking	9.7 %
Recruiter Is Full Of Energy	Index Conscientiousness Hardworking	
Recruiter Is a Reliable Worker	Index Conscientiousness Hardworking	
Recruiter Does Things Efficiently	Index Conscientiousness Hardworking	
Recruiter Does Not Handle Stress Well	Index Neuroticism	9.5 %
Recruiter Can Be Tense	Index Neuroticism	
Recruiter Worries a Lot	Index Neuroticism	
Recruiter Remains Not Calm In Tense Situations	Index Neuroticism	
Recruiter Is Curious About Many Different Things	Index Openness	8.6 %
Recruiter Has a Good Imagination	Index Openness	
Recruiter Is Inventive	Index Openness	
Recruiter Has Not Few Artistic Values	Index Openness	
Recruiter Tends To Not Find Fault With Others	Index Agreeableness Variety	8.2 %
Recruiter Can be Temperamental	Index Agreeableness Variety	
Recruiter Prefer Work That Is Not Routine	Index Agreeableness Variety	
Recruiter Is Sometimes Not Rude To Others	Index Agreeableness Variety	
Recruiter Has a Forgiving Nature	Index Team Worker	7.1 %
Recruiter Is Generally Trusting	Index Team Worker	
Recruiter Likes To Cooperate With Others	Index Team Worker	
Recruiter Tends To Be Organised	Index Work Focused	
Recruiter Is Not Easily Distracted	Index Work Focused	6.5 %
KMO	0.753	
Total Variance Explained	62.9 %	

Table 5
Index Previous Contact

Variables	Index	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha If Item Deleted
Previously Shown Interest Towards the Company	Index Previous Contact	0.762	
Been In Touch With The Company Several Times	Index Previous Contact		
Previously Contacted the Company Outside the Recruitment process	Increase in Cronbach's Alpha If Deleted - Individual Variable		0.824

Table 6
Indexes Application

Variables	Index	Variance Explained
Application Is Good	Index Application Content	34.2 %
Application Is Well-Written	Index Application Content	
Application Has a Clear Structure	Index Application Content	
Application Has a Picture	Index Application Picture	26.1 %
Application The Picture Is Professional	Index Application Picture	
Application The Picture Shows Something About the Candidate	Index Application Picture	
Application Written Towards the Company	No Loading - Individual Variable	
KMO	0.690	
Total Variance Explained	60.3 %	

Table 7
Indexes Interview

Variables	Meta Index	Variance Explained
Consistent Picture	Index Interview Candidate Appearance	28.8 %
Twinkle In The Eyes	Index Interview Candidate Appearance	
Candidate Attractive	Index Interview Candidate Appearance	
Professional Appearance	Index Interview Candidate Appearance	
Candidate Does Show Nervousness	Index Interview Candidate Appearance	
Personal Chemistry	Index Interview Personal Chemistry	21.7 %
Laugh Together	Index Interview Personal Chemistry	
Professional Expression	Index Interview Personal Chemistry	
Interview Natural Flow	Index Interview Personal Chemistry	
Interview Goes Well	Individual Factor - No Index	11.2 %
KMO	0.724	
Total Variance Explained	61.7 %	

Table 8
Indexes Creativity

Variables	Index	Variance Explained
Can Be Relevant for the Position You Are Hiring For	Index Creativity Positive Evaluation	26.0 %
Can Be Favourable	Index Creativity Positive Evaluation	
Can Not Be Irritating	Index Creativity Positive Evaluation	
Can Not Be Extreme	Index Creativity Positive Evaluation	
Can Be Surprising	Index Creativity Differentiates	23.3 %
Can Differentiate One Candidate From Another	Index Creativity Differentiates	
Can Make Me Create More Associations To The Candidate	Index Creativity Differentiates	
Can Make Me Remember The Application More Easily	Index Creativity Differentiates	
Can Make Me Feel More Creative	Index Creativity Makes Recruiter Feel	22.4 %
Can Make Me Feel Excited	Index Creativity Makes Recruiter Feel	
Can Make Me Feel Positive	Index Creativity Makes Recruiter Feel	
KMO	0.825	
Total Variance Explained	71.7 %	

Table 9
Indexes Intuition

Variables	Index	Variance Explained
I Need To Listen To My Intuition	Index Intuition Using	27.1 %
I Am Comfortable Listening To My Intuition	Index Intuition Using	
I Use My Intuition When Two Candidates Have the Same Qualifications	Index Intuition Using	
I Never Not Listen To My Intuition	Index Intuition Using	22.9 %
I Form My Opinion About The Candidate Pretty Quickly	Index Intuition Decision Making	
I Know Pretty Quickly Who Will Have An Organisational Fit	Index Intuition Decision Making	
My Intuition Can Not Be Wrong	Index Excessive Own Ability	15.2 %
I Trust My Intuition To 100 Percent	Index Excessive Own Ability	
I Can Misjudge Someone's Character	Index Excessive Own Ability	
I am a Good Judge of Character	No Loading - Individual Variable	
KMO	0.830	
Total Variance Explained	65.1 %	

Appendix 5: BFI Personality Traits

Table X

BFI Personality Factors and Traits Used in the Questionnaire

Personality Factor	Used	Changed into	Not used
Extroversion	Is talkative		Generates a lot of enthusiasm
	Is reserved		Has an assertive personality
	Is full of energy		Is sometimes shy, inhibited
	Tends to be quiet		
	Is outgoing, sociable	Is outgoing	
Neuroticism	Is relaxed, handles stress well	Handles stress well	Is depressed
	Can be tense		Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
	Worries a lot		Gets nervous easily
	Can be moody	Can be temperamental	
	Remains calm in tense situations		
Openness	Is curious about many different things		Is original, comes up with new ideas
	Has an effective imagination		Is ingenious, a deep thinker
	Is inventive		Values artistic, aesthetic experiences
	Prefers work that is routine		Likes to reflect, play with ideas
	Has few artistic values		Is sophisticated in art, music or literature
Agreeableness	Tends to find fault with others		Is helpful and unselfish with others
	Having a forgiving nature		Starts quarrels with others
	Is generally trusting		Can be cold and aloof
	Is sometimes rude to others		Is considerate and kind to almost everyone
	Likes to cooperate with others		
Conscientiousness	Does a thorough job		Can be somewhat careless
	Is a reliable worker		Tends to be lazy
	Tends to be disorganised		Perseveres until the task is finished
	Does things efficiently		Makes plans and follows through with them
	Is easily distracted		

Appendix 6: Meta Indexes for Personal Branding and Social Psychology

Table 1

Meta Indexes Personal Branding

Dependent Variable	Meta Index	Variance Explained
Index Professional Competencies	Skills, Creativity, Openness	11.8 %
Index Business Skills	Skills, Creativity, Openness	
Index Personal Attributes	Skills, Creativity, Openness	
Index Candidate Creative Openness	Skills, Creativity, Openness	
Satisfaction with Candidate	Satisfaction	10.0 %
Candidate Fulfills Expectations	Satisfaction	
Candidate Corresponds to an Ideal One	Satisfaction	
Willingness to Recommend Candidate Internally	Satisfaction	
Index Creativity Positive Evaluation	Recruiter's Evaluation of Creativity	8.5 %
Index Creativity Makes Recruiter Feel	Recruiter's Evaluation of Creativity	
Index Candidate Efficient Cool	Candidate Efficient but Tense	8.0 %
Index Candidate Work Focused	Candidate Efficient but Tense	
Index Candidate Tense Faults	Candidate Efficient but Tense	
Index Candidate Extrovert	Extrovert, Agreeableness, Variety	8.0 %
Index Candidate Agreeableness	Extrovert, Agreeableness, Variety	
Index Candidate Openness Variety	Extrovert, Agreeableness, Variety	
Candidate Can be Temperamental	Extrovert, Agreeableness, Variety	
Previously Contacted the Company Outside the Recruitment process	Previous Contact	7.7 %
Index Previous Contact	Previous Contact	
Index Creativity Differentiates	Individual Variable - No Meta Index	6.8 %
KMO	0.671	
Total Variance Explained	60.7 %	

Table 2

Meta Indexes Social Psychology

Dependent Variable	Meta Index	Variance Explained
Index Intuition Using	Intuition	58.2 %
Index Intuition Decision Making	Intuition	
Index Excessive Own Ability	Intuition	
I am a Good Judge of Character	Intuition	
KMO	0.749	
Total Variance Explained	58.2 %	

Appendix 7: Recruiter Cluster Personality Mean Differences

Table 1
Recruiter Cluster Mean Values and Differences on Personality Characteristics

Personality Characteristics (item number in questionnaire)	Cluster 1 - Recruiter Wants to be Better Than the Candidate			Cluster 2 - "Birds of a Feather Flock Together"			Cluster 3 - Candidate Should be Better Than the Recruiter		
	The Recruiter Is	The Candidate Is	Mean difference (Recruiter-Candidate)	The Recruiter Is	The Candidate Is	Mean difference (Recruiter-Candidate)	The Recruiter Is	The Candidate Is	Mean difference (Recruiter-Candidate)
Is talkative (1)	5.78 (0.93)	4.33 (1.21)	1.44 (1.19)	5.19 (1.23)	4.87 (1.11)	0.31 (1.28)	3.90 (1.15)	5.00 (1.13)	-1.10 (1.05)
Tends to not find fault with others (2)	4.78 (1.48)	6.22 (1.28)	-1.44 (1.82)	5.14 (1.41)	5.87 (1.22)	-0.72 (1.41)	5.21 (1.47)	6.14 (1.16)	-0.93 (1.51)
Does a thorough job (3)	5.52 (1.16)	6.22 (0.84)	-0.70 (1.22)	5.96 (0.88)	5.93 (0.93)	0.03 (0.97)	5.76 (0.99)	6.07 (0.84)	-0.31 (1.04)
Is not reserved (4)	5.65 (1.49)	5.09 (1.29)	0.56 (1.50)	5.15 (1.62)	5.13 (1.07)	0.02 (1.53)	4.17 (1.61)	5.59 (1.02)	-1.41 (1.43)
Does not handle stress well (5)	2.85 (1.32)	1.80 (0.74)	1.06 (1.38)	2.03 (0.93)	1.99 (0.82)	0.05 (0.94)	2.97 (1.12)	1.76 (0.74)	1.21 (1.08)
Is curious about many different things (6)	6.00 (1.06)	5.83 (0.97)	0.17 (1.17)	6.17 (0.97)	5.81 (0.88)	0.35 (0.95)	5.62 (1.02)	6.40 (0.83)	-0.83 (1.20)
Is full of energy (7)	5.61 (1.20)	5.87 (1.07)	-0.26 (1.32)	5.69 (0.93)	5.99 (0.94)	-0.30 (0.93)	4.90 (1.18)	6.28 (0.92)	-1.38 (1.29)
Is a reliable worker (8)	6.19 (0.97)	6.52 (0.75)	-0.33 (0.93)	6.40 (0.76)	6.37 (0.72)	0.04 (0.73)	6.03 (1.18)	6.72 (0.53)	-0.69 (1.14)
Can be tense (9)	3.94 (1.50)	2.96 (1.57)	0.98 (1.72)	3.08 (1.31)	2.91 (1.29)	0.17 (1.40)	3.66 (1.20)	2.76 (1.19)	0.90 (1.42)
Having a forgiving nature (10)	5.02 (1.62)	4.59 (1.13)	0.43 (1.83)	5.35 (1.24)	4.62 (1.14)	0.74 (1.48)	5.59 (1.12)	4.76 (1.19)	0.83 (1.34)
Tends to be organised (11)	4.22 (1.56)	6.59 (0.71)	-2.37 (1.50)	5.46 (1.60)	6.13 (1.02)	-0.68 (1.52)	5.69 (1.54)	6.07 (1.71)	-0.38 (1.59)
Worries a lot (12)	3.59 (1.72)	2.09 (1.23)	1.50 (1.67)	2.54 (1.30)	1.97 (0.97)	0.58 (1.34)	3.62 (1.68)	1.72 (0.80)	1.90 (1.52)
Has a good imagination (13)	5.48 (1.23)	4.69 (1.20)	0.80 (1.32)	5.10 (1.27)	4.71 (1.23)	0.40 (1.33)	4.59 (1.52)	4.93 (1.19)	-0.35 (1.84)
Tends to not be quiet (14)	5.83 (1.09)	4.70 (1.18)	1.15 (1.28)	5.21 (1.41)	4.97 (1.10)	0.24 (1.49)	4.24 (1.43)	5.21 (1.05)	-0.97 (1.24)
Is generally trusting (15)	5.50 (1.21)	5.41 (1.27)	0.09 (1.15)	5.68 (1.20)	5.30 (1.24)	0.38 (1.02)	5.31 (1.44)	5.52 (1.18)	-0.21 (1.18)
Is inventive (16)	5.20 (1.22)	5.11 (1.14)	0.09 (1.34)	5.22 (1.33)	5.09 (1.18)	0.13 (1.36)	4.38 (1.21)	5.55 (0.99)	-1.17 (1.36)
Can be temperamental (17)	4.65 (1.56)	3.06 (1.43)	1.59 (0.50)	3.35 (1.65)	3.18 (1.24)	0.17 (1.53)	3.14 (1.66)	2.93 (1.33)	0.21 (1.88)
Does things efficiently (18)	5.44 (1.08)	6.28 (0.81)	-0.83 (1.33)	5.96 (0.84)	6.12 (0.70)	-0.17 (0.89)	5.52 (1.02)	6.55 (0.63)	-1.03 (0.94)
Remains not calm in tense situations (19)	2.96 (1.39)	1.91 (0.85)	1.06 (1.31)	2.14 (1.13)	2.15 (0.87)	-0.01 (1.14)	2.97 (0.98)	2.03 (0.68)	0.93 (0.96)
Prefer work that is not routine (20)	5.70 (1.34)	5.13 (1.54)	0.57 (1.45)	5.71 (1.24)	5.22 (1.28)	0.49 (1.30)	4.90 (1.21)	5.41 (1.30)	-0.52 (1.15)
Is outgoing (21)	5.96 (1.06)	5.02 (1.12)	0.94 (1.29)	5.56 (1.14)	5.29 (1.04)	0.27 (1.17)	4.38 (1.32)	5.52 (1.09)	-1.14 (0.99)
Is sometimes not rude to others (22)	4.89 (1.72)	6.37 (1.03)	-1.48 (1.54)	6.03 (1.23)	6.38 (0.99)	0.35 (1.06)	6.45 (0.99)	6.76 (0.64)	-0.31 (0.85)
Has many artistic values (23)	4.37 (1.63)	5.06 (1.24)	-0.69 (1.61)	4.40 (1.86)	4.53 (1.12)	-0.13 (1.64)	5.34 (1.32)	4.48 (1.21)	0.86 (1.22)
Likes to cooperate with others (24)	5.78 (1.04)	6.07 (1.03)	-0.30 (1.00)	5.92 (1.01)	6.09 (0.90)	-0.17 (0.96)	5.72 (0.84)	6.48 (0.51)	-0.76 (0.91)
Is not easily distracted (25)	3.94 (1.35)	6.04 (1.18)	-2.09 (1.72)	4.84 (1.47)	6.00 (0.91)	-1.16 (1.47)	4.62 (1.43)	6.38 (0.68)	-1.76 (1.38)
<i>n</i>	54			156			29		

All variables measured on a 7-point Likert-scale 1=Disagree Strongly - 7=Agree Strongly. Difference calculated as "mean recruiter-mean candidate". Any differences that do not exactly add up are due to rounding.

Appendix 8: Meta Index Differences Within Each Cluster Between Screening and Interview

Table 1
Mean Differences Between the Stages Within the Clusters

	Cluster 1			Cluster 2			Cluster 3		
	Screening mean (S.D)	Interview mean (S.D)	Z-value	Screening mean (S.D)	Interview mean (S.D)	T-value	Screening mean (S.D)	Interview mean (S.D)	Z-value
Meta Index Skills Creative/Openness	5.51 (0.45)	5.42 (0.53)		5.44 (0.57)	5.47 (0.55)		5.55 (0.39)	5.76 (0.45)	
Meta Index Recruiter's Creativity Evaluation	3.73 (1.49)	4.51 (0.96)**	-2.183	3.69 (1.23)	4.52 (1.01)***	-4.556	3.44 (1.10)	4.72 (0.68)**	-2.991
Meta Index Candidate Efficient Tense	4.75 (0.34)	4.71 (0.33)		4.58 (0.39)	4.64 (0.34)		4.69 (0.43)	4.70 (0.28)	
Meta Index Candidate Extrovert, Agreeableness, Variety	4.80 (0.47)	4.76 (0.64)		4.87 (0.43)	4.80 (0.40)		5.06 (0.52)	4.91 (0.41)	
Meta Index Previous Contact	2.64 (1.66)	2.84 (1.22)		2.90 (1.44)	3.13 (0.99)		2.70 (1.65)	3.68 (1.17)*	-1.646
Index Creativity Differentiates	5.04 (1.28)	4.59 (1.04)		4.84 (1.28)	4.52 (0.82)*	1.817	5.27 (0.99)	4.89 (1.09)	
Meta Index Intuition	5.25 (0.80)	5.07 (0.65)		5.25 (0.76)	5.13 (0.74)		4.98 (0.82)	4.58 (1.04)	
<i>n</i>	27	27		84	72		15	14	

Measured on a 7-point Likert-scale, 1=Not at all important, 7=Very important or 1=Disagree strongly, 7=Agree strongly. Z-tests performed in cluster 1 and cluster 3 due to low n-size. Independent samples t-test performed in cluster 2.

* $p < 0.1$

** $p < 0.05$

*** $p < 0.01$

Appendix 9: Results of Hypotheses Testing

RQ1. How do recruiters perceive different aspects of personal branding used by business graduates in the recruitment process?	
a. Does this depend on which stage of the recruitment process, screening or interview, that is in focus?	
b. Does this depend on which business field the candidate is interested in?	
H1: Personal branding aspects differ in importance depending on if a candidate is in the screening stage or in the interview stage.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
H2: Hard and soft skills are important in order for a recruiter to invite a candidate to a first interview/employ the candidate.	ACCEPTED
a. The importance of hard and soft skills differs depending on which candidate position that is in focus.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
H3: Soft skills are more important than hard skills in order for a recruiter to invite a candidate to a first interview/employ the candidate.	ACCEPTED
a. Soft skills are more important than hard skills for all candidate positions and both recruitment stages.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
H4: The mere exposure effect, in terms of previous contact, is important for recruiters.	REJECTED
a. Its importance is larger in the screening stage than in the interview stage.	REJECTED
H5: Different candidate personality factors differ in importance depending on which stage of the recruitment process that is in focus.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
a. The importance of the candidate personality factors differs between candidate positions.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
b. The candidate personality trait Neuroticism is low valued by recruiters.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
H6: Creativity is valued higher, in terms of importance, in the screening stage than in the interview stage.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
a. The usage of creativity can differentiate one candidate from another.	ACCEPTED
b. The candidate's usage of creativity is more positively evaluated for positions within Marketing & Sales than Accounting & Finance and Consulting.	ACCEPTED
c. The evaluation of a candidate's usage of creativity depends on who the recruiter is and when in the recruitment process this is received.	ACCEPTED
d. The evaluation that creativity can differentiate one candidate from another depends on who the recruiter is.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
e. The evaluation of a candidate's usage of creativity depends on if the company has the technical ability (i.e. experience) to receive creative applications.	ACCEPTED
H7: In order to employ a candidate, it is important for a recruiter that a candidate shows a personal brand consistency throughout the recruitment process.	ACCEPTED

RQ2. Does social psychology have an impact on the recruitment process of business graduates? If so, in what way?	
H8: Personal chemistry between the recruiter and candidate is important in the interview stage.	ACCEPTED
H9: The recruiter's use of intuition is highly valued as a means to decide which candidate to invite to a first interview/employ.	ACCEPTED
a. The usage of intuition has higher value, within both screening and interview, for Marketing & Sales positions than Accounting & Finance and Consulting positions.	REJECTED
H10: The usage of intuition within the recruitment process differs between recruiters depending on which stage and ...	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
a. Recruiter's educational background.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
b. Recruiter's position within the company.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
c. Recruiter's amount of years within recruitment and year of birth.	REJECTED
d. Recruiter's gender.	REJECTED
e. Recruiter's personality.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
f. Number of employees within the corporate group.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED

RQ3. Are there any differences between recruiters, in terms of candidate similarity, on how they value personal branding and social psychology aspects?	
H11: Most recruiters like a candidate who is similar to themselves in terms of personality	ACCEPTED
a. It exists different types of recruiters based on what they value, personality-wise, within a candidate.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
H12: It exists different types of recruiters who ...	
a. Value a candidate's hard and soft skills differently.	REJECTED
b. Value a candidate's personality differently.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
c. Value a candidate's use of creativity differently.	REJECTED
d. Use intuition to different extents.	ACCEPTED
e. Evaluate personal branding and social psychology factors differently.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED
f. Evaluate personal branding and social psychology factors differently depending on which stage of the recruitment process that is in focus.	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED