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Sonja Airikka

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL BRANDING IN BUILDING
BRAND PERSONALITY FROM A CONSUMER
PERSPECTIVE

1st Supervisor: Professor Olli Kuivalainen, LUT

2nd Supervisor: Professor Peter Spier, SKEMA

ABSTRACT

Author: Airikka, Sonja Maria
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The purpose of this exploratory research is to study the role of emotional branding in building brand personality. The research is conducted from the perspective of the consumer, more specifically the Finnish Generation Y females. The aim of the thesis is to gain insights and understanding on the key concepts and contribute to the Generation Y literature. In addition, the research examines the effect of certain cultural implications on the process of building brand personality.

The research was conducted as an embedded single-case study, in which qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with a sample of six consumers and personal observation within one of the concept stores of the case company. In order to triangulate the data, secondary sources were utilized to gain more information about the case company. The results indicated a connection between emotional branding and the formulation of brand personality, which can be manipulated according to the brand personality drivers. Congruence with consumer self-conceptualization and set of values were discovered to strengthen the emotional bonding. As the end result, the research was able to clarify the process-thinking behind emotional branding.

TIIVISTELMÄ

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Tämän eksploratiivisen tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on tutkia tunnepohjaisen brandin rakentamisen roolia brandipersonallisuuden muodostumisessa. Tutkimus toteutetaan kuluttajanäkökulmasta, jonka kohteena ovat suomalaiset Y-sukupolven naisetustajat. Tutkimus pyrkii laajentamaan ymmärrystä keskeisiin käsitteisiin liittyen, ja samalla edistämään Y-sukupolveen liittyvää kirjallisuutta. Tämän lisäksi tutkimus tarkastelee tiettyjen kulttuurillisten tekijöiden vaikutusta brandipersonallisuuden muodostumiseen.

Työ suoritettiin tapaustutkimuksena, jossa analysoitiin kuluttajien mielipiteitä case-yrityksen muodostamassa viitekehityksessä. Laadullista dataa kerättiin kuuden teemahaastattelun kautta sekä havainnoimalla yhtä case-yrityksen konseptimyymälää. Tämän lisäksi case-yrityksestä kerättiin sekundaarista tietoa materiaalin triangulaation vuoksi. Tulokset osoittivat yhteyden tunnepohjaisen brandin rakentamisen ja brandipersonallisuuden muodostumisen välillä, mihin voidaan vaikuttaa brandipersonallisuuden muodostavilla tekijöillä. Kuluttajan minäkuvan ja arvomaailman yhtenevyyden brandipersonallisuuden kanssa todettiin vahvistavan kyseistä yhteyttä. Työn lopputulemana onnistuttiin myös selventämään tunnepohjaisen brandin rakentamisen ajattelua prosessina.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	8
1.2	Literature review	10
1.3	Research questions	12
1.4	Theoretical framework	13
1.5	Key concepts	14
1.6	Delimitations	15
1.7	Research methodology	16
1.8	Structure of the thesis	17
2	BRAND PERCEPTIONS	18
2.1	Corporate image	19
2.2	Brand personality	21
2.2.1	Brand associations	25
2.2.2	Drivers of brand personality formulation	26
3	EMOTIONAL BRANDING	27
3.1	Consumer relationship	28
3.1.1	Generation Y	30
3.1.2	Women	32
3.2	Sensorial experiences	33
3.2.1	Sight	35
3.2.2	Sound	37
3.2.3	Smell and taste	38
3.2.4	Touch	39
3.3	Logotype	40
3.4	Products	41
3.5	Store concept	42
4	CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS	44
4.1	Culture	44
4.2	Values	48
4.3	Ethnocentrism and country-of-origin	50

5	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	51
5.1	Research approach	51
5.2	Research design	53
5.3	Case description	54
5.4	Data collection	57
5.4.1	Semi-structured interviews	57
5.4.2	Personal observation	59
5.4.3	Secondary data	60
5.5	Data analysis	61
5.6	Reliability and validity	63
6	EMPIRICAL RESULTS	65
6.1	Interviews	65
6.1.1	Brand personality	68
6.1.2	Emotional branding	76
6.1.3	Cultural implications	83
6.2	Observation	88
6.2.1	Retail space	88
6.2.2	Retail environment	89
6.2.3	Product assortment	90
6.2.4	Personnel	92
7	CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION	93
7.1	Theoretical implications	98
7.2	Managerial implications	99
7.3	Research limitations	100
7.4	Suggestions for further research	102
	REFERENCES	103

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1	Semi-structured interview questions
APPENDIX 2	Visual elicitation pictures
APPENDIX 3	Sample of interview transcripts

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1. Theoretical framework
- Figure 2. Interaction between brand identity and brand image
- Figure 3. Brand personality framework
- Figure 4. Cultural dimension scores on Finland
- Figure 5. Logo of Marimekko
- Figure 6. Process of emotional branding

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1. Brand personality drivers
- Table 2. Personality associations with colors
- Table 3. Template for observation notes
- Table 4. Illustration of codes
- Table 5. Informant experience related to the case company
- Table 6. Description of informants
- Table 7. The brand personality of Marimekko
- Table 8. Perceived values of Marimekko
- Table 9. Consumer relationship with Marimekko
- Table 10. Primary and secondary focus points
- Table 11. Frequency of Marimekko store visits

1 INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced, consumption-driven economy, the importance of companies engaging with consumers in new ways in order to succeed in the market has elevated to a new level (Gobé 2009, xvii). Branding a product or a service can be seen as a cornerstone of success, as it creates additional value for both the consumer and the company (Lindberg-Repo 2005, 20) and thus creates many competitive advantages.

As purchasing decisions are made increasingly based on emotional needs, wants and desires, only strong brands outlast their competition by differentiating in appealing to consumers on an emotional level. (Gobé 2009, xx; Hammond 2008, 29.) Marketers are nowadays competing for consumer attention, but a brand becomes superior to other products only when it is able to build a deep, meaningful and long-lasting relationship with consumers (Roberts 2004). In order to do this, brands need to generate emotions towards the actual product or service that they offer, but also on the complete customer experience around it. (Hammond 2008, 30.)

Pitkänen (2001, 9-10) discusses the difficulties in differentiation, when ordinary business decisions are not enough anymore due to increased competition. Mental images and their systematic development have become valuable assets for companies, and even crucial for success. As various brands begin to saturate the market, the focus is now turning towards strong brand personalities (Gobé 2009, xix).

Thus, brands should be able to humanize themselves in order to appeal emotionally to their customers and thus leverage their overall level of competitiveness through many gained benefits (Freling, Crosno & Henard 2011). Even though evoking emotions is a tricky subject for marketers, there are ways to utilize certain techniques within the paradigm of

emotional branding, which eventually contribute to brand personality. The difficulty of the task lies in the intangibility of emotions.

Fashion, clothing and personal style has long been considered as a mean of self-expression. Given the emotionally-charged nature of fashion, many fashion brands could benefit from a brand personality that customers can identify with. Currently, the Finnish fashion industry is suffering from small market size and issues with profitability due high labor costs. It has also been argued that Finnish fashion has difficulties in differentiating from Nordic fashion despite creative use of prints and garment cuts. This creates exporting problems, which can't be solved even with brand awareness generated by product placement in TV shows or films. (Pöppönen 2012; Lehtinen 2008.)

Brands operating in the fashion or retail industry have especially embraced the brand personality thinking in their strategy. The constantly changing environment in terms of seasons and trends alongside fierce competition has challenged these companies to develop strong, yet flexible brand personalities that are able to match the consumers' cultural and personal aspirations time and time again. For this reason, these companies act as good basis for studying brand personality. (Gobé 2009, 144.)

This thesis has both theoretical and managerial aspirations. Theoretically, the study will discuss notions of brand perception, most importantly brand personality, as well as the concept of emotional branding, and aims to increase knowledge on the topics while contributing to the Generation Y literature. The goal is to study the role of emotional branding practices on consumer perceptions and more specifically, brand personality. Located within the fashion and retail industry, this research aims to clarify how this bond can be manipulated by a fashion brand. The normative contribution of this thesis revolves around the practicalities of emotional branding.

A well-known Finnish fashion and design company, Marimekko, will be used as a case company in the examination of factors affecting brand personality due to its strong position and iconic status in its domestic market. However, the case will be studied from a consumer perspective in order to gain insights on the formulation of brand personality in the mind of Generation Y consumer through emotional branding elements. While the main aim is to understand the phenomenon and discuss the relationship between the two concepts, this research can act as guidance for brands in establishing or strengthening their position on the market.

1.2 Literature review

The concept of branding has been discussed extensively in literature for years, and it has become a buzzword especially during the past three decades. Despite increasing attention towards studying the emotional dimension of branding as well as the well-established concept of brand personality, there is still much to discover in both topics. This chapter presents central academic literature regarding the concepts of emotional branding and brand personality.

Emotional branding is an intricate concept, which can be viewed as a combination of several marketing theories. The preceding building blocks of emotional branding can be found in relationship marketing. However, this approach is lacking the emotional element present in emotional branding, in which the focus is more on understanding why and how certain needs or wants arise rather than on plain need satisfaction as a basis for building consumer-brand relationship.

The purpose of emotional branding is to enable people to form emotional connections with brands in a subliminal way (Gobé 2009, xxix). Whereas the concept itself has been displayed relatively rarely in academic research, many researchers have studied emotional brand attachment in much more detail. The attention has been focused on e.g. measuring the

strength of emotional brand attachment (Thomson, McInnis and Park 2005), its effect on consumer responses to brand extensions (Fedorikhin, Park & Thomson 2008) and brand loyalty (Fournier & Yao 1997; Loureiro, Ruediger & Demetris 2012; So, Parsons & Yap 2013).

Challenging the traditional approach to branding, Gobé (2009, xix) developed a paradigm of emotional branding, which relies upon anthropology, sensory experiences, imaginative ways to capture the attention of customers within brand design and a visionary approach to doing business. Roberts (2004) created his own framework around the concept and refers to brands that create extreme consumer loyalty as Lovemarks. The notion is mainly built on a brand's capability to create stories and metaphors around its offering, arouse the five senses into emotional responses and establish an emotional and respectful relationship with the consumer.

Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel (2006) examined a different side to emotional branding in their research, as they studied the Doppelgänger brand image and its effects on the brand itself when issues of authenticity start to develop around the brand message conveyed by emotional branding practices. The research area concerning metaphors and memory elicitation in understanding the emotional consumer-brand bonds has been studied widely by Zaltman (2003). Lindstrom (2005) can be covered for extensive research upon the area of sensorial branding activities.

In terms of brand personality, Aaker's (1997) research on the dimensions of brand personality can be considered as the most fundamental in defining the concept. The developed Brand Personality Scale (BPS) has been considered widely as a strong component in brand personality literature, whereas the concept itself has been in existence already for decades. As a cognate theory, Freling, Crosno and Henard (2011) developed a scale to measure brand personality appeal (BPA) based on BPS.

Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer and Nyffenegger (2011) studied the relationship between self-congruence and emotional brand attachment, and whether brand personality should be highlighted with regards to consumers' actual or ideal self. Brand personality has often been considered to have a causal relationship with consumer brand responses, which has initiated research on the 'brand personality effect' on consumer-driven outcomes (Freling & Forbes 2005). Other areas of research include its effect on brand extensions (Le, Cheng, Lee & Jain 2012) and buying decisions (Rajagopal 2006).

1.3 Research questions

Derived from the literature review, a research gap can be found to exist in the relationship between emotional branding and brand personality. As highly emotional concepts, one might assume some sort of linkage between the two – one being the enabling process and the other being an end-result. This thesis aims to study the role that emotional branding has in the process of building brand personality. By choosing to study the topic from the consumer perspective, the main research question is described as:

What is the role of emotional branding in building brand personality from a consumer perspective?

The supportive sub-questions are:

SQ1: *What constitutes a brand personality?*

SQ2: *Which emotional branding elements are most appealing to consumers in formulating a brand personality?*

SQ3: *How do cultural implications in terms of culture, personal values and ethnocentrism along with country-of-origin, alter the formation of brand personality?*

1.4 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this thesis is concentrated around the concepts of emotional branding and brand personality. As relevant theory was found scarce in combining these two concepts together, an inductive approach was taken to explore the topic by gathering data and reviewing relevant literature and academic articles on the key concepts. The case company and its emotional branding activities in Finland provide a contextual framework for examining Finnish consumers, more specifically female members of Generation Y, and their susceptibility of emotional branding elements within the retail environment. The complete theoretical framework is further illustrated below in Figure 1.

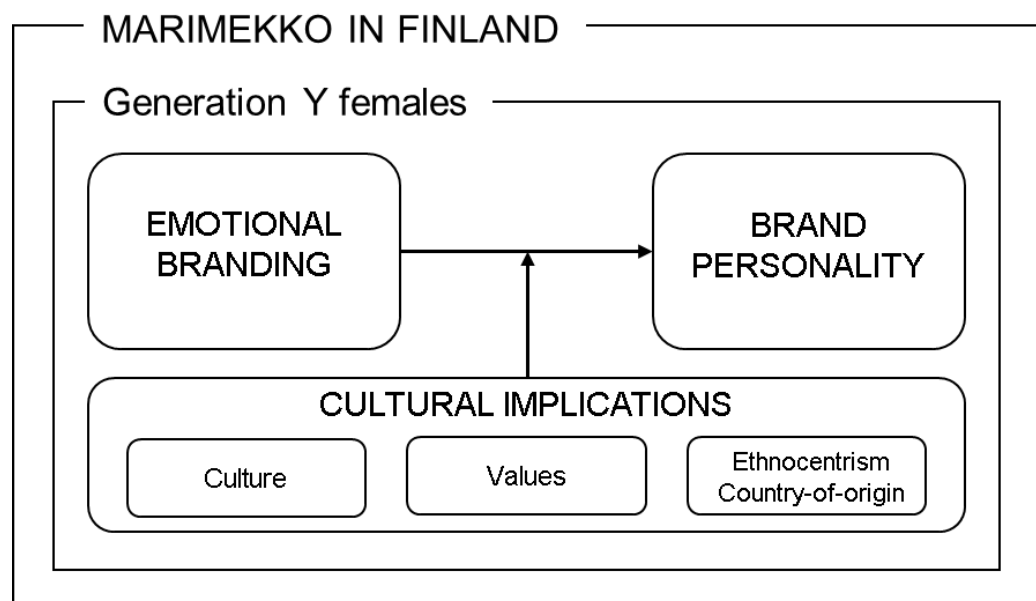


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

As a concept, brand personality has a relatively subjective nature, which means that consumers tend to reflect it against several social and cultural factors. A person's cultural background, set of values and possible attitudinal tendency towards ethnocentrism concerning country-of-origin are bound to affect perception and decision-making. Therefore, it will be interesting to study their ability to affect the formulation of brand personality.

1.5 Key concepts

The symbolic and intangible nature of brands has resulted in a complicated network of concepts and terms that fundamentally refer to the same things, but sometimes with different nuances. In order to clarify the conceptual framework regarding this thesis, the key concepts regarding the theory are explained briefly below.

Emotional branding

In this research, the concept of emotional branding is described as the successful association of a certain emotion to a brand in the mind of the consumer (Rossiter & Bellman 2012). These emotions can be e.g. nostalgia, love or companionship. With this definition in mind, this thesis will follow Gobé's (2009) emotional branding paradigm, which relies upon a combination of anthropology, sensory marketing and innovativeness.

Brand personality

Aaker (1997) defines brand personality as a set of human characteristics that can be associated with a brand. In addition to basic personality traits such as fun, social or sophisticated, brand personality can include demographic characteristics such as age, gender and socioeconomic class as well as lifestyle-related factors (Aaker 1996, 142).

Generation Y

Current literature has a fickle definition about Generation Y. Gobé (2009, 20) describes Generation Y as a group of individuals born between the years 1981 and 1999. Bartlett (2004), however draws the line at the years 1977 and 1995, while Howe and Strauss (2000, 4) define the cohort being born in or after 1982. Deriving from these definitions, Generation Y is defined here as people born in the early 1980s up until the late 1990s.

1.6 Delimitations

The focus of this research will be on Finnish consumers, who specifically represent women identified within Generation Y. This segment is especially interesting for companies, who wish to engage with these consumers early on with a long-term perspective. In addition, the purchasing power of the age group is increasing as the consumers graduate and become employed. (Gobé 2009.) As much of the information regarding Generation Y has been discovered through researching the US population (Foscht, Schloffer, Maloles III & Chia 2009), this research will focus on providing valuable information about the Finnish Generation Y. As for the case company, it is thus justified that analysis and discussion are delimited to Marimekko's emotional branding conducted in Finland.

In order for the research to remain manageable in terms of scope, only the retail environment is discussed here as a focal point in practicing emotional branding. After all, it is the best platform for the purpose (Gobé 2009), and supports the experiential preferences of Generation Y (Foscht et al. 2009). Thus, theory on emotional branding will concentrate on the most relevant topics regarding the retail environment, being the consumer relationship, sensorial experiences, logotype, products and store concept. When discussing the consumer relationship, an anthropological approach will be taken instead of the more operational, 'how to manage customer relationship' perspective that would be more relevant with studies involving customer relationship management or relationship marketing.

Matters such as brand awareness and brand recognition are not going to be touched upon with this research, as they are only superficial concepts in terms of brand personality and emotional branding (Gobé 2009). Similarly, brand loyalty and customer retention are not relevant concerning the perspective of this study, as the concepts have already been studied rather widely by academics all over the world (for example Fournier & Yao 1997; Loureiro, Ruediger & Demetris 2012;) and it is expected that the

sample of informants are already somewhat loyal to the iconic Finnish brand that Marimekko is.

Furthermore, theory regarding advanced psychology or emotions is not discussed due to the domain of the research is in business, where also the expertise of the researcher is concentrated. In addition, the decision-making process is not discussed here as the focus is on consumer perceptions and responses to emotional branding, not on actual purchasing decisions. The main interest in this research is to find out how Finnish consumers perceive the personality of a domestic fashion brand, and whether their perception is affected by emotional branding activities. In terms of mediating factors, only the predetermined cultural implications are of relevance in this research.

1.7 Research methodology

This research focuses strongly on the emotional aspects between a brand and consumers, and aims to deepen the understanding on the elements that affect the construction of perceived brand personality. Thus, it is most suitable to gather data through qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is best suited in areas where it is necessary to tap into the mind of a consumer on topics that are felt and experienced on an emotional level (Gordon & Langmaid 1993, 6).

The approach of this exploratory research is inductive, which aims to gain insights and understanding of the topic based on empirical findings. The research is conducted as an embedded single-case study, since it is expected to provide the most reliable results within the given context. The data for the research will be gathered from both primary and secondary sources and analyzed according to triangulation, while Marimekko will be used as the main case company in the process.

Semi-structured interviews will be organized to gain in-depth information from the consumers about how they view the brand personality of Marimekko and perceive different emotional branding elements. The informants are selected according to the relevant criteria risen from theory. In addition, personal observation is utilized in the retail environment in order to identify the actual emotional branding techniques used in the Marimekko concept stores. Furthermore, secondary data regarding the company is derived from literature, media and corporate website. A more detailed description of the research design and its elements is provided in Chapter 5.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

To begin with, this thesis will discuss the concept of brand personality in depth. Beginning with theory about mental images, the first chapter will introduce the different concepts related to brand perceptions that finally comprise brand personality. Secondly, the paradigm of emotional branding will be discovered in further detail, and relevant information regarding the actual emotional branding activities will be given. The following chapter will focus on consumer behavior and its intricacies values that presumably have an effect in the emotional branding process.

The research methodology will be presented in the fifth chapter, along with a detailed description of the qualitative techniques used in order to gather data for analysis. After this, the results of the research are discussed, and summarized in the conclusion. The conclusion will highlight both the theoretical and managerial outcomes, and define the limitations and suggestions for further research.

2 BRAND PERCEPTIONS

A *brand* can be defined as a name, term, sign, symbol or design - either combined or separate - which helps consumers to recognize the products and services of a certain provider while differentiating them from their competition. *Branding*, however, is the process of adding brand elements to products or services in order to create meaningful differences against competitors with the intention of standing out in the market. Branding is able to affect consumer decision-making process by providing the means to create mental structures in terms of organizing knowledge about market offering. The outcome of branding is to create value for both the company and consumers, and this added value compared to regular commodities is referred to as *brand equity*. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 263, 265.)

Brands, as well as terms such as image, reputation, profile or corporate image, can be categorized under the generalizing concept of mental images. They all share the characteristic of intangibility (Pitkänen 2001, 15), and while companies are able to affect the formulation of mental images to a certain extent, Rope and Methner (2001, 13-17) point out that mental images are always subjective and based on a person's attitudes and values. In addition, all purchasing decisions are ultimately considered to be based on emotions, which can be enforced by positive mental images.

As the focus of this research is on the emotional appeal of brands, it is important to understand the different viewpoints in their perception. In order to study the concept of brand personality in full detail, it is necessary to distinguish between the meanings of brand identity and image that together comprise the corporate image. Both concepts can be seen as building blocks for brand personality, which is why the issue with the brand terminology jungle needs to be tackled first.

2.1 Corporate image

As mentioned, the concept of corporate image is closely linked with brands. According to Pitkänen (2001, 15), corporate image is a concept that can either refer to the mental image that consumers have been able to construct of a brand based on their personal experiences, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, feelings and assumptions, or to the company perspective of aiming consciously towards a favorable mental image. Lindberg-Repo (2005, 67) agrees by stating that corporate image can be viewed from both consumer and corporate perspective. The opposing perceptions are called brand image and brand identity.

Klimchuk and Krasovec (2006, 40) define brand identity as the tangible elements of a brand. The visual representation, such as brand name, chosen colors and symbols and other design elements, aims to create an emotional connection to the consumers, who then formulate a mental image of the brand according to their own perception. On the whole, brand identity is the core of the company, which guides all communication efforts towards the consumer about the brand's purpose and values. (Lindberg-Repo 2005, 68.)

By establishing a strong brand identity, companies are able to maintain consistency in their operations, which translates as reliability to many consumers. Moreover, authenticity is the key to success, as consumers tend to place more value on what companies are actually doing rather than believing everything that is told via marketing communications. Corporate values can be considered as a main determinant in defining brand identity as they reveal the company's operational standards and appreciations as well as what it aspires to become in the future and how. In addition, values are an important factor externally in creating stories and traditions, but internally as well in creating and upholding company culture. (Pitkänen 2001, 92-95.)

Brand image, on the other hand, is always subjective to the consumer (Lindberg-Repo 2005, 67). Foxall and Goldsmith (1995, 60) refer to brand image as an organized set of all attained perceptions that consumers have about a brand. Consumers are able to form a brand image according to all the information they receive through media, word-of-mouth and personal experience. These mental images have been proven to influence purchasing decisions to a certain extent, as they provide means for brands to differentiate their offering from competition.

Brands are always based on interactive development between the company and consumers, which occurs through different contact points (Lindberg-Repo 2005, 58). Hestad (2013) describes the interaction between the two concepts in a simplified way, but with slightly different terms. The process is illustrated in Figure 2.

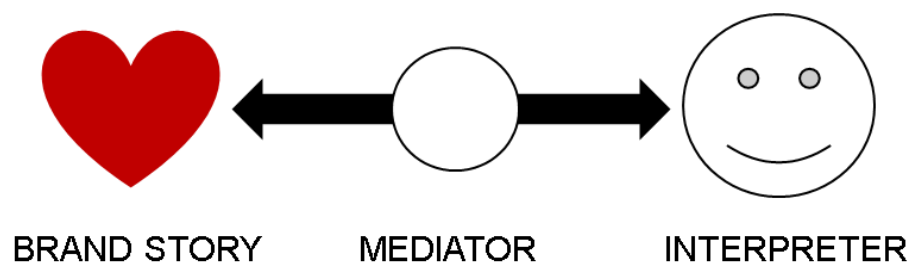


Figure 2. Interaction between brand identity and brand image (modified from Hestad 2013, 11)

Here, brand identity equals to a brand story, which summarizes the purpose of a company in terms of vision or philosophy. In order to convey this intangible message to a larger population, the company needs a mediator, which can vary from any element to another that represents the brand story, such as products, logo or marketing communications. In the other end, the consumer acts as the interpreter, who translates the brand story according to the mediator, finally resulting in a subjective brand image. (Hestad 2013, 11.) According to Lindberg-Repo (2005, 59), brand image should always be developed with consumers as key contributors.

Plummer (1985) states that brand image consists of three main components: physical elements or attributes, functional characteristics or usage benefits, and brand personality. However, Foxall and Goldsmith (1995, 61) argue brand images being a compilation of five elements, which are either mental or contextual: personality, connotations, advantages, user profiles and usage situations. Connotations are linkages in the consumers' minds to other things that they associate with the brand. Advantages, on the other hand, represent the concrete benefits of consumption experienced by the consumer, such as safety, status or convenience. In addition, certain brands can sometimes be associated with distinct user profiles or usage situations by pushing specific customer prototypes or contextual settings in the brands advertising. Finally, brand personality refers to the impression given to the consumer about the brand according to whether it is, for example, fashionable, stylish or sophisticated. The following chapter will discuss the concept of brand personality in more detail.

2.2 Brand personality

Reflecting Aaker's (1997) definition, Solomon (2013, 247) defines brand personality as a set of characteristic traits that people can associate with a brand in a similar manner to humans. This touches upon the cultural process of animism, where people tend to connect different human qualities to inanimate objects to make them feel alive. For the same reason, consumers tend to directly associate the personality traits of the people involved with the brand with the actual brand personality, such as spokespersons, users or personnel. (Aaker 1997.) The advantage of brand personality is its charisma and ability to evoke emotions. As brand identities can be regarded as descriptive statements and recognition, a brand personality is able to bring the brand to life in a unique and special way. (Gobé 2009, xxxii.)

Blythe (2009, 168-169) refers to brand personality as a mixture of all consumer perceptions and beliefs of the brand, but it goes deeper than brand image. Sometimes brand personalities are developed more by consumers than the company itself, which results in a mismatch between the aspirations of the company and consumer perceptions. However, Plummer (1985) clarifies that brand personality is actually a subset of brand image, which can be divided into two facets: brand personality statement and brand personality profile. The brand personality statement is a strategic tool of the company to be used by the creative department and which acts as guidance for the communication goals of the company, whereas brand personality profile entails the actual perceptions that consumers have of the brand in terms of its characterization. It should identify the central components of the brand personality in order to reveal its strongest and weakest points.

According to Thakor and Kohli (1996), brand personality is a construct with two components: brand demographics and brand traits. Brand demographics were considered to include factors such as brand origin, age, gender and social class, whereas brand traits were similar to the "Big Five" human personality traits. However, Aaker's (1997) research on the dimensions of brand personality developed a framework of five major dimensions to be utilized with brands. These dimensions are Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness with 15 descriptive facets. The BPS, which is the quantitative outcome of the research, can be utilized to measure brand personality in studying its antecedents and consequences. The brand personality framework that is more suitable for qualitative studies is presented in Figure 3.

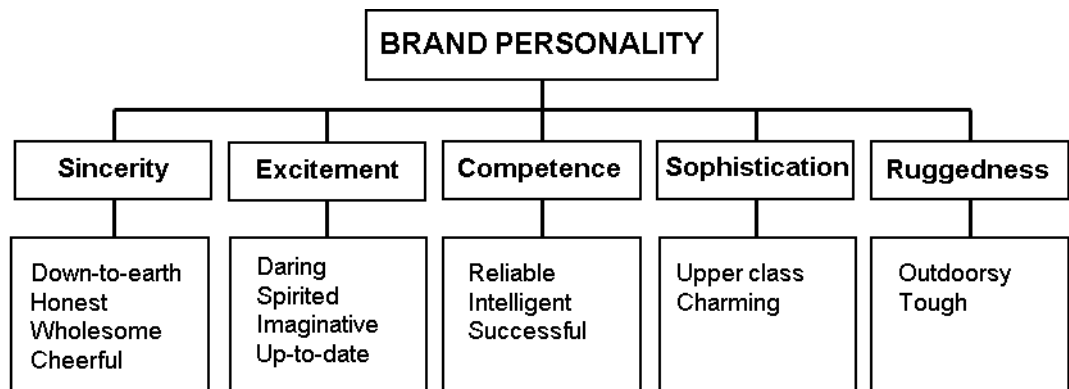


Figure 3. Brand personality framework (Aaker 1997)

The brand personality dimensions correlate partially with the “Big Five” human personality dimensions, which would support the idea of self-congruence to a certain extent. However, the dimensions of Sophistication and Ruggedness are different to any of the “Big Five” dimensions, which suggests that some brands appeal to an aspirational side in consumers. (Aaker 1997.) Brands are often used as means for self-expression, and people tend to associate themselves with brands of their liking as they do with people. Similar to actual relationships, brand personality and its compatibility is what drives the formation and strengthening of relationships between the brand and the consumers by creating emotional responses. Most times, brand personality is a reflection of the consumers’ self or how they wish to see themselves. (Blythe 2009, 168-169.) Thus, self-conceptualization is an important concept in terms of brand personality. Consumers construct an image of themselves from four different perspectives, which are categorized as:

- 1) actual self-image, how consumers really see themselves;
- 2) ideal self-image, how they aspire to see themselves;
- 3) social self-image, how they think others see them; and
- 4) ideal social self-image, how they want others to see them.

(Schiffman & Kanuk 2004, 144-145.)

Malär et al. (2011) found that stronger emotional brand attachment can be achieved by targeting consumers' actual self in terms of brand personality. However, the importance of ideal self is leveraged when consumers experience low self-esteem, public self-consciousness, or are less involved with the product. It has been discovered that especially women tend to select brands that have a brand personality consistent with their own (Schiffman & Kanuk 2004, 143).

Overall, this aspect of brand personality is only one of the ways to create brand equity. In addition to the self-expression model, consumers can seek out brands that can benefit them from a relationship basis that is not necessarily linked to the sense of affinity. To elaborate, consumers might like a brand with exciting and bubbly personality involved with their free time, but value trustworthiness and stability when dealing with serious matters such as banking and loans. Moreover, brand personalities can convey the functional benefits that can be attributed with a brand. This is often done with utilizing symbols, such as the Michelin man or Duracell bunny. (Aaker 1996, 153-168.) Thus, brand personalities can either be functional or symbolic in nature (Schiffman & Kanuk 2004, 137).

By familiarizing with brand personality, companies are able to gain many benefits. First of all, it aids in revealing how consumers perceive a brand and what their attitudes are towards it, and thus increases understanding on the underlying feelings and consumer-brand relationships. These can sometimes provide more insights to business capabilities than queries about regular product attributes. Secondly, brand personality is a way to differentiate, especially in industries where product attributes are mainly similar among competitors, and it is able to guide strategic decision-making as well as communication plans. (Aaker 1996, 150-151.)

2.2.1 Brand associations

Aaker (1991, 109) defines brand associations as anything that a consumer can recall being related to a certain brand. Their level of strength depends on the amount of exposure to communications and related experiences, but also on the network linking the associations to each other. Thus, brand associations tend to be weaker, if they are shallow due to the inability to link marketing communications to real-life experiences.

Brand personality is often a reflection of the brand's position in the market (Solomon 2013, 251), which is greatly connected with brand associations. Changing or neutralizing brand associations can be very difficult, which is why brands should ultimately either try to build upon the existing associations or create completely new ones when making positioning decisions. Other notable points in terms of associations are knowing the competitors' associations in order to develop own, differentiating associations that build competitive advantage and simultaneously enable positive responses from the target audience. (Aaker 1991, 156-159.)

Freling and Forbes (2005) studied brand personality as a driver of consumer behavior, and found out that brand personalities are able to develop more brand associations as long as they are perceived as strong and positive. In addition, the quality of the brand associations increases in terms of favorability, congruence, strength and uniqueness. These findings are supported by Schiffman and Kanuk (2004, 137), who likewise acknowledge the positive effects of a strong and favorable brand personality on brand strength, regardless of its type.

Brand associations are important and valuable, as they are able to summarize the brand's meaning rather well. From the emotional branding perspective, their ability to create positive attitudes and feelings towards products is especially meaningful. In addition, they are able to foster brand

loyalty, and thus create a good basis for brand extensions. (Aaker 1991, 110-111.)

2.2.2 Drivers of brand personality formulation

The main drivers in brand personality formulation can be divided into two categories: product-related and non-product-related. Product-related characteristics, such as packaging, price, product category and given product attributes are considered to be the primary factors affecting brand personality. However, non-product-related characteristics like user imagery, country-of-origin, time on the market, symbol, advertising style and CEO identification among others, cultivate brand personality in a similar manner. (Aaker 1996, 145-147.) The complete list of both product- and non-product-related characteristics is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Brand personality drivers (modified from Aaker 1996, 146)

Product-related characteristics	Non-product-related characteristics	
Product category	User imagery	Sponsorships
Package	Symbol	Age (time on the market)
Price	Advertising style	Country-of-origin
Attributes	Company image	CEO identification
	Celebrity endorsers	

Foxall and Goldsmith (1995, 61) state that brand personality can be best constructed through advertising, packaging and naming of the brand. According to Blythe (2009, 169), television advertising is especially efficient in evoking emotional responses from consumers. Moreover, brand personality can be developed through user-imagery or by creating a symbol through brand personification.

Brand personification refers to the act of creating a human-like persona which embodies the attributes of a product or service related to the consumer perception of the brand's personality (Schiffman & Kanuk 2004, 138). However, sometimes brands can be powerfully identified with actual

people. Celebrities tend to build personality brand around themselves, whereas companies are more and more identified by their charismatic managers (Lindstrom 2005, 125).

Although user-imagery can be described as one of the drivers for brand personality, Parker (2009) found that user-imagery and brand personality are actually complementary concepts with only moderately correlating relationship. While it can bring up associations to brand personality, user-imagery is more narrow and stereotypical representation of brand personality. In addition, the research findings included variation between publicly and privately consumed brands, as brand personality congruence was more meaningful with private brands, whereas user-imagery congruence was linked with public brands.

3 EMOTIONAL BRANDING

Hammond (2008, 9-10) describes the challenges of a regular consumer being encountered by an endless flood of information when making purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, the market is filled with similar products with relatively the same quality. Companies try to back up their products and services with facts in order to make them more appealing, but in the end consumers make up their minds according to their personal taste and feelings. Kotler and Keller (2012, 185) agree to the statement by reaffirming consumer responses as mostly emotional with only hints of cognition and rationality. Consumer-wise, brands have the power to evoke different feelings, such as pride, confidence, excitement or even disgust.

The advantage for emotional branding is that people have a tendency to respond emotionally to different life experiences and place emotional value on surrounding objects (Gobé 2009, xxix). Therefore, the task is to be able to guide the emotional responses into a preferred direction that is consistent with the brand. Brands are built on emotions, which means that

if companies are unable to perform in this area, they only offer commodities. In order to succeed, emotion needs to be involved both with the product itself, and the whole customer experience around it. (Hammond 2008, 21, 30.)

Gobé's (2009) paradigm of emotional branding is based on strong knowledge and management of consumer relationship, unique sensorial experiences and innovative brand design that build up the emotional bond between the brand and consumer on a subliminal level. Moreover, successful implementation requires deep knowledge of current industry trends, agile marketing practices and a visionary approach to business on the whole. Overall, emotional branding suggests turning focus from benefit-driven branding to pursuing a more sustainable, emotionally profound connection with the consumers.

To begin with, the following chapter will discuss the intricacies involved with consumer-brand relationship as well as the characteristics of the most interesting consumer segment at the moment, being the female members of Generation Y. The discussion is followed by an in-depth view on sensory branding and the implications related to utilizing the five senses as a part of emotional branding. Finally, brand design will be examined in terms of logotype, products and store concept.

3.1 Consumer relationship

As mentioned in the literature review, relationship marketing can be considered as an antecedent for emotional branding, however lacking in specific attention on the emotional dimension. Stone and Woodcock (1995, 11) define relationship marketing as utilizing different marketing, sales, communication and customer care techniques and processes in order to identify target customers, form a long-term relationship with them and manage the connection over time to benefit from increased customer loyalty and retention. The identification of customer needs is essential in

the process. Similarly, Lindberg-Repo (2005, 40) discusses the important role of relationship marketing as a continuous process of brand value creation. However, new challenges put pressure on the traditional way of thinking, since brand value can only be leveraged when customer experiences are central to the process in a similar manner to consumer-brand interaction and the actual offering.

According to Rope and Mether (2001, 17), the most important thing in marketing is to always think of the consumers as individuals. With the strong psychological element present in emotional branding, it is essential that companies acknowledge the importance of skills related to evoking certain mental images, and thus, emotions that strengthen the bond between the company and the consumer. Reflecting on this, companies must determine their core brand values (Stone & Woodcock 1995, 114) and remain consistency in conveying them across their operations.

Values, either spiritual, social or moral, allow the consumer to evaluate the fit of a brand against their personal view of the world. When compatible, the bond between the brand and the consumer becomes emotionally profound and intensifies. Moreover, the level of advocacy increases in both direct and virtual communication with other consumers. (Pradeep 2010, 126.) Overall, trust is one of the key values that companies should pursue. It can only be achieved through honesty and authentic communication with consumers. (Gobé 2009, xxxi.)

In order to connect emotionally, companies must know their target audience for them to design a suitable approach that will appeal to them on a deeper level (Gobé 2009). The differences in needs and wants can vary greatly already between genders and different age groups that tend to share similar values and common cultural experiences (Solomon 2013, 35). Emotional branding will thus prove to be impossible, if time and effort is not allocated to explore and understand these underlying thoughts and feelings of consumers. Only this way can marketers be able to anticipate

certain consumer responses and guide them into the preferred direction. (Zaltman 2003, 18-19.)

Companies have long been able to focus on the large segment of Baby Boomers, but nowadays the success lies in engaging with the young adults of Generation Y. Compared with the preceding age group, Generation X, and its lower demographic numbers, Generation Y is a large and promising segment for companies to target in replacing the purchasing power of the retiring Baby Boomers (Gobé 2009, 2). Similarly, the potential and increasing purchasing power of female consumers is slowly getting recognized in the market. Not only do they make approximately 85 % of purchasing decisions of a household, they also educate themselves further more than men do, diminish the median salary gap between genders especially in urban areas and feel especially passionate about the in-store shopping experience.¹ (Luscombe 2010.)

Thus, these two demographic consumer segments are the most attractive in terms of emotional branding and forging long-lasting bonds with brands. The following chapters will discuss both segments in further detail in order to understand their intricacies in responding to emotional branding stimuli on a deeper level.

3.1.1 Generation Y

Generation Y can be described as pragmatic and smart thinkers, who are open to new opportunities and experiences. They are socially and environmentally aware, but also sensitive to global issues, such as war, poverty or global warming, and feel strongly about decreasing discrimination in several areas. They are rather individualistic and selective in their nature of disregarding what is mainstream. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2004, 454; Gobé 2009, 22-23.)

¹ Data based on American consumers.

The strong sense of individuality is characterized with the desire to customize fashion according to one's personal preferences. Although trends are somewhat important and the need to fit in exists among Generation Y in a similar manner to every other generation, the significance of making individual decisions and expressing personal style is much greater. Especially the younger Generation Y women have been affected by the rise of feminine empowerment in the 90's, which has shaped their perception of beauty towards a healthier direction parallel to altering yourself and body to fit a certain socially predominant mold. (Gobé 2009, 24, 57-58.) As a part of shaping your own path, Generation Y feels skeptical about the stores or brands that their parents use (Schiffman & Kanuk 2004, 454).

Being the children of Baby Boomers, Generation Y members have lived in a media-saturated society and gained a wider perspective on different marketing activities than their parents. In addition, their media consumption habits are different, as they are less likely to read traditional newspapers and tend to replace some of their TV viewing time on the Internet. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2004, 454.) Especially increased consumption of electronic media can be identified within the group. Having grown up with technology, Generation Y members are more comfortable with its usage and willing to diffuse new innovations. In terms of purchasing decisions, the internet is used both as a reference as well as a market place. (Foscht et al. 2009.) More significantly, Generation Y uses the internet as a social space to connect with other people (Gobé 2009, 24).

As consumers, Generation Y can be labelled as brand-savvy and knowledgeable about the latest fashion and trends. They always look for bargains and are mindful of a good price-quality ratio. (Foscht et al. 2009.) Intelligence is appreciated among this age group, and it is also expected from brands (Gobé 2009, 22). It is especially important for companies to maintain a cohesive and truthful brand image, as young consumers are

able to detect inauthentic messages more easily (Solomon 2013, 249), which will naturally shake their perception of the brand towards a more negative direction.

Despite living very fast-paced lives and under high expectations ever since they were children, Generation Y is quite value-driven with the emphasis on traditional values. In terms of marketing, they respond especially well to cues of fun, interaction and experiences. For this reason, retail stores have an advantage over increasingly popular online stores, as this segment is looking for something special in terms of experiences. For example, events within stores are a great opportunity to connect emotionally with these consumers and create a multisensory experience while presenting the brand in a unique way. However, brands are constantly challenged to keep up with Generation Y in their quickly evolving lifestyle and fluctuating personal preferences. (Gobé 2009, 3, 22-25; Foscht et al. 2009.)

3.1.2 Women

It has been discovered that people respond differently to specific marketing elements based on their gender. Women are more prone to empathizing than men, which is why they react more strongly to emotional components within purchasing situations, such as interaction with a sales clerk or a spokesperson. However, while men process information either through rational or emotional filter, women are still able to utilize both perspectives when making purchasing decisions by reflecting rational messages through their emotions. (Pradeep 2010, 67, 72.) Nevertheless, most of their decisions are based on emotions rather than rationality (Gobé 2009, 49).

In addition, women are very interested in the concrete benefits that they acquire through consumption. It is natural for them to try to cover all aspects regarding an issue before finally making the final decision.

(Pradeep 2010, 73.) They deliberately search for additional information on products and services, which is why they also require respect and to be taken seriously as consumers (Gobé 2009, 48). For companies, this is an important factor affecting customer service situations.

Nowadays, women tend to perceive themselves as multidimensional individuals, who have different roles in life and a variety of qualities. Dealing with a lot of external and internal pressure, women appreciate the acknowledgement of their diverse life situations, possible solutions to relieve their stress levels and avoiding stereotyping. (Gobé 2009, 48-49.)

Pradeep (2010, 75) states that women tend to look for long-lasting connections with people who share their interests and manage these relationships based on loyalty and reliability. (Pradeep 2010, 75.) Gobé (2010, 20) reaffirms that women are talented in creating networks, and that they seem to benefit especially well from the current social media and networking platforms available in the Internet.

In a similar manner, brands can become included in these selective personal networks. They can even be considered as a friend or an ally when the emotional connection is deep and built on trust. This is why the importance of emotional memories is especially high with women. (Pradeep 2010, 75.) Moreover, women look for brands that share the values that they feel important, and exude a brand personality that stands for something meaningful (Gobé 2009, 55-56). Therefore, brands need to focus on consistency and live up to the expectations in order to maintain exclusive appeal in the female consumer's mind.

3.2 Sensorial experiences

According to Hammond (2008, 14), a brand is defined by the sensory experience that it provides for its customers. Sensory marketing relies upon the idea of altering consumer behavior through sensorial stimuli

(Solomon 2013, 73). Sensory branding, however, is more focused on building and strengthening a long-lasting and positive bond between the brand and the consumer through utilizing unique and habitual sensorial stimuli (Lindstrom 2005, 110-111). Due to emotional branding perspective, the ability to evoke emotions and feelings towards to brand is essential in the process.

Sensorial stimuli can be divided into two categories, either being branded and non-branded. Sensorial stimuli might be aroused by any sight, sound, touch, scent or taste, but without brand associations they only promote impulsive consumer behavior patterns. Branded stimuli is difficult to achieve, but when successful, it advances impulsiveness. In contrast to non-branded stimuli, it also creates loyalty by allowing emotional associations to form with the brand. As branded stimuli take a lot of time to cultivate, it is common for unbranded stimuli to develop into branded stimuli. (Lindstrom 2005, 108-109.)

Consumer motivations in terms of needs or interests affect the allocation of attention greatly. Usually when consumers encounter new products, services or their advertisements, they do not have an established need for it or have immediate buying intentions. (Gobé 2009, 74.) In addition, selective perception of consumers filter out the visual and auditory material that is inconvenient or uninteresting to them, meaning that the flow of information is cut between the consumer and company (Foxall & Goldsmith 1995, 58). Adding sensory elements can provide a solution in drawing consumers' attention by evoking an emotional response towards the brand. Not only do these actions help in establishing a connection with the consumer, but they can also improve sales. (Gobé 2009, 101.)

Lindstrom (2005, 42-43) discusses the five senses by dividing them into two overly-used and three neglected ones. While advertisements commonly utilize sight and sound, taste, smell and touch are not given the attention that they deserve. Gobé (2009, 71) continues that companies

should not ignore the power of the five senses, as brand differentiation can ultimately be achieved through the utilization of sensory elements. However, it is important to realize that these elements tend to affect consumers on a subconscious level. Thus, the objective is to enforce the consumer-brand relationship in a way that consumers intuitively choose the same brand over and over again with competitors going by unnoticed (Lindstrom 2005, 110).

Brand management through sensory elements is a challenging process, which requires many strategic decisions from companies. Consumer sensory perception is limited to the division between foreground and background, which means that for the optimum experience certain elements must be chosen to the foreground, leaving all the others in the back (Hammond 2008, 81). Companies should think about their brand and carefully choose the most efficient sensory stimuli in terms of suitability and relevance (Gobé 2009, 102). Despite having learned to utilize several sensory branding techniques from music and scents, the retail industry is currently suffering from inability to transform unbranded stimuli into branded stimuli (Lindstrom 2005, 149). Thus, the following chapters will introduce the five senses in more detail, as well as certain techniques related to them.

3.2.1 Sight

According to Foxall and Goldsmith (1995, 58), sight is responsible for approximately 90 percent of the stimuli in perception. For this reason, vision has been actively targeted as the main sense in advertising. However, the constant flow of information makes it impossible for consumers to process everything that they encounter. The main concern with visual experiences is that it remains consistent. Humans tend to look for patterns in visual communication, and through consistency they become more engaged in it as the brand presentation is not fragmented. (Hammond 2008, 83.)

On the whole, sight is based on light and the different reactions of the retinal receptor cells to it. The amount of light affects the visual perception, as the receptor cells are directly linked to sharp resolution and distinguishing colours, more specifically within the wavelengths of 400 to 700 nanometres. (Pohjola 2003, 51.) Thus, the perception of colours is mostly physiological. Colours with long wavelengths are arousing and catch the attention of people quicker than colours with short wavelengths that tend to be more soothing and can even lower pulse, blood pressure and respiration rates. (Gobé 2009, 80.)

However, the perception of colours has also mental and cultural dimensions. Colours and their experienced meanings vary across cultures, and even between individuals, who can be affected by one particular color in many different ways. In this sense, colours are subjective experiences as they are associated with known and frequently encountered matters. Most often these associations can be made with nature and the environment, but they are also commonly associated with personalities and characteristic traits, as presented in Table 2. (Gobé 2009, 80; Pohjola 2003, 52; Schiffman and Kanuk 2004, 141.)

Table 2. Personality associations with colors (Kanner 1989, modified from Schiffman & Kanuk 2004, 141).

Color	Personality link
blue	respect, authority
yellow	caution, novelty, temporary, warmth
green	secure, natural, relaxed, living things
red	human, exciting, hot, passionate, strong
orange	powerful, affordable, informal
brown	informal, relaxed, masculine, nature
white	goodness, purity, chastity, cleanliness, delicacy, refinement, formality
black	sophistication, power, authority, mystery
silver / gold / platinum	regal, wealthy, stately

According to Gobé (2009, 79-83) color branding is based on strategic decisions concerning the information that a company wants to convey to consumers. The selection of colours should not be based on trends that shift rapidly, but on the audience to which messages are targeted to. Colours can trigger thoughts, memories and perceptions, which aid the consumer in processing information about the company, and they should be especially considered in the company logo, window displays and products along with packaging.

In addition to colours, pictures and symbols are able to evoke emotions efficiently (O'Shaughnessy 2013, 350). As deriving meaning is a natural trait to humans, communication and design are characterized by creating both explicit and implicit messages around different elements and symbols. These symbols can be either conditional or descriptive. Descriptive, or iconic symbols have only one natural expression to describe them, such as a table or chair, and are easy to understand just by looking. However, conditional symbols are characterized by added meanings and implicit messages, such as logotypes that are based only on spelling and need decoding of their purpose. (Pohjola 2003, 72.)

3.2.2 Sound

Hearing represents approximately 6 % out of all sensorial perception (Pohjola 2003, 51). Similar to visual perception, hearing is susceptible for selective perception. Hearing something is passive to an individual, whereas listening is active by requiring attention from the hearer and ultimately evokes a response through filtering, focusing and remembering a certain sound (Lindstrom 2005, 73). Disturbing or uninteresting content through hearing can be filtered out, which means that the message will never reach the consumer (Pradeep 2010, 53.)

Gobé (2009, 75) introduces two ways of utilizing sound for emotional branding purposes. To begin with, a company is able to work with their

unique user profile and select music played in the store specifically to suit their customers' preferences. This way the customers are both stimulated by the music and they are given means to identify with the store. Alternatively, music can be exploited in the creation of brand identity, which is particularly important with representatives of Generation Y. Consumers are able to distinguish a company better based on its clear identity, when they can associate it to a certain genre of music.

Music is proven to affect consumers' speed and spending while shopping, but also how long they are willing to wait for something or stay in the store. Meanwhile, the different outcomes between music genres are still to be discovered. However, altering the musical elements such as tempo, pitch level and amplitude modulation has been proven to evoke different kinds of emotions. (Gobé 2009, 77-78.)

3.2.3 Smell and taste

Despite being separate senses, smell and taste operate in synchrony, which allows humans to distinguish an enormous amount of different flavors and odors. Out of the two, smell is the primary sense in sensorial experiences, as people tend to smell something before they taste it. (Pradeep 2010, 50.) Both smell and taste are so-called chemical senses, which share the purpose of sampling the environment (Lindstrom 2005, 100).

Despite only one percent of brain functions being allocated to smell, it is still quite powerful from the perspective of emotional branding and more specifically, memory recollection. (Pradeep 2010, 45.) Studies have shown that different scents are able to evoke emotions better than any other of the five senses due to the numerous facilitating neural connections in the brain. As the reaction to smells is instinctive and involuntary, they immediately bring up emotions or memories better than any other of the five senses. (Gobé 2009, 99; Hammond 2008, 138.)

The influence of different scents on moods is unquestionable, and especially pleasant smells affect consumer behavior in the retail environment quite positively (Gobé 2009, 101.) In general, different scents are either soothing or stimulating, which is why matching specific aromas to the brand needs to be considered carefully. Nevertheless, it is beneficial to acknowledge that different consumers might feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed by various scents due to allergies or asthma. (Hammond 2008, 141, 153.)

Companies outside of food or drink industry might have difficulties in incorporating the taste element to their brand. However, sensory branding does not require the use of all five senses. (Hammond 2008, 156.) The most common way to provide taste experiences within a store environment is to offer customers a drink either serviced or by self-service. In fashion retail, this is often done next to the fitting rooms that usually hold a couple of seats outside of the rooms. However, the same sense of taste can be achieved without consumers ingesting anything. By adding elements of food or drink either on tables or shelves they contribute to both sensorial smell and taste experiences and aid in creating an atmosphere. The same idea can be used two-dimensionally in advertisements. (Gobé 2009, 91.)

3.2.4 Touch

Touch is an integral sense concerning the brand experience, and is often used to compensate unfamiliarity with the brand to gain knowledge (Gobé 2009, 93). Tactile experiences are often central to assessing quality attributes of a product. (Lindstrom 2005, 91). In addition, touching an item can be very powerful in determining whether it actually suits the consumer's personality and social lifestyle (Hammond 2008, 166.) Touching is especially important in shopping situations within the fashion industry, when people want to try on clothes and feel the fabrics to see if they are comfortable, durable and of high quality.

Hammond (2008, 167) suggests two ways to incorporate tactile experiences to brands: either distinguishing the brand from competition through product design or establishing product packaging as the main element in brand identification. The retail store needs to be designed in such a way that the products on display can be easily touched or tried on. However, the tactile experience is not limited only to actual products, but the whole environment itself including the retail space and flooring. (Gobé 2009, 94-96.)

3.3 Logotype

Powerful brands are known for logos that are instantly recognizable and have been able to incorporate implicit meanings within one symbol. As consumers become attached to them, they start to allocate more of their focus towards brand communication. A logo is rather often considered as a guarantee of high quality and overall, consumers tend to feel more comfortable to interact with a brand that they are already familiar with. (Gobé 2009, 126.)

Logos are visible representations of brands and basically entail their visual identity. Strategic selection of colours is important, but even a black and white logo would suit the purpose if it reflects the core of the company well. (Hammond 2008, 87-89.) The visual identity of a brand is ultimately based on the emotional associations related to the brand, and more specifically, its personality (Pohjola 2003, 91). However, Lindstrom (2005, 45) argues that the importance of brand logos falls short when compared with the overall value of the brand and the included brand experiences. If consumers can recognize components of the brand in its products and multisensory experiences without seeing the logo, the brand is on the right track.

3.4 Products

Products are naturally important in terms of branding, as they are physical touch-point of the brand with the consumers. In terms of brand identity, they should be able to embody everything that the brand is about and are responsible for the continuum in upholding the brand promise. However, the challenge of achieving this lies in branding and product design being two separate branches within a company. (Hestad 2013, 4-6.)

According to Kotler and Keller (2012, 354), design has the ability to appeal to consumers on both rational and emotional level by providing functional and aesthetical benefits. Especially the aesthetical dimension is considered to be more important in terms of differentiation, although designers must balance between features such as durability and reliability. Hestad (2013, 16-17) adds that the functional benefits are meant for gaining the consumers' trust and respect, whereas emotional benefits gain their love. However, the scale of functional and emotionally experienced benefits varies depending on the brand's strategy, industry and message.

Design is considered to be a successful way to project brand values and meaning in today's world, where appearance and visuals are given more attention than in the past. Thus, the idea of self-expression through certain items and brands becomes especially important in the process (Hestad 2013, 19). Moreover, design has the power to transform the appeal of a brand experience to a more positive and comprehensive direction. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 354-355.)

The ability to achieve an emotional connection with consumers opens many possibilities in terms of product offering. Consumers that have identified with a brand on an emotional level are more likely to buy varied products from it despite experiencing the initial connection with another product line. Thus, companies need to acknowledge this valuable aspect when considering brand extensions. (Gobé 2009, 146.)

3.5 Store concept

According to Gobé (2009, xxix-xxx), retail environments are crucial in terms of building brand image due to the fact that they are able to provide consumers a comprehensive brand experience through retail design, merchandising strategies, entertainment and sensorial stimuli, which is superior to any online experiences. A product or shopping experience has the power to remain in the consumer's long-term memory and depending on its outcome, it can create strong emotional associations and added value. Moreover, they are able to influence the perceived quality of the products in the assortment as well as consumer decisions on where to shop. For this reason, the store concept, width of product offering and pricing strategies have an important role in building brand image. (Schiffman & Kanuk 2004, 194-195.)

Foxall and Goldsmith (1995, 66) define the location, design, product assortment, services and personnel as having the most impact on consumer perceptions within the retail space. However, Schiffman and Kanuk (2004, 194) argue that store perceptions were more affected by ambient factors such as personnel and other customers, rather than store design features. Other factors affecting brand image within the retail space include lighting, colours, materials, shapes, furniture, scents, sounds, neatness and brand visualization (Hämäläinen 2004). As the research at hand discusses elements that are effective in terms of emotional branding, it is important to note that some of these factors might be more passive when the purpose is to evoke emotions and convey brand personality.

The size of the retail space is a determining factor in how consumers feel in the store. Large stores are considered to have a better selection of products and consumers tend to spend more time there, but smaller spaces are felt as more personal. (Foxall and Goldsmith 1995.) However, even smaller stores can evoke negative feelings. These feelings arise in situations, when the space is too narrow and consumers have difficulties

in moving there, but also if the space is too empty in terms of layout, decoration or filling of shelves. (Markkanen 2008, 81.) Retail spaces can be easily and relatively affordably modified by lighting, which is a crucial element in interior design. Cold light can make a space seem sterile, whereas warm light might evoke a more homely feeling. In addition, different colours can be transformed with lighting solutions, which can provide stores a fresh look in terms of perception for example when transitioning between seasons. (Gobé 2009, 84; Hämäläinen 2004.)

Companies that deal with consumer contacts numerous times a day on a weekly basis can agree that the role of staff in branding is considerably big (Heinonen-Salakka 2004). It is important to understand that interaction happens on both verbal and non-verbal level, which is why companies must be able to recruit personnel that is able to personify the brand and maintain its consistency. In addition to general conduct, a predetermined dress code or brand vocabulary are able to aid in this aspect. (Hammond 2008, 101,115.)

Consumers appreciate genuine interaction with personnel. In order to successfully engage with consumers, it is important to respect their personal space and adopt good eye contact that welcomes the consumer into the store. (Hammond 2008, 102-103.) In addition, a greeting or smile is often considered as a prerequisite and conclusion for customer service situations. It is important to listen to the consumer in order to be able to give professional advice and guidance for the problem that needs to be solved. The situation should be pleasant and calm, and rushing should be avoided. On the whole, the consumer determines the quality of the service according to whether their expectations were met or even exceeded, but the company should always aim for interaction that is consistent with the overall image and brand personality. (Heinonen-Salakka 2004.)

4 CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

In general, culture can be considered as one of the main influences on consumer behavior. The current rate of globalization and cultural interconnectedness presents new challenges for marketers. The reason for the importance of culture in marketing is especially due to its ability to powerfully and unconsciously guide consumers' individual and collective behavior, perceptions and determine their set of values. (Alas & Tuulik 2007.)

Sandhusen (2000, 219, 225) describes the stimuli affecting consumers as two-fold. Interpersonal influences that refer to social and cultural grouping according to e.g. gender, family, social class or reference groups occur in interaction between people, while intrapersonal influences include both demographic and psychographic variables that deal with the consumers' self. In comparison with the demographic variables, psychographic variables such as perceptions, motives and attitudes are more difficult to measure, but they are still considered as more important in terms of segmentation and evoking strong emotional responses through suitable marketing mix decisions. Therefore, the following chapters will discuss the implications related to culture, personal values and tendency towards ethnocentrism.

4.1 Culture

Schiffman and Kanuk (2004, 408) define culture as a compilation of learned beliefs, values and customs that have an impact on the behavior of consumers belonging to a certain society. O'Shaughnessy (2013, 441) elaborates the concept by describing it as a socially constructed and culturally learned way of living, which affects all decisions that people belonging to a certain culture make. Moreover, it resembles collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes people of one group or category from another (Hofstede & Hofstede 2014). These can entail

whole nations, regions, ethnicities or genders, and they referred to as subcultures, which are typical to every culture (Kotler & Keller 2012, 175).

Studies related to national culture have been widely based on the four established Hofstede cultural dimensions: power distance, individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. Furthermore, two additional dimensions of long-term orientation and indulgence versus restraint were included in the framework later on. Each country is given scores on the values within these dimensions to enable cross-cultural comparisons. The cultural dimensions are described as follows:

1. Power distance

Index that acknowledges that all societies are somewhat unequal, but displays the extent to which unequal power distribution is expected and accepted by the less powerful members of organizations or institutions within the society.

2. Individualism / Collectivism

Index that presents the level of group integration within the society. Individualistic cultures tend to emphasize responsibility over one's self and perhaps their immediate family, whereas collectivistic cultures are identified by strong cohesion at societal and family level.

3. Masculinity / Femininity

Index that measures the extent to which values, either masculine such as assertiveness and competitiveness; or feminine such as modesty and caring, are highlighted in the society.

4. Uncertainty avoidance

Index that presents the level of tolerance towards uncertainty and unstructured situations. Strict regulation and safety measures underline uncertainty avoiding societies that want to minimize the occurrence of surprising and unknown situation. Cultures with lower level of uncertainty avoidance are less emotional and have a more phlegmatic and difference-allowing approach to life.

5. Long-term orientation

Index that measures the level of pragmatism in terms of plans for the future and adjusting to changes against short-term orientation characterized by national pride, fulfilling social obligations, preservation of face and fostering tradition.

6. Indulgence vs. Restraint

Index that juxtaposes societies in terms of gratification of needs by enjoying life and having fun and strict social norms that suppresses the latter actions.

(Hofstede & Hofstede 2014.)

To provide a context for the present study, these dimensions can be used to interpret Finnish culture and values. The most recent study regarding the dimensions was initiated in 2013, while actual data is available from 2008. Based on the Value Survey Module 2008, Finland was given scores on each of the six dimensions. These scores are illustrated in Figure 4.

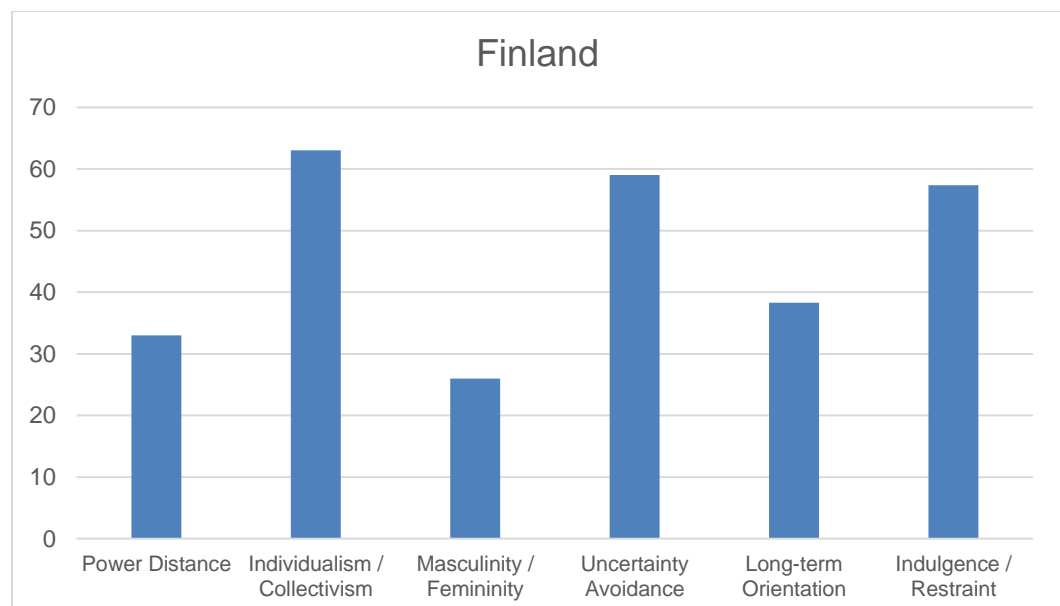


Figure 4. Cultural dimension scores on Finland (Hofstede & Hofstede 2014)

In conducting analysis, Finland has relatively low scores on power distance and masculinity dimensions. This means that the Finnish population appreciates softer values and power is distributed more equally among the society and between genders. Especially hierarchy in the work environment is more casual, allowing subordinates to talk relatively freely to their managers and even give feedback, but it is also reflected within the family among the relationships between companions and parents to children. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 72, 74.)

Regarding the femininity, the quality of life as well as caring for people and relationships is important for Finns, and modesty is appreciated over competitiveness. It is common for both men and women to be aspirational with their career and provide for the family, in contrast to most of the more masculine societies where the man is considered as the main provider for the family. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 155.)

Despite the ease regarding hierarchy, the level of bureaucracy and legislation is relatively high in Finland, which is partly due to the influence of the European Union. However, Finland's score on the uncertainty avoidance index is positioned at medium range compared to other countries in the world. Reflected from this, the Finns can be described as somewhat emotional or anxious when facing ambiguity, and seek for structure and predictability in organizations, institutions and relationships. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 197-198.)

In addition, Finland scores high in the individualism index. This reflects emphasis is on self-reliance and ultimately correlates to increased freedom in self-expression. Critical and opinionated thinking is allowed, and the people have the opportunity to shape their own path in life outside of their family unit. Independence is valued, which shows in adult children to move out of their parents' home to pursue studying or working career. People wish to support themselves in life as a manifest of personal

achievement, which is often noticeable in consumption patterns. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 113, 117.)

By looking at the dimensions of long-term orientation and indulgence versus restraint, Finland is positioned more towards short-term orientation as well as indulgence. Reflecting high individualism, people feel that they are in charge of their own lives, value friendships and are willing to spend money on themselves. It would seem that overall level happiness is high as people are able to indulge themselves without too many social restrictions. Due to this, people tend to have more positive attitudes and remember positive emotions better than negative ones. In terms of short-term orientation, Finns tend to respect traditions and be concerned with obligations, society- or status-wise. (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 243, 291.)

4.2 Values

Among others, Alas and Tuulik (2007) state that culture along with social interaction affects the formation of values. According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2004, 408), personal values are mental images that affect a person's attitudes and behavior, and thus their responses in different situations. Values are difficult to change and while they are not tied to any specific objects or situations, they guide behavior to meet cultural appropriateness and social acceptance. However, some cultural drift that subtly changes value sets and social norms is always in motion, especially when outside influences from other cultures are taken in by another (O'Shaughnessy 2013, 441).

Alas and Tuulik (2007) portray values as means of making judgments about things that they consider valuable or important. More specifically, they are principles and standards that are felt either individually or collectively. Because values are implicit, people feel it difficult to talk about them, but also due to the possibility of starting to question personal

motives, emotions and taboos (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 23). Although beliefs share similarities with values, they only represent an array of mental or verbal statements reflecting a person's assessment or knowledge of something (Schiffman & Kanuk 2004, 408).

To highlight the meaning of values to the present study, it is important to acknowledge the relationship between values and emotional responses. According to O'Shaughnessy (2013, 343, 350), emotions are tightly linked to values as they arise in situations when something is considered important and alternative solutions or actions are pondered. In addition, emotional appeals are powerful in providing certain experiences and affecting perceptions, in this case brand personality.

The development of brands into having an iconic status in the market requires a deep connection with the consumers. This position cannot be reached solely based on product attributes or innovative new solutions, but a brand has to be able to reflect upon the culture, personal beliefs and values of consumers. Thus, the consumer commitment to brands has two dimensions: an external framework of emotional and attitude-based behavior, and an internal framework that touches upon self-image and personal values. (Lindberg-Repo 2005, 47.)

Overall, Finnish values highlight justice and equality between genders as well as honesty and reliability. In addition, hard work and diligence are appreciated within the Finnish society. However, it is not common for one to boast with their possessions or success, as Finns value humility and modesty. Listening and taking others into consideration in social situations is an indicator of good manners, whereas commending one's self is considered as selfish. (Infopankki 2014.)

Derived from the country analysis of Hofstede cultural dimensions, Finns value individualism and freedom of choice in all aspects of their life. According to the principles of equality, people are allowed to express

themselves in different ways in the society. Relatively high score on the indulgence index shows that in order to improve the quality of life, people are willing to indulge themselves with things or activities that make them happy.

4.3 Ethnocentrism and country-of-origin

Another concept related to culture and values is ethnocentrism, which arises from the tendency of people perceiving their own culture as superior to others (O'Shaughnessy 2013, 442). According to Solomon (2013, 348), ethnocentrism refers to the behavioral conduct of preferring one's own country's products over foreign ones in purchasing situations. It is common for ethnocentric consumers to be highly conscious over domestic economy, and feel that they are supporting the national labor market by purchasing domestically produced products. The downside of ethnocentrism is that when own culture and values are so highly appreciated that they never change, a society becomes inaccessible to and misses out on foreign innovations (O'Shaughnessy 2013, 443).

For this reason, country-of-origin needs to be considered as an important factor for ethnocentric consumers. In addition, it is a central concept contributing to brand image (O'Shaughnessy 2013, 443). The parallel concept of brand origin refers to origin details being included in brand demographics, which contribute further to brand personality through the 'made in' labeling on products. However, country-of-origin includes a wider array of perceptions in consumer studies in the form of country of assembly, design or manufacture or sourced components. (Saran & Gupta 2012.)

Brands are able to benefit from positive associations with country-of-origin, especially in situations when consumers make purchasing decisions with relatively low amount of information available. (Solomon 2013, 347.) Studies have shown that country-of-origin is considered as a determining

factor in decision-making when there is no variation on quality or price among product categories. Furthermore, brand name has been discovered to having a lesser impact compared to country of design or assembly in the evaluation of quality. (Saran & Gupta 2012.)

As a part of Scandinavia, Finland has been able to integrate the Nordic lifestyle into its country image. Modernism, innovativeness and egalitarianism are all characteristics of Finland alongside a strong design identity as well as expertise in high technology and wood industries. Responsible conduct towards both domestic and international society has generated an image of trustworthiness. While Finland is definitely not a country of cheap labour, its products are designed with integrity, style and user orientation. In addition, the quality of Finnish products is considered as relatively high, especially when compared with consumer perceptions of products produced in countries with low labour costs. (Ryan 2008.)

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following chapter will discuss the research methodology and serve as an introduction to the empirical segment of the present thesis. To begin with, the research approach will be clarified and continued with a detailed description of research design. As the research is conducted as a case study, a description of the case company will be given within the context of the research. Moreover, methods of data collection and data analysis are described alongside discussion about the reliability and validity of the research.

5.1 Research approach

Most of the researches conducted have either a deductive or inductive approach. Deductive approach refers to the process of drawing conclusions from theoretical principles, which are tested through empirical

research. Induction is the opposite of deduction, and thus relies on the gathered data and specific observations derived from it to contribute to theory. (Lee & Lings 2008, 6). For the present thesis, an inductive approach will be taken. It is characterized by deep understanding of the research context and aims to develop understanding around certain phenomena and the meanings that people tend to attach to them. Due to this, the research process is more flexible and allows smaller samples compared to deductive approach, which is highly structured and aims to generalize findings based on larger samples. With induction, there is less concern for generalization. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 126-127.)

The research design for this thesis is exploratory in nature. Exploratory research is often utilized in situations where one seeks to gain insights and discover new ideas by exploring a problem or situation, and it is often guided by the curiosity of the researcher. The results are commonly tentative due to characteristic small and non-representative samples, but they are valuable in providing grounds for further research attempts. Due to this, one operational advantage of exploratory research is its ability to develop an approach to a problem. More specifically, it distinguishes priorities or hypotheses that can be tested by other, more conclusive types of research. (Malhotra 2012, 100-102.)

Exploratory research is characterized by flexibility towards the research process. However, it does not refer to drifting focus, but to a broader perspective, which is narrowed down in the end to generate specific findings. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 140.) In terms of data collection, exploratory research design relies mostly upon qualitative methods, although it is also possible to quantify some of the data collected. Moreover, the collection and qualitative analysis of secondary data is used to complement the methods used for primary data collection. (Malhotra 2012, 102.)

Inductive exploratory approach suits the research at hand rather well considering that the main aim is to gain insights and understanding on the role of emotional branding on brand personality specifically within the context of the case company and Finnish Generation Y female consumers. However, brand personality is always formed as a subjective mental image. While it is possible to generalize the results to a certain extent, emotions are always experienced individually on a personal level, which makes their prediction rather challenging. Moreover, the present study is expected to contribute to emotional branding theory, which seems to be relatively scattered and vague at the moment.

5.2 Research design

This research will be conducted according to qualitative principles. Qualitative research is best suited for situations where an interest is established towards specific detailed structures related to a certain phenomenon (Metsämuuronen 2008, 14). Moreover, it responds well to problem areas related to brands, emotions and other intangible issues that are hard to grasp and quantify. Consumers differentiate brands based on rational and emotional criteria, and qualitative methodology is able to tap into the emotional dimension, which is felt and experienced rather than consciously spoken or thought of. (Gordon & Langmaid 1993, 5-6.)

Case studies are a common form of performing qualitative research. They can be applied to several circumstances, targeting either individuals, groups of people or different kinds of entities. Furthermore, case studies are utilized to study contemporary events, where it is not possible to control behavior (Yin 2009, 11). The benefit is that they provide a versatile perspective on the case at hand by allowing multiple methods to gather comprehensive data. (Metsämuuronen 2008, 16-17.) In addition, case studies are rather concerned with the context of the research topic. They allow the study of contemporary phenomenon in their natural context,

although the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not always necessarily clear. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 146).

The present research will be conducted as a single-case study with embedded units of analysis. To elaborate, the research will utilize a Finnish fashion and design company, Marimekko, as the main case and tool to study the relationship between emotional branding practices and brand personality construction. As the focus of the study is on consumer perspective, the sampled consumers will act as the embedded units to be analyzed. One rationale for such case study design is based on the case being considered as representative or somewhat typical of the research topic or context. While single-case studies are able to provide in-depth information on a topic, the potential disadvantage is that it is more vulnerable to misinterpretations. This risk, however, can be minimized by ensuring an access to the maximum amount of evidence available. (Yin 2009, 48-50.)

5.3 Case description

Marimekko is a Finnish textile and clothing design company founded in Helsinki in 1951. The company's original style includes bold prints, clean lines and bright colours, whereas the inspiration is derived and mixed from nature, tradition and Finnish culture as well as international, modern and urban aspects. Over the years, Marimekko has developed into a lifestyle concept that covers clothing, bags, other accessories and interior decoration items such as fabrics and tableware. (Marimekko 2014a; Aav, Kivilinna & Viljanen 2011, 6.) The logo of the company, which has remained relatively unchanged since its first public presentation in 1954 (Aav, Kivilinna & Viljanen 2011, 29), is portrayed below in Figure 5.

The logo for Marimekko, featuring the word "marimekko" in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. A registered trademark symbol (®) is positioned at the top right of the letter "o".

Figure 5. Logo of Marimekko

As a fashion and design company, Marimekko does not have a mascot or spokescharacter that some brands in the FMCG market utilize to personify the brand. However, Marimekko has always been perceived as a women's company, which has provided means for differentiation even on an international scale. In addition to its numerous successful female designers, Marimekko has been characterized by two of its CEOs, Kirsti Paakkanen and most notably, founder Armi Ratia. Since 2008, the company has been headed by Mika Ihamuotila as the current CEO. (Aav, Kivilinna & Viljanen 2011, 6, 135.)

Marimekko's core values are condensed into the so-called 'Marimekko Spirit', which comprises of six main points: originality, fairness, common sense, cooperation, courage and most importantly, joy. The company encourages authenticity, which translates to independence, ability to speak your mind and express yourself as you are. Moreover, the emphasis is on creativity, boldness and stepping outside of your comfort zone by taking risks while fostering the joy of life. In terms of stakeholders, Marimekko values transparency, environmental awareness, fair conduct and working together to reach common goals. (Marimekko 2014b.)

The Marimekko lifestyle encapsulates the beauty in regular everyday life, and is reflected in the company's value to create meaningful and timeless products (Marimekko 2014b). The company prices its offering within middle-range and does not aspire to become a luxury fashion house, only to continue to be renowned for its high quality and durable products (Haapala 2014). Nowadays, Marimekko targets consumers according to their personality that resonates with idealism, bubblyness and a balanced appreciation of traditionalism and innovativeness, whereas in the past the target segment was considered to be intelligent and educated women, who were strong and powerful opinion leaders. (Härkäpää, Sykkö, Arjavirta & Kemell-Kutvonen 2012, 11.)

Over the years, Marimekko has moved from Finnish production to a much wider manufacturing network. Currently, only 30 % of production is located in Finland, while EU countries account for nearly 80 % of total production. The remainder is mostly produced in China, Thailand and India. However, many of the company's products are still based on Finnish design. The country-of-origin is labelled on the products according to the country where the product has been compiled into its final form. By doing this, the company aims for transparency in their production process in addition to recorded quality requirements and committing to a Code of Conduct based on the ethical rules of ILO and BSCI in dealing with their subcontractors all over the world. (Marimekko 2014c.)

The distribution network consists of company-owned, retailer-owned and shop-in-shop stores, of which around 40 % are located in Finland (Marimekko 2013). Marimekko stores are described as meeting places, which aim for the visitors to get energized, gain positive experiences and feel at home. Thus, the sympathetic spaces rely a lot on the strength of the company: colours and prints. (Härkäpää et al. 2012, 11.) In addition to the concept stores, Marimekko opened an online store in Finland in 2012 followed by its initial launch in the United States (Marimekko 2012).

Marimekko was chosen as the case company as it is one of the few Finnish companies that has been able to craft and establish a strong brand personality that is reflected throughout its operations. Since its foundation over 60 years ago, Marimekko has been able to gain an iconic status in the Finnish market by representing Finnish design, labour and quality. Due to this, many Finns have become emotionally attached to the brand and are able to see something special in even the most ordinary shapes as long as they are a part of a Marimekko product (Härkäpää et al. 2012, 208). Thus, Marimekko can be considered as a representative case in studying emotional branding and brand personality.

5.4 Data collection

As mentioned above, case studies are characterized by utilizing multiple methods in data collection. These methods commonly include interviews, observation, documentary analysis or questionnaires. Such multi-method approach requires triangulation as a part of proving the validity of the results. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 146.) The process can either refer to triangulation of *data* gathered from several sources; *investigators* involved in data collection and analysis; *theory* described from different positions; or *methodology* utilized to derive data for analysis (Bryman 2002).

The empirical segment of the present thesis relies upon both data and methodological triangulation. Data collection will be carried out by deriving primary data through semi-structured interviews and personal observation, while secondary data regarding the case company is retrieved from relevant literature, media articles and corporate website. The following chapters discuss the detailed actions taken on each step of data collection.

5.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are considered to be the most important data collection methods in case study research (Yin 2009, 106). For the present thesis, the interviews are conducted as semi-structured interviews. According to Metsämuuronen (2008, 41), semi-structured interviews are usually performed in situations where topic is either sensitive or intimate, or the informants will discuss issues that they are not very conscious of, such as values or ideals.

Semi-structured interviews are characterized by certain themes that guide the interview forward. Although the themes are the same for all the respondents, the order and form of questions can vary between interviews. The samples are relatively small, but the gained information provides in-

depth insights. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1991, 36, 38.) The sample for the interviews consisted of six Finnish female consumers, who were considered as representatives of Generation Y. All of the contacted consumers were initially willing to participate in the research.

According to ethical principles, all of the respondents were assured that their identity would remain anonymous in order for them to discuss the topic more freely. In addition, the permission to record the interview for further analysis methods was asked in the beginning, and consequently given by each respondent. Moreover, every interview began with a brief introduction to the main themes of the interview for the respondents to get accustomed to the research at hand.

The one-on-one interviews were organized in July 2014, most often in the interviewees' home in order to create a calm and safe environment for answering the questions (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 74). The interviews were conducted in Finnish, which is the mother tongue of all the respondents. The duration of the interviews ranged from 30 to 45 minutes, during which the informants were asked questions related to four pre-determined themes: background information, consumer behavior, Marimekko associations and Marimekko brand personality. The interviews were recorded on site and later on transcribed into written form for coding and analysis. The template for the interviews is provided in Appendix 1.

The utilization of different projective methods during the interview is able to aid in retrieving valuable information, as people feel more liberated to speak about topics that are, for any reason, otherwise difficult to voice. The impact of projection is derived from the general tendency of people to project emotional content on something else rather than reflect it from themselves. The projective methods to be utilized in this research are object personification and visual elicitation. (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets 2013, 44.)

In discovering the brand personality of Marimekko, the informants participated in a personification exercise, which encouraged in imagining the Marimekko brand as a person. The exercise was elicited by showing three advertising campaign pictures of Marimekko's Fall/Winter 2013–2014 collection, which had appeared in Finnish women's magazine Olivia's October, November and December issues in 2013. These pictures are further displayed in Appendix 2. The pictures were chosen due to the magazine's reader profile, of which roughly over 50 % can be counted among female Generation Y representatives (Aller Media 2014). This would suggest that the campaign was specifically aimed to reach Generation Y members and designed to appeal to them. In order to ease the exercise, the pictures served as a visual aid in describing the personality of Marimekko and other human attributes associated with the brand (Gordon & Langmaid 1993, 97).

5.4.2 Personal observation

In addition to interviews, this research will derive primary data from observation. It is a notable qualitative method in gathering additional information about the research topic (Lee & Lings 2008, 224; Yin 2009, 110). Observation can be categorized into two main areas: *personal observation*, which refers to discreet data collection without attempting to control or manipulate the observed phenomenon; and *humanistic inquiry*, which requires high level of involvement from the researcher in the studied phenomenon. (Malhotra 2012, 233.)

For this research, personal observation is conducted in order to triangulate the data gathered through semi-structured interviews and find out what kind of emotional branding activities actually take place on the retail space, where most of the consumer contacts happen. The observation was carried out in July 2014 with the target being the Marimekko concept store in Lappeenranta, which is a company-owned store in Marimekko's distribution network, opened in 2012 (Marimekko 2012). In personal

observation, the observations are made and recorded as systematically as possible, often aided by different kinds of checklists, estimation scales or scorecards (Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara 2009, 215-216). As this case requires more descriptive data of the concept stores for qualitative analysis, a template for the observation notes is created based on a rough categorization of the most relevant store concept elements listed in Chapter 3. The template is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Template for observation notes

OBSERVATION	DETAILS
<i>Retail space</i>	Location
	Size
	Display window
	Surface materials
	Store layout
<i>Retail environment</i>	Sensorial stimuli
	Furniture
	Lighting
<i>Product assortment</i>	Categories
	Product layout
<i>Personnel</i>	

Personal observation is advantageous in being a very flexible research method, which allows the observer to record the phenomenon widely and diversely. Moreover, it is especially suited for research that takes place in natural settings. However, critique towards the method revolves around the high possibility for bias throughout the process due to its unstructured format and heavy reliance on the researcher. (Malhotra 2012, 233.)

5.4.3 Secondary data

In order to build context for the case study, secondary data was gathered from several sources to support the primary data. Such sources were the corporate website of Marimekko, literature concerning the company and media articles that further described the company's actions and strategy. Thus, secondary data serves here as the company perspective

corresponding to the consumer perspective derived from the interviews. This data is presented in a detailed manner in the case description.

As the data collected for the case description has come partially from the case company itself, it is important to acknowledge that these statements are subjective to the company's own perception of itself, reflecting upon brand identity. For this reason, some of the statements made might not actually correlate with the data received from the semi-structured interviews as brand personality, being a part of brand image, does not necessarily match with the experienced brand identity. Thus, it will be interesting to see, whether this is the case in the research at hand.

5.5 Data analysis

The data collected for this research is analyzed according to qualitative content analysis. The process is guided by the central concepts that had been identified in the beginning of the research process as well as the assumptions risen during the data collection period, which serve as basis for the selection of research variables. It is common that with qualitative analysis the variable categories are more imprecise than with quantitative analysis, which assigns a specific value to each variable. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1991, 115.)

Qualitative research methods, especially different types of interviews, are known to produce a large amount of rich data up for transcription and analysis. For this reason, the amount of data needs to be reduced by identifying key ideas from the material guided by the research questions through a process referred to as coding. (Lee & Lings 2008, 233, 244.) For the present study, the codes were formulated according to descriptive and interpretive principles (Miles & Huberman 1994, 57). Characteristic of inductive approach, the coding of data happened after the data collection and can even alter the predetermined research questions (Saunders,

Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 490). A table of the utilized codes is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Illustration of codes.

Brand personality	BP
Marimekko brand personality	BP.MAR
Brand personality drivers	BP.DRI
Brand associations	BP.BA
Perceived values	BP.VALUE
Congruence with brand values	BP.VALUE.CON
Consumer self-congruence	BP.SELF
Emotional branding	EB
Preferable contact points	EB.CONTACT
Consumer relationship	EB.CONS-REL
Generation Y	EB.CONS-REL.GEN-Y
Sensorial experiences	EB.SENSE
Positive experiences	EB.SENSE.POS
Negative experiences	EB.SENSE.NEG
Logotype	EB.LOGO
Products	EB.PROD
Store concept	EB.STORE
Primary consumer focus points	EB.FOC.PRI
Secondary consumer focus points	EB.FOC.SEC
Cultural implications	CI
Culture	CI.CUL
Personal values	CI.VAL
Ethnocentrism	CI.ETH
Brand personality / Emotional branding relations	REL.BP-EB

Both primary and secondary data went through a categorization process, which resulted in coding the transcripts by hand according to key issues risen from the context and prior literature. The template for the semi-structured interviews with the predetermined themes guided the coding

process. Finally, the data is displayed by cross-analysis of the embedded cases within the context of the single-case study according to the assigned themes in order to be able to discover generalizable aspects and deepen understanding of the topic (Lee & Lings 2008, 247). Moreover, the findings from observation are presented from the perspective of the case study in order to triangulate the data from the interviews (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 36.)

5.6 Reliability and validity

In order to prove their scientific value, any research must go through the examination of its quality. The quality of research design can be measured according to four common tests: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. As internal validity is only possible to test in explanatory studies, three other tests remain to be discussed with the case study at hand. (Yin 2009, 40.)

Construct validity refers to the identification of correct operational measures for the concepts under study. Several tactics, such as having multiple sources of evidence, establishing chain of evidence and having key informants review a draft of the case study report are able to increase construct validity. (Yin 2009, 42.) In this case, the role of emotional branding is studied in relation to brand personality formation with the measure being consumer perceptions. The choice of measure is fairly justified, since brand personality is ultimately a personal mental image that forms by perception and is processed through subjective filters. Moreover, construct validity is supported by the reliance on methodological and data triangulation.

External validity is a test to measure the capability to generalize the results of a case study within a certain domain. In terms of generalization, case studies have received arguments both in favor and against them. Yin (2009, 15) states that the purpose of case studies is to expand theory and

allow generalizations on theoretical propositions, not to aim for statistical generalization. In addition, many have argued that understanding the specific case is more important than its generalization on a larger scale. In this context, a single case can become a component in studying a multifaceted phenomenon. (Yin 2009, 15, 43; Metsämuuronen 2008, 17-18.)

In order to validate the data retrieved from a relatively small sample, the respondents were contacted according to the principles of purposive sampling, and the interviews were conducted until theoretical saturation was reached (Lee and Lings 2008, 213, 216). Interviews are able to produce important insights to the research at hand when the interviewees are well-informed and knowledgeable of the topic (Yin 2009, 108; Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000). For the present thesis, the respondents were selected according to the criteria risen from theory and based on their level of knowledge and experience regarding the case company, which is highlighted in Table 5.

Table 5. Informant experience related to the case company.

	Age	First contact to Marimekko
Participant 1	26	early childhood
Participant 2	25	early childhood
Participant 3	25	early childhood
Participant 4	25	primary school / fifth grade
Participant 5	25	early childhood
Participant 6	23	primary school/ early teens

The role of theory is essential in single-case studies in addressing the issues with external validity, as it aids in the identification of suitable domain for generalization (Yin 2009, 43). For the present thesis, the research is expected to provide generalizable results within the theory related to brand personality drivers. Moreover, the study aims to bridge the

gap between the concepts of emotional branding and brand personality – an area which can be considered as relatively understudied.

The reliability factor of research refers to the extent to which other researchers are able to replicate the case study with the same results. In order to accomplish this, the research procedures need to be documented carefully and the suggested actions include the utilization of case study protocol and development of case study database. (Yin 2009, 45.) For this case study, a database was created, and it includes all the notes related to data collection and audio recordings of each interview along with their transcripts. A sample of coded transcripts is presented in Appendix 3.

6 EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The following chapter will present the empirical results of the research. The data derived from interviews will be discussed according to the key concepts of the study, followed by the results of personal observation conducted in one of the case company's concept stores. These segments will combine both primary and secondary data to contribute to the validity of the research. The concepts of emotional branding and brand personality are discussed as separate entities, whereas cultural implications related to culture and values are discussed as a part of the segment related to brand personality in order to allow a more comprehensive analysis. However, the results related to ethnocentrism and country-of-origin are discussed further in their own segment.

6.1 Interviews

As previously mentioned, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with six informants, who were considered as members of Finnish female Generation Y. At the time of research, the respondents were aged between 23 and 26 years, which is an interesting age group for companies

to engage with. Around this age, these consumers are finishing up their studies and starting their working careers, and thus experience an increase in their income. It is especially beneficial for companies to reach consumers at this time, as emotional branding can become a crucial tool in generating a long-term relationship with these individuals and tapping into their purchasing power potential.

In terms of the research, both self-conceptualization and set of values are important in studying the formation of brand personality. In order to be able to analyze their congruence with the Marimekko brand personality and corporate values, the respondents were asked to describe themselves briefly, and elaborate on what kind of characteristics they value in their friends. A detailed description of the informants is provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Description of informants

	Age	Occupation	Self-description	Values in friends
Participant 1	26	Stay-at-home mother (textile designer)	open-minded, humane, mostly cheerful	honesty, loyalty, sense of humour
Participant 2	25	Marketing assistant	social, quite cheerful, determined, explicit	reliability, honesty, support
Participant 3	25	Project manager	open-minded, enthusiastic about new things, traditional, quite calm and cheerful	reliability, honesty, fun, easy to get along, similarities
Participant 4	25	Student	quite cheerful, social, reliable, honest, risk-taker	reliability, honesty, caring
Participant 5	25	Waitress	relaxed, open- minded, self- indulgent, friendly, social	socialness, reliability, similar interests
Participant 6	23	Student & part-time sales clerk	open-minded, energetic, hard- working, positive, humane, social	similar attitude towards life, positivity, authenticity, honesty, reliability

Despite coming from very different backgrounds, nearly all of the informants described themselves as either social or humane. When asked what kind of characteristics they would value in a friend, reliability and honesty were strongly emphasized by all of the informants, regardless of whether they described themselves as having these qualities or not. These two aspects are very integral components of the Finnish culture, and commonly applied with brands that consumers perceive to stand for quality and reliability acquired through consistency in operations.

When asked about personal style, the results show an increased tendency towards individualism, which is rather characteristic of Generation Y. The level of following trends was either moderate or low, as all of the respondents expressed a preference towards following their own style rather than current trends. Each informant was able to describe their personal style and the motives behind it rather intricately and it often correlated well with their own description of themselves:

I like casual clothes, and usually colourful ones. Just last winter I noticed that I don't have any black coat until I bought one to wear for more formal occasions. But like, a jacket suit is not my style at all, or dress shirts and such, but more relaxed, comfortable [clothing]. (Participant 5)

In terms of the case company, one of the informants brought up that the Marimekko style divides opinions in a sense that you either love it or hate it. One of the informants stated that she wears Marimekko in order to stand out and likes that none of her close friends at school wear the same clothes, whereas another considered the popularity of the products with peers to be the reason for their initial appeal. While the style of dressing is a personal matter, some of the informants managed to identify the wide variety in Marimekko's product offering as several alternative contact points:

--[I]f you don't think about only clothes, I feel that everyone can find something for themselves pretty well from the whole range of products. (Participant 3)

--[T]he product range is so wide that I think there's something for everybody, so that they don't suit only one person's style, but also many, many others' too. (Participant 6)

In addition, it was acknowledged that Marimekko is able to adapt to different tastes by combining various kinds of aesthetical influences and elements across many product categories. Based on the responses, a majority of the informants expressed a preference towards the older and bolder print patterns of Marimekko, partially due to motives based on nostalgia and tradition. One respondent specifically preferred newer patterns in interior decoration due to their neutrality, which entails less accommodation from the rest of the décor elements. Another respondent felt that the big and flamboyant patterns were a mismatch to her classical style, and would prefer patterns that are subtler with small dots or stripes and understated, basic colours such as black, white or blue.

The following chapter will present the empirical results related to Marimekko's brand personality in terms of its definition, drivers and brand associations. In addition, the perceived values of Marimekko, and their congruence with consumer and brand values is presented in more detail.

6.1.1 Brand personality

The brand personality of Marimekko was examined through an object personification exercise, in which three different advertisement pictures were shown to the informants as visual elicitation. The advertisements were part of an advertising campaign, showcasing the A/W 2014 collection to a Finnish women's magazine readers with a diverse approach. The first image, referred to as Picture 1 in the text, presented a graphic outlook of a

black-haired woman with a patterned black and white dress on a dark background and red framing. Picture 2 was styled more casual with a brunette woman in a beige, checkered wool coat carrying a tote handbag on a blue-toned background and framing. Finally, Picture 3 had a more festive atmosphere with a blonde woman in a patterned cotton sateen dress carrying a bunch of evening bags and clutches with the same pattern on an orange-toned background and framing. The pictures are illustrated in Appendix 2.

The respondents were asked to imagine Marimekko as a person, who they can get to know and spend time with, and then describe the Marimekko person in their own words in terms of characteristic qualities and musical taste. The results indicated that Marimekko has a very clearly defined brand personality that is apparent to the sample of Generation Y representatives. The responses to the exercise are presented further in Table 7.

Table 7. The brand personality of Marimekko

Participant 1	<i>-- walks her own path, and kind of playful, and confident -- confident in her own style -- a fun person to hang out with.</i>
Participant 2	<i>Fresh, direct, beautiful -- outspoken, by being explicit about everything that she does -- wild.</i>
Participant 3	<i>Funny, warm, easily approachable, maybe educated -- has class.</i>
Participant 4	<i>-- colourful, with a wide perspective on life -- forgiving to everyone -- social and gets along with everybody -- has her own values, a warm person -- dares to take risks and do whatever she wants in life -- walks her own path.</i>
Participant 5	<i>-- gentle, friendly towards everyone, happy, quite social, but not in an aggressive way --.</i>
Participant 6	<i>-- lively, fresh, strong, -- trustworthy. It would be like a long-term friend.</i>

These descriptions of Marimekko's brand personality can be summarized under happy, lively and social, as well as inclusive of other people. This can be deduced from the comments describing Marimekko as gentle, fresh, getting along with everybody, easily approachable, playful and funny.

However, another theme that arose clearly is the sense of direction: Marimekko is perceived as a brand, which has found its core identity, believes strongly in its own way of doing things and is not afraid to show it. This characterization translates into the perceived brand personality qualities such as outspokenness, confidence, strength, directness and risk taking.

In terms of musical taste, all of the respondents described Marimekko listening mostly to Finnish music, more specifically old hits. The variety would be still be present in either jazz, indie or old French music. However, three of the respondents stated that the musical style in genres would not really matter in the case of Marimekko, as Marimekko's musical taste would probably quite diverse, being a mixture of something between old, classical and contemporary. These statements summarize efficiently the strong Finnish identity and design aesthetics of Marimekko in blending the past with the present, and thus offering variety that applies to a larger audience.

In order to study the perceived values of Marimekko, the sampled consumers were asked to describe the values that Marimekko represents to them. It was possible to group the responses under three main categories: Finnishness, traditionality and reliability. The individual responses are gathered together in Table 8.

Table 8. Perceived values of Marimekko.

Participant 1	family values, traditionality, reliability
Participant 2	clarity, quality
Participant 3	traditionality, quality, domesticity
Participant 4	Finnishness, traditionality, reliability
Participant 5	domesticity, practicality, durability
Participant 6	reliability, durability, Finnishness

As indicated above, the cultural relevance of Marimekko is very high. It is essentially perceived as a Finnish brand, through which consumers can project their national identity. Given its iconic status on the Finnish market, the company has been able to intertwine its brand personality with the Finnish culture and values with a unique twist. One of the respondents brought up this cultural aspect in her comments:

--If you had never seen those products and Marimekko, -- for example as a foreigner, you would know nothing about it, then it might be a bit weird, difficult to get into the mindset, but in a way all Finnish people have somehow grown up with [Marimekko] so that at least for the people our age it is quite an easily approachable [brand]. Almost everyone has something, or at least I would think that everyone has even some small pouch from Marimekko if nothing else. (Participant 1)

In addition, reliability was stated by all of the respondents either as such or in the alternative forms of quality of durability. The fact that Marimekko has had a strong legacy essentially in the Finnish textile and manufacturing industry was important to a couple of the respondents. The long history of Marimekko was appreciated by many of the interviewed consumers, and essentially it built their trust towards the company and its products:

-- [The products] last time. -- [N]ot only the products, but also the durability of the printed patterns. The fact that you have Unikko curtains made in 1965, it can still hang there [nowadays] and still look good. (Participant 5)

-- [History] creates credibility -- and I also like old things anyway so the fact that [Marimekko] has existed for a longer time kind of creates some value for me. (Participant 4)

On the whole, the durability and high quality of the products contributes to the longevity of their usage. The aspects related to traditionalism was another important recurring theme in the responses. A few of the

respondents acknowledged the presence of Marimekko products in the different phases in life:

-- [The products] are a part of a chain of generations. -- [T]hey are of good quality, so maybe the fact that they outlast is the reason you buy them. -- One shirt was bought -- to my older child so that it's bought from the flea market for four euros and it's still like new and it has been worn so much. So it will be inherited by [my] younger child. (Participant 1)

Maybe Marimekko is somehow so traditional, and my mom has been quite respectful of traditions and appreciated quality. -- Marimekko has timeless patterns that have been in my parents first home and then the same ones have been brought into the family home. (Participant 3)

When compared with the corporate values, or the so-called Marimekko Spirit, which Marimekko has explicitly described as a part of their brand identity and corporate culture, there is clear congruence with the consumer perception of Marimekko's brand personality and values. The descriptions above clearly define the aspects of originality, fairness, common sense, cooperation, courage and joy, which would indicate that the company has been quite successful in implementing their brand identity through their communication as well as maintaining consistency and authenticity in its operations.

As brand associations can have a very defining effect on brand personality in terms of revealing some of its drivers, several interview questions were formulated to find out what kind of things the consumers associated the Marimekko brand. The most common association that was brought up in the responses was the combination of colours and patterns, which were the initial focus point for many of the respondents. Moreover, clean cuts and shapes were further associated with the products. Although the interviewed consumers were rather knowledgeable of the different patterns from different generations, nearly everyone referred to the Unikko

pattern at some point of the interview. One respondent stated that she expects colours from Marimekko and focuses especially on the pattern, while many indicated that these elements are integral to the Marimekko style. These aspects were brought up as a part of the visual elicitation, as the consumers were debating whether all of the presented advertisements were truly representative of the Marimekko style.

As the perception of colours can vary between individuals, there was a division between the informants regarding the Pictures 1 and 2. While four of the respondents felt that Picture 1 conveyed positive associations with its intensity, professional feel, graphic style and appealing colours and print, two respondents described the advertisement as depressing, dark, cold and unrepresentative of Marimekko. On the contrary, the same four respondents perceived Picture 2 as bland and boring with cold colours and products that are unidentifiable as Marimekko, whereas the remaining two saw it correlating with the Marimekko style with its strong, practical and classic appeal. A consensus was reached with Picture 3, which was described the most appealing due to its warm, fun and festive message with interesting products and a print that is easily identifiable as Marimekko.

In addition to colours and prints, Marimekko was most commonly associated with the special occasions in life and giving gifts. One respondent had her confirmation and graduation dresses custom-made out of a Marimekko fabric, whereas another buys the ready-made clothes for her children. Overall, many of the respondents stated buying the products as gifts for their friends and family. The popularity of the products as gifts is due to the positive associations with the brand:

In my opinion [Marimekko] is a gift that tells the receiver that it is of high quality and that it is a valuable. -- [Y]ou can give it and you know that it is durable, that it's not anything disposable. -- [It is a way to appreciate your friends] -- and think about the receiver of the gift. (Participant 3)

As valuable products, the relatively high prices limit the purchasing capabilities of some respondents. For this reason, a few of them mentioned that they buy Marimekko especially during the sale seasons. The association with Finnish design was brought up by a couple of the respondents, which makes it also suitable as a souvenir for foreign acquaintances. One respondent stated to buy Marimekko for her foreign friends, partially due to its ability to convey an image of Finland.

Two of the respondents associated Marimekko with their grandmothers and childhood, whereas for one it reminded her of her childhood home. All of the respondents described their childhood as happy and content, so from the perspective of emotional branding these kinds of nostalgic associations with positive memories and important relationships are very important. Moreover, they are able to cultivate the brand personality in a manner that it feels easily approachable and more relatable.

In terms of the main brand personality drivers, it is possible to identify five main instances for Marimekko based on the interviews: product attributes, country-of-design, time on the market, user imagery and advertising. The most dominating of these are the product attributes that revolve around design features, such as colours, print patterns and shapes. Through these elements, Marimekko has been able to construct a design identity that exudes its brand personality as well as its Finnish origin by combining simplicity with boldness. In addition, the fact that Marimekko has a long history creates trust and respect in the eyes of the consumers, which has resulted in the iconic position in the company's domestic market.

Finally, user imagery refers to both consumers and company representatives and presents Marimekko as an inclusive brand. The interviewed consumers described Marimekko's brand personality as social, friendly, warm and easily approachable, which was reflected in many comments referring to Marimekko offering something for everybody. Although Marimekko has developed a distinct style that does not

necessarily match with the personal style of each consumer, it does not exclude anyone by targeting a certain consumer group:

[Marimekko products] -- have clean shapes, pretty much suitable for people of all ages, so that they haven't put them in a certain mould. (Participant 3)

In addition, these same aspects were brought up as a part of the visual elicitation. The respondents were asked to describe the models in the pictures and imagine what kind of people they were. As several kinds of descriptions arose based on the advertisements, the visual elicitation based on an actual advertisement campaign was able to prove how diverse the Marimekko brand actually is and how advertising is able to cultivate the brand personality from this perspective:

[The woman in Picture 2] is very metropolitan -- and [the woman in Picture 3] has maybe this kind of garment for celebration, more for these kinds of season parties and from [Picture 1] I feel she's like a hipster type or this kind of -- ecologically aware --. [C]ould be even a mother, like who is trendy. (Participant 1)

[In Picture 3] it could be a stay-at-home mother. -- [In Picture 2] maybe someone like a student, or a career woman, who dresses more neatly, but still casually --. Follows her time. [In Picture 3] she is probably going to some party. (Participant 5)

The following chapter will present the results related to emotional branding. Elements, such as consumer relationship, sensorial experiences, logotype, products and store concept are discussed from both general and case company perspective. Moreover, this segment clarifies the primary and secondary consumer focus points for a more efficient implementation of emotional branding.

6.1.2 Emotional branding

To begin with the segment of emotional branding, the level of emotional brand attachment of the sample is assessed. All of the respondents were knowledgeable of the case company, and have experienced several contact points throughout their life with the Marimekko brand. Thus, they were asked to describe their relationship with the brand. Responses revealed variation in the level of emotional attachment as some of the respondents referred to the brand directly being like a friend, whereas others described their relationship as relatively neutral or distant, or based on functional qualities. However, a majority of the respondents can still be categorized having either a moderate or high level of attachment to the brand based on the complete interview and their brand associations. All of the responses are summarized in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Consumer relationship with Marimekko

	Level of attachment	Quote
Participant 1	moderate	<i>Friendly, close, a little bit like old mates-type of thing. We have known for years already.</i>
Participant 2	low	<i>Quite distant. -- I can buy their bed sheets, or maybe tableware or bags, -- [but] I wouldn't wear Marimekko. -- [The clothes] are not my style.</i>
Participant 3	moderate	<i>Well, I'm not a large-scale consumer of Marimekko, but it is something that is constantly present at home and elsewhere. That it is always a reliable choice so that the products are very trustworthy and maybe kind of timeless.</i>
Participant 4	high	<i>-- I am quite trusting -- towards Marimekko. -- Enthusiastic. -- It's funny how you don't always realize what Marimekko means to you, because I am not ready to pay a lot for everything, but for Marimekko I would pay 200 euros for a leather bag, although I would certainly not buy a bag that expensive from any other store.</i>
Participant 5	moderate	<i>-- I had more [Marimekko products] when I was younger -- I haven't bought anything in a long while. Of course it's due to the economic situation a bit. -- Neutral [relationship].</i>
Participant 6	high	<i>An interdependent relationship! --It's kind of an open-minded relationship. I always approach with a very positive and open mind when I go to their store to look at the products and let the personnel come near to tell what they have to offer. --</i>

As the purpose of this research is to study the role of emotional branding in brand personality formulation, it is important to be able to identify the consumer contact points in which the implementation of emotional branding practices is possible. In order to find out the most efficient contact point for emotional branding, the informants were asked which distribution channel they usually wish to use when buying clothes. Although some of the informants did their shopping partially online, a clear consensus was discovered among the sample in the preference of shopping primarily in retail stores. The reasons for this choice were most commonly related to easiness and practicality in terms of time and quality control:

--[P]rimarily I want to buy to buy from retail stores, because you can try the product on immediately and know if it's good on you. I don't have to wait first for a week for it to arrive. (Participant 2)

There have been so many mistake purchases from online stores, so rather would be easier to buy when you see the garment. And even if you don't get to try it on in the store, at least you get to see it! (Participant 1)

--You can see how [the garment] fits. That even though there's a picture of it online how it looks on the model, but it doesn't necessarily look the same on you. And of course the materials of the clothes, although you can read them online and can see them a bit, but what if it is that kind of gross fabric? Or take for a hoodie, so that yeah, it is college fabric, but does it have a soft lining inside or is it just thin cotton fabric? (Participant 5)

Two of the respondents expressed a liking towards retail stores as they allow quick impulse purchases based on touching and trying on the products. This is seen as a positive aspect, as it contributes to personal satisfaction and supports the paradigm of emotional branding in terms of experiential shopping. One of the informants even voiced concerns of a market shift towards online purchases:

I like [buying from retail stores] more, because I want actual stores to be there in the future so that not everything will go online. -- [You] can touch the clothes and even try on something stupid and they might turn out to be quite good. (Participant 4)

After the retail stores were identified as the most efficient platform for implementing emotional branding, the sampled consumers were asked to describe the first things that they focused on as they entered a store. The responses were then categorized under primary and secondary focus points, meaning factors that came up first without further inquiry and factors that came up through probing. The responses are further presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Primary and secondary focus points.

	Primary	Secondary
Participant 1	store layout, product layout, lighting	personnel, scents
Participant 2	product layout, store layout, sounds, personnel	scents
Participant 3	product layout	personnel
Participant 4	store layout, product layout, product categories	personnel, sounds
Participant 5	product layout, product categories, display window	scents, sounds, personnel, lighting
Participant 6	product layout, lighting, product categories	personnel, scents, sounds

The primary focus points within a retail store concentrated mainly on product layout, as all of the respondents recognized it as a main factor in attracting interest, inviting to the store, and general feelings of comfort within the space. A few of the respondents brought up the importance of having the prices of the products easily available, and that they specifically look for bargains and a good price-quality ratio - a characteristic supported

by current Generation Y literature. Five of the respondents brought up the neatness of product layout and two were attracted by colours. In terms of another common focus point, product categories, two respondents took notice of the overall style and mood set by the product offering, while one felt that too narrow product selection caused her anxiety and vulnerability as a consumer in terms of too much open space. This is also connected to store layout, which was another recurring element in the primary focus points. The highlighted aspects included the ease of entering and moving around the store as well as space design related to effortless browsing of the items carried by the store.

In terms of personnel, a majority of the informants regarded it as a secondary focus point, whereas only one focused immediately on how she was welcomed to a store. The sampled consumers brought up many different perspectives on the importance of personnel as part of a shopping experience. Based on the responses, it became evident that while being a rather meaningful element within the retail store, the relevance of personnel was mostly based on context:

-- If I go for example to Vero Moda, I don't expect to get customer service, I just hope that they greet me. -- But if I go to a more up-scale store, I expect that I get noticed, I am asked why I have come into the store in the first place, what am I looking for, do I need something. (Participant 2)

[The personnel] has to be professional, so that if I try something on in the fitting rooms and it looks horrible, they have to be able to say that it looks horrible. Not just selling for the sake of getting money, but they have to know how to look at your body type and bring right kinds of clothing. And the personnel has to be nice, but not overly nice." (Participant 4)

-- Well it is nice if somebody asks whether they can help you, but most of the time you answer 'thank you, but I'm just browsing'. -- If there is no salesperson nowhere near me, I don't have to be greeted, but of course if

the salesperson is near, they have to greet. I would be bothered if a sales person sees you coming and says nothing. (Participant 1)

Many of the respondents demanded for specialized customer service when they knew what they were looking for. However, the most common response was that the service should not be too pushy, but constantly available. Although some did not require any special services from the personnel, they felt that the least that they can do is to notice the consumer coming into the store and greeting them in some way.

Sensorial experiences, and more specifically sounds and scents, were mostly regarded as secondary focus points, if noticed at all. Only one informant was able to give actual examples of different scents used in retail environments, whereas one person described herself as sensitive for fragrances and a couple told of getting irritated by strong scents. Overall, the sampled consumers expressed thoughts that scents within a retail store carrying clothes should remain as neutral as possible. The scent of freshness and cleanliness was described by a majority of the respondents, which is further associated with novelty:

In my opinion a clothing store should be quite neutral without any strong scents, because I don't necessarily want my new clothes to smell of something - especially if they are using an air freshener or something, the smell will stick to the clothes. But then again, the air [in the store] can't be stuffy either, because then it reminds me of a flea market. (Participant 5)

Music was described as more of passive background noise by a majority of the informants. However, a few would start paying attention to the music, if it presented itself in an unconventional way: one respondent described the lack of music causing anxiety as she would get bothered by the silence, whereas two others would get irritated if the same song or album would be playing in repeat. In a similar manner, two respondents expressed disliking the music if it was playing too loud, and two would feel that it

would be out of place if it would not match the style of the brand. Nevertheless, another two also acknowledged the possible influence of music in their buying behavior in both positive and negative ways:

“It does bring a positive feeling if you have a really cool, nice shirt that you want -- [and think] ‘yeah, I will wear this when I go to the club next Saturday and they’re playing this song’. So it might make me want to buy it more, yes. But on the other hand, if there comes some horrible song that was the biggest thing when you have broken up with someone, it can be also like ‘I am so not buying this shirt’. (Participant 6)

Overall, only one of the respondents mentioned music as a primary focus point, whereas others recognized sounds and scents as a result of probing. This would indicate that such stimuli is mostly subconscious in nature. However, visual and tactile stimuli were discussed by every consumer within the sample. The fact that both product and store layouts along with product categories came up several times indicates that emotional branding should focus primarily on visual and tactile experiences. For many of the respondents, trying on clothes and touching the products was an integral part of the shopping experience.

When asked about retail experiences in a Marimekko store, nearly every respondent brought up the high level of customer service implemented by the personnel. This perception seems to correlate well with the social aspects of the Marimekko brand personality. In addition, one respondent described the stores as very neat and light spaces. For some of the respondents, the recollection and detailed description of the stores seemed difficult, which can be a result of long intervals in their visits to the stores. The frequency of store visits is summarized in Table 11.

Table 11. Frequency of Marimekko store visits

Participant 1	once a month
Participant 2	once a year
Participant 3	very rarely, last visit two years ago
Participant 4	once every two months
Participant 5	twice a year
Participant 6	once every two weeks

The respondent who visited the stores most frequently was able to compare the concept stores of different locations and give the most detailed description of what she liked and disliked in the stores:

The Marimekko [store] in Joensuu is really good in my opinion. It is big, they carry most of the times the products that I want, and there is also other than the classic products available, clothes designed by a variety of Marimekko designers. There is incredibly good customer service, really good compared to the store in Lappeenranta. I think that earlier it was a competitor of the Joensuu store, but nowadays the store is just too small and the product assortment too narrow. -- Although they have a nice male salesperson too. (Participant 6)

Three of the respondents visited the stores for inspiration and pastime in terms of browsing for new products, and two of them recalled being lured into the store by an attracting display window. These three were also among the ones who visit the stores most often, whereas the rest visited the store only if they had some purpose to go in there. Such reasons included gift shopping, sewing projects or accompanying a friend.

In terms of the logotype, the most common description of the Marimekko logo revolved around simplicity and clarity. One of the respondents described it as timeless, while another perceived it as plain yet dignified. It was brought up that the logo is especially multifunctional, as it is can be easily revitalized with different colours. However, one person associated

the simplicity of the logo to dullness. On the whole, the responses did not reveal a deep emotional connection to the logo itself, although it was seen as a strong indicator of quality in general. The respondents were nearly unanimous when asked how their attitude would change towards a regular striped shirt if they would suddenly notice a Marimekko logo:

-- [With the logo] I know that [the shirt] has quality. Or it brings the whole brand behind it, so that afterwards it is not a striped shirt anymore, but a Marimekko striped shirt then. (Participant 3)

-- [With the logo a striped shirt] is more valuable than any other striped shirt. -- [T]hat Marimekko name is kind of like a proof of quality --. (Participant 6)

However, one participant addressed the Marimekko 'Even stripes' shirt as a recognizable piece even without the company logo. Two others also believed that they would probably recognize the shirt as Marimekko either based on the look of the stripes or by the quality of the fabric when they would have the shirt in their hands. As also discovered by the examination of brand personality drivers, the products themselves are very central to the creation of an emotional bond with the consumer.

6.1.3 Cultural implications

As the effects of culture and values was more discussed as a part of the results regarding brand personality, this segment deals with the attitudes related to ethnocentrism and country-of-origin. In terms of ethnocentrism, certain aspects were able to be derived from the interviews. Overall, the informants were rather consistent in showing only mild signs of ethnocentrism while mitigating circumstances, such as high price and narrow selection affected the consumer mindset heavily. This is elaborated in the related quotes when asked how important domestic production in clothing is to the informants:

[Domestic] clothing is not necessarily [important], because nowadays you won't get clothes made in Finland unless you go buy from some really small-scale artisan. (Participant 2)

-- [N]ot so important. Or it depends -- on the product. Pretty much, and the price. (Participant 5)

It depends so much on the product. -- [I]n clothing the [price] difference can be so huge that anyway with the budget of a stay-at-home mom I would have to buy a foreign product. (Participant 1)

I don't really pay that much attention to domestic production in clothing. -- [T]here are so few Finnish alternatives available for people my age and the style of clothes that I use. -- [M]aybe the scale is so narrow and [the clothes] are not so easily available. -- [I] don't want to invest in something so valuable that Finnish quality would be. (Participant 3)

Well of course it is always a plus, but -- then I couldn't really go [shop] anywhere, not in many stores that we have here [in Lappeenranta]. (Participant 4)

While domestic production in clothing did not seem too important to a majority of the interviewees, many of them brought up its importance with groceries. Reasoning behind this thinking was based on smaller differences in price in relation to tight monetary budgets, and close production in terms of ecology. However, three of the informants indicated more liable qualities towards ethnocentrism by beginning to discuss the importance of Finnish labour and supporting domestic production, as well as indicating more trust in Finnish companies in resolving reclamations and other problem situations. This is highlighted by the following comments:

-- If there are two alternatives, then I would -- choose of course the Finnish one if they are completely similar or equivalent ... And one should of course support Finnish [products]. It is quite important. -- Before everything was better. -- Then [the products] were probably produced in Finland and Finland had textile factories and work -- it would be quite ideal even nowadays that we could produce domestically so that people would have jobs --. (Participant 1)

-- I pay more, because I know that [Marimekko] is Finnish. For that I am willing to pay more. -- [It is important] so that we, Finland, stay somehow in the market and that for those of us who work here will have work if I give money there --. (Participant 4)

For me it stands for certain kind of quality and assurance if the product is made completely in Finland, and for example if there is some problem with a product and it is sent back to the manufacturer, I feel that if it is a Finnish factory that deals with it I have faith in good conduct with the matter. (Participant 3)

These aspects were expected to arise in some form in the research as the childhood of this particular age group was widely affected by the economic downturn in Finland in the early 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Ryan 2008). Considering the valuation of Finnish work and concern for national economy, having experienced the dramatic increase in unemployment in their early childhood can be the source of these feelings that might be further enforced by the most recent global recession affecting their own capabilities in finding a job.

By probing for ethnocentrism, the respondents revealed important insights related to country-of-origin. Certain aspects regarding ethical production and level of quality arose from some of the respondents when discussing the importance of country-of origin. Deriving from several statements, the respondents were trusting that Finnish companies are able to produce

high quality products in an ethical manner. However, for this quality, one must be prepared to pay more. This comes across the related quotes:

-- [With domestic production] there would be no need to import from so far abroad where [the clothes] are not necessarily produced so ethically. (Participant 1)

-- [T]his current economic situation [as a student] is what allows turning a blind eye to the fact that a garment might not be produced in the most ethical way. But I would hope that when my income level will rise within a few years I would have more chances of purchasing Finnish items and so on, but I won't reproach myself every night that I bought tops that are produced in Bangladesh. (Participant 6)

-- I understand that some three-euro shirt is not made in Finland, but if it is made in Finland, then I understand that it costs more and that's when I expect more quality [from the product]. -- [B]y comparing to foreign ones --, [Finnish products] have a so-called price-quality ratio that because they cost more, you expect them to be also more durable and of higher quality. (Participant 5)

Considering the case company's current manufacturing scheme, a majority of production is concentrated within European Union with one-third of total production in Finland. As the country-of-origin is labelled according to the final country of assembly, many consumers are buying products with a label indicating production outside of Finland. In order to reveal awareness and the emotional responses to this aspect, the respondents were asked how they would feel if they found out that a purchased product they thought as Finnish was actually manufactured somewhere else. The initial reaction from each respondent was betrayal given certain circumstances:

Especially if [the clothes] are manufactured somewhere like Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh --, take for a jersey shirt. You have paid over 30 euros and then it is made in the same place as the three euro shirt from H&M, so you will feel a little bit betrayed, sort of. -- [I]t could be, and probably is produced in a different factory, so maybe it is better quality. (Participant 5)

-- If I am told that this is a Finnish product, then of course I will be disappointed if I find out that it is made in Bangladesh. -- But it depends on what I have been told when I have been buying the product. What kind of mental image I have formed then. (Participant 2)

However, some of the respondents voiced their awareness of the fact that Finnish companies have more commonly shifted their production abroad to countries with cheaper labour costs. Although Marimekko's transparency in labeling its products enables them to avoid unpleasant consumer responses and distinguish Finland as more of a source of design, a couple of the respondents were hoping for a change in the situation. On the contrary, one of the respondents did not mind despite initial disappointment. These comments are presented below:

-- I am not surprised by the fact that even the Finnish produce abroad because it is just so much cheaper. (Participant 2)

-- [U]sually it is written in big letter if it is manufactured in Finland, as many Finnish [companies] have their production abroad, but of course it feels nice for me to support Finnish labour also and not just a Finnish company. (Participant 1)

In my opinion it has been told very clearly in many cases if some product is designed in Finland and manufactured elsewhere --, [but] I would hope Finland could produce more. I would appreciate it more --. (Participant 3)

Well I would be pissed off and annoyed, but maybe it would be temporary. Then I just state after thinking about it for a while that this is the way it went down and this product is still pretty cool. (Participant 4)

6.2 Observation

The personal observation for the research was conducted in July 2014 in order to validate the data gathered from semi-structured interviews. The concept store of Marimekko in Lappeenranta was observed according to the retail space, retail environment, product assortment and personnel. The following chapters will describe the observations according to the notes written at the scene after visiting the store, after which further associations are made with aspects that arose from literature as well as data collection.

6.2.1 Retail space

The concept store is located downtown in the city center, along a long-standing shopping street City-käytävä. The surrounding stores include a jewelry and accessories stores, opticians and a kiosk to name few. The store is facing the Saint Mary's Church of Lappee, which is situated in a calm and green Central Park. Thus, the location of the store is very central and able to take advantage of large flows of people.

The company logo is visible above the entrance of the store, with a large display window to the right. The window has a display of different kinds of printed fabrics and a colourful array of Marimekko pouches and bags, either situated on ground level or hanging in the air on strings coming down from the ceiling. Next to the door, there are two bean bags outside to welcome people into the store. The other one is black and white with the Marimekko logo, while the other one has a fine print on it. Overall, they give an impression of a casual, inviting and relaxed store.

The size of the space is rather small, as expressed by many of the interviewees. The shape is rectangular, appearing as narrow and long from the entrance. Despite this, the customer flow layout has established and clear walking routes, which are spacious enough even if the store is crowded or one is entering with a baby carriage. Due to the shape of the space there is very little table space, as most of the product offering is either on shelves or clothes racks that mainly line the walls. One table is situated next to the entrance, and in the other end of the space there is a large table for cutting fabrics properly, with the check-out desk right next to it facing two relatively spacious fitting rooms with striped Marimekko curtains. The walls, ceiling and shelves in the store are white, whereas the flooring is oak-coloured wood. Such a light colouring scheme creates a calm and harmonious background for all the colourful Marimekko products.

6.2.2 Retail environment

In terms of sensorial stimuli, the main two senses employed within the store were sight and touch. Reflecting Marimekko's brand personality, the products are exuberant and eye-catching with all their prints, shapes and colours. The variety of visual stimuli is balanced with harmonious, white environment that enables the products to catch all of the attention of consumers. In addition, most of the products were laid out for the customers to touch, as a clear majority of the products were unpacked. If they were packed, such as tablet covers, the packages featured a see-through window and it was possible to open the package without breaking it to evaluate the product's quality.

The lighting in the space can be considered two-fold. First of all, the large window to the street allows maximum utilization of natural daylight, which illuminated the white space effortlessly. However, the use of artificial lighting is necessary due to the shape of the retail space. Especially the back corner of the space had lighting, as well as the shelves on the wall.

Warm lighting was used, reflecting the aspirations of creating a more homely feeling into the rather small retail space.

On the whole, the first impression of the retail environment was that it was clean and well illuminated with all the colours popping up. However, the space was very quiet in the absence of music, and at the time of observation there was no obvious stimuli directed towards taste or smell. The amount of visual stimulation is so large that it must have been a reasonable decision to avoid a sensory overload, and especially in this case the meaning of the brand is so condensed to its design identity that it is mainly what consumers expect from store visits.

6.2.3 Product assortment

The store's product assortment in terms of categories was wide and representative of all the areas concerning Marimekko. The categories included clothing for women, men and children, bags and pouches, accessories such as jewelry, ties, scarves, portable device covers and notebooks, kitchen and tableware, home textiles and different kinds of fabrics. Upon arrival, the store seemed to be filled with a variety of colourful products with recognizable prints, which convey the brand personality of Marimekko at its best. As everything else in terms of interior decoration within the store is rather muted, the products are able to pop out even better. In terms of emotional branding, this is an efficient strategic decision, which supports the formulation of brand personality in its desired form.

However, the variety of products within the product categories could not be described as very wide, although the relatively narrow retail space naturally sets limitations upon the number of items that the store is able to carry. As for clothing, the product assortment was mostly focused on women's department with a selection of children's clothing, which both carried, for example, only certain colours of specific items. Men's offering

consisted traditionally of classic pieces such as 'Jokapoika' and 'Tasaraita' shirts, which was expected.

In terms of layout, the first things that were encountered when walking into the store were the racks of discounted clothing in the middle of the room. They were the first thing that customers would see, which would prove especially effective with Generation Y, who tend to seek for bargains and good price-quality ratio. Another special feature within the store was a table on the right-hand side of the entrance, which could be described as an inspiration table. At the time of observation, the table was laden with towels, tableware and other decorative stuff that was labelled as gifts for taking with you to summer houses, which is a customary element in Finnish culture during the summer. Buying Marimekko products as gifts due to their meaningfulness and durability is a valuable brand association, which is harnessed in the concept store in this way.

The product layout supports the division of women's clothing on the right-hand side wall of the space with the children's clothing on the left. Although some items were mixed between the walls, the accessories were mainly divided equally between the two walls with many of the products on shelves on a level that is easy to explore and touch the products. Most of the clothes were on racks, although the classic cotton jerseys were laid out in neatly folded stacks in a shelving unit. More boxy items, such as large bags were situated at a higher level, but most of the bags were also on a level that enabled touching them. Marimekko's iconic pouches were located close to the check-out counter in large cylinders allowing impulse purchases. In the back of the room, the corner was reserved completely for fabrics, which comprised a large visual element. On the whole, the layout of products was organized and neat to balance out the flood of colours and prints.

6.2.4 Personnel

On the day of the observation two members of staff were present. When walking into the store, there were two additional customers within the space. At the time, the male salesperson was behind the check-out desk, but came quickly to greet and ask whether the observer was looking for something specific that he could help with. When replied that the observer was just looking, he smiled and gave space for the observer to wander around the store. Before going to help the other customers in the store, the salesperson indicated towards the discount rack in the middle of the room and shared that it has some great sale pieces from the summer collection, but that all the available sizes of those clothes are now on display. In addition, he encouraged to ask for different sizes in case the observer would find something pleasant from the new collection without the right size on display.

As the observation continued, the male salesperson left the space to go into the backroom, and was replaced by a female salesperson. The salesperson set herself behind the check-out desk at first, but then started to move around the store to go through the clothes racks. Although there was no additional communication between the salesperson and the observer, she smiled and said goodbye as the observer was about to leave the store.

From the perspective of emotional branding, a dress code was apparent, as both salespersons were dressed in Marimekko clothes of their choosing. The service was casual and friendly, and gave space for the observer to roam around the store and check different items freely without disturbance. However, the salespersons remained close by and seemingly alert to help out with any questions that might arise. In terms of brand personality, the personnel embodied Marimekko's accessible, accepting, individualistic and friendly aspects.

7 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The following chapter will summarize the findings of empirical research by acknowledging the research questions. As the objective of this thesis was to gain insights and increase understanding on the role of emotional branding in building brand personality, the supportive sub-questions are discussed at first, followed by concluding remarks on the main research question. The conclusions are followed by discussion on the theoretical and managerial implications, research limitations and suggestions for further research.

What constitutes a brand personality?

Brand personality is formed according to brand personality drivers, whereas brand associations support and contribute to the brand personality on a more general level. Based on the interviews, the main brand personality drivers of Marimekko were discovered to be product attributes, country-of-design, time on the market, user imagery and advertising. In terms of the brand associations, the perceived brand personality is reflected relatively well. The colours and prints were most commonly associated with the Marimekko brand, along with a distinct design aesthetic. Moreover, the social aspect of the brand was reflected in buying Marimekko products as gifts and souvenirs, or incorporating them with meaningful life events in various ways. This contributes to the nostalgic and traditional elements of the brand personality.

According to Aaker's (1997) brand personality framework, Marimekko seems to be especially strong on the dimension of Excitement along with Sincerity. On the whole, one could make the conclusion that Marimekko indeed has a positive brand image in terms of brand personality, which entails many aspects that people often appreciate, such as individualism and self-confidence. As it was discovered through the interviews, the

respondents had developed and were faithful to their own personal style of dressing. Comparing with the design aesthetics of Marimekko, it can be said that the congruence of Marimekko style with consumers' personal style dictates the level of emotional bonding with the brand only to a certain level. For the interviewed sample, the connection becomes stronger based on cultural relevance, values and self-congruence with Marimekko's brand personality, whereas congruence with personal style enforces it.

Which emotional branding elements are most appealing to consumers in formulating a brand personality?

The research on this sub-question began with identifying retail stores as the preferred shopping channel, which supports the idea of emotional branding. The consumers then began to evaluate the distribution of their attention within the store in terms of primary and secondary focus points. Whereas it was discovered that most sensorial experiences related to scents and sounds were either secondary focus points or went completely unnoticed, the sample of consumers paid initially most attention to the product layout, store layout and product categories. As for personnel, it was considered as an important, yet sometimes quite passive factor in the shopping experience depending on the context, although most respondents emphasized the importance greeting them as customers.

Compared with the brand personality drivers, emotional branding can most efficiently utilize the products and personnel within the retail environment. Observation in one of the Marimekko concept stores revealed a neat and attracting product layout in a relatively small space with quite narrow product assortment within the wide range of categories. As discovered from the interviews, the most efficient sensorial experiences in shopping were created by visual and tactile stimuli. In order to focus all visual attention on the products, the concept store was cleverly covered in harmonious white. Moreover, a majority of the products were laid out so

that the customers could freely touch them. One of the most efficient and unique emotional branding practices within the store was the inspiration table, which derived directly from the brand association of gift giving. As for the personnel, observation showed that the concept store had friendly and professional service available when needed, which was described as the most preferred form of customer service by most of the sampled consumers.

Overall, it can be said that Marimekko has been able to define its brand identity in a way that it is aware of its brand personality in the minds of the consumers, and it can manipulate its formation in the most efficient way in the retail environment. However, the relatively small retail space of the observed concept store can be considered as a minor limitation to the implementation of emotional branding, as it was also brought up in one of the interviews as a negative point. Nevertheless, the space has been developed according to Marimekko's guidelines of sympathetic meeting places filled with inspiration.

How do cultural implications in terms of culture, personal values and ethnocentrism along with country-of-origin alter the formation of brand personality?

As discussed above, the effects of culture and values were obvious in having an effect on the Marimekko brand personality. Consumer perceptions of the Marimekko values were able to match with the stated corporate values, and they also resonated partially in the values that the respondents appreciated in their friends. As for the Finnishness of the case company, choosing to wear or use Marimekko products can be seen as a reflection of one's deeply rooted national and cultural identity.

Deriving from Marimekko's brand personality, the issue with country-of-origin seems to have little effect on the perceptions that the respondents have on the company. Marimekko is essentially perceived as a Finnish

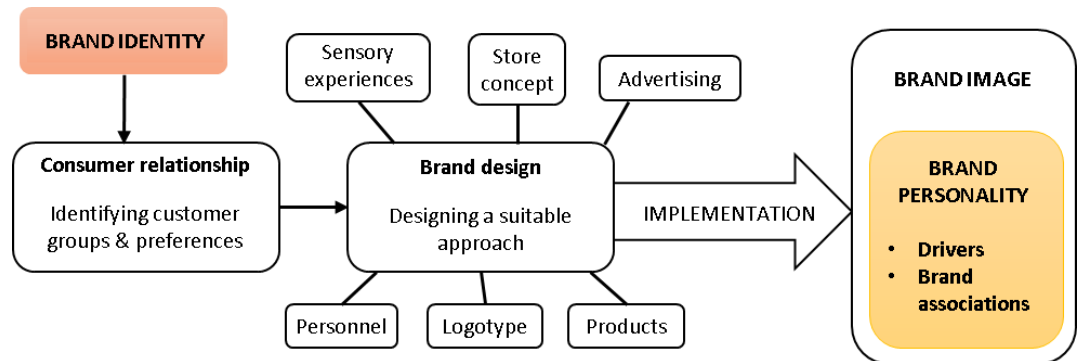
company, which is most likely a result of the brand's history and strong legacy in the Finnish fashion industry. Even though the relatively recent shift of domestic production to abroad and the current emphasis on Finnish design are acknowledged by the interviewed consumers, the overall brand personality of Marimekko is Finnish, regardless of country-of-origin. In terms of ethnocentrism, the consumers showed only mild signs of ethnocentric attitudes, which can also rule out its influence on the formation of brand personality.

Thus, it can be stated that Marimekko is able to benefit from its strong brand personality and iconic status, as consumers are more likely to choose the brand for what it stands for rather than based on actual corporate decisions in terms of manufacturing. Nevertheless, the Finnish mentality is always present in the company's products, which is a major element for Finnish consumers.

What is the role of emotional branding in building brand personality from a consumer perspective?

Through extensive familiarization with the topic and analysis of the findings of the research, this thesis is able to illustrate a connection between emotional branding and brand personality. As emotional branding has been a relatively hazy concept relying much on the paradigm and guidelines developed by Gobé (2009), the notions of brand personality have received wide academic interest for many decades (Plummer 1985; Aaker 1997; Freling & Forbes; Freling, Crosno & Henard 2011). In order to clarify the linkage between the two concepts, a process model of emotional branding is established within the retail environment to complement the formulation of brand personality in the consumers' mind. This model is illustrated below in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Process of emotional branding



The process begins with establishing a brand identity, which guides the brand throughout all of its operations. The second step is to clarify the intended consumer relationship in terms of identifying the target customer group and studying their qualities and preferences in depth. Without this step, it is impossible to move on to designing a suitable approach for this consumer group. The step regarding brand design involves all of the operational decisions related to the products, logotype, recruitment of personnel, sensory branding, store concept and advertising to name a few.

Following the steps of planning, the implementation of emotional branding sums up all of the strategic decisions that reflect the brand identity of the company and the chosen direction. Through implementation, consumers are able to formulate a mental image of the company, which constitutes the brand image. As its subset, brand personality is formed according to case specific drivers and brand associations, which the company in question needs to be aware of in order to control them.

In conclusion, it can be stated that emotional branding has an indisputable position in terms of brand personality formulation, although some of its components can be perceived to have more of an impact in the process depending on the case at hand. For this case study, these were the actual products and user imagery.

7.1 Theoretical implications

As revealed by the literature review, the connection between emotional branding and brand personality was previously relatively understudied. The findings of this thesis were able to deepen the understanding of emotional branding, and provide a new kind of process model to contribute to Gobé's (2009) emotional branding paradigm. Moreover, the case study was able to identify the most important factors in both emotional branding elements and brand personality formulation from the consumer point of view. By combining these factors, a linkage between the concepts was established for more efficient implementation of branding and control of the intangible brand capital. To the knowledge of the researcher, this is the first study to tackle these aspects of the key concepts.

As suggested by Aaker (1996, 153), brand personalities are able to create brand equity from either self-expressive, relational or functional point of view. The findings of the research indicated all of the cases above, although it can be said that the interviewed sample gravitated mostly towards the self-expression model. The brand personality congruence with both self-conceptualization along with set of values was perceived as a driving force in forming an emotional connection with the case company. Moreover, the importance of national and cultural identity was emphasized in this case study, as the case company has developed into an iconic brand on its domestic market.

In addition to clarifying the process of emotional branding in terms of building brand personality, this thesis was able to contribute to the existing Generation Y literature from a different cultural context. The findings were able to confirm that the Finnish female members of Generation Y want to stand out from the crowd with their own style, which is modified only with a hint of peer influence. At the same time, they are quite respectful of traditions, and value brands that have a consistent history and share a similar value set as them. As for shopping preferences, the interviewed

sample was cohesive in choosing to shop in retail stores for both pragmatic and experiential reasons (Gobé 2009.) Moreover, they always look for the best price-quality ratio (Foscht et al. 2009), as they are quite aware of the value of money and refuse to pay too much for poor quality. (Pradeep 2010.)

7.2 Managerial implications

The normative contribution of this research revolves around emotional branding and its implementation within the retail environment. Managers and other practitioners are able to dive deeper into the emotional branding context and re-evaluate its manifestation in their retail design. This particular case study is especially useful for companies operating in the fashion and clothing industry, which is characterized by strong reliance on designers and differentiation through products and aesthetical style. Moreover, this research can act as guidance for clothing brands in establishing or strengthening their position on the market.

By providing insights to the process-thinking behind emotional branding, this thesis provides support for managers in implementing emotional branding in the most suitable way possible for them and their company. As the process model is applicable in general, the emotional branding elements can be manipulated across industries as long as they are linked to the company-specific brand personality drivers. If these drivers are unknown to a company, an additional research based on them is required for the efficient utilization of the emotional branding process model.

In addition, this thesis was able to gain interesting insights related to an attracting consumer group of Finnish females. This information can be useful for companies in choosing a targeting approach as well as planning their branding activities. However, it is important to acknowledge that these findings can only be generalized to a certain extent within the

context of Finnish market, as differences to the results can arise when discussing consumers outside of Finland.

7.3 Research limitations

Two major limitations for the present thesis were both time and resource constraints. In the absence of a flexible budget, time frame and other resources, the research had to be limited to cover only Finnish consumers. With additional language skills and networks, the research would have been able to be conducted in a different country with another cultural setting. Nevertheless, the chosen market orientation allowed face-to-face interviewing of the informants by travelling to meet them in different locations in Finland.

According to Yin (2009, 111) the reliability of the research in terms of data collected through observation would increase if there would be more than one observer to collect evidence. However, in this case the resources were limited only to one researcher in both data collection and analysis. As case studies are more susceptible for bias, it is possible that the researcher's personal beliefs and attitudes have affected the research process. Nevertheless, there is confidence on the researcher's objectivity and professionalism in studying the topic.

Another notable limitation of the research is the relatively small sample size that is characteristic of the case study method and semi-structured interviews (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1991, 38; Malhotra 2012, 103). Although this has an effect on the generalizability of the results, the embedded single-case study method was initially chosen to answer to the needs of the research in terms of allowing in-depth exploration of the case and topic at hand. As both concepts under study are characterized by experience and intangibility, it presented the challenge of having the informants express ideas and attitudes that can be difficult to voice due to their subconscious nature. Having the researcher acquire additional training in psychology

might have been able to produce more comprehensive results for the research.

Adding to the limitations, much of the current Generation Y literature was based on American consumers with little information available on other markets and their consumers. Nevertheless, exploratory research is able to go around this issue and generate new data from topics that are otherwise understudied. In terms of generalizability, research with the same case company, but in a different cultural context would have possibly brought up different kinds of aspects. As Generation Y classification can be considered as a cultural concept to a certain extent, it could have affected the choosing of the sample and analytical approaches.

As a data collection method, interviewing is a challenging method that requires a suitable skillset from the researcher when conducted personally. Semi-structured interviewing relies a lot on the interviewer in probing for the relevant data, and the lack of experience on this aspect of interviewing from the side of the researcher can possibly affect the collection of data, and thus, results. However, semi-structured interviews are known to allow a more flexible structure, in which different question can be asked from different informants. As six interviews were conducted for the present thesis, the capabilities of the researcher in probing improved during each meeting.

Despite having reached theoretical saturation, the informants presented somewhat differing relationships with the case company at hand. As the sample was selected based on demographic characteristics, it is possible that there might be an issue with the generalization of the results due to varying psychographic qualities.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

Whereas the purpose of this exploratory thesis was to gain insights and understanding related to the role of emotional branding in the process of formulating brand personality, a more conclusive research utilizing quantitative methods would be in order. Research is required to shed light on more measurable effects that could explain the causality between the topics and variation between different elements of emotional branding.

In order to increase the generalizability, extending the sample size to a larger scale that is more characteristic of quantitative research would be efficient. Moreover, it is important to include male respondents in the research which would provide valuable data for comparison and allow further generalization of results across Generation Y in a more coherent way. Despite the context of the present study being situated in Finland, similar research attempts can be replicated in a different cultural context in order to provide width to the topic in the future.

Emotional branding is not limited only to the retail environment, as it can also be implemented in the internet. The present topic could be studied and tested in the virtual environment such as corporate websites, web stores and most interestingly, social media that supports the emotional branding ideology through storytelling and image sharing. In addition, other industries, such as food and nutrition, would prove interesting to study brand personality and emotional branding, as was highlighted in many responses in the present research. Moreover, similar research can be conducted with the focus on a different kind of brand within the same industry as in the present thesis. As brands can vary from global to niche ones, their comparison could provide interesting grounds for study and provide width to the concept landscape.

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APPENDIX 1

Semi-structured interview questions

1. Taustatiedot

- Nimi, ikä, syntymäpaikka, nykyinen asuinpaikka, ammatti
- Kuvaile itseäsi ja luonnettasi, millaisena ihmisenä näet itsesi?
- Mitä arvostat ystävissäsi?
- Kerro hieman perhetaustastasi ja siitä millaisena muistat lapsuutesi?
- Miten kuvailisit perheenne tulotaso?
- Millainen suhde sinulla on muotiin ja vaateeseen yleensä?
- Seuraatko kuinka paljon trendejä?
- Kuvaile hieman omaa tyyliäsi.

2. Kuluttajakäyttäytyminen

- Mitä kautta ostat yleensä vaatteesi: internetistä, liikkeestä? Mikä siihen vaikuttaa?
- Millaisiin asioihin kiinnität huomiota astuessasi liikkeeseen?
- Millainen merkitys henkilökunnalla on ostokokemukseen?
- Millaisia tunteita tai ajatuksia erilaiset tuoksut liiketilassa herättävät?
- Millainen merkitys musiikilla on liiketilassa?
- Millainen on mielestäsi täydellinen shoppailukokemus?
- Kuinka tärkeää tuotteen kotimaisuus on sinulle?
- Ostat suomalaisen brändin tuotteen, ja sinulle selviää jälkikäteen, että tuote on valmistettu jossain muualla kuin kotimaassa. Millaisia tunteita se sinussa herättää?

3. Marimekko-assosiaatiot

- Mitkä ovat ensimmäiset muistosi Marimekosta?
- Onko sinulla suosikkivuosi Marimekolta? Miksi?
- Millaisia arvoja Marimekko edustaa sinulle?
- Miten tärkeää sinulle on, että yrityksellä on historia?
- Millaisissa tilaisuuksissa ostat yleensä Marimekon tuotteita?
- Mikä on ensimmäinen asia, joka tulee mieleesi Marimekosta tänä päivänä? Millaisia ajatuksia tai tunteita se sinussa herättää?
- Kuvaile hieman suhdettasi Marimekkoon.
- Milloin olet viimeksi käynyt Marimekon liikkeessä? Mikä sai sinut käymään liikkeessä?
- Kuinka usein vieraillet Marimekon liikkeessä?
- Millaisia kokemuksia sinulla on asioimisesta Marimekon
 - a) kivijalkaliikkeessä,
 - b) verkkokaupassa?

4. Marimekko-persoona

Näytetään kuvia Marimekon mainoskampanjasta

- Mitkä ovat ensireaktiosi näihin kuviin?
- Millaisia ajatuksia tuotteen muotokieli; mallin olemus; värit tuovat sinulle mieleen?
- Kuvittele, että Marimekko on ihminen, johon voit tutustua ja jonka kanssa voit viettää aikaa. Millaisilla sanoilla kuvailisit Marimekkoa?
- Millaista musiikkia Marimekko kuuntelisi?

Näytetään Marimekon logoa

- Millaisia ajatuksia tämä logotyyppi sinussa herättää?
- Sinulla on käsissäsi raitapaita. Huomaat pian, että paidassa on Marimekon logo. Kuinka se muuttaa suhtautumistasi vaatteeseen?



Source: Olivia Magazine, Issue 10/2013, Bonnier Publications.



Source: Olivia Magazine, Issue 11/2013, Bonnier Publications.



marimekko.fi/verkkokauppa

Source: Olivia Magazine, 12/2013, Bonnier Publications.

APPENDIX 3

Sample of interview transcript

Teemahaastattelu 1 / 3.7.2014

P: No ne on vaan enemmän semmoin miun tyyppisiä että niissä uusissa tai sillee, ei oo semmonen moderni tyyli ei vaa oikee oo miulle tosi niiku..
Tietysti ku oon tekstiilialan ammattilainen niin sanotusti ni on sillee jo se oma tyyli tai semmonen. Tykkää sit enemmän siitä mikä on itseä lähellä eikä niiku, semmonet graafisuus ja tämmöset ni en oikee välitä niistä. Et vähä semmone mummolafiilis on varmaa miulla mikä on se mikä viehättää. Semmone mis on väriä enemmän ja semmosta ehkä pienet kuviot enemmän ku isot.

EB. CONS-REL.
GEN-Y

BP. BA
BP. DRI

H: Yhdistäisie Marimekon enemmän menneisyyteen kuin nykyisyyteen brändinä?

P: No kyllähän se on esillä hirveesti, mut et se on miulle ainakin osa sitä sen ideaa, et sil on historia sil yrityksellä. Et se on tärkeä se sen historia että se tuo lisäarvoa niille uusillekin tuotteille. Et ne on tavallaan osa semmosta sukupolvien ketjua.

BP. DRI
BP. VALUE. CON

H: Okei, ja onks sil sit merkitystä semmoseen luotettavuuteen.

P: No kyllä, siis on totuttu ainakin ajattelemaan et ne on niiku hyvälaatuisia ne tuotteet, et siks niitä ehkä tulee ostettua, että ne kestää. Oon huomannu varsinkin noissa lastenvaatteissa että kestää paremmin ku niiku perusmarkettipaidat, just niiku trikoopaidat esimerkiksi. Ainakin nuo mitä kirppikseltä, yksi paita on ostettu, vanhemmalle lapselle, niin siis se on kirppikseltä ostettu neijällä eurolla ja se on vieläkin niin kuin uus ja sitä on käytetty ihan hirveen paljon. Että niiku menee sitte perintönä seuraavalle.

BP. VALUE. CON

EB. PROD

H: No tästä voidaankin mennä sitten semmosee kysymykseen et millaisia arvoja Marimekko edustaa siulle?

P: No se varmaa just niiku tossa sanoin et tämmöstä, kylhä se semmosta suomalaisuutta myös, mutta tällasta perhearvoja ja tällasta niiku historiaa ja jollain lailla sellasta menneen, perinteiden kunnioitusta ja semmosta kuitenkin. Se on ehkä miulle ku mie tykkään tietysti niistä sen vanhemmasta tuotannosta enemmän ni sit se on ehkä niinku sitä historiaa, nyt aika "ennen kaikki oli paremmin" tyyppinen fiilis.

BP. VALUE. CON
EB. CONS-REL.
GEN-Y

C1. ETH

H: Jos avaat että ennen kaikki oli paremmin niin millä tavalla tarkoitat sitä?

P: No siis että siis sillee esimerkiksi että silloin ne varmaan niinku valmistettiin Suomessa ja sillee et Suomessa oli tekstiilitehtaita ja töitä ja sitte tota vähän tuotiin vaatteita ulkomailta et pääasiassa käytettiin mitä Suomessa valmistettiin, ni se ois aika ihanteellinen tila nykyäänki että saatas kotimaassakii valmistettua näitä et ois ihmisille töitä ja ei tarviis tuoda niin kaukaa sitte tuolta missä niitä mahdollisesti ei kauheen eettisesti tuoteta.

C1. ETH