



Understanding the relationship between Brand identity and Brand image

– *A case study of Coop*

Authors: Amanda Lindeberg
Marketing program

Camilla Blomkvist
Marketing program

Mikaela Johansson
Marketing program

Tutor: Dan Halvarsson

Examiner: Dr. Pejvak Oghazi

Subject: Marketing
Communication

Level and semester: Bachelor Thesis
Spring semester 2012

Abstract

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Subject: Marketing Communication

Authors:

Amanda Lindeberg (alijv09@student.lnu.se)

Camilla Blomkvist (cblwg09@student.lnu.se)

Mikaela Johansson (mjoiq09@student.lnu.se)

Tutor: Dan Halvarsson

Examiner: Dr. Pejvak Oghazi

Background: When it comes to brand communication, gaps can arise. These occur when the brand management's view of the brand does not match the customers' Brand image. In order to prevent reputation crises brand managements need to monitor the Brand identity and Brand image and identify possible gaps.

Purpose: To identify and analyse what communication gaps that can occur between a company's Brand identity and customers' Brand image.

Research question: What communication gaps can occur between a company's Brand identity and the customers' Brand image?

Theory: Marketing Communication, Sender-Receiver model, Brand image and Brand identity focusing on Personality, Positioning, Vision & Culture and Relationship.

Method: A case study of the Swedish food company Coop was conducted to investigate the relationship between their Brand identity and the customers' Brand image. The case study was conducted in two steps; firstly, information concerning Coop's Brand identity was gathered through in-depth interviews. Secondly, a questionnaire was handed out to Coop's customers to see whether their Brand image was consistent with Coop's Brand identity. The aim was to find similarities and dissimilarities between data and thereby identify communication gaps.

Results: Several communication gaps were identified between Coop's Brand identity and the customers' Brand image when it came to the concepts of Personality, Positioning, Vision & Culture and Relationship. Coop experiences most communication gaps in Relationship, they has not managed to create close relationships with their customers.

Keywords: Marketing communication, Brand management, Brand image, Brand identity, Communication gaps

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1. Introduction

This chapter aims to introduce the thesis and presents relevant concepts, such as Brand identity and Brand image to the reader. Section 1.1 consists of a problem discussion where the authors discuss the phenomena of Brand identity and Brand image from different viewpoints and justify the importance of the thesis. Lastly, a purpose and a research question are presented in section 1.2 and 1.3.

Macho, ruggedness, freedom. These are keywords that the customers of perhaps one of the world's most mythic brands think about when they hear "Harley Davidson". The famous motorcycle brand has managed to create a powerful brand with a loyal customer base that does not like the brand. They love it! Moreover, the customers' love towards the brand has reached as far as them tattooing the brand logotype onto their bodies, which they wear with pride. The brand management of Harley Davidson noticed the high attachment to their brand and cleverly started to produce merchandise in forms of T-shirts and cigarette lighters. However, one day a problem reached the Harley Davidson headquarters. The merchandise had now gone from masculine and rugged, to perfume and shampoo ranges. The loyal customers were not impressed and quickly amended their positive perception of the brand to "not as good". The brand had thereby managed to decrease the attachment and loyalty with their core customers (Haig, 2003).

In 1985, Coca-Cola decided to change their famous and secret drink formula in order to counteract their biggest rival, Pepsi, which possessed the largest market share. The new flavour was a success that generated the best results in blind taste tests. Even Pepsi was beaten! However, while the new Coca-Cola flavour succeeded in the tests, the loyal customers of Coca-Cola appalled. Due to the new flavour, Coca-Cola was no longer connected to "America" or gave customers emotions of "friendship" and "nostalgia" which they previously associated with the drink. By changing the flavour, Coca-Cola's brand management had confused the customers by creating something that did not fit their image of the brand. Coca-Cola had to take actions and decided to end the experiment before it "hit the fan". Even though the flavour was greatly received, the brand management had worked against their original way of thinking (FosterWashington, 2012-05-11).

So what do these cases have in common? A brand is defined as a "*name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers*" (About Marketing, 2012-03-21), and as Haig (2003) once expressed; companies live or die on their strength of their brands. For decades the value of a company was measured in terms of its buildings, land and tangible assets. It is only recently that we have realized that its value lies outside, more precisely in the minds of potential customers who decide if they will buy a product based on how they view the brand (Kapferer, 2008). The cases of Harley Davidson and Coca-Cola imply that time has changed, and as Kapferer (2008) expresses; companies now believe that the brand is their most important asset.

As seen in the case of Coca-Cola, the management saved the brand by ending the experiment and making sure that customers still possessed positive values about Coca-Cola in their minds. The action paid off, and in 2011 Coca-Cola was ranked by Interbrand as the most valuable brand in the world with a brand value of 71,861 million dollars. Companies such as Apple, McDonalds and Google were also presented on the list with brand values ranging from 29 to 55 million dollars (Interbrand, 2012-03-21). These figures reveal why brand management is of outermost importance for a company and has become an important part in business processes.

Communicating the brand to the customers is essential to a company's success since it is through communication they explain and promote the value proposition their firm is offering (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Communication consists of a sender, a message and a receiver, where the sender represents the company that communicates a *Brand identity* (Kapferer, 2008). Janonis et al. (2007) define Brand identity as everything that makes the brand meaningful and unique. It includes brand values, aim and moral image, which together constitute the essence of individuality that differentiate the brand (De Chernatony & Harris, 2001). The receiver, on the other hand, represents the customer who receives the company's message and forms a *Brand image*. Keller (1993) defines Brand image as the consumer's perception of a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in the consumers' memory. The cases of Harley Davidson and Coca-Cola are examples on when communication between a company and its customers has failed. In other words, communication gaps occurred which could potentially lead to damaging effects for a brand. In order to prevent reputation crises and to signal potential problems, Davies and Chun (2002) mention that brand managements

need to continually monitor the Brand identity and Brand image and make sure they are connected. These concepts of *Brand identity* and *Brand image*, and more specifically, the relationship between them are the focus of this study.

1.1 Problematization

Considering the increased competition in today's society it is important that companies' brand managements create differentiation in their communication to consumers, making them stand out of the competition (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Apart from differentiation, companies also need to manage the brand communication and make sure that the intended messages reach the chosen target group. If brands fail to achieve this, companies can gain the same problems explained in the introduction when inconsistencies in the communication between the Brand identity and Brand image have arisen (De Chernatony, 1999). A dysfunctional identity is therefore established since the key-points in the brand communication do not match each other (Grönroos, 2007). Jung and Hecht (2004) mention that such gaps indicate that changes need to be performed in order to generate greater and more accurate brand communication to consumers. Furthermore, if the communication gaps between the brands' and the customers' values continues to increase, businesses will become disillusioned about their brand values and their ability to differentiate themselves by using market positioning and unique selling propositions (Janois et al., 2007).

De Chernatony (1999) also emphasizes that possible communication gaps can worsen brand managements capability to fine-tune marketing strategies, considering they have inaccurate information of on what position they possess in consumers' minds. Schein (1984) and Davies and Chun (2002) further mentioned that companies continuously need to audit a brand's visible communication to ensure they all communicate the same message. If levels of the communication are inconsistent and the differences are not understood, the brand management will have difficulties to understand "why" messages are misunderstood (Schein 1984). De Chernatony (1999) also established that such communication gaps occur if the brand values are not communicated in a consistent manner. This can have a negative impact on consumers' evaluation of the brand where customers perceive the brand to have lack of quality (Grönroos, 2007). This could also have significant impact on sales performance, where customers rather purchase from rivals that have a better-perceived Brand image. The lack of consistency can occur by failed brand positioning, where companies do not communicate the same characteristics that the brand stands for. It could also mean that the

internal communication for the business is suffering, delivering wrong brand messages to staff (De Chernatony, 1999). According to Janonis et al. (2007), a brand itself does not ensure any competitive advantage in the market. Companies that fail to communicate their brands therefore fail to create or keep a competitive advantage, considering the incapability of managing the brand communication, reflecting its identity, and determining its elements, uniqueness and equity (Janonis et al., 2007). Floor (2006) highlights that inconsistencies in communication could contribute to negative effects on the Brand identity and brand awareness. The wrong brand information could be spread to their customers, which could develop into misunderstandings between the business and the customers, as well as with the employees and the business' objectives (Floor, 2006). Mohr and Nevin (1990) further add that ineffective communication can lead to mutual feelings of frustration, misunderstandings and incorrect strategies.

According to Jung and Hecht (2004), individuals often choose brands that match their own identity and aspirations. If brands do not live up to consumers' criteria, gaps can occur as a result of negative interaction of communication and social relations (Jung & Hecht, 2004). This also indicates that emotions play a big part in the communication of Brand identity (Floor, 2006). Because of this, businesses that are unaware of their target group and their characteristics can fail to deliver and communicate an attractive Brand identity to consumers. Jung & Hecht (2004) further state that it can have negative effects on the communication satisfaction of the consumers, which explains the emotional response when inner standards are reinforced in communication, leading to bigger communication gaps. Overall, communication gaps should be avoided since they can harm a brand's customer relationship and stagnate or degrade companies' success. As previously stated "companies die or live on their strength of their brands". So make it work!

1.2 Purpose

The purpose is to identify and analyse what communication gaps that can occur between a company's Brand identity and Brand image by conducting a case study.

1.3 Research questions

- What communication gaps can occur between a company's Brand identity and the customers' Brand image?

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter presents a literature review of the chosen theories for this thesis. The chapter begins with introducing theories providing essential background information found in section 2.1. Thereafter the more specific problem areas; Brand identity and Brand image are reviewed in sections 2.2 and 2.3. The aim of this chapter is to provide the basis for developing a conceptual model, which will serve as a guideline for the empirical investigation and analysis.

2.1 Marketing communication

Communication is defined as the human act of transferring a message to others and making it understandable in a meaningful way. It also focuses on the efficacy of producing desired effects (Andersen, 2001). Ottesen (2001) states that marketing communication embraces every marketing tool that is useful to the seller when communicating their offering. Lovelock and Wirtz (2011) discuss that marketers explain and promote the company's value proposition through marketing communication. The aim is to persuade customers to purchase by stating that the company's offering has the best solution for meeting customers' needs in relation to rival offerings (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Ottesen (2001) further suggests that the tasks of marketing communication are; to convey the value of marketing communication, to remind buyers of the existence of the offerings and to "show the way" to offerings. This can for example give customers direction regarding how, where and when they can purchase the market offering (Ottesen, 2001).

2.1.1 Sender-Receiver model

According to Kapferer (2008) communication means two things: sending out messages and making sure that they are received. Fill (1999) however believes that communication is a process where individuals share meaning. This means that the sender and the receiver must fully understand the meaning of each other's communication, otherwise no dialogue will occur. Companies will only achieve their objectives of influencing customers' attitudes, knowledge and/or behaviour, if an understanding is obtained (Fill, 1999). Finne and Grönroos (2009) develop the statement further, stating that communication starts with a sender who conveys a message. The message is thereafter sent to a receiver through coding, noise and

decoding processes (Finne & Grönroos, 2009). Kapferer (2008) has developed a model showing the process of communication where the company represents the sender and the customer represents the receiver (Illustrated in Figure 2.1). This model further shows the relationship between Brand identity and Brand image. Brand identity is what the company sends out to the customers and Brand image is the perception the customers create about the brand Kapferer (2008). Janonis et al. (2007) also discuss how the meaning of a brand is decoded in the target market. Finne and Grönroos (2009) agree that the receiver in the communication process creates the meaning of the message. As in most brand communication situations, the receiver of communication messages is the customer, which performs the integration and processes the meaning-creation (Finne & Grönroos, 2009).

Kapferer (2008) discusses the concept of “noise” and explains it as extraneous factors that produce meaning in the communication process and occurs before the message reaches the receiver. Overall, noise is communication bugs that speak in the brand’s name and thus help produce meaning Kapferer (2008). This could have positive effect on the communication where the message is interpreted as better than reality. It could also have a negative effect where the message is perceived as worse than reality. Doeble et al. (2005) highlight that the brand communication have to be strong enough to cut through the clutter, encourage a favourable brand attitude and encourage consumers to purchase the product and spread the word. Kapferer (2008) explains three explanations to why noise occurs. Firstly, it can arise when companies have no clear idea of what their Brand identity is, which leads them to focusing on their competitors and imitating their marketing communication. Secondly, noise occurs when companies are focusing on meeting the public’s expectations; instead of communicate their real identity. The last explanation is when companies have a fantasized identity and communicate it as one would like it to be, but not as it actually is (Kapferer, 2008). It is therefore important for companies to be aware of the noise and handle it as carefully as possible in order to avoid negatively influence the on the consumers' Brand image.

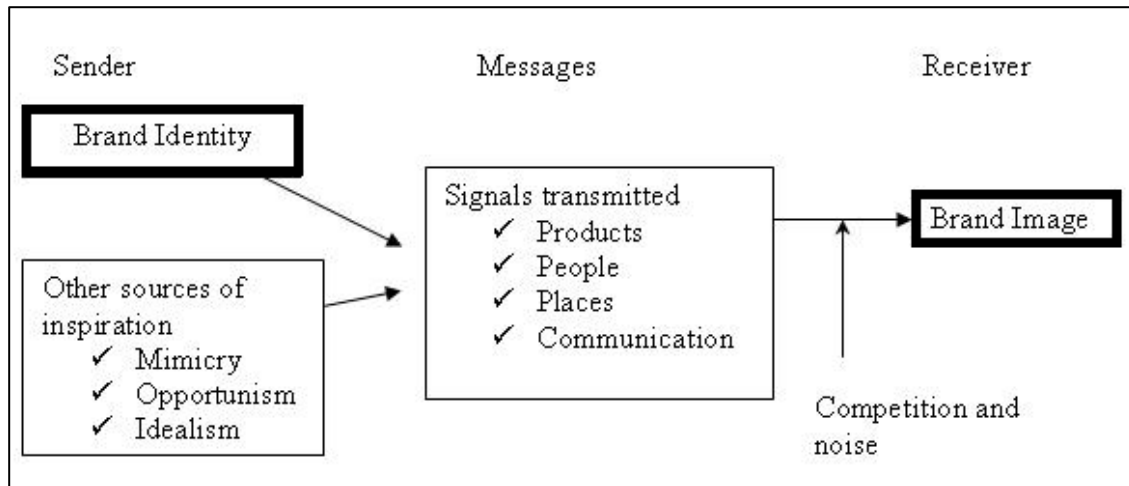


Figure 2.1: Sender-receiver model (Kapferer, 2008, p. 174)

2.2 Brand identity

Kapferer first mentioned the concept of Brand identity in 1986 and since then there have been many discussions of its definition (Janonis et al., 2007). According to Janonis et al. (2007), Brand identity includes everything that makes the brand meaningful and unique. De Chernatony and Harris (2001) suggest that Brand identity includes values, aim and moral image that together constitute the essence of individuality that differentiate the brand. Brand identity offers a possibility to position a brand and encourages strategic approach while managing it (De Chernatony & Harris, 2001). Kapferer (2008) suggests that Brand identity involves many dimensions and any communication from the brand; whether it is formal or informal, verbal or non-verbal, should be sync with its Brand identity. Sääksjärvi and Samiee (2011) propose another definition of Brand identity, describing it as a unique set of brand associations that firms aim to create or maintain. According to the researchers, Brand identity represents how companies *aspire* to be perceived. They also suggest that the purpose of Brand identity is to establish a relationship between the brand and the customer (Sääksjärvi & Samiee, 2011). Based on the reviewed definitions, the authors of this thesis have decided to define Brand identity as “a set of distinct characteristics, applied in brand communication, making the brand meaningful and unique”.

De Chernatony (1999) has developed a model called “the process of managing a brand” (Illustrated in Figure 2.2), which conceptualizes Brand identity. According to the model, Brand identity consists of four aspects; *Personality, Positioning, Vision & Culture* and

Relationship. All aspects influence each other, however the brand’s vision and culture is the core aspect which determine and drive the brand’s desired positioning, personality and the subsequent relationships. The Brand identity is passed on to stakeholders that reflect and interpret the identity as a presentation (De Chernatony, 1999). As previously stated in the introduction, Brand image is presented as the consumer’s perception of the brand. This definition is well suited even for this model, however De Chernatony (1999) adds that aspirations and self-images are the main influences for stakeholders’ Brand image. The created Brand image thereafter causes stakeholders to forms opinions of the brand which De Chernatony (1999) refer to as reputation. The reputation can either be positive or negative and has a direct influence on the brand. Overall, the model highlights the importance of brand managements’ task of managing the brand, especially when negative brand images and reputations of the brand occur. This process of influence is seen as circular and ongoing, which is also reflected in the model (De Chernatony, 1999). Each aspect of Brand identity in De Chernatony’s model will be further discussed in the following sections.

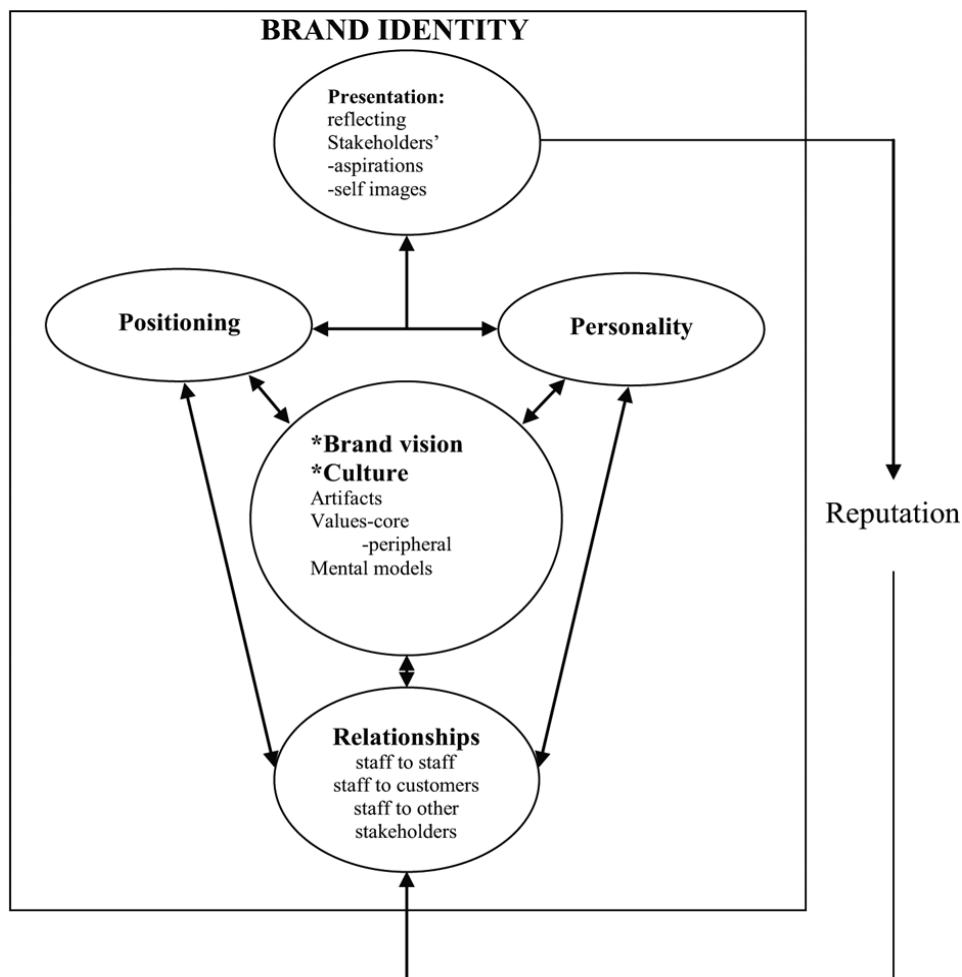


Figure 2.2: The process of managing a brand (De Chernatony, 1999. p. 443)

2.2.1 Personality

The brand personality establishes what specific characteristics the brand has, and these characteristics should indicate how the brand would be in human life. By humanizing a brand, it plays a more central part in consumers' lives (Kapferer, 2008), which is good considering individuals are keener towards brands that share the same or similar ideas (Ponnam, 2007). Aaker (1997) also states that brand personality refers to the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. It regards how the brand personality enables a consumer to express his or her self through the consumption of a brand. Furthermore, brand personality increases consumer preference and usage, evoke emotions in consumers, and increases levels of trust and loyalty (Aaker, 1997).

Aaker (1997) has developed a theoretical framework of brand personality dimensions that measures the perception of a brand. These are measured by considering the extent to which the respondents believe it possesses the characteristics of personality dimensions. This framework enables experimental researchers to measure symbolic meanings of brands as if they were people (Aaker, 1997). Swaminathan et al. (2009) highlight that brand managements need to understand which brand personality traits are going to matter to customers in order to attach the potential of brand personality. However, not all customers are equally sensitive to a brand's personality. Interpersonal attachment styles determine what types of customers are most likely to be influenced by a brand's personality (Swaminathan et al., 2009).

2.2.2 Positioning

According to Kapferer (2008), companies can distinguish brands according to their positioning, which is when one emphasizes the distinctive characteristics that make it attractive to consumers and different from its competitors. Keller et al. (2002) agree that positioning sets the product apart from the competition. However, the researchers stress that companies also need to pay attention to other aspects of the positioning; understanding the frame of reference that your brand is working in and address the features that your brand has in common with the competition. This will ensure the companies a better understanding of the market (Keller et al., 2002). Kapferer (2008) further states that positioning controls the words that are communicated to the customer and can be explained as the brand's message and outward expression of the inner substance. However, the researcher rather refers to this as "physique", which mainly describes the brand's physical qualities and the brand's performance characteristics (Kapferer 2008).

Bronnenberg and Wathieu (1996) state that positioning is an important aspect that managers need to take into account when evaluating the promotion asymmetry and communication. Moreover, Sujan and Bettman (1989) believe that the aspects of the brand itself, such as physical attributes or situational factors, determine which positioning strategy is best suited for the brand. The positioning also influences the customers' perception of the brand and their memory, which in turns can determine in what category the brand is seen to operate in (Sujan & Bettman, 1989). However, Kotler and Gertner (2002) state that brands can add or subtract from the perceived value of a product. They also suggest that differentiation based on product characteristics do not motivate consumers or making them able to evaluate the products in dept. Companies should therefore use the combination of a brand name and brand significance in order to achieve a better evaluation for consumers (Kotler & Gertner 2002).

2.2.3 Vision & Culture

As De Chernatony (1999) mentions, a brand needs a clear vision that describes a well-defined direction of what it wants to achieve. Managers need to envisage the brand's environment for at least five years ahead and consider how the brand is going to make the future world they operate in better (Collins & Poras, 1996).

The brand culture describes the set of values that are feeding the brand's inspiration, as well as explains from where the product is derived (Kapferer, 2008). To improve the communication with consumers and decrease misunderstandings, Kapferer (2008) stresses that brands need its own culture from which every product should originate. Banerjee (2008) adds that the cultural values are principles that determine how people perceive themselves and others. It is also highlighted that marketers need to view the brand culture as a main weapon considering it can increase the competitive advantage in operating markets (Banerjee 2008).

Kapferer (2008) and Schmidt et al. (1995) stress that the culture links the brand to the firm and highlights the differencing factors, making it stand out from the competition Kapferer (2008) further states that these differentiating factors of the culture can refer to the basic principles leading the brand's outward signs, such as product and communication. It is also mentions that countries of origin are for example a highly valuable factor used by well-established companies; Volkswagen stands for Germany and IKEA stands for Sweden (Kapferer 2008). Moreover, forms and shapes, colours and materials in the visual and auditory communications express the brand's culture and values. This indicates that aesthetics

either can add value to a brand, as well destroy a reputation if handling wrong (Schmidt et al., 1995).

De Chernatony (1999) further elaborates that one needs to audit brand culture in order to develop a strategy for reaching consumers. Schein (1984) believes that this can be measured through the brand's visible artefacts, employees' and managers' values and mental models of the people involved in brand building activities. One can then understand which values that have remained unchanged over time, such as core values, and values that have changed. This audit illustrates the brand culture's suitability to help achieve the brand vision, through appreciating the gaps between desired and current components of culture (Schein, 1984).

2.2.4 Relationship

Relationship is defined by Blackston (1992) as the interaction between consumers' attitude towards the brand and the brand's attitude towards the consumers. This means that consumers' perception plays an important part into the brand communication (Blackston 1992). Kapferer (2008) stresses that companies should include the relationship facet into their brand in order to succeed in the process of transaction and exchange. Meenaghan (1995) adds that companies need to involve brands into the world of the consumer in order to gain a "magnetic" relationship between them.

Kapferer (2008) and Lannon and Cooper (1983) agree that brands need to be the voice that the consumers hear. The communication should answer who you are, where you are in life and where you are going. Brands and consumers are therefore connected since they are part of ourselves and we are part of our brands (Lannon & Cooper, 1983). Swaminathan et al. (2007) and Fournier (1998) mention that consumers therefore form strong relationships with those brands that have values and personality associations that are similar to their self-concept.

Brands need to act, deliver and relate in accordance to the consumers, and companies need to consider this when communicating to the consumers. Every part of the communication, such as images and symbols must relate to and exploit consumers' values and lifestyles (Kapferer 2008). Broadbent and Cooper (1987) mention that can particularly be a way to increase the added value and differentiating factors of the brand.

Moreover, De Chernatony (1999) explains that the relationship and increased interaction can boost the innovation and success for the brands, considering the company gain furthered

understanding of the consumer. One downside of the Brand image studies however is that the focus of the relationship is on customer to brand, which makes the assumption that the brand is passive (Blackston, 1992).

2.3 Brand image

Brand image is on the receiver's side in the Sender-Receiver model (Kapferer, 2008). It is the sum of impressions that affects how consumers perceive a brand and identify or differentiate the brand from others. Brand image can also be defined as consumer's perceptions of a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumers' memory (Keller, 1993). Aaker (1991) adds that the connection to a brand in the mind of the consumers will be stronger with associations. These associations can be further divided into subgroups, such as attitudes and benefits (Keller, 1993).

Attitudes have a direct impact on Brand image (Faircloth et al., 2001) and are widely defined in research, making the concept abstract to reach a total understanding of (Keller, 1993). Nevertheless, brand attitudes are most frequent said to be consumers overall evaluation of a brand (Chen, 2001) and seen as a silent perspective of benefits and attributes (Keller, 1993). Benefits are the values consumers connect with the product or service and more specific what types of needs the product or service fulfil for the customer. Product or service benefits could for example be of functional, experiential or symbolic benefits (Keller, 1993).

Individuals perceive the Brand image differently since they individually interpret the message based on their life experiences and specific characteristics as human beings (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). According to Grönroos (2008) and Kapferer (2008) is it impossible to affect an image since it is created in the mind of the consumer, which does not enable the opportunity to influence the perception of a brand. However, according to Faircloth et al. (2001) it may be possible to affect the Brand image since brand associations could be manipulated in order to create the desirable image. In De Chernatony's model (as seen in Figure 2.2) companies can manipulate the stakeholders' aspirations and self-images that together represent the Brand image.

Establishing a positive Brand image requires the establishment of a strong, favourable and unique association to the brand. When Brand images are strong, they can be used to enhance a person's self-image, appeal stakeholder, (Keller, 1993) and influence customers' purchase

decisions, which in order has an impact on the corporation's financial revenue (Munoz, 2004). Interaction with a brand can also affect consumers' overall attitudes to the brand where for example individuals can feel a sense of belonging by consuming or buying a certain product. For instance, even if a customer does not belong to the elite class, they can feel a sense of belonging just by wearing a suit from Armani (Graeff, 1996). Products and brands can therefore be perceived to have symbolic meaning, which is part of the environment symbolized by the individual (Kapferer, 2008).

2.4 Chapter Summary

The authors found the reviewed theory to be lacking information on how Brand identity and Brand image are connected, and more specifically what gaps can occur between them. Based on this limitation, the authors decided to focus the thesis on this topic.

The chapter began with providing essential background information needed for understanding the study. The theory of marketing communication gave an overall picture of why it is important for companies to communicate their market offering. Furthermore, the Sender-Receiver model was presented to provide an overview of how a brand's message is transmitted between a company and its customers. This model places the company on the sender's side, while the customer is located on the receiver's side. The model also introduced the concept of noise, which can possibly cause gaps to exist in a company's communication. After providing the reader with necessary background information, the more specific problem areas of the study were discussed. These were Brand identity and Brand image, which were explained in De Chernatony's model on managing a brand. This model was also used in order to get deeper insight into the Brand identity's four primary concepts; *Personality*, *Positioning*, *Vision & Culture* and *Relationship*. Moreover, the authors perceived the reviewed theories as relevant for the thesis' purpose and they could also be used as a basis for a conceptual model developed in the next chapter.

3. Conceptual model

This chapter presents a conceptual model, developed on the basis of the theoretical framework. The model shows the connection between theoretical constructs and will serve as a guideline for the empirical investigation and analysis. The chapter also provides an explanation of how the model will be used in the study.

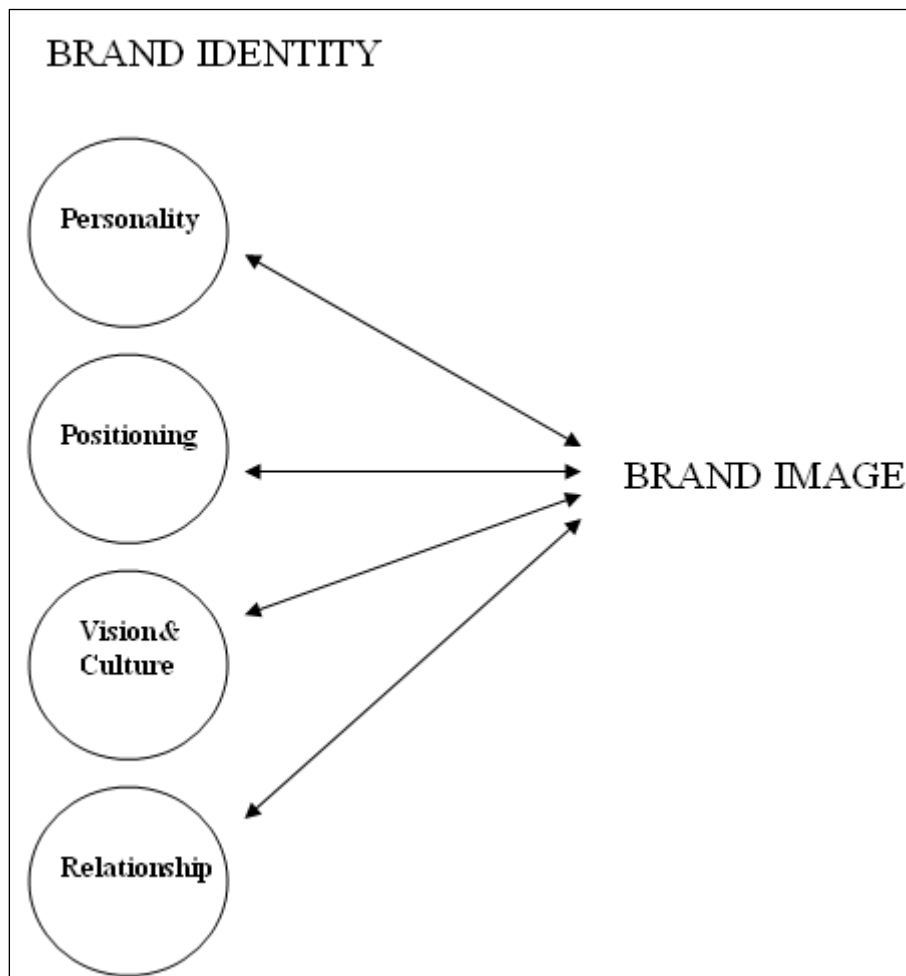


Figure 3.1: Conceptualized model

Figure 3.1 demonstrates the link between the theoretical constructs discussed in Chapter 2. For this thesis, the relationship between the concepts of Brand identity and Brand image is the focus. Brand identity is placed on the company's side and includes everything that makes a brand meaningful and unique. It represents how a company wants their brand to be perceived by others. Furthermore, Brand identity is divided into four concepts; *Personality*, *Positioning*,

Vision & Culture and *Relationship*. All these concepts in order influence the customers' Brand image, which is defined as the customers' perceptions of a brand.

As previously stated in the literature review, the goal of marketing communication is to make the sender and receiver fully understand the meaning of each other's communication. In this case, this is achieved by having the Brand image and the Brand identity to match each other. The relationship between these concepts is represented by the arrows in the conceptual model, which show a two-way exchange of communication between Brand image and Brand identity where the goal is for both sides to share the same information and equal each other.

The research question of this thesis is; *what communication gaps can occur between a company's Brand identity and the customers' Brand image?* In order to answer this question, a comparison between the Brand identity and Brand image is necessary. The comparison will be conducted based on the concepts of *Personality*, *Positioning*, *Vision & Culture* and *Relationship*. This will ensure that the authors get a deep understanding of the relationship between the Brand identity and Brand image, and will allow them to identify several areas where communication gaps can exist. The conceptual model in Figure 3.1 will serve as a guideline for the empirical investigation and analysis in order for the authors to answer the research question.

4. Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology applied in this thesis, including information about different methodology options available for researchers followed by a justification on why a certain approach was chosen. As seen in section 4.4.2 a case study of the Swedish food company Coop was conducted in order to answer the research question of what gaps can occur between a company's Brand identity and the customers' Brand image. Each step in the methodology is discussed in detail throughout the chapter.

4.1 Research approach

According to Bryman and Bell (2007), the research approach is the way in which researchers chose to approach a research problem. One consideration is what theory of science you adhere to: inductive or deductive and qualitative or quantitative (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

4.1.1 Inductive vs. Deductive Research

When conducting research, there are two different views on the relationship between theory and research: deductive and inductive testing (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Deductive testing is described as *"the researcher, on the basis of what is known about a particular domain and of theoretical considerations in relation to that domain, deduces a hypothesis (or hypotheses) that must then be subjected to empirical scrutiny"* (Bryman & Bell, 2007, pp.11). In other words, the deductive approach starts with theory, which serves as the basis for a hypothesis, which then drives the process of collecting and analyzing data (Hair et al., 2011).

Induction on the other hand, is the opposite of deduction since it is conducted in the opposite direction with theory as the outcome of research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). It is a way of thinking that involves identifying patterns in a data set to reach conclusions and build theories (Hair et al., 2011). Based on observations and findings, a researcher draws generalizable inferences out of observations. The inductive approach of linking data and theory is typically associated with a qualitative research approach, while a deduction is more associated with a quantitative research approach (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

The authors of this thesis took on a deductive approach since the study is based on relevant theory such as Marketing communication, Brand identity and Brand image. These theories served a basis for the empirical investigation and analysis. Furthermore, a deductive approach helped the researchers to fulfil the purpose and answer the research question which were also developed using existing theories.

4.1.2 Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research

There are two distinctive orientations to conduct business research, also known as clusters of research strategy; qualitative and quantitative research. The simple distinction between the two is that quantitative research employs measurements and qualitative research does not. However, there are greater differences between the two research strategies. For example, quantitative research strategy emphasizes quantification in the collection and data analysis and the accent is placed on the testing of theories (Bryman & Bell, 2007). This strategy is most suitable when the purpose is to examine hypothesized relationships to see what kinds of conclusions that are appropriate (Hair et al., 2011). Qualitative research, on the other hand, is more focused on emphasizing words and analyzing data gained from data collection and the emphasis lies on generating theories. It is important to note that quantitative research also can be employed to test, rather than generate theories (Bryman & Bell, 2007). A qualitative approach is the most appropriate method if the primary purpose of the research is to propose new ideas and hypothesis that can eventually be tested with a quantitative research (Hair et al., 2011).

Even though there are differences, many writers argue that the two research strategies can be combined within an overall research project (Bryman & Bell, 2007). As Hair et al. (2011) argues, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in the same research may give the researcher a deeper understanding. Therefore, the authors of this thesis applied both qualitative and quantitative research strategy since they complemented each other and generated more data relevant for answering the research question and fulfil the purpose of this thesis. Using a mixed approach also gave a more in-depth analysis by both emphasize quantifications and words.

4.2 Research design

Bryman and Bell (2007) discuss three types of research designs that would aim to answer the chosen purpose and research question. The first research design, exploratory research, is

explained by Jaeger and Halliday (1998) to be proceeded from hypothesis testing. From hypothesis testing researchers aim to establish inductive inferences by testing the hypothesis by gathering and analysing collective data (Jaeger & Halliday, 1998). Arbnor and Bjerke (2008) add that those hypotheses are most likely to include “possible facts” and guiding templates, which are also applicable to purely descriptive researches as well. Bryman and Bell (2007) further state that exploratory design is fact-finding and aim at clarifying the problem and research question. It mostly applied to medical and psychological problems and develops knowledge to describe, explain and predict the problems. However, this method tends to be weak on justifications, making it unpopular among academics (Ernst van Aken, 2005).

Descriptive research, which is the second research design, aims at identifying and explaining a problem of a given subject, ending with proposing recommendations for improvements. Descriptive also intends to answer questions regarding who, what, where and how questions (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Ernst van Aken (2005) highlights that the given organizational phenomenon is described and explained in terms of independent variables, where the descriptive knowledge is theory-driven, focusing on existing situations. Willig (2008) adds that descriptive research, in comparison to exploratory research, provides a detailed description of the phenomena within its context, which in order aims at gaining new insights and further understanding of the nature of the phenomena.

The third research design, causal research design, explains if one variable cause or determine value of another variable (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Arbnor and Bjerke (2008) further add that this type of research design explains that one event contributes to another event either through exigency or slight probability. This design aims to gain understanding of causal patterns that is shared between researchers and informed audiences (Ernst van Aken, 2005).

Furthermore, in relation to the research design, researchers must choose if the study should have cross-sectional or longitudinal design. Cross-sectional involves observations of a population or sample at a specific point of time and longitudinal involves repeated observations of the same variables over a long period of time (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Descriptive research design was chosen for this thesis considering the nature of the problem to be studied. The relationship between Brand image and Brand identity were aimed to be investigated. Furthermore, the authors wanted to identify the problem and provide recommendations on how to solve it. In the thesis, the identified communication gaps would

be the standpoint of recommendations for a company's future success. The authors of this thesis only intended to identify communication gaps and not explain the underlying reason to why the gaps have occurred, which would have been the focus in exploratory research. Moreover, the study was not focusing on finding correlations between the Brand identity and Brand image, making causal research irrelevant for the study. Because of lack of previous research and time constrains longitudinal design was excluded. Therefore, a cross-sectional approach was chosen since the sample would only be studied during a specific point of time.

4.3 Data source

There are two different types of data: primary and secondary data. Primary data is information collected first-handily. The collected data is designed to address specific questions and gathered by the researcher for a specific purpose or analysis. The researchers perform and publish their own analyses of the data they have collected. The benefits with primary data are that it is tailor-made, up to date and specific. However, primary data is often more time-consuming than secondary data and there is a risk of non-response (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Secondary data is explained by Cowton (1998) to be data collected by others for a different purpose than their own. Bryman and Bell (2007) believe that secondary data may provide necessary background information, and might help researchers to identify their specific problem. Furthermore, there are two types of secondary data: internal secondary data and external secondary data. Internal secondary can for example be annual reports and strategy analysis that are derived from the company. External secondary data however, is available for everyone and could for example be web forums, Twitter and Facebook (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

In this thesis, both secondary and primary data was collected with mainly focus on primary data. Secondary data was used to provide background information necessary for the thesis and gave the authors a greater understanding of Marketing communication, more specifically the subjects of Brand identity and Brand image. However, to answer the research question of what gaps can occur between a company's Brand identity and customers' Brand image, more specific and depth information was required which was not available using only secondary sources. Therefore, primary data was collected to provide the authors with tailor-made and up to date information relevant for this thesis. This type of data collection was more time consuming than only using secondary sources, however it provided the authors with more

control and a better understanding of the subject under investigation. Furthermore, it served as a complement to the secondary sources and gave the thesis an overall greater depth. The primary data was collected by using techniques presented in upcoming sections and was also used to address the purpose of the thesis.

4.4 Research strategy

Research strategy deals with several ways of finding information about a topic (Bryman & Bell, 2007) and provides researchers with different choices on how data can be collected (Hair et al., 2011). Yin (2009) discusses five different research strategies; experiment, survey, archival analysis, history and case study. As illustrated in Table 4.1, strategies have different set-ups and focuses, where researchers must choose the most appropriate strategy for their study.

Table 4.1: Relevant situations for different research strategies

Research strategy	Form of research question	Requires control over behavioural events	Focuses on contemporary events
Experiment	How, why	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, What, where, how many, how much	No	Yes
Archival analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes/no
History	How, why	No	No
Case study	How, why	No	Yes

Source: (Yin, 2009, p. 6).

The nature of the research question in this thesis is based on a current problem which makes it hard to solve it with help of history and archival strategies. These strategies focus on collecting and analyzing historical documents, where archival specifically examines accumulated documents of the unit of analysis (Yin, 2009). Considering that these two strategies have observational features and do not focus on contemporary content (Yin, 2009), they were rejected as research strategies. This choice can be strengthened by stating, that these strategies would not provide an understanding about the current Brand image customers have about a company. The experimental research strategy is often used to find answers in causal problems (Yin, 2009). However, since the authors chose a descriptive approach this strategy was also excluded. Surveys aim to make statistical inferences of a population (Yin, 2009). The authors also rejected this strategy since it would mainly be useful to gain data regarding the Brand image and not the overall study.

A case study provides a close and intensive analysis of an individual unit and highlight improvement factors in relation to the given purpose (Yin, 2009). Bonoma (1985) further explains that case analysis is mainly concerned with the researcher's interpretation of management's signification of events, information and reality. Willig (2008) adds that case studies integrate information from diverse sources, which gives an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation. It might also involve a range of data collection techniques, which gives triangulation to the case and allows the researcher to approach the case from a number of various perspectives (Willig, 2008). Yin (2009) further adds that it is preferable to do a single-case study considering it represent a unique or extreme case and are of intrinsic interest to the researcher or provide opportunities to test the applicability of existing theories to real-world data.

This thesis aimed to investigate what communication gaps that can occur between a company's Brand identity and customers' Brand image. Considering this, several different techniques needed to be assessed in order to gain relevant information. A case study allows for several sources to be used, and since this thesis focuses on both the company and the customer perspectives, the authors found case study as the most appropriate research strategy. Also, by choosing case study, it allowed for a more in-depth understanding of what communication gaps can occur and it allowed the authors to have direct contact with participants of the study. More specifically, the authors chose to do a single-case study. The main reason was due to interest in a specific case which is further explained in the following section. Furthermore, due to time constrain, the authors was only able to investigate one company since they wanted to obtain an in-depth analysis of the thesis.

4.4.2 Case study: Coop

The Swedish company Coop was selected for the case study. The company is one of Sweden's largest food stores with over 700 stores spread all over the country. These stores are in turn divided into five different chains; Coop Nära, Coop Konsum, Coop Extra, Coop Forum and Coop Bygg which all share the same values and belongs to the same union. However, these chains provide customers with different offerings, for example Coop Nära is all about providing customers quickness, comfortableness and simplicity (Coop A, 2012-05-03).

In 2011 Coop had a turnover of 33,2 billion SEK and the number of employees were 6856 (Coop B, 2012-05-03). The most distinctive characteristic of Coop is that the company is part of a union called Kooperativ Förbundet (KF), which has over 3 million members. Coop is therefore owned by their members and the profit is divided among them (Coop C, 2012-05-03). KF was founded 110 years ago and even to this day, the company remain the same values; membership, innovation, influence, honesty and concern for people and environment (Coop D, 2012-05-03).

Coop was chosen for the case study since their staff experience that customers do not perceive the Coop brand in the way they wish the brand to be perceived. This information came to the authors' knowledge since one of the authors is an employee at Coop and has insight to the company. As one anonymous employee at Coop expressed *"It feels like the customers have misunderstood our brand and what we stand for. This makes us feel stressed and insecure. We are not keeping up with competitors and they are always one step ahead. Our communication is not received the way we intend it to"*. By choosing Coop, the authors were also certain that primary data from the management would be easily accessed since the authors had several relevant contacts within the company.

4.5 Data collection method

There are several data collection methods available for researchers, the most commonly used are; content analysis, in-depth interviews, observations, focus groups and survey (referred to as questionnaire by the authors) (Bryman & Bell, 2007). According to Bonoma (1985), a case study often implicate multiple data sources where studies can rely on verbal reports and thereafter add other quantitative data sources to give a fuller picture of the business unit under investigation. Due to this statement, the authors of this thesis chose two methods; in-depth interviews and questionnaire. The methods were chosen to gather information in order to get a full picture of Coop's Brand identity and the customers' Brand image. Furthermore, these methods were most appropriate since they suited the authors' mixed approach which included both quantitative and qualitative research.

Overall, this thesis consisted of two steps; firstly, in-depth interviews with staff members at Coop were conducted to get a deeper understanding about their Brand identity. Secondly, a questionnaire was handed out to Coop's customers. The questionnaire was based on the

empirics from the in-depth interviews and was carried out to see whether the customers' Brand image was consistent with Coop's Brand identity.

4.5.1 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews are personal interviews between an interviewer and a respondent, lasting between 30-90 minutes (Bryman & Bell, 2007). According to Christensen et al. (2001) it is a powerful method to gather useful and important information about a product/service or to get insight into a decision-making process. In-depth interviews allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions and get deeper insight into the business and their procedures (Christensen et al., 2001). Bryman and Bell (2007) further suggest that in-depth interviews are the best method for probing personal values, opinions, beliefs, attitudes and hidden issues.

There are some drawbacks that need to be considered when choosing in-depth interviews as a method; it is time-consuming, expensive and the interviewer needs to possess necessary skills to conduct the interview in a correct way. There is also a risk that respondents answer questions in a way that they believe is socially acceptable and desirable (Bryman & Bell, 2007). A difficulty for the interviewer can be to find a balance, where they maintain control of the interview and allow the participant to talk freely. Furthermore, the interviewer should familiarize himself or herself with the participant, such as work title or culture, in order to tailor-make the interview. Moreover, when analysing the results, interviewers need to be aware of linguistic variation, meaning that words might not have the same meaning to all participants (Willig, 2008).

There are different ways of conducting an in-depth interview; it can be more or less structured. An unstructured interview has no set of format; instead the interviewer may have some key questions formulated in advance. In this type of interview the questions can be changed or adapted to better meet the respondent's intelligence and beliefs. In a semi-structured interview however, the interviewer and interviewee engage in a formal interview, with a framework allowing for a two-way communication. This type of interview is flexible, where new questions can be brought up as a result of the conversation and of what the interviewee says (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

In this thesis, the most suitable method for collecting qualitative data was in-depth interviews. The authors were interested in getting a deeper understanding and insight into Coop's

business and values and therefore this method was seen as the most appropriate. In other words, this method gave the researchers the opportunity to gather more detailed and necessary information for analysing Coop's Brand identity. The type of interview the authors decided to conduct was semi-structured, since it provided an opportunity to have a more formal discussion. Also, the interviewees were able to talk freely and the interviewers were able to ask follow up questions. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allowed for a two-way communication which led to new variables, not known by the interviewers, to be brought up. This helped the authors to obtain information they had not considered before conducting the interview. It gave insight to the interviewees' beliefs, attitudes and opinions which finally led to a more in-depth understanding of Coop's Brand identity.

4.5.2 Questionnaire

Survey, also known as questionnaire, is a method built upon communication with the respondents of the study. It is the most common method in social science, used when the predicted population is too large to be observed (Bryman & Bell, 2005). According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), this data collection method is particularly suited for quantitative and statistical analysis. Christensen et al. (2001) further stress that questionnaire is a method for collecting quantitative information about items in a population. The data collected can be used to determine the relationship between categories (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). The advantages are that a survey is inexpensive and provide the ability to gather information from a large number of entities. It is also less time-consuming compared to other available methods. However, there are some disadvantages that also need to be considered. Surveys give generally low response rates and there is no opportunity to correct misunderstandings or to probe, or to offer explanations or help (Oppenheim, 2005).

In this thesis, a questionnaire was considered as the best method for collecting quantitative data since it allowed the authors to study as many entities as possible. By conducting a survey the authors were also able to gather customer's subjective thoughts, which were necessary in order to understand customers' Brand image of Coop. Furthermore, considering the large population size, as well as time and monetary limitations, the authors of this thesis experienced the only suitable data collection method to be questionnaire.

4.6 Survey design

Once the decision was made to collect data through in-depth interviews and questionnaire, the authors designed a suitable interview guideline and a questionnaire.

4.6.1 Interview guideline

According to Hair et al. (2011) an interview guide specifies the topics to be covered. The role of the interviewer is to motivate the respondent to answer, make sure that the respondent understands the questions and to probe for clarification or elaboration for open-ended questions (Hair et al., 2011).

The focus of the in-depth interview was to understand Brand identity from a company's perspective. In order to make sure that the concept was measured in a correct way, an operationalization of Brand identity was necessary. Bryman and Bell (2007) explain operationalization as the process of defining a fuzzy concept, making it measurable in forms of variables. Brand identity was broken down into four concepts; *Personality*, *Positioning*, *Vision & Culture* and *Relationship*. These concepts were thereafter further broken down into questions based on the theoretical framework for each concept. By doing this, the authors made sure that the concepts were measurable and that the gathered information was specific for Brand identity (for interview guideline and operationalization, see appendix A and B).

4.6.2 Questionnaire design

In this thesis, a questionnaire was designed to gather information about the customers' Brand image. The questionnaire was based on the empirical data generated from the in-depth interviews. This data influenced what questions would be included in the questionnaire. Furthermore, the questionnaire followed the same structure as the interview guideline, where the questions were connected to the concepts of *Personality*, *Positioning*, *Vision & Culture* and *Relationship*. This made it easier to compare the questionnaire results of Brand image with the in-depth interview results of Brand identity. Considering both data collection methods followed the same structure, the authors could easier identify communication gaps.

Hair et al. (2011) states that there are several essential steps that needs to be followed when designing a questionnaire. If a researcher overlooks these steps, he or she can easily make mistakes in the questionnaire design. The first step is to do an operationalization where the researcher selects variables to represent the concepts (Hair et al., 2011). An operationalization

of the concepts and findings was therefore developed in order to make sure that the comparison of the Brand identity and Brand image was possible (for questionnaire and operationalization, see appendix C and D).

The second step in designing a questionnaire is to determine question types, formats and sequences, as well as the length of the questionnaire (Hair et al., 2011). According to Bryman and Bell (2007), a questionnaire should be short in order for the respondents not to lose interest. Because of this, the authors decided the questionnaire to be no longer than two pages. One page was considered to be too short since the authors would not obtain enough data needed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the results.

Bryman and Bell (2007) mention that researchers must decide whether to use open-ended or closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions have no specific answer alternatives and are useful when the researcher believes that the alternatives may influence the answer. They are relatively easy to develop, but the drawback is that it is time consuming to analyze and understand the responses. Closed-ended questions on the other hand, is more difficult to design and is usually more time-consuming to formulate in comparison to open-ended questions. However, the main benefit is that the data collection and analysis is relatively easy. These types of questions are usually applied when doing large-scale surveys (Hair et al., 2011).

The authors of this thesis chose to include mainly closed-ended questions in the questionnaire, but also include some open-ended questions. The authors were interested in whether respondents agreed or disagreed with the company's Brand identity. Therefore, the questionnaire presented closed-ended questions with answer alternatives of "YES" and "NO". These types of questions were also considered most suitable since the questionnaire was handed out to a large number of people. Also, considering the time frame of the study, these types of questions were most appropriate since they made it easier for the authors to collect the data and analyze it. The open-ended questions were included to as a complement, where respondents had the opportunity to express opinions, beliefs and attitudes. This provided the authors with additional information about the Brand image and made it easier to identify gaps.

Researchers should also consider including classification questions when designing a questionnaire. These are defined as questions that seek information of a more personal nature,

for example income and age (Hair et al., 2011). The authors of this thesis chose to include two classification questions regarding age and gender since they could provide additional information when analyzing the results. These questions revealed possible age and gender differences regarding the customers' Brand image, and made the thesis more in-depth. By including classification questions, the authors also made sure that the spread of age and gender were proportional.

The third step in designing a questionnaire is to pre-test it (Hair et al., 2011). This is further discussed under section 4.9.1.

4.7 Sampling

Bryman and Bell (2007) define a population as all the entities that belong to the same group and or same geographical area. Christensen et al. (2010) explain that a researcher can conduct a census study where the entire population is investigated, or one can use a sample, which Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005) define to be a segment of the population that is selected for investigation. Dariush (1999) adds that researchers often use samples because monetary and time limitations often make it impossible to carry out an investigation of an entire population. However, a sample should only be used if the population is too broad, since a sample decreases the validity of the results (Dariush, 1999). Bryman and Bell (2007) indicate that sampling starts with defining the population and thereafter deciding on the sample size. For this study there were two populations:

- Staff members at Coop's head office in Stockholm.
- Existing customers of Coop in Sweden, who are frequent buyers (at least once at week).

These two populations were considered too broad to include all entities in the study. Also, due to monetary and time limitations it was impossible to carry out an investigation of the entire population. Therefore, the authors chose to use a sample for the two populations, which are further discussed in the following sections.

4.7.1 Sampling: In-depth interviews

Arbnor and Bjerke (2008) stress that if researchers experienced monetary or time limitations, they can choose to perform subjective procedures regarding the sampling. This means that one chooses a sample that one thinks is representable for the population based on already established background variables (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2008). Bryman and Bell (2007) further add that one can choose interviewing one individual per organization, often the senior manager, in order to find out facts regarding the organization. This can be achieved by using a non-probability sampling, explained to be a sampling technique where not every individual has the same probability to be chosen (Bryman & Bell, 2007). In this thesis, the authors chose non-probability sampling for the in-depth interviews since they had contacts within the company who were considered as representable for the whole population. Also, by doing non-probability sampling, the authors were certain that relevant information would be obtained within the time frame and also suit the monetary limitations of the study.

The sample size was restricted to two in-depth interviews with staff members working at Coop's head office in Stockholm. The first interviewee is a project leader at Coop, currently working with Coop's own brands and how customers perceive them. The second interviewee is working on a managerial level with inside information about Coop's brand. However, this interviewee requested to be anonymous. The primary data generated from these two interviews were considered to be enough since these people possessed in-depth information regarding Coop's Brand identity. It was also highlighted that these staff members' knowledge represented the entire company, meaning that it would be the same as the rest of the staff.

The in-depth interviews were carried out via Skype on April 6th and April 10th 2012 and lasted between 40 minutes and one hour. Telephone interviewing was selected considering it was more flexible than for example email, and it gave opportunity to ask follow-up questions to gain more developed answers. Thereby it was most suitable since the authors were doing semi-structured interviews. Moreover, Skype was chosen because Coop's head office is located in Stockholm and the authors did not have a sufficient budget or time frame to travel there.

4.7.2 Sampling: Questionnaire

It might be hard for researchers to gain information of all included entities of the population (Dariush (1999)). In these circumstances cluster samples can be used, which is a decreased

copy of the population. This sampling method is however a multiple-step process, where the first step involves generating which cities that should participate in the investigation. The second step is to perform a convenience sampling, which is when researchers use a sample that is accessible (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Dariush (1999) adds that convenience sampling is to interview the people who are accessible to you, and are often used when researchers stop people in the streets to ask them questions.

Furthermore, Hair et al. (2011) state that one also needs to administer the questionnaires, which includes identifying the best practice for administrating the type of questionnaire utilized. Bryman and Bell (2007) gives different options for handing out questionnaires, the most common methods being through mail, on the Internet and in person. Hair et al. (2011) describe benefits and advantages with each method. Handing out questionnaires through mail is the most traditional method. It allows for wider access and better coverage, and it gives the respondent the opportunity to take time answering the questionnaire. However, there is a low response rate, and it usually takes a long time; the researchers must allow at least three weeks for the individuals to respond. Internet is an inexpensive method where the researchers can collect information in a short period of time. The drawbacks are the loss of anonymity and the problem of complex computer programs. Handing out questionnaires in person gives a high response rate and it clarifies the respondents' queries. On the other hand, it is expensive in time and money and it is difficult to obtain wide access (Hair et al., 2011).

The authors of this thesis chose to do a cluster sampling restricted to the geographical area of Växjö where the authors were currently located. Furthermore, a convenience sample was conducted where questionnaires were randomly handed out to customers at Coop Extra and Coop Konsum in Växjö at two different times. The authors were placed by the entrance of each store on April 16th and 17th between 11 AM and 2 PM. Since the questionnaires were to be filled out by current customers at Coop, convenience sampling was the most suitable way to make sure the respondents was part of the population. It was easier to identify the customers in person in one of Coop's stores rather than for example sending out mail. To decrease over-coverage, which Dariush (1999) explains to be when people outside the population participate into the investigation, the customers are asked how frequent they purchase at Coop in order to determine if they belong to the population. Also, by handing out the questionnaires in person the researchers made sure that they got a high response rate, as well as it gave the respondents the opportunity to ask questions if anything was unclear.

In order to decide the sample size, “rules of thumb” was applied. Muthén and Muthén (2002) explain rules of thumb as a technique used in order to establish a suitable sample size. This can be achieved by using a specific number of observations per questionnaire parameter (Muthén & Muthén, 2002). In this thesis, the authors decided to have four respondents on each questionnaire parameter since it would generate enough data regarding the customers’ Brand image, which later could be analyzed and generalized. Since the questionnaire had 32 parameters, the final sample size was 130. However, after the sampling had been conducted, one questionnaire was expurgated because of incompleteness, which made the final sampling size 129.

4.8 Data analysis method

Once the data from the in-depth interviews and questionnaire had been collected the next step was to analyze and present the data using different methods. According to Hair et al. (2011) good research is the result of a careful, thoughtful and knowledgeable approach, using qualitative or quantitative research analysis methods. Yin (2009) states that the data analysis is implemented in the thesis since it helps categorizing, measure and presents the collected data in a clear and structured way.

This thesis employed a mixed research approach in the study, meaning that both qualitative and quantitative analysis was necessary. To answer the research question of what gaps can occur between a company’s Brand identity and customers’ Brand image, a comparison between the qualitative and quantitative analysis was conducted, as explained in section 4.8.3.

4.8.1 Data analysis method: Qualitative

Qualitative researchers may have access to millions of sources of information on a specific topic. Therefore they must use certain criteria for deciding what to examine in their research. The researchers also need to identify relevant search terms and choose the information source that will generate the most depth to the study (Hair et al., 2011). To clarify the process of qualitative data analysis Miles and Huberman (1994) have developed a process of steps for reaching the aim of identifying, examine, compare and interpret patterns. The process of qualitative analysis is divided into a set of steps; data reduction, data display, drawing conclusions and verification of findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The first step *data reduction* involves selecting, simplifying and transforming the data in written-up field notes or transcriptions to make it more understandable. The researchers need to decide on what should be emphasized, minimized and eliminated from the study. The decisions should be guided by the research purpose and questions. However the researcher should also be able to look for new meanings and relationships. The aim of the data reduction is to decrease the data without eliminating what could be of interest or relevance for the research. *Data display* is the second step in the qualitative data analysis where the information is organized so that the researchers are able to identify links and develop explanations related to their existing theory. Examples of displays are charts or table listing and linking themes central to the research. The third step in the analysis is *drawing and verifying conclusions* where the researcher needs to decide on what things mean. Drawing conclusions involves deciding what the themes identified in the second step means and how they help to answer the research aim. Verifying involves checking and rechecking the data to ensure the initial conclusions are credible (Hair et al., 2011).

The authors applied a qualitative data analysis when analyzing the data from the in-depth interviews with Coop regarding their Brand identity. For the data reduction, the researchers identified keywords that were mentioned by the interviewees and these helped the researchers to identify, compare and interpret patterns. The data was thereafter displayed under the four concepts of *Personality*, *Positioning*, *Vision & Culture* and *Relationship*. The operationalization of the interview guideline made sure that the authors could analyze each concept separately and present them accordingly. In these sections, the authors drew conclusions and verified the information in accordance to the theory of Brand identity and Coop's Brand identity could thereby be defined.

4.8.2 Data analysis method: Quantitative

Quantitative research approach's primary task is to convert the data into knowledge, which means examining the data to be able to identify and confirm relationships. In a quantitative analysis, data is measured in numbers that are used to directly represent the properties of the phenomena. For data to be useful it needs to be analysed and interpreted (Hair et al., 2011).

The first step in a quantitative analysis method is to examine the data after it has been collected and before it has been analysed, to ensure its completeness and validity. For

example blank responses are referred to as missing data that must be taken into consideration. The aim of the first step is to edit, handle missing data, code and transform the data. The second step involves selecting one of two approaches: (1) using descriptive statistics to obtain an understanding of the data, or (2) testing hypotheses using statistical tests (Hair et al., 2011). According to Hair et al. (2011) descriptive graphs and charts help to obtain an understanding of the data thus describe and effectively communicate complex issues concerning the data. Examples of descriptive statistics are pie charts, histograms and bar charts. These types of tables and charts provide a great deal of basic information and are easy to read. Hypothesis testing on the other hand is a systematic procedure followed to accept or reject hypotheses about certain patterns or relationships (Hair et al., 2011).

The authors used a quantitative data analysis when analysing the data from the questionnaire. This analysis method was chosen since questionnaires generated quantitative data measured in numbers, which needed to be analysed and interpreted. The first step was to examine and code the data. The operationalization of the questionnaire (see Appendix D) helped the authors to code the questionnaire statements so that each concept of *Personality*, *Positioning*, *Vision & Culture* and *Relationship* could be analyzed. Thereafter the authors used the statistical computer program SPSS to edit and transform the data and calculate percentages for each questionnaire statement. In the second step of the quantitative data analysis the authors chose to present the data using descriptive statistics, more specifically bar and pie charts. These types of charts were chosen since they provided the reader with the best visualization and understanding of the data. Hypothesis testing was rejected since it was not a focus of the study to reject or accept hypothesis about Brand identity and Brand image.

4.8.3 Comparison of qualitative and quantitative data

The research question of this thesis is “*what communication gaps can occur between a company’s Brand identity and the customers’ Brand image?*” In order to answer this question, a comparison between the Brand identity and Brand image was necessary. This was achieved by comparing the data from the in-depth interviews to the data from the questionnaire. Since the questionnaire was based on the in-depth interviews, it was possible for the authors to see how well the customers’ Brand image matched the company’s Brand identity. The authors could identify similarities and dissimilarities and thereby draw conclusions of possible communication gaps.

The questionnaire included statements connected to the concepts of *Personality*, *Positioning*, *Vision & Culture* and *Relationship*, which customers agreed or disagreed with. If an individual answered “YES” they agreed with a statement and the authors could draw the conclusion that their Brand image matched the company’s Brand identity. Furthermore, when drawing conclusions for the whole sample, the authors made the assumption of a match if more than 50% of the respondents in the questionnaire had answered “YES” and thereby agreed with a statement. 50% was chosen as the limit since everything over indicates that a majority has a matching Brand Image and that the company’s communication is successful. However, if the sample data generated less than 50% agreement it was assumed to be an unsuccessful communication with existing communication gaps.

4.9 Quality Criteria

This chapter discusses how well the authors managed to obtain the thesis’ rigor. It is further explained through validity and reliability. Validity is the degree to which the measurement instrument measures what it is intended to measure, while reliability indicates if the research possesses consistency of measure of a concept (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Arbnor and Bjerke (2008) add that validity can be seen in two different ways; 1) to evaluate a test or measurement instrument one can ask what the test/instrument really measures and 2) to evaluate a measurement result one can ask if the results mirror the reality. If one does not gain adequate answers to these questions, it means that the results are meaningless; meaning that it further can be of danger to involved companies, Arbnor and Bjerke (2008). The concept of validity is divided into four different forms; content validity, construct validity, criterion validity and external validity. The focus of this study is on content, construct and external validity to make sure that the study had a high level of quality. Criterion validity is measured by hypothesis testing (Bryman & Bell, 2007) and was therefore not included in this thesis since hypothesis testing was not performed.

4.9.1 Content validity

When it comes to content validity, Dariush (1999) suggests that the researchers need to prove that the measurements are connected to the intended purpose and research question. According to Arbnor and Bjerke (2008) this can be achieved by making reasonableness judgments, such as pre-testing. Bryman and Bell (2007) elaborate that pre-testing is a good way to gain strong content validity and can be achieved by allowing an expert to judge the

representativeness of a measure, such as an interview guideline before the main data collection. It is also important to conduct a pre-testing when using a questionnaire (Hair et al., 2011). Bryman and Bell (2007) explain this to be a mini-study in which the proposed questionnaire and implementation procedures are tested on a survey population in an attempt to identify possible problems. After completing the questionnaire, the respondents should be asked probing questions about each part of the questionnaire, from instructions to scaling and from format to wording. This in order would ensure that each question is relevant, clearly worded and unambiguous (Hair et al., 2011).

For the qualitative approach, content validity was gained by allowing an expert; the authors' supervisor Dan Halvarsson to review both the in-depth interview guideline and the operationalization of it. Halvarsson approved the representativeness of the guideline and according to him; the questions were well connected to the theoretical framework. For the quantitative research, content validity was gained by pre-testing the questionnaire on potential respondents from the sample frame. By performing pre-testing, the authors ensured that the quality and responsiveness of the questionnaire was acceptable, which decreased the respondents' possible interpretation mistakes. Respondents in the pre-test gave their opinions on the length of the questionnaire, as well as the wording of the questions. Based on the pre-test, it came to the authors' knowledge that some questions were difficult to understand. This was taken into consideration and those questions were reformulated to be understandable. When it came to the length and the number of the questions, the respondents were satisfied

4.9.2 Construct validity

The construct validity explains the extent to which an operationalization distinctly measures the concept it is supposed to measure. This is assessed by using multiple sources of evidence and establishing a chain of evidence in terms of proper referencing and saving original transcripts. The researchers should also allow key informants to review drafts of the case study/ focus group report and approve it before it is printed (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Cronbach and Meehl (1955) further state that the construct validity involves accepting a set of operations that is meant to be measured. Arbnor and Bjerke (2008) suggest that researchers should provide a detailed overview which gives others an opportunity to evaluate the investigation, making sure that it is correctly conducted and that the connections between the chosen theories, definitions and reality are strong.

This thesis gained construct validity by including a detailed overview of how the investigation was conducted, in terms of a methodology chapter. It provided information on how each step of the thesis was carried out. For the qualitative research, the authors used multiple sources in terms of two respondents which increased the validity. Furthermore, the in-depth interview guideline was attached as Appendix B to show how the concepts for the study were measured and how different theories were connected. After the in-depth interviews had been performed, the results were immediately transcribed and sent to the interviewees for approval. This made sure that the authors had understood the interviewees' replies in a correct way. The finalized transcripts were also included as appendixes (see Appendix E and F). Moreover, to decrease the social bias that can arise when conducting in-depth interviews, all authors were present during the interviews. This way, less personal remarks and comments were included in the results, which gave it a more objective approach and thereby increased the construct validity further. For the quantitative approach, construct validity was gained by attaching the operationalization of the questionnaire as Appendix D to show how it was connected to theory. All questionnaires were also saved to be presented if necessary in order to increase the construct validity further.

4.9.3 External validity

External validity establishes domain to which a study can be generalized (Bryman & Bell, 2007). It establishes if the gained results are relevant to a definable population and explains if it can be applicable or generalized to other studies (Rothwell, 2005). Arbnor and Bjerke (2008) further highlight that external validity is closely connected to the generalization of the topical area of investigation, which means that the results can be used for other similar events and characteristics or for future consequences. Daurich (1999) agrees that the validity for the investigation increases if one can repeat the study later on.

This thesis specializes in Coop's brand communication and the gaps they are experiencing. However, the thesis obtains external validity by presenting results that are relevant for all companies. The managerial and academic implications of the thesis are general and can therefore be applied to other companies and industries that experience communication gaps. External validity is further gained since the study can be repeated later on with help of the detailed methodology chapter. The conceptual model presented in Chapter 3 is also generalized and can be used in other studies focusing on Brand identity and Brand image.

4.9.4 Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which the same researcher conducts similar observations and interpretations at different times (Hair et al., 2011). Bryman and Bell (2007) agree, saying that reliability is gained by repeating the study at a later point in time and displaying the same result over time. Furthermore, reliability can be established by using multiple case studies, case study protocol and keeping a case study database.

Due to time constraints and monetary limitations, the authors were not able to repeat the study and display results gained over time. However, reliability was gained by including a well formulated methodology chapter with a detailed explanation of every step in the thesis to enable other researchers to repeat the study later on. Moreover, since this thesis included only one case study; reliability was gained by instead using multiple interviews and handing out questionnaires at several occasions.

4.10 Chapter summary

This chapter provided a detailed explanation of each step conducted in the thesis. It included information on everything from the authors' philosophical approach, to data collection to analysis. The chapter is summarized in Table 4.2 which provides an overview of the methodology used in this study.

Table 4.2: Methodology overview

Research approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deductive ○ Qualitative & Quantitative
Research design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Descriptive
Data sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Primary data ○ Secondary data
Research strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Case study: Coop
Data collection method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In-depth interviews ○ Questionnaire
Survey design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interview guideline ○ Questionnaire design
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff members at Coop's head office ○ Existing customers at Coop in Sweden who are frequent buyers once a week
Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two staff members at Coop's head office ○ Existing customers in Växjö
Data analysis method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Qualitative data analysis ○ Descriptive statistics
Quality criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Validity ○ Reliability

5. Empirical investigation

This chapter presents the empirical data from the in-depth interviews and questionnaire. Sections 5.1 to 5.4 are connected to the four concepts under investigation; Personality, Positioning, Vision & Culture and Relationship. In these sections, the results from the in-depth interviews are presented as a summary and the result from the questionnaire is presented using descriptive statistics in forms of pie and bar charts. Section 5.5 is also included in the empirical chapter to present classification findings regarding age and gender. For interview transcripts, see Appendix E and F. For full empirical data and descriptive statistics from the questionnaire, see Appendix G and H.

5.1 Personality

5.1.1 In-depth interviews result

Coop describes their brand as trustworthy, honest, reliable, sustainable, traditional and challenging, which are words that sum up their most important characteristics and values. Reliable, trustworthy and sustainable derives from their ecological aspect and environmental efforts. The traditional characteristic comes from their roots in KF. The company has been around for a long time and have kept the same values since the start. They are also traditional in the sense that they are owned by their members, which has been a primary value since the start. Coop is challenging since they are trying to be innovative and come up with new solutions for the environmental issues. They also work hard to constantly offer their customers new high-quality products and try to keep up with competitors by being challenging and driven.

The feelings Coop wants to evoke in their consumers are trust and comfort. These emotions are achieved by always keeping their promises to customers. Coop also wants their customers to be loyal and this is achieved by having membership programs and by benefiting them on a regular basis. Moreover, Coop wants their customers to feel fellowship and a sense of belonging when dealing with the company, which is obtained by giving the customers the opportunity to become members and thereby owners of Coop. This provides them with feelings of belonging and feeling important.

5.1.2 Questionnaire result

The questionnaire included nine statements connected to *Personality*, which respondents could agree or disagree with. Two open-ended questions were also included to give the respondents the opportunity to respond freely. Figure 5.1 presents the outcome of the statements and shows how many percentages agreed (YES) or disagreed (NO) with them.

As seen in Figure 5.1, the majority of the statements generated positive results. Statement Pers2 “Coop is honest” generated the highest result where 91% of the respondents agreed. Also Pers1 “Coop is reliable”, Pers4 “Coop is trustworthy” and Pers3 “Coop is ecological” generated results over 80%. Furthermore, 86% feel comfortable when shopping at Coop (Pers8) and 42% see themselves as loyal customers (Pers9).

The first open-ended question was “Are there any other characteristics apart from those above which you associate with Coop?”. The majority of the respondents did not associate Coop with any other characteristics other than the ones mentioned prior to the question. However, a minority of the respondents mentioned characteristics such as; modern, participative and caring for their members. The second question was “When thinking of Coop, what emotions does it evoke in you?”. The majority of the respondents did not answer this question, but the ones who did expressed that they feel happiness and joy.

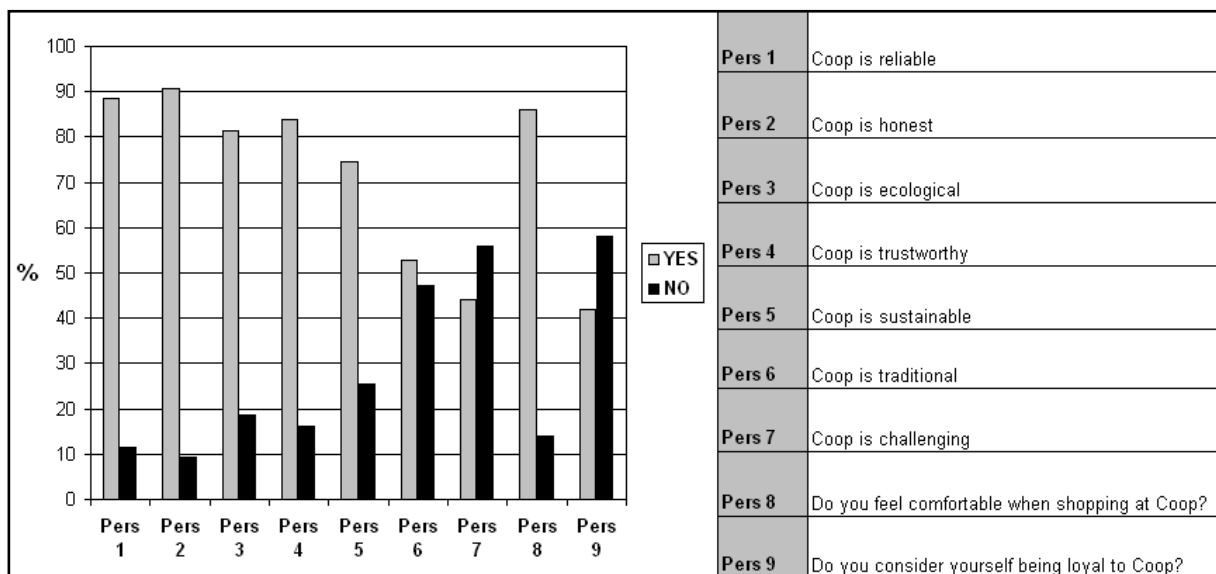


Figure 5.1: Questionnaire result for Personality

5.2 Positioning

5.2.1 In-depth interviews result

Coop is similar to competitors when it comes to having their own brands, a wide range of stores, shop express, self-scanning, iPhone application and franchising. It was also mentioned that Coop's target group is families with children, which is also a similar approach for most competitors.

However, Coop mentioned several factors that distinguish them from competitors. The biggest difference is that Coop is owned by their members, meaning that their members share the profit. This makes Coop trust worthier with higher reliability than competitors. Moreover, by having a membership program, Coop is able to deliver economic benefit to the customers. Coop feels that it is important that customers are aware of the economic benefit since this is a factor that distinguishes them the most from competitors. The economic benefit stresses that Coop wants customers to save money by shopping at their stores. Except for the membership program, this is achieved by offering customers a wide range of high-quality products and services at relatively low prices. Coop aims to offer a price 15-20% lower than competitors and this is realized by actively applying new knowledge and techniques that are available. The company puts a lot of resources into keeping the promise of high-quality products at good prices.

Another factor that differentiates Coop from competitors is their ecological approach, which is a main focus and a big part of Coop's identity. Coop has Sweden's largest assortment of ecological and environmentally approved products and they want to make sure that their customers have the opportunity to contribute to a sustainable environmental development. They also want it to be possible for their members to contribute to a positive development for people working in the food industry. This is achieved by offering customers ecological products, as well as by constantly working with improving their environmental approach. Coop also work closely with local farmers and use locally grown products as much as they can.

In the in-depth interviews, it was mentioned that Coop's outward message expression is to deliver food joy and food inspiration to their customers. They want to inspire the customers in their everyday lives when it comes to consuming food. This is achieved by sending out a food

magazine once a month and by providing inspiration in the stores; for example by offering free recipes, tastings and an inspiring shopping environment.

5.2.2 Questionnaire result

Nine statements and two open-ended questions were connected to *Positioning*. Figure 5.2 shows the questionnaire result of each statement; how many percentages agreed (YES) or disagreed (NO).

As seen in Figure 5.2 the majority of the respondents disagreed with most statements concerning Coop's positioning. However, the statements that generated a positive result were Pos7: "*Coop offers high quality products*" (65%), Pos8: "*Coop offers high service quality*" (69%) and Pos9: "*Coop offers a good range of products*" (69%). The lowest results were found in statements Pos2: "*Coop is more reliable than their competitors*" (33%) and Pos4: "*Coop inspires me in my cooking*" (33%). Furthermore, 37% stated that Coop gives them food joy (Pos5) and less than half perceive Coop as more ecological than their competitors (Pos3).

The first open-ended question regarding positioning was "*What do you think is the biggest difference between Coop and their competitors?*". A majority of the respondents replied that they perceive Coop as less modern and innovative than competitors. Coop is also perceived as more old-fashioned and expensive. A few respondents also mentioned that Coop has less attractive commercials than other competing brands. The positive differences mentioned by respondents were the membership program and ownership. The second open-ended question, "*What do you think is the main similarity between Coop and competitors?*", showed that a majority of respondents believe that supply is the biggest similarity between Coop and their competitors. A few also believe that Coop target the same people as their competitors with their advertising.

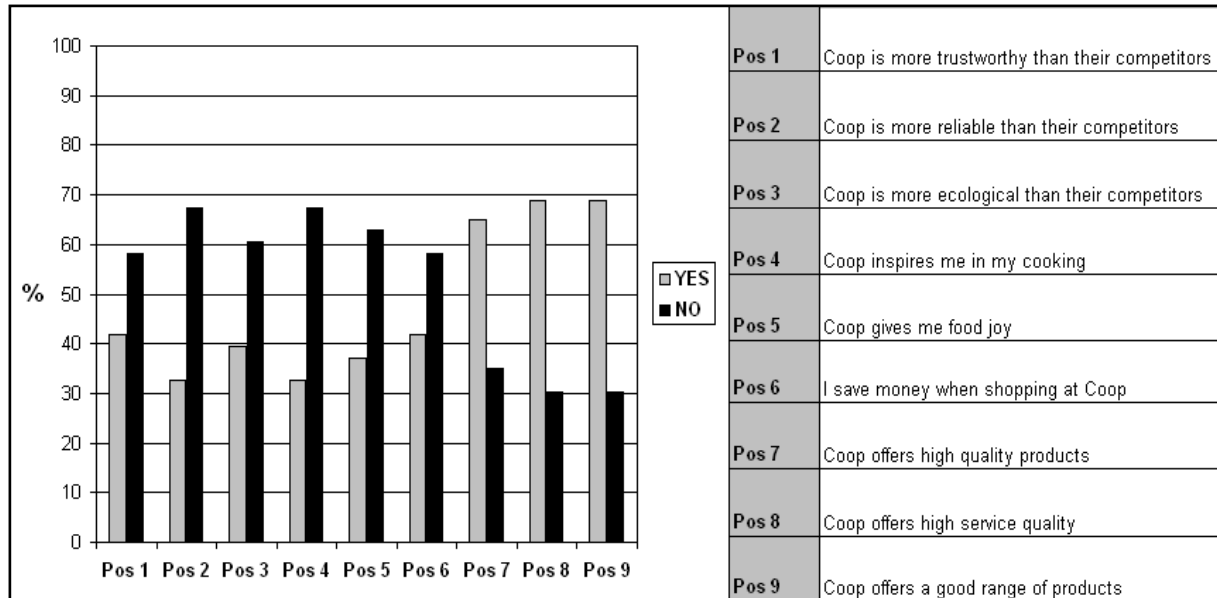


Figure 5.2: Questionnaire result for Positioning

5.3 Vision & Culture

5.3.1 In-depth interviews result

Coop’s vision is to create a better and comfortable every-day shopping experience by having profitable stores owned by members. The stores should offer good product supply, good prices and good services, as well as high-quality, honest product information and high demands on ethical, environmental and health issues. Coop should be a food store that customers want to visit, even though it might be located further away than competing stores.

One of Coop’s branding goals is to be perceived as ecological and trustworthy. This is achieved by continuously working with sustainable development and environmental approaches, as well as offering ecological products. As a company, Coop values both people and animals’ health, and nature. They are aware that their business is affecting the environment, both directly through their own business and indirectly through their suppliers. However, they are careful not to harm nature and its resources too much. This is done by compensating their affects in various ways, for example by planting trees. Also, all Coop stores are KRAV certified, which shows that their effort is paying off in a positive way.

Coop's high demand on ethical issues is realized by working with and by supporting organizations, such as Kooperation Utan Gränser and VI-Skogen. These are organizations that work with issues like preventing AIDS, planting trees in Kenya and fighting poverty. By working closely with these organizations, Coop contributes to a sustainable development.

There is an enormous pride within Coop's culture, which highlights that the company is owned by its members. The cooperation has been around for a long time, which is reflected both internally and externally for Coop. The motivation in the company is strong when it comes to working for the members. Coop's staff members perceive themselves as the best when it comes to benefiting customers and the goal is to reward customers by offering them special prices, discounts on events and hotel nights, an inspiring food magazine every month and a percentage in return on everything they buy. Moreover, Coop is eager to make sure that everyone knows the benefits of being a member and the advantages of being a customer at Coop. The company wishes to be perceived as affordable, something that is reflected in their low prices and economic benefits.

Coop's culture is rooted in its country of origin - Sweden. This aspect is a huge part of the company and indicates where they come from and what they represent today. The company is proud to be owned by Swedish consumers, which is seen as a joy for staff members. However, Coop does not have specific ways of expressing their culture when it comes to colours and materials. Instead, they wish that the culture is naturally expressed to customers through all aspects in their business.

5.3.2 Questionnaire result

Five statements in the questionnaire were related to *Vision & Culture*. Figure 5.3 shows the outcome of each statement and how many percentages agreed (YES) or disagreed (NO).

As seen in Figure 5.3 all statements received positive results where more than half of all respondents agreed with them. Statement V&C4 "*Coop reward their customers*" generated the highest percentage with 67%. Furthermore, 54% believe that Coop has good prices (V&C1) and 58% believe that Coop takes environmental and ethical questions into consideration (V&C2). The other statements generated positive responses between 58% and 61%.

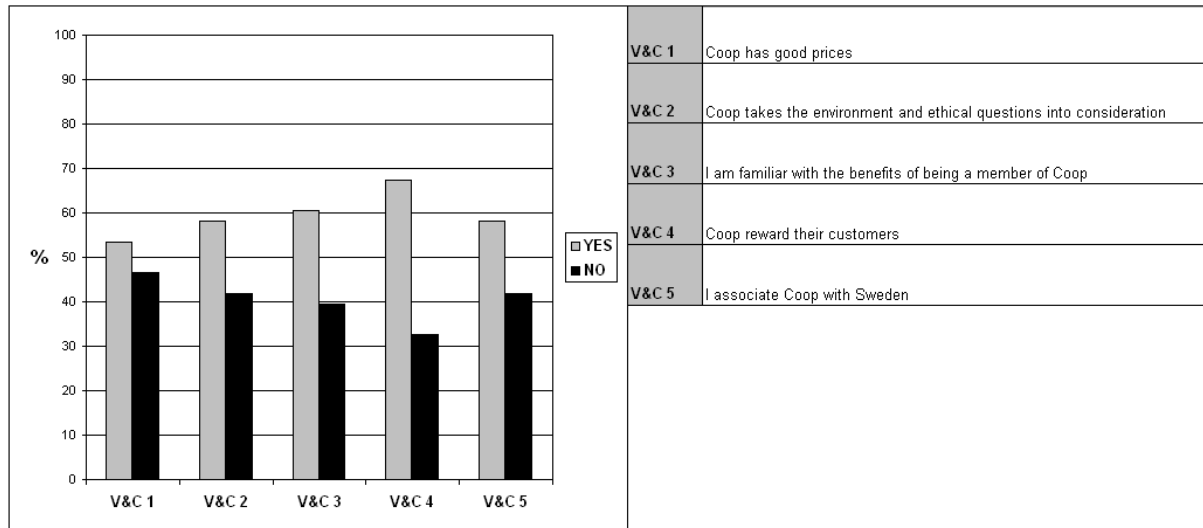


Figure 5.3: Questionnaire result for Vision & Culture

5.4 Relationship

5.4.1 In-depth interviews result

Coop strives to have strong relationships with every customer. Since the company is owned by their members they feel that a close relationship is achieved by offering benefits and constantly rewarding them. Also, Coop always has the customer in focus. This applies both in the stores and for people working at the head office. For example, staff at Coop stores should always pay attention to customers and the priority is to please them at all times. Every customer should be treated as an important guest whenever walking in to one of their stores.

All decisions in the company are based on customers' needs and wants. Coop therefore arranges regular membership meetings where customers are allowed to express their opinion about the business. The customers' inputs are used in two different ways. Firstly, when it comes to bigger, strategic decisions within the company, they do great customer research to find out what customers think of the company and what they want out of it. Secondly, they listen to the individual customer. For example, if a person has a complaint of a product or a suggestion on how to improve the store, they always try to handle these inputs and make the customer feel noticed and satisfied.

Listening to customers and satisfying them is one of Coop’s most important values. They want customers to have influence and be an active part of the organization. Coop constantly informs customers about organizational changes in order to encourage a discussion with them. They are eager to know customers’ opinions and strive to have an open dialogue with them.

5.4.2 Questionnaire result

Four statements and one open-ended question were connected to *Relationship*. Figure 5.4 demonstrates the outcome of each statement and how many percentages agreed (YES) or disagreed (NO) with each statement.

As seen in Figure 5.4 all statements received a negative result. Rel4 “*I have a close relationship with Coop*” generated the lowest percentage where only 26% agreed. Moreover, 49% replied that they are satisfied Coop customers (Rel3) and 45% believe that Coop always has the customer in focus (Rel1).

The open-ended question was “*What is your main reason for shopping at Coop?*”. A significant majority of the respondents answered “location” as their main reason. Other replied that they shop at Coop because of friendly staff and “by coincidence”.

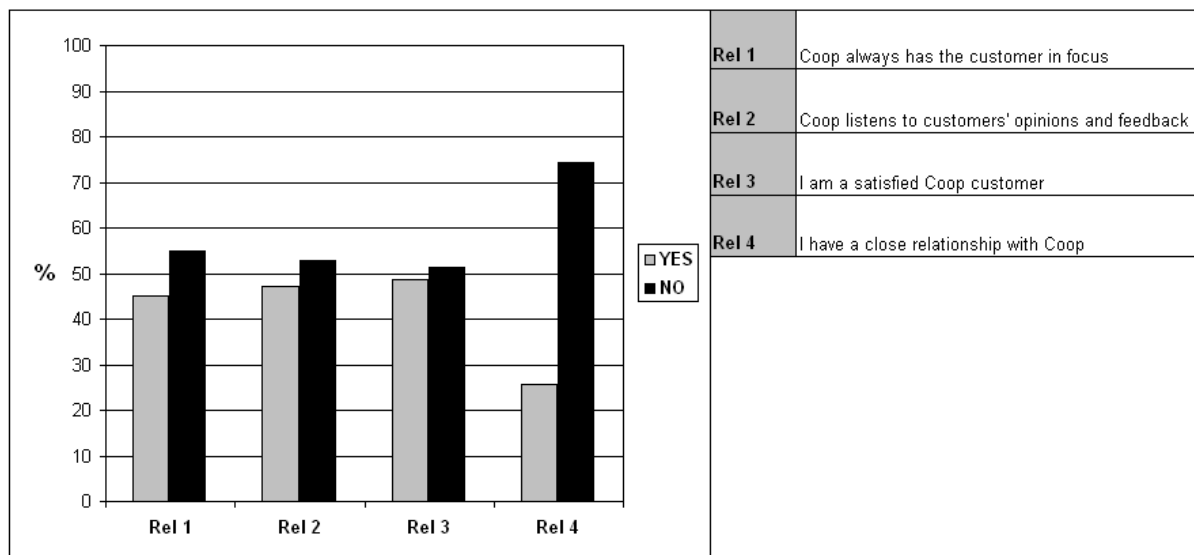


Figure 5.4: Questionnaire result for Relationship

5.5 Classification findings

Two classification questions regarding age and gender were included in the questionnaire. As stated in the methodology chapter these classification questions were included since they could provide important information when analyzing the results and make sure that the spread of age and gender were proportional. In the following section a summary of age and gender related findings are presented. For full data on age and gender see Appendix H.

5.5.1 Gender

Figure 5.5 intends to show if there are any significant differences between male and female respondents. The figure shows the average percentage of men and women who agreed to the statements connected to *Personality*, *Positioning*, *Vision & Culture* and *Relationship*.

As seen in Figure 5.5, female respondents generated a higher percentage than the male in all four categories. In other words, they agreed more to the statements. The largest differences between the genders are found in the concepts of *Vision & Culture* (6,5 percentage points) and *Relationship* (7 percentage points). However, the difference is not as large when it comes to *Personality* (0,7 percentage points) and *Positioning* (1,4 percentage points).

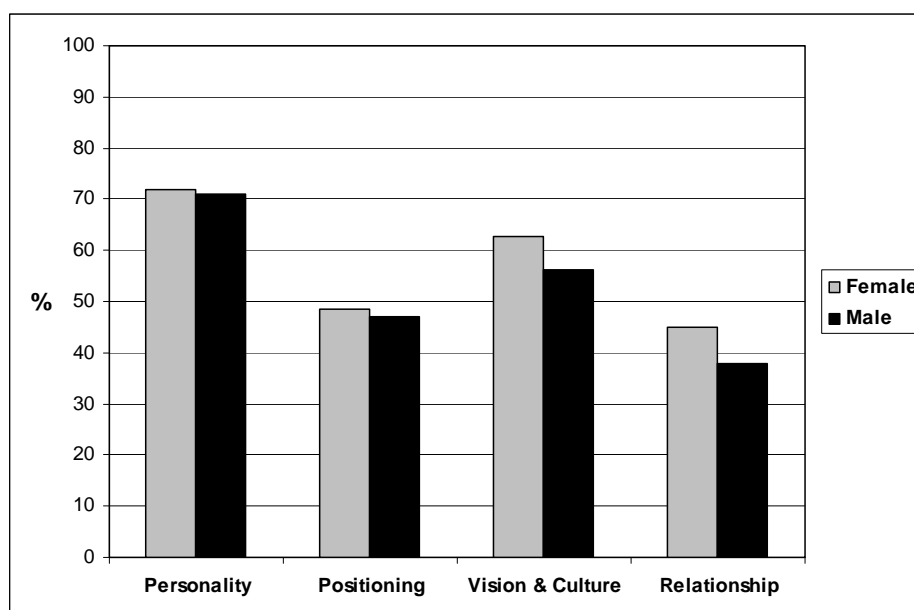


Figure 5.5: How well men and women's Brand image matches Coop's Brand identity.

5.5.2 Age

Figure 5.6 intends to show if there are any significant differences between age groups. The figure shows the average percentage of how well they agreed to the statements. Instead of presenting all age groups from the questionnaire separately they were divided in to three groups. The reason is to focus on relevant age groups and also make the data visually understandable. This in turn will lead to a deeper and more relevant analysis.

Figure 5.6 shows that there are differences between age groups. It is shown that age group 2 (ages 30-49) has the greatest percentage in all four categories, in other words, they agree mostly with the statements. Age group 1 (ages <29) generated the lowest percentage in three of the categories and age group 3 (ages >50) generated the lowest percentage in the fourth category. Furthermore, the largest differences between the age groups are found in the concepts of *Positioning* and *Relationship* while the difference is not as large when it comes to *Personality* and *Vision & Culture*.

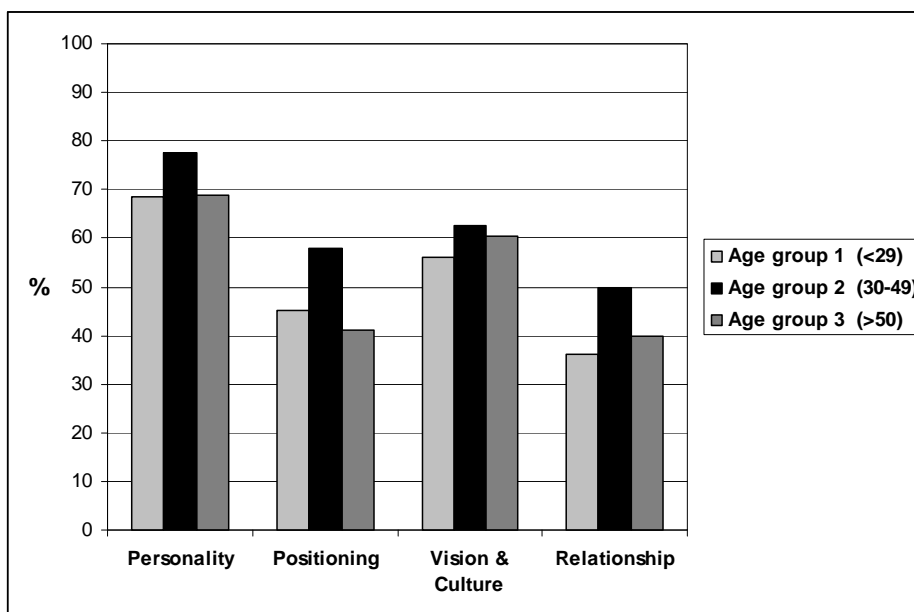


Figure 5.6: How well age groups' Brand image matches Coop's Brand identity

6. Data Analysis

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the data presented in the empirical chapter. The focus is on finding similarities and differences between data and theory while answering the research question “What communication gaps can occur between a company’s Brand identity and the customers’ Brand image?” The analysis follows the same structure as previous chapter where the concepts of Personality, Positioning, Vision & Culture and Relationship is analysed under its own section. A summary of the data analysis can be found in Section 6.6.

6.1 Analysis of Personality

When it comes to the concept of *Personality*, Coop’s Brand identity has a good fit with the customers’ Brand image. Coop’s customers perceive the company in a satisfying way, which indicates that Coop has been successful when it comes to communicating their personality. It was also found that men and women perceive Coop’s personality in a similar way, which as Keller (1993) suggests indicates that the genders have similar attitudes toward *Personality*.

However, even though Coop’s personality has a good fit with the Brand image, there were communication gaps identified and these are important to discuss and handle in order to avoid larger gaps. The gaps were found when it came to Coop being traditional and challenging and also regarding customers feeling loyalty towards Coop. These will be further discussed throughout this section.

Aaker (1997) argues that a brand personality refers to the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. The characteristics that Coop wants to be associated with are trustworthy, honest, reliable, sustainable, ecological, traditional and challenging. Coop’s consumers were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with these characteristics and as seen in the empirics for the questionnaire result, Coop’s customers agree that Coop is reliable, trustworthy, honest, ecological and sustainable. Based on Keller’s (1993) discussion about Brand image, this implies that Coop has managed to establish strong and unique associations to the brand, which has given the customers a positive attitude towards Coop. This in order can therefore work as an enhancement tool for customers’ self-image, appeal stakeholder and influence customers’ purchase decisions. However, it is important to note that the result show

differences in Brand image among various age groups. Age group 2 (age 30-49) generated the highest percentage score, which indicate that their Brand image matches Coop's Brand identity the best. This can also be strengthened by the result of the statement "*Coop is reliable*" where 95% of the respondents in age group 2 agreed. Furthermore, it can be noted that age group 1 (age <29) and 3 (age >50) generated the lowest scores when it came to *Personality*, which suggest that their Brand image matches the least with Coop's Brand identity and most communication gaps exists when communicating to customers in these ages.

When it came to the characteristics of "traditional" and "challenging", there were communication gaps identified. The aspect of "traditional" generated the lowest percentage score where 48% agreed that Coop is traditional. "Challenging" also generated a low score where 45% of the respondents agreed with the statement that Coop is challenging. This implies that Coop has not been successful when it comes to communicating these characteristics, which are two of their most important association keywords. Based on what the theory suggests, Coop have not managed to create strong associations regarding "traditional" and "challenging" to their customers, which made it hard for the customers to connect the keywords to the brand and as a result the keywords are not either part of the customers' Brand image. The communication of "traditional" and "challenging" could experience gaps since they are perceived as opposites. Based on Kapferer's (2008) theory on why gaps arise, this indicates that Coop has no clear idea of what their Brand identity is. They are trying to communicate two different identities, and as Kapferer (2008) states, this lead the company to focusing on their competitors and imitating their marketing communication instead of focusing on determining their own.

According to Keller (1993), these gaps can affect the benefit evaluation customers have regarding a brand, in this case Coop, where the customers do not believe that "traditional" and "challenging" are present in the Brand identity. This also implies that these keywords do not work as differentiating tools for the brand personality, which Coop had aimed to. Based on De Chernatony's (1999) discussion about Brand image, Coop should focus on manipulating the Brand image's two aspects; that is in the stakeholders' aspirations and self-images. This in order to amend the Brand image to the better and decrease the small communication gaps that exist here.

As Aaker (1997) argues, emotions play an important part in brand communication. As seen in the empirics, the majority of the respondents feel comfortable when shopping at Coop and they trust the company. This indicates that the emotions Coop wishes to evoke in their customers, comfort and trust, are achieved. Thereby, there is a match between the Brand image and Brand identity and Coop's communication in this area has been successful. Furthermore, this means that Coop has achieved to be a more central part in consumers' lives, which emphasize that the brand personality dimensions that Aaker, (1997) mentioned has the same symbolic meanings in the brand's and customers' perception. It also implies that the customers have positive associations towards the shopping experience at Coop and therefore have managed to gain positive attitudes. Furthermore, the open-ended question regarding what emotions customers feel when thinking of Coop received replies such as joy and happiness, which are great results for the business. This indicated that customers have a positive Brand image of Coop and the company has managed to evoke positive emotions.

It is further discussed by Aaker (1997) that brand personality can increase levels of trust and loyalty. The concept of loyalty was mentioned by Coop's staff in the in-depth interviews as something they wish their customers to be, as well as being an important part of their personality. However, a disagreement was found when customers were asked whether they consider themselves as loyal to Coop. 42% of the respondents replied that are loyal Coop customers, which implies that more than half are not loyal. This shows that even if the business possesses a well-perceived brand personality, customer brand loyalty towards Coop is not obtained. Swaminathan et al. (2009) also stresses that not all consumers are equally sensitive to a brand's personality and that interpersonal attachment styles determine what types of consumers are most likely to be influenced by a brand's personality. This could therefore mean that the 42% of Coop's customers who agreed to be loyal are more sensitive towards the brand personality. This could however also imply that there is some sort of attitude error, which affects their Brand image of Coop. As Coop's staff members in the interviews expressed, Coop is working hard at making customers feel loyal through their membership program. This part of their communication however experiences a gap and needs to be improved. As Kapferer (2008) argues, it is important for companies to be aware of the noise and handle it as carefully as possible, in order for it to not negatively influence the consumers' brand perception.

6.2 Analysis of Positioning

The empirical result showed that men and women perceive Coop's positioning in a similar way and as Keller (1993) suggests, this gives them similar evaluation processes regarding benefits and attributes when it comes to positioning. However, both genders disagreed with most statements (6 out of 9) in the questionnaire regarding the *Positioning* of Coop's Brand identity. This indicated that there are communication gaps between the Brand image and the Brand identity when it comes to *Positioning*.

As Kapferer (2008) states, companies can distinguish brands according to their positioning, which is when one emphasizes the distinctive characteristics that make it attractive to consumers and different from its competitors. According to Coop, they see themselves different from competitors since they are owned by their members. This in order makes them trust worthier with higher reliability than competitors. However, Coop's customers do not share this image of Coop's positioning since only 42% believe that Coop is trustworthier than competitors and as little as 33% feel that Coop is more reliable than competitors. This can therefore have a negative impact on the customer loyalty, in the way that customers do not want to be exclusive to Coop considering they have the same trust and beliefs of reliability towards rival companies. As Bronnenberg and Wathieu (1996) state, managers need to take positioning into account when evaluating the promotion asymmetry and communication. This implies that Coop has not focused their communication on these aspects, which therefore has not assured customers that Coop are trustworthier and more reliable than their rivals. Furthermore, the theory stress that the aspects of the brand itself determine which positioning strategy is best suited for the brand. This implies that Coop currently has not the best positioning strategy, considering this aspect has not placed itself into customers' perception or memory.

It is further discussed by Keller et al. (2002) that positioning sets the product apart from the competition. He also argues that it is of importance to understanding the frame of reference that your brand is working in. According to Coop, another factor that differentiates them from competitors is the ecological approach, which is a main focus and a big part of Coop's Brand identity, where they want to offer customers the opportunity to contribute to a sustainable environmental development. Since Coop has Sweden's largest assortment of ecological products, they want to make sure that the customers are aware of this. However, the majority

of Coop's customers are not aware of this and only 40% believe that Coop is more ecological than competitors. This indicates a communication gap and Coop has not managed to deliver the message of being the most ecological company to the customers. As discussed in the theoretical chapter, this means that the customers' reference frame of Coop is not consistent with the one Coop wants to communicate and furthermore, the customers are not aware of the brand benefits. De Chernatony (1999) argues that such communication errors occur if the brand values are not communicated in a consistent manner. In the case of Coop this can have a negative impact on consumers' evaluation, and affect customers' evaluation regarding Coop and the competitors, considering the majority of the respondents believed the market had the same ecological approach. Coop could therefore miss out revenue from ecological-minded customers.

When analysing differences between Coop and their competitors the results show a mismatch between what the company wants to communicate and how the customers perceive them. Furthermore, an open-ended question regarding differences between Coop and their competitors was presented in the questionnaire and the respondents could freely answer what they believe are the biggest differences. Most answers were negative saying that Coop is old-fashioned, less modern, more expensive and less innovative than competitors. This is another indication that Coop has failed in the positioning of their Brand identity. The customers' Brand image of Coop does not match the Brand identity, and it is assumed to be a communication gap. As discussed by different authors in the theoretical chapter, this can affect the customers' frame of reference when thinking and evaluating Coop, which in this case can imply that Coop is currently operating in a different reference frame than desired. For example, they are perceived as more expensive than they actually are. Some respondents also mentioned that Coop has less attractive commercials, which can be influencing the customers' perception and attitude towards the brand.

As seen in the in-depth interview result, one of Coop's outward expressions is to deliver food joy and food inspiration to their customers. They want to inspire the customers in their everyday lives when it comes to consuming food. However, according to the respondents in the questionnaire 37% answered that they feel food joy and only 33% are inspired by Coop in their cooking. This means that Coop's message regarding the aspect has not reached the customers completely. This further indicates that Coop has not managed to develop the best-suited positioning strategy regarding this differentiation factor. If Coop managed to provide

food joy and inspiration they could have added perceived value to the brand, which could have affected customers' evaluation process positively. This aspect, as well as the previous aspect of ecological, could make Coop's brand stronger and more unique, considering more positive associations could be connected to Coop.

Kapferer (2008) states that positioning controls the words that is communicated to the customer and can be explained as the brand's message and the outward expression of the brand's inner substance. However, researcher rather refers to this as "physique", which mainly describes the brand's physical qualities and the brand's performance characteristics. According to Coop, one of their outward messages is to deliver economic benefit to customers. They should save money by shopping at their stores and this is an important part of Coop's positioning. This part of the communication experiences gaps since less than half of Coop's customers feel that they save money by shopping at Coop. This can cause problems for Coop since it can disturb the customers' evaluation of the brand.

Coop also mentioned that they want to offer customers a wide range of high-quality products and services. This part is shown to be successfully communicated. These were the statements that customers agreed mostly with in the questionnaire considering 69% believe that Coop offers high service quality, 65% feel that Coop offers high quality products and 69% agrees that Coop offers a good range of products. This shows that Coop has succeeded with this part of the positioning and no communication gap is present, meaning that this part of Coop's message has reached the customers without getting amended in any noise. At this point, Coop has managed to create a good attitude among the customers, as well as a defined Brand image.

Overall, the result from the empirical investigation indicates that Coop has not managed to communicate the emphasized differences of their positioning to their customers and there are gaps present. More specifically the result showed that age group 3 (>50) generated the lowest score and thereby Coop experiences most gaps when communicating to this age group. The best fit was found with age group 2 (30-49) which indicated that their Brand image matches the best with Coop's Brand identity.

The communication gaps found between Coop's Brand identity and Brand image reveals that Coop's message has failed to completely reach customers, and as stated by Keller (1993) this affects customers' brand perception and memorization of the brand. Since Coop's customers

have a different and less positive Brand image, one can say that the failed message has subtracted value from the actual brand. As De Chernatony (1999) argues, this can have a negative influence on the customers' brand evaluation, which in this case implies that Coop is perceived similar as competitive companies. Furthermore, De Chernatony (1999) implies that this could also have significant impact on sales performance, where customers rather purchase from rivals that have a better-perceived Brand image.

6.3 Analysis of Vision & Culture

The empirical result showed that customers agreed with all five statements regarding *Vision & Culture*, which leads to the assumption of a match between Coop's Brand identity and the customers' Brand image. Overall, the customers perceive the company in a satisfying way, which indicates that Coop has successfully managed to communicate both their vision and their culture without any interruption of noise. However, even if there is a match regarding the concept there is a clear gender distribution of the results in *Vision & Culture*, where women generated higher scores than men. These are not great differences, but it does indicate that males do perceive the concept as lower in comparison to women. Overall, men have a weaker perception of the vision and culture of Coop. Moreover, as the empirical data shows, age group 2 (age 30-49) generated the greatest percentage score in this concept, which indicated that their Brand image matches Coop's Brand identity the best. It is also an indication that age group 2 possess a better attitude and evaluating process towards Coop than the other age groups. Age group 1 received the lowest score in *Vision & Culture*, which suggest that their Brand image matches the least with Coop's Brand identity.

As stated by De Chernatony (1999) in the theoretical chapter, a brand needs a clear vision that describes a well-defined direction of what it wants to achieve. The in-depth interviews with Coop showed that the company has a clear vision about their brand and what they wish to obtain. They have some key-points that are important for them to communicate to the customers, one being their high demands on sustainable development including ethical, environmental and health issues. As Collins and Poras (1996) highlight, managers need to envisage the brand's environment for at least five years ahead and consider how the brand is going to make the future world they operate in better. This is something that is clearly reflected in Coop's vision to contribute to a sustainable development.

As a company, Coop also values both people and animals' health and they are careful not to harm nature and its resources too much. This is achieved by compensating their affect in various ways, for example by planting trees. Also, all Coop stores are KRAV certified and they work closely with organizations dealing with issues such as poverty and AIDS. As seen in the empirical data, the majority of Coop's customers share a similar view, saying that they perceive Coop as taking environmental and ethical questions into consideration. Another important aspect of Coop's vision is to always provide customers with good products, services and quality at a good price. The questionnaire result showed that the majority of the respondents believe that Coop provides good prices of their products, which indicates that Coop has been successful also in this area.

The overall result show that Coop has been successful when it comes to communicating their *Vision* to the customers, which indicates a match between the Brand identity and the Brand image in this area. The result further shows that there is an absence of gaps in the communication and that Coop's vision is clear and well-defined. Also, the right message regarding Coop's brand vision has reached the customers and they perceive Coop as an environmental friendly company, which offers high-quality products and services at good prices.

In the theoretical chapter, Kapferer (2008) describes culture as the set of values that are feeding the brand's inspiration, as well as explaining from where the product is derived. For Coop, there are mainly two aspects that are essential within their culture; Coop is owned by its members and derives from Sweden. Coop expresses an enormous pride of being owned by their members and there is a strong motivation in the company when it comes to working for the members and benefiting them. The questionnaire result showed that 61% of the respondents are familiar with the benefits of being a member of Coop and 67% agree that Coop reward their customers. The largest gender distribution was found in the last mentioned statement, "*Coop rewards their customers*". Women generated a much higher score than men in this statement, indicating that Coop's communication regarding their culture has reach women in a far better way than it has with men. Overall, Coop has been successful when it comes to communicating this part of their culture since customers perceive it the way Coop wants to.

The other important aspect of Coop's culture is that the company derives from Sweden. As Coop's staff members explained in the in-depth interviews, Coop's culture is deeply rooted in Sweden and it is a huge part of the company, where they come from and what they represent today. Kapferer (2008) mentions; that countries of origin are a highly valuable factor used in order to communicate a brand culture. The empirical result shows that 58% of Coop's customers associate Coop with Sweden. This is an indication that Coop is also successful in communicating this part of their culture. As Coop mentioned in the in-depth interview, they do not have a specific way of expressing their culture when it comes to colours and materials, but as the result shows; their culture is still perceived in a correct way by customers. Based on Schmidt et al. (1995) discussion on cultural values, these results indicate that additional value has been added to Coop's brand, which has not affected the reputation of the brand in a negative way. However, this statement "*I associate Coop with Sweden*", generated a lower percentage score among men in relation to women. Furthermore, no significant gap exists concerning this matter considering Coop and the customers have the same belief regarding this cultural aspect.

Banerjee (2008) stresses that a company should consider expressing a clear culture since the cultural values are principles that determine how to perceive others. The empirical result shows that Coop does have a clear culture that they manage to communicate to the customers. The culture is perceived in the way Coop intends it to and it is assumed to be a match between the Brand identity and Brand image. This match generates positive results for Coop since, as Kapferer (2008) and Schmidt et al. (1995) state, the culture links the brand to the firm and highlights the differencing factors, making it stand out from the competition.

Overall, it can be seen Coop's *Vision & Culture* has a good match with the customers' Brand image. This means that the cultural values have a good fit, which implies a mutual understanding in how Coop and their customers perceive themselves and others. Moreover, the visual and auditory communications that Coop sends out express the brand's vision. Thereby, the company has managed to establish a positive Brand identity when it comes to both their vision and culture, and as Janonis et al. (2007) highlights this provides favourable and unique associations to the brand.

6.4 Analysis of Relationship

When it comes to the concept of *Relationship*, the customers disagreed with all statements in the questionnaire. This indicates that there are communication gaps between Coop's Brand identity and the customers' Brand image. Moreover, as the empirical data shows, age group 2 (age 30-49) has the greatest percentage score in *Relationship*, which indicated that their Brand image matches Coop's Brand identity the best. It is also an indication that age group 2 possess a better attitude and evaluating process towards Coop than the other age groups.

The in-depth interviews showed that Coop strives to have a strong and close relationship with every customer. The customer should always be in focus and they want every customer to be treated as an important guest whenever walking into one of their stores. However, according to the customers this kind of relationship does not exist. Only 26% feel that they have a close relationship with Coop. Furthermore, this statement, "*I have a close relationship with Coop*", also shows an uneven age distribution. Customers in the ages of 30 to 49 generated the highest percentage of agreement, which indicates that Coop is most successful when it comes to communicating to this age group. As Coop expressed in the in-depth interviews, they are trying to target families. This result indicates that Coop has been successful in their reaching their target group since it can be assumed that most respondents in the ages of 30 to 49 have families with children. Moreover, the result showed that only 13% of respondents in ages under 29 answered "YES". This indicates that Coop has been unsuccessful when it comes to establishing a close relationship with customers in this age group. As De Chernatony (1999) explains, a successful relationship can boost the innovation and success for the brands. However, Coop is missing out on these essential benefits by failing to establish a relationship with customers other than their target group.

Less than half of the respondents believe that Coop always has the customer in focus. This further strengthen that Coop experiences communication gaps when it comes to their relationship with their customers. This can also be supported by the result from the open-ended question "*What is your main reason for shopping at Coop*" where a significant majority of the respondents answered "location" as their main reason. This shows that Coop has not been able to establish a strong and close relationship with their customers as they wish to, since the customers visit their stores for other reasons. However, some respondents mentioned that they shop at Coop because of friendly staff. This shows that a small

percentage of the customers have formed a positive relationships with Coop. This also indicates that Coop has managed to fulfil a certain aspect they strive, which is to treat every customer as an important guest when visiting their stores.

Another important aspect in Coop's relationship with their customers is to make them satisfied. Coop is trying to achieve this by listening to customers and give them influence power in the organization. They constantly inform customers about changes in the organization and they arrange regular membership meetings where customers are allowed to express their opinion about the business. However, the empirical data reveals that communication gaps are present since only 47% of the customers feel that Coop listens to their opinion and feedback. Moreover, 49% of Coop's customers expressed that they are satisfied customers, which is less than half of all respondents and a relatively low number for a service-minded business like Coop. In the in-depth interviews, Coop expressed that they want a close relationship with every customer. However, as these results shows, Coop has not succeed with their communication in this area since the majority of the respondents are not satisfied and they do not feel that they are a part of Coop's decision-making process. Furthermore, the empirics further showed an uneven gender distribution of the result. The largest difference in the study was found within *Relationship* and the statement; "*I am a satisfied Coop customer*" where the women generated a higher result than men. This indicates that Coop has managed to satisfy women much better than men, who possesses a far better relationship with Coop than men do.

Based on Kapferer (2008) discussion about *Relationship* it can be stated that Coop has failed in their communication when it comes to act, deliver and relate their brand in accordance to the consumers. Coop has also failed in possessing any symbolic meaning regarding the brand, which the company wished. Moreover, the relationship aspect is not achieved, and as Broadbent and Cooper (1987) mentions, this can have a negative effect on the differencing factors. This means that Coop has not managed to add value to their brand, which affects the interaction between consumers' attitudes and overall evaluation towards the brand. The dissatisfaction among customers also indicates that Coop does not fulfil customers' needs.

Kapferer (2008) stresses, that companies should focus on building relationships regularly in order to gain the most important place in the human process of transaction and exchange. This has Coop failed to do, which could have an indirect effect on profits considering customers

are unsatisfied and not loyal. Coop has not managed to connect the customers and making them a part of the Coop brand. Blackston (1992) also discusses the importance of *Relationship*, defining relationship as the interaction between consumers' attitude towards the brand and the brand's attitude towards the consumers. This means that consumers' perception plays an important part into the brand communication. Since Coop's customers have a different perception than the company wants them to, this disturbs the communication and causes gaps. The empirical result indicates that Coop and their customers do not share the same attitude towards one another. As Faircloth et al. (2001) state, attitudes have a direct impact on Brand image and are most frequent said to be consumers overall evaluation of a brand. An unsuccessful relationship can stagnate innovation and success for the brand considering the interaction between consumers' attitude towards Coop and Coop's attitude towards the consumers is weak. Coop has therefore not managed to gain a "magnetic" relationship with their customers where an important exchange is present. It is important that Coop handles the gaps in order to influence the customers' evaluation of the brand and make it match with the Brand identity.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an analysis where the empirical data was connected to the theoretical framework. The aim of the chapter was to find similarities and dissimilarities between data and thereby identify communication gaps. The concepts of *Personality*, *Positioning*, *Vision & Culture* and *Relationship* served as a basis for the analysis to ensure that the researchers obtained an in-depth understanding of the relationship between Brand identity and Brand image. Table 6.1 provides a summary of gaps found in the communication between Coop's Brand identity and the customers' Brand image.

Table 6.1: Coop's communication gaps

	Communication gap
Personality	Coop is not seen as traditional Coop is not seen as challenging Coop's customers have low loyalty Age group 1 (age <29) and 3 (age >50) experiences most gaps
Positioning	Coop is perceived as less trustworthy than competitors Coop is perceived as less reliable than competitors Coop is perceived as less ecological than competitors Coop does not inspire customers in their cooking, especially men. Coop does not provide food joy, especially men. Coop is not perceived as providing economic benefit Age group 3 (>50) experiences most gaps
Vision & Culture	Men have a weak perception of Coop's Vision & Culture Men do not associate Coop with Sweden Men do not perceive Coop as rewarding to them Age group 1 (<29) experiences most gaps
Relationship	Coop does not have a close relationship with their customers, especially men Coop is not perceived as putting the customers in focus Coop fails to make customers satisfied, especially men Coop is not perceived as listening to customers' opinions and feedback Age group 1 (<29) experiences most gaps

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

In the final chapter, the authors highlight the findings in the study. Section 7.1 presents the conclusions and section 7.2 provides managerial and academic recommendations developed on the results of the thesis. Section 7.3 includes recommendations for future research.

7.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyse what communication gaps that can occur between a company's Brand identity and Brand image. The concepts of *Personality*, *Positioning*, *Vision & Culture* and *Relationship* were used as a basis for the study to ensure that the researchers got a deep understanding of the relationship between the Brand identity and Brand image. The overall results show that Coop experiences communication gaps in all four concepts.

In *Personality*, Coop experiences communication gaps in customer loyalty, as well as in communicating their personality to age groups <29 and >50. These age groups have the poorest Brand image of Coop, which indicates that most gaps occur when communicating to them. Gaps also exist when Coop is communicating two of their most important association keywords; "traditional" and "challenging". The problem is that these words are perceived as opposites, which thereby has caused gaps to occur. Moreover, it is shown that Coop has no clear idea of their communicated Brand identity. Overall, the gaps found in *Personality* can negatively influence customers' brand perception of Coop and affect the customers' benefit evaluation regarding the brand.

In *Positioning*, Coop experiences most gaps between the Brand identity and Brand image when communicating to men and customers in the age group <50. Furthermore, the result shows that Coop has not managed to communicate the emphasized differences of their positioning to their customers; they fail to convince customers that they are trustworthier, more reliable and more ecological than their competitors. Coop also experiences gaps when communicating their outward expression of delivering food joy and food inspiration to their customers. Lastly, gaps also exist when Coop is communicating their outward message of economic benefit to the customers. The gaps found in *Positioning* can eventually affect

customers' brand perception and memorization of the Coop brand and also disturb the customers' evaluation of the brand. Furthermore, it means that customers are not aware of the brand benefits and Coop could miss out on revenues.

In *Vision & Culture*, the result shows that men have a weaker perception of Coop's vision and culture. This is because men do not associate Coop with Sweden or perceive Coop as rewarding to them as much as the women do. Coop also experiences gaps when communicating their vision and culture to customers under the age of 29. They have the poorest Brand image in comparison to Coop's Brand identity. These gaps found in *Vision & Culture* could provide unfavourable associations to the brand.

Relationship is the Brand identity concept that generated most communication gaps. Coop has not managed to create close relationships with their customers. Coop is not perceived as customer-focused or as listening to their customers' opinions and feedback. The overall satisfaction among customers is lacking, where men is seen to be most unsatisfied with their relationship with Coop. It was shown that customers visit Coop for other reasons than a good relationship. Furthermore, Coop experiences most gaps when communicating to customers in ages up to 29, which shows that they possess the least fitting Brand image regarding *Relationship*. Overall, the gaps found in *Relationship* could lead to negative effect on the differentiating factors and indicates that Coop has not managed to add value to their brand. It could also stagnate innovation and success for the brand and have negative effects for profits.

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Managerial implications

In this thesis it has been clarified that it is important for a company's Brand identity to match their customers' Brand image. Brand managements must continually monitor the relationship between them, otherwise communication gaps can occur. The established findings could contribute to managerial implications and strategic recommendations for their brand communication.

This thesis established that gender and age groups have different Brand images and perceive messages differently. Companies should consider this in their marketing efforts. If there are major differences, companies should try to reach sub-groups by conducting niche marketing. Companies can for example use social media, such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn, in order

to reach the younger generations. The marketing efforts should however not contradict the companies' overall marketing strategies.

This thesis also establishes that a company's customers can lack a well-perceived image of the company's positioning. In this case, companies should perform a competitor analysis, as well as an internal positioning analysis. This will generate answers regarding the company's current positioning in the market, as well as the companies' desired positioning. The findings can thereafter be used as a basis in order to develop a new positioning strategy or improvement plans of how you can amend the current strategy. Companies should also do continuous research of the customers' Brand image in order to gain significant knowledge of where the brand stands in the customers' minds. This helps to decrease possible communication gaps, as well as the possible negative outcomes that are highlighted in the problematization. Furthermore, if the customers are unsatisfied with the business, companies should perform customer research in order to find out the underlying reason to why the customers are unsatisfied. This can lead to new findings that will improve the overall business (such as the 7 P's of marketing).

Companies should investigate their brand personality to get valuable insight into their unique selling points/keywords. Overall, brands should have a clear Brand identity that is communicated to customers. Companies need to choose one track and not try to communicate opposite keywords such as "modern" and "old-fashioned", since this will confuse customers and lead to weak associations to the brand. Moreover, by having a clear outward expression, companies can add perceived value to the brand, which can affect customers' evaluation process positively. It could also make the brand stronger and more unique, considering more positive associations would be connected to the brand.

The thesis further shows that companies can experience customer involvement problems where customers do not feel apart of the company's decision-making. Companies should therefore highlight the customers' inputs into the marketing more. For example, a customer's suggestion of improvements can be included into the companies' promotional material, such as magazines etc. This will assure the customers that their ideas and suggestions matter to the company. This can also strengthen the relationships between the company and customers. In cases where companies, such as Coop, experience major problems concerning lack of customer loyalty, satisfaction and relationships, companies should focus on informing and

engaging their customers more. This can create new interest and attention towards the company and the brand.

7.2.2 Academic implications

This thesis is based on already established theories about Marketing communication, Sender-Receiver model, Brand identity and Brand image. Indications of what gaps that can occur between Brand identity and Brand image are presented in the thesis and the importance of decreasing the gaps is brought up.

Remenyi et al. (1998) suggests that a thesis should make a valuable contribution to theory by for example extending the ability to understand a certain phenomena. This thesis contributes to existing theory by strengthening the understanding of the relationship between the Brand identity and Brand image. This was done by presenting a conceptual model which explains the relationship between the theoretical concepts. The model highlights that Brand identity consists of four concepts; *Personality*, *Positioning*, *Vision & Culture* and *Relationship*, which together influence and create the Brand's identity and outward expressions. These four concepts are in order significant and influential to the customers' Brand image. The model also presents a framework which can be used by companies to identify gaps in their communication. It can further help companies perform better and improve their marketing communication. A similar framework of communication gaps was not found in existing theories and thereby the authors have made a valuable contribution to the field of marketing communication.

A further contribution of this study is the methodological approach where the authors provided a framework for comparing the company's perspective on communication with the customers'. It also included recommendations for how a mixed approach can be applied to gain a more in-depth understanding of a studied phenomenon.

7.3 Future Research

The authors suggest that more research should focus on the relationship between Brand identity and Brand image, and more specifically what factors that can cause gaps in the communication between them. The authors found that existing theory provides limited information on how the theoretical concepts are connected, which indicates that more research in this field is necessary. Moreover, the relationship between Brand identity and Brand image

is of great interest for companies, especially since the brand management is of outermost importance for a company and has become an important part in business processes. More research would be applicable in the business world, which further could strengthen companies' communication and targeting of customers.

This thesis is focused on De Chernatony's model of how to manage a brand, which also explains what key-concepts he believes conclude Brand identity. However, apart from *Personality, Positioning, Vision & Culture* and *Relationship*, there might be other concepts that develops and justifies a brand's identity. If additional research regarding this area would be conducted, companies could gain deeper understanding of their brands and its processes. It could also open up new opportunities to how companies can communicate to their customers. Apart from investigating the Brand identity, furthered researches could also focus on customers' Brand image, as well as its possible influential factors. This thesis mainly brings up customers' attitude and benefits evaluation. However, if companies had deeper knowledge of what factors that could contribute to a positive Brand image, they would easier be able to target and tailor-make their communication strategies.

Moreover, in order to easier tailor-make the communication, further research should be performed in the area of gender differences. The thesis establishes that men and women possess different Brand images, especially in terms of their relationships with a brand or company. More answers to what differences there is between women and men's attitude and desires for a well-functioning relationship with a company or brand, could therefore strengthen companies communication strategies and operations. This could also lead to more opportunities for companies to develop customer loyalty. Similar studies could also be conducted among age groups; in order to see what specific requirements the different ages have regarding relationship-building processes.

The thesis highlighted that brands could have a contradictive brand personality, where for example a brand uses contradictive keywords such as "traditional" and "modern" in their communication. It is stressed that more researches regarding this area should be conducted to see what consequences a contradictive brand personality can have on a brand's success, as well as giving guiding points for how to prevent it. This problem is currently occurring for many companies, which is why more knowledge regarding this issue should be gained.

This thesis presented a conceptual model, developed by the authors based on existing theory. Due to time limitations in the study, the authors were not able to test the model more than once. Therefore, future research should retest the model in order to strengthen the model's validity and if needed make alterations. Also in this thesis, the authors tested the model on one company operating in the food industry. Future research should therefore apply the model when investigating other companies and industries to further increase the model's validity.

Moreover, the authors conducted a case study of Coop in this thesis. Future research specifically recommended for Coop is to re-do the same study in one year. As mentioned by Coop's staff, the company is in the middle of a process of changing the perception of their brand. Future studies can thereby reveal whether the change has succeeded or if there are still gaps in Coop's communication. Also, by applying the provided managerial recommendations, Coop will be able to see changes in customers' perceptions by repeating the study later on.

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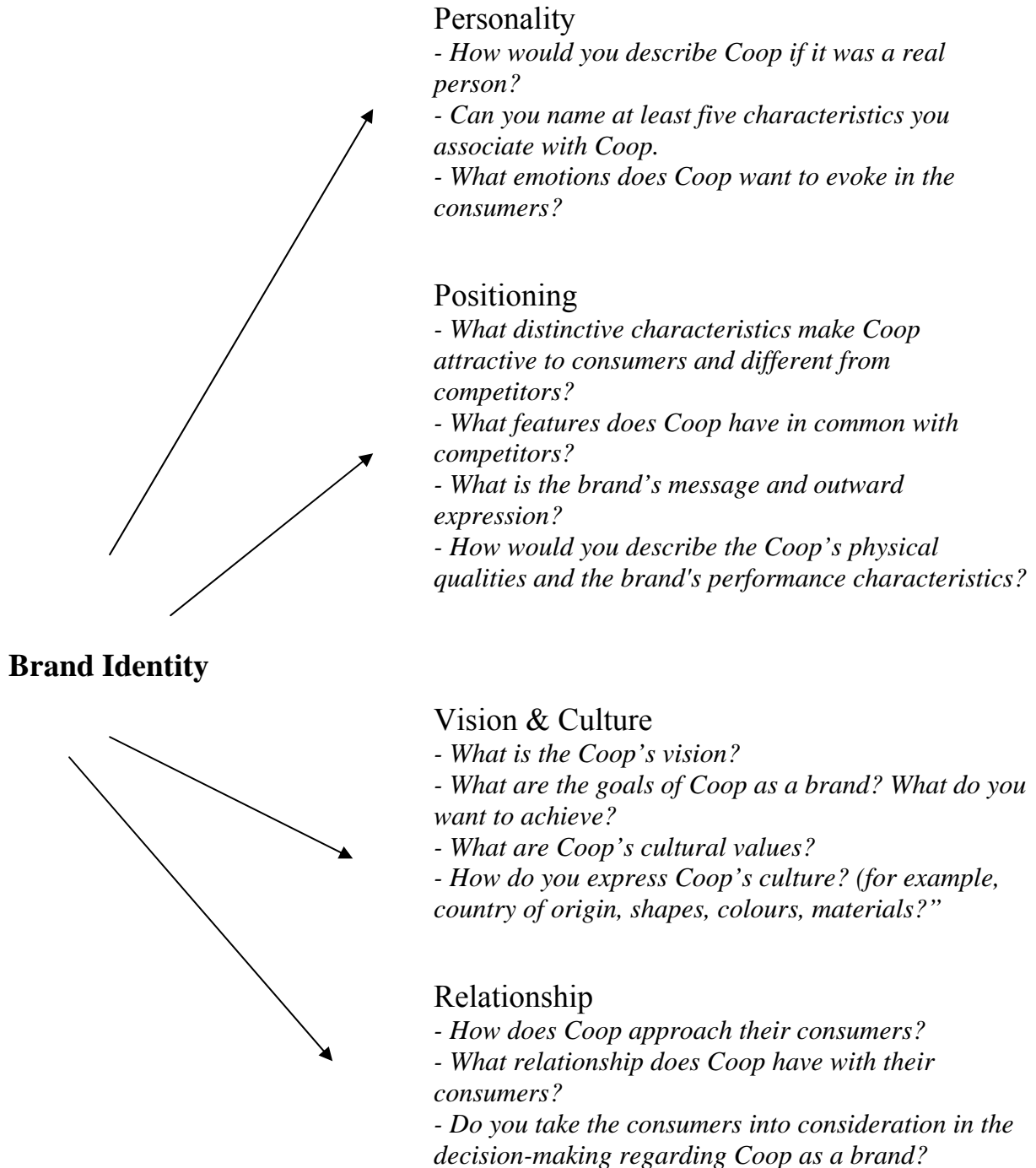
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Appendix A: In-depth interview guideline

Brand identity was divided in the following concepts; Personality, Positioning, Vision & Culture and Relationship. These concepts were further broken down in to questions based on the theoretical framework for each concept.

- How would you describe Coop if it was a real person?
- Can you name at least five characteristics you associate with Coop.
- What emotions does Coop want to evoke in their consumers?
- What distinctive characteristics make Coop attractive to consumers and different from competitors?
- What features does Coop have in common with competitors?
- What is the brand's message and outward expression?
- How would you describe Coop's physical qualities and the brand's performance characteristics?
- What is Coop's vision?
- What are the goals of Coop as a brand? What do you want to achieve?
- What are Coop's cultural values?
- How do you express Coop's culture? (for example, country of origin, shapes, colours, materials?)
- How does Coop approach their consumers?
- What relationship does Coop have with their consumers?
- Do you take the consumers into consideration in the decision-making regarding Coop as a brand?

Appendix B: Operationalization of in-depth interviews



Coop is more reliable than competitors	YES	NO
Coop is more ecological than competitors	YES	NO

What do you think is the main difference between Coop and competitors?

What do you think is the main similarity between Coop and competitors?

Do you agree with the following statements?

Coop inspire me in my cooking	YES	NO
Coop gives me food joy	YES	NO
I save money when shopping at Coop	YES	NO
Coop offer high quality products	YES	NO
Coop offer high service quality	YES	NO
Coop offer a good range of products	YES	NO
Coop have good prices	YES	NO
Coop takes the environment and ethical questions into consideration	YES	NO
I am familiar with the benefits of being a member of Coop	YES	NO
Coop reward their customers	YES	NO
I associate Coop with Sweden	YES	NO
Coop always has the customer in focus	YES	NO
Coop listens to customers' opinions and feedback	YES	NO
I am a satisfied Coop customer	YES	NO
I have a close relationship with Coop	YES	NO

What is your main reason for shopping at Coop?

Appendix D: Operationalization of questionnaire

The questionnaire is based on the empirical data from the in-depth interviews. The reason is to ease the comparison the company's and the customer's view and identify possible gaps. Each section in the operationalization shows the questions and statements related to each concept.

Section 1: Personality		
Do you agree with the following statements?		
Pers 1. Coop is reliable	YES	NO
Pers 2. Coop is honest	YES	NO
Pers 3. Coop is ecological	YES	NO
Pers 4. Coop is trustworthy	YES	NO
Pers 5. Coop is sustainable	YES	NO
Pers 6. Coop is traditional	YES	NO
Pers 7. Coop is challenging	YES	NO
Pers Q1. Are there any other characteristics apart from those above, which you associate with Coop?		
Pers 8. I feel comfortable when shopping at Coop	YES	NO
Pers 9. I consider myself being loyal to Coop?	YES	NO
Pers Q2. When thinking of Coop, what emotions does it evoke in you?		

Section 2: Positioning		
Do you agree with the following statements:		
Pos 1. Coop is more trustworthy than their competitors	YES	NO
Pos 2. Coop is more reliable than their competitors	YES	NO
Pos 3. Coop is more ecological than their competitors	YES	NO
Pos Q1. What do you think is the main difference between Coop and their competitors?		
Pos Q2. What do you think is the main similarity between Coop and their competitors?		
Do you agree with the following statements?		
Pos 4. Coop inspires me in my cooking	YES	NO

Section 2: Positioning		
Pos 5. Coop gives me food joy	YES	NO
Pos 6. I save money when shopping at Coop	YES	NO
Pos 7. Coop offers high quality products	YES	NO
Pos 8. Coop offers high service quality	YES	NO
Pos 9. Coop offers a good range of products	YES	NO

Section 3: Vision & Culture		
V&C 1. Coop has good prices	YES	NO
V&C 2. Coop takes the environment and ethical questions into consideration	YES	NO
V&C 3. I am familiar with the benefits of being a member of Coop	YES	NO
V&C 4. Coop reward their customers	YES	NO
V&C 5. I associate Coop with Sweden	YES	NO

Section 4: Relationship		
Rel 1. Coop always has the customer in focus	YES	NO
Rel 2. Coop listens to customers' opinions and feedback	YES	NO
Rel 3. I am a satisfied Coop customer	YES	NO
Rel 4. I have a close relationship with Coop	YES	NO
Rel Q1. What is your main reason for shopping at Coop?		

Appendix E: Transcript of in-depth interview with Coop's project manager

How would you describe Coop if it was a real person?

I would describe Coop as a reliable, honest, trustworthy and ecological person. I believe that Coop's customers do not perceive the brand as having a strong personality. However, there is a wish in the company that the brand would be seen as having a colourful and strong personality. This is something that Coop is going to change within the coming year, we are right now in the middle of a process of changing the perception of our brand

Can you name at least five characteristics you associate with Coop.

Reliable, Trustworthy, Sustainable, Traditional, Challenging. Our most important characteristics and values are summed up in these words. Our environmental efforts and the ecological aspect make us reliable, trustworthy and sustainable. This is an area where we are very successful and also very proud of. Coop was chosen as the most sustainable brand in both 2011 and 2012 and this shows that our hard work has paid off. The traditional characteristic comes from our roots in KF. The company has been around for a long time and we have kept the same values since the start and we have always, and will always be owned by our members. At the same time as we are traditional, we are also challenging. We try to be innovative, come up with new solutions for the environmental issues and offer new products with higher quality

What emotions does Coop want to evoke in their consumers?

For me, Coop is "the good guy". We are the company that fights for our customers by creating loyalty among them through having a membership program. The customers should feel trust and comfort when dealing with Coop.

What distinctive characteristics make Coop attractive to consumers and different from competitors?

The main difference between Coop and the competitors is that Coop is "owned" by its members. There is no individual who makes a fortune on Coop, instead the profit is shared among the members. This makes Coop trust worthier with higher reliability than competitors. Another difference is that Coop is more focused on ecological issues than competitors. The ecological aspect is a main focus for Coop's and it is a big part of our identity.

What features does Coop have in common with competitors?

One of the major things Coop has in common with competitors is the store planning. They are organized in a similar way, for example that the fruit department comes first and so on. Coop has several different stores depending on size and location, for example Coop Konsum and Coop Forum. This is also something that can be found in competing brands. Another similarity might be our target group. We are targeting families with children, and I believe that most food stores have a similar approach.

What is the brand's message and outward expression?

The message that Coop wants to deliver to the customers is food inspiration and food joy. We want to inspire the customers in their everyday lives when it comes to consuming food. This is done by sending out a food magazine once a month and providing inspiration in the stores with for example free recipes, tastings and an inspiring shopping environment. It is also important for us to spread the message that by shopping at Coop, customers will experience an economic benefit. It is very important that our customers are aware of this since this is another thing that distinguishes us from most competitors.

How would you describe Coop's physical qualities and the brand's performance characteristics?

One important value for us at Coop is to deliver high quality products and services. There is a long process of making sure that for example products keep a high standard and make customers satisfied.

What is Coop's vision?

Coop's vision is to create a better and more comfortable every-day through profitable stores owned by members. The stores should offer good supply, good prices and good service, as well as high product quality, honest product information and high demands on ethical, environmental and health issues.

What are the goals of Coop as a brand? What do you want to achieve?

The goal of Coop is to be perceived as ecological, affordable and trustworthy. The goal is also to make sure that everyone is aware of the benefits of being a member and the advantages of being a customer at Coop.

What are Coop's cultural values?

There is an enormous pride within Coop's culture that the company is owned by its members. The cooperation has been around for a long time and this is something that is reflected both internally and externally for Coop. There is also a strong motivation in the company when it comes to working for the members. The staff working at Coop see the company as "the good guy" and as being the best when it comes to benefiting customers. Coop's culture is rooted in its country of origin - Sweden. It is a huge part of the company, where we come from and what we represent today. We are owned by Swedish consumers and we also work for Swedish consumers.

How do you express Coop's culture? (for example, country of origin, shapes, colors, materials?)

We do not have specific ways of expressing Coop's culture when it comes to colours, materials and so on. However, we do have different colours for different stores but the reason is to separate the stores and make their distinctiveness more clearly to the customers.

How does Coop's approach their consumers?

For us at Coop, the customer is always in focus. This applies both in the stores and for people working in the head office. For example, staff at Coop stores should always pay attention to customers and the priority is to please at all times.

What relationship does Coop have with their consumers?

Since Coop is owned by the members, we have a close relationship with our customers. We have membership meetings regularly where customers are allowed to express their opinions about the company. We are engaging our customers and work closely with them. There is also another group of people who are not members in Coop but still consumers, these people have a more casual relationship with Coop and I believe that the main reason these people are customers is due to location.

Do you take the consumers into consideration in the decision-making regarding Coop as a brand?

Coop always takes the consumers into consideration. This is done in basically two ways. Firstly, when it comes to bigger, strategic decisions within the company, we do huge consumer research to find out what our customers think of the company and what they want

out of it. Secondly, we listen to the individual customer. For example, if a person has a complaint of a product or a suggestion on how to improve the store, we always try to handle these inputs, and make the customer feel noticed and satisfied.

Appendix F: Transcript of in-depth interview with anonymous employee at Coop's head office.**How would you describe Coop if it were a real person?**

I believe that customers perceive Coop as having a weak personality. However, we wish to be seen as a confident and driven person that challenges competitors.

Can you name at least five characteristics you associate with Coop.

Reliable, Honest, Kind, Weak and Dull.

What emotions does Coop want to evoke in their consumers?

I believe that Coop's customers should feel fellowship and a sense of belonging when dealing with the company. This is achieved by giving the customers the opportunity to become a member and thereby also an owner of Coop. This gives customers the feeling of being part of something and also feeling important. We also aim to evoke trust by always keeping what we promise. Other emotions we wish to evoke are food joy and a feeling of economic benefit.

What distinctive characteristics make Coop attractive to consumers and different from competitors?

The main difference between Coop and our competitors is the fact that Coop is "owned" by its members and that they have influence in the company's decision-making through general meetings. We also have Sweden's largest assortment of ecological and environmentally approved products, for example it is important for us to work closely with local farmers and use locally grown products as much as we can. We want to make sure that our customers have the opportunity to contribute to a sustainable environmental development.

What features does Coop have in common with competitors?

Coop is similar to competitors when it comes to having their own brands, a wide range of stores, shop express, self-scanning, iPhone application and franchising.

What is the brand's message and outward expression?

The message Coop wants to deliver is economic benefit with focus on membership benefits as well as food joy.

How would you describe Coop's physical qualities and the brand's performance characteristics?

We aim to deliver high-quality products, but at the same time offer a price that is 15-20% lower. This is realized by actively applying new knowledge and techniques that are available. We put a lot of resources into keeping the promise of high-quality products at good prices.

What is Coop's vision?

The store should offer high quality products and services. Coop should be a food store that customers want to visit, even though it might be located further away than other competing stores. Our vision is also to increase the number of members and offer them the best benefits as possible. We offer them special prices at our stores every week, discounts on events and hotel nights, an inspiring food magazine every month, and most importantly they get a certain percentage in return on everything they buy.

What are the goals of Coop as a brand? What do you want to achieve?

The goal is to improve the brand and always challenge competitors by always putting the customer in focus.

What are Coop's cultural values?

Coop has a tradition of offering economic benefit for their customers. It is also important for the company to work with sustainable development. As a company, we value both people and animals and we are concerned about their health. We also value nature. We are aware that our business is affecting the environment, both directly through our own business and indirectly through suppliers. However, we are careful not to harm nature and its resources too much. We try to compensate our affect in various ways, for example by planting trees. All Coop's stores are KRAV certified which shows that our efforts are successful. We also want it to be possible for members to contribute to a positive development for people working in the food industry. This is achieved by offering customers ecological products and that Coop constantly works with improving our environmental approach. We also work a lot with organizations such as Kooperation Utan Gränser and Vi-skogen. These are organizations that work with issues like preventing AIDS, planting trees in Kenya and fighting poverty. By working closely with these organizations, Coop contributes to a sustainable development.

How do you express Coop's culture? (for example, country of origin, shapes, colours, materials?)

We do not have specific ways of expressing the company's culture. Instead, we wish that the culture is naturally expressed to customers through all aspects in our business. However, we want to be clearer when it comes to expressing out culture, an example might be using green colours to express our ecological approach.

How does Coop's approach their consumers?

The focus is to treat every customer as an important "guest" whenever they visit a Coop store.

What relationship does Coop have with their consumers?

I believe that Coop is lacking a strong relationship with the customers. However, this is something we wish to change.

Do you take the consumers into consideration in the decision-making regarding Coop as a brand?

Yes, all decisions should be based on the customers' wants and needs. This is one of our most important values; we want the customers to have influence and be an active part of our organization. We inform our customers about changes in the organization in order to encourage a discussion with the. We are eager to know customers' opinions and we are striving to have an open dialogue with them.

Appendix G: Full empirical data for questionnaire

Table G.1 to G.4 presents the full questionnaire data for each questionnaire statement *connected to the concepts of Personality, Positioning, Vision & Culture and Relationship*.

Table G.1: Full empirical data for Personality

	Pers 1	Pers 2	Pers 3	Pers 4	Pers 5	Pers 6	Pers 7	Pers 8	Pers 9	Average
YES	88,4%	90,7%	81,4%	83,7%	74,4%	52,7%	44,2%	86%	41,9%	75,5%
NO	11,6%	9,3%	18,6%	16,3%	25,6%	47,3%	55,8%	14%	58,1%	28,5%

Table G.2: Full empirical data for Positioning

	Pos 1	Pos 2	Pos 3	Pos 4	Pos 5	Pos 6	Pos 7	Pos 8	Pos 9	Average
YES	41,9%	32,6%	39,5%	32,6%	37,2%	41,9%	65,1%	68,8%	68,8%	47,6%
NO	58,1%	67,4%	60,5%	67,4%	62,8%	58,1%	34,9%	30,2%	30,2%	52,4%

Table G.3: Full empirical data for Vision & Culture

	V&C 1	V&C 2	V&C 3	V&C 4	V&C 5	Average
YES	53,5%	58,1%	60,5%	67,4%	58,1%	59,2%
NO	46,5%	41,9%	39,5%	32,6%	41,9%	40,8%

Table G.4: Full empirical data for Relationship

	Rel 1	Rel 2	Rel 3	Rel 4	Average
YES	45%	47,3%	48,8%	25,6%	41,6%
NO	55%	52,7%	51,2%	74,4%	58,4%

Appendix H: Full empirical data for gender and age

This appendix presents the full questionnaire data including descriptive statistics and individual percentage scores for each questionnaire statement.

Gender

As stated in 4.7.3 in the methodology chapter the final sample size for the questionnaire was 129. Figure H.1 shows the gender distribution of the respondents in the questionnaire. As the pie chart shows, there was an even distribution where 51% were male and 49% were female.

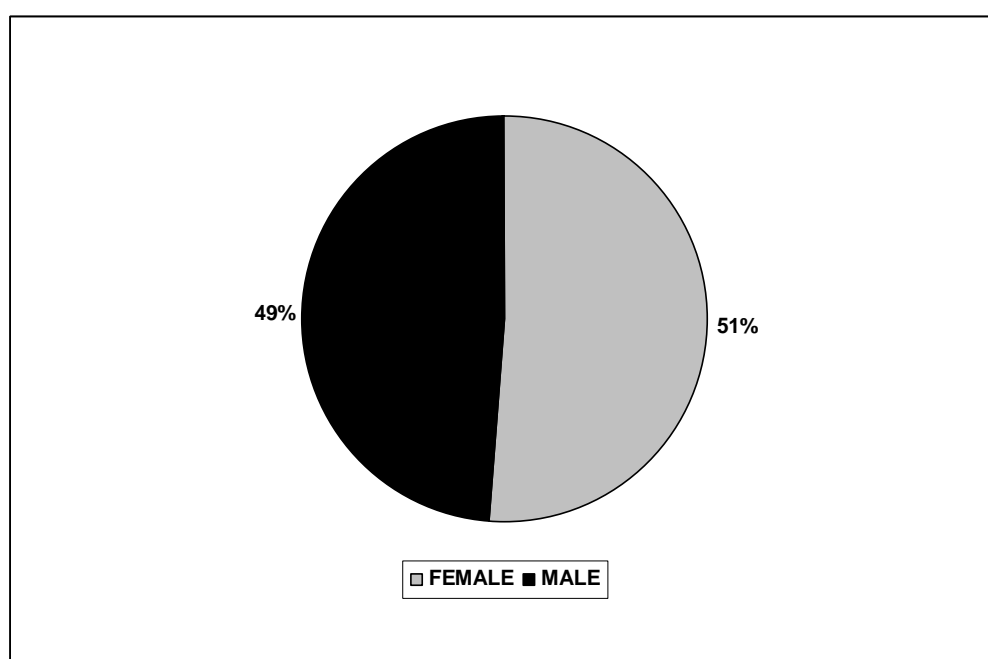


Figure H.1: Gender spread in the questionnaire

Table H.1 shows the average percentage of men and women who answered “YES” in the questionnaire, in other words agreed to the statements concerning the four Brand identity concepts under investigation. The difference between the genders is also presented in percentage points where the blue colour indicates male advantage and red indicates female advantage.

Table H.1: Average percentage among gender.

	Female	Male	Difference
Average % Personality	71,8%	71,1%	0,7
Average % Positioning	48,5%	47,1%	1,4
Average % Vision & Culture	62,7%	56,2%	6,5
Average % Relationship	45,1%	38,1%	7

Table H.2 shows the percentage of “YES” among male and female for each statement in the questionnaire.

Table H.2: Percentage of “YES” among gender for each questionnaire statement.

	Female	Male	Difference
Pers1	95,5%	81,0%	14,5
Pers2	90,9%	90,5%	0,4
Pers3	81,8%	81,0%	0,8
Pers4	81,8%	85,7%	3,9
Pers5	81,8%	66,7%	15,1
Pers6	47,0%	58,7%	11,7
Pers7	40,9%	47,6%	6,7
Pers8	90,4%	81,0%	9,4
Pers9	36,4%	47,6%	11,2
Pos1	40,9%	42,9%	2,0
Pos2	27,3%	38,1%	10,8
Pos3	31,8%	47,6%	15,8
Pos4	36,4%	28,6%	7,8
Pos5	36,4%	38,1%	1,7
Pos6	45,5%	38,1%	7,4
Pos7	72,7%	57,1%	15,6
Pos8	77,3%	61,9%	15,4
Pos9	68,2%	71,4%	3,2
V&C1	54,5%	52,4%	2,1
V&C2	59,1%	57,1%	2,0
V&C3	63,6%	57,1%	6,5
V&C4	72,7%	61,9%	10,8
V&C5	63,6%	52,4%	11,2
Rel1	45,5%	44,4%	1,1
Rel2	48,5%	46,0%	2,5
Rel3	59,1%	38,1%	21,0
Rel4	27,3%	23,8%	3,5
Average	58,4%	55,4%	3,0

Age

Figure H.2 shows the age distribution of the questionnaire respondents. As seen in the pie chart, the age group “21-29” represented the largest percentage with 26% and “<20” represented the smallest with 9%. 21% of the respondents were 60 years old or older and the rest of the age groups fell in between 13% to 16%. Overall, the age distribution was fairly evenly distributed.

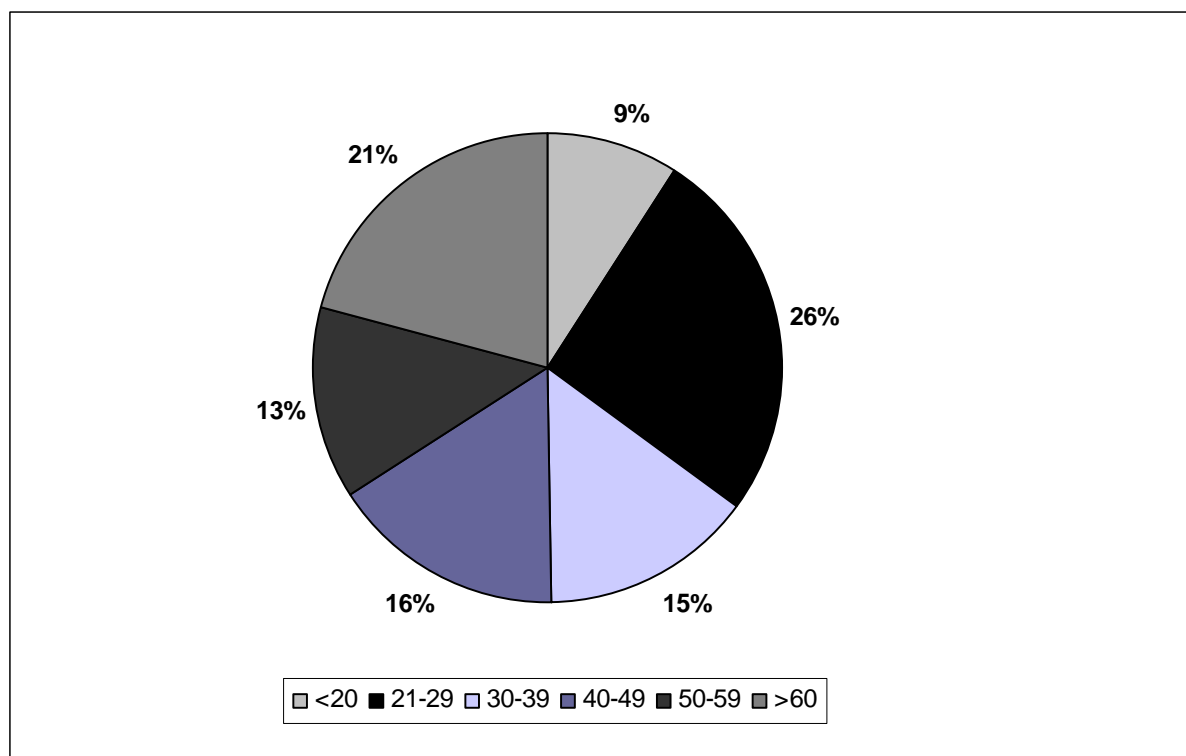


Figure H.2: Age spread in the questionnaire

Table G.3 shows the average percentage of different age groups who answered “YES” in the questionnaire, in other words agreed to the statements concerning the four Brand identity concepts under investigation.

Table H.3: Average percentage among age groups.

	Age group 1	Age group 2	Age group 3
Average % Personality	68,7	77,5	68,9
Average % Positioning	45,2	58,0	41,2
Average % Vision & Culture	56,0	62,5	60,5
Average % Relationship	36,1	50,0	39,8

Table G.4 shows the percentage of “YES” among the age groups for each statement in the questionnaire.

Table H.4: Percentage of “YES” among age groups for each questionnaire statement.

	Age group 1	Age group 2	Age group 3
Pers1	86,7%	95,0%	84,1%
Pers2	91,1%	90,0%	90,9%
Pers3	82,2%	77,5%	84,1%
Pers4	80,0%	85,0%	86,4%
Pers5	60,0%	87,5%	77,3%
Pers6	75,6%	40,0%	40,9%
Pers7	37,8%	75,0%	22,7%
Pers8	75,6%	90,0%	93,2%
Pers9	28,9%	57,5%	40,9%
Pos1	31,1%	57,5%	38,6%
Pos2	24,4%	57,5%	18,2%
Pos3	55,6%	47,5%	15,9%
Pos4	17,8%	52,2%	29,5%
Pos5	35,6%	45,0%	31,8%
Pos6	24,4%	55,0%	47,7%
Pos7	71,1%	65,0%	59,1%
Pos8	80,0%	67,5%	61,4%
Pos9	66,7%	75,0%	68,2%
V&C1	44,4%	62,5%	54,5%
V&C2	57,8%	67,5%	50,0%
V&C3	55,6%	55,0%	70,5%
V&C4	62,2%	65,0%	75,0%
V&C5	60,0%	62,5%	52,3%
Rel1	42,2%	47,5%	45,5%
Rel2	46,7%	55,0%	40,9%
Rel3	42,2%	52,5%	52,3%
Rel4	13,3%	45,0%	20,5%
Average	53,7%	64,2%	53,8%



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Linnaeus University
SE-391 82 Kalmar/SE-351 95 Växjö
Telephone: +46 772-28 80 00