

**Linnaeus University, Sweden**



**School Of Business And Economics**

# **Online Brand Personality In Sweden**

## **Bachelor Thesis**

**Marketing Program**

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## **Abstract**

This Paper is centered on online brand personality in the Swedish context. The study is carried out thanks to an existing Model of online brand personality. Precisely the online brand personality dimensions of Park et al., (2005). Parks et al's. (2005) method was first tested in Korea which was also done in the Korean Language. It is now explored in the Swedish context.

A literature review about brand personality in general and particularly online brand personality was conducted which led to the methodology used in the entire paper. A qualitative and cross sectional research design has been used in order to obtain data from customers. This study is thus carried out to explore Park et al. (2005) online brand personality model in the Sweden context. So far, it resulted to new model which involved thirty-one traits and six dimensions.



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## 1. Introduction

Brands play a fundamental role in the marketing strategy of a company. They are not just a vital marketing element for the manufacturer but they also provide a very rich source of consumers' information (Grace and O'Cass, 2005). A well constructed brand that creates significant images in the minds of consumers are those brands that are really powerful, with a convincing reputation which leads to an acceptable consequence in the consumer's buying behavior (Keller, 1993; McEnally, 1999).

A number of researches have laid emphasis on consumers, with the motive to unveil the knowledge structures of the brand already stored in the memory of the consumer (Keller, 2003). The picture that consumers have in mind about the brand according to Keller (1998, p. 92) is defined as, "the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer's memory". However, firms have long used brands in order to gain consumers' awareness and distinguish their products from those of other competitors. For consumers, brands can have a number of functions. The brand name can guide consumers when making their choices as well as summarizing information about a product's characteristics. These characteristics according to Plummer (2000) can be divided into 3 groups which include physical, functional and characterization characteristics. In Physical attributes, the customer is able to see for him/her what the brand is all about. Meanwhile, Functional characteristics which are the internal or external consequences of using a brand. And in characterization, the brand is either seen as old-fashion, or modern, or exotic, or lively. (Ibis) The characterization therefore is what can be described as the brand personality. (Plummer, 2000)

According to Plummer (2000) brand personality is a set of human characteristics associated with a brand (Aaker, 1997, p.347) Aaker (2002) also explains that the personality of a human is similar to the personality of a brand and everything that links to the brand and which affects the personality of that brand. Brand personality therefore can drastically differentiate a website from its competitors even though they might be functionally and physically similar (Kim et al., 2001), thereby causing business environment to becoming more competitive and complicated in cyber space (Park, 2005) and thus leading most companies to venture online in



order to express the benefit of branding (Lindström & Andersen, 2000) As a result, Individuals spend most of their time browsing on websites rather than being committed in other media-based distractions such as television (TV) (Park, 2005) This has resulted in the fact that, the rate at which people use the internet stands around a rate of 23% of the 24 hours a day which is much more higher than the traditional media usage such as newspaper and TV (Morgan Stanley Dean Witter & Co., 2002). The youths spend approximately 17hrs a week longer than the amount of hours they spend on watching TV and listening to the radio. Web sites therefore, are not just an insignificant intermediate but have greatly become a significant opponent to the traditional mass media (Lindstrom & Andersen, 2000; Dayal et al., 2000) thus leading Lindström & Andersen, (2000) to state that, “ online brands should be seen as a person who also talks, listens, learns and reacts” (ibis, p.147). In a nutshell, an Online brand is an online-based brand for companies who originally were given birth in cyberspace, such as Yahoo or Amazon (Hue, 2001), and can be built up in numerous ways such as, Web sites, electronic mailings and mass-media advertisements. (Dayal, Landesberg, & Zeisser, 2000; Lindstrom & Andersen, 2000) Because of this, online branding therefore facilitates and saves customers’ time, thereby pushing them to go for the cheaper offering based on the access of lots of information on the internet. (Bergström, 2000).

## 1.1. Problem Discussion

In the traditional environment of in-store branding, most researchers do seem to come to a compromise on how it should be done, (Kim et al., 2001) but however, the question that arises here is how brand personality also applies in the cyberspace or the internet. (Park, 2005) Brand personality on websites and online has been researched by authors such as Park et al., (2005) but no clear picture of brand personality online could be found. One possible reason for this could be that this is still somehow tender for policies to be developed and accepted. (Park at al., 2005 and Aaker, 1997) Aaker (1997) therefore did come up with a brand personality dimension which included excitement, competence, sophistication, ruggedness and sincerity which represented the self-significant purpose that a product fills for the customer (Keller, 1993). Aaker’s (1997) dimension affects individuals in diverse ways.



Competence, excitement and sincerity affect consumers' instincts meanwhile ruggedness and sophistication fulfils what the customers wishes to be but is not. (Aaker, 1997). The validity of Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimension was however questioned by Sung & Tinkham (2005) and Chu & Sung (2011). These authors therefore tested Aaker's (1997) dimension on offline brands and arriving at varying results and a few adjustments that best suits their various cultures.

Sung & Tinkham (2005) therefore tested this Aaker's (1997) model in Korea and came up with "Passive Likeableness and Ascendancy" being a replacement to Aaker's (1997) Sincerity and Excitement. Meanwhile Chu & Sung (2011) tested Aaker's (1997) model in China leaving Ruggedness and Sincerity to be replaced with Trendiness, Joyfulness and Traditionalism. (Ibis) Park et al. (2005) on the other hand also questioned the validity of Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions and thereby tested Aaker's (1997) model on websites and came up with a modified version which includes, Bold, Analytical, friendly and Sophistication. Thus, taking out Competence, Excitement, Ruggedness and Sincerity completely away from the picture. Park et al., (2005) research was carried out based on websites and came out with a brand personality scale that could be used on online brands. However, it did come up with some limitations whereby, the study focused only on the visual aspects of Web sites for online brand personalities and also conducted in Korea, with Korean participants, and entirely in the Korean language. (Park, 2005, p.30) This equally makes it difficult to apply the study results to other countries without additional verification in those countries". (Park, 2005).

Web sites however have played an important role in branding and are also particularly significant for the brand personalities of online-based products and services, such as EBay whereby, consumers carry out their complete utilization process on the Web sites, gathering information on products, sorting and purchasing products, and even acquiring after-sales services. (Park, 2005) Web sites nowadays are being used to give a two-way individualized communication on the bases of selectivity and interactivity: meaning that, Web sites are fast becoming a very important tool for building online brand personalities, especially for those



companies that operate purely online (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998; Lindstrom & Andersen, 2000; Ansari & Mela, 2004).

Given that this field of research concerning the online environment is quit recent, it makes it harder to find researchers whose works have been used repetitively. This research therefore could still be suitable today than older outdated theories. In looking at the framework of Park et al. (2005), it is realized that, the traditional offline framework by Aaker (1997) seem to be different from their online brand personality frameworks. Aaker’s (1997) frameworks will not be used in this study reasons being that, it operates in the offline world and this study is based on the online brand personality. More so, Aaker’s (1997) brand personality dimension has been researched a couple times by other authors and in other cultures in the offline and thus came out with varying results and a few adjustments that best suits their various cultures.

Park et al’s (2005) personality framework will be used in this thesis based on the fact that it was tested in Korea and Park et al., (2005) model will now be explored in Sweden. The research question therefore addresses the brand personality online. In this light therefore, Park et al’s. (2005) framework will be tested among some online brands operating in the Swedish context. Table 1 below represents the respondents’ identification and description of online brand personality of the websites and how they use each of these dimensions to a lesser or greater degree

**Table 1:** Park et al., (2005), p. 18

<b>Park et al., (2005)</b>	
<b>Dimensions</b>	Facets
<b>Bold</b>	Gaudy, sexy, Frivolous, Arbitrary, Bold, Show-offy
<b>Analytical</b>	Analytical, Objective, Accurate, Detailed, Realistic



<b>Friendly</b>	Ingenuous, Warm, Gentle, Friendly
<b>Sophisticated</b>	Sophisticated, Liberal, luxurious, futuristic

## 1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how Park et al.'s (2005) Online Brand Personality is considered in the Swedish context.

## 1.3. Research Question

RQ1: How is Online Brand personality perceived in Sweden?

## 2. Literature Review

*In the previous chapter the background information of this research led to a problem discussion chapter, purpose and research question. In this chapter, a review of studies which have previously been studied and in relation to the research question will be provided. First off, theories of brand personality related to study of brand personality according to Aaker (1997) and followed by Park et al.'s (2005) online brand personality dimension. All these studies are included in the Theoretical Framework so as to illustrate clearly why Park et al.'s model will be used in this study as clearly stated in the problem discussion chapter.*

### 2.1. Brand Personality

According to Aaker (1997) brand personality is “a set of human characteristics associated with a brand”. If brands were said to be human, some examples of its features would be, manner, friends and clothes (ibid). Additionally, Sweeney & Brandon (2006) define brand personality as “the set of human personality traits that corresponds to the interpersonal domain of human personality are relevant to describing the brand as a relationship partner”.



(P.645) In the minds of a consumer, in order to decide if a brand suits him or her, brand personality turns out to be very important. (Plummer, 2001) This implies, the identification of a brand is greatly linked to word of mouth which indirectly links to a higher brand loyalty. (Kim et al., 2001). In order therefore to build a long term existing relationship between the consumer and the brand, there is that need for brand identification. (ibid) That which could help the consumer to sieve plenty of information on different available brands is brand personality. (Biel, 1992) Right up till 1997, there existed no study that gave a systematic, generalized and reliable scale or dimension which could be used to measure brand personality (Aaker, 1997). In this light, in order to understand how brand personality was perceived by customers, Aaker (1997) carried out an exploratory factor analysis. This study was based on developing a brand personality framework from relying on the constructs of human psychology and which could be best used to measure brand personality. (ibid.) According to Malin (1997), the same reason that fellow human beings choose who to mingle and socialize with is the same reason why brand personality is built. An attractive personality is trusted to be very much linked to a continuous and solid relation between the customer and the brand, and more so brand loyalty. (ibid) When a brand has a stronger identity that blends-in with that of the customer, the customer considers himself or herself very strong with the brand and thus, they both have a stronger relationship. (Hankinson and Cowking, 1993). This therefore brings the customer and the personality of a brand together and thus creates value for the customer in the form of self expression. (McEnally and Chernatony, 1999) This led to the thinking of Kim et al., (2001) to say that, “The greater the self expressive value of brand personality and the distinctiveness, the greater the attractiveness of the brand personality that will be.” (p. 198) That is, when there is some level of sameness arising between the self expression of consumers and brand personality, the consumer may tend to look at a brand as a companion or as human. (ibid) Kim et al., (2001) mentioned that, there is often that tendency where consumers use certain brands to communicate their personality and thereby classifying themselves as associates of a particular group. This is therefore known as “social identification.” (Ibid) The more strongly the attractiveness of brand personality is seen by



consumers, the more self expressive and distinctive brand personality will be. (Kim et al., 2001)

Based on the human personality Framework, Aaker (1997) developed the model of brand personality dimension and named it the “Brand Personality Scale” (BPS). BPS has five dimensions including Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness, inclusive of twenty-seven traits and fifteen facets that better explain and describe these five dimensions of brand personality. (Aker, 1997) The model that has thus been recognized and accepted as the core theory for brand personality development and research is the Aaker’s (1997) model. (Avis, 2012) But the question that often arises is whether these adjectives and descriptions can also be formulated for brands as it is with humans. (Plummer, 2001) But Aaker (1997) already clarified this by saying that, even though others may work well with brands as it is with human, some others may actually not work. This therefore led Sweeney and Brandon (2006) to conclude that, while some brands are somehow not wholesome, Aaker’s (1997) brand personality framework tends out to include only the attributes of a positive brand.

## **2.2. Online Brand Personality Dimension**

Even with the existence of the brand personality framework, it should be noted that, on a small fraction of its dimensions have actually been used for online purposes. (Park et al, 2005). More so, the studies carried out in Aaker’s (1997) brand personality model as afore mentioned lay emphasis just in the physical world meanwhile, Park et al., (2005) attempted to adapt Aaker’s (1997) framework to the online world and came out with varying results. The main goal of their findings therefore, was to identify online brand personality dimensions that are appropriate to Web sites. In order to analyze these associations, they conducted an exploratory factor analysis and a hierarchical cluster analysis with varimax rotation. Park et al’s (2005) analysis resulted in four e-brand personality factors which include Friendly, Sophisticated, Bold and Analytical. these dimensions can be elaborated on as follows;



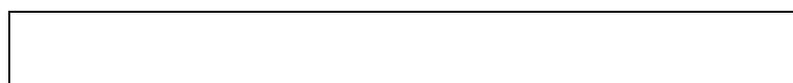
According to Park et al., (2005) *Friendly* personality is said to be recognized by its correspondence of location, size and color amongst objects. Secondly, a Web site is said to be sophisticated when figures that are being placed on the screen are distributed in an even manner including a visible influence of objects. Thirdly, in order for a person to be considered *Bold*, he or she is supposed to be bolder than the people in his or her surroundings. This similar belief relativity ought to be practical to e-brand personality, reasons being that, it was initially founded on the theory of human personality. (Aaker, 1997) And lastly, for a Website to be examined as *analytical*, it should have an analytical personality that is stronger than other analytical personalities and it should also have a weaker personality than the target personality of other websites. (Park et al., 2005)

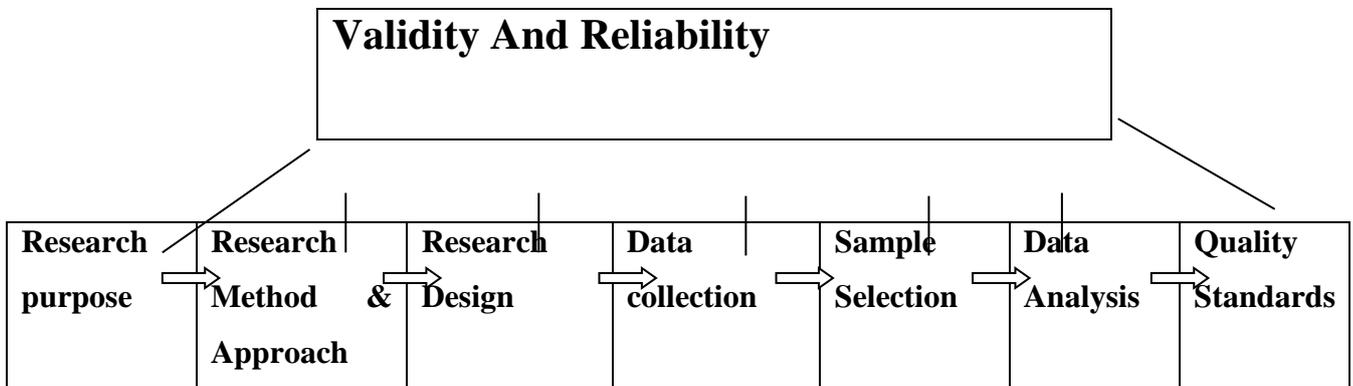
Among these four e-brand personality factors therefore, park et al., (2005) also came up with 19 personality adjectives. “Bold” consisted of the adjectives such as, gaudy, sexy, frivolous, arbitrary, bold, and show-offy. “Analytical” consisted of adjectives such as, analytical, objective, accurate, detailed, and realistic. “Friendly” consisted of adjectives such as, ingenuous, warm, gentle, and friendly. And lastly “Sophisticated” consisted of adjectives such as, sophisticated, liberal, luxurious, and futuristic. (Park et al, 2005) In summary, the four dimensions of online or e-brand personality together with the 19 personality adjectives identified and found them to be valid and reliable.(ibis) Park et al., (2005) dimension can be seen in the appendix 2.

### 3. Methodology

*This chapter explains how the study in this thesis is carried out. The discussion will circle around the issues of the research purpose, research method, research design, data collection, data analysis and the quality standards. The outline of the methodology chapter is shown in figure below.*

**Fig. 2**





### 3.1. Research Purpose: Exploratory

Bryman and Bell, (2007) define research design as a logical framework used in the collection and analysis of the empirical data. Research design therefore serves as a linkage between the initial set of questions and the final conclusion of these questions (Yin, 2009). A marketing research is usually associated with three main categories of research: exploratory research descriptive research and explanatory research (Yin, 2003)

- To describe simply means the researcher registers the facts and maps out a particular phenomenon. Descriptive research is used when the problem is clearly structured and the linkage that exists between the relation and the cause is low. (Malhotra and Birks, 2003). When describing a phenomenon, the researcher chooses terms and concepts, perspectives, observe, aspects, classifiers, register, systemize and interpret. (Ibid)
- An explanatory research is essential when there is a very high focus on the linkages between particular factors and the phenomena they cause. (Wiedersheim-Paul & Eriksson, 2006)
- Exploratory research therefore, is formulated in order to better understand the nature of a phenomenon. It is very well applied if the researcher does not have enough understanding towards the research project. The research is possibly more flexible, unstructured, and does not involve structured questionnaires (Malhotra and Birks, 2003).



Taking into consideration the purpose of this study, the explorative approach has been chosen based on the fact that, the study is more of a flexible nature and involves a set of unstructured interview questions rather than structured questions. This study is thus conducted to explore how Park et al.'s (2005) Online Brand Personality is considered in the Swedish context. The research question will also be answered, which is specialized on how an Online Brand's personality is perceived in Sweden in order to understand the phenomena.

### 3.2. Research Method: Qualitative

Bryman and Bell (2007) mention three types of research methods which includes, quantitative method, qualitative method and a combination of qualitative and quantitative method otherwise known as mixed methods.

Qualitative research and quantitative research therefore, are two different categories in terms of research strategy (Bryman and Bell, 2007). On the one hand, Quantitative research is defined as a strategy which focuses on the quantification aspect of data collection such as numbers of respondents.

On the other hand, qualitative research emphasizes on the quality of data which is able to get a deeper comprehension towards a research problem. (Bryman and Bell, 2007) More so, qualitative research is to make hypothesis or identify new variables which are subsequently tested in quantitative research. (Malhotra and Birks, 2003).

The combination of qualitative and quantitative research is called "mixed methods research" (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Arona and Stoner, 2009). Mixed research methods therefore combine both qualitative and quantitative approach in order to strengthen the breadth and depth of a research subject. (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007) It is therefore used when the application of either quantitative or qualitative is not satisfactory to resolve the problem (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).



When looked critically at this thesis, qualitative research best suits the exploratory approach. In particular, the online brand personality dimension of Park (2005) was tested in Korea. This research is set to verify the applicability of this model in the Swedish context which is better put in words than measured in numbers. Also, the limited timeframe makes this thesis rather small-scaled which is the case when qualitative data and research are chosen.

### 3.2.1. Research Approach: Deductive

Research approach is defined as a way to approach the research problem. There exist two types of research approaches: inductive and deductive. (Hyde, 2000) They both reflect the interactive relationship between relevant empirical data and theory (Bryman and Bell, 2007)

On the one hand, Inductive approach is referred to as the constitution of a new theory after the process of collecting and analyzing the empirical data. (Spens and Kovacs, 2006) Meanwhile on the other hand, deductive approach deals with the collection of relevant data based on an established theoretical framework. This thus permits the subsequent analysis of data in order to verify if the theory could be applied to a new context (Hyde, 2000).

The study is mainly deductive. This method is selected due to the same manner of method which has previously been used in brand personality studies. (Das, Guin and Datta, 2012).

### 3.3. Research Design: Cross Sectional

Research design is classified into five different types: experimental design, Cross sectional design, Case study design or social survey design, Comparative Design and longitudinal design (Bryman & Bell, 2007). *Experimental design* is carried out with the purpose of verifying, falsifying and establishing the validity of a hypothesis. It is pursued by alternating



variables in order to reach different effects. (Yin, 2009) Cross sectional design deals with the collection of data on more than one case at a single point in time which is thus examined to detect patterns of association. (Bryman & Bell, 2007) *Case study* design constructs an in-depth analysis towards a contemporary subject in a specific context. It involves the case of programs, processes, individuals, event, organizations, etc (Yin, 2009) In a Comparative Design, there exists a comparison between two or more cases. (Bryman & Bell, 2007) And lastly, Longitudinal design deals with social survey research on a sample of more than one occasion. (Ibid)

According to Bryman & Bell, (2007), a Cross sectional study could be applied as an appropriate design if the study deals with the collection of data from more than one case

Since this thesis focuses on more than one case, that is, studying more than one website, the choice of this study is cross sectional design. Referring back to this study, Park et al., (2005) online brand personality scales is applied as a cross sectional study in order to explore if the dimension could also be applicable to websites in Sweden. More so, this design is selected due to the following reasons. Firstly, it satisfies the first rationale of cross sectional since it is applied to multiple websites in Sweden and also constructed on the grounds of a well formulated model of brand personality in Korean sector. This model is applied on websites which specializes in online shopping in Sweden. The purpose is to examine if the model is still applicable in a new context. Alternatively, Park et al., (2005) scale is chosen based on the fact that it is an online brand personality dimension which has been tested in Korea but with few limitations such as, it being carried out in Korean language and used just the visuals of websites. The results from this study could be able to convincingly represent the online brand personality in Sweden. More information about Park et al., (2005) online brand personality scale is provided in online brand personality chapter and in Appendix 2.



### 3.4. Data Collection

Bryman and Bell, (2007) state that, Data collection method is built on the basis of research strategy. Based on these research strategies, the most suitable methods of collecting data are focus groups, in-depth interviews, content analysis, triangulation, surveys and structured observation

#### 3.4.1. Qualitative research interviews

Qualitative research interviews according to Bryman and Bell (2007) refer to either in depth interviews or group interview otherwise known as focus group. Morgan, (1998a) defines In-depth interviews as a form of one to one interviews meanwhile focus group or group interviews represent interviews that include several participants (six to ten) at the same time. Individual interviews can be classified into unstructured interviews and semi- structured. (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

With regards to the study purpose, semi structured interview is applied. Semi structured interviews are therefore constructed on a formal structure with a set of predetermined opened questions. However, the interviewee does not have to exactly follow the structure. Follow up questions could still be added during the interview and thus creating flexibility in order to strengthen the interviewee's opinion so as to further generate a soft flow of the conversation (Bryman and Bell, 2007). It also permits the interviewer to get a deeper understanding as regards the underlying beliefs, feelings and thoughts that are being expressed by the interviewee. (Ibis)

Bryman and Bell (2007) make mention that, some factors also need to be taken into consideration in order to conduct an in depth interview. They include, required skills for the interviewer, place to conduct the interview, type of questions to be asked, the quality of transcription and recording (Bryman and Bell, 2007). An appropriate place should be private, quite, being distant from the outside noise, spacious and airy enough so as to make the interviewee feel very comfortable. There also exist certain criteria that need to be fulfilled by the interviewer. They include, the interviewer has to be broad about the topic, clear and



straightforward to the main problem, must be able to behave gently and kindly to the respondents and most especially, be able to quickly interpret the interviewee’s responds and also remembering what they said previously. (Bryman and Bell, 2007)

Some questions that could also be suitably applicable for a semi structured interview includes, following up questions, introducing questions, direct questions, indirect questions and interpretation questions (Kvale, 1996).

With regards to this study, it is conducted on one method which is, In-depth interview. This is selected based on the fact that it suits the purpose and also aligns with previous researches which have been conducted before in the same research area. Interviews will therefore, supply us with rich qualitative data about the perceptions of consumers. The utilization of interviews therefore, is to get a deeper knowledge of online brand personality in the Swedish context. Table 3 presents the strengths and weaknesses of interviews.

**Table: 3. Source:** Denscombe, 2000, p. 161: Yin, 2003, p.86

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><b>Targeted:</b> Centers directly on the case study topic</p> <p><b>Depth:</b> Interviews are appropriate for obtaining deep and detailed data</p> <p><b>Equipment:</b> Does not need expensive equipment</p>	<p><b>Bias:</b> poorly constructed questions Response bias</p> <p><b>Inaccurate:</b> Poor recall</p> <p><b>Reflexivity:</b> interviewee gives the interviewer what he/she wants to hear</p>

### 3.4.2. Operationalization



Operationalization is the process by which specific and available definitions of a phenomena are created, which are further converted into a set of quantifiable items whereby specific questions are then formulated upon. (Bryman & Bell, 2007)

As regards to the interviews, ten interviews were conducted. Questions were asked in a similar way among all ten respondents whereby the author aimed to explore how Park et al., (2005) model is considered in the Swedish context.

A list of five websites are presented to the respondents. The questions asked to the respondents are mostly follow-up questions and a few questions which are solely based on online brand personality. The questions were divided up into three parts.

In the first part, their shopping habits and choice of company are discussed. Questions such as, why they choose to shop online and from the particular company website were asked. In the second part, questions about the online experiences are discussed with the main question being, describing their chosen website as though it were human. This section appears to be the most important section because it clearly portrays the personality of the various websites, how they are recognized by their location, size and color, how visible the websites are, how figures are being placed on the screen, how bold they are in comparison to other people in their surroundings, how strong their analytical personality is, and how weak their personality is as compared to the target personality of other websites. Lastly, part three discusses about the respondent's profile. For example, age, occupation, and status.

The research purpose of study applied in this thesis is mainly exploratory. A cross sectional study has therefore been conducted using in-depth interviews as the major data collection method. The companies and respondents were chosen with a non random selection method. A convenient sample selection was also used based on the fact that, the companies were chosen to make an equivalent to the group of possible available respondents.



### 3.5. Sample Selection

The Sample explains how the interviewed respondents were chosen and on which company the focal point of the study lies. Sampling frame consists of all elements and characteristics of the population from which sample is structured. (Bryman and Bell, 2007) Sampling in a qualitative research includes setting boundaries in order to find aspects which the case can be connected directly to the research. (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

#### 3.5.1. Company Selection

The case was aimed at exploring the brand personality of online brand personality in Sweden. The selection of these companies is therefore carried out based on the fact that, they own websites which operate only online and popularly known by the respondents. These companies include; Zalando.se, Nelly.se, Cdon.com, Bonprix.se and Fyndiq.se. These choices were made based on the reason that, they are common online shops well established and very much common amongst young people. Also, in representing the online brand personality in the Swedish context based on just one online shop “say Nelly”, will be biased and not reliable enough because “Nelly” in this case is not the only and most visited online shop in Sweden. Thus, a couple of online shops were necessary so that the results will be reliable to an extent favorable enough. The focus of the case study is online brand personality and therefore, the interview is centered in just letting the respondents to think just about the above websites and that which they choose to be interviewed upon.

#### 3.5.2. Respondent Selection and Size

Interviews were conducted. And ten respondents were thereby selected. This number was arrived upon based on the fact that the saturation point was reached at the 10<sup>th</sup> respondent. This is such that, the responses provided by the respondents began repeating themselves. So far, all ten respondents were frequent visitors and also matched the criteria for the interview which is, the respondents must be living in Sweden, must have shopped from at least one of the online shops selected and must be fluent in English language



Among these ten respondents were four males and six females. When using interviews it is very much normal to choose the respondents based upon their knowledge of the research area. (Remenyi et al., 1998) Since the focus on how brand personality can be perceived by consumers is based on Zalando.se, Nelly.se, Cdon.com, bonprix.se and Fyndiq.se websites, the respondents have been chosen based upon their knowledge in the study area. The respondents therefore have shopped from at least one of the following websites and in the age group of 20 to 40 years old. They were selected through a convenience sampling selection whereby, respondents are simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility. (Bryan & Bell, 2007) The decision to use this selection was to get a deeper knowledge of online brand personality in the Swedish context. The Sample selection thus resulted to four males and six females and all ten respondents were interviewed about websites whereby each respondent was allowed to choose one website from among the five websites provided by the interviewer.

### 3.6. Data Analysis

Yin (2003) states that, before the Data gathered from a case study can be analyzed, the researcher has the responsibility to choose a general analytical strategy. This thesis has relied on the theoretical plan of Park et al's (2005) online brand personality dimension brought about by Aaker's (1997) model whereby, the collection of Data is based on the research question that was specified from the purpose. Miles and Huberman (1994) also highlight that, a within-case analysis involves comparing the data that has been collected with the relevant theory.

According to Malhotra & Birks, (2003), the researcher should use four different steps when carrying out a qualitative Data analysis. This includes Data Assembly, data reduction, data display and Data verification. Data assembly deals with gathering data from various sources based on the method applied. (Ibid) With regards to in-depth interviews in this case, data is thus retrieved from the respondents with the help of tape recording, observation and note



taking during the interview. Data reduction helps to organize and focus the data for a better ground in order to draw conclusions from. (Ibid) It therefore describes the data filtering process. Thus, irrelevant data will be removed from the study. Data reduction also involves data coding which means that, data is separated into discrete amount with diverse labels. (Ibid) Data display on the other hand enables the reduced data to be further compressed and organized so as to make the process of drawing conclusions easier. And lastly, data verifications refers to the details of the data structure and how the its meaning and theoretical concepts connect together. (Malhotra & Birks, 2003)

In this study therefore, the four steps and the process of data analysis holds together. It holds true in that, note taking and tape recording are used to record the answers of the respondents. Secondly, data is filtered and only those related to online brand personality are maintained. Thirdly, the category and different characteristics are grouped into significant dimensions based on the theoretical framework and its meaning. Lastly, the existing model of Park et al., (2005) online brand personality is modified and both new and current dimensions are combined. The model according to the author's interpretation is thus made simple by selecting and sorting out similar attributes.

### **3.7. Quality Standard**

There exist two main criteria that are applied in order to measure the research quality. They include validity and reliability. ( Bryman and Bell, 2007)

#### **3.7.1. Qualitative Validity**

Validity measures concepts and involves, construct validity, content validity and external validity. Construct validity creates a measurement whereby, the data collected is specified to fit in with the concept that is being studied (Yin, 2003). Content validity refers to the personal evaluation of a survey's content which is achieved by expert's review and the prospective respondents before commencing with the collection of the data procedure (Litwin,



1995). And lastly, External validity is such that, the findings are generalized across social settings. (Bryman & Bell, 2007)

### 3.7.2. Qualitative Reliability

According to Bryman & Bell (2007) Reliability involves internal reliability and external reliability. Internal reliability is such that there exist more than one observer whereby the research team members agree upon what they hear and see while external reliability is the degree to which a study can be duplicated. (ibis)

### 3.7.3. Ethical Issues

It is somehow hard in getting a clear definition of what the term ethical really means. Ethics could be said to mean values, but again contradicted with the fact that, there exists other type of values such as, aesthetic and political values. (Martyn, 2015) Despite the uncertain meaning of ethical, it is most commonly referred to as, a set of conducted norms which distinguishes the differences that therein between unacceptable and acceptable manners or behavior during a research process.(Ibis)

Some Ethical principles among which Shamoo & Resnik (2009) did mentioned includes, Honesty, objectivity, Integrity, Carefulness, Openness, Respectfulness, Confidentiality, non-discrimination

Shamoo & Resnik (2009) thus explain these ethical principle as such. *Honesty* is vital in that, the results gotten and the method used in acquiring these results gotten are not falsified and data not misinterpreted which results in deceiving the respondents or the public. Another important principle is being *objective* in that, biased interpretation of information is avoided. Thus, the researcher has to always inform the respondents about the information they intend to send out to the public so that it does not disclose personal information without their permission. *Integrity* also plays an important role such that, the researcher is bound to be consistent and keep to promises. The researcher has to be very *Careful* in that, negligence and



careless errors should be avoided. Thereby, keeping good records of the research activities. *Openness* on the other hand is equally important in that, the researcher has to put to the table what the research is all about, open to critics and how the results are intended to be used. The *Respect* for academic Property is bound to be respected in that, proper acknowledgement for all the contributions of the research must be given. *Confidentiality* also must be maintained, thereby, the researcher has no right to disclose information without the consent of the public or respondents. The *discriminations* that do sometimes exist against students, colleagues, race, sex, and ethnicity should be avoided. (Ibis)

In this regard, all respondents were given short introductions of why they were being interviewed, where their contributions were aimed at, and they were also aware of the fact that they were being recorded. The author also informed the respondents that their privacy will be maintained as most of them opted for anonymity. All ten respondents agreed to be contacted further if answers were not clear enough. It is in this light that, even though their statuses have been mentioned, names have been omitted and rather replaced with codes so as to better protect their privacies. All ten respondents had to choose one company from among the five selected companies. This was such that, they were allowed to choose just one company among the 5 companies presented and that which they had great insights about and more likely to express themselves. All respondents were quoted on just what they were able to respond to, and what they provided with no added information. Lastly, there was so far no such discrimination of sex or race because the respondents were selected randomly based on familiarity and the knowledge they had in the websites they chose to be interviewed upon.

It can also be noted that, some companies appeared more than others. This goes by to show that, amongst the online companies, some companies were more visited than others based on what they sell. With this, the author was convinced that the respondents gave honest responses based on the fact that they did not contradict themselves thinking about multiple online stores at a time when responding to the questions being asked.



### 3.8. Summary

The interviews conducted were done face to face and in English language because of the problem of translating the adjectives that there-in in the Park et al., (2005) brand personality model. Also, for fear that both validity and reliability would be negatively affected should the brand personality adjectives be translated. More so, since all ten respondents that were chosen spoke fluently and had a great knowledge in English language, it made it easier to interact with them, and thus provide a convenient, reliable and valid result unlike if a translation was made. The interviews were also recorded and some notes being taken down too. The respondents were also comfortable with more meetings if need be.

Content validity is thus approved based on the fact that, the question list for the in-depth interviews is reviewed by the tutor before the commencement of the interview. The Tutor indicated that, the questions were understandable and the concept of working with websites is clear. Construct validity is also assured by the use of taking down notes and recording in the course of the interview. When it comes to external validity, it is attained based on the fact that, the result could be generalized. Also, the reliability between data transcription and data recording is attained, and internal reliability reached based on the fact that, two steps are accomplished by a single person. External reliability on the other hand could also be achieved since this study is a starting point in developing online brand personality for websites in Sweden. Future researches could be carried out by imitating this study and situating it in another context.

## 4. Empirical Data

*The methodology chapter gave details of how the data was collected and this chapter now gives details on the collection of data for the study in this thesis. The empirical data is gathered from ten interviews where same questions geared towards all five websites are being asked to all ten respondents. The first part of this chapter introduces the interviewees and the coding system and the second part presents qualitative data from ten in depth interviews*



### 4.1. Interviewee Presentation

The interviewees were ten in number. Four males and six females. Ranging between 25 and 37 years old.

The first interviewee was a 27 year old Female graduate in Economics. She will be referred to as 1FOP (Female in the online Brand Personality). The second interviewee is a female 26 year old female and a holder in masters Degree in Marketing. She will be referred to as 2FOP. The third interviewee is a 31 years old male who works at IKEA and lives with his wife and two kids. He will be referred to as 3MOP (Male in the online Brand Personality). The fourth interviewee is a 32 year old male. Works at a supermarket and has a wife and two children. He will be referred to as 4MOP. The fifth interviewee is a 35 year old male who worked at a Hotel. He will be referred to as 5MOP. The sixth interviewee is a 29 year old female who works as a nurse. She has two children and a husband. She will be referred to as 6FOP. The seventh interviewee is a 37 year old female who works at the Kindergarten and lives with her husband and two year old daughter. She will be referred to as 7FOP. The eighth interviewee is a 28 year old Female at the University. She will be referred to as 8FOP. The ninth interviewee is a 36 year old female who works as a Stylist. She is single and will be referred to as 9FOP. And lastly, the tenth interviewee is a 37 year old Male with a son and wife. He is a makeup artist and owns a beauty salon. He will be referred to as 10MOP. The table below provides a summary of all eight respondents and the coding system which has been used.

**Table 4**

Respondents	Description	Age (Years)	Coding	Chosen Choice
1	Female	27	1FOP	Zalando.se
2	Female	26	2FOP	Zalando.se
3	Male	31	3MOP	Zalando.se
4	Male	32	4MOP	CDon.com
5	Male	35	5MOP	Nelly.se
6	Female	29	6FOP	Nelly.se



7	Female	37	7FOP	Bonprix.se
8	Female	28	8FOP	Nelly.com
9	Female	36	9FOP	Fyndiq.se
10	Male	37	10MOP	Fyndiq.se

Table 4 represents the respondents. All ten respondents are familiar with, and had shopped either from Zalando.se, Nelly.se, Cdon.com or Fyndiq.se websites, and they fall between the age group of 25 to 40 years old.

## 4.2. Data from in-depth Interviews

*This sections aims at presenting data from all ten interviews and for each respondent individually and also showing the adjectives they chose and additional descriptions for them.*

The first interviewee is a 27 year old female and a university graduate in Economics. She frequently buys from Zalando and had visited Zalando website the last few days before the interview. She buys mostly clothes and shoes from Zalando. She chooses to buy online because she is not satisfied with the shops she has around her, because it is cheaper and also because of the so many choices to choose from, different styles and also because she wants to make a difference in her community due to the fact that most or all the shops around her carry one and the same items. She first saw Zalando advertisement on TV, and then heard from friends too. When the question about what motivates her to buy at Zalando was asked, she said it is not just because of the price because they do have some very expensive items too, but because of the flexibility of shipping. That is, being able to post the items back to Zalando for free if you were not satisfied with the items unlike being stuck with the items even if you don't want them because of the expensive return fee or because of hidden information that other websites provide was a go option. She also thinks Zalando is reliable and detailed because of the information they provide on their site.



When the question of describing about Zalando as a human was asked, she said Zalando will be a female who is gaudy, because she sells flashy items at moderate prices, friendly because she communicate with her customers in a nice manner, luxurious because she is expensive. She is realistic for the fact that the shipping is free with no other hidden costs, she is accurate based on the fact that she provides fast shipping, She is Sexy because each time she buys the items she sells, it makes her (Interviewee) sexy, and she gives detailed information of products with great analysis and thereby making her very Analytical.

The second interviewee is 26 years old and a masters Degree holding in Marketing. She has been on Zalando a couple of times but has not been there in the last two weeks because she didn't have money. She visits Zalando very often and even more close to the end of the month in search of items that she will buy for herself at the end of the month. She is motivated to buy online because it is cheaper than most expensive brands and it is convenient to find what you want. She thinks Zalando is Accurate with the information it provides to its customers and thinks Zalando is reliable.

When the question about describing Zalando as a human was asked, she said she will describe Zalando as a female who is Honest because she gives a detailed information about products, costs and is a real person because she sticks to what she says with no additional or hidden costs. She also describes Zalando as a very open minded person because she is kind to let you try her dresses at home and if you are not satisfied with what you actually see, you are free to send it back within 30 days if you have not used the product. She also thinks Zalando is Luxurious because they have some really expensive products that are also very nice. It just depends on how much you are ready to pay for the item. She also thinks Zalando is Friendly because once she tried to contact the customer service to find out about items that were out of stock, they were very patient to listen to her even sometimes when she shouted at them on the phone. She also says Zalando has a very warm behavior and always makes sure that the customers are satisfied. This respondent also admits that Zalando is the only shop that she has



bought most of her dresses without being afraid of how it will look on her because they give detailed product information.

The third respondent is a male. 31 years old and a worker at IKEA who lives with his wife and two kids. He buys at Zalando but he is not a frequent buyer. He says he buys from Zalando because he thinks it is convenient for him, due to the nature of his job. He says he works six times a week and has just one day to spend with his kids. So going around and doing shopping with them is not a great idea. He says searching Zalando for 30 minute is enough to get what he wants because the website is quite easy to go about.

When he was asked to describe Zalando as a Human, he felt so emotional to an extent and expressed his feelings by saying that, he will describe Zalando as a very friendly person because it helps him at times when he cannot make quick choices because of the detailed information it provides which makes it very easy for him to buy stuff very fast and have time for himself and family. He also describes Zalando as a real person because he sees him as an adviser of how he should dress and is also very playful with its models and how products are presented on the website.

The fourth respondent is a 32 years old Male who works at a Supermarket. He buys very often from Cdon.com and is addicted to the site so much so that he sometimes has the urge to buy on credit when he runs out of cash. He mostly buys electronics and mobile appliances from the website and says he loves CDON because their items are very affordable and cheap. He thinks going about CDON website is quite easy, well built and also gives accurate and detailed information about their products sometimes. He also mentions that there have been few disappointments with some items. But admits will give a favorable 7 on 10 mark in the overall shopping.



When asked to describe CDON as a human being, he said he will consider CDON website as easy-going, assessable and understanding. But could also be misleading sometimes because for example, some items may be grouped together mean while just one of the items are being advertised and sold. But even so, it is still friendly to its customers and also has a very polite and warm attitude put forward when responding to its customers. He also describes CDON as being honest because it has no hidden costs.

The fifth interviewee is a male. 35 years old and works at a Hotel. He chooses to buy online because it is convenient for him because he spends most of his time at work and really hates going about to look for stuff all by himself. He also notes that he does spend very little time on Nelly.se website because it is very analytical and easy to look for what you want.

When asked to describe Nelly as a human, he said, he will consider Nelly as a stylish person because it has different styles for males, females and even children. He said Nelly is a very luxurious person with an open mind that is willing to listen to you at anytime. He said Nelly is also very friendly because of its willingness to help at any time when stocked and don't know what to do. He also said Nelly gives detailed product information, is a real human being because of its honesty especially when it comes to product prices and no hidden costs are involved.

The sixth interviewee is a 29 year old nurse who lives with her two children and her husband. She admits she likes to shop from Nelly website a lot and says she buys from other offline and online stores too but when it comes to class, she gives thumbs up to Nelly. She says she is a very busy lady and spends most of her time with her family when she is not working but she still manages to browse on Nelly website because she thinks it is time saving. She says Nelly website provides detailed information about their products which makes it easier to shop. She also noted that Nelly places their products randomly on their website but you can choose to arrange them according to price, recent items, and so on.



When asked to describe Nelly as a person, she said that was quite tricky but went ahead to say that, she thinks Nelly is a female with a great objective that aims at satisfying her customers. She provides detailed information of her products with accurate descriptions. She thinks Nelly is a show-offy person because she always provides good designs that stands out when compared to other brands. She thinks Nelly is a stylish and sexy person based on the products she puts out to the market. Lastly, she says that, she has never had a difficulty shopping at Nelly and thus thinks Nelly is a very honest and friendly person, with a polite way of talking to her customers.

The seventh interviewee is a 37 year old female who works at Kindergarten and lives with her husband and 2 year old daughter. She chooses to buy at Bonprix because she thinks the website is advanced and reliable and most preferable to her than other online shops that she has visited. She admits that she likes to dress in a matured way and Bonprix suits her desires. She also says that she has not been too lucky with other online shops she has bought from in the past because of hidden information and lack of honesty. But with Bonprix, she has never gone wrong. She first heard about it from a friend who blasted the website as being fake and sells items of low quality. But she said, that it actually depends on what one chooses to go for. One always gets what they pay for. She also says that, Bonprix is an advanced and sophisticated online shop.

When she was asked how she will describe Bonprix as a person, she said to her Bonprix is very flashy and sexy. Has a great objective to satisfy its customers by providing detailed and accurate product information on all products on its website. She also thinks Bonprix is honest with the information it provides to its customers. She sees Bonprix's personality as friendly, warm and reliable to its customers rather than misleading them.

The eighth interviewee is a 28 year old Female and an international student studying at the University. She heard about Nelly from a TV advert and became so interested. She said she



first tried the website by buying just a single item and the quality was on point. All descriptions about the item was detailly explained and straight to the point. She said since then she has always bought from Nelly because she has never felt sexy in her dresses since she moved to Sweden. She also thinks the customer service is very friendly in that, she once bought a wrong color of the item she had to buy and when she tried to contact them, they helped her promptly but the downside was, they could not change the order because this website does not cancel orders. Instead, they ask the customer to send the items back once they've received them and a full refund will be made. And upon sending the package, she was charged extra for returning it. She said she felt betrayed because the customer service had not given her this information. When asked if she wasn't afraid of theft, she responded that, for a renowned company like Nelly, it is very difficult for them to cheat on their customers.

When asked to describe Nelly as a person, she said, in the best of her knowledge, Nelly is a sexy, stylish and friendly girl who aims at providing the best fashion to males, females and children. She admits Nelly is a very honest person and sees to it that, her customers are well dressed. Nelly gives detailed information of what her products are and she is very much advanced when it comes to fashion. But she thinks that Nelly does not disclose some hidden costs and is sometimes considered untrustworthy

The ninth interviewee is a 36 year old female who works as a Stylist. She says she first heard about Fyndiq.se from a friend and was so eager to try it out. The first purchase from Fyndiq turned out really attractive with an unexpected price. She states that Fyndiq is diverse and sells almost everything one is looking for; from indoors to outdoors and fashion. She says Fyndiq has multiple sellers with different prices which makes it even more easy to choose what favors you best. She says the website is so confusing and choked up. One has to have been used to online shopping and how it works to be able to go about Fyndiq website. she mostly buys stuff from her saloon and the quality is just amazing and very much affordable.



When asked to describe Fyndiq as a person, she said it has very unique with affordable, provides very detailed information about the website’s laws, and gives access to customers to be able to get in contact with its sellers. But also says that it is a very disorganized and choked up person. Thus making it difficult to browse through it.

The tenth interviewee is a 37year old Male with a son and wife, who owns a beauty salon and is a makeup artist. He said he came across Fyndiq website when he was browsing on the internet and then the website popped out on his screen as an advertisement. At first he thought it was a virus or a some kind of scam. But when he opened up the site, he realized that it was the best thing for his business. He says he has since then, placed so many orders and this has really helped him to boost profit since he also sells makeup. He says Fyndiq is very accurate in giving product information and also has a speedy delivery whereby your items are secure and well packed.

When asked to describe Fyndiq as a person, he said, it is very competitive put to the fact that, there are multiple sellers for common items with varied prices. He also says Fyndiq is a reliable and polite person because of the way it provides responses to ones questions. Even though it is not so easy to talk directly to Fyndiq, there is still a clear section where one can get majority answers, he says. In regards to this, he says Fyndiq is explicit and open-minded.

**Table 5**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Description as a Person</b>
1FOP	Friendly, reliable, detailed, gaudy, luxurious, realistic, accurate, Analytical, Sexy
2FOP	Accurate, reliable, Honest, detailed, real, open minded, Luxurious, Friendly, warm



3MOP	Friendly, detailed, real
4MOP	Accessible, accurate, detailed, understanding, warm, friendly, Honest, affordable, cheap, misleading, easy-going
5MOP	Convenient, easy, Stylish, friendly, accurate, real, honest, analytical, luxurious, open mind, detailed
6FOP	Detailed, time-saving, easy, satisfying, objective, accurate, show-offy, stylish, sexy, honest, friendly
7FOP	Reliable, advanced, sophisticated, flashy, sexy, objective, detailed, accurate, friendly, warm, honest
8FOP	Sexy, stylish, friendly, honest, detailed, advanced, untrustworthy
9FOP	Attractive, diverse, easy, confusing, choked up, affordable, unique, detailed, disorganized
10MOP	Accurate, secure, competitive, reliable, polite, explicit, open-minded

The table 5 gives a summary of the items being mentioned by all ten interviewees.

**Table 6**



1) Gaudy	2) playful
3) Luxurious	4) show-off
5) Realistic	6) objective
7) Accurate	8) stylish
9) Analytical	10) advanced
11) Sexy	12) warm
13) Reliable	14) Accurate
15) Honest	16) Friendly
17) Real	18) Detailed
19) Disorganized	20) Accessible
21) time-saving	22) Understanding
23) satisfying	24) Unique
25) untrustworthy	26) Affordable
27) Attractive	28) Convenient
29) Confusing	30) secure
31) Diverse	

Table 6 gives a rundown of the objectives mentioned by the respondents. In all, thirty-one items were mentioned by the ten interviewees. Some words meant the same even though they were used differently. These words were put together are as follows; Reliable, Real, was linked with Realistic, Flashy was linked with Gaudy, playful was linked with Frivolous, stylish linked with sophisticated, Open minded and explicit linked with Liberal, Honesty linked with Ingenious, advanced linked with Futuristic, Chocked-up linked with disorganized, cheap and affordable have been merged together to give a new name affordable, Satisfying has been replaced with contentment, easy and convenient have also been merged together to give a new name convenient.



## 5. Data Analysis

*In this chapter, the empirical data realized in chapter 4 is analyzed. It thus covers the information in regards to the research question.*

With the treats put together by Park et al., (2005) there have been 12 other traits that have been added to their online brand personality dimension mentioned by the interviewees so as to clearly identify the personality of online brands. The following traits below have been mentioned. Time-saving, contentment, untrustworthy, Attractive, Confusing, Disorganized, Affordable, Unique, Diverse, Accessible, Understanding, Convenient and secure. Table 7 clearly illustrates it.

**Table 7**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Additional Items</b>
1	Time-saving
2	contentment
3	Untrustworthy
4	attractive
5	confusing
6	Disorganized
7	Affordable
8	Unique
9	Assessable
10	understanding
11	Convenient
12	Secure
13	Diverse



A total of 31 items have been put together to describe the brand personality of online brands. The final question that involves describing the various websites as though they were a person, 27 items are selected as the most important traits that best describes the personality of online brands. These 27 items have subsequently been selected by the ten interviewees.

1FOP : Friendly, detailed, gaudy, luxurious, realistic, accurate, Analytical, Sexy

2FOP: Ingenious, detailed, liberal, Luxurious, Friendly, warm

3MOP: Friendly, detailed, real, frivolous

4MOP: Accessible, accurate, detailed, understanding, warm, friendly, ingenious, affordable, misleading, convenient

5MOP: Convenient, Stylish, friendly, accurate, realistic, ingenious, luxurious, liberal, detailed

6FOP: Detailed, contentment, objective, accurate, show-offy, sophisticated, sexy, Ingenious, friendly

7FOP: Gaudy, sexy, objective, detailed, accurate, friendly, warm, Ingenious

8FOP: Sexy, sophisticated, friendly, Ingenious, detailed, Futuristic, untrustworthy

9FOP: affordable, unique, detailed, disorganized

10MOP: competitive, realistic, polite, liberal

After merging and renaming most of the items, there therefore exists 27 items in general that have been mentioned by the interviewees. Park et al.'s (2005) online brand personality model has four main dimensions and nineteen traits as seen in *Appendix 2*. But after the interview had been carried out, a couple of traits from Park et al., (2005) Model have been taken out and replaced with information gathered during the interview from respondents. So far, two dimensions have been included in the already existing four, making it all together six dimensions. Table 8 below thus illustrates these changes and adjustments.



Table 8.

Framework	Dimension	Traits
Park's (2005) Online Brand Personality Framework	Bold	Gaudy
		Sexy
		Bold
		Show-offy
	Analytical	Analytical
		Objective
		Accurate
		Detailed
		Realistic
		secure
	Friendly	Friendly
		Warm
		Gentle
		Understanding
		Convenient
		Accessible
	Sophisticated	Sophisticated
		Liberal
		Luxurious
	Contentment	contentment
		Time-saving
Affordable		
Untrustworthy	Untrustworthy	
	Disorganized	
	Confusing	



The two dimensions that have been added so far includes “contentment” and “Untrustworthy”. The trait *Secure* has been added to the dimension “Analytical” because it analyses the level of security which the interviewees had while shopping online. *Accessible, convenience and understanding* have also been added to the dimension “Friendly” because it best explains how the interviewees were able to go about the various websites. Thus making the websites browse-friendly. The Dimension “contentment” includes *time-saving and affordability* that were also mentioned by the interviewees. This is to show how better it was to shop online due to prices and how it saved their time rather than going from one offline shop to another. And finally, the dimension “Untrustworthy” includes items that were also mentioned by the respondents. It is realized that, Park et al., (2005) model does not include negative traits meaning, all is fine shopping online. But, some respondents were able to give some negative points that they faced while shopping online. And these traits include some websites being *disorganized and confusing* which thereby causes difficulties in getting to what they wanted. Also, the traits *Frivolous and Arbitrary* have been removed from dimension “Bold” because it was mentioned by none of the ten respondents.

## 6. Conclusions and Findings

Taking into consideration the analysis of the in-depth interviews, a total of thirty-one items have been put together to describe the online brand personality in Sweden. And grouped into six dimensions which include Bold, Friendly, Analytical, Sophisticated, Untrustworthy and contentment. These items were realized through a face-to-face interview of ten interviewees. Based on this interviews, the final question that involved describing all five websites as though they were a person, resulted to twenty-seven items being selected as the most important traits that best describes the personality of online brands. These twenty-seven items have subsequently been selected by all the ten interviewees. The dimensions that were mostly mentioned by the respondents include, Analytical and Friendly dimensions. The most mentioned traits were accurate, detailed, realistic, ingenuous, friendly, and sophisticated. This



is to show that, online brands provides the most precise and comprehensive information to those who visit the websites so as to make things easy and efficient when buying online. It's no doubt that it saves time thanks to the friendly environment that most of these websites have. This therefore goes by to conclude that Park et al's (2005) online brand personality dimension that was tested in the Korean population has also worked in the Swedish context with a few additions while leaving out Frivolous and Arbitrary which did not favor the Swedish context.

## 6.1. Discussion and Future Research

In this research, the customers' view on brand personality online was perceived and that was what was investigated. That which was not investigated was how Cdon, Zalando, Nelly, Fyndiq and Bonprix want to be perceived. And whether or not they want to be perceived as a single brand personality or more brand personalities was also not investigated.

Since just the views of customers were included in this research, in future, the views of the companies could also be included so as to be able to tell if what the customers see is what these companies intended for it to be perceived.

This research included just current customers who shopped from Cdon, Zalando, Nelly, Fyndiq and Bonprix . It could also be interesting to see how these websites could be viewed by those who just visit but have never made purchases. This might provoke either a less positive or maybe an unclear view of the brand personalities of these websites.

Also, it is noted that there exists no negative adjectives in Park et al.'s (2005). This is to the fact that, a real personality must not include only positive adjectives. In this regard, negative dimensions could also be included in the brand personality, it may provide a more complex and detailed image of the real world.



Also, most of the interviewees had mostly positive reviews about the experiences and how they see Cdon, Zalando, Nelly, Fyndiq and Bonprix websites. It will also be interesting to search for mostly unsatisfied customers so as to get their own view of what they think about shopping online.

It could be realized that most of the adjectives that represents Cdon, Zalando, Nelly, Fyndiq and Bonprix brand were mentioned by a lesser amount of respondents. Reasons may also be that the in-depth interview and a qualitative method was not favorable enough. So in the future, doing a quantitative research might yield interesting results with amazing and clear figures.

Also, Park et al., (2005) method has now been explored just in the Swedish context. It will be interesting to how this model will look like if it is tested in other countries with different cultures.

Since this research was applied to multiple companies that were born and only existed online, it would be interesting to see how the results will turn out if the research was applied to companies that were not online born. That is, companies that operate both online and offline or in-store.

The result gotten from this study could contribute to a future building of the online brand personality in the Swedish context. This is to say, future researchers can examine the relationship that therein between Park et al., (2005) model and the modified model gotten from this study so as to get the online brand personality in the Swedish context.



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## Appendixes

### Appendix 1.

Dimension	Facet	Traits
<b>Sincerity</b>	Down-to-earth	Down-to-earth Family Oriented Small town
	Honest	Honest Sincere Real
	Wholesome	Wholesome Original
	Cheerful	Cheerful Sentimental



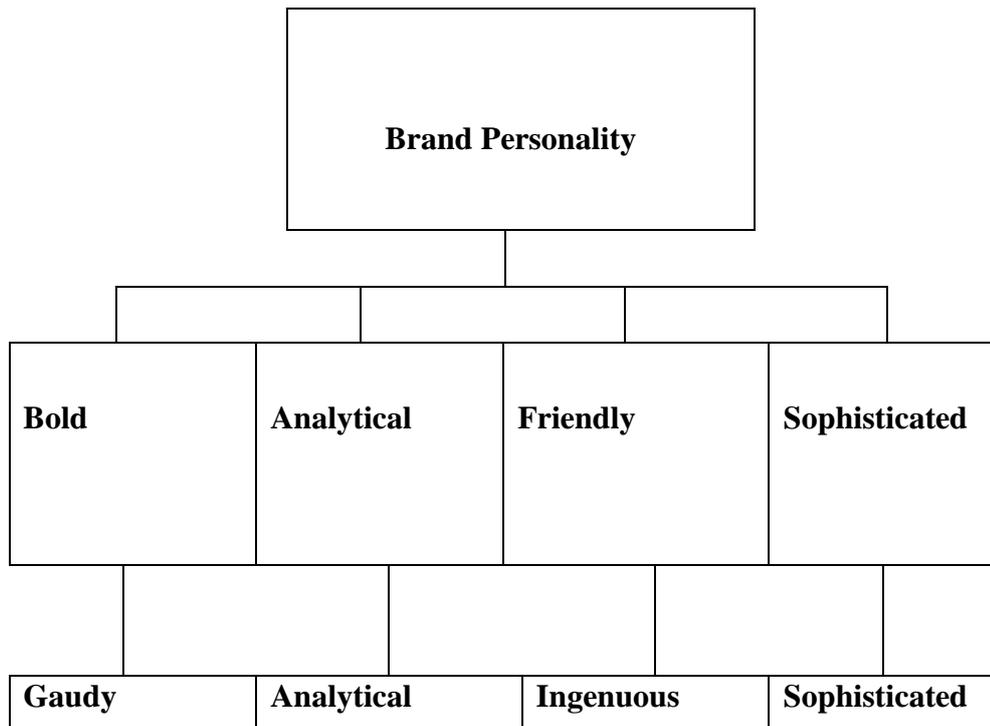
		Friendly
<b>Excitement</b>	Daring	Daring Trendy Exciting
	Spirited	Spirited Cool Young
	Imaginative	Imaginative Unique
	Up-to-date	Up-to-date Independent Contemporary
<b>Competence</b>	Reliable	Reliable Hardworking Secure
	Intelligent	Intelligent Technical Corporate
	Successful	Successful Leader Confident
<b>Sophistication</b>	Upper Class	Upper Class Glamorous Good-looking
	Charming	Charming Feminine Smooth

<b>Ruggedness</b>	Outdoorsy	Outdoorsy Masculine Western
	Tough	Tough Rugged

*Source: Aaker, 1997*

*Appendix 2*

*Online brand personality framework Source: Park et al., 2005, p. 18*





<b>Sexy</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Warm</b>	<b>Liberal</b>
<b>Frivolous</b>	<b>Accurate</b>	<b>Gentle</b>	<b>Luxurious</b>
<b>Arbitrary</b>	<b>Detailed</b>	<b>Friendly</b>	<b>Futuristic</b>
<b>Bold</b>	<b>Realistic</b>		
<b>Show-offy</b>			

Appendix 3

Questions

**Part 1: Shopping Habits.**

1. Why do you choose to buy online?

**Part II: Experiences**

2. What do you know about (chosen website)?
3. Where did you first hear about (chosen website)?
4. What reasons motivates you to visit (chosen website)?
5. How often do you Visit (chosen website)?
6. Imagine that (chosen website) was Person, how would you describe her/her?
7. Why do you choose those words to describe (chosen website)?
8. Why do you think they match (chosen website)?

**Section III: Profile**

9. Gender
10. Occupation
11. Marital status
12. Age group: 20 -25, 26 - 30, 31 -35, 36 - 40

